

Trends in Higher Education in India

Abstract

Production process (or creation of anything) involves three steps i.e. Inputs, Processing and Output. In the Education sector, 'inputs' are the students that enter the institute, the 'processes' refer to the teaching and delivery mechanisms, the curriculum, etc. And the 'output' is the total number of graduates, and the 'outcome' is the quality of these graduates. The higher education system in India is complex. With a Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of 17.87 per cent, India is still below the world average. With stagnant growth of public sector, private sector accounts for 63% of the total higher education institutions and 52 per cent of the total enrolments in Indian higher education. Different commissions and committees have made multiple regulations and measures to increase the quality and equity to face the challenges globally. India is witnessing new era in the field of Education. Many Corporate groups like Nirma, Tata, Reliance, etc. have promoted Management Institutes. Some reputed foreign universities are also coming to India.

Keywords: Efficiency, Private Universities, Higher Education, Privatization, Administrative, Commercialization, Gross Enrollment Ratio, Management.

Introduction

Higher education system in India is the world's third largest in terms of students, next to China and the United States. Unlike China, India has the advantage of English being the primary language of higher education and research. India educates approximately 11% of its youth in higher education as compared to 20% in China. The main governing body University Grants Commission (India) enforces its standards, advises the government, and helps in coordinating between the centre and the state. In India, the thrust on privatization in higher education started in the early 90s when LPG (liberalization, privatization and globalization) policy introduced. As we know that privatization leads to competition and brings qualitative improvement, efficiency, and cost reduction, but this happens under some optimum perfectly competitive conditions. If we talk about last two decades, it has witnessed a tremendous growth in Indian education system. The number of institutes have grown at a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 11% while student enrolment at compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 6%. Now the participation of private sector is increasing. Private institutes now account for 4/5th of the enrollment in professional higher education and 1/3rd in overall higher education. According to the FICCI and Ernst & Young report 91% engineering schools, 95% pharmacy, 64% business and 50% medical schools in India are non-government. More than 1.4 crore students are enrolled in approx.31,000 higher education institutions across the country. Commercialization of education may be defined as "A process of private ownership and private management of educational institutions where investments are made only with the motive of earning profit". The decade of 2000's has been associated with expansion, privatization and globalization of higher education. These have been reflected in various ruling governments policies reduction in government funding, ownership of higher education by private players – both 'for- profit' and 'not for- profit' and the emergence of foreign providers of higher education.

Objective of the Study

This paper attempts

1. To find out the impact of new trends in education in India.
2. To understand the nature of privatization and commercialization in higher education in India.
3. To examine the efficiency and quality concerns of Indian higher education.

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Increasing Privatization of Higher Education

Over last two decades, a rapidly growing Indian economy has led to a huge demand for skilled and an educated labour force. To meet the manpower needs of a dynamic economy, private enterprises have cropped up to complement public educational institutions, plagued as they are by capacity constraints. Privatisation of higher education is especially noticeable in professional courses such as engineering and Master of Business Administration (MBA), where most of the institutions offering such type of programmes have been established by the private sector.

Critics who argue that education is a social good and should remain exclusively in the hands of the government will find it hard to disagree that the government on its own cannot single-handedly tackle all the issues on the given scale and complexity of Indian higher education challenges. This is not to say that the panacea to all of India's higher education problems is privatisation. In fact, this phenomenon has brought about its own set of issues and challenges. The role played by private enterprise in transforming sectors, such as telecom, banking, Information Technology and Information Technology Enabled Services (IT and ITES), etc., is evident. Today, IT sectors are shining examples of the progress that can be made when private enterprise is allowed to function in a free and encouraging manner.

Need of Private Sector

The central government funding on education is less than 1% of GDP. At present 14.6 million students are enrolled in higher education sector. According to FICCI-E&Y report the country would need an additional capacity to cater to 25 million new seats to achieve 30% gross enrollment rate (GER) over the next decade. The extra capacity generation would need an extra Rs. 10 lakh crores by 2020. The funding requirement is Rs. 0.4 million per seat. The private sector led to increase of gross enrolment rate (GER) during the period from 1999 to 2008, from 71% to 83% in USA, 45% to 58% in Japan and in Malaysia it increased from 28% to 32%. Globalization, liberalization, and privatization have a great impact on improving quality of Indian Corporate, both in products and systems.

Commercialization of Education

Every year, number of students going for higher professional education is increasing in India; so now many colleges get opportunity by which they can make money by offering such courses. In many cases, situations even remain much worst and students feel cheated at the end of courses. The best example is given in a movie, Pathshalla in which some rules were set for the school's profit. We can simply offer the instance of flourishing master's degree schools across India wherever average annual fees is around 5-10 hundred thousand rupees; but, the facilities provided by these colleges are below average levels. Most of these colleges remain more interested in making good money than providing quality education to students.

Importance of Education and Education as Commodity

No individual is a soul in this the working world till he has been educated in the correct sense. Education makes man a right thinker and a correct decision-maker. A person who gets a quality education may become a dependable employee, a better subject, and a strong client. In many cases, situations even become worse and students feel cheated at the end of courses.

However, in India this trend has full support of our government as a result of several huge political leaders and industrialists are running these schools. Therefore, they easily get the needed certificates to run these schools while not providing correct instructional infrastructure. At the end, we will say that for these folks education has these days become a choice to create cash solely than providing quality education to students. This is really a shameful scenario for country like India wherever our nice leaders have stressed on quality and free education. As commercialization affects all areas of life (including education), it gradually shifts society's view of education. Education is increasingly seen as a commodity that increases one's chances of achieving higher earnings and successfully competing in the global economy. Students are seen as "customers," "clients" and "products," teachers are "service suppliers, learning guides and education managers"; evaluation becomes "quality management," and education is subsumed under the general notion of "production."

The measure of success is not 'customer satisfaction' however intellectual growth. The commercialized model of education, where education is a product to be purchased and sold in terms mirroring the terms of alternative economic transactions, privileges competition and the drive for economic gain as moral values, and thus step by step erodes the want for civic action beyond tangible self-interest, especially once the interests of the larger community are not identical because the interests of the economically-oriented self.

International Trends

The concept of private education isn't new. In Asia, private establishments have always been a central part of education. Private higher education has been enjoying a significant role in Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Taipei, Indonesia, and the Philippines. In these countries, up to 80% of students attend private establishments.

Private higher education is reported to be rapidly growing in China, Vietnam, Cambodia, and other central Asian republics as well. China has more than 1200 private higher education institutions today, though not all of them enjoy official government authorization. Malaysia is one of a few countries that had long ago allowed private higher education, without granting it full status. Private institutions worldwide are generally criticized for their privateness, their lack of quality or accessibility, or their contribution to the commercialization of higher education. In fact, the private sector can also be given

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credit for the expansion of higher education in most countries in the last three decades.

By global standards, India is doing fairly well. It runs the third largest higher educational system and has the third largest pool of skilled person power in the world, despite the fact that only 7.2 per cent of the youth in the 17-23 age group have access to education. India provides a massive market and taking part in field for private initiatives at each the national and international levels. It is very wealthy in human resources, in terms of quantity as well as quality.

India is being projected as a would-be super-power by the year 2020; at the same time, higher education, which is growing at the rate of two hundredth once a year worldwide, is being counted as one of the foremost important ingredients in knowledge-based economies. Every year a lot of Indian students join private colleges, whether recognized or unrecognized.

Challenges of Present Higher Educational System in India

Since we have a tendency to have got independence; we face challenges to ascertain an excellent and powerful education system. Various governments came and gone. Off course they tried to ascertain new education policies within the system but still we have a tendency to face heap of issues and challenges in our Education System. These include inadequate infrastructure and facilities, large vacancies in faculty positions, low student enrolment rate, poor faculty, outmoded teaching methods, declining research standards, unmotivated students, overcrowded classrooms and widespread geographic, income, gender, and ethnic imbalances.

Internationalization of Education

Some specialized courses may not be available within the country and hence students may seek out a foreign land where this is offered-a 'push' factor. Since most institutions charge higher tuition from the foreign students, there is an incentive for the host institutions to attract students from abroad.

Regulatory Aspects of Higher Education

Over a period, fewer new Universities have come up and therefore number of colleges has increased manifolds. Overall, university system has become complex, large and difficult to govern. UGC has formulated plans and guidelines to grant autonomy to deserving institutions. Only 161 universities and 4,371 colleges were accredited by The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) as on March 2011.

Student Fees

Traditionally, tuition was almost free. Now, it is one of the charges in a plethora of fees levied by institutions. Exam fees, registration, library, migration, welfare, gymkhana and others are some examples. The poorer sections simply cannot afford high fees.

More than One Regulator

Multiple authorities such as All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE), medical council, bar council, and the UGC create problems in the growth of private institutions. Time has come when the regulatory bodies start monitoring process, content,

and outcomes rather than just licensing bodies granting approval based on physical infrastructure.

Shortage of Faculty

Institutes are facing acute shortage of good quality faculty. The high ranking students mostly prefer to join the industry due to better career prospects. Sometimes the restrictions on the academic qualifications create the challenges in hiring good quality professionals from the industry.

Lack of Uniformity

Various courses/degrees are being offered by different educational institutions and there is no uniformity in the content, pedagogy, and forms of assessments by different private institutions.

Exploitation of Students

There is reported exploitation of students by many private providers. Very few teachers are there and their knowledge is also insufficient. Most of the teachers are making money with tuitions. There is no creativity in students. That is the reason that our top class students are hard-worker but not innovative. They are not capable enough to produce new technology.

Suggestions for Improving the Quality of Higher Education

Besides increasing investment and opening new colleges and universities, government has to create a proper regulatory environment where good quality private service providers are attracted. There is confusion as regards entry, fees and the type of courses/programs that can be offered. The private service providers are also handicapped by absence of clear, transparent and consistent policy regime in the higher educational sector. Here are some suggestions to improve the quality of higher education in India:

Global Rankings

In the age of information and technology, rankings do influence even more the choice of internationally mobile students. The USA has the highest number of universities and institutes in top one and two hundred institutions.

Innovative Practices

The new technologies offer many opportunities for economic growth, improved health, better service delivery, improved learning and socio-cultural advances or we can say that it offer opportunities for progress in all walks of life. Though efforts are required to improve the country's innovative capacity, yet the efforts should be to build on the existing strengths in light of new understanding of the research innovation- growth linkage.

Industry and Academic Connection

Industry and Academic connection is necessary to ensure curriculum and skills in line with requirements. Skill building is really very crucial to ensure employability of academia to understand and make sure good jobs (keeping in view knowledge + skills+ global professional skills = good jobs).

Incentives to Teachers and Researchers

Industry and students are expecting specialized courses to be offered so that they get the latest and best in education and they are also industry ready and employable. Vocational and Diploma courses need to be made more attractive to facilitate

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specialized programs being offered to students. Incentives should be provided to teachers and researchers to make these professions more attractive for the younger generation.

To Mobilize Resources

Effective measures will have to be adopted to mobilize resources for higher education. There is also a need to relate the fee structure to the student's capacity to pay for the cost. So that, students at lower economic levels can be given highly subsidized and fully subsidized education.

To Provide Need Based Job-Oriented Courses

All round development of personality is the purpose of education. But the present day education is neither imparting true knowledge of life and nor improving the talent of a student by which one can achieve laurels in the field one is interested. The course must be focused on graduate studies and research and developing strategies and mechanisms for the rapid and efficient transfer of knowledge.

World Class Education

India should aspire for the international standard in education. Many national universities like in the USA, UK, Australia, etc. allow studies in higher education for foreign students in their countries and through correspondence courses as well. In the same way India Universities of world class education can also offer courses of studies to foreign students taking advantage of the globalization process. To achieve that goal it should adopt uniform international syllabus in its educational institutions.

Examination Reforms

Examination reforms, gradually shifting from the terminal, annual and semester examinations to regular and continuous assessment of student's performance in learning should be implemented.

High-Tech Libraries

Our university libraries have a very good collection of books, but they are all in mess. A library must be online and must be conducive for serious study. Indian universities also should concentrate more on providing quality education which is comparable to that of international standards.

What Needs to be Done?

Because of so many issues and challenges India perhaps need a four-tier system for higher education

1. Public,
2. Private,
3. Public-Private (Partnership),
4. Community Colleges.

Though Indian people enjoy the reputation of being highly intelligent and emotionally strong but this is not universally true. Though India has human resources and highly professional person power, there is no dearth of gullible men and women. India needs different levels of efficiency. It needs different types of institutions, whether public, private or hybrid, to meet different needs and aspirations in terms of quality, mode of instruction, content, or job prospects. India needs to focus on short term as well long term programmes in vocational education and technical skills in collaboration with the private sector. There is no harm in permitting private enterprises to create

some profits, provided they are ready to maintain quality, accountability, and transparency. Those who will afford to pay money for luxury or goods ought to be created to pay money for quality instruction of selection. Those who cannot afford to pay ought to be offered scholarships or loans.

Conclusion

There is strong need to modify the fundamental of the education system, not its pattern, in order to revive education's real importance. Einstein once said, "Education is that what remains after one has forgotten what one has learnt in school." If what he said is true, none of us of this generation have ever had education! The exponential growth in private institutes needs to be regulated based on quality of outcomes. The most acute weakness plaguing India's higher education is a crisis of governance. Its most visible manifestation is a crisis of faculty. There is a necessity for careful planning, enhanced financing and evolving a sanctionative policy framework to create instruction accessible, equitable and qualitative. For all the progress made, even 68 years after Independence of India, higher education faces challenges within the critical areas of Access, Equity and Quality.

Government funding and scholarships need to be rationalized supported the advantage of the scholars instead of subsidizing restricted number of institutes like IIT's. Uncontrolled and unbalanced growth of private institutes has to be regulated to specialize in development of analysis based mostly Universities and correcting regional inequality in education. There is a necessity to rethink on present system of not for profit nature of educational institutes.

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