Quality Concerns in Higher Education

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Abstract

The higher education plays as leadership role in the system of education. Quality education can ensure security, welfare and prosperity of a nation. The key factors influencing the quality of higher education is the quality of faculty, curriculum standards, technological infrastructure available, research environment, accreditation regime, administrative policies, financing, evaluation and good governance. In the 21st century those countries will lead the world who have quality higher education system because higher education not only generates larger personal and social wealth, but all the aspects of development such as intellectual, social, cultural, aesthetic, economical, moral, and human resource are directly or indirectly related to it. Poor infrastructure, examination ridden curriculum, memory based examinations, lack of quality faculty members, poor teaching methods, lack of funds, inconsistent government policies regarding higher education, vested political motives, huge demands of young population, political turmoil, growing privatization, lack of access and equity etc. are some of the challenges in higher education. There are many more such challenges and this paper critically analyses all those challenges along with the possible solutions.
Keywords: Higher Education, Quality, Higher Education Institute, Enrolment, Challenges, Solutions

Introduction

Higher education is a powerful tool to build modern, value-based, knowledge based, culture based, and peaceful society which can lead the country towards becoming super power in the world. It is also considered one of the important and strong tools for the development of any country. Primary education is necessary for creating base, while, higher education is extremely important for providing cutting edge. Higher education contribute to the growth of nation by providing specialized knowledge and skill manpower. India's higher education system is the second largest in the world, after the United States. The main governing body at the tertiary level is the University Grants Commission, which enforces its standards, advises the government, and helps coordinate between the centre

and the state. These data represents that higher education does not stand anywhere among the world higher education institutions with respect to quality.

Challenges to Quality Higher Education
Lack of Access and Equity

The lack of access and equity is the most serious challenge faced by Indian higher Education. In some areas or town or states the access of higher education is absolutely fine for all the people. But in some areas where the even the higher secondary schools or colleges are very scares.

Poor Government Budget: Low budget is a serious challenge in the field of education. Very meagre amount of fund is allocated for the education system. And the matter is that most of the allocated fund is spend in school education, very less amount is spend on higher education sector. The amount of scholarship is significantly low and Public expenditure on scholarships has been declining over the years. For education an extremely low percentage of graduates in India avail student loans. Sometimes the fellowship of research scholars are not transacted in the due time that leads to frustration among the scholars. Though some quantitative development is seen, but due to low budget quality of higher education is facing a serious challenge.

Gap between Demand and Supply: India has a huge growing young population. They demands education after finishing their higher secondary education. But it fails to meet the demand of the people. According to a study conducted by ASSOCHAM 93 per cent MBA graduates are unemployable. It is because the availability is not up to the demand of industry. Another thing is that,

due less job opportunity students continue their study after finishing their course of study. This leads to over demand of education in higher level.

Poor Infrastructure: Though India has tremendous development in the higher education, still there are large number of colleges, institution and universities where even the basic facilities are not available. Old classrooms are there; lack of sufficient building, staffrooms, library or resource rooms, laboratory, technological facilities, instruments for practical classes, toilets and urinates, drinking water facilities etc are there. The poor infrastructure of institutions directly throwing challenges to the quality of higher education. This problem is found basically in rural areas.

Inadequate Number of Faculty members: Another serious challenge to the higher education is insufficient number of faculty members in the colleges and universities. Without the teachers the intended learning outcomes cannot be achieved. Even the single teachers have to teach number of different subjects to large number students along with other work load. Thus the student teacher ratio on the whole is at a lamentable state.

Improper Teaching Method: At the tertiary level there is no such formal training for the faculty members. Therefore the unqualified or untrained faculty members are appointed. As they don't have knowledge of pedagogy and teaching techniques, their quality of teaching is very poor and the learning outcome is meagre.

Low Performance of the Teachers and Principles: In India, a large section of teacher community does not perform their duties well. The moment they have been

appointed to the colleges, they thought that their learning is complete. They just perform their daily basis duties to come to the colleges and make the attendance continue. Even in some colleges, teachers come in interval basis and perform their personal work. The principles of colleges remain absent and doing their own personal business. They do not take strict actions against the non-performing teachers as they themselves are engaged in forgery.

Lack of Available Resources: The quality of education is directly depending upon the learning process. The availability of learning resources is very less in Indian colleges. Most of the colleges have poor quality of library building. This leads to poor service of the library. Number of books are very less, no magazine, no journal that lead to the up gradation of new knowledge. There are also poor internet facilities to access the online database and resources.

Examination Ridden Curriculum: In India most of the universities has over loaded curriculum of theoretical knowledge. And this curriculum is only concerned with the passing of examination. Not only this, curriculum is not up to the mark in terms of market demand. Old and outdated curriculum is still being followed by most of the universities where due to globalization the demand of quality and skill is changing every day.

Poor Financial Condition of the students: It is major setback for Indian higher education that due to lack of financial support many large numbers of students compel to drop their study. This is because, among Indians, even after the 70 years of Independence, the economic disparity is very high. While successive governments have declared financial aid for different weaker section but many more people still do get this benefit. Due to financial problem students are not able to get admission in quality institutions, could not by books and available technological accessibility.

Privatization: Due to the lack of public fund and degrading quality, privatization of higher education is developing in fast speed. Though it seems that privatization can improve the quality, but somehow it is found that in some areas of education it leads to very poor quality of education and management. This also leads to disparity in quality educational. Education sector is being grabbed by education mafias who have huge money power.

Political Turmoil: Indian higher education is facing very bad political turmoil. Due to this, no stability is found in the education policies that can promote the quality education. Whenever the government change, different political parties frame new policies according to their vested interest. Therefore with change of power, the educational policies also change that leads to overwork and frustration among the learners and different stake holders.

Solutions

Promote Access and Equity: It is the most serious issues that need to be addressed as soon as possible. Regional, religious, financial and caste disparities have to remove to give access and equity. Different welfare schemes for different groups have to introduce to promote access and equity to all the groups involved in the teaching-learning process.

Framing Realistic Financial Plan: The concerned governments in the central and the state need to frame realistic financial planning to achieve the target. Any mismatch with the budget and target of the policy makers will lead to the poor quality of education. Therefore the government need to allocate more funds.

Bridge the Gap between Demand and Supply: As there is huge demand of higher education among the growing young population, their demands needs to be urgently supplied.

Establishment of new institutions and increase the strength of the old institutions can solve this issue.

Infrastructural Development: To improve the quality infrastructural development is essential. The government must ensure proper physical access to these communities and emphasize on construction of higher education institutions in closer proximity to villages. All the accessibility must be ensure in the name of infrastructure to improve the quality of higher education.

Appointment of Sufficient and Quality Faculty Members: It is an alarming issue needs to be urgently addressed. First of all a large number of teachers needs to be appointed either ad hoc or guest basis or permanent basis. At least there must be one teacher for a particular subject. After that we need to focus on the quality of the teachers for the permanent basis. Strict rules and regulation must be followed; academic background, research and experience must be taken into consideration.

Training of Faculty Members at Tertiary Level: The faculty members of college and universities need to be trained in regular interval basis. Basically all the newly appointed members must be given different exposures for training with intensives.

Vigilance and Supervision or Inspection: Vigilance or supervision is essential for all the public sectors; it may be in government offices or schools or colleges. Sudden visits or regular inspection surely improve the performance of the faculties in school or colleges. In this case strict actions must be taken if any irregularities are found.

Provision for Online Resources and Books: At the present time ICT facilities is an essential part of any institution. Therefore use of computers and online access must be established in different institutions to avail the online learning resources.

Job Oriented Curriculum: This is an urgent need to update the curriculum with the changing global scenario. In today's world, everything in the higher education affected by the globalization. Hence the curriculum must be frame according to the local as well as global perspectives.

Welfare Schemes and Scholarship: The government has to sanctions fund for different schemes and scholarship so that needy students can avail education. If it is possible then, they can also take part in the process of nation building.

Controlled and Monitored Privatization: Privatization to some extent has important contribution to the quality higher education. But the rate in which it is growing without quality concerns needs to be urgently monitored and controlled. The money oriented approach of the private institutions needs to be changed.

Strong Policies for Higher education: The government have to frame stable and

strong rules, regulation and policies. This will create stable mind set about higher education among different stakeholders of education.

Conclusion

Thus it can be concluded that education is the key to the progress especially higher education which provides the cutting edge and skilled manpower. But, quality of higher education is declining and is a matter of concern for all the stakeholders as well as for the whole nation. We know the importance of quality higher education. It directly influences the all aspects of development of a country and helps the country to stand high in the global platform. In India during the periods of seventy years, the higher education has developed a lot in terms of quantity. However, we are still lacking of quality higher education as expected. To improve the quality of higher education the concerned authorities have to concentrate on the parameters (such as sufficient infrastructure, updated curriculum, trained faculties, learning resources, financial help, and well planned policies) of quality higher education. It is only the quality higher education that can establish India as world leader to lead the world of 21st century.

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