The Vision of Higher Education in India

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Abstract

The vision of higher education in India is to realize the country's human resources potential to its fullest with equity and inclusion. The higher education sector, in recent decades, has witnessed a tremendous growth in many aspects such as its institutional capacity, enrolment, teacher-student ratio, etc. The rapid expansion of the higher education system at the same time has brought several pertinent issues related to equity, efficiency, excellence and access to higher education in the country. The present paper holds an immediate significance of creating awareness of many issues of concern to be taken care of by the stakeholders in the national as well as the global levels. The study is also unique in the sense that it brings about better understanding of the present scenario in the higher education system in the country and its pattern of growth given the opportunities and challenges to the system under consideration. The present study throws a gainful insight on financing schemes and enrolment aspects of higher education in India.

Keywords: Higher Education, Opportunities and Challenges, Enrolment, Privatization.

Introduction

India's higher education system is the world's third largest in terms of students, next to China and the United States. In future, India will be one of the largest education hubs. India's Higher Education sector has witnessed a tremendous increase in the number of Universities/University level Institutions & Colleges since independence. The 'Right to Education Act' which stipulates compulsory and free education to all children within the age groups of 6-14 years, has brought about a revolution in the education system of the country with statistics revealing a staggering enrolment in schools over the last four years. The involvement of private sector in higher education has seen drastic changes in the field. Today over 60% of higher education institutions in India are promoted by the private sector. This has accelerated establishment of institutes which have originated over the last decade making India home to the largest number of Higher Education institutions in the world, with student enrolments at the second highest (Shaguri, 2013).The number of Universities has increased 34 times from 20 in 1950 to 677 in 2014. Despite these numbers, international education rating agencies have not placed many of these institutions within the

best of the world ranking. Also, India has failed to produce world class universities. Today, Knowledge is power. The more knowledge one has, the more empowered one is. However, India continues to face stern challenges. Despite growing investment in education, 25 per cent of its population is still illiterate; only 15 per cent of Indian students reach high school, and just 7 per cent graduate (Masani, 2008). The quality of education in India whether at primary or higher education is significantly poor as compared to major developing nations of the world. As of 2008, India's post-secondary institutions offer only enough seats for 7 per cent of India's college-age population, 25 per cent of teaching positions nationwide are vacant, and 57 per cent of college professors lack either a master's or PhD degree (Newsweek, 2011). As of 2011, there are 1522 degree-granting engineering colleges in India with an annual student intake of 582,000 (Science and Technology Education, 2009) plus 1,244 polytechnics with an annual intake of 265,000. However, these institutions face shortage of faculty and concerns have been raised over the quality of education (Mitra, 2008). Despite these challenges higher education system of India equally have lot of opportunities to overcome these challenges and have the capability to make its identity at international level. However, it needs greater transparency and accountability, the role of universities and colleges in the new millennium, and emerging scientific research on how people learn is of utmost important. India provides highly skilled people to other countries therefore; it is very easy for India to transfer our country from a developing nation to a developed nation.

1. Teaching Quality

The first issue that higher education in India is facing is decreasing teaching quality. Teachers are not well trained and qualified for the job they are assigned to some colleges recruit young graduates as professors who have no experience or knowledge. So this is a big problem. Higher Education has to face is the teaching of English in the multilingual context. Language has been accepted as a major vehicle for conveying thoughts and feelings and there by storing our experiences and establishing relationship in the society yet, the teaching of languages in general and the teaching of languages of instruction in particular is taken for granted which is unacceptable in the multi lingual milieu of globalized world.

2. No Proper Value Education

Value education is not offered in the schools and colleges. If offered, religion and hatred are spread in the name of value education. Many of the doctors, lawyers, CAs, politicians and Govt. servants who are supposed to be the saviors of the society, suffer from serious charges of corruption. Old-age homes are increasing. Suicides are increasing. The meaning of love is eventually changing. The education-led technology, inventions and innovations are being misused.

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3. Poor Women's Education

Women have a much lower literacy rate than men. Conservative cultural attitudes prevent girls from attending schools. Despite Government's attempts to provide incentives viz. midday meals, free books and uniforms, girls' attendance is poor. Though the minimum age for marriage is eighteen, many girls get married much earlier. Therefore, at the secondary level, female drop-out rate is high.

4. Political Factor

Political influence is also a bad thing and an issue with higher education. Governing bodies do not want any political influence or interference in their affairs. The dominant political leaders, now playing key role in governing bodies of the Universities, as they own most of the Institutions, imparting education (Aided-non-aided). They have established their own youth cells and encourage students' organization on political basis. They exploit the students' energy for their political purposes. The students for get their own objectives and begin to develop their careers in politics.

5. Moral Issues

Younger generation is not interested in serving their country and they are more interested in just taking up a job and a hefty pay package. Rapid growth of science and technology and subsequent industrialization has caused a great and danger to our old moral and values. The younger generation's dissatisfaction and revolt is the out-come of a decaying system of values.

6. Corruption in Education

Corruption in Indian education system has been eroding the quality of education. It is one of the major contributors to domestic black money. Payment to Management at dark rooms and seeking admissions is increasing. 'Get full salary in the account, pay back part to Management by blank signed cheques' is also a practice in some private schools.

7. Curriculum issues

There are many different curriculum systems that confuse the students who wish to achieve the same objective such as Engineering, Medical and Business Administration. At the higher education level, there is no uniformity in the syllabuses taught for the same programmer. Syllabus revision is done quite often without considering the contemporary requirements of industries. There is lack of diversity in the subjects one can take in colleges. Flexibility to cross over streams is also lacking.

8. Wrong societal outlook

For Governments, more scoring is success. English is becoming the measure of intellect. Hence, parents of today take least interest in vernacular medium of education. Due to the perceived notion of inferior quality, Govt schools are becoming the last choice for many. Education-seeking migration has become a matter of pride for many families. Most of the school students spend

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majority of their learning time in preparing for competitive exams. Coaching classes too flourish due to this unwarranted competition, leading to a class-divide.

9. Our heterogeneous education system

Based on geographical, rural-urban, rich-poorest up has posed in great challenge for the educational institutions. Varieties of colleges, universities, technical institutions have produced and different types and quality of Education. Some of the mare really imparting qualitative education while a few others are doing the dirtiest job. Thanks to UGC, for publishing the list of such a fake Universities and Institutions indulging in educational malpractices.

10. Privatization

Privatization is also a big problem that higher education faces. Privatization of higher education is the way to go. However just privatization is not going to solve the problem. You need to foster the culture of creativity, imagination and learning new skills in young students.

11. No Project Based Learning & Strategy

Higher education lack project based learning. Young graduates need to learn new skills especially vocational skills that can give them job.So we are not focusing on project based learning at all. Just theory is not enough, we also need practical knowledge is also. There is no strategy for higher education in India. We don't have foreign students coming to the country and studying here. Government has no plan for this and this is a big challenge.

Suggestion

1. Give Importance to Technology in Education

India has to embrace computer and high speed internet technology. Our educational delivery mechanisms should take the wealth of human capital to the masses. The models of brick and mortar schools, colleges and universities will have to be integrated and interlinked with ICT. The Governments should invest more in technological infrastructure that will ease the knowledge accessibility.

2. Encourage Innovation and Creativity

The system should reward those who deserves highest academic honor. The crammers should not be rewarded. Our testing and marking systems need to be built to recognize original contributions, creativity, problem solving and innovation. Ranks should be awarded accordingly.

3. Personalize the Education

Indian education system is built on the assumption that if a thing is good for one child, it is good for all. But, one massive education system cannot be suitable to all. Some people are visual learners, others are auditory learners. Some kids learn faster, some do slow. The syllabus should be designed in such a way that every learner's latent ability is identified and motivated. Hasty and fast learning should be discouraged.

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4. Train the Trainers Continuously

A teacher is an entrepreneur and creator. The performance of a teacher should not be restricted to classroom. It needs to be opened up for the world to see with internet. There has to be leaders in teaching positions, not salaried people holding their mantle. Hence, regular training is a necessity.

5. Change the Aptitude to Teach

Teaching jobs are widely regarded as safe, well-paid and risk-free jobs. Most of the teachers do not want to change. As they become experienced, they get septic, and not even think of the nature and need of the students. Understanding the present generation is the necessity. Guidelines should be made in this direction.

6. Provide Quality Education with Character

Education without character is abortion and will create divisions in the society. A country that lowers the quality of education and allows score competition in exams will collapse. The mystified doctors, less skilled engineers, cowardly judges, money minded accountants, greedy businessmen, inhuman preachers and ignorant teachers cannot serve for the economy's growth. They will soon and surely doom the society with their unethical practices which no one can resist.

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