Status of Higher Education in India : Present and Future Perspective

Dr. K.D. Bompilwar

Associate Professor, Department of English, G. S. Gawande College, Umarkhed, Maharashtra, India

ABSTRACT

The higher education sector in India since the old times has witnessed a constant shifts and growth according to time and age. Growth in many aspects such as its numbers, institutional capacity, enrolment, teacher-student ratio, etc. The rapid development of the higher education system at the same time has brought several issues of concern related to quality, equity, access to higher education in the country. The present paper deals with the journey of higher education since some centuries back to the current position where it has changed its appearance and it is passing through make over for its impetus to suit international standard at global levels. The paper also brings about better understanding of the present scenario in the higher education system in the country and the emerging opportunities and challenges to the system under consideration. This paper includes the key challenges that India is currently facing in higher education and also includes some initiatives taken by the government to meet those challenges. It further discusses the role of NEP and the country's future perspective.

Keywords: Higher education, NEP, quality, challenges, future

I. INTRODUCTION

In the wake of industrialisation and globalisation, catering to higher education to its young generation becomes a top priority of the government. The term 'higher education' with respect to India denotes the tertiary level education that is imparted after 12 years of schooling.

The nations are trying to be innovation hubs in technology and science. The cut throat competition in the global scenario has made the national as well as global institutions to provide quality education that lead to innovation and discoveries. The country's Higher Education sector has witnessed a tremendous increase in the number of Universities, Institutions & Colleges since independence. The higher education sector has witness a rapid growth in terms of student enrolment, teaching faculty, courses, degrees, modes etc. The government has initiated and developed conventional as well as technical education through government as well as private institutes and colleges in order to increase opportunities for employability to students. The general connotation of higher education is: Higher education imparts knowledge, develops the student's ability and also give him/her a wider perspective of the world around. Higher education becomes input to the growth and development of industry and also seen as an opportunity to participate in the development process of the individual through a flexible education mode. (AppuSrva, 2017)

II. HISTORY

Indian higher education system goes back as early as 1000B.C. with the prime focus on disseminating Vedic education, art and science, religion and politics, medical and craft teaching etc. Takshashila and Nalanda were the ancient, renowned universities in India. But the arrival and establishment of British East India Company in India has used university system as a tool of cultural colonization. When India gained independence in 1947, the nation had a total of 241,369 students registered across 20 universities and 496 colleges. In 1948, the Indian Government established the University Education Commission to oversee the growth and improvement of higher education. In the 1960s and 1970s, the government increased its efforts to support higher education by not only setting up state-funded universities and colleges, but also providing financial assistance to private institutions, resulting in the creation of private aided/ grant-in-aid institutions (Wikipedia)

III. PRESENT POSITION

Framework of higher education in India is very complex. It includes various types of institutions like universities, colleges, institutes of national importance, polytechnics etc. Universities are also of different types like central universities, State universities, Deemed universities (aided and unaided) and Private.(Sharma and Sharma: Indian Higher Education System: Challenges And Suggestions) As of 2020, India has over 1000 universities, with a break up of 54 central universities, 416 state universities, 125 deemed universities, 361 private universities and 159 Institutes of National Importance which include AIIMS, IIMs, IIITs, IISERs, IITs and NITs among others. 37,670,147 students are degree holder today including post graduate degrees, Post-graduate degree other than technical degree, Engineering and technology, Teaching, Medicine, Agriculture and dairying Veterinary.

The NEP, approved by the Union Cabinet of India on 29 July 2020, outlines the vision of India's new education system. The policy is a comprehensive framework for elementary education to higher education as well as vocational training in both rural and urban India. (Wikipedia) Apart from the Institutes of National Importance, the UGC has set a recognition scheme for Indian higher education institutes in 2017 according to which a total of 20 institutions will be granted the status as Institute of Eminence. To monitor and regulate such a vast area of education, there are the apex bodies and research councils such as University Grant Commission (UGC) All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) Council of Architecture (COA) Research Councils: Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR) Indian Council of Social Sciences Research (ICSSR) Indian Council of Philosophical Research (ICPR) National Council of Rural Institute (NCRI) Project of History of Indian Science Philosophy and Culture (PHISPC)

IV. PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES

A large structure of education from primary to tertiary has evidences a quantitative spread of education Such a vast field of higher education with bulky numbers of universities and educational institution raise a question mark when quality parameters come out for discussion. Many educationist and thinkers opine that after 75 years of independence, India's higher education system has still not been developed fully. There are many areas to be taken into consideration while examining the current position of Indian education system with other developed and developing countries' education systems.

Ensuring quality in higher education is amongst the foremost challenges being faced in India today. Quality environment, quality teachers, students, infrastructure, courses, programs, techniques, teaching aids and tools etc. are some of the challenges that are yet to resolve and needs urgent actions. The Government is continuously focusing on quality education still, a 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 their place among the top universities of the world. As a result of the increase in the number of affiliated colleges and students, the burden of administrative functions of universities has significantly increased. As a result quality of work gets deteriorated. The fact that there is not a single university that excels international universities and listed among the top 100 prime institutes of the world. The picture becomes grimmer when one regards it as the third largest in the world. While comparing to the foreign countries' status of higher education, India has a low rate of enrolment i.e. gross enrolment ratio (GER), at only 19%. If we compared to china and Brazil, the GER is 26% and 36% respectively. (British Council) The universities and institutions are seen to confront dual challenge of increasing the enrolment number in HEIs and to increase employability potential of the students. The technical education in India is another challenge faced by lakhs of students on the ground that it requires huge amount and fees that can't be affordable to many. The government as well as private institutes charges fees that blocks the poor student's journey towards HE at the very first stage. According to **Siddharth Banerjee MD- India & Asia, Pearson** With approximately 1,000 universities and 40,000 colleges nationwide, India has one of the largest higher education systems in the world. However, affordable access to higher education has remained a pressing challenge for our country. Education along with inculcation of values and ethics must provide employment or must cater the skills to raise self-employability of the students is the condition of the day. The technical education provided through technical institutions except IITs, IIMs and other reputed institutions perform unsatisfactorily because of their own challenges to follow government rules, vacancies, unstable staff, poor performance of the entry level students, market challenges, insufficient funds, vested interest of the management, etc. The product, i.e.the student who have passed from such institutions when enters the market do not necessarily crack the filters that make them empowered. If this is such a challenging situation for technical educational institutions, the picture becomes more dismal when one talks about general degree colleges which cater conventional education and offer basic degrees such as BA, B.Sc and B.Com.

The quality of education in India whether at primary or higher education is significantly poor as compared to major developing nations of the world. K. Balachander asserts that 'the idea of equalising educational opportunities also lies in the fact that "the ability to profit by higher education is spread among all classes of people. There are great reserves of untapped ability in the society; if offered the chance they can rise to the top. A great deal of talent of the highest level is, in fact, lost by an in egalitarian system of education'. In most of the state and central universities more than 30% of faculty positions are lying vacant. While the student enrolment in higher education is growing with faster rate in the last few years. Moreover the curriculum that needed to be updated within time does not see any relevant changes for years together. At one side, there are large number of eligible candidates fulfilling Net/SET/Ph.D requirement and at the other side, there are large number of vacancies of teaching post in universities. This imbalance between demand and supply directly affect the quality education.

V. LOOKING AHEAD

Indian higher education system is growing very fast in the last six decades irrespective of various challenges but there is no point to think that these challenges cannot be overcome. With the help of new-age learning tools, huge population properly educated, equity it is easy for country like India to overcome these problems. National Education Policy 2020 is introduced with the objective to implement and strengthen multidisciplinary, inclusive and technology-based learning that is accessible to all. It focuses on imparting higher education that enables personal accomplishment for students and prepares them to pave a good future. It has promised some massive changes and transformation that envisages mandatory quality education to the young generation. Choice based credit system, systematic and full fledge acquisition of degree, choice based mode of learning, Emphasis on Indian knowledge system, focus on values and ethics, multidisciplinary approach, Collaboration with international institutions, student exchange programme, high emphasis on research and innovation, emphasis on hybrid mode learning, importance on self and virtual learning and so on are the core concepts that are alluring and enticing and can change the face of higher education with more opportunities than challenges. With the sincere efforts of the government in utilising its sources and making people vigilant about is essentiality, our country can easily emerge as one of the most developed nations in the world. Education is a process by which a person's body, mind and character are formed and strengthened. It is bringing of head, heart and mind together and thus enabling a person to develop an all-round personality identifying the best in him or her. India is a country of huge human resource potential, to utilise this potential properly is the issue which needed to discuss. Ample number of 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. Online and digital learning mechanisms are evolved during corona pandemic. However, much work needs to be done for them to be truly effective. Alternative approaches to teaching and learning such as online learning are needed to complement traditional methods. Educational Technology (EdTech) which is often the backbone for solutions such as online learning has been gaining ground during the last decade and needs to occupy centre stage in order to create and utilize modern technology based learning.

Student exchange, faculty exchange programs, and other collaborations with high- quality national and international higher educational institutes are expected in multiple numbers. 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.

VI. CONCLUSION

To reach and achieve the future requirements there is an urgent need to re-examine quality, Excellence, Access and Equity, Relevance, Infrastructure and at the end the internationalisation and collaboration with foreign universities.

It seeks to bridge the digital divide, i.e. the gap in the skills to use computing devices for the purpose of teaching and learning among urban and rural teachers/learners in Higher Education domain and empower those, who have hitherto remained untouched by the digital revolution and have not been able to join the mainstream of the knowledge economy. The country must plan to focus on appropriate pedagogy for e-learning, providing facility of performing experiments through virtual laboratories, on-line testing and

certification, on-line availability of teachers to guide and mentor learners, utilization of available Education Satellite (EduSAT) and Direct to Home platforms, training and empowerment of teachers to effectively use the new method of teaching learning

VII. REFERENCES

[1]. AppuSrva, 2017) Present Education System in India, http://www.groupdiscussionideas.in/present-education-system-in-india/, 28thJanuary.

[2]. http//: www.Wikipedia.com

[3]. http//: www.Wikipedia.com Wikipedia

[4]. Sharma and Sharma: Indian Higher Education System: Challenges And Suggestions) Published by CORE Scholar, 2015

[5]. British Council, Understanding India: The Future of higher education and opportunities for international cooperation,2014.Websites: http://pib.nic.in/newsite/efeatures.aspx?relid=122741 http://ictpost.com/process-and-politics-ict-governance-in-indian-education/].

[6]. https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/services/education/future-proofing-indias-higher-education-system/articleshow/88899008.cms

[7]. Balachander, 1986Balachander, K.K. "Higher education in India: Quest for Equality and Equity", Mainstream, 1986.

[8]. https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/in/Documents/public-sector/in-ps-ASHE-Report2021-noexp.pdf)

[9]. etc. https://www.education.gov.in/en/technology-enabled-learning-0