



HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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Abstract:

This paper is an attempt to show the status of higher education in India taking into consideration its challenges and opportunities. Higher education is an important factor which determines the strength of nations. Therefore, understanding the role, policies, challenges and opportunities in the field of higher education play an important role in the development of the nation. India is one of the largest countries in the world. India has made tremendous changes in the higher education system after the independence. As a developing nation, India has made certain changes in the policies of higher education. MHRD and UGC have planned new policies and programmes for making better changes in the present higher education system. New accreditation frameworks are coming into force through agencies like NAAC for making reforms to overcome the present challenges. It has helped the higher education institutions to work with vision and mission for the better performance which will help the institutions to compete with the world class institutions. No doubt, there are many challenges ahead but these challenges will create different new opportunities to excel in the field of education.

(Keywords: MHRD , UGC,NAAC)

The present ratio of higher education in India is alarming. It shows that India needs to make substantial improvement in the field of higher education. Government has to increase the percentage ratio of GDP on education to improve the condition of higher education. If we

think about the advanced countries and their educational systems, we come to know that we are lagging behind. We are far behind if we see the list of top-class universities, colleges and institutions in the world. There are many challenges before us. These challenges before higher education are follows:

Financing of higher education: Most of the colleges and institutions in India which provide higher education are unaided. Naturally, it becomes problematic to pay suitable remuneration to the faculty. It has created the problem of good faculty. In most of the PG centres in the colleges, teachers and guest faculty are not paid suitable remuneration. Therefore, availability of good faculty is a challenging issue in most of the colleges. The government needs to make certain provisions of finance so that quality faculty and quality can be provided to the students.

Quality education: Without quality, it is impossible to survive in this world of cut throat competition. Quality is the need of the present times. Higher education in India needs to maintain this quality. The curriculum needs to be changed and developed for quality maintenance. Our curriculum needs to include hobbies, sports, vocational skills, moral values, soft skills, and all other modules and programmes which are needed for the employability enhancement. To maintain to quality of higher education efforts should be taken to meet the needs of rural and tribal students who are very often lagging behind due to their surrounding and lack of facilities. Appropriate monitoring and mentoring are great challenges to bridge the gap of rural and urban. It is a great challenge to improve the communication and soft skills of the students who are getting education in the hilly and remote areas. Quality teachers is the need of the present times. To improve the teaching quality of the teachers, some training programming and special training should be given to the teachers. The ratio of the teachers are students should be considered seriously because there is a big gap if we compare our Indian higher educational system within the advanced countries.

Locational disadvantages: Though the government and universities have started the online processes, many students in the rural and underdeveloped areas are unable to cope up with the situation. Inculcating multitasking facilities among the students are essential, if we want to compete with the world. To understand foreign languages and for advanced IT knowledge computing and internet facilities should be made available for everyone.

Political interference: It is very unfortunate that political interference is seen in higher education. Some colleges and institutions are getting funds and facilities due to political

pressure. Even it is seen that many political leaders have started their institutions and they are making changes in the rules and regulations by using their power. Management quota seats, reservation policies, fee structure needs to be changed considering the common man in the society.

Inadequate facilities: Many higher educational institutions and colleges are running their post-graduation courses without providing adequate facilities. The infrastructural facilities are desirable to maintain quality of education. Enough and spacious classrooms, well equipped laboratories, digital libraries, transportation and other support services should be made available on the campus for the student.

Accreditation standards: In order to improve the standard of our higher education there is a need of some standards of the accreditation system. It is seen that many students of engineering, medical and management are unemployed. It is because of the lack of standard of our education, our students are qualified but suffer from the problem of employment. It shows that to provide quality education and to maintain the standard of higher education robust accreditation standards are needed. Most of the top-ranking colleges, universities and business schools are in advanced countries but we are not amongst them. It shows that we need to apply certain standards which will help us to improve our quality of education and it is possible by applying accreditation standards.

Innovation and research: The curriculum and syllabus of the colleges and universities need to improve to equip the students with the necessary skills. To meet the global standards our colleges and universities must improve the standards of our education by promoting research and innovation. The colleges, universities and management schools must involve in research activities. The expert faculty must be provided to create research awareness among the students. Even there is need to provide incentives for the researches to promote research activities.

The present Indian higher education system faces several challenges such as student enrolment ratio, quality education, employability of graduates, political interference, accreditation standard, financing of higher education, inadequate facilities, heterogeneous education system, examination and evaluation reforms etc. These challenges have made us to move towards fulfilling required standards. The attempts to improve our educational standards have given us opportunities. These opportunities are the steps towards improvement and perfection in the field of higher education.

Opportunities:

India is one of the largest developing countries in the world. India is the third largest country in the world to provide higher education. Therefore, though the government is spending in the education, it is insufficient to meet all the growing requirements.

In Indian higher education system, new learning tools are immerging very fast. These new tools, techniques, methods and approaches are bringing positive changes in the higher education system. It will help India overcome the challenges. Advanced digital tools are being used for imparting education in India. India has a great opportunity to train and educate the younger generation for emerging as a developed country in the world. There are opportunities for India to work in collaboration at international level. The government of India is also changing its policies and various commissions are working to bring out the tremendous positive changes in the educational systems. Now rules and regulations have been formed for better assessment and evaluation of higher educational institutions. National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) has been established by UGC to access and accredit institutions of higher education in the country. The crucial changes have been made by the accreditation and assessment bodies for maintaining global standards. It will definitely improve the standards of higher education and India and it will help India to emerge as an advanced country in the world in the future.

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