

A Study about Higher Education in India

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Abstract

Higher Education is very important to achieve sustainable growth and development of any country in general and India in particular. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, gave the foundations of the Indian Higher Education in 1948 through University Education Commission and the e got momentum by way of The Central Advisory Board of Education Committee, the National Policy on Education and further boost in various Five Year Plans in the country. Its research capabilities boosted by annual R&D spends totaling over US\$140 billion. In the last 20 years alone, 6 Indian intellectuals have been awarded the Nobel Prize across categories.

Indian Universities and Colleges are facing major challenges as they traverse the 21st Century and make decisions that will not only impact higher education but will also contribute to country's future competitiveness in the worldwide market place. Education should satisfy the employer, as they are the ultimate people to judge the efficacy of higher education obtained by the students.

The prevalence of a climate of goodwill and respect for institutions of higher education is now replaced with a general sense of hue and cry with distrust. Colleges and universities are challenged to serve a variety of students, from academically gifted to under-prepared for college-level study. Cost of education and debt burden after the study forces the students to think twice before opting for higher education. So it is very clear that the students are starting their course by pressure and ending with the pressure of job availability, that too on time. This aspect is to be given due consideration by the Government and others responsible for creating a climate of confidence in our Quality of Higher Education.

Keywords

Quality Education, Enrolment, Teaching, Technology, Job Market

1. Introduction

The growth and development of India lie in having an appreciable development in Higher Education. The foundation for higher education was laid by DR. S. RADHAKRISHNAN in 1948 with the help of University Education Commission. The importance got momentum by way of The Central Advisory Board of Education Committee, the National Policy on Education and further boost in various Five Year Plans in the country. Its research capabilities boosted by annual R&D spends totalling over US\$140 billion. In India, 6 intellectuals got the Nobel Prize in varied categories in the past 20 years. But, nowadays, Higher education is under attack. Students from different sections in the society are being served by universities and colleges with multiple subjects.

Cost of education and debt burden after the study forces the students to think twice before opting for higher education. Parents, society, and the country places more expectations of higher education for economic well-being of the country. It is a well-known fact that the students are starting their course by pressure and ending with the pressure of job availability, that too on time.

2. Meaning

In simple term, Higher Education is presumed as an education beyond the school level. The education may be of three aspects namely General, Vocational, Professional or Technical Education. It offers people with an opportunity to imitate on the dire social, economic, cultural, spiritual and moral matters facing humanity. It contributes to national development through dissemination of specialized knowledge and skills.

3. Type of Institutions

All Institutions of higher education are broadly be classified into three categories, namely, University/ University Level Institutions, Colleges/ Institutions affiliated/ recognized by University and Stand-alone Institutions not affiliated/ recognized with University.

Table 1: No. of Universities and Colleges

Year	Universities	Colleges
2014	723	36634
2015	760	38498
2016	799	39071
2017	864	40026
2018	903	39050
Total	4049	193279

(Source: All India Survey on Higher Education, 2017-18)

In 2014, there were 723 Universities and 36634 Colleges. In 2018, it rose to 903 Universities and 39050 Colleges. So in total, 4049 Universities and 193279 Colleges in the country catering to the needs of students.

4. Mode of Higher Education

The various levels of programmes can be obtained by three different ways depending upon the capacity of an individual. The first one is **Regular mode**, i.e. formal system of higher education – a direct contact with the teachers and also makes use of other infrastructure facilities further facilitating learning. The next one is **Self-Financing Courses in Regular mode** through Government aided Universities/ Colleges/ Institutions without the financial support from the Government. The other one is the **Distance/ Correspondence mode**, simply known as non-formal system of Higher Education. This is normally through telecasting, broadcasting, internet, correspondence courses, contact programs, seminars or the combinations of any two or more such means of good communication. The enrolment of PG programmes under Regular mode rose from 1521127 in 2014 to 30377099 in 2018 as such 37128817 students enrolled. The enrolment in UG programs stood at 22184092 in 2014 to 24845665 in 2018, altogether with a total of 119728101. The enrolment under Distance mode stood at 3285834 in 2014 to 3449586 in 2018, totaling with 16904737 students.

The growth in student enrolment is clearly visible from the following table and shows that more and more students are eager to pursue education to live a decent life in the ever changing society.

Table 2: Growth in Enrolment of Student

Year	Enrolment
2014	32336234
2015	34211637
2016	34584781
2017	35705905
2018	36642378
Total	173480935

(Source: All India Survey on Higher Education, 2017-18)

5. Management of Higher Education

In India, the management of higher education is being carried by the Central Government, and State Governments. Apart from that, any institutions or colleges promoted by other local body or by an individual, Trust, Society or other private organization getting financial assistance from the Government or not, are being managed by Local Body for strengthening higher education in the country.

6. Student

Student means a student of the institution who has enrolled himself/herself to pursuing any programme conducted by the institution. Foreign students are also allowed to join subject to availability of seats designed by the government from time to time and to enroll within the stipulated time frame.

7. Gender-wise Enrolment

Like male students female students are also acquiring higher qualifications to lead a happy life in the society. The number of male students rose from 17495394 in 2014 to 19204675 in 2018. Similarly, female students from 14840840 in 2014 to 17437703 in 2018. This has been provided in the following table which is self-explanatory.

Table 3: Gender-wise Enrolment of Students

Year	Male	Female
2014	17495394	14840840
2015	18488619	15723018

2016	18594723	15990058
2017	18980595	16725310
2018	19204675	17437703
Total	92764006	80716929

(Source: All India Survey on Higher Education, 2017-18)

8. Gross Enrolment Ratio

The Gross Enrolment Ratio of male and female from 2014 to 2018 is in the increasing trend and this has been depicted in the following table for clear understanding of the same.

Table 4: Gross Enrolment Ratio

Year	Male	Female
2014	23.9	22.0
2015	25.3	23.2
2016	25.4	23.5
2017	26.0	24.5
2018	26.3	25.4

(Source: All India Survey on Higher Education, 2017-18)

9. Teacher

The teacher is defined as a faculty or staff assigned the professional activities of providing knowledge, giving instructions and guidance in the subject area of studies. Normally, this will be in self-contained classes or courses or in classroom situations based on the fixed time and place of learning.

10. Pupil Teacher Ratio

In the year 2018, the Pupil Teacher Ratio is as per the standard requirements of 30 in the country and is shown with the help of the following table. The table gives an idea over a period how it has increased from 2014 to 2018 in respect of the universities and colleges and also university and its constituent units.

Table 5: Pupil Teacher Ratio

Year	University and Colleges	University and its Constituent units
2014	21	16
2015	22	15
2016	21	16
2017	25	19
2018	30	20

(Source: All India Survey on Higher Education, 2017-18)

11.Recent Trends in Higher Education

Union finance minister Mr. Arun Jaitley announced various doles for students and education sector in India in his Budget 2018 speech. Budgetary expenditure on health, education and social protection in 2017-18 was Rs.1.22 lakh crore but the same has been increased to Rs.1.38 lakh crore in 2018-19.

12.A New Financial Model for Higher Education Sector

The government has planned to invest Rs.1,00,000 crore in another four years in improving the research and development in various reputed educational Institutions in the country. A comprehensive plan has been developed in the name of “New India 2022” to increase the infrastructure in the research field to develop higher education.

13.Training to Teachers

The greatest resource in the classroom in a teacher. All Institutions should think of increasing the knowledge of a teacher, by way of providing him/ her a good training which is quite often regarded as an area of a neglected one.

14.Change of Curriculum and Entrepreneurial Spirit

Nowadays, the topic of entrepreneurship has gained momentum among the public. The reason being the development of the economy in the country, are supported by business start-ups. It creates more job for the people. Universities and colleges are considered to be an important place in developing the entrepreneurial spirit among the students.

15. Boosting Technology in Education Sector

In the present scenario, use of chalk, blackboard, ink pens and textbooks are not considered to be an important one. The technology has occupied most of the areas of the educational. In fact, teaching and learning have gone beyond the norms of reading from a book and understanding. With the swift development of technology, students are able to understand concepts in a more meaningful manner.

16. Government Efforts

All India Survey on Higher Education was initiated in 2011. The XII Plan highlighted the need for a strong and comprehensive data for evidence-based policy making and effective planning. A new plan scheme, Higher Education Statistics and Public Information System have been approved in XII Five Year Plan. To collect the data a steering committee for Higher Education Statistics and Public Information System was constituted under the chairmanship of Secretary, Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resources Department and different stakeholders as members of the said committee.

17. Why Quality in Higher Education?

The following years will be considered in the nature of skill development, innovation-based technologies, talent analytics, automation, and advanced IT. The world is changing quite often and technological innovations have become faster and cheaper thereby making traditional jobs and skills buried under the ground. There are at least six distinct skills required for the present day work force compared to two skills which were sufficient in 1980s and earlier. The global job market will be dominated by coding, soft skills, emotional intelligence and cross cultural competency, healthcare and allied skills, including expertise in telemedicine and robotic surgery, expertise in social media platforms and computational and analytical thinking. Based on the mind boggling future scenario, it is imperative that the present day education must be tuned to this state. All those connected with the growth of quality education in India must realize this in good spirit and work towards developing quality education.

By 2022, job scenario will change in a more drastic manner. This has been emphasized by various reports ranging from EY, NASSCOM and FICCI. Changes in the worldwide in all fields, and more importantly in

advanced technologies. In the coming years, Nine percent work force would be in new jobs which do not exist today and Thirty Seven percent would be in jobs which will radically change the skill sets in a more different way. Twenty-one percent of workforce will face existential threat and around Twenty- Twenty Five percent jobs will be in organized sector will reach Ten percent from the current Eight percent level. Thus, organized workforce will be around 46-48 million by 2022.

18.Nature of the Study

The topic “**A Study about Higher Education in India**” is a research paper undertaken by selected colleges in Chennai region. A new insight is being conceived and brought into limelight about the present status and ways to make it more meaningful and beneficial to all.

19.Objectives of the Study

1. To study the current status of higher education in India.
2. To analyse the trends in higher education in India.

20.Research Methodology

The present study is based on Primary and Secondary data. The primary data is in the nature of questionnaire wherein students of both girls and boys were considered for the study. The details are collected and systematically arranged. The secondary data consists of published reports from journals, newspapers and magazines.

21.Limitations

1. The period of study is limited to six months duration starting from October, 2017 to March, 2018.
2. Colleges in Chennai alone are considered for the study.
3. Students pursuing higher education both girls and boys were contacted for the study purpose.

22.Analysis of Data

By using a simple statistical tool, the primary data were analyzed to elicit the information. The outcome will be much helpful in knowing the present status and what actions are in dire need for giving boost to quality higher education in India.

Table 6: Management of Higher Education

	Management of Higher Education should be in the Hands of	Response	%
a.	Academicians	107	86
b.	Political interference	18	14
		125	

(Source: Primary Data – Questionnaire)

The above Table 6: Management of Higher Education - of all the students, 86 percent stressed that it should be in the hands of Academicians and 14 percent said reluctantly, that it should be in the hands of political parties. But in reality there is no need for political people to fall in line in providing higher education.

Table 7: Accessibility of Higher Education

	In India Accessibility of Education is Very Much Available to all.	Response	%
a.	True	31	25
b.	False	94	75
		125	

(Source: Primary Data – Questionnaire)

In Table 7: Accessibility of Higher Education Seventy-Five percent of the people said it is not easy and Twenty-Five percent opined it is somewhat true. By going so deeper into the meaning of accessibility only rich people are finding it to get their desired course due to the availability of money. Whereas, people in villages and rural side are finding it difficulty owing to distance, money, transport, poverty and ignorance in the family.

Table 8: Need for Quality of Research

	What constitutes important in improving the Quality of Research in Higher Education?	Response	%
a.	Increase in laboratories	28	22
b.	Upgrading of laboratories	22	18
c.	Motivate researchers	30	24
d.	Provision of more funds	45	36

(Source: Primary Data – Questionnaire)

Table 8: Need for Quality of Research, the importance of funds was fallen by 36 percent, followed by motivation to researchers with 24 percent and 22 percent expressed that more laboratories are the need of the hour and a mere 18 percent said that upgrading of present laboratories are to be given importance. It is clear that more and more research institutions equipped with latest developments will help in improving the quality of research in higher education. This will help in positioning our country in education at higher level, internationally.

Table 9: Graduates Employability

	Our graduates are more employable in nature	Response	%
a.	True	61	49
b.	False	64	51
		125	

(Source: Primary Data – Questionnaire)

The above Table 9: Graduates Employability, Forty-Nine percent expressed that our Indian graduates are more employable in nature in all sectors, and fifty-one percent said that they are not fit for employment conditions in the country, by any sector. Every year nearly 15 million graduates complete their course, and it has been found that seventy-five percent are not having the basic required soft skill and technical knowledge to perform the given task in an appreciable manner. So only twenty-five percent are eligible in the job seeking area as per the McKinsey report. There is a possibility that the above twenty-five percent may go in the future to twenty percent also. In another survey, “Aspiring Minds”, of the 15 million graduates, ninety-five percent of engineers can’t code. This is a sorry state of engineering students in the country.

Table 10: Coordination of Higher Education

	There is no coordination between Centre and the States in Promoting Education	Response	%
a.	True	120	96
b.	False	5	4
		125	

(Source: Primary Data – Questionnaire)

In Table 10: Coordination of Higher Education - The centre takes all possible steps to streamline the higher education and make it more meaningful and purposeful but most of the State Governments are voicing against the center's action and putting a halt abruptly. As our political leaders are narrow minded and self-interest in nature, any reform brought forward will yield result slowly, and at times it may remain only on paper. The majority of the students accepted by ninety-six percent, that there exists no coordination between the Centre and the States, and only a meagre four percent expressed a different opinion.

23. Findings

Accessibility to higher education has been hampered by the availability of finance coupled with a higher cost of educational loan, distance, transport, dire poverty, and ignorance. More Funds should be made available which will support the growth of quality in higher education. In practice, most of them are not ready to cough enough funds and trying to run with the available quality. Most of the higher educational institutions are run by politicians and tainted leaders any change in policy matters to enhance the quality by the Government, vehemently opposed by the politicians and rulers of various States. Their narrow mind makes it cumbersome in the implementation of policy decisions, thereby, the standard is in eroding nature.

24. Suggestions

1. The management of Indian Higher Education should be in the hands of academicians and experts in the field of education.
2. As education is the backbone for the economic development of a country, steps should be taken to provide more and more funds at regular intervals to strengthen higher education.
3. Accessibility should be made easy by opening more institutions in the rural areas by giving wide publicity to all.
4. The government should make international collaboration compulsory which will give a room of improving the quality. For this purpose, free guidance, provision of funds and other moral supports should be carried on vigorously.

5. To make our students highly competitive in the employment scenario, changing of the curriculum at a regular interval should be taken into account.
6. Value Education should be added as a compulsory one in all curriculum for developing good attitudes on the part of students for a safe and happy living in society.

25. Conclusion

The rapid changes are challenging in nature, the system should be matched with the industry requirements and learner aspirations. The challenges can be clustered under the category of – **Equity, Excellence and Expansionary**. Moreover, as the job market and industry of ever-changing nature, equipping people with the required skills are considered the utmost important and that can be fulfilled only by good educational system. It is also nice to follow the footsteps of developed countries in imparting education, which will help a lot in acquiring, developing and maintaining quality in **Indian Higher Education**.

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