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December 2014 Vol - 2 Issue- 12



HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The Indian higher education system is the largest in the world, ahead of those of USA and China. However, the higher education enrolment is far from satisfactory. As against China's 26.7 and USA's 83, India's 14.6 put India in an unhappy position in terms of Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER). India's current GER is only 13.8 per cent whereas the target for 2020 is 30 per cent. The global average is 23 per cent. India is far behind the US (83 per cent), Russia and Australia (77 per cent), UK 57 per cent and Brazil (34 per cent). The Indian higher education system is the largest in the world, ahead of those of USA and China. However, the higher education enrolment is far from satisfactory. As against China's 26.7 and USA's 83, India's 14.6 put India in an unhappy position in terms of Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER). India's current GER is only 13.8 per cent whereas the target for 2020 is 30 per cent. The global average is 23 per cent. India is far behind the US (83 per cent), Russia and Australia (77 per cent), UK 57 per cent and Brazil (34 per cent).

KEYWORDS: Higher Education, Students, Institution, environment, Nalanda, Takshashila, Ujjain and Vikramashil.

INTRODUCTION

Higher education is one of the major factors which takes a country into Globalization especially for countries like India with very little of other resources to offer in the international market. Higher education provides high level human resources, which can interpret world issues and can provide a catalyst for other internal processes to fit into globalization. Education is an instrument for social transformation and economic and human resource development. Realizing these facts, countries all over the world give utmost importance to provide education to their people to achieve economic growth. All over the world, there is a realization that only through right education a better order of society can be built up. Real education in fact, must be based on the actual environment and experiences of the students. Students may be quite smart, clever, and efficient, if suitable education is given. Several suggestions are made for improving the quality of higher education. Improving the quality of education is perhaps the improvement of the quality of teaching. An institution may have beautiful buildings and the best infrastructure, but if the quality of teaching in that institution is poor, the quality of education cannot be high. The quality of education is bound to be high, when the teachers are motivated to give their best to the students. So, teachers also play a very important role to improve the quality of education.

INDIAN EDUCATION STRUCTURE

The education system in India is considered to be one of the largest and most ancient ones in the world. The history of the education system in India dates back to the first centuries, when the young children were taught in the Gurukuls and the Guru Shishya system was the most common means of education. After that the famous universities like Nalanda,

Takshashila, Ujjain and Vikramashil came into existence and enhanced the scope for the students. The Mughal periods saw the inception of Marasahs in the education system in India. In the modern times, there are numerous schools, colleges, universities and other institutions in India that are continuously providing education to the students.

The education system in India is divided into different stages or levels. The stages are classified as the pre-primary level, primary level, elementary education, secondary education, undergraduate level and the postgraduate level. The primary or the elementary education is the foundation of the education system in India, as the children are given eight years of schooling during this period. After completing the elementary education, the students get into the secondary level. The undergraduate and post graduate levels constitute the higher education. In this stage, a student chooses his/her most favorite subject in which he/she is intending to pursue career. The students also put in lots of efforts to be successful in this stage. They are taught the skills and knowledge needed for them to be successful while working in different professional environments, at this stage. The students also get into different professional courses at this level and the courses help them to be in a better position.

HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

The higher education system in India has its origin in the Woods Dispatch of 1854. It gained traction after the revolt of 1857 when universities were established at Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras. At present out of the 107.91 crores of our population there are 12.21 crores of young men and women in the age group of 18-24 years. Out of them 9.97 crores are enrolled in some educational institutions

or the other. This indicates 2.24 crores of young people are from higher education (B.Ramesh Babu, 2009: 135 -142).

Indian comprises about 9.5 lakh schools but still short of about lakh schools. In 1947-48, India had only 20 universities and 496 colleges which have increased to 369 universities and 18,064 colleges with enrollment from 0.2 to 10.5 million. (UGC, Annual Report 2005-06). As per the Education Commission (also known as Kothari Commission), the expenditure on education is allocated for the target of 6% of the GDP than compared to the backlog in adequate targets.

Similarly Eleventh Five Year Plan is proposed to allocate to 19.36% of GBS as against 7.68% in Tenth Plan, the situation at various levels of education primary, secondary and higher continues to be grim. A sum of rupees 34000 crore was allocated for education in plan for the year 2008-09. This is almost 6000 crore rupee most than last year (2007-08). Even this allocation falls under the critical minimum of 6% of GDP needed to enable the education sector to meet out declared goals.

According to McKinsey report, in 2005 declared only 25% of Indian engineers 15% of finance and accounting professionals and 10% professionals with degree, have the requisite competence to work for multinational companies. Around 4 billion dollars are annually spent on higher education for the students going abroad, keeping in view the constraints like demand for higher education, lack of infrastructure development, languages accessibility, supply of finance, lack of technology, lack of networking regulatory mechanism, capacity building, and international research and knowledge capacity at regional as well as at national levels.

All these demand and supply constraints in the social sector like education,

manifesting itself in array of problems such as poverty, unemployment and inequality (wealth and income) are taken into consideration. This stops the growth of social, economic, political, cultural developing in post industrial society. Taking this into account, the foreign government and private individuals identify the supply of higher education and by taking advantages of WTO's (general agreement of trade in services), perceive it as commercialized product in the labour market. In this context Reliance groups, Vedanta group etc. are going to set up World Class universities in India.

Indian today has 369 universities including 20 Central universities and 13 institutions of national importance like NIT, IIT, IIM, IIIT (Indian Institute Information Technology). Thus, to catch up with Western and Asian countries and to become part of the global education, India should also become a part of the scramble for the growth of global, social, and economic equality. Hence, in order to become on par with developed nations, Indian had also made development formula commensurations with global governability (public private partnership).

For example, in India private sector holds 92% of the professional colleges for the last five years recorded with 75% of growth (Amith Gupta 2008: 499). In connection with the above discussion of the current educational situation, the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) recommended 1500 universities nationwide and 50 national universities to enable India to attain a gross enrollment ratio of at least 15% by 2015. Hoping these institutions can enhance the knowledge network in the Indian civil society in the name of ideas, innovation, expertise, networks.

MAJOR PROBLEMS

The Indian higher education system is the largest in the world, ahead of those of USA and China. However, the higher education enrolment is far from satisfactory. As against China's 26.7 and USA's 83, India's 14.6 put India in an unhappy position in terms of Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER). India's current GER is only 13.8 per cent whereas the target for 2020 is 30 per cent. The global average is 23 per cent. India is far behind the US (83 per cent), Russia and Australia (77 per cent), UK 57 per cent and Brazil (34 per cent).

The UGC said that there should be one university for each district. Most states followed this norm without any homework. Some of the new universities do not have their own sites; some have sites but no buildings. Some are accommodated in affiliated colleges. At present, in most universities the seats are not filled. Some courses are being wound up.

The universities are not doing their job. They do not undertake even minimum supervision over the colleges affiliated to them. They are confined to framing syllabus, conduct of examination, awarding degree and renewal of affiliation. The teacher refuses to update their knowledge. The UGC has set up Academic Staff Colleges (ASCs) in select universities. The lecturers are expected to complete three refresher courses, each of three weeks duration. But the lecturers attend the classes in a perfunctory manner, defeating the very purpose of establishing ASCs.

The Kothari Commission on education (1964-66) has recommended stepping up public spending on education to six per cent of the gross domestic products (GDP). The total spending by the Government on education (centre and states combined) accounts for only 3.7 per cent of GDP (2009-10). The centre's total allocation for education in 2012-13 (budget

estimate) stands at 0.73 per cent of GDP, slightly better than the 0.69 per cent in 2011-12 (revised estimate). As a proportion of its total budget outlay also, there is an increase in outlay for education from 4.65 per cent in 2011-12 (RE) to 4.97 per cent 2012-13 (BE).

Today, corruption is ubiquitous. However, earlier, one did not hear of corruption in universities. With the politicization of university administration, there is conspicuous corruption in the field of higher education, undermining the foundation of society. Political interference has taken many insidious forms. For getting the post of Vice-Chancellor too there is a huge price, from Rs.5 crore to Rs.50 crore in some states (M.Anandkrishnan: 'Corruption undermining Higher Education in India', The New Sunday Express, September 15, 2013). The newly appointed Vice-Chancellor is busy in recovering the amount he invested! No wonder, the readymade ph.D theses are for sale. In 2011-12 as many as 16,093 ph.Ds were awarded.

Accountability is missing at every state in the administration of universities. Students are allowed to appear for examination even when they do not attend classes regularly. There are teachers who let off classes very frequently. Research scholars pursue research in perfunctory manner. The research guides are otherwise busy. Very few complete their research during the stipulated period. Some research scholars are busy in preparing for various competitive examinations. In the administration of universities, top academics are not involved. The decision-making body is deliberately debilitated. The universities take all possible measure not to encourage but to curb dissent. It has been rightly said, "The one major reason for the poor performance of our universities is the fact that in their decision-making processes, it is the academic and administrative pygmies who have, more or less,

supplanted those who are head and shoulders above them.” (D.P.Verma, ‘Smothering Dissent: A Facet of Indian University System’, *Mainstream*, November 19, 1983 p.26)

REFORMS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The Yashpal Committee and also the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) have dealt with various issues affecting the higher education system in the country and both have suggested definite framework for improvement by way of institutional as well as policy reforms. One of the main suggestions is establishment of an overarching regulatory body, namely National Commission on Higher Education and Research, which would subsume the function of existing regulatory institutions like University Grants Commission (UGC), All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and National Council for Teacher’s Training. In addition, other reforms suggested are wide ranging from accreditation of the higher education institutions to curbing malpractices to entry of foreign education providers. Based on the recommendations and suggestion of the YCR and NKC, the central government has initiated the process for

- ◆ Establishment of educational tribunals;
- ◆ To provide for prohibition of certain unfair practices in technical and medical educational institutions and universities,
- ◆ To provide for mandatory accreditation of higher educational institutions and to create a regulatory authority for the purpose and
- ◆ To provide for regulation of entry and operation of foreign educational institutions. In addition, a Task Force constituted by the Ministry of Human Resource Development has developed a framework for the establishment of

National Commission for Higher Education and Research. This framework is in public domain for wider consultation and discussion before a final version takes shape

SUGGESTIONS

If education has to raise the quality of human resources, the following changes will have to be made in the existing educational system. First of all, restrictions should be introduced on higher education. The essential conditions for University education should be laid down and only those who satisfy them should be admitted to postgraduate courses. Most of the research work done in Indian Universities is unproductive and the expenditure involved is a colossal waste. For making research both meaningful and productive, emphasis should be on quality and not on quantity. Secondly, education should be made job-oriented. In other words, emphasis should be on vocational education rather than on general education. Thirdly, education in science is costly and its expansion should be carefully planned. There is no point in producing science graduates if they can get only clerical jobs. For these jobs commerce and arts graduates will not be less competent while the expenditure on their education will be much smaller.

- ★ Educational interaction should be increased with developed countries for knowledge-based education.
- ★ Government should make a proper comprehensive policy for privatizing higher education which will be able to compete with foreign institutions/universities.
- ★ Rationalize the fee structure of universities/colleges and stop profit-based nature of higher education through Act.

- ★ “Plough Back” earning into higher education.
- ★ In L.P.G age of Higher Education the government should review entire educational pattern/ policy for universalization of quality and knowledge-based higher education encouraging private funding from NRIs, industrial concerns, international institutions and philanthropists.
- ★ Expansion of Distance Education.
- ★ Virtual Universities should be established.

CONCLUSION

Distance education based on 3-A concept (anyone, anytime and anywhere) will help increase the number of access to higher education. Introduction of new skill related courses is a need of hour. There is a strong need for the entry of new providers in the sphere of education, and they must come up with innovations, reforms and quality initiatives. Plans and promises of Government, NKC and MHRD should be materialized.

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