

Higher education in India: Emerging issues, challenges and suggestions

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ABSTRACT

Education is a powerful tool for achieving the development of a country. Education causes economic, culture and social change in nation. The function of education is to bring change in the society which are necessary for today's changing world, also brings changes behavior of an individual, group etc. Education provides an opportunity to critically reflect on the social, cultural, spiritual, moral and economic issues which are facing by human beings. Entire globe has clearly understood that economic success of the country or state is directly decided by their education system. Education is a country's strength. Education is having great influence to affect social mobility in the society.

1. Status of Higher Education in India

Introduction:

India is a vast country and has many cast creeds, normally in India a person is identified on the basis of caste, due to cast creed mind among different people with different culture. **According to 2011 Census of India** population is **1210.19** million comprising **586.47** million(48.50%) females and 623.72 million(51.50%)males. Total enrollment in higher education has been estimated to be 28.56 million with 15.87 million boys and 12.69 million girls. Girls constitute 44.40% of the total enrolment. Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in Higher education in India is 20.4, which is calculated for 18- 23 years of age group. GER for male population is 21.6 and for females it is 18.9.

India has around 540 universities and 27000 colleges enrolling, 13000 million students. It is ranked third globally, after U.S.A and china, in terms of absolute number of students enrolled in higher education institutions. Despite the presence of a large number of institutions, higher education penetration is only 12%. The union government aims to increase this 15% by the end of 2012. This is estimated to translate into 22 million students to be enrolled in the system. Educational infrastructure is clustered and does not have an equitable distribution across status. The five year plan targets to increase spending on expansion of education from its present level of 3.5% to a higher side. The Planning commission has set aside around 20% of the total plan resource for education. The UGC has planned to permit the state government to start university in each district depending upon its need and the availability of infrastructure and other facilities including financial resources. UGC is also allowing the private organization to start private university. Accordingly the state governments and private organizations have taken interests to start the degree colleges in rural areas.

Definitions of Education

Durkheim describes Education as "The socialization of the younger generation". He further states that it is "continuous effort to impose on the child ways of seeing,

feeling and acting which he could not have arrived at spontaneously".

According to the report of the National Committee on Women's education, it cannot be denied that the general picture of the education women was the most unsatisfactory and women received practically no formal instruction whatever, except for the little domestic instruction that was available to the daughter of the upper class families.

According to Swami Vivekananda, the basic purpose of education is the total development of human personality. Everyone is endowed with certain capacities, which remain dormant, although in a potential form, in childhood. Swami Vivekananda believed education is the process by which these inherent potentialities in human personality manifest themselves in completing his or her total development.

2. Determinants of Aims of Education

1. Understand the society.
2. Reflecting dominant social values.
3. To gain knowledge.
4. Have knowledge of Physical, Socio-economic problems.
5. Exploration of knowledge.
6. To know the ways how to live life in a righteous way.
7. To develop consciousness about his rights and duties towards society and fellow men.

3. National Policy on Education in India

To bring radical change in education.

1. To improve quality of education at all levels.
2. To give more importance to science and technology.
3. To strengthen ethical values.
4. To develop feelings of common culture and citizenship.
5. To strengthen unity in society.

4. Right to Education

Article 21A of the Constitution says that the state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of

the age of six and fourteen in such manners the state may, by law, determine.

The Constitution (86th Amendment) Act, 2002 seeks to make free and compulsory education a fundamental right for all children in the age group of 6 – 14 years. There is a considerable gap between male and female literacy rates in India. It has been estimated that at the current rate of progress, India will attain universal literacy only until 2060. As per the **census of 2011**, an effective literacy rate for men was 82.14% whereas for women it was 65.46%. As per census 2011 the female literacy rate in Karnataka 68.08%, among them SC constitutes 65.33%, with the total decade growth in Karnataka 6.18% (2001 – 2011) and total SC female literacy decadal growth rate is 12.46%. The following table shows the literacy rate of persons, males and females as per census 2011 ;

| Census Year | Persons | Males | Females |
|-------------|---------|-------|---------|
| 1951 | 18.3 | 27.2 | 8.9 |
| 1961 | 28.3 | 40.4 | 15.4 |
| 1971 | 34.5 | 46.0 | 22.0 |
| 1981 | 43.6 | 56.4 | 29.8 |
| 1991 | 52.2 | 64.1 | 39.3 |
| 2001 | 64.8 | 75.3 | 53.7 |
| 2011 | 73.0 | 80.9 | 64.6 |

5. Education and Modernization

Education, modernization, advancement in science, technology and industry normally go together. Formal professional education has become an absolute necessity today. Education is needed just read, write and do simple calculations but, it is essential to earn one’s living. It is the main source of supply of trained and technical persons to industry. The job that one gets today depends largely on the type of education that one has secured. Modern education includes “Heavy study Materials”, “Values Losing their Importance”, “The Dangerous face of Science and Technology”. This has prevented the modern learners from knowing their own past traditions and cultural heritage.

6. Challenges of Higher Education System in India:

- Enrolment
- Quality
- Equity
- Infrastructure
- Faculty
- Research and Innovation

7. Suggestions Improving the System of Higher Education

- There is a need to implement innovative and transformational approach type primary to higher education level to make Indian educational system globally more relevant and competitive.
- Higher educational institutes need to improve quality and reputation.
- There should be a good infrastructure of colleges and universities which may attract the students.
- Government must promote collaboration between Indian higher education institutes and top

International institutes and also generates linkage between national research laboratories and research centers of top institutions for better quality and collaborative research.

- There is a need to focus on the graduate students by providing them such courses in which they can achieve excellence, gain deeper knowledge of subject so that they will get jobs after recruitment in the companies which would reduce unnecessary rush to the higher education.
- Universities and colleges in both public private must be away from the political affiliations,
- Favoritism, money making process should be out of education system etc.
- There should be a multidisciplinary approach in higher education so that students knowledge may not be restricted only up to his own subjects

8. Initiatives taken by the government in the area of human resource development

- The Central Government has also launched a scheme called Unnat Bharat Abhiyan for the promotion of technologies from the laboratory to the ground. Under the scheme, higher educational institutes would connect with villages in their neighborhood and address the various problems faced by them.
- RashtriyaAvishkarAbhiyan has launched to revive interest in the technology among youth through support for innovative learning based on observations and experimentation.

9. Suggestions for Improving the System of Higher Education

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- There is a need to implement innovative and transformational approach form primary to higher education level to make Indian educational system globally more relevant and competitive.
- In higher educational institutes Industrial co-operation must be there for the development of curriculum, organizing expert lectures, internships, live projects, career counseling and placements.
- Higher educational institutes need to improve quality, reputation and establish credibility through student exchange, faculty exchange programs, and other collaborations with high- quality national and international higher educational institutes.
- Government must promote collaboration between Indian higher education institutes and top International institutes and also generates linkage between national research laboratories and research centers of top institutions for better quality and collaborative research.

- **Student-Centred Education and Dynamic Methods-** Methods of higher education also have to be appropriate to the needs of learning to learn, learning to do, learning to be and learning to become. Student-centred education and employment of dynamic methods of education will require from teachers new attitudes and new skills. Methods of teaching through lectures will have to subordinate to the methods that will lay stress on self-study, personal consultation between teachers and pupils, and dynamic sessions of seminars and workshops. Methods of distance education will have to be employed on a vast scale.
- **Examination Reforms-** Examination reforms, gradually shifting from the terminal, annual and semester examinations to regular and continuous assessment of student's performance in learning must be implemented.
- **International Cooperation-** Universities in India have been a primary conduit for the advancement and transmission of knowledge through traditional functions such as research, innovation, teaching, human resource development, and continuing education. International cooperation is gaining importance as yet another function. With the increased development of transport and communication, the global village is witnessing a growing emphasis on international cooperation and action to find satisfactory solutions to problems that have global dimensions and higher education is one of them.
- **To increase Quantity of Universities-** We need more universities because we are more in number and present number of universities is too less. On 13th June, 2005 Government of India constituted a high level advisory body known as National Knowledge Commission (NKC) to advise the PM about the state of education in India and measures needed to reform this sector. It was headed by Sam Pitroda and submitted its report in November 2007. NKC has recommended setting up of 1500 universities by 2015 so that gross enrolment ratio increases to 15 percent. It has also called for establishing an Independent Regulatory Authority for Higher Education (IRAHE) to monitor the quality of overall higher education in India.
- **Cross Culture Programmes-** After education, tour to every the places in India and world as far as possible with the cooperation of government is necessary so that one can understand about people, culture, arts, literature, religions, technological developments and progress of human society in the world.
- **Action Plan for Improving Quality-** Academic and administrative audit must be conducted once in three years in colleges by external experts for ensuring quality in all aspects of academic activities. The self-

finance colleges must come forward for accreditation and fulfill the requirements of accreditation. Universities and colleges should realise the need for quality education and come forward with action plan for improving quality in higher educational institutions.

- **Personality Development-** Finally, education must be for the flowering of personality but not for the suppression of creativity or natural skill. In the globalized world opportunity for the educated people are naturally ample in scope. As a result business process outsourcing (BPO) activities have increased competition in the world trade leading towards the production of quality goods and their easy availability everywhere in the world market. That is the way the world can be developed for peace, prosperity and progress by able and skilful men.
- **High-tech Libraries-** Our university libraries have a very good collection of books, but they are all in mess. A library must be online and conducive for serious study. Indian universities should concentrate more on providing quality education which is comparable to that of international standards.

10. Conclusion

Education is a process by which a person's body, mind and character are formed and strengthened. Higher education in India has expanded very rapidly in the last six decades after independence yet it is not equally accessible to all. India is today one of the fastest developing countries of the world with the annual growth rate going above 9%. Still a large section of the population remains illiterate and a large number of children's do not get even primary education. This is not only excluded a large section of the population from contributing to the development of the country fully but it has also prevented them from utilizing the benefits of whatever development have taken place for the benefit of the people. No doubt India is facing various challenges in higher education but to tackle these challenges and to boost higher education is utmost important. India is a country of huge human resource potential, to utilise this potential properly is the issue which needed to discuss. Opportunities are available but how to get benefits from these opportunities and how to make them accessible to others is the matter of concern. In order to sustain that rate of growth, there is need to increase the number of institutes and also the quality of higher education in India. To reach and achieve the future requirements there is an urgent need to relook at the Financial Resources, Access and Equity, Quality Standards, Relevance, infrastructure and at the end the Responsiveness.

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