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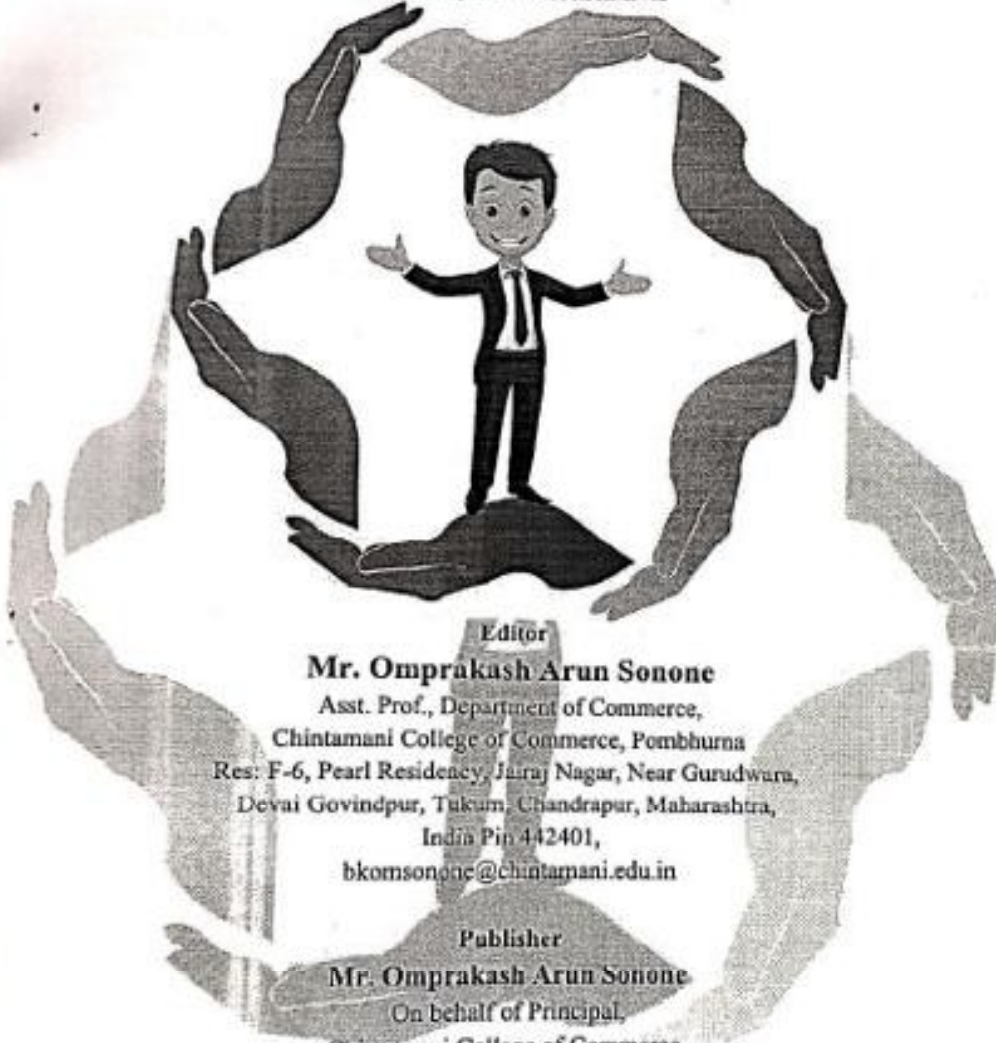


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PRESENT SCENARIO OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA: CHALLENGES AND SUGGESTIONS

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ABSTRACT

The higher education system plays an important role for the overall development of the country including industrial, social, economic and so on. There has been a huge increase in the number of universities / university level institutions and colleges in the field of post-independence higher education. In the future, India will become the largest learning center. At present, the role of Indian higher education institutions like colleges and universities is to provide quality based education in the field of education, skill enhancement, research and innovation, etc. to enable the youth to become self-reliant. This paper analyses the present scenario of higher education system in India, its challenges and suggestions for its improvement.

Keywords : Higher Education, HEIs, GER, Universities, Colleges

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The world has realized that the economic success of states is directly determined by their education system. Education is the power of the nation. A developed nation is essentially an educated nation. Higher education can be seen as the focal point of knowledge and its application. The Indian higher education system ranks third in the world, ahead of the United States and China. Since independence, India as a developing country has been making progress in the field of education.

India's higher education system has faced many challenges, then also there are some opportunities to overcome these challenges and improve the higher education system. That is why India supplies highly skilled people to other countries. Therefore, it is easy for India to transfer our country from a developing country to a developed country as India provides highly skilled people to other countries. It is the responsibility of universities and colleges to provide skilled staff to the nation and contribute in development of nation.

Higher Education is the education, which is obtained after completing 12 years of schooling or equivalent and is of the duration of at least nine months (full time) or after completing 10 years of schooling and is of the duration of at least 3 years. The education may be of the nature of General, Vocational, Professional or Technical education.

GER is the ratio of students enrolled in the age group of 18-23 years to the population in that age group. The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education has increased from 25.8 per cent in 2017-18 to 26.3 per cent in 2018-19, while in absolute terms the enrolment increased

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from 3.66 crore to 3.74 crore students, according to All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE). University Grants Commission has set a target to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education. UGC has also recently chalked out some objectives for improving the quality of learning in higher education institutions.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

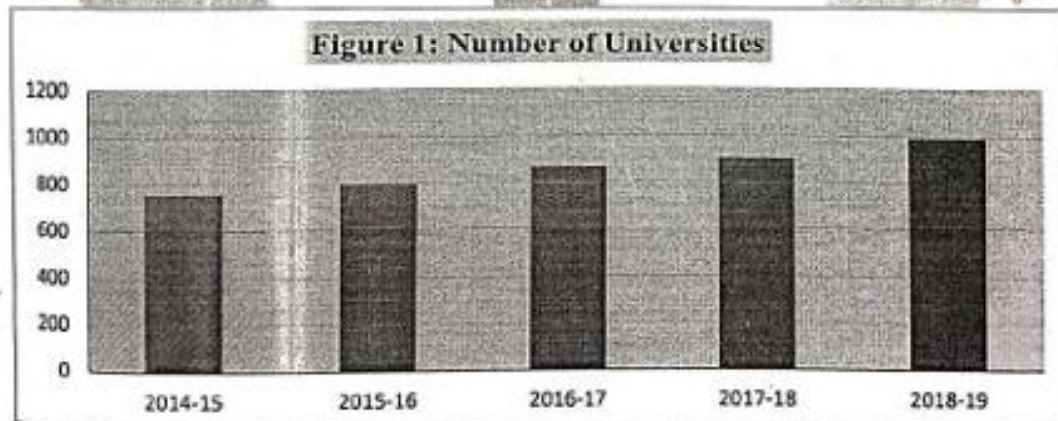
1. To analyse the Higher Education System in India.
2. To present the growth of Higher Education Sector in India.
3. To focus on the main challenges of Higher Education System in India.
4. To provide suggestions for improvement in Higher Education in India.

1.3 GROWTH OF HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR IN INDIA

Growth of the higher education system creates the various issues like quality of programs, public assessment, and the international ranking of higher education institutions. These institutions give high importance to research and its quality. Though there is remarkable growth in the number of colleges, universities and enrolment but it is a major challenge in front of government to enhance quality, expertise and transparency in this system.

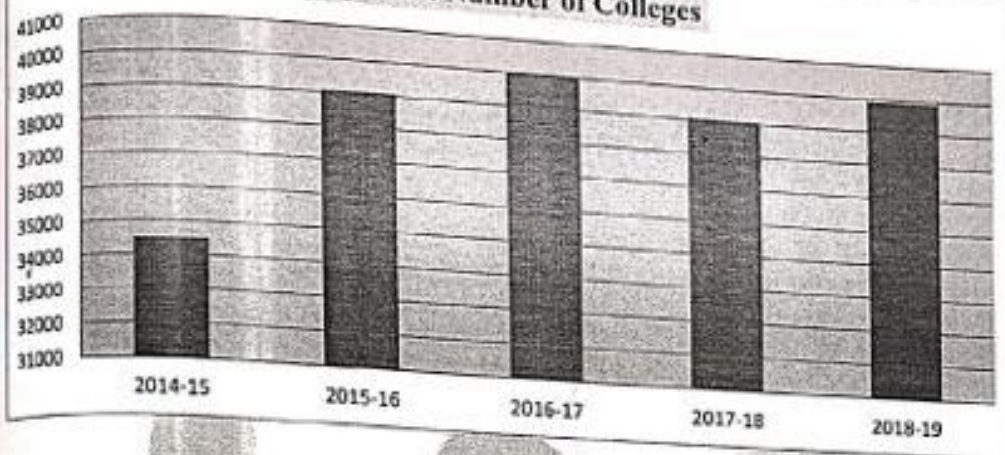
1.3.1 Growth in Number of Higher Educational Institutions

The number of Universities and similar Institutions listed on AISHE portal has increased from 760 in 2014-15 to 993 in 2018-19 by almost 30.7% as shown in the Figure 1. And the number of colleges has increased from 38498 in 2014-15 to 39,931 in 2018-19 by about 3.7% which has shown in the Figure 2.



(Source: AISHE Report, 2018-19)

Figure 2 . Number of Colleges



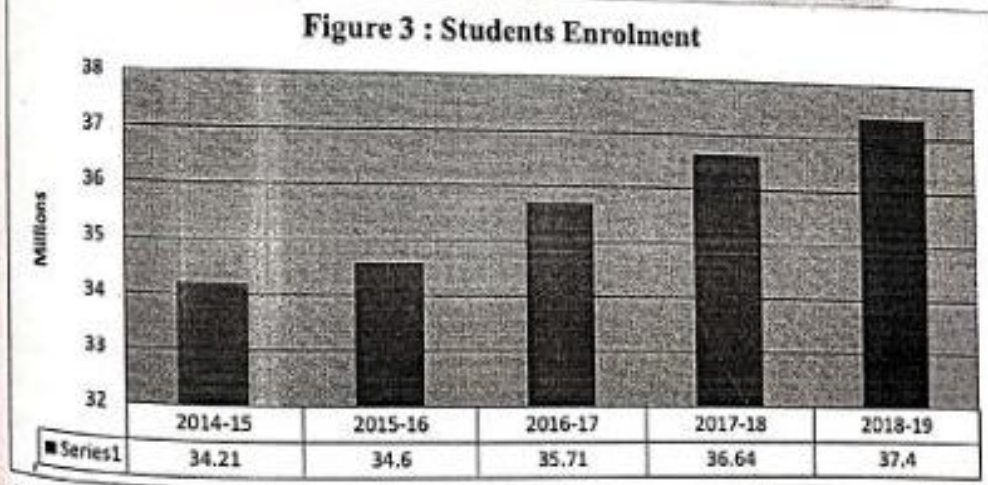
(Source: AISHE Report, 2018-19)

13.2 Growth in Student Enrolment

The student enrolment has been classified in 8 levels – Ph.D., Post Graduate, Under Graduate, PG Diploma, Diploma, Certificate and Integrated. The highest number of students is enrolled at Under Graduate level across India. Similar situation is observed in States.

The enrolment has increased remarkably during last 5 years, which has raised from 3,42,11,673 in 2014-15 to 3,73,99,388 in 2018-19. The overall growth is 9.3%. The growth in enrolment is presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3 : Students Enrolment



(Source: AISHE Report, 2018-19)

1.4 CHALLENGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

Despite this being the 72nd year of independence, our education system is not fully developed. We are not able to list one of the top 100 universities in the world. During these six decades, different governments changed. They tried to drive the education system and implement various educational policies but it was not enough to set an example to the world. UGC is constantly working to upgrade the quality of higher education, though there is growth in GER, still India is facing lot of problems and challenges in education system. Following are some of the main challenges –

1. Gross Enrolment Ratio

India's Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) in higher education has increased positively at 26.3% but it is lower than that of developed and other developing countries. Due to the increase in enrollment at the school level, the supply of higher education institutions is insufficient to meet the growing demand in the country.

2. Quality

To provide the quality higher education is one of the biggest challenges in India today. The government has consistently focused on quality education. Yet many colleges and universities in India are unable to meet the minimum requirements of the UGC and their universities are not in a position to show their place among the top universities in the world.

3. Male-Female Ratio

As per the AISHE Report, 2018-19, the ratio of male is higher than female in almost every level. Student enrolment at Under Graduate level has 51% male and 49% female. Diploma has a skewed distribution with integrated levels have 57.50% male and 42.50% female. PG Diploma student enrolment is 54.09% for male students and 45.91% for female students. The relatively higher share of male enrolment than female enrolment of students is also seen across the levels in the most of the States. 66.8% males and 33.2% females. Ph.D. level has 56.18% male and 43.82% female. Hence there is no equity in no equity in GER.

4. Social Category-wise Distribution

The total estimated student enrolment is 3,73,99,388 out of which nearly 51.36% are male and 48.64% are female students. SC student enrolment is 14.89% of the total enrolment and the male-female ratio is more or less similar to the All Categories. On the other hand, students belonging to ST category constitute only 5.53% of the total student enrolment and male female ratio is similar to All Categories. 36.34% of the total students belong to OBC with 50.83% of male OBC students. There is unequal ratio on the basis of caste pattern also. (AISHE Report, 2018-19)

5. Faculty

The lack of professors and the inability of the state education system to attract and retain qualified teachers has been challenging quality education for many years. Despite the large number of vacancies in higher education, a large number of NET, SET, Ph.D candidates are unemployed. These eligible candidates are choosing the another fields for their careers.

6. Pupil Teacher Ratio

Taking into account all types of Institutions (University, Colleges and Stand-alone Institution), Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) at All India level comes out to be 26 and 24 if only regular enrolment is considered. In case of University and its Colleges, PTR is 29 for regular mode. It has been observed that, PTR in University along with its Constituent Unit is significantly high at 18 in case of Regular Mode, which is a good indicator. Looking at the State-wise variation, it is seen that there are large variations among the States. PTR is more than 50 in Bihar, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh. Among top 6 major States in terms of Enrolment Puducherry has the best PTR of 11 followed by Lakshadweep 12, in terms of regular mode in all institutions.

7. Infrastructures Facilities

Infrastructure includes Playground, Library, Laboratory, Conference Hall, etc. 88% of Universities, 92% of Colleges and 90% of Standalone Institutions are maintaining playground. 94% of Universities, 98% Colleges and 98% Standalone Institutions have library facility. Percentage of University, College and Standalone Institutions having laboratory are 84%, 81% and 93%, respectively. There is less availability of Health Center, Computer Center, Auditorium, Conference Hall etc. are also in place with most of the Universities, Colleges and Standalone Institutions. Poor infrastructure is one of the challenges to the higher education system of India. (AISHE Report, 2018-19)

8. Political interference and Corruption

Most educational institutions are owned by political leaders, who play a key role in the board of directors of colleges and universities. They are using college students for their own selfish targets. Miseducated and Misguided students attracted towards fake popularity and publicity and forced to do their careers in politics.

Another fact is that, some educational institutions are taking a huge amount in the form of donations for giving recruitment to eligible candidates. Some talented students could not manage the amount and they could not enter in the teaching field.

9. Research and Innovation

In our country, there are only nominal scholars whose writings have been given by famous Western writers. There is insufficient focus on research in higher education institutions. There are inadequate resources and facilities as well as a limited number of quality faculties to teach students.

Government is providing the financial assistance to the students to encourage the research activities in higher education. But in India, most research scholars are not getting fellowships on time. It affects directly and indirectly on their research. Higher education in India is poorly connected to research centers. Hence, this is another area to challenge higher education in India.

1.5 SUGGESTIONS IMPROVING THE SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION

1. In order to make the Indian education system more relevant and competitive globally, there is a need to implement innovative and transformative approaches at the primary to higher education level.
2. Universities and colleges should regularly revise the curriculum with clearly specified program outcomes, course outcomes and program specific outcomes. They should develop such courses which creates job opportunities or self-employments opportunities.
3. Higher Educational Institutes need to improve quality by starting skill enhancement and capacity building programs, soft skill and personality development programs and provide them access to employment/self-employment.
4. Higher Education Institutes should start entrepreneurship development programs and sign Memorandum of Understandings with industrial set ups for providing employment opportunities to students. And motivate them to become entrepreneurs.
5. Higher Educational Institutes should provide good infrastructure facilities like playgrounds, libraries, laboratories, seminar halls, etc. of universities and colleges for making the education more comprehensive and overall development of students.
6. Higher educational institutes should arrange student exchange programs, faculty exchange programs, and MoUs with high- quality national and international higher educational institutes.
7. Government must promote collaboration between Indian higher education institutes and top International institutions and generates linkage between national research laboratories and research centres of top institutions for better quality and collaborative research.
8. Higher Education Institutes should organize expert lectures, internships, live projects, career counselling programmes and placements activities for better quality of higher education.
9. Higher Education Institutes should not allow the interference of political parties in academics and maintain multidisciplinary approach in higher education.

CONCLUSION

In the last seven decades since independence, higher education has grown rapidly in India, but not for everyone. India is one of the fastest growing countries in the world today in the every sector along with education sector. A large section of the population is still uneducated and a large number of children do not even get primary education.

India is facing various challenges in higher education but there is no doubt that it is very important to meet these challenges and promote higher education. India is a country with human resource potential. Now, it is a need of hour to make best utilization of this resource. In this paper, researcher analyzed the present scenario of higher education of India. Researcher recognized the challenges in higher education such as enrolment ratio, male-female ratio, problems in the financial assistance to research students, quality of education, infrastructure problems, shortage of faculties, etc. To improve the higher education system we need to improve teaching pedagogy, create proper links between research and teaching, promote industry tie ups,

capacity building and skill enhancement programs, infrastructure facilities in higher education institutions. This is necessary for the overall development of nation.

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