

DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA: MANAGERIAL ISSUES

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Introduction

We move toward a global economy when we become more and more interdependent in terms of trade, culture and communication. The University has always been global continuing to be a powerful force in the world. The modern University emerges to be an international knowledge system encompassing technology, communication and culture. It is also the primary centre of learning and repository of accumulated wisdom. Again, the University becomes a centre of Economic and cultural development in the knowledge based society. It educates the people, performs research, provides opportunities for social mobility and certifies expertise and professional competence. In this context, it is important to study the growth and development of higher education in India in terms of student enrolment, access and equity and quality education.

The size, structure and growth of the Indian Higher Education System are really unbelievable to see when compared to those at the international level. There are more than 20,000 educational institutions in India with a little higher than 5 lakh teachers and 1.2 crores of students in addition to 450 Universities. It is unquestionable to approve that India emerges to be the third largest country in the world in terms of spread of Higher Education. It is the fact that the number of Educational Institutions in India out numbers that of the rest of the World taken together. But at the same time, it is to note that the Gross Enrolment Ratio in Higher Education is about 11% in India. This is very less when compared to that of the world average (23.2%). The Indian academic structure has adopted the British Universities as its model. However, the recently established universities in India have adopted the organizational models of the U.S. Universities. Though, they look like that of the U.S. Universities in terms of organizational structure, they basically differ from U.S. Universities in terms of vision and mission. Despite of our social diversity and complex economic development, the educational system in India moves towards ensuring uniformity leaving little choice for the students.

Many colleges act like tutorial colleges with fixed curriculum with the purpose of cracking examinations. It is the need of the hour for consolidation of resources available in various colleges and Universities by merging and clustering them. This exercise may ultimately result in effective intellectual exchange, benefit from synergy and share the infrastructural facilities. The National Knowledge Commission has already suggested that

the U.G. colleges may be restructured in order to create small Universities with an aim of bringing out changes in the policies and practices.

It is observed that the enrolment pattern is skewed in favor of conventional arts and humanity courses with less enrolment in P.G. and Doctoral studies. We have to ensure proper mix of streams in the expansion side by integrating vocational courses with arts and humanities by suitable curricular reforms. It is proposed that the GER be enhanced to 15% by 2012 with an additional capacity for 7.5 million students. The Central Government has been setting up several IITs, IIMs and other premier institutions for enhancing the turn out of the higher professional education. 16 new central Universities and 14 world class Universities have been established in the recent times.

The issue of expanding access in Higher Education is associated to the rising aspirations of the learners in the recent time. The unplanned proliferation of Universities and colleges expanded the access to Higher Education over the period of time from independence. But at the same time, the recent focus on inclusive growth shows a clear direction for the expansion of access to Higher Education. The financial limitations also put constraints in the enhancement of access. Perhaps, better access to higher education in India in the recent times must be attributed to private enterprise in this direction. The change in the socio-economic realities and gradual shift towards pro-market economic policies, help privatization of higher education and thus 60% of the school pass out go for higher education in India.

The enrolment rate being 6.73% and 19.8% for the rural and urban areas respectively, it is understood that the GER in the urban areas trebles when compared to rural areas. The GER among the SCs (6.3%), the STs (6.33%) and the OBCs (8.5%) was much lower when compared to the others (16.6%). The SCs, the STs and the OBCs from all religions suffer from lower access to higher education. The SCs within the Hindu and the Sikhs suffer more than SCs belonging the other religions. Again, OBCs within the Muslims suffer more than the Hindu OBCs. Similarly, the STs within the Hindu suffer more than their Christian counterparts. Gender disparities in terms of access to Higher Education is really very wide. The enrolment ratio is generally low for females (9.11%) when compared to males (12.42%). The females belonging to lower castes and some religions suffer more acutely in accessing higher education than other females. The GER for Muslim females was 5.8% as compared to 9.32% for Hindu females, 12.7% for Sikh females and 16% for Christian females. The GER for the poor is 2.21% as against 12.36% for the non-poor. Differences in the GER are also seen across occupational groups in the rural and the urban areas. The 11th Five Year Plan recognized the problem of multiple natures of disparities in enrolment rate and proposed policy measures to enhance men access to higher education. Hence, it is

obvious that inclusive education requires an increased access to higher education to these multiple groups who suffer from lower access to higher education (Pawan Agarwal, 2009).

The demand for higher education is rapidly growing. So, Government Institutions can accommodate all those who are aspiring for Higher Education. Hence, the future of Indian higher education largely depends upon the growing private sector. Private higher education has flourished in low-risk higher profit segments of higher education. We have to establish self-financing colleges even in Arts and Science subjects. So far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, the number of such colleges has increased from 6 in 1984-85 to 297 in 2006-2007, a fifty fold increase. It is to note that the number of Government and Government aided colleges increased only by six (from 187 to 193) during the same period. Again, the number of private engineering colleges increased from 0 in 1984-85 to 254 in 2006-2007. Despite the emergence of quality private institutions, there are poor colleges which plague private provision. Anyhow, private institutions continue to be the main venue for increasing access to higher education. The growth of private higher education leaves large gaps which need the public institutions to fill up the gaps. The public institutions should take care of the P.G. and research programmes in addition to such programs as arts, humanities and languages. The foreign universities emerging in the recent times become a challenge to the local condition. While private Universities enhance access, foreign universities energize local institutions through competition.

Conclusion

Indian Higher Education system has undergone changes with unprecedented growth transforming from an elite system to a mass system. Higher Education is now easily available to the public including the underprivileged and weaker sections of the societies. However, the system has to change its organizational structure and form and maintain uniform standards of education. In this context, it is imperative that we have to take corrective measures to bring out reforms in our system of Higher Education.

References

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