

# Crises of Indian Higher Education System: An Overview

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## Abstract

It is true that Indian education system is lagging behind both qualitatively as well as quantitatively in ratio of population and educational progress of developed countries. On the other hand it has achieved substantial growth after independence but we may compete with china and Japan, which are examples for us. On one hand, we are grappling with quantity but on the other hand the most serious concern is quality and relevance of higher education imparted to student. In terms of quality, the biggest lacuna in the system of higher education is mismatch between the need of society and what the students are taught in classrooms. Our universities and colleges produce a number of unemployed youth every year that is not fit for corporate sector. It is due to lack of proper governance and commitment to work. So, there is need to paradigm shift in education. There is no dearth of intellectuals/professionals in India who may come with shining stars only if policy makers have patience and concern. Keeping the new education policy educate, encourage and enlighten in view, we must go ahead.

**Keywords:** India, Tertiary education, Crises

## Introduction

The Indian education system still suffers from colonial legacy. With the privatization of education, the institutions turned into factories manufacturing degrees. Enrolments also become/fruitless activity when students target to obtain certificates and degrees for the sake of being called educated as against qualified. The concept of equity becomes irrelevant when institutions confer degree only. In place of providing jobs, making a complete man or creating opportunities for growth.

In terms of quantity, there has been substantial growth in Indian higher education in the post independence context from 30 universities and 590 colleges in 1947-48, the number has gone up to around 600 universities and 27000 colleges. Despite such a quantitative expansion, we still fall short of universities and colleges as only 10% of 17 to 23 years age group are enrolled in higher education system which is far below the world average of 23%. These poor enrolments are further marked with percentage of those students who have degrees and certificates but are not employable. The enrolments are more in field of humanities and social science.

As regards, number of Institutions of higher learning, Japan has 4000 universities for its 127 million people and USA has 3650 universities for its 301 million people. While in India, we have 547 universities for 1.2 billion people.

Knowledge commission 2006 wanted the enrollment in higher education to increase 15% by 2015 for which, it has recommended to establish 1500 universities before 2015, but it has not been converted into reality.

On one hand, we are grappling with quantity, On the other hand the most serious concern is quality and relevance of higher education imparted to students poses a serious concern.

No doubt, there are hurdles in development of higher education in India. Policy makers and educationist must realize and improve it. The higher education has number of challenges which cannot be accomplished overnight. Higher learning is not for learning but it is major input for overall progress of country. It is high time, when India may formulate a vision and policy for development of skilled human resources with an aim to achieve required development and reduce the percentage of unemployment. Viewing potential of India's booming industry and technology (like BPO and retail sector), one may expect somehow India will tackle with these difficulties.

### 1. Ground realities of the educational system

The reality of present higher education system is as follows:

- Enrolment in commerce stream has increased in comparison to science stream.
- We have only 10% enrolment at university level; moreover we produce too much unskilled unemployable graduates.
- We also disobey demand and supply rule, though we have enough demand of skilled graduates in corporate sector but our passed out graduates are incapable to cater their needs.
- As regards quality, we are far behind in input, process and output indicators of quality.
- Though in some universities and its associated colleges, all the latest amenities have been provided but due to lack of quality thinking, it failed to produce expected results.
- Due to lack of commitment, devotion and passion for work unlike missionary schools and colleges, we could not succeed.
- Our evaluation system judge only the rote memory power of students, his/her creativity and innovation etc. are not judged.

- Our curriculum is traditional and completely theoretical; it should be practical and applicable.
- Skill based departments like department of local governance, youth development, skill development, gender studies, panchayati raj, development studies etc. should be initiated in every university/college/institution.
- Our faculty members are more engage in strengthening their resume for promotion purpose by having projects etc. They are less cautious to build up the career of their students.
- Our research scholars especially scholars of humanities and social science focus to submit their thesis/dissertation/project work through jugar technology, they are less bother in creating/ innovating some new formula/principle/theory etc.
- Even in most prominent research institutes like NBRI, CDRI and ITRC, some researchers are busy in completing their research works by cut-copy-paste method.
- Even after introducing semester system, most of our students become serious before one month of examination only. For the rest of the months, they remain busy in non educational practices.

It reveals that they do not take pain in studying thoroughly, their focus is not to gain knowledge but to achieve the degrees for getting jobs.

- Even after so much pedagogical researches and implementation, teachers are engage in completing the course with their traditional method. The changes are either on paper or it is regulated at the time of inspection of concerned authority.
- The latest objective of education has not been finalized yet.
- There is much unrest among students, their endurance has been weakened. Their moral values are degrading. Their expectations are high, while role is less. They want to become big-gun overnight.
- Filthy politics is involved in students at college level, moreover this politics does not work for their future career. They waste the most of their time in college politics and making fun in place of thorough studies.
- The condition of off campus /satellite campus is bad to worse. Governance from head quarter is its major problem.
- The allotted fund is surrendered to UGC because of non- utilizing the fund. This is due to lack of commitment, devotion and strategy to work.
- Minority institutions have been privileged to run educational institutions by self established trust/management body. These management bodies have become political houses. Their offspring becomes the head of institutions without proper election. Consequently, the quality of these institutions suffers.
- There is little accountability because there are no rewards for performers and no penalties for non performers.
- Hierarchy of governance is same as 60 years back while system is rapidly changing.
- Budget heads are allocated to departments on guess/anticipation method keeping 31<sup>st</sup> March, closing year in view but not on the basis of priority of need and exact calculation.
- Revenue generation is not a major problem of Indian higher education system but governance and policy formulation.

## 2. Educational Crises

- Non uniform policy of admission procedure in various educational institutions
- Lack of polarization of higher education
- Poor infrastructure
- Compromising classrooms
- Financial crises
- Poor academic administration both in colleges and universities.
- Traditional evaluation system which fail to measure soft skills and analytical abilities of students.
- 'Take it easy' attitude of students and teachers.
- Curricular and pedagogical reforms are not coping up with the rate of advancement of knowledge.
- Lack of strong regulatory authority to check and balance the institutions.
- Capitation fees fetched by private institutions.
- Negative attitude towards research.
- Political interference in the autonomy of higher education.

### 2.1 Weak regulatory bodies

For quality control of higher education system, we have a number of ways of checking, monitoring, testing, inspection, and determining standards of university/college/ institution viz. NET, NAAC, NBA, NCTE, DEC and AICTE etc. but these agencies are effected by government, politics and favoritisms etc. so, there is need to set up an independent regulatory body like proposed Lokpal Bil of Anna Hazare.

## **2.2 Off-Campus are marginalized**

Recently emerged off-campus satellite campus of various institutions like Lucknow and Shillong campuses of English and Foreign Language University, Lucknow, Bhopal, Darbhanga and Sri Nagar campuses of Maulana Azad National University, Tura Campus of North-Eastern Hill University and Murshidabad Kishanganj and Mandlapuram Campuses of Aligarh Muslim University etc. are running in India. These campuses are thousands of kilometers away from their head quarters. All academic, administrative and financial matters are dealt at these campuses but are controlled by the directives of their head quarters. Ultimately quality education of campuses suffers.

## **2.3 Lack of commitment to work**

Why quality of our educational institutions does not improve whatever amenities are given in form of infrastructure, funding, salary increment etc.? Denial, delaying work or throwing ball in other court has become our habit. Most probably, most of us do not take institutional work as their personal work. Till we are committed to work, it would merely be a dream to talk about quality education. One of the best solutions is that the Registrar of every university should be either an I.A.S Officer or an Officer of Military.

When Japan can establish 400 Universities in 70 years after complete demolition of Second World War, why do we have only 547 universities after independence? It shows that there are some major problems with us apart from poor infrastructure and lack of funding etc.

## **2.4 Short Cut Method**

Most of us are comparatively less sincere about our work in comparison to citizens of development countries. However, every sphere of our life is connected with Jugar technology. Whether exam of U.G./P.G. students, viva-voce of Ph.D. Scholars or official work of staff, everybody is linked with 'Chalta Hai' attitude or Jugar technology. Anybody may believe or not, it is inherited in our personality. So, there is an urgent need to eliminate these habits from the personality of youngsters from childhood through moral teaching.

## **2.5 Result of Public Private Partnership**

The owners of private institutions are fetching capitation fees according to the need of the students. They are not worried about quality of education. In such institutions, only the rich can afford. Thereby, the gulf between the rich and poor will further widen. Consequently, the poor and deprived of society will be marginalized.

## **2.6 Poor evaluation system**

In India, most of the pass-out graduates/ masters are of humanities and social science. Besides it, they are through private, distance and correspondence courses. It has not been observed that there has been any behavioral change in their knowledge standard, skill or personality, though it is the primary objective of education. The institutions award them degrees on the basis of written exam, which the student mugs up from the material available in the market. It is a pity that private institutions are constantly striving to bring out 100% results. The institutions do not bother to evaluate the capabilities, soft skills and analytical skills of students.

Now the universities are progressing to shift from annual evaluation and marking system to semester and grading system respectively. There are imbalances of curricula, pedagogical methods and mode of evaluation. Theoretically we have moved from Norm referenced tests (NRT) to criterion referenced test (CRT) but practically we are still not prepared mentally.

## **2.7 Poor ICT & Infrastructure**

On paper, we learn and discuss much about ICT and web 3.0 but practically we have a very less number of institutions which are equipped with ICT labs, computer labs and media. We are still compromising with chalk and dust. Universities and colleges do not have ICT facilities as well.

## **Conclusion**

It is true that the status of India higher education is not at par with the excellence of other institutions at world level. We are nowhere in the ranking of top 200 universities. Sometimes, IIT or any other institute gets ranking from bottom of the list. Our system is also not job oriented and produces unemployed youth. It also does not create creativity, innovation or produce good citizens. In the name of change, every political party incorporates their heroes and sets aside others as a patriotic. Every system introduced for improvement collapses due to lack of commitment, theft from other countries or incompetency of governance. So, there is a need to initialize such a mechanism, which suits the Indian environment.

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