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HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA : CHALLENGES AND SUGGESTIONS

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Abstract

It is a known fact that education is directly proportional to development of any kind of ties including economic , social, industrial development etc. In this competitive world it is more important to pursue higher education to cope up with the world and be relevant to it.

In order to achieve the zenith of glory in higher education and focus on how to tackle them. In this research paper ,an attempt to address the both, was made. Challenges include digital divide, allocation of funds to education sector, Megale lack of infrastructure, Wide gap between student – teacher ratio and the suggestions to improve the variations like promotions of vocational courses, pragmatism based on education , trained faculty were mentioned.

Key Words: Higher Education system, sustainable , challenge

INTRODUCTION

Higher Education in India is at a pivotal juncture, marked by both remarkable progress and significant challenge . Over the years , the country has witnessed a substantial expansion of its higher education system, with a growing number of institutions and increased enrolment rates. To navigate these complexities ,it's essential to explore innovative solutions and



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strategies recommendations that can help to shape a brighter future for higher education in India.

One of primary challenges in India higher education is maintaining and enhancing the quality of teaching and research. Many institutions struggle with outdated curricula , adequate, inadequate infrastructure and shortage of qualified faculty. They often result in a gap between what students learn and the skill required by the industry, moreover research output crucial for innovation and global recognition, is often hampered by limited funding and a lack of research – oriented culture.

Another significant concern is the issue of access and equity. While the higher education system has expanded, it still faces barriers related to affordability, geographical disparities and social inclusion . Students from marginalized communities and those in rural areas often find it difficult to access quality education addressing these disparities requires a multi-pronged approach including financial aid, scholarship, and targeted programs to support disadvantaged students.

The challenges against the higher education in India are as follows:

1. Digital divide:

The digital divide is the gulf between those who have access to computers and the internet and those who don't have any access yet.

Digital divide is categories into three types:

First, the gender divide, according to a 2013 report, even though internet access has increased and is available to everyone one can observe and conclude that women are still lagging behind even in 2023, women in several parts of the country are not familiar with the usage of internet and computers.

Second, social divide, internet access creates relationships and social circles among people with shared interests. Social media platforms like twitter and Facebook create online peer groups based on similar interests.

Moral than ever internet usage has influenced social stratification which is evident in societies among those that are connected to the internet and those that are not non-connected groups are sidelined since they don't share in the internet benefits of the connected groups.



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Third, the universal access divide, individuals living with physical disabilities are often disadvantaged when it comes to accessing the internet. They may have the necessary skills but cannot exploit the available hardware and software.

2. Gender Equality :

Over the years the number of female students has increased in India, for graduation purposes. But there is yet a lot to be achieved. There's only 48.6% enrollment of women in higher education. The share of male students enrolled in engineering and technology is 71.1% compared to female enrolment, which is just 28.9% . The enrolment of female was lower in the India institutes of technology (IIT's) and national institutes of technology (NIT's) in comparison to the overall enrolment of women, considering to the overall enrolment of women, considering the law enrolment of females in the stream, the government decides to increase female enrolment free 8% in 2016 to 14% in 2018-19 ,17% in 2019-20 and ,20% in 2020-21 by creating supernumerary seats. The results are visible in real terms. The total number of women in NIT's has grown from 14.17% in 2017-18, to 17.53% in 2019-20 in IIT's in Btech programme.

3. Lack of Affordability:

Why are Indian students flocking to foreign countries just to acquire a medical degree, M.S degree, MBA and other post-graduation degrees ? while India has top class IIT's, IIM's , medical colleges and other institutes of higher learning. It is not just not sufficient to cater to the huge demand. Merit category students find it extremely frustrating to join a course of their preferences. Hence many are under compulsion either to seek admission in foreign universities or opt for other courses in India. This is a typical Hobson's choice. India needs to put in place a pragmatic policy to ensure top-class education for its youth at the most down-to-earth fees. If many east European countries and China are able to provide professional courses at very reasonable rates, why can't we do it in India? Can this be achieved ? Why not ? Higher education, especially professional courses like medical education, law and engineering are highly sought after by lakhs of students, across India, but there is a chronic shortage of seats, acute competitions and prohibitive fee structure of private and deemed to be universities, which are beyond the common man. Hence the



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clamour for getting admission in government institutions, where the fee structure is very economical in every aspect.

4. Lack of infrastructure and quality:

Infrastructure plays an important role in the education sector classroom design, auditoriums, laboratories , campus area etc are crucial components of a learning environment. Poor building conditions especially in broken furniture, leaky washrooms, poorly maintained cafeterias and pantry areas, messed up library arrangement creates a negative environment and this adversely affects student's learning outcome. Classrooms are the backbone of any education institution. Classrooms must also be well equipped with the latest technology like AV system, projectors and WI-FI hotspot. Seating and furniture must also be given equal importance while planning classroom design. Well-designed seating is comfortable and thus provides relaxed and convenient seating to the students. Well-equipped labs encourage students to translate their theory learning into practical results. The has an important role to play in both learning and teaching. Libraries must also be flexible to incorporate technologies like e-library, digital book access to central library and libraries across the campus in various locations. Reported in 2017 , the lack of proper infrastructure and poor investment are badly impacting the higher education sector in the northeastern region. There is very acute funding for the universities in the North eastern region of our country. Which affects higher education quite badly.

5. Political interference:

Constant political interference in universities, especially in appointment to leadership positions , has caused irreparable damage to the institutions which produced outstanding work in post – independence India, said chair professor of national centre for biological sciences, Bengaluru . P. Balaram . Political internationalism is pervasive at all levels from selecting locations of examinations centres to all senior appointments and in many states from VC to collages principal to District educations officers.

There is large -scale corruption in appointment , transfers ,approval to affiliation and grants recognitions of institution often rival to affiliation and grants recognitions of institution often



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received rapid accreditation , while more qualified institution wait for long period the answer answer almost invariably would relate to this

6. Not Being Skill Oriented : According to consulting firm Mcksey around 69% of companies globally are focussing on skill building and more than 50% believed that the pandemic and the challenges it threw up have increased the demand for a multi-skilled workforce . According to an Accenture report titled fueling India skills (R) evolution the could lose 2.3% of its annual growth by 2028 if skill-building is not on par with modern technological intervention . Therefore the focus towards skill based education is more important than knowledge based education

7. Inadequate Research :

There is an unantiquate focus on research in higher education institutions. There are insufficient resources and faculty to advise students .

Most of the research scholars are without fellowships or not getting their fellow ship on time which directly or indirectly affects their research . Moreover , India higher educations institutions are poorly connected to research centres and to industries

Initiatives Taken For Higher Education in India :

- Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) : Focuses on improving infrastructure , promoting quality and ensuring equity in state universities
- IMPRINT and unchchar avishkar yajana : Aim to enhance research and innovation capability within higher education institution
- SWAYAM: Provides a platform for online courses , increasing access to education and promoting digital learning .
- National Digital library : offers access to a vast collection of educational resources , supporting research and learning

Suggestions for the Enhancement of Higher Education



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1.Promotion of Vocational courses :

The labour market becomes more specialised and economics demands higher levels. The labour market becomes more and there is a need to invest in vocational courses by the authorities. It focuses on practical skills , it prepares students for the global stage and awakens passion in students and it is also helpful to non -conventional students who wish to study while balancing other obligations.

2.Creating Awareness for Girl Educations :

In multiple parts of India child marriages are still prevailing most of the time girls are stopped from pursuing higher education due to marriages. Therefore there’s an utmost need to create awareness towards their higher education.

3.Increase student -Teacher Ratio:

While there are no guidelines or rules governing students -teachers ratios on campuses , the existing overall ratio across streams is 1:18 when the UPA government sanctioned new teaching posts while implementing the 27% OBC quota in 2008. It followed the 1:18 ratio , giving it a sort of official stamp. India’s student teacher ratio is the lowest compared to many countries. India trails behind several countries including Brazil and China in terms of student-Teachers ratio in the higher education system , a government report has revealed. The 24:1 ratio of India is lower than 19.1 in Brazil and China among the eight countries compared. India's student -ratio has turned out to be the lowest – against Sweden’s 12:1 , Britain’s 16:1 Russia’s 10:1 and Canada ‘s 9:1.

4. Regular Training of Faculty :

It is a change making suggestion in itself , since the more trained faculty is the more it makes education less stressful to the students because they get proper guidance. It is also required to ensure all graduates passing out must be meeting the demands and needs of industries.



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5.Entrepreneurs must be encouraged :

Entrepreneurship accelerates economic growth. They are important to market economies because they can act as the wheels of economic growth of the country's economic growth. By ultimately creating new products and services , they stimulate new employment , which ultimately results in the acceleration of economic development. Students should be encouraged to become entrepreneurs.

CONCLUSION :

Therefore, through establishing an education sector which is accessible to all, equal towards everyone , is well equipped with facilities and trained faculty. Through curbing the challenges of female education India is set to achieve great development in all other sectors but it could be achieved only when higher education in the country achieves the importance it deserves.

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