An Overview of Higher Education in India: A Literature Review

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Abstract: *The world has realized that the economic success of the states is directly determined by their education systems. Education is a Nation's Strength. A developed nation is inevitably an educated nation. Indian higher education system is the third largest in the world, next to the United States and China. Since independence, India as a developing nation is contentiously progressing in the education field. Although there have been lot of challenges to higher education system of India but equally have lot of opportunities to overcome these challenges and to make higher education system much better. It needs greater transparency and accountability, the role of colleges and universities in the new millennium, and emerging scientific research on how people learn is of utmost important. India need well skilled and highly educated people who can drive our economy forward. India provides highly skilled people to other countries therefore; it is very easy for India to transfer our country from a developing nation to a developed nation.*

Key Words: *Higher Education, Challenges, Reviews.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

India's Higher Education sector has witnessed a tremendous increase in the number of Universities/University level Institutions & Colleges since independence. The 'Right to Education Act' which stipulates compulsory and free education to all children within the age groups of 6-14 years, has brought about a revolution in the education system of the country with statistics revealing a staggering enrolment in schools over the last four years. The involvement of private sector in higher education has seen drastic changes in the field. Today over 60% of higher education institutions in India are promoted by the private sector. This has accelerated establishment of institutes which have originated over the last decade making India home to the largest number of Higher Education institutions in the world, with student enrolments at the second highest (Shaguri, 2013).The number of Universities has increased 34 times from 20 in 1950 to 677 in 2014. Despite these numbers, international education rating agencies have not placed many of these institutions within the best of the world ranking. Also, India has failed to produce world class universities. The operating environment of higher education institutions has undergone changes in terms of increasing demand for higher education, technological advancement, evolving knowledge economy, and pressure to respond to the needs and aspiration of their stakeholders (Blackmore, 2009). These changes have posed major challenges and long term survival of educational institutions depends on its quality education delivery system.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Kundu (2016) world-class institutions, global rankings, and accreditation have become hot topics within field of education, the potential of researching these topics is significantly limited by the lack of theorizing about what quality means. Quality must be at the centre of the research and the first step must include revisiting the notions of quality. In this context, the author is of the opinion that this paper should guide research and practice in higher education. The author has tried to contribute to that important goal by presenting quality in education from various perspectives.
Yusoff et al. (2015) identified the following dimensions which drive business student satisfaction in higher education.

- Professional comfortable environment: The elements of professional comfortable environment are as follows: the competence, confidence and professionalism conveyed by the ambience; the feelings that students' best interests are being served; the feelings that rewards marks/grades gained are consistent with the efforts put in by the students; the university environment's ability to make students feel comfortable; competence and availability of staff; and respect for students' feelings, concerns and opinion.
- Student assessments and learning Experiences: It includes the appropriateness of the method of assessment coursework and/or examination; the appropriateness of the style of assessment individual and/or group work; the course workload; the level/difficulty of subject content; the appropriateness of the quantity of assessment; and the way time table is organized.
- Classroom environment: It includes decoration; layout; furnishings; teaching and learning equipment, for example, projectors, screens; lighting; level of cleanliness; class sizes; and overall number of lecture and tutorial rooms.

- Lecture and tutorial facilitating goods: It includes supplementary tutorial materials/hand-outs; supplementary lecture materials/hand-out; overall tutorials quality; quality of power point/slides presentation where applicable; and overall lecture quality.
- Textbooks and tuition fees: It includes the quality of textbooks; tuition fees; availability of textbooks in local bookstores; textbooks' usefulness in enhancing understanding of the modules; and recommended core textbooks.
- Student support facilities: It includes IT facilities; learning resource centres; vending machines; on-campus cafeteria/canteen facilities; and recreational facilities.
- Business procedures: It includes availability of parking; security measures; registration procedures; toilet facilities; and accommodation facilities/services.
- Relationship with faculty: It includes approachability of faculty; friendliness of faculty; and concern shown when students have a problem.
- Knowledgeable and responsive faculty: It includes teaching ability of faculty; consistency of teaching quality irrespective of the faculty; responsiveness of teaching staff to requests; and subject expertise of the faculty
- Staff helpfulness: It includes helpfulness of administrative staff; and helpfulness of technical staff
- Feedback: It is about usefulness of feedback on student performance; and promptness of feedback on student performance.

Sarrab, et al. (2018) Mobile learning (M-learning) is a learning paradigm that utilizes the advantages of mobility and wireless technologies in the learning and education process. It can be characterized by the ability to support and provide strong interaction between learners and instructors, offering high levels of learning motivation, collaboration, and flexibility to the learning activities. Despite the increased popularity of M-learning, there is no complete and well-defined set of educational requirements for M-learning in higher education which considers both instructional design and M-learning design.

Higher Education Scenario in India

State	Central universities	State universities	Deemed universities	Private universities	Total
Andhra Pradesh	3	23	5	5	36
Arunachal Pradesh	1	0	1	7	9
Assam	2	15	0	5	22
Bihar	4	18	1	2	25
Chandigarh	0	1	1	0	2
Chhattisgarh	1	14	0	9	24
Delhi	7	8	10	0	25
Goa	0	1	0	0	1
Gujarat	1	30	2	31	64
Haryana	1	20	6	20	47
Himachal Pradesh	1	5	0	17	23
Jammu and Kashmir	2	9	1	0	12
Jharkhand	1	11	1	8	21
Karnataka	1	31	14	14	60
Kerala	1	13	3	0	17
Madhya Pradesh	2	24	1	24	51
Maharashtra	1	24	21	10	56
Manipur)	3	3	0	1	7
Meghalaya	1	0	0	8	9
Mizoram	1	0	0	1	2
Nagaland	1	0	0	3	4

State	Central universities	State universities	Deemed universities	Private universities	Total
Odisha	1	18	2	4	25
Puducherry	1	0	1	0	2
Punjab	1	10	2	15	28
Rajasthan	1	25	8	46	80
Sikkim	1	1	0	5	7
Tamil Nadu	2	22	28	0	52
Telangana	3	17	2	0	22
Tripura	1	1	0	1	3
Uttar Pradesh	6	30	9	29	74
Uttarakhand	1	11	3	13	28
West Bengal	1	26	1	9	37
Total	**54**	**411**	**123**	**287**	**875**

3. CHALLENGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA :

It is our 69th year of independence still our education system has not been developed fully. We are not able to list a single university in top 100 universities of the world. Various governments changed during these six decades. They tried to boost the education system and implemented various education policies but they were not sufficient to put an example for the universe. UGC is continuously working and focusing on quality education in higher education sector. Still we are facing lot of problems and challenges in our education system. Some of the basic challenges in higher education system in India are discussed below:

❖ Enrolment: The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of India in higher education is only 15% which is quite low as compared to the developed as well as, other developing countries. With the increase of enrolments at school level, the supply of higher education institutes is insufficient to meet the growing demand in the country.

❖ Equity: There is no equity in GER among different sects of the society. According to previous studies the GER in higher education in India among male and female varies to a greater extent. There are regional variations too some states have high GER while as some is quite behind the national GER which reflect a significant imbalances within the higher education system.

❖ Quality: Quality in higher education is a multi-dimensional, multilevel, and a dynamic concept. Ensuring quality in higher education is amongst the foremost challenges being faced in India today. However, Government is continuously focusing on the quality education. Still Large number of colleges and universities in India are unable to meet the minimum requirements laid down by the UGC and our universities are not in a position to mark its place among the top universities of the world.

❖ Infrastructure: Poor infrastructure is another challenge to the higher education system of India particularly the institutes run by the public sector suffer from poor physical facilities and infrastructure. There are large numbers of colleges which are functioning on second or third floor of the building on ground or first floor there exists readymade hosieries or photocopy shops.

❖ Political interference: Most of the educational Institutions are owned by the political leaders, who are playing key role in governing bodies of the Universities. They are using the innocent students for their selfish means. Students organise campaigns, forget their own objectives and begin to develop their careers in politics.

❖ Faculty: Faculty shortages and the inability of the state educational system to attract and retain well qualified teachers have been posing challenges to quality education for many years. Large numbers of NET / PhD candidates are unemployed even there are lot of vacancies in higher education, these deserving candidates are then applying in other departments which is a biggest blow to the higher education system.

❖ Accreditation: As per the data provided by the NAAC, as of June 2010, "not even 25% of the total higher education institutions in the country were accredited. And among those accredited, only 30% of the universities and 45% of the colleges were found to be of quality to be ranked at 'A' level".

❖ Research and Innovation: there are very nominal scholars in our country whose writing is cited by famous western authors. There is inadequate focus on research in higher education institutes. There are insufficient resources and facilities, as well as, limited numbers of quality faculty to advice students. Most of the research scholars are without fellowships or not getting their fellowships on time which directly or indirectly affects their research. Moreover, Indian Higher education institutions are poorly connected to research centers. So, this is another area of challenge to the higher education in India.

❖ Structure of higher education: Management of the Indian education faces challenges of over centralisation, bureaucratic structures and lack of accountability, transparency, and professionalism. As a result of increase in number of affiliated colleges and students, the burden of administrative functions of universities has significantly increased and the core focus on academics and research is diluted (Kumar, et al, 2015).

4. DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS:

Higher education in India has expanded very rapidly in the last six decades after independence yet it is not equally accessible to all. India is today one of the fastest developing countries of the world with the annual growth rate going above 9%. Students have a multifaceted understanding of quality in higher education. Another benefit of involving students in quality assurance initiatives is transparency, meaning all participants see the outcomes and subsequent changes. Student participation in QA activities influences the quality of higher education (Palomares, 2014). Including students is key in the QA process because they provide an important lens for quality assurance in higher education. Government must promote collaboration between Indian higher education institutes and top International institutes and also generates linkage between national research laboratories and research centres of top institutions for better quality and collaborative research. There should be a multidisciplinary approach in higher education so that students knowledge may not be restricted only up to his own subjects. There is a need to implement innovative and transformational approach form primary to higher education level to make Indian educational system globally more relevant and competitive.

5. CONCLUSION:

India is a country of huge human resource potential, to utilise this potential properly is the issue which needed to discuss. Opportunities are available but how to get benefits from these opportunities and how to make them accessible to others is the matter of concern. In order to sustain that rate of growth, there is need to increase the number of institutes and also the quality of higher education in India. To reach and achieve the future requirements there is an urgent need to relook at the Financial Resources, Access and Equity, Quality Standards, Relevance, infrastructure and at the end the Responsiveness.

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