



## THE STATUS OF HIGHER EDUCATION INDIA

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### ABSTRACT

The challenges in front of today's higher education are to meet the growing demand for qualitative and quantitative education in the country. Privatization in education has been observed chronologically region wise. It is highly influenced in southern part, western, northern and eastern part of our country. The term privatization is usually used to denote a process of selling shares of a public company's stock to individuals, i.e. private sector. The central government finances the education at less than 1% of GDP. The government sponsored capacity building is not sufficient to meet out the emerging need for higher education. Today 14.6 million students are enrolled in higher education sector. According to FICCI-E&Y report, to achieve 30% gross enrollment rate (GER) over the next decade the country would need an additional capacity to cater to 25 million new seats. The extra capacity generation would need extra Rs. 10 lakh corers by 2020. The funding requirement is of Rs. 0.4 million per seat. The current budgetary allocation for education is insufficient. Private sector can bridge the gap in budgetary allocation and required allocation. The success of private institutions in USA, Japan, and Malaysia are showing positive contribution from the private players in higher education. The private sector led to increase of gross enrolment rate (GER) during the period from 1999 to 2008, from 71% to 83% in USA. In Japan it has increased from 45% to 58%. In Malaysia it has increased from 28% to 32%. Globalization, liberalization, and privatization have a great impact on improving the quality of Indian Corporate, both in products and systems. By allowing foreign Universities, the competitive pressure on Indian private players and public institutions will improve quality and would benefit all the stakeholders. Globalization, liberalization, and privatization will create opportunities for Indian players to improve on all kinds of indicators like pedagogy, faculty salary, curriculum, research and administration. The large English speaking population offers an opportunity to make India a higher education hub in South East Asia. Realizing the need for active collaboration of industry and academia FICCI is in process to form National Knowledge Functional Hub. This collaboration will work to improve the quality of graduates by productively utilizing the experience of academia and capital goods companies. It is proposed to operate through "Hub and Spoke model". The model would be started on an experimental basis at 5 places in 2012. Higher education in India would witness a phenomenal development in terms of both quantity and quality. In the era of globalization scholars, educationist and policy makers are interested in enhancing the quality of higher education in our country. Since independence till 2014 the number of universities has increased from 20 to 722 and colleges from 500 to 33023 as against National Knowledge Commission recommendation of 1500 Universities. In case of private universities, out of 712



universities, about 360 are of private, state and of deemed universities. The cost of private education has affected the access by the poor to education.

**KEYWORDS:** gross enrollment rate (GER), industry and academia FICCI, Higher education.

## 1. INTRODUCTION :

The problems of higher education are low rate of enrolment, unequal access, poor quality of infrastructure, lack of relevant education, state governance, and full-fledged faculty. The goals remain unachieved that expansion with inclusion and assurance of quality and relevant education. In this article I want to discuss the following objectives as problem and want offer solutions.

## 2. OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

This research paper has the following objectives:

1. To understand the Status and governance of higher education in India
2. To review the access to higher education in India
3. To understand the nature of privatization in higher education in India
4. To examine the efficiency and quality concerns of Indian higher education

### Status and governance of higher education in India

A) **Present number of institutions in India.** The following table-1 indicates the present number of institutions in India. Table No-1: Number Universities/ university level institutions and colleges

S.N.	Institution	31-03-1947	31-03-2014
1	Central Universities	30	45
2	State Universities	„	317
3	State Private Universities	„	175
4	Deemed to be Universities	„	129
5	Institutes of National Importance and other importance	„	50
6	Institutes established under State legislature Acts	„	05
7	Total		722
8	Colleges	500	33023

Sources: UGC report-2013-14

Since independence till 2014 the number of universities has increased from 20 to 722 and colleges from 500 to 33023 as against National Knowledge Commission recommendation of 1500 Universities. In case of private universities, out of 722 universities, about 360 are of private, state and of deemed universities. Though we realize significant progress over the last ten years but still Indian higher education is facing some of the broad challenges: they could be mentioned as below.

• **The supply-demand gap:** India has a low rate of enrolment in higher education, at only 18%, compared with 26% in China and 36% in Brazil. By 2020, the Indian government aims to achieve 30% gross enrolment, which will mean providing 40 million university places.

• **The low quality of teaching and learning:** The system disturbed with the issues of quality in many of its institutions such as a chronic shortage of faculty, poor quality teaching, outdated and rigid curricula and pedagogy, lack of accountability and quality assurance and separation of research and teaching.

• **Constraints on research capacity and innovation:** The enrolment of PhD is at low level, We does not have enough high quality researchers; there are few opportunities for interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary working, lack of early stage research experience; a weak ecosystem for innovation, and low levels of industry engagement.

• **Uneven growth and access to opportunity:** India socially remains highly divided; access to higher education is uneven with multidimensional inequalities in enrolment across population groups and geographies. The high cost of private education has affected access by the poor to education. Between 1996 and 2008, private institutions expanded every year at the rate of 10 percent. On the contrary, there is decline in government and private-aided institutions by 1.65 percent per year. As a result of this the share of student in private and self- financed colleges increased from 7 percent in 1996 to 25 percent in 2008. As per MHRD data, the share of private undergraduate colleges and student increased by 59 percent and 37 percent respectively.

Kapur and Mehta (2007) described the evolution of privatization in Indian higher education using a phrase, “from half-baked socialism to half bake capitalism.” They argued that much of the massive privatization has not resulted from ideological commitments of key sectors but is instead a result of collapse of the state system resulting in weak ideological and institutional foundations. Trends show that of the various forms of institutes of higher education that exists, the number supported by public funding have stagnated by growth (like the central and state universities, aided colleges, etc.) and rather the numbers with private funding have witnessed a speedily rising growth (like the private universities, deemed universities, unaided colleges, etc.)

Within a small duration of five years from 2001–2006 the unaided private higher education accounted for 63 per cent (from 43 per cent in 2001) of the total higher education institutes and 52 per cent (from 33% in 2001) of the total higher education enrolments (FICCI, 2011). Since 2005–2011, the State Private Universities have witnessed a fifteen-fold rise in the number of institutes from 6 to 94. Of the 130 Deemed Universities, 73 are in the private sector. About 1 per cent of colleges have been granted an autonomous status (FICCI, 2011). Quiet obviously most of this growth of private higher education has happened in the more marketable professional courses like engineering, medicine, management, computer applications, etc. ranging between 50 per cent to 95 per cent of the private institutions.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

There are some of the suggestions and Expectations from Government, Industry, Educational Institutions, Parents and Students for improving quality of higher education-

**1. Towards a Learning Society-** As we move towards a learning society, every human activity will require contributions from experts, and this will place the entire sector of higher education in sharp focus. Although the priorities, which are being assigned today to the task of Education for All, will continue to be preponderant, the country will have to prepare itself to invest more and more on higher education and, simultaneously, measures will have to be taken to refine, diversify and upgrade higher education and research programmes.

**2. Industry and Academia Connection-** Industry and Academia connect necessary to ensure curriculum and skills in line with requirements. Skill building is really very crucial to ensure employability of academia to understand and make sure good jobs (keeping in view knowledge + skills+ global professional skills = good jobs).

**3. Incentives to Teachers and Researchers-** Industry and students are expecting specialized courses to be offered so that they get the latest and best education and they are employed. Vocational and Diploma courses need to be made more attractive to facilitate specialized programs being offered to students. Incentives should be given to teachers and researchers to make these professions more attractive.

**4. Innovative Practices-** The new technologies offers opportunities for economic growth, improved health, better service delivery, improved learning and socio-cultural advances. The efforts are required to improve the country's innovative practices, yet the efforts should be build on the existing strengths in light of new understanding of the research innovation with growth linkages.

**5. To mobilize resources-** The decline in the public funding has created serious effects on standards due to increasing costs on non-salary items and emoluments of staff, on the one hand, and declining

resources, on the other. There is a need to mobilize resources for students at lower economic levels by subsidized and fully subsidized education.

**6. Student-Centered Education** Student-centered education and employable education should be made available from teachers. Methods of distance education will have to be employed on a vast scale.

**7. Public Private Partnership-** PPP is the essential model to enhance quality in the higher education system. Governments can ensure it through an appropriate policy. University Grants Commission and Ministry of HRD should play a major role in strengthening relation between the Universities, Industries and National Research Laboratories (NRLs) as a step towards PPP. Funding to NRLs by the government will ensure the involvement of institutions in higher education, whereby, it can engage in research activities to facilitate availability of latest sophisticated equipment.

**8. Provide Job-Oriented Courses-** The purpose of education should be all round development of students' personality. But the present day education is neither imparting true knowledge of life and nor improving the talent of a student by which one can achieve laurels. In this context, combination of arts subjects and computer science and science and humanities or literature should be introduced so that such courses could be useful for the students to do jobs after recruitment in some companies which would reduce unnecessary rush to higher education. The focus must be on graduate studies and research for the rapid and efficient transfer of knowledge. Its application should be specific to national and local conditions need. Meritorious doctoral students should be recognized through fellowships. Finally, vision of the future life and work must be based on broad ambition satisfying job.

**9 Action Plan for Improving Quality-** Academic and administrative audit should be conducted once in colleges by external experts for ensuring quality in all aspects of academic activities. The self-finance colleges should come forward for accreditation and fulfill the requirements of accreditation. Universities and colleges should realize the need for quality education and come forward with action plan for improving quality in higher educational institutions.

**10. Privatization of Higher Education-** In any nation education is the basic necessity for the socio-economic development of the individuals and the society. In reality only 20% of the population is educated in India. So, improved standard of education as first priority should be offered to the majority by the govt. authorities with sincere political will. Also, privatization of higher education is absolutely necessary in a vast country like India as government alone is helpless to do so.

**11. Quality development-** Quality depends on activities like teaching and academic programs, research and scholarship, staffing, students, building, facilities, equipments, services to the community and the academic environment. It also requires that higher education should be characterized by its international dimensions: exchange of knowledge, interactive networking, mobility of teachers and students and international research projects, while taking into account the national cultural values and circumstances. The level of education and knowledge being instructed by many colleges is not up to the mark. Instead of concentrating on quantity, these institutions should concentrate on quality. The approach of doctoral research in social sciences needs to be more analytical and comparative and be related to society, policy and economy. A study conducted on Social Science Research Capacity in South Asia (2002) showed that the share of the Indian universities in the special articles published in the Economic and Political Weekly was only about a 25 percent i.e. dominated by only three universities, namely- Jawaharlal Nehru University, University of Mumbai & University of Delhi.

**12. World Class Education-** Indian government is not giving priority to the development of Standard in education. India should aspire for the international standard in education. Many national universities like in the USA, UK, Australia, etc. allow studies in higher education for foreign students in their countries and through correspondence courses as well. In the same way India Universities of world class education can also offer courses of studies to foreign students taking advantage of the globalization process. To achieve that goal it should adopt uniform international syllabus in its educational institutions.

**13. Personality Development-** Finally, education should be for the flowering of personality but not for the suppression of creativity or natural skill. In the globalized world opportunities for the educated people are naturally ample in scope. As a result business process outsourcing (BPO) activities have



increased competition in the world trade leading towards the production of quality goods and their easy availability everywhere in the world market. That is the way the world can be developed for peace, prosperity and progress by able and skilful men.

**14. Status of Academic Research Studies-** If we take in to consideration the number of researchers engaged in Research and Development activities as compared to other countries, we find that we have merely 119 researchers, whereas Japan has 5287 and US has 4484 researchers per million of population. In absolute terms, number of researchers in India is very much smaller compared to US, China, Japan, Russia, and Germany. Numbers of doctoral degrees awarded in all subjects are 16, 602 out of which 6774 are in Arts and 5408 in science and rest in others (professional subjects). India has a little over 6000 doctorates in Science and engineering, compared to 9000 in China and 25000 in US. It has increased rapidly from a little over 1000 in 1990 to over 9000 in recent years in China. In comparison, there has been a modest increase in India. National Science Foundation (NSF) - Science and Engineering Indicators (2002) shows that in the US, about 4% of the science and engineering graduates finish their doctorates. This figure is about 7% for Europe. In India this is not even 0.4%. Data on doctorates particularly in science, engineering and medicine suggests that only a few institutions have real research focus. In engineering there were merely 650 doctorates awarded in 2001-02. Of these 80 percent were from just 20-top universities. In science, 65 percent of the doctorates awarded were from the top-30 universities.

**15. Stipends to Research Fellows-** The number of Ph.Ds from Indian Universities should increase with proper standards. This should be seen in the context of extremely low fraction of Ph.Ds in India in relation to M.Sc./B.Tech., as compared to what it is in USA, UK, Germany, Japan etc. Meritorious doctoral students should be recognized through teaching assistantships with stipends over and above the research fellowships. Identifying talented, meritorious students and encouraging them through recognition is very important to attract students into research and teaching.

**16. Fair Quality Assurance System-** Colleges and Private institutes should set up Internal Quality Assurance Cell and must follow a minimum standard to give degrees. The quality assurance system must be independent of political and institutional interaction and it must have a basis in the legislation. There should be operational, financial and academic autonomy coupled with accountability. There is a need of an independent accreditation agency with a conglomerate of government, industry, academia; society etc. means all stakeholders of the education to ensure that the stakeholders particularly the students are not taken for a ride. They should be able to know whether a particular institution delivers value or not, then things can be under control to some extent. It is also important that all institutes of higher learning must make public the acceptability of their courses and degrees. (i.e. the status, recognition and acceptability of their courses by other institutions).

**17. To increase Quantity of Universities-** We need more universities because we are more in number and present number of universities is too less. On 13th June, 2005 Government of India constituted a high level advisory body known as National Knowledge Commission (NKC) to advise the PM about the state of education in India and measures needed to reform this sector. It was headed by Sam Pitroda and submitted its report in November 2007. NKC has recommended setting up of 1500 universities by 2015 so that gross enrollment ratio increases to 15 percent. It has also called for establishing an Independent Regulatory Authority for Higher Education (IRAHE) to monitor the quality of overall higher education in India. That is not generated properly in the context of quality.

**18. Examination Reforms-** Examination reforms, gradually shifting from the terminal, annual and semester examinations to regular and continuous assessment of student's performance in learning. In this connection recently, choice based credit system (CBCS) should be implemented properly by providing infrastructure facility.

**19. High-tech Libraries-** Our university libraries have a very good collection of books, but they are all in mess. A library must be online and conducive for serious study.

## CONCLUSION

After independence, there has been tremendous increase in institutions of higher learning in all disciplines. But with this attention is needed to see the core issue of quality. India is today one of the fastest developing countries of the world with the annual growth rate going above 7%. In order have that rate of growth, there is need to increase the number of institutes and also the quality of higher education in India.

To reach and achieve the future requirements there is an urgent need to relook at the Financial Resources, Access and Equity, Quality Standards, Relevance and at the end the Responsiveness.

Report of the National Knowledge Commission if implemented can help boost education sector in India. We are moving towards an era which would be defined by the parameters of knowledge and wisdom. India in order to become a developed nation by 2020 and knowledge power by 2015. The decisions that are going to be taken on these are likely to hold the key to India's future as a center of knowledge production. We need higher educated people who are skilled and who can drive our economy forward. When India can provide skilled people to the outside world then we can transfer our country from a developing nation to a developed nation very easily and quickly.

According to Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh '*The time has come to create a second wave of institution building and of excellence in the fields of education, research and capability building*'. We need an educational system that is modern, liberal and can adapt to the changing needs of a changing society, a changing economy and a changing world. The thrust of public policy for higher education in India has to be to address these challenges. However, one university can't make much difference. If the government welcomes more such initiatives, the future will be ours. We will be able to match and compete with other countries and the dream to be the world's greatest economy.

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