



Education System Reforms for Sustainable Success & Emerging Knowledge Economy

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Introduction

Education is the key factor in shaping the budding super power. Higher education refers to the education in colleges and universities. India has the third largest higher education system in the world. India higher education system is very vast of majority of graduates' students in fields of art, science, technical, medical, law and forestry etc. All of us who have been concerned with the development in higher education in India have come across a great deal of comments and criticism about things that have gone wrong. The university education report had set goals for development of higher education in the country. While linked these goals Dr. S. RadhaKrishnan commission on university education, 1948-49 put it in the following words: "The most important and urgent reform needed in education is to transform it, to endeavor to relate it to the life, needs and aspirations of the people and thereby make it the powerful instrument of social, economic and cultural transformation necessary for the realization of the national goals. For this purpose, education should be developed so as to increase productivity, achieve social and national integration, accelerate the process of modernization and cultivate social, moral and spiritual values".

Education system built on the premises of quality and equality is central to sustainable success in the emerging knowledge economy. Education is a powerful tool for preparing our citizen in the knowledge of society. Education will amalgamate globalization with localization, enabling our children and youth to become world citizen, with their roots deeply embedded in Indian culture and tradition.

Brief history of higher education in India

The Education System which was evolved first in ancient India is known as the Vedic system. The importance of education was well recognized in India, '*Swadeshepujyate raja, vidwansarvatrapujyate*'. The world's first university was established in Takshila in 700 BC and the University of Nalanda was built in the 4th century BC, a great achievement and contribution of ancient India in the field of education. India literacy rate at the time of Independence was just 12%. In the seven decades after independence, India has achieved much.

In the last twenty years, the educational scenario has seen major changes and new concepts such as rights-based approach to elementary education, student entitlement, shift in emphasis from literacy and basic education to secondary, higher, technical and professional education, the endeavour to extend universalization to secondary education,

Role of higher education in Society:

Higher education is generally understood to cover teaching, research and extension. If critically analyze the different concept of higher education it can list the various roles higher



education plays in the society. Higher education is the source or feeder system in all walks of life and therefore supplies the much-needed human resources in management, planning, design, teaching, and research. Scientific and technological advancement and economic growth of a country are as dependent on the higher education system as they are on the working class. Development of indigenous technology and capabilities in agriculture, food security and other industrial areas are possible because of our world-class higher education infrastructure. Higher education also provides opportunities for lifelong learning, allowing people to upgrade their knowledge and skills from time to time based on the societal needs. The Kothari commission (1996) listed the following roles of the universities (Higher education institutions in the modern Society):

- ❖ To seek and cultivate new knowledge, to engage dynamically and fearlessly in the pursuit of truth, and to interpret old knowledge and benefits in the light of new needs and discoveries.
- ❖ To provide the right kind of leadership in all walk of life, to identify gifted youth and help them develop their potential to the full of cultivating physical fitness, developing the powers of the mind and cultivating right interests, attitudes and moral and intellectual values.
- ❖ To provide the society with competent men and women trained in agriculture, art, medicine, science and technology and various other professions who will also be cultivated individuals, imbued with a sense of social purpose.
- ❖ To strive to promote quality and social justice and to reduce social and culture differences through diffusion of education
- ❖ To foster in the teachers, students and through them in the society generally, the attitudes and the values needed for developing the good life in individuals and society(GOI, 1996)

The Present situation of higher education in India

The present situation of higher education system in India is complex and challenging. With the increase in population, there has been surge in the number of students seeking admission in these universities and colleges for higher education. In the field of higher education in India, there was the time when population of the country was much lesser and higher education was accessible to all and everyone. During the last few years, universities have increased manifold and colleges have mushroomed all over our country to impart higher education. Opening of a large number of private medical colleges, engineering colleges and poly-techniques has become an attractive financial proposition but on the other hand, it also affect on the quality of education. Almost two third of our universities and 90% of colleges are rated below average in quality parameters and Enrollment rates in our higher education institutions have gone up to around 17% but are still well below the world average of 26 percent.

India literacy rate at the time of Independence was just 12%. In the seven decades after independence, India has achieved much. There is now a primary schooling facility in almost every village and the gross enrolment ratio is more than hundred percent. Likewise there has been rapid expansion of secondary and higher education. The education infrastructure has also improved significantly. There has been remarkable improvement in



the enrolment of girls, their retention rates, and performance at all levels of education. The literacy rate of India, as per the 2011 census, was 74%.

Quality of higher education in India

There are however serious concerns about the quality of education at all levels. Quality assurance in higher education is today the top priority of the policy agenda. Postsecondary education needs to prepare graduates with new skills, a broad knowledge base and a range of competencies to enter a more complex and interdependent world. Quality is a multidimensional concept and several mechanisms for quality assurance and management at individual and institutional level are needed. Systems of accountability and accreditation with a robust regulatory mechanism are essential to the process of sustaining and improving quality. Surveys conducted by government and private agencies show that students are not achieving the expected levels of learning. The Union Government has been taking a series of measures to improve the quality of higher education of the nation. In order to improve quality, the Central Government has launched several initiatives viz.

- ❖ National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF),
- ❖ Impacting Research Innovation & Technology (IMPRINT),
- ❖ Uchchatar Avishkar Yojna (UAY) and
- ❖ Global Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN)

The UGC undertakes maintenance of standards in teaching, research and quality assurance in Universities, Deemed to be Universities and Colleges through framing various regulations, formulating several schemes and disbursing grants to the eligible institutions. Some of the initiatives taken by UGC for improving quality of Higher Education are as under:

- ❖ Choice-based Credit System (CBCS)
- ❖ Universities with Potential for Excellence
- ❖ Centre with potential for excellence in particular area
- ❖ Special Assistance Programme (SAP)
- ❖ Basic Science Research
- ❖ Major Research project
- ❖ Community College
- ❖ B.Voc. Degree Programme
- ❖ Deen Dayal Upadhyay Kaushal Kendras
- ❖ Scholarship Scheme (ISHAN UDAY) for North Eastern Region
- ❖ New Methodology of Grading by NAAC UGC (Credit Framework for Online Learning Courses through SWAYAM) Regulation, 2016.

Challenges in higher education

It is our seventy years 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 seven 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. Gross enrolment ratio (GER), equity, quality, access, infrastructure, political interference, faculty, accreditation, structure of higher education, research and innovation are some of the basic challenges in higher education system in India.



Higher Education System in India compare to developing / developed countries needs substantial improvement. So reform should be needed in the higher education system.

Suggest some reforms for qualitative Improvement of Higher Education:

- ❖ 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.
- ❖ Higher educational institutes need to improve quality and reputation.
- ❖ There should be a good infrastructure of colleges and universities which may attract the students.
- ❖ Government must promote collaboration between Indian higher education institutes and top International institutes and also generates linkage between national research laboratories and research centers of top institutions for better quality and collaborative research.
- ❖ There is a need to focus on the graduate students by providing them such courses in which they can achieve excellence, gain deeper knowledge of subject so that they will get jobs after recruitment in the companies which would reduce unnecessary rush to the higher education.
- ❖ Universities and colleges in both public private must be away from the political affiliations,
- ❖ Favouritism, money making process should be out of education system etc.
- ❖ There should be a multidisciplinary approach in higher education so that students knowledge may not be restricted only upto his own subjects.
- ❖ There is a need to improved technology for education delivery.
- ❖ Finally, there should be urgent need for more and better research to improve the quality of higher education.

In conclusion, higher education means integrated development of personality which should be imparted through head, hand and heart. The reform of higher education system will require a comprehensive and collective efforts of the Government, private sector, academia and civil society.



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