

NEED OF QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA: A STUDY OF ISSUES & CHALLENGES

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Abstract:

Fast development is being seen in the realm of India's higher education system. Since our country's independence, our education system has seen remarkable growth. Recently, the government of India has introduced National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 which would be able to bring drastic changes in education system of the country. Moreover, we currently boast of the largest concentration of universities of world level after the implementation of the new policy. Today in terms of students' population, our country ranks second. Anyway, despite these brilliant insights, our higher education system is still plagued by a tremendous deal of weakness. Due to the incorporation of the concept of "quality" into the higher education, the nature of learning itself is evolving along with the prevailing fashion and cutting-edge technology. Understanding the concept of quality in higher education, the significance of quality in higher education, some issues and challenges facing higher education today, and finally, some key suggestions are all covered in this article to assist readers to have a better understanding with better grasp on the higher education system of India. For this purpose a variety of research articles on the topic of quality in higher education have been reviewed, and a full reference list is included for the reader's convenience.

Keywords: National Education Policy 2020, Higher Education, Quality, NAAC, UGC, AISHE.

Introduction:

It is a well-known fact that education plays a vital role in all round development of all human beings. Actually human beings are given access to education because, without it, there would be no progress in areas such as politics, society, education, or law. Prior to the current era, the notion of education was either outdated or not widely accepted; as time and circumstances have passed, the education system has evolved. For example, India's education system used to be so underdeveloped that the country was often categorized as underdeveloped. But now that the tide has turned, India has moved from "undeveloped nation" to "developing country," reflecting the general trend.

As a result, a large number of advancements have been made in the field of education, and a new buzzword has emerged: "quality." Here, "quality" refers to a set of characteristics—including familiarity with each subject's fundamental ideas; effective coordination and communication between teachers and students; strict adherence to time and other constraints; and a system that incorporates these qualities in a way that makes learning easy for students.

Objectives of the Study:



- To define the concept of higher education.
- To highlight growth of higher education in India.
- To point out the need of quality in higher education system in India.
- To analyze the challenges and opportunities in higher education.

Research Methodology: The present study is based on the secondary sources of data collection from a few published review articles, research papers, AISHE Report for year 2016-2017, UGC Report and some official websites. To pace the study, the researcher has used some observational facts related to the present research area.

A Review of Literature:

Sheikh (2017) pointed out that while higher education in India has grown significantly in the sixty years since independence. He further stated that not everyone benefits from this trend. India's GDP growth rate in recent years has been around 9%, making it one of the world's fastest-growing nations. There is still a sizable illiterate population, and many youngsters do not get a basic education. This has meant that many individuals have been left out of the country's progress and cannot fully benefit from the developments that have been made.

Basavraj and Mantri (2015) concluded that the education sector cannot expand without instituting Total Quality Management (TQM) that the advancement of higher education is impossible without the framed vision of teachers and administration, and that everyone involved must work toward achieving quality. Those working in the field of education must work together to fully implement TQM on campus if value-oriented education is to be attained.

Sudha (2013) stated that the quality of higher education has risen to the top of the list of concerns for modern societies. Many different commissions' reports have included recommendations for change. Staff members from a wide range of educational establishments also contribute to TQM development in higher education by offering suggestions for and direct support of these efforts. However, it was in industries and businesses that TQM initially saw widespread use.

Bhalla (2012) revealed that there are both international and domestic obstacles to the expansion of higher education that must be overcome. It is established in this education that the health sector performs better in terms of TQM than the educational sector. India's educational institutions would do well to adopt TQM in order to bring its pupils and teachers up to the same standard of education seen around the world.

Suzana et al. (2009) stated that there is a significant addition to the examination of educational realities. Those who are open to these traits believe they may be attained via the education of inventiveness and the instillation of values, skills, and the notion of excellence in the educational system. New educational institutions will have difficulties with TQM.

What is Education?

The most crucial factor in a person's growth as a whole is their education. Why a nation should

develop and get stronger because of this? As such, it is seen as the groundwork for comprehending the modern world. It plays a significant role in broadcasting one's way of life, convictions, and traits to the public, as well as in constructing one's character. It's useful for progress and accommodating other countries' evolving requirements.

Education's overarching goal is to mould students' personalities into models of perfection through a virtuous cycle of material and intellectual growth, emotional maturity, and spiritual enlightenment. It's important for your career and your life in general, both now and in the future. "Education stimulates liberation," as the ancient Sanskrit proverb puts it, "freedom from numbness which blankets the intellect; freedom from weird thought which dazes the view of reality."

Education has always been held to a very high standard of importance in ancient India. According to (Herbert Spencer), its purpose is to shape people's personalities so that they are ready to face the challenges of everyday life. India's long and storied past is reflected in the country's educational institutions. The emphasis is on a lengthy past. Beginning stages find it rural rather than metropolitan.

The Concept of Higher Education:

Numerous studies relevant to the current education show that the most significant difficulty the education sector is experiencing is becoming higher as time goes on, despite the fact that this presents more opportunities for the department and other agencies overseeing higher education. When compared to both affluent countries like the United States, Switzerland, Japan, and the United Kingdom and non-industrial nations like China, Brazil, Malaysia, and the Philippines, India's Gross Enrollment Ratio is much lower. However, with the incorporation of quality and its characteristics into higher education, it will soon catch up to other countries in similar situations. Instead, Total Quality Management might make the goal more feasible.

India's higher education system now ranks third in the world, after China and the United States; nevertheless, the notion of quality has brought about profound changes in higher education, and it is reasonable to assume that India will soon deliver the finest education in the world. Since the first days of independence, the number of universities and colleges has likewise grown rapidly. Article 21, "Right to Education," mandates that all children between the ages of 6 and 14 must attend school, and that they do so free of charge. There have been many positive effects on students' access to higher education as a result of the reforms introduced by this movement. When we talk about "higher education," we're referring to the degrees awarded by universities, colleges, professional schools, schools of the arts and sciences, education institutions, and other similar institutions (such as trade schools, foreign language academies, and vocational colleges) that are considered to be at the university level.

The general consensus on what constitutes "higher education" is that the completion of secondary schooling or other similar evidence of knowledge acquisition is necessary as a prerequisite for admission (Terry, G. and T.B. Thomas, 1979). A college education, it is stated, implants the most thorough understanding in students' heads, as opposed to a typically

superficial grip that must be sufficient in some other part of the framework. Nothing can be taken at face value in higher education, and students must be able to think for themselves so that they have the freedom to do so (Barnett, 1997). There are certain fundamental gaps in India's higher education system. Therefore, it continues producing graduates who cannot find work despite growing shortages of skilled workers in a variety of fields. Exam standards in the academic world are sinking. Some of the problems in Indian higher education include the cumbersome affiliating framework, the rigid scholastic structure, the uneven limits across topics, the weakening self-governance of academic organizations, and the inadequate public funding. Concerns about the ineffectiveness of administration, the accreditation system's lack of effectiveness, the absence of incentives to perform well, and the transparency of finance arrangements are not well understood (Agarwal, 2006).

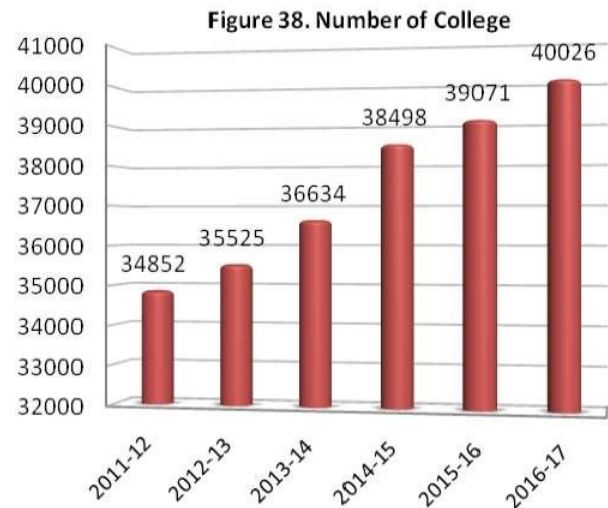
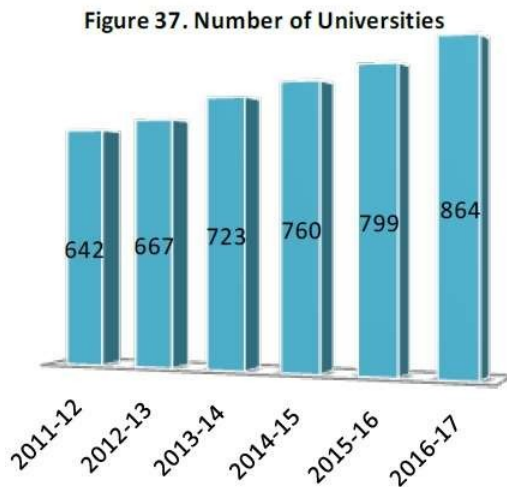
Growth of Higher Education System in India:

There are two main types of educational institutions in India: public universities and colleges, and private schools and universities. The public sector has recently emerged as a top education for students and their families, especially in the education of higher education, as a result of the introduction of new methods, strategies, and technologies. As a result, the country's higher education system has expanded at a far faster pace. The Indian higher education system is overseen by a number of different organizations, including the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE), the University Grant Commission (UGC), the Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA), the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), and the National Research Professorship (NRP). The following statistics reflect the current state of higher education.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) is the primary regulatory agency responsible for upholding standards in higher education. It also provides policy recommendations to the government and serves as a clearinghouse for information shared by the federal government and individual states. According to the 2011 census, 8.15 percent of students have earned a bachelor's degree or higher, and as of the end of the year, India was home to 989 educational institutions, including 54 federal universities, 416 state universities, 125 deemed universities, 361 private universities, 7 institutes established by legislation at the state level, and 159 institutes of national importance like the All India Institutes of Medical Science (AIIMS), the Indian Institutes of Technology, and the National Institutes of Technology. There are around 52,627 universities and colleges.

The Indian education system is working to address these issues; the introduction of quality may bring about significant improvements for students, faculty, and administration, provided that they embrace quality metrics as beneficial to their development.

As can be seen in the following graph, which is taken from the AISHE 2016–2017 report, the number of higher education institutions continues to rise.



(Source: All India Survey of Higher Education – 2016-2017)

Note: Figure 37 and Figure 38 means Figure 1 and 2 respectively.

From the above data it can be seen that in the year 2012-13 number. of colleges were 35525 then in the further years it has been increased and up to the year 2016-17 it has reached up to 40026, similarly regarding universities also in the year 2012-13 it was 667 but by the year 2016-17 it has grown up to 864 .

Indicators of Quality in Education:

The following indicators of quality in education are listed by Murad and Rajesh (2010) as under:
Consistency: Here, zero deformity approach and quality culture are included into the teaching cycles. The obstacles, in any case, lie in the establishment of trustworthy standards and the adaptation to those norms.

Purposefulness: In today's competitive job market, it is essential for all members of society to have access to a high-quality education that is tailored to each individual student's interests, abilities, and goals.

Transformative: Educating to a person is transformative since it strengthens and advances one's education over time (Oduwaiye et. al, 2012). This essay examines the current and future potential of higher education in India through the lenses of five issues: quantity/quality, guidelines, privatization, personnel, and focus overseas.

Institutional Efforts to Ensure Quality in Higher Education:

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has established what it calls 2(f) and 12 indicators to monitor quality (b). Together, they determine whether or not universities and colleges meet the minimum quality requirements for receiving grants. If the institution is a government agency and has a relatively short alliance and is responsible for teaching students at the under graduate level, it will be recognized under section 2(f). Given that the university and school have an unbreakable partnership, the recognition under 12 (b) is permitted. After meeting the barest minimum requirements, the institution offers a permanent partnership.

As a result, 2(f) and 12(b) serve as the foundation and, most likely, the primary source of the institutions' quality standards. National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) was

established up as an alternative to the UGC in order to evaluate the standard of India's higher education institutions; it used more thorough and comprehensive criteria to determine a school's worth (Thorat, 2006).

India is in the midst of a higher education crisis, and the success of a few really good colleges is masking the true scale of the problem. Under the guise of a select few prestigious institutions, Indian higher education has become woefully unable to produce knowledgeable and skilled graduates. Students are not prepared to become contributing and conscientious community members, and the cycle does not fulfill any screening or flagging functions. As a result, students are compelled to invest more time (and, increasingly, astronomical sums) in gaining a postgraduate expert capacity in an effort to rapidly develop strategies to highlight their qualities to prospective employers. It is not an exaggeration to say that India's current system of higher education is highly centralized, very political, and works against the development of a common academic ethic throughout the country. Due to the large number of students and the Darwinian competition for admission to the few elite secondary schools, the system manages to produce a noticeable percentage of really talented students (Kapur and Mehta, 2004).

Issues in Higher Education in India:

As we have seen in the preceding paragraph, India is a growing nation that is expanding at a higher rate, particularly in the education sector. However, in order to be completely developed, it must update the universities and colleges with many quality characteristics. Universities and colleges on a global scale have started from scratch, focusing on quality from the get-go. At one point, India lagged behind other countries because it was dominated by others. Some of the issues in higher education are:

1. **Quality in Education:** To improve India's higher education system, it's crucial to focus first on elementary and secondary education, then on postsecondary education, and finally on higher education. Introducing the education of quality education at the primary level is also crucial. The biggest challenge India faces today is ensuring that its students receive a high-quality education, despite the fact that the government is making strides in this regard. Many schools still lack the resources to compete on a global scale.
2. **Enrollment:** Because of poor enrolment in elementary and secondary schools, India's Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) for higher education is just 26.3%, which is much lower than the GERs of industrialized countries.
3. **Equality:** India's education system faces a major obstacle in the underrepresentation of female students in higher education, a problem that is exacerbated in rural areas where parents, out of fear for their daughters' safety, often withdraw their applications for college admission after their daughters have already completed secondary education.
4. **Teaching Faculty:** There is a severe lack of certified, high-quality instructors in India because the system is so corrupt that it is unable to keep them. As a result, many talented individuals are looking for work but are unable to find it.
5. **Accreditation:** According to the assessment by NAAC, just half of all colleges and universities received the highest possible grade.

6. **Research Area and Innovations:** Because of inadequate funding, a lack of available supervisors, and a delay in awarding fellowships to deserving students, university research is not doing as well as it might.

7. **The Structure of Higher Education:** Lack of transparency, lack of accountability, overloaded, and lack of professionalism in Indian education administration and management has led to a dearth of Higher Education possibilities.

Challenges in Higher Education:

Even though it's difficult to establish a network of research-based universities all at once, it's not impossible. The advancement of education goes beyond the attainment of quality parameters; therefore, if universities, colleges, and other educational establishments adopt the concept of Total Quality Management and use the opportunities at their disposal, the education sector will advance to the same level as other sectors. Some of the challenges in the way of higher education are:

1. Since there is still unmet need for high-quality education, current levels simply will not do.
2. When compared to China and the United States, the Gross Enrollment Ratio is very low.
3. India is often tipped to become a major centre for higher education in Asia.
4. There is a worldwide need for more professors to participate in academic conferences, workshops, and seminars.
5. The demand for easily understandable and conveyable course materials has never been greater than it is right now.
6. Practical experience is in high demand in this area.
7. College and university level infrastructure, both for students and faculty is appealing and practical.

Suggestions for Improving Higher Education System in India:

- Teachers and other employees should have extensive experience and education.
- There is an immediate need for cutting-edge ICT use in this case.
- In the current climate, collaboration between businesses and academic institutions is essential.
- The way we educate has to alter dramatically.
- Each individual is responsible for learning about the current higher education system.
- Education may be improved by designing a system of open communication between faculty and students.
- For efficient administration with regards to providing high-quality education, all relevant personnel should adhere to MBO.
- All the fundamental choices pertaining to a high-quality education need the guidance and implementation of strong leadership.
- There is an immediate need to execute a creative, inventive method from elementary to higher education in order to enhance the root level, which then transforms the higher level itself.

- To raise its profile and credibility, the Department of Higher Education must present a more polished front.
- The government should support universities and encourage international partnerships in the field of higher education.
- If we want high-quality advances in research, the government has to strengthen ties between public and private research institutions.
- Here it is urgent need to improve leadership quality and management capabilities in higher education through a more strategic approach.
- For progress in the field of quality, cooperation on a national and global scale is urgently required.
- More efforts should be made to improve students' level of comprehension in addition to fostering their employability and vocational abilities.
- Quality factors including leadership, motivation, employee involvement, reward and recognition, employee training, and curriculum development should be used consistently throughout all of higher education.

Conclusion:

An individual's body, mind, and behaviour may all be reinforced, transformed, and developed via many processes, and education is one of the most essential of them. Higher education has grown rapidly since independence; it was initially less popular in rural areas, but after years of government investment, it has become widely available there as well. Today, higher education is available to students in both public and private settings, with the former catering to those who live in urban areas. India's human resource potential is enormous, and the challenge is how to put it to good use.

The study arrives to the conclusion that excellent education must exist and be relevant throughout all three levels of schooling: elementary, secondary, and tertiary. Total Quality Management (TQM) is a novel idea that has just been brought to the area of education. TQM recognizes that quality is essential to every successful endeavour, and that includes higher education. Total Quality Management was first used exclusively in business settings, but this has changed as a result of time, environment, human resource, and other variables. TQM in Education has been the subject of several studies at both the national and international levels. A closer look at these articles reveals the value of quality and reveals opportunities for further enhancement of the higher education system via the authors' ideas.

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