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"New Dimensions in Higher Education"
One Day National Open Forum (Seminar)

Chief Editor
Dr. Mahadev Gavhane

Editor
Ln. Prof. Shivshankar Patwari
Dr. A. J. Raju
Dr. E. U. Masumdar

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REFORM HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA BY FORMING A COMMON HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY

Prof. Madhav Shelke
Shri. Balaji Masalge
Prof. Nitin Panchal

Rajarshi Shahu Mahavidyalaya, Latur

Introduction :

Higher education in India refers to study programmes offered beyond the senior secondary level leading to a degree or a diploma. It refers to all study programmes at the ISCED 5 and 6 levels. Higher education in India, like in other countries, has a university component and a non-university component. The universities have the authority to award degrees and offer courses at the undergraduate and post-graduate levels. The non-university institutions in India, in general, offer courses, especially in technical and professional subject areas. The universities, deemed universities and institutions of national importance award degrees while other non-university institutions mostly award diplomas or certificates. India follows a pattern of three years of post secondary education (PSE) for the first university degree (Bachelor's degree) and two years of further studies to obtain a Master's degree. However, a bachelor's degree in professional and technical education programmes may be of longer duration of 4-6 years.

Education is the foremost sector that shoulders the biggest responsibility of shaping the future of nation. India, though renowned since ancient time for higher educational institutions like Nalanda, is presently facing multiple challenges in education.

Higher Education in India:

The goals of the higher education, for that

matter any education system of any country is expansion with inclusion, ensuring quality and relevant education. To meet these challenges, there is a need for policy to identify the key issues involved, to build up on the earlier policies, and to take a step ahead.

Education neither a privilege nor favour but a basic human right to which all are entitled to be. "In our culturally plural society, education should foster universal and eternal values, oriented towards the unity and integration of our people. Such value education should eliminate obscurantism, religious fanaticism, violence, superstition and fatalism."

India's huge pool of young people might be considered its biggest strength. Unfortunately, India is far from having its act together when it comes to figuring out how to educate these young people. Government data suggests that only one out of every seven children born in India goes to college. What's more, the nation suffers from both a crippling quantity, as well as a quality, challenge when it comes to higher education.

The draft legislation for setting up a 'Higher Education Evaluation and Regulation Authority, 2018' (HEERA) or Higher Education Regulatory Council (HERC), says that the new authority will focus on setting quality standards for institutions, specify learning outcomes, lay down standards of teaching assessment and research and evaluate the yearly academic

performance of the institutes on clearly laid criteria.

Challenges in the Higher Education System:

The total population between the ages of 15 and 24 in India is 234 million. If India is to meet its 30 percent GER target by 2020, about 40 million students would be enrolled in the higher education system in 2020.

Currently, around 18.5 million students are enrolled in the higher education sector. The problem is that as increasing numbers come out of the high school system, we just don't have the capacity to absorb them into the college system. There is a massive mismatch in the supply-demand, of proportions that have never been seen anywhere or anytime in the world before.

The problems that confront higher education in India today are low rates of enrolment, unequal access, poor quality of infrastructure and lack of relevance.

1. Presently, education standards of higher education, research and innovative skills for novel ideas are not on par with international community in most of the universities of India.
2. There is an increasing gap between education and employability. Many of industrial persons complained about the quality of students coming from colleges. Mostly, students are lacking in job skills.
3. As per recent studies, around 50% of faculty are working in colleges based on contract. In long term, teaching with contract faculty has serious implications on quality and research.
4. Many of private colleges started to receive funds from UGC and fee refunds from state governments. Specifically, in south India every year, there were many seats vacant in engineering. Permissions for new colleges and existing colleges require more scrutiny than present.

Coordination and determination of standards in institutions for higher education falls

under the union list as per seventh schedule of our Constitution. When considering the nation as a whole it is evident that rural India still trying hard to enter the higher education sector.

The states are varying in the level of acquiring even primary and secondary education. So more care should be given to those states which are backward in these areas.

Measures needed to improve innovation in universities :-

Research cannot be improved merely by regulating universities, instead they need efforts to create enabling atmosphere for which it is imperative to grant more autonomy, better funding and new instruments to regulate work ethic.

- New initiatives like Hackathon, curriculum reform, anytime anywhere learning through SWAYAM, teacher training are all aimed at improving quality. These need to be effectively implemented.
- As India wants to transform its universities into world class institutions, it must safeguard the interests of young researchers and thousands of temporary faculty members by expediting the permanent appointments in a time-bound framework and transparent manner.
- Establish world-class multidisciplinary research universities
- Create a master plan for every state and union territory
- Each state must establish an integrated higher education master plan to provide an excellent education for all its residents.
- Attract the best and the brightest talent to be faculty members
- One of the fundamental changes India must institutionalize is a radically new compensation and incentive structure for faculty members. A flexibility to pay differential salaries based on market forces and merit must be part of this transformation.

Conclusion:

Thus a complete revamp is needed to meet the present demand and address the future challenge that India is about to face. To reap the diverse culture demographic dividend and to maintain peace and social harmony among them quality education with values are the necessary area to focus. The higher education is facing many challenges as pointed above, most the challenges are difficult but are not impossible to resolve. Our goal to be a world power, the resolving and restructuring of higher education is must, then only we will be able to harness the human potential and resources of nation to the fullest and channelize it for the growth of the nation. In the Union Budget for the financial year 2018-19, Education sector has witnessed an increase of almost 4% in terms of funds allocation. The Union Cabinet has taken a decision recently to give due importance to the Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA), a centrally sponsored scheme launched in 2013 to provide strategic funding to eligible State higher educational institutions.

Way Forward:

Education is the basis of human establishment and hence should be treated with profound seriousness. Maintaining the education standards will satiate the concerns of youth which is looking for opportunities within the nation. Not only economic fronts but education fronts should be dealt prudently in order to usher as a powerful nation in coming years.

Today there is much more data and evidence about the contours of the learning crisis in India than ever before. The time is ripe for timely and effective decentralised action to improve the quality of youth learning outcomes.

So, unless we ensure that our young people reach adulthood with the knowledge, skills, and opportunities they need to help

themselves, their families, and their communities move forward, India's much awaited 'demographic dividend' will not materialize.

If India really wants the best of the global players to come, it needs to lay out more attractive terms. Contrast that to places such as Singapore, Dubai and Qatar, which aren't just enabling quick permissions, but are providing top universities free infrastructure and facilities to entice them to set up campuses. Youth is the most important asset for a country their future is the future of the Nation. So, the government must be compelled to provide basic education and skills.

Keywords :

- 1) ISCED - The International Standard Classification of Education
- 2) PSE - Post Secondary Education
- 3) HEERA - Higher Education Evaluation and Regulation Authority
- 4) HERC - Higher Education Regulatory Council

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Aruna Prakashan, Latur

103, Omkar Complex-A, Khardekar Stop,
Ausa Road, Latur 413512 Mob. 9421486935