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Challenge of Higher Education in India

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Abstract

Higher education is tool of development of a nation in each sphere. Primary education is lose creating while higher education contributes skilled and specialized knowledge. Our higher education system is second largest in world, which is governed by University Grants Commission and coordinated by human resources ministry at centre and state. Quality of higher education remained the main concern for all the stakeholders because poor quality of higher education affects the overall progress of any nation. Our higher education is far away from the global educational standard. The core mission of higher education is to educate, to train, to undertake research and to provide service to the community. Higher education demands quality and quality demands self-assessment. My paper shows various factors i.e. favourable environment for teaching and learning, infrastructure curriculum and monitoring system for improving quality adaption, variety, reliability, availability, efficiency and responsibility are essential for higher education.

Keywords: Higher Education, Primary education, improving quality adaption, variety, reliability, availability, efficiency and responsibility

Introduction

Higher education is a powerful tool to build modern, value-based, knowledge based, culture based, and peaceful society which can lead the country towards becoming super power in the world. It is also considered one of the important and strong tools for the development of any country. Primary education is necessary for creating base, while, higher education is extremely important for providing cutting edge. Higher education contributes to the growth of nation by providing specialized knowledge and skill manpower.

India's higher education system is the second largest in the world, after the United States. 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 33 Institutes of National Importance. 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.

But in spite of all these developments and growth, quality of higher education remained the main concern for all the stakeholders in the education system i.e. students, parents, institution management, faculty members, policy makers and society as a whole because poor quality of higher education effects the overall progress of any nation. Indian higher education is far away from the global educational standard. India is nowhere in the recently released (year 2011) world universities rankings. India doesn't figure in world to 100 universities. The three rankings - Times Higher Education world University Rankings, Academic rankings of world universities compiled by Shanghai Jiao Tong University, and QS World University Rankings

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- are just out and none of our prestigious institutions of learning like the IITs and the IIMs make it to the top-200. While overall, US universities dominate all three rankings with its Harvard and Princeton, most of the other countries are ahead of India, including Thailand. IIT Bombay finds itself at the 225th position far beyond of 187th position in 2010, IIT Delhi is on 218th position and IIT Madras is on 281st position in the QS rankings. These data represents that Indian higher education does not stand anywhere among the world higher education institutions with respect to quality.

Progress of a nation is possible only when its citizens are dynamic, enterprising and responsible. Without such citizens, a nation cannot achieve progress in any field and education is the most important tool to create such types of citizens. Higher education plays a vital role in the overall development and growth of a nation. It imparts in-depth knowledge in different ways of life. Further, it not only broadens the cerebral power of the individual within a narrow specialization but also gives a wider perspective of the world around. Higher education is no longer a luxury, it is essential for survival. The core mission of higher education is to educate, to train, to undertake research and to provide service to the community. In the context of globalization, the scope and demand for higher education is increasing day by day and this demand can only be fulfilled by the quality higher education. Quality education is the "Mantra" of present day education system whether it is elementary or higher education. The quality in higher education is the biggest need of the hour as our country is progressing towards becoming the educational hub of the world. But, Indian higher education system does not stand anywhere among the world higher education systems in terms of quality. Poor quality of higher education depends on various factors such as favourable environment for teaching and learning, infrastructure, teachers, curriculum, effective feedback and monitoring system etc. Present paper focuses its attention on the issue of quality concerns in India and factors influencing the quality of education.

Suggestions to meet the Challenges

1. Stress is laid on the need for improving the quality of education at every stage so that a proper foundation can be laid for advanced study in science, engineering, Agriculture and those other areas which are most closely allied to the national Economic development and reconstruction of the nation as a whole.
2. To begin from the top without reforming the lower stages is against the law of nature; it is against the law of evolutionary progress. Before any restrictions are imposed on the higher education, the earlier stages should be improved so as to produce better Students for the higher stage.
3. A critical point to be considered by educational planner is the adaptation of a Multidimensional, flexible, and dynamic education system, which serves people According to their ability and aptitude and is responsive to their economic, social
1. Political and cultural needs.
4. The new system of higher education should be flexible enough to offer a variety of Courses, formal and non-formal, full time and part time, correspondence and media Based to fit every individual as well as the economic needs of the country

5. Economic conditions of the people cannot be ignored in all matters in which the Question of equal opportunities to all is involved. In an atmosphere of economic Depression as it is today in Pakistan how could one expect from our youth to be able to develop their potential qualities in desired way.
6. The test of qualities must be made reliable upon examination and more effective; the Teaching method must be made more rational and natural; and last of all, the teachers must be kept fully satisfied. It is well known, that a foreign medium of instruction and examination is seriously hampering the progress of education. Pakistan will have to determine its policy with regards to this question also.
7. There is great question of availability of qualified university teachers, suitably equipped libraries, and fully developed plants and laboratories. It is a matter of Common knowledge that our resources in all these areas are very merger. Any Unnecessary addition to the number of the universities at present would therefore Mean nothing, but more ill-fed and ill-equipped institutions with no specially or Individuality of purpose.

Higher education institutions must be responsive to the challenges of the rapidly Changing and challenging new world: expectation of society and growing demands of the Rising student population. This policy therefore looks forward to a new beginning in higher Education in South Asian developing countries.

India needs multi-dimensional and broad-based quality education to maintain its leadership in the 21st century, therefore India should show the concern over the quality in education as the education in India is not competitive in terms of the quantity and quality with other countries. Quality in higher education is a burning issue which can be ensured through regular review of the function of the institutions either through self-assessment or through outside agencies and by accrediting the institutions. The expansion of higher education over the years has also resulted in educational malpractices, which exist in the form of capitation fees being charged by the private institutions at the time of admissions in addition to the fees. The entry of large number of private institutions has also resulted in rapid increase in proceedings involving students, teachers, employees, management of higher educational institutions and universities and other stakeholders negatively impacts the quality of education and efficient function of the institutions. Also there has been spurt in activities of Foreign Educational Institutions operating in India since mid 1990s. While some of them are resorting to various mal-practices to appeal and attract students, particularly in smaller cities and towns. Many of these institutions have come up since there is yet neither a centralized policy nor the regulatory regime.

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