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## Restructuring and management of higher education in India

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### ABSTRACT

*Education has a vital role to play in the life of an individual as well as the society. The availability of quality higher education in India, though increasing, is unable to meet the demands of the growing youth population and aspirations of the people. To meet the higher educational requirements and aspirations of its people, India has more than 150 Central Universities, more than 315 State Universities, approximate 200 Private Universities and a whopping 34,000 odd colleges. This paper reviews the management of higher education in India*

**Keywords**— *Restructuring, Management, Higher education, India*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

*“Education is not the learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think” [1]*

*-Albert Einstein*

A country that does not invest its intellect, energies and time on education of its people is bound not to reap the fruits of prosperity, development and a standing in the world community. The second most populous country in the world, India is also one of the youngest countries with more than 1.27 billion people. India's average age will be 29 years by 2020. Presently, 50% of the population is below 25 years and 65% is below 35 years of age.

To meet the higher educational requirements and aspirations of its people, India has more than 150 Central Universities, more than 315 State Universities, approximate 200 Private Universities and a whopping 34,000 odd colleges. We produce an approximate 9 million graduates and 1.5 million engineers every year and another 229 million of us are receiving school education at any point in time.

The above figures are suggestive of a superpower with unbridled potential and unfathomable opportunities. But the parallel truth is that we have the largest number of educated unemployed who, the industry claims, are inadequately trained and qualified. We have the largest number of school and university drop-outs. In spite of Right to Education, we have a large chunk of our population not attending school and only a handful of our universities find a mention in worlds' top universities. In short, we are yet to exploit the potential of our demographic dividend. And the country will not remain young for very long. Soon our average age will begin to represent various shades of gray.

The availability of quality higher education in India, though increasing, is unable to meet the demands of the growing youth population and aspirations of the people. At the same time, it has been widely recognized that the country has a unique opportunity to convert its demographic surplus into its economic strength by providing its young people the right kind of skills and knowledge. Following this understanding, and due to the persisting problems in the sector, higher education now must occupy a central position in the country's strategy for global competitiveness and inclusive growth, and several steps need to be taken for its improvement. After having analyzed the prevailing situation, it becomes imperative to suggest a framework for the creation of a competitive environment in higher education that would ensure not only better utilization of public funds and improvement of both public and private institutions but should also reduce the gap between supply and demand of quality education in India.

In India, while public institutions and public funding characterized the growth and expansion of higher education in its elite stage of development, however, the reach of higher education in India has become a market-mediated process facilitated mostly through private institutions and financed by the households. This is in contrast to the developments in the matured market economies where the reach of higher education was facilitated mostly through public institutions. The reach of higher education in India for the masses has posed challenges to expand the system with equity, to improve quality while expanding the system and managing the sector efficiently and effectively. Therefore, there is a requirement of an increased role of the state or autonomous bodies to regulate the sector while encouraging an expanded role of the non-state actors and ensuring autonomy in the functioning of institutions of higher education.

Unfortunately, the higher education system ails from a plethora of factors ranging from accreditation problems, finances, quality and quantity of institutions and faculty, teaching methodology and skewed admission process, growing mismatch in the ratio of available educational institutions and student population, lack of private sector participation, politicization, malpractices, commercialization, system not being in synchronization with the socio-economic realities and last but not the least, a complete disconnect with the requirement of our industries. It is therefore important that the higher education system must meet the aspirations of people and provide equal opportunities to the students both in terms of quality of education and number of educational institutions. These problems, if not addressed with the required sincerity and urgency, will lead to slow socio-economic growth, large-scale unemployment, and societal unrest.

Education has a vital role to play in the life of an individual as well as the society. It is considered to have the potential to effect change in the system of social stratification. Education assumes special significance in the context of a quasi-traditional or transitional society like India where it has to face multifaceted developmental challenges like, "Education and social change, education and national development, education and human rights, education and social justice, education and international understanding, education and equality, education and societal and cultural progress and the list could be prolonged indefinitely. Behind each statement has an ideology-about the role that education must play in building minds for the future" [2].

The emergence of a worldwide economic order has immense consequences for higher education more so under the changes that have taken place in the recent past with regard to globalization, industrialization, information technology advancement and its impact on education. Aided to these are the policy changes that have taken place at the UGC, AICTE, DEC, NCTE, Medical Council, BOR Council, Architecture Council and such other regulatory bodies from time to time to accommodate these developments and yet maintain quality students in higher education. The landscape, in general, has changed towards a new order. It is obvious, Centre and State governments, institutions, academic & non-academic staff need to gear themselves to deal with the challenges posed by those to achieve the slated, and it demands a review of the beaten track, set notions, comfort, attitudes and work styles. It is time for all those who are concerned with policymaking, planning, administration and implementation of Higher Education's to revitalize the very thinking on the subject and put it on the right track. It is well known that the Indian higher education system is not only large but also the most complex one.

**Today, the higher education system as a whole is faced with many issues of concern** like financing and management, including access, equity, relevance and reorientation of the program by laying emphasis on values, ethics, and quality of higher education together with the assessment of institutions and their accreditation. These issues are of vital importance for the country, as it is engaged in the use of higher education as a powerful tool to build a knowledge-based society of the 21st century.

Recognizing this requirement as also the basic fact that the institutions of higher learning have to perform multiple roles like creating new knowledge, acquiring new capabilities, producing intelligent human resource pool, Indian Higher Education system has to address itself to global challenges through channelizing teaching, research & extension activities and maintaining the right balance between the need and the demand.

Higher education needs to be viewed as a long-term social investment for the promotion of economic growth, cultural development, social cohesion, equity, and justice. In order to meet the aim of inclusive growth and to ensure genuine endogenous and sustainable development along with social justice and equity, the higher education sector has to play a pivotal role especially in generating research-based knowledge and developing a critical mass of skilled and educated personnel. Within this philosophical paradigm, some of the issues pertaining to the higher education system have been identified, that need to be seriously addressed for the balanced development of higher education in India.

The globalized era has necessitated inculcation of competitiveness. This can be achieved only by bringing the quality of the highest standards in every sphere of work. Therefore, the quality of higher education has become a major concern as of today. Needs and expectations of the society are changing very fast and the quality of higher education needs to be sustained at the desired level. Quality would mainly depend on the quality of all its facets, be it the Faculty, Staff, Students, Infrastructure, etc. As such, all the policies, systems and processes should be clearly directed towards attaining improvements in all the relevant facets for the overall rise in the quality of education.

Therefore, there is an inescapable requirement of reforms in the higher education system by restructuring it not only to obviate the above-mentioned maladies but also to meet the aspirations of the people. Reforms in the higher education system have to be made by linking it with vocation and designing it after taking due consideration of the socio-economic realities of our population and the requirements of our industries so that it is able to address their specific needs.

Govt has recently taken few initiatives in this direction and some are in the pipeline. However, these need to be institutionalized based on the existing socio-economic fabric of our society and obtaining ground realities. **Some major issues of restructuring and management of Higher Education recommended in India are** strengthen the Foundation of Education that is Primary & Secondary education, not Rote Learning concept but reasoning & problem solving approach, Skill Development to start only after 10<sup>th</sup> standard when a child has grown sufficiently with broader awareness of the social needs of the society, Exit and Re-entry should be available to cater for students who are unable to continue with education but are still keen to rejoin after domestic conditions stabilize, mandatory adoption of Semester System in all state & central institutions, Introduction & Institutionalization of Choice Based Credit System in the entire country, need for Creative Exam System & Continuous Evaluation, urgent need to enhance Access & ensure Equity (Rural, urban and gender disparities must be kept in mind), need of an independent accreditation agency with a conglomerate of government, industry, academia, society etc., Industry and Academia connect, more Govt funding, further

Privatization of Higher Education with increased PPP, encourage the Arts & Humanities streams with equal job opportunities, develop concept of 'Earn while you Learn' just like the west, creating large education hubs & urgent need to pass/clear pending education bills.

## **2. REFERENCES**

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