Issues and Challenges Before Higher Educational Sector in India

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Abstract- Higher education system plays an important role for the country's overall development which includes industrial, social, economic etc. Indian higher education system is third largest in the world. The role of Indian higher educational institutes such as colleges and universities in the present time is to provide quality based education in the field of education, research etc to empower youth for self sustainability. This paper includes the key challenges that India is currently facing in higher education and also includes some initiatives taken by the Government to meet those challenges.

Keywords- Higher Education, Empower, Self Sustainability. Challenges.

I. Introduction

Higher education means different things to different people. If we talk about higher education in terms of level, it means to gain higher educational qualification by the teaching-learning process in the higher educational institutes such as colleges and universities. Moreover higher education imparts knowledge, develops the student's ability and also gives him/her a wider perspective of the world around. Higher education becomes input to the growth and development of industry and also seen as an opportunity to participate in the development process of the individual through a flexible education mode.

II. Higher Education in India

Next to China and United States India has the third largest higher education system in the world in terms of size and its diversity and largest in the world in terms of number of educational institutions. After independence Indian higher education attain a massive growth.

In the Indian system, higher (tertiary) education starts after the 10+2 (i.e. ten years of primary and secondary education flowered by two years of senior secondary education). Framework of higher education in India is very complex. It includes various type of institutions like universities, colleges, institutes of national importance, polytechnics etc. Universities are also of different types like central universities which are formed by government of India, by an act of parliament which are responsible for arranging and distributing resources required by university grant commission(UGC), State universities, Deemed universities (aided and unaided) and Private universities. India has a federal set-up and the Indian constitution places education as a concurrent responsibility of both the centre and state. While the centre co-ordinates and fixed standards in higher and technical education, school education is the responsibility of

state. Under the department of higher education there are several regulatory bodies and research councils which are responsible for the higher education in India.

Regulatory Bodies:
University Grant Commission (UGC)
All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)
Council of Architecture (COA)
Research Councils:
Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR)
Indian Council of Social Sciences Research (ICSSR)
Indian Council of Philosophical Research (ICPR)
National Council of Rural Institute (NCRI)
Project of History of Indian Science Philosophy and Culture (PHISPC)

III. Issues and challenges before higher educational sector in India

The Standing Committee on Human Resource examined the challenges of higher education in India after studying the higher education institutions in Hyderabad, Chandigarh, Patiala, Thiruvananthapuram, Udaipur, Chennai, Vishakhapatnam, Bhopal and Indore. The Committee also interacted with public sector banks regarding the education loan facilities being provided to students for higher education.

The key observations and recommendations of the Committee are as follows:
- **Shortage of resources:** Bulk of the enrolment in higher education is handled by state universities and their affiliated colleges. However, these state universities receive very small amounts of grants in comparison. Nearly 65% of the University Grants Commission (UGC) budget is utilized by the central universities and their colleges while state universities and their affiliated colleges get only the remaining 35%. The Committee recommends that the mobilization of funds in state universities should be explored through other means such as endowments, contributions from industry, alumni, etc.
- **Teacher vacancies:** According to UGC, the total number of sanctioned teaching posts in various Central Universities is 16,699 for professors, 4,731 for Associate Professors and 9,585 for Assistant Professors. Out of the total sanctioned teaching posts, 5,925 (35%) professor posts, 2,183 (46%) associate professor posts and 2,459 (26%) Assistant professor Posts are vacant.
- **The Committee reasoned that this could be due to two reasons:** (i) young students don't find the teaching profession attractive (ii) the recruitment process is long and involves too many procedural formalities. The recruitment process should start well before a post is vacated. In addition, to make the profession of teaching more lucrative, faculty should be encouraged to undertake consultancy projects and be provided financial support for start-ups.
- **Accountability and performance of teachers:** At present, there is no mechanism for ensuring the accountability and performance of professors in universities and colleges. This is unlike foreign universities where the performance of college faculty is evaluated by their peers and students. In this context, a system of performance audit of professors based on the feedback given by their students and

colleagues should be set up. Other inputs like research papers, publications by teachers should be added in the performance audit in due course of time.

- **Lack of employable skills:** Lack of employable skills in students of technical education has been observed. Identification of skill gaps in different sectors and offering courses for enhancing employability in them has been recommended. Some strategies in this regard can include: (i) Industry Institute Student Training Support, (ii) Industrial Challenge Open Forum, (iii) Long Term Student Industry Placement Scheme, and (iv) Industrial Finishing Schools.
- **Accreditation of institutions:** The Committee notes that accreditation of higher educational institutions needs to be at core of the regulatory arrangement in higher education. Further, quality assurance agencies should guarantee basic minimum standards of technical education to meet the industry demand for quality manpower. The National Board of Accreditation should act as a catalyst towards quality enhancement and quality assurance of higher technical education.
- Credit rating agencies, reputed industry associations, media houses and professional bodies should be encouraged to carry forward the process of rating of Indian universities and institutions. A robust rating system will give rise to healthy competition amongst universities and help improve their performance.

IV. Suggestions for Improving the System of Higher Education

- There is a need to implement innovative and transformational approach form primary to higher education level to make Indian educational system globally more relevant and competitive.
- In higher educational institutes Industrial co-operation must be there for the development of curriculum, organizing expert lectures, internships, live projects, career counseling and placements.
- Higher educational institutes need to improve quality, reputation and establish credibility through student exchange, faculty exchange programs, and other collaborations with high- quality national and international higher educational institutes.
- Government must promote collaboration between Indian higher education institutes and top International institutes and also generates linkage between national research laboratories and research centers of top institutions for better quality and collaborative research.
- There is a need to focus on the graduate students by providing them such courses in which they can achieve excellence, gain deeper knowledge of subject so that they will get jobs after recruitment in the companies which would reduce unnecessary rush to the higher education.

V. Conclusion

In this paper we have presented the present situation of India in higher education sector. We also identify the challenges like demand-supply gap, lack of quality research, problem of infrastructure and basic facilities, shortage of faculty etc in the higher education. The implementation framework for twelfth plan aims to focus on improving quality of state institutions, to revamp financial aid programs, to interlink expansion,

equity and excellence. To improve the higher education system we need to improve teaching pedagogy, build synergies between research and teaching, from facilitate alliance of higher institutions among themselves, research centers and industries. This is necessary not only to take care of economic growth, but it is also essential for social cohesion and to empower the country's youth.

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