

MANAGING CHALLENGES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION



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Problems and Reforms in Indian Higher Education

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Abstract – This paper represents various aspects of higher education and emerging trend challenges and issues in India. It does not seek to make a case for increased foreign participation, but presumes it to be a medium-term outcome of the process of India's integration into the global economy. This paper basically based on secondary data. This paper shows some major issues and challenges related to higher education in India, and reforms done by Indian government to improve the higher education so that India can become competitive in world.

Keywords: Higher Education, Emerging Trends, Global Economy, Competitive

INTRODUCTION

India's higher education system is the third largest in the world, next to the United States and China. The main governing body at the tertiary level is the University Grants Commission, which enforces its standards, advises the government, and helps coordinate between the centre and the state. Accreditation for higher learning is overseen by 12 autonomous institutions established by the University Grants Commission.

Indian higher education system has expanded at a fast pace by adding nearly 20,000 colleges and more than 8 million students in a decade from 2000-01 to 2010-11. As of 2011, India has 42 central universities, 275 state universities, 130 deemed universities, 90 private universities, 5 institutions established and functioning under the State Act, and 93 Institutes of National Importance which includes AIIM, IIT's, NIT's among others. Other institutions include 33,000 colleges as Government Degree Colleges and Private

Degree Colleges, including 1800 exclusive women's colleges, functioning under these universities and institutions as reported by the UGC in 2012. The emphasis in the tertiary level of education lies on science and technology. Indian educational institutions by 2004 consisted of a large number of technology institutes. Distance learning and open education is also a feature of the Indian higher education system, and is looked after by the Distance Education Council. Indira Gandhi National Open University is the largest university in the world by number of students, having approximately 3.5 million students across the globe.

Some institutions of India, such as the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), National Institute of Technology (NITs), Indian Institutes of Information Technology (IIITs), Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), International Institute of Information Technology (IIIT), University of Mumbai and Jawaharlal Nehru University have been globally acclaimed for their standard of

education. The IITs enroll about 8000 students annually and the alumni have contributed to both the growth of the private sector and the public sectors of India. However, India still lacks internationally behind prestigious universities such as Harvard, Cambridge, and Oxford.

Indian higher education is in need of radical reforms. A focus on enforcing higher standards of transparency, strengthening of the vocational and doctoral education pipeline, and professionalization of the sector through stronger institutional responsibility would help in reprioritizing efforts and working around the complexities. The rise of IT sector and engineering education in India has boxed students into linear path without giving them a chance to explore and discover their passions. Concerted and collaborative efforts are needed in broaden student choices through liberal arts education.

Education India has come a long way since conventional times and in today's scenario is has become a tough competition for all the students to make an entry in their desired field.

One of the major conflicting trends that can be noticed is the cost of education. As the expense of formal education in the educational institutes is increasing very fast, the expense of education via the internet is comparatively low and affordable. Students can have an easy and cheap access to Internet with the help of cyber cafes and the various other cheap internet home connection schemes available these days. Students here also get the scope to download many e-books, free of cost.

• **Some Major Issues related to higher education in India:**

1. Education is a seller's market – lack of competition – no incentive to provide quality education.
2. Increasing number of students going abroad for higher education which is

a drain on foreign exchange resources and also on the students and/or their parents' finances.

3. Percentage of directly employable graduate are very less.
4. Quality of education delivered in most institutions is very poor. While India has some institutions of global repute delivering quality education, such as (Indian Institute of Management) IIMs and (Indian Institute of Technology) IITs, we do not have enough of them.
5. Very narrow range of course options are offered.
6. Lack of attractiveness in teaching as a profession – there is clearly a lack of educated educators – Teaching is not an attractive profession – it's a last choice in terms of career.
7. Most of the education institutions esp. in states such as Maharashtra and states in South India are owned by politicians – Education system which is highly regulated by the government has been set up to benefit politicians

• **Some Major problems with the Indian Higher Education System:**

1. Imbalance of supply and demand

India's GER is lingering around 19 percent at the moment, 6 % below the world average and at least 50 % lesser than countries such as Australia and the United States of America. GER stands for gross enrollment rate, or the percentage of students enrolling into higher education institutes each year post high school. The government apparently has a vision to increase this to 30 percent by the year 2020.

To give that information some context, India has the largest population of teens with close to 100 million in number between 17 to 19.

But each year only 19 % students enroll into higher education institutes which translates to 20 million according to a joint survey by aspiring minds and Nasscom in 2013. 80 % million in number who do not have the opportunity to study even if they wanted to. And to think only 3.5 million graduates join the workforce each year among the 20 million.

2. Fast development of low quality, money making Institutes.

It's no secret that the education industry has long lost its noble cause and is more of a business. Politicians, businessmen, basically anybody who wants to mint some serious cash, start to open colleges.

3. Shortage of relevant opportunities and project based learning

In most of the Indian education institutes even top institutes, students are force fed a few kilos of textbooks, spend a relatively short time on hands-on project based learning and are absorbed into fields irrelevant to their subjects. This is also one of the reasons that not a single Indian University ranks in the world top 200.

• Reforms to improve Higher Education in India:

A. The Reform measures suggested (World Bank, 1994) for developing countries

- (i) Encouraging greater differentiation of institutions of higher education, including development of private institutions;
- (ii) Cost-recovery mechanisms including cost-sharing with students;
- (iii) Redefining the role of the government by evolving a policy framework to make the sector more market friendly and public institutions more autonomous; and

Prioritizing investments towards quality improvement

B. Reforms taken by the Indian government to improve higher education system in India.

Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA), the overall quality of existing State higher educational institutions is sought to be improved by ensuring their conformity to prescribed norms and standards and adoption of accreditation as a mandatory quality assurance framework.

Certain academic, administrative and governance reforms are a precondition for receiving funding under RUSA. Under RUSA, participating States are permitted to mobilize 50% of the State contribution of funding through Public-Private Partnerships, Corporate Social Responsibility funds, philanthropic contributions etc.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has taken various measures for educational reforms, such as the introduction of the semester system, the regular updating of curricula and Choice Based Credit Systems (CBCS), etc.

The UGC has issued the UGC Minimum Qualifications for Appointment of Teachers and other Academic Staff in Universities and Colleges and Measures for the Maintenance of Standards in Higher Education, Regulation, 2010 for improving the standard of teaching in Indian universities. It has also issued the Mandatory Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Educational Institutions, Regulations, 2012 whereby all eligible higher Educational institutions are required to get themselves accredited.

The All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) has informed that in order to promote quality of technical education, it has introduced various schemes such as Faculty Development Programme, Visiting Professorship, National Faculty in

Engineering and Technology with Industrial Collaboration (NAFETIC), Quality Improvement Programme etc. It has also issued the Mandatory Accreditation of all Programs/Courses in Technical Education Institutions, University Departments and Institutions Deemed to be Universities imparting Technical Education Regulations, 2014 which makes it mandatory for each technical education institutions, university departments and institutions Deemed to be Universities imparting technical education to get all its programs/courses accredited.

The Government had constituted a Review Committee headed by Dr. Hari Gautam, former Chairman UGC to review the working of the University Grants Commission (UGC). The Committee had submitted its report. The process of reforms has already been initiated in the UGC. Significant funding reforms and regulatory reforms have been undertaken with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of regulatory mechanisms of the UGC.

The Central Government has launched several initiatives viz. National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF), Impacting Research, Innovation & Technology (IMPRINT), Uchhtar Avishkar Yojna (UAY), Global Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN) in the field of education for the qualitative development of education in the country. Under the NIRF, Educational Institutions will be ranked by an independent ranking Agency for which objective criteria has been developed. They shall be ranked separately in fields such as Engineering, Management, Pharma, Architecture etc. Under the IMPRINT initiative, the Government has taken the initiative to address major engineering challenges through the collaborative efforts of the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and Indian Institute of Science (IISc). Under this, a roadmap is finalised to pursue engineering challenges in ten technology domains that have large social impact. The objectives of UAY scheme are to promote innovation in IITs addressing issues of manufacturing

industries; to spur innovative mindset; to co-ordinate action between academia & industry and to strengthen labs & research facilities. GIAN scheme is for facilitating partnership between Higher Educational Institutions of the country and other countries. The scheme is aimed at tapping international talent pool of scientists and entrepreneurs.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) undertakes maintenance of standards in teaching and research and quality assurance in Universities, Deemed to be Universities and Colleges through the following mechanisms, namely: framing regulations and schemes and disbursing grants to the eligible institutions. The UGC has notified several regulations with the objective of sustenance and improvement in the quality of higher education and for undertaking academic reforms.

In order to encourage research and development in the country, UGC has laid out schemes, LOK SABHA awards, fellowships, chairs and programmes under which financial assistance is provided to institutions of higher education as well as faculty members working therein to undertake quality research covering areas of knowledge across disciplines including revival & promotion of indigenous languages.

Further, UGC has notified Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) for enhancing student mobility and providing a wider choice in subjects and for facilitation of quality education through innovation and improvements in curriculum, teaching-learning process, examination and evaluation systems; notifying a credit framework for skill development for aligning skill education with formal education and launching several skill development schemes; enhancing the coverage of scholarships/fellowships; incentivizing quality; undertaking equity promotion on a wider scale; strengthening university-industry linkage; process reforms; student centric initiatives etc.

CONCLUSION

As one of the strategies for building up of reputation, Internationalization will get more importance. It may consist of international collaborations for the faculty members and also the students, joint research tasks or offshore campuses. Since many European universities are anticipated to show their interest in India, so the collaborations will not only be restricted to American institutes and Universities only.

Quality of the education system in India has been lagging for quite some times now in comparison to the quantity. In the coming time few changes are expected regarding the matters of transparency and norms. The educational institutes in India would need to fulfill certain basic norms. The institutions are expected to participate more into information sharing and of course accountability. The upcoming educational institutes are expected to be trend setters in adopting several standards related to the quality of education.

With the increase in the number of institutions, there will be growing need for reorganization and the process of controlling. Different technology based solutions such as the campus managing software packages is expected to gain prominence. Program management tools will also gain prominence among the faculty members who look forward to efficiently organize the class.

Indian education industry lacks both in quality and quantity when it comes to administrative staffs and faculty members. This might pose serious threats regarding the availability of good faculty members. The expansion of the educational institutes as announced by the Government of India would demand for more faculty members. If the shortage of talented and efficient faculty members persists, then quality of education will suffer immensely.

Although the ways of education is witnessing a change, the old conventional setting of the

education system has definitely not changed. The same classroom concept is still being used by majority of the schools and other educational institutes in India. Rigid curriculums and huge syllabus still characterize the educational scenario in India. However, with the entrance of the online education system in the picture, things are expected to change for the better. Some of the greatest challenges are being posed by the online educational system towards the traditional way of learning.

Education is the groundwork based on which any country can progress and develop. Without educated personnel, sustenance of a vibrant economy is not possible. Some of the recent trends in education are quite apparent while others are still to make its presence felt. Some are yet to emerge and therefore subject to evolution and change. One way you can master the change is by spotting the trends and keeping yourself flexible enough to get ready for the changes.

Indian government has taken so many steps to improve higher education in India in last few years. Indian government continuously financing to improve higher education. So many grants are providing by UGC to improve research and best utilizations of teachers and latest modern facilities for the development of the students of universities and colleges.

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