

## TREND EVALUATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

*Dr. Indu Mazumdar*

*Prof., LNUPE, Gwalior, M.P., India*

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### ABSTRACT

*One of the striking features of the development of higher education in India over the last few decades has been the extent to which private institutions have entered the scene and attempted to respond to the massive demand for education at the post-secondary level. The evaluation of curriculum material occupies an important place as on the provisions of effective, meaningful, need based and rational curricular material depends the growth of the learners. Good study materials contribute to desirable changes in the learners. It has therefore, to be assumed that the curriculum materials are of good quality. Higher education has received a lot of attention in India over the past few years. Country having weak higher education system, is being blamed for skill shortages in several sectors of economy.*

*Key words: Higher Education, Process Development and Trends.*

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### INTRODUCTION:

Higher education in India has expanded rapidly over the past two decades. This growth has been mainly driven by private sector initiatives. There are genuine concerns about many of them being substandard and exploitative. Due to the government's ambivalence on the role of private sector in higher education, the growth has been chaotic and unplanned. The regulatory system has failed to maintain standards or check exploitation. Instead, it resulted in erecting formidable entry barriers that have generated undesirable results. Voluntary accreditation seems to have no takers from amongst private providers and apparently serves little purpose for any of its stakeholders. This is particularly true in the fields of engineering, medicine, and management, and much less at the broader level of university education. The strong emergence of the private sector is reflected in the funding pattern: While the government's share in overall education expenditure has declined from 80 percent in 1983 to 67 percent in 1999, private expenditure on education has increased more than ten times over the same period.

The higher education system in India grew rapidly after independence. By 1980, there were 132 universities and 4738 colleges in the country enrolling around five per cent of the eligible age group in higher education. Today, while in terms of enrolment, India is the third largest higher

education system in the world (after China and the USA) with 17973 institutions (348 universities and 17625 colleges) and is the largest higher education system in the world in terms of number of institutions.

There are different types of universities and colleges in the higher education system in the country. They vary in terms of their academic, administrative and financial arrangements. Universities can either be established by an Act of Parliament or by the state legislatures. Those established by the Act of Parliament are the central universities and the ones set up by the state legislatures are state universities. Some higher education institutions are granted the 'deemed university' status by the central government through gazette notifications. A few institutions are established by the Parliament / state legislatures as institutions of national importance. Universities, deemed universities and institutions of national importance are degree-granting institutions.

One of the key factors behind Indian success in outsourcing is the fact that India could produce thousands of graduates who are skilled in English language. Indian universities are often thought of to be among the best in the world and it is a reality that many Indians are working in the major international companies around the world. In general some of the major problems of higher education in India.

1. Quality vs quantity: In terms of quantity, India is quite impressive. Every year, India is producing 2.5 million graduates and this figure is just after US and China. However, in terms of quality India is falling behind than the developed world. In fact, many of the graduates cannot find job as they are not up to the mark.
2. Research: This is one area; Indian universities are still far behind than US universities. In fact, many of meritorious scholars from India go to US in the hope of having good research facilities.
3. Poor salary: Teaching is an ill paid job in India. As a result, many brilliant students are not coming to teaching. Some Indian teachers and scholars are migrating to the western countries for better facilities.

4. Study Science: These days most students in India want to study engineering and business. As a result, good students are not interested to study in Humanities subjects.

5. Poor funding: India is not a rich country and naturally Indian government cannot afford to provide a lot of money for the universities and colleges. On the other hand, the tradition of private companies sponsoring research projects is yet become popular.

6. Primary education: India needs to invest more on improving the quality of primary and secondary education.

7. Infrastructure: Since Indian universities do not have sufficient funding naturally they cannot invest enough on improving their infrastructure. I really wish that Indian universities and colleges could get more funding to set up world class labs.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS BY VARIOUS COMMISSIONS:

A National Knowledge Commission (NKC) was accordingly set up to prepare a blue print to tap in to the enormous reservoir of knowledge base to confidently face the challenges of 21st century. Some other important recommendations of NKC on expansion include change in the system of regulation for higher education, increase in public spending and diversifying sources of financing and establishment of 50 national universities. The Commission perceiving confusion and overlap in mandates of multiplicity of regulatory agencies has recommended establishment of an Independent Regulatory Authority for Higher Education (IRAHE) which should be at an arm's length from all stake holders including Government of India. IRAHE conceptualised by NKC is to be set up by an Act of Parliament and would be the only agency authorised to accord degree granting powers. "The purpose of creating an IRAHE is to separate these functions. The proposed IRAHE shall be responsible for setting the criteria and deciding on entry. It would, in addition, licence agencies to take care of accreditation. The role of the UGC will be limited to disbursing public funds. Issues of access will be governed by state legislation on reservations and

other forms of affirmative action. And, professional associations may, in some institutions set requirements to determine eligibility for conducting a profession.”

The Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India set up another Committee, post- NKC, under the chairmanship of eminent physicist and a former Chairman of UGC, Prof. Yashpal, to guide the efforts at reforms process. This Committee known as the Committee to Advise on Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher Education submitted its report very recently (June 2009) and advised a different structure and role for the regulatory authority than the one suggested by NKC. Prof Yashpal Committee maintained that a holistic view of knowledge requires a regulatory system which treats the entire range of educational institutions in a holistic manner. The Committee recommended a single, all encompassing higher education authority since it considered all higher education including engineering, medicine, agriculture, law and distant education as an integrated whole. This Committee noted that there were 13 professional Councils created under various Acts of Parliament to promote and regulate specialised areas of education and underlined the need to bring them under a national apex body for bringing greater coordination and integration in the planning and development of higher education system including research as already envisaged in the National Policy of Education (1986) and the Plan of Action (1992). The Committee accordingly proposed to create an apex body to subsume academic functions of all professional bodies to be called The National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER).

#### CONCLUSION:

Higher education has received a lot of attention in India over the past few years. There are four reasons for this recent focus. First, country's weak higher education system is being blamed for skill shortages in several sectors of economy. Second, reservation quotas in higher education institutions, particularly the more reputed ones that provide access to high status and best-paid jobs became a highly divisive issue, central to the policy of inclusive growth and distributive justice, and hence politically very important. Third, in the backdrop of the first two developments, it began to be argued that the country would not be able to sustain its growth momentum and maintain competitiveness unless problems with higher education are fixed. Last,

demand for higher education continues to outpace the supply due to growing population of young people, gains in school education, the growing middle class and their rising aspirations.

It is widely believed that technological advances and a shift in demographic provide India with a window of opportunity to productively engage its huge pool of human resources, and become a leader in both the rapidly expanding sectors of services and highly skilled manufacturing. This would, however, require revamping the higher education sector. Hence many steps have been taken to augment supply, improve quality and fix many of the problems faced by higher education. The National Knowledge Commission (NKC) that was set up to examine the higher education sector (amongst other things) made several useful and important recommendations. The Government of India has increased funding significantly during the Eleventh Five Year Plan.

The inability to incentivize quality in private institutions of higher learning is the key failure of India's education regulators. Rather than improving quality, the state's stranglehold on higher education has created an artificial shortage leading to an acute supply-demand mismatch. The demand for higher education has been growing rapidly with comparatively faster growth in enrolment in higher educational institutions than the growth in number of higher educational institutions. The regulatory process is thoroughly politicized; it is well documented that most private colleges are owned by politicians or well-connected business houses. The poor quality of such institutions offers a readymade excuse to impose even stronger government regulations, notwithstanding the fact that high entry barriers-ostensibly erected to improve quality- allow poor institutions to thrive in the first place. While the regulatory bodies seek to guard the portals of higher education, and are entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring adherence to minimum guidelines by existing institutions, however, these regulations, in their current form are simply erecting entry-barriers rather than working to remove the asymmetry.

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