



## Indian Higher Education: Challenges & Issues

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### *Abstract*

*Globalization has redefined the constituents and drivers of economic progress over last two decades. The traditional contributors of economic development and economic power such as material resources and production capabilities have been replaced by knowledge and information. Globalization has resulted in significant changes in the knowledge economy and ushered new conditions for the provision of higher education to cater the skill requirement all across the globe. Higher educational services have emerged over the last few years as a major economic sector for trade worth several billion dollars. The key elements of globalization include the knowledge society, information and communication technologies, the market economy, trade liberalization and changes in governance structures. These elements of globalization have impacted significantly the education sector in general and higher education in particular. The present study critically analyzes the growth of higher education sector in India and identifies the major concerns. It also evaluates the preparedness of the country for the opening up its border for foreign institutions.*

### **Introduction**

Over the last two decades globalization has impacted operations of various institutions including academic institutions all over the world. Higher education institutions have been both the agent and objects of globalization. International mobility, global comparison, bench marking etc. has gained lot of importance in policy making. The other countries have

responded differently to the changes in global environment. In the English-speaking world, international operations have become the primary mode of development. In Europe, the negotiation of the common higher education area and European Research Area has been the major development leading to the emergence of global higher education environment. Global research circuits have been wired into the rapidly developing higher education systems of China, Singapore and Korea. India has not yet opened up the direct entry of foreign institutions in education sector. In India, higher education was traditionally looked after by the government, but in view of lack of resources to meet the increasing demand, private sector has been allowed to share the responsibility. The country has a well developed educational set up in terms of range of programs and their acceptability in local industry, but it lacks in terms of international quality standards. Higher education institutions managed by private sector emphasize more on commercial aspect than creation of knowledge which leads to deterioration of quality of education. The councils and government bodies responsible for quality assurance do not have internationally matchable quality norms on one hand and an effective system to monitor and control violation of the existing norms by the institutions on the other. Further, the political parties manipulate the issues of access and equity in higher education for their vested political interest rather than taking the right steps to enhance the quality of higher education. As a result those who can afford the high cost of higher education look forward for the opportunities abroad while the others have to compromise with sub-standard education.

#### **Challenges in Indian Higher Education**

Indian higher education system has playing an important role in the Indian economy and society to improvement of those. It has some advantages and merits TO say that not all is well with higher education in India will be something of an understatement. Problems relating to higher education privatisation, commercialisation, political interference, mismanagement, falling standards and irrelevance.

#### **Lack of Quality of Faculty**

Faculty should the ambitious plans of both the public and the private sector for massive development of higher education in India have chance to succeed, one of the key prerequisite is a large and highly capable pool of scholars who can provide academic leadership in teaching and research. Many of these scholars already exists or are moving into the ranks of professoriate at the better Indian and Foreign universities; many more will be needed to satisfy the growing demand and to take the place of the large numbers of the college and university faculty who are not up to the standard of an internationally competitive system of higher education.

#### **Neither Autonomy Nor Accountability**

Our higher education system is over regulated but under governed. The present system Neither autonomy nor does it promote accountability. The autonomy of state universities is largely eroded by interventions from government and intrusions from political interferences. A highly bureaucratized system overlapping regulatory mechanism has led to jeopardizing the very edifice of higher education system. At the same time there is not enough accountability and transparency in the university administration

#### **Poor Technology**

Universities and colleges do not have adequate ICT Facilities. In the outer world there is a move from primitive and print media to modern electronic and multimedia . our colleges are still compromising with chalk and talk. Computer, computer lab, ICT Labs, media are not

properly utilised. It is because there is very little convergence of prospective of higher education among State Governments and Central Government.

#### **Poor Evaluation System**

Most of the universities have annual evaluation and marketing system. Some of the universities have semester and grading system. However there is progressive a shift from marking to grading system. There are imbalance among curricula and modes of transaction and evaluation. There is a need to revise the curricula as per the societal needs. Modes of transaction of curricula need to be perfected and updated as per the techno-pedagogic methods and modes of transaction. The evaluation should be continuous, comprehensive, valid and reliable.

#### **Financial Crisis**

There are different sources of educational finance in India-central and state government, local bodies and private sector including the student who are its potential beneficiaries. As the system of higher education grew in size, it required increased funds even for its maintenance, simultaneously, due to successive reduction in the private contribution, its dependence on reduction in the private contribution, its depends on government for funds also increased. In the developing countries, higher education is considered a speedy vehicle for upward social mobility, especially by the socially and economically deprived sections.

#### **Unwieldy Affiliating System**

Affiliating system is inefficient and ineffective due to size and lack of accountability. It is reasonably accepted that an optimal size of an affiliating university is about more than 150 colleges. The traditional system of university administration has failed to manage the affiliating system

#### **Bureaucracy in education sector**

Highly bureaucratized system with multiple controls and regulations exercised by Central and State Governments, statutory bodies like UGC, AICTE and others, university administration and local management. This problem is arises due to the heavily subsidized by the Government in India, Up to 90per cent of the operating costs are paid for by the state.

#### **Inflexible structure of study programmes**

Most institutions offer outdated programmes with inflexible structures and content of the syllabi. While course content has been updated and restructured over time in the world's best institutions, Indian university curriculum have so old than other instates in the world. Hence there are a strong need of change in the course contents, structure and bring more horizontal and vertically mobility and flexibility in the various programmes.

#### **Problem of infrastructural facilities**

Infrastructural facilities are most important for learning process. But in the Indian rural institutes have a big problem of infrastructural facilities of the education. Most teachers in the rural institutes are teaching by the choke and tocks. When we compare this system at the global scenario we found that we are far away from the technological advancement in the education system. According to the study only 20per cent of the institutions have the basic minimum laboratory equipment, sufficient books, journals, and other facilities. Only few urban institutes have advanced learning and teaching equipments but what about majority? This is the question in front of us.

#### **Problem of supply side education**

Most of educational institutes are providing traditional education to their students. These institutes do not try to change according to the global changes in the overall educational

system of the world. In consideration of GATS education is becomes tradable service. If we were accepted the commercialization of educational service, we must concenter the demand and expectations of the students. Because, those are our consumers and we must to satisfy them as per their demand of educational services.

#### **Negligence of the government**

The state has understanding that, the investment in the educational institutions is unproductive. Therefore government has do not concentrate on public investment in education sector in large amount. But it is totally false, because is it higher productive investment compare to all other sectors. The returns of the educational investment are may be late but it is cute and best for the nation building process and personal development also. Expenditure on only higher education is only 0.67 to 0.70 percent of GDP in India. From year of 2005-06 to 2007-08 only 0.10 percent of expenditure of GDP has been grow on higher education it shows that the negative attitude of the centre and state governments in India.

#### **Uneven teacher pupil ration**

In the education process teacher and student ration must be sufficient for better communication and student teacher attachment. But narrow minded policy of government regarding appointments of teachers in higher education adversely affected on the teacher-students ration in India. According to the information of the HRD ministry of Government of India, teachers – students' ratio is differing in various states in India, it varies from 09 to 54 and average ratio is 26.

#### **commercialization educational services**

WTO has considered that higher education is a marketable commodity like a manufactured product. GATS covers educational services of all types for all countries whose educational systems are not exclusively provided by public sector or those systems that have a commercial purpose. Education is identified as one of the services which are to be negotiated under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). For the purpose of negotiations, the Education Sector has been divided into five sub-sectors. They are as primary education, secondary education, higher education, adult education and other education. The negotiations under GATS take place under the Offer and Request approach. Countries make offers to their trading partners regarding access to their internal market. Similarly Countries make requests on their partners seeking access to their markets. This commercialization is adversely affecting on the need of common mans educational facilities because is has been selling on the basis of trade and commerce.

#### **Outdated examination system**

Examination system in Indian education is outdated in the today's dynamic world. Because this system is relates to most of memorial abilities of the students, it can't focus on his creative and thinking abilities. But, it is very essential that, how the higher education can increase the creative abilities of the students. It is most important for better human development in the nation. But Indian education system fails in this target in some extent.

#### **Problem of quality education**

In an environment of global competitiveness it is important that Indian products of the higher education institutions are as competent as graduates of any other country, Not only in their scholastic attainments, but also in terms of the value system and richness of their personality. One another issue relates to the quality of higher education system. It is important to recognize that an important portion of collages and universities are not assessed

for quality and therefore we don't have full picture of the quality and excellence of university and college sector engaged in higher education. Most of colleges and universities are providing traditional courses and study programmes. Some programmes are needful to maintain moral and social values but not all. Hence, there is urgent need of change their courses and restructure of educational programmes in Indian college and university education.

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#### **More concentration on traditional eduction**

In the Indian higher education scoter most of institutes are relating to the traditional education those are providing general education to the students. According to the data

published by HRD ministry of the government of the India total 11698 institutes are general educational institutes and only 5284 are professional institutes.

### **Suggestion**

**Principles of Transparency** The general principle applies that students and staff of the institution should have appropriate access to inform about the proceeding of a governing body. Agenda, draft minutes, if cleared by the chair, and the signed minutes of governing body meeting, together with the papers considered at meeting should generally be available for inspection staff and students. There may, however, be matters covered in standing orders where it is necessary to observe confidentially. Such matter are likely to concern individuals or have commercial sensitivity. Good practice for all institution might including placing copies of the governing body's minute on the institution's intranet and in its library, reporting on decision in a newsletter, and ensuring that the annual report and account are circulated to academic departments and any students representatives.

### **Infrastructure and Support Service**

The need for additional class rooms, centralized facilities like library, hostel etc., can be taken up by the senior academic like Dean; HODs can involve directly with the vice chancellor/ registrar combine as they would be ultimate user. The quality of the building and facilities would of appropriate standards and the faculty satisfaction is assured. A support service is often the bone of contention in the academic circles, which, if left to their care can be to all around satisfaction.

### **Procedure of Admission**

Depending on the 'Demand-Supply' position, we seem to adopt different norms for admitting the students. With general guidelines, the faculty could decide as to how a student is selected to a particular programme. In fact, when the semester system and choice based credit system are fully implemented, a formal admission to programme procedure may have to change. In fact, there can be only one admission step, Viz., admission to the college or universities based on their capacities to take students with infrastructural facilities. Then the faculty should step in with their counselling to steer the students as to what 'major' and 'minor' related courses to be taken etc., mostly on the basis of the students academic achievements/ performances. There can also be scope for horizontal movement from one type to another subject subsequently based purely on the academic considerations and that should satisfy the students interest and their progression. The academic staff should be able to manage the admission better.

### **The Environment**

It is necessary that the overall environment of an institution of higher education should be receptive, conducive to supportive of the operations of the effective governance. All the stakeholders, partners and authorities should facilitate its operations in all the way possible ways, be they attitudinal, psychological, moral material, legal, financial and even physical. There should be ensured that artificial barriers and hurdles are not created to hamstring governance, to disable it surreptitiously in its functioning and to frustrate its overall objective of improving the quality of education.

### **Improvement in Guidance and Counselling**

The lack of proper guidance and counselling most of our efforts of providing proper education are becoming in vein. Students are not perusing course of their choice but are focusing only on the emerging job opportunity at that very moment

### **Examination Reform**

Reforms in the examination system are most common phenomenon in recent past. Most of the researchers and academicians are not satisfied with present system. It may be true for several years because the pitfalls in the evaluation system make examination system ruin. The evaluation is not reliable. This can be changed by using the new methods of grading system and other various innovative system advised by professional educationalists.

### **Upgradation of Curriculum**

This aspect deals with how the curriculum, depending on the freedom allowed in curricular design, aligns with the mission statement of the institution of higher education. The process of revision and redesign of curricula should be based on recent trends and developments, the feedback from all the stakeholders and catering to the needs of the society. All should be ensured with 360<sup>0</sup> participation so that horizontal-vertical permutation and combination may be enshrined in the whole process.

### **NCHER Bill**

An important measure awaiting political clearance of the Cabinet for introduction in the Parliament is the Bill for the Creation of the National Commission on Higher Education and Research (NCHER) (conforming to the recommendations of the Yashpal Committee Report on Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher Education In India). This Bill addresses certain fundamental concerns in the reports of National Knowledge Commission and Yashpal Committee. These two reports draw critical attention to the fundamental academic weaknesses such as compartmentalization and fragmentation of knowledge systems, absence of innovation in learning methods, disconnect with the society and too much emphasis on multiplicity of harmful entrance and qualifying tests. They reflect concerns on the growing trend in loss of university autonomy damaging the prospect of healthy growth of spirits of enquiry, creativity, and innovation. The NCHER is not a regulating or controlling or licensing or inspecting body. Its primary task is to evolve norms and standards for various aspects of higher education including assessment and accreditation, while abolishing several of the regulating bodies dealing with the academic norms for higher education.

### **Hard Implementation of Malpractices Bill**

The malpractices occur on a large enough scale in the Indian higher education to cause major worry about its cumulative effect on the society. Many of these are wanton disregard of the existing regulations and guidelines, which have large enough loopholes. Unfortunately in quite a few instances those who are supposed to watch their proper implementation abet the irregularities. The existing set of regulations and guidelines are totally devoid of any meaningful penalties to those who flout them. They were designed some decade ago, perhaps with the assumption that those involved in educational endeavours will not resort to willful malpractices, not anticipating the entry of new class of educational entrepreneurs whose greed exceed limits of decency and propriety as seen in several of the deemed-to-be-universities, which came into existence with the connivance of power centres that are equally greedy. The need for the malpractices bill should be viewed in this context. It lists all those (mal) practices that will attract the penalty of hefty fines and jail terms. The Bill requires prior announcement and publication of institutional facilities, faculty, procedures for admissions and examination, fee structure and so on. Any willful deviation will attract the penalty. For instance collection of any kind of fees without giving any official receipt will be treated as a major malpractice. Manipulated entrance tests, collection of unaccounted fees, false information about faculty strength, qualification, infrastructure etc., are some of other malpractices covered in this bill.

## Conclusions

Quality is an important issue in Higher Education. Despite a vast network, the institutions that are in focus on the world or nation ranking are very few. There is an apprehension that Indian HEIs cannot produce 'world class' institution to compete in present day context. While many universities in India provide general as well as professional education, there are some universities which exclusively provide professional education, and some exclusively general. No plan for the future development of the country can be deemed to be complete which does not provide for quality education. This is the age of Machine and it is only those countries in which technical and scientific training has risen to the highest pitch that will survive in the struggle that will commence when the war is over, for maintaining decent standards of living for their people. We are responsible for quality crisis. We stand for all the stakeholders of education market, i.e. the teachers, the students, the management and the society at large. We never raise our voice about crisis expect when we directly affected. The suggestions can provide a strong foundation to overcome the present aberrations and elevate the credibility of Indian higher educational qualifications among the community of nations. Hopefully, if the proposed legal instruments emerge through the legislative process, and perhaps go through the judicial scrutiny, and if implemented in their true letter and spirit, there will be some light at the end of the tunnel. In the meantime those who are concerned about the future of higher education in India should seek to understand the basic rationale behind these measures and help to address them in their own domains of involvement in whatever way possible. Since the nation's economic future and global stature are intricately associated with the credibility of higher education system, one can only hope that there is sufficient wisdom in the society not to let the present state of entropy to persist.

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