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Abstract

Education plays a pivotal role in the development of the society and decides the direction in which it has to develop. It has been the salient driver for the achievement of various societal milestones. Since development and advancement is order of the day, education has caught the limelight and turned to be paramount significance. In the present paper, an attempt is being made to throw some light on the current status of higher education, Gross enrolment ratio, state of employability of the output of higher learning institutions. Providing quality education and producing employable output has been a major challenge faced by institutions of higher education. We survive in a society where education is base to go up in the ladder socially, politically, economically etc, in the society. The paper further highlights the innovativeness being developed, persued and followed in the in the wake of changing dimensions of education globally. Academicians and administrators have to think on serious initiatives to be followed to bring about desired changes. The curriculum and delivery mechanism has to be restructured and updated from time to time to meet the expectations of the society. Though there is a visible growth in terms of increase in number of higher learning institutions i.e. 523 universities, deemed universities and institutions with national importance are functioning in India, but not even a single higher learning institution from India figured in the top 200 institutions in the world, this poses serious question on the education system being followed in the country which can only be answered by adopting innovative changes in higher learning institution. The concerted efforts so initiated may bring desired quality results from the sector. Thus the present paper makes an effort to critically examine the present status of higher education system in the country and offer measures to be adopted in the days to come to make the sector more vibrant and relevant and more societal oriented. Education ultimately should enable the society to attain and achieve the desired changes and enjoy the demographic dividend. Further it should contribute visibly in the development of productive social capital.

Keywords: GER, employability, higher education, higher learning institution, demographic dividend, social capital, curriculum

Introduction

India has been witnessing a consistently higher rate of economic growth in the recent times. It has now turned to be a major player in the global knowledge economy of the present time. Skill-based activities have made significant contribution to the growth. Such activities depend on the large pool of qualified manpower that is fed by its large higher education system. It is now widely accepted that higher education has been critical to India's emergence in the global knowledge economy. Yet, it is believed that a crisis is plaguing the Indian higher education system. While, the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) set up

by the Prime Minister, calls it a „quiet crisis“, the Human Resource Minister calls higher education „a sick child“. Industries routinely point towards huge skill shortages and are of the opinion that growth momentum may not be sustained unless the problem of skill shortages is addressed. This appears to be endless problems with the Indian higher education.

An unwieldy affiliating system, inflexible academic structure, uneven capacity across subjects, eroding autonomy of academic institutions, low level of public funding, dysfunctional regulatory environment are some of its many problems. Finally, it is widely held that it suffers from several systemic deficiencies and is driven by populism, and in the absence of reliable data, there is little informed public debate. More than 35 years ago, Nobel laureate Amartya Sen, while analyzing the crisis in Indian education, rather than attributing the crisis in Indian education to administrative neglect or to thoughtless action, pointed out that the „grave failures in policymaking in the field of education require the analysis of the characteristics of the economic and social forces operating in India, and response of public policy to these forces (Amartya Sen, he Crisis in Indian education, Lal Bahadur Shastri Memorial Lectures, 10–11 March 1970). He emphasized that „due to the government's tendency to formulate educational policies based on public pressure, often wrong policies are pursued. Unfortunately, it is believed that policy-making suffers from similar failure even today. Rather than pragmatism, it is populism, ideology and vested interests that drive policy. It seeks to achieve arbitrarily set goals that are often elusive and, more than that, pursued half-heartedly.

Evolution of Higher education:

The tradition of higher education system India is old and inherited an age which has generated knowledge and learning right from the beginning of the Indian civilization. To take into consideration the period of Guptas they encouraged higher learning by patronizing center for higher education at Nalanda, Takshila, Ujjain, vikramshila and vallabhi. Each university as mentioned specialized in a particular group of study. These universities have become popular in 7th and 8th centuries A.D. After the advent of Buddhism people flocked to saranath university to study Buddhist religion and to Ajanta to specialize in art, architecture and painting. These institutions mainly funded by grants of land and donations. Such grants came from kings as well as affluent people existing in the then-society. In fact the historical data figures out a well-established system, which functioned in India as early as 1000 B.C. In that system the construction of knowledge, the beliefs on

which the knowledge is based, basic concepts of the organizational learning were very different from the European tradition.

Higher education system during British Raj

The European system of higher education was introduced by the British regime in India in the year 1857 with the establishment of universities for European education in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. If we consider the beginning of the British Raj in 1858, the British have done lot of work on the promotion of the English education along with higher education in India. With starting of English schools and promotion of English language in the higher education was a major contribution by the regime.

resent status of higher Education in India

The higher education in India has grown significantly over the years and played pivotal role in the creation of human capital contributing substantially the economic growth. The education being the concurrent subject, the state and centre playing an important role in the field of higher education by establishing higher learning institutions and enhancing the reach of the higher education. The following tables provides an over view and development of higher education in India.

Table 1: No. of Institutions During The Year 2015-16

0No. of Institutions/enrolment	Year (2015-16)
Universities	799
Colleges	39071
AICTE Technical Institutions	51089

Higher Education sector in India has witnessed a tremendous growth in the number of Universities/Universities level Institutions and Colleges since Independence. The number of Universities has increased from 20 in 1950 to 677 in 2014. The sector boasts of 45 Central Universities, 318 State Universities, 185 Private universities, 129 Deemed to be Universities, 51 Institutions of National Importance (established under Acts of Parliament) under MHRD (IITs - 16, NITs – 30 and IISERs – 5) and four Institutions (established under various State legislations). The number of colleges has also registered manifold increase of just 500 in 1950 to 37,204, as on 31st March, 2013. There was a time when population of the India was much less and higher education was accessible for everyone to pursue higher Education in India. but due to raise in population has made difficult to seek admission to universities and higher learning institution in India and it is also found that increased high

cut-off percentage for admission as 80%, 85% even 90% in some of the discipline in prestigious universities and institutions of the India.

The final onus resides with the teachers of the nation. They, by their precept as well as by their example of uprightness and devotion to perform duties and responsibilities should become the real torch bearers for the student community and win regard and reverence from them. That alone can place the University or the college campus above narrow perceptions. Private coaching has become a wide-spread malady among teachers. This needs to be curbed and controlled even by law, if required.

Innovations initiated by the GOI

The government of India has come out with appropriate initiatives by establishing more central universities and higher learning institutions to make higher education easily accessible to all at the optimum cost.

Establishment of New Central Universities

Central Universities Act, 2009, which came into effect from 15.1.2009, has established 16 new Central Universities in each such States (except Goa) which did not have a Central University; in Jammu & Kashmir, there are two Central Universities, one in Kashmir Division and another in Jammu Division. Besides J&K, the new Central Universities are established in the uncovered States of Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Goa, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Tamil Nadu. Three State Universities which have been converted into Central University are Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya in the State of Chhattisgarh, Dr. Harisingh Gour Vishwavidyalaya in the State of Madhya Pradesh and Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna Garhwal University in the State of Uttarakhand.

Indira Gandhi National Tribal University

The Indira Gandhi National Tribal University (IGNTU), Amarkantak, Madhya Pradesh, has been established by an Act of Parliament. It commenced its academic activities from the Academic Session 2008-09. The University is running Undergraduate as well as Postgraduate courses in various disciplines. The University is a teaching and affiliating university for facilitating and promoting avenues of higher education and research facilities for the tribal population of the country

Setting Up Of 374 Degree Colleges in Educationally Backward Districts

The Ministry has decided to set up Model Degree Colleges in those educationally backward districts of the country, where the GER or Gross Enrolment Ratio is

less than the national average. In a survey, 374 such districts have been identified. Proposals are awaited from the respective State Governments for the establishment of such colleges. This scheme is a part of the Government policy for access, participation and expansion of higher education.

Scheme for Incentivizing State Governments for Expansion Of Higher Education Institutions

A scheme is being introduced for incentivizing States for establishing new higher educational institutions/expanding existing higher educational institutions. This new Scheme will provide central assistance to the State Governments in the ratio of 1:2 (1:1 for Special Category States) for establishing new higher educational institutions/expanding existing higher educational institutions. The physical targets for XI Plan and XII Plan include new universities, colleges, engineering colleges as well as expansion of existing colleges.

Supporting Uncovered State Universities and Colleges

Affiliated colleges of State Universities are technically under the purview of UGC but do not get assistance as they do not meet the minimum eligibility norms in terms of physical facilities and human resources. The Ministry intends to strengthen those colleges and universities with focus on underserved areas to enable these institutions to fulfill the criteria for UGC assistance.

In the XIth Plan period, it is envisaged to provide additional assistance to universities and colleges which are already declared fit to receive grants under Section 12B of the UGC Act.

Strengthening Science Based Higher Education and Research in Universities

Looking at the declining quality and quantum of scientific research in India, an Empowered Committee under the Chairmanship of Prof. M.M. Sharma was constituted for rejuvenation of Basic Scientific Research in Universities. Based on the recommendations of Task Force action for strengthening science based education and research in Universities has been initiated.

The main objective of the scheme is to promote excellence in research in higher education by supporting research programmes of the University and College teachers in various disciplines. The UGC has been striving for promoting teaching and research in emerging areas in Humanities, Social Sciences, Languages, Literature, Pure Sciences, Engineering & Technology, Pharmacy, Medical Agriculture Science etc. Teachers who are permanent / regular, retired / working in the Universities and colleges which are recognized

under section 2(f) and declared fit to receive grants under 12 B of the UGC Act, 1956 only are eligible.

NISER (National Institute of science Education and Research)

The government of India has earmarked an initial outlay of 823.19 crore (US\$130 million) during the first seven years of this project, starting from September 2007. It is an autonomous institution which will be operated under the umbrella of department of atomic energy (DAE) of the Government of India. NISER will facilitate the synergy between research and higher education in the field of science. It will be categorically compared with the best institutions in India in terms of facilities and faculties. The atomic energy commission in its 182nd meeting approved the proposal of establishing the NISER at Bhubaneswar.

Presently NISER has five schools namely:

- * School of biological sciences
- * Schools of chemical sciences
- * School of mathematical sciences
- * School of physical sciences
- * School of humanities and social sciences.

More than 20% of the Indian falls in the age group of 15-24 years are available for work according to the population census of 2011. While education system of India has made considerable progress in terms of capacity creation and enrolment in the last decade, it lags significantly in the terms of global relevance and competitiveness as stated by the report of the FICCI (Federation of Indian chambers of commerce and Industry) and EY.

The reports reveal that low employability of Indian graduates is due to outdated curricula, shortage of quality teaching faculty, high student-teacher ratio, lack of institute-industry linkage and lack of autonomy to introduced new and innovative programmes. Small portion of the Indian Graduates are found to be employable with the passage of time and declining in academic stature of high excellence. It is found that drop down in the placement in institutions other than top institutes and this cannot fulfill the total market demand. Further this has resulted to shut down number of small institute of higher education which was failing to provide quality education.

Quality Of higher education:

The overall higher education scenario of India does not match with the global Quality standards. Hence, there is enough justification for an increased assessment of the

Quality of the country's educational institutions. Traditionally, these institutions assumed that Quality could be determined by their internal resources, viz., faculty with an impressive set of degrees and experience detailed at the end of the institute's admission brochure, number of books and journals in the library, an ultra-modern campus, and size of the endowment, etc., or by its definable and assessable outputs, viz., efficient use of resources, producing uniquely educated, highly satisfied and employable graduates. Fingers are raised on the current phase of the quality in HE in India as direct impact on employable factor as most of the output produced by the institutions is jobless. Competencies can be created among the students competencies in the form of recall; problem solving and understanding has to be uplifted to make them get employment. Restructuring of the academic syllabi and it should be free from politics and should hold autonomy for proposing and modernizing the Indian education system with the sole aim of producing talent.

CONCLUSIONS

The current arena is going to be tough for Indian higher education system as government is thinking to globalize the higher education system for transformation and standards in the education system. This will pose a serious question on the existing standards that how well the Indian universities and institutes are meeting the global challenges in the sector. Few feel that globalizing education would lead to quality education and research at large which will enable to capture the current and future challenges and explore the opportunities to excel in getting employment. Today we are producing graduates at high rate but still lot of them are unemployable we need to change this mindset and transform it by making suitable efforts to employ and increase employability. So it's time to transform, adapt change to impart high quality education. We understand that the present higher education is on the cross road and needs to bounce back on the right track so that it can be ray of hope for students of the nation.

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