

Higher Education in India: Present Status and Path Ahead

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Abstract-

Globalization has brought drastic changes in the economies across the globe and changed the way industries function. With changing needs of the industry, the institutional framework in the country is changing. Knowledge has emerged as a driving force in the rapidly changing economic environment resulting in both challenges and opportunities. In such a scenario, education in general, and higher education in particular, has clearly become a crucial determinant of economic growth. Though Higher Education in India has seen a phenomenal growth in the last decade, it doesn't really look to be in line with the challenges posed by the globalization.

As quoted by Aristotle "Education is an ornament in prosperity and a refuge in adversity." Education is the most significant and essential input for the growth and prosperity of a nation. It provides strength and resilience to enable people to respond to the changing needs of the industry and economy. Education is the backbone of all national endeavors. It has the power to transform human beings into human resource. We cannot build a sustainable and prosperous nation without human resource development which mainly depends on the health and vitality of higher education. Apart from primary and secondary education, higher education is the main instrument for development and transformation. Higher education has the omnipotent role of preparing leaders for different walks of life: social, political, economic, cultural, scientific and technological. Higher education has special value in the contemporary knowledge society which contributes both directly and indirectly to the wealth of a nation.

Design/Methodology/Approach: Secondary data from UGC reports & All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) reports, used to infer the current scenario of H.E. in India. The study has been conducted by consulting existing literature through historical, analytical and empirical approaches. Based on the data certain recommendations were based.

Findings: *The main findings of the study were review based on the data available. It was found that the blueprints developed by the University Grant Commission (UGC) and others are very detailed and cover almost every aspect of Higher Education (H.E.) in India. However, it has been reviewed here that the plans so developed are not executed properly.*

Research Limitations/Implications: *This research is limited to secondary data available. However, researchers discussed the topic in detail with academic & industry experts to reach in depth of the topic.*

Keywords- *Higher Education, Enhancement in Higher Education, Growth Drivers of Higher Education,*

Introduction

For past 10 years, India has experienced consistently high rate of economic growth. The demographic dividend in general and existence of large pool of qualified manpower in particular has made India a major player in the global knowledge economy. High education plays major role in providing qualified manpower and it in turn drives economic development of the nation.

The country has witnessed drastic changes in higher education in last few years. Over the years, our higher education system has seen a paradigm shift with business orientation as its mainstay. By virtue of sheer population, Indian education system is one of the largest in the world. But it also faces myriad challenges, more so in this era of globalization. These challenges range from paucity of funds to contemporary curriculum development and from quality assurance & accreditation and ethical value propositions to policy planning and governance. In a technology driven society, knowledge rewrites the fate of a nation and so does higher education. But the biggest challenge is obviously lack of enough investment in education sector. With unprecedented growth of knowledge typically in the area of information and communication followed by globalization shrinking the world into a global village, competitiveness has become a decisive force of growth.

The nodal ministry for education in India is the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD). The MHRD has a Department of Higher education which is the apex department “for the overall development of the basic infrastructure of Higher Education sector”. The University Grants Commission (UGC) under the Department of Higher Education in the MHRD acts as the coordinator as well as prescriber of standards for education in the country.

Objectives of the Study-

1. To study the present status of Higher Education in India.
2. To study the UGC Interventions towards quality Enhancement in Higher education.
3. To study the Forces Driving Change in Higher Education.

Higher Education in India: Literature Review-

Knowledge is power and therefore has remained one of the most important driving forces of sustaining human existence. For any nation to achieve exponential economic growth, it is vital to gear up skill based activities through a potential, vibrant and dynamic higher education system.

Over the years, trade, investment, mobility of people, use of technology and the economy have grown significantly. This growth has generated the need for revamping the higher education system and replacing the age old & non-relevant practices. Looking at the deficiencies in most of the key areas of higher education system of India like accessibility, quality, financing and governance, a strategic paradigm shift in the policy framework and overall functioning is needed to meet growing expectations and societal needs (Mrutyunjay Dash, 2011).

Higher education system is essential for national, social and economic development of the country. India's higher education system is the third largest in the world. Our education system has undergone a sea change given the present technological advancements, the increasing number of students, the demographic diversity of students, the quest for quality education and a fiercely competitive global market etc. Researchers (Bhatia, Kareena; Dash, Manoj Kumar, 2011) have shown the need of value in higher education system in India. A value based higher education system empowers youth for self-sustainability by inculcating employment skills and hence reducing poverty. The authors have explained in their study the critical aspects of managing, and delivering superior value of the higher education system in India.

Globalization has changed the world dramatically leading to intensified mobility of ideas and educational talent across borders. Focusing on the role of foreign educational institutions and their possible impact on the higher education landscape, Deloitte survey report has highlighted the need of foreign participation in improving the quality of and access to higher education in the country. The report further emphasizes on the need to simplify the prevailing regulatory framework and creating a conducive environment for sustained growth. "With a rapidly flourishing workforce and the inevitable need for global acceptance, the internationalization of higher education has become critical to India's human resource growth. Foreign investment will, therefore, play an instrumental role in strengthening India's higher education sector, both in terms of quality and access," (Survey Report- Deloitte India, 2015).

A sound higher education sector assumes an imperative role in economic development and advancement of a country. Higher education, regarding its pertinence and significance, enjoys a

significant position in the instruction framework as it outfits individuals with learning and aptitudes to be productively utilized. In the connection of the present demographic structure of India where the dominant part of population is underneath the age of 25 years, higher education had a significant role to play in serving to realize the broad social changes fundamental for sustainable development. (Singh, Yadwinder; Bhalla, Amarbir Singh; Bhalla, G S, 2015)

Current Scenario of Higher Education in India-

According to the All India Survey on Higher Education 2014-15 (Provisional), there are 757 Universities, 38056 Colleges and 11922 Stand Alone Institutions and out of them 716 Universities, 29506 Colleges and 6837 Stand Alone Institutions.

- ❖ 267 Universities are privately managed. There are 43 Central Universities, 1 Central and 13 State Open Universities, 69 Institutes of National Importance, 316 State Public Universities, 5 Institute under State Legislature Act, 37 Deemed Universities Government and 6 Other Universities.
- ❖ The top 7 States in terms of highest number of colleges in India are Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Telangana. College density, i.e. the number of college per lakh eligible population (population in age-group 18-23 years) varies from 7 in Bihar to 58 in Puducherry as compared to All India average of 27.
- ❖ In UTs of Andaman & Nicobar Island, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu and Lakshadweep, there is no University.
- ❖ 76% Colleges are privately managed; 61% Private-Unaided and 15% Private Aided. Andhra Pradesh and Telangana has 83% and 82% Private Unaided Colleges respectively, whereas, Mizoram has only 3%, Chandigarh has 4% and Tripura has 9%; Bihar and Assam has only 10% Private Unaided Colleges.
- ❖ Total Enrolment in Higher Education has been estimated to be 33.3 million with 17.9 million boys and 15.4 million girls. Girls constitute 46% of the total enrolment.
- ❖ Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in Higher Education in India is 23.6, which is calculated for 18-23 years of age group. GER for male population is 24.5 and female it is 22.7. For Scheduled Castes, it is 18.5 and for Scheduled tribes, it is 13.3 as compared to the national GER of 23.6.
- ❖ Distance enrolment constitutes 11.7% of the total enrolment in higher education, of which 46% are female students.
- ❖ About 80% students are enrolled in Undergraduate level Programme. 112812 students are enrolled in Ph.D. that is about 0.34% of the total student enrolment.
- ❖ Uttar Pradesh comes at number one with the highest student enrolment followed by Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.

- ❖ Scheduled Castes students constitute 13.4% and Scheduled tribes students 4.8% of the total enrolment. 32.9% students belong to Other Backward Classes. 4.4% students belong to Muslim Minority and 1.9% from other Minority Community.
- ❖ The total number of teachers is 1418389. Out of which more than half about 61% are male teachers and 39% are female teachers.
- ❖ At all-India level there are merely 64 female teachers per 100 male teachers.
- ❖ Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) in Universities and Colleges is 24

In the last few years, the education sector of India has witnessed a number of dramatic changes which resulted in substantial increase in the market share of the education industry. With availability of enhanced technology, it was extremely essential to expand the Indian education sector in order to maintain stable economic growth in the country. However, funds were one of the important aspects to achieve growth in education sector of India. Considering this, the Government of India has taken several initiatives in order to attract investment from foreign investors (including NRIs and PIOs) for the expansion of education sector.

Today,

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India is the <i>single largest provider</i> of global talent, with one in four graduates in the world being a product of the Indian system • India is among <i>top 5 countries globally</i> in cited research output, its research capabilities boosted by annual R&D spends totaling over US\$140 billion 	I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India is in the <i>fourth cycle of its research excellence framework</i>, with at least a 100 of Indian universities competing with the global best • <i>23 Indian universities</i> are among the <i>global top 200</i>, going from none two decades ago 	N
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the last 20 years alone, <i>6 Indian intellectuals</i> have been awarded the <i>Nobel Prize</i> across categories • India is a <i>regional hub for higher education</i>, attracting global learners from all over the world 	D
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The country has augmented its <i>GER to 50%</i> while also reducing disparity in GER across states to 5 percentage points • The Indian higher education system is <i>needs-blind</i>, with all eligible students receiving financial aid. <i>Two-thirds of all government spending</i> towards higher education is spent on individuals, including faculty and students 	I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India's massive open online courses, started by several elite research universities, collectively enroll <i>60% of the world's entire student population</i> • Indian higher education institutions are <i>governed by the highest standards of ethics and accountability</i>, with every single one of them being peer-reviewed and accredited 	A

Source- FICCI Higher Education Summit 2013

Growth Drivers of Education Sector in India –

Constantly Rising Awareness	Demographics Advantage	Technology Oriented Education
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in awareness and importance of education among Indian people has created several opportunities in the education sector of India 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to recent analysis, more than 35 percent of Indian population is under the age of 15 which will create strong demand for education in coming years in India 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constant increase in importance of technology has also created revolution in the education sector of India

The Human Resource Driven Economy is also considered as one of the important growth drivers of education sector in India.

Higher Education Expansion in India-

As per FICCI Higher Education Summit 2013: The Indian higher education system has seen significant expansion to become one of the largest in the world enrolling over 70 million students. Such expansion would not have been possible without the extensive use of ICT tools. To illustrate, if India were to create this additional capacity through increase in institutions alone, it would have had to build six universities and 270 colleges each and every month in the last 20 years – a feat that would have been almost impossible to achieve with India's limited resources. Instead, India opted for the MOOCs way.

Online platforms and ICT tools have made it possible to take higher education to millions of deserving students in far-flung and remote areas who would, otherwise, have no access to University education. Online education has become the first resort for many students who were earlier left out of the higher education system, or had to settle for lower quality alternatives.

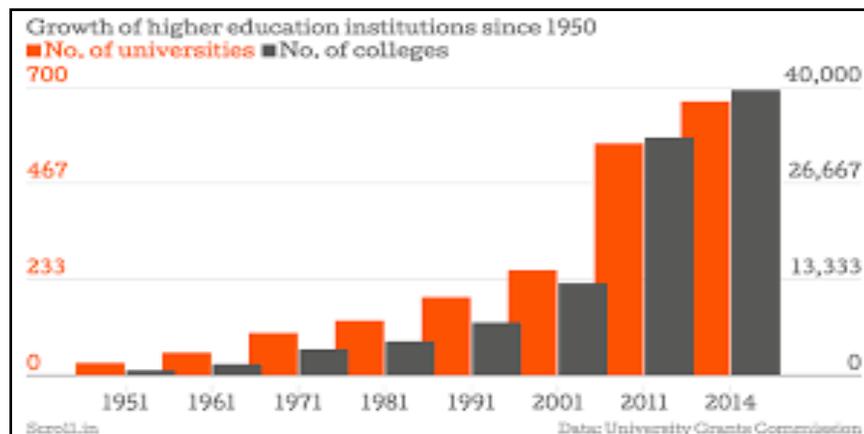
The MOOCs model made it possible for the nation to provide a quality education to the masses despite poor faculty-student ratios. Students today are widely using the facility of learning from leading faculty at elite institutions beyond the four walls of their classrooms as top-tier institutions have seriously taken up the role of being content generators. Professors collaborate across universities to collectively create and distribute for-credit curriculum for an online semester.

Technology has not only been helpful in addressing the demand-supply gap for quality education, but has fundamentally changed the nature of several educational processes. The days when students had to gather in a classroom only to attend a lecture are passé. Today, classroom lectures are pre-recorded and

uploaded to be accessed by students as per their convenience and comfort. Class time is instead used for creating more in-depth learning experiences through group activities, problem-solving and interactive learning. Online analytics provide faculty with data on how and at what pace each student is learning, enabling them to provide personalized support to aid student learning outcomes. The model also allows students to learn at their own pace – for instance, slow learners can go over certain content and exercises multiple times with special tools to aid their learning. Finally, the hybrid model (where part of the program is taught online and part in-person) has become particularly popular among adult and working professionals looking to gain additional credentials. This model provides students with the flexibility to access course material as their schedule permits.

In short, technology has been nothing short of disruptive for Indian higher education and to some extent, has been proved a solution for three of India's pressing problems – access, equity and quality.

India Rising in Higher Education-



The Indian Higher education sector has been recognized as the “sunrise sector.” Higher education in India is of vital importance for the country, as it is a powerful tool to build knowledge-based society of the 21st Century.

Indian higher education, currently the third largest in the world, is likely to surpass the U.S. in the next five years and China in the next 15 years, to become the largest system of higher education in the world. Higher education in India has recorded impressive growth since Independence, but it also needs an immediate transformation in line with the challenges posed by the globalization. Indian higher education has a complex structure riddled with many contradictions, still has great possibilities.

India, by 2030 will be amongst the youngest nations in the world. With nearly 140 million people in the college-going age group, one in every four graduates in the world will be Indian. University Grants Commission (UGC) is designing programmes and implementing various schemes through academic,

administrative and financial support, which will contribute in the growth and development of Indian higher education.

Increasing number of private universities will be crucial in changing the landscape of education sector. Though, this will not have direct impact on the government universities (State or Central Universities) as the education in these universities is highly subsidized, but it will give more options to the students. Majority of education leaders also believe that entry of foreign universities will change the face of Indian Higher Education System.

The country has undertaken large-scale reforms to better faculty-student ratios by making teaching an attractive career path, expanding capacity for doctoral students at research universities and delinking educational qualifications from teaching eligibility. Despite the government's increased spending on higher education by 37 percent from `195.1 billion in 2011 to `267.5 billion in 2013-14, for realizing the vision, it is important to adopt a learner-centered paradigm of education, introducing multi-disciplinary, industry-oriented, entrepreneurship, and skill-based courses, and adopting new pedagogical techniques such as blended learning, flipped classroom and experiential learning. Incentivizing and facilitating faculty development and exchange programs; attracting and incentivizing best-in-class faculty to conduct research.

Transition in Indian Education Paradigm-

An Indian student in 2013 was a 'passive player' on a predefined education pathway. She had little choice in what she learnt and little say in how she learnt it. The curriculum was predesigned and worse still, outdated and seldom relevant, and the dominant mode of instruction was information-loaded, one-way lectures from the teacher to the student. If one were to describe the transformation in higher education pedagogy from then to now, dramatic would be an understatement. In today's classrooms, the student is an active participant in the education process and the role of a professor is that of a facilitator as opposed to an instructor. The instruction is designed to engage students in learning experiences that not only enable them to learn content but also to develop greater passion for learning – enabling them to 'learn to learn' and to be lifelong learners.

In the learner-centered paradigm of education, students are encouraged to take greater responsibility for their learning outcomes. The professor ceases to be the fount of knowledge filling the empty receptacles of students' minds; instead, students actively participate in the discovery of knowledge. They are encouraged to be reflexive and thoughtful learners, learning from themselves, their peers and their immediate environment just as much as they would from their professors. Accordingly, the teaching-learning methodology involves less lecturing and rote note-taking and more hands-on activities to allow for experiential and interactive learning.

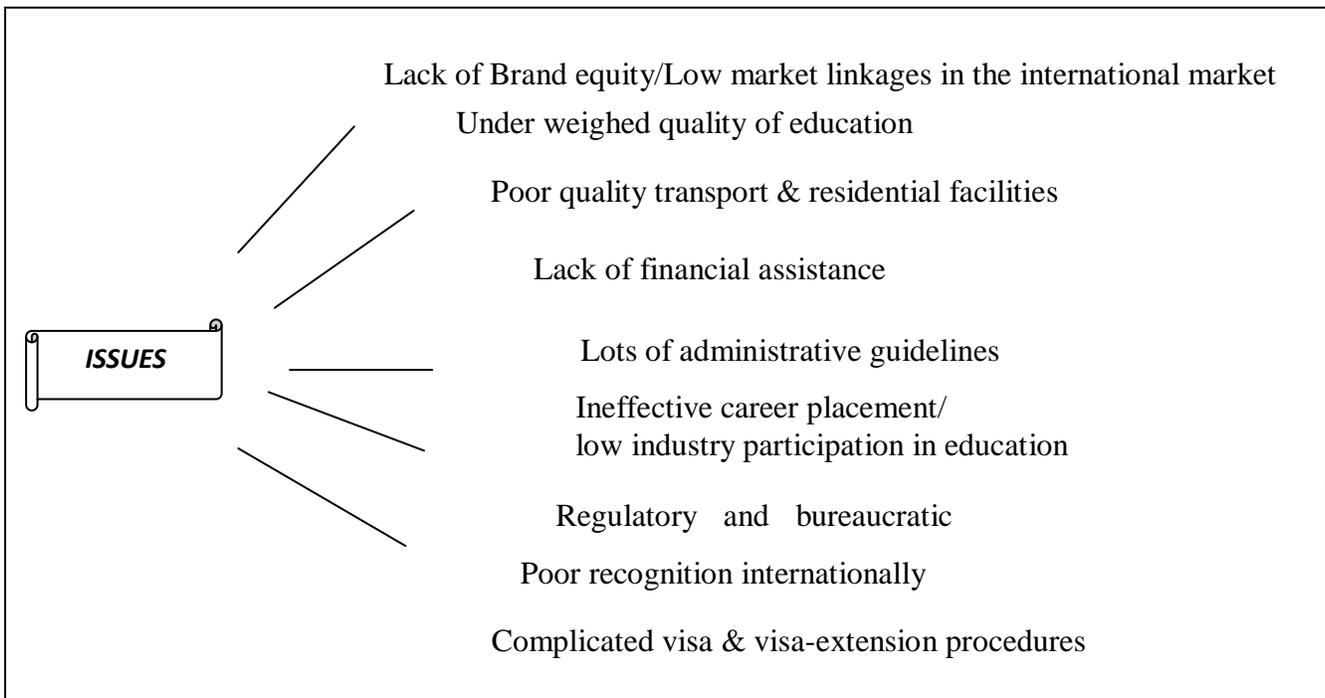
Over the years, such emphasis on learning has impacted students and learning outcomes in ways that have far-reaching impact for Indian economy and society. Firstly, by stoking students' innate curiosity

and encouraging them to learn in self-directed ways, it has enabled Indian graduates to be independent, critical thinkers. As a result, it has greatly enhanced the country's innovation capability and entrepreneurial ambition, positioning it amongst the most attractive R&D hubs for dozens of multinationals. Secondly, the learner-centered paradigm has helped India's thriving human resource base to keep pace with the changing needs of their work environments. Over the years, with evolution of the 'knowledge economy', learning and work have become inseparable, making constant on-the-job learning and up-gradation indispensable. Trained to be active and adaptive lifelong learners, the Indian workforce is known to be dynamic and agile even in the face of 'disruptive' progress.

Lastly, but importantly, the learner-centered approach has helped correct for the problem of equity in Indian higher education. As India's enrolment numbers grow, and access to higher education expands, the learner-oriented method has helped sensitize educators to difference in learning styles and student expectations that result from diversity in student backgrounds. By placing the student at the centre of the learning process, the approach on the one hand has enabled institutions to devise new and innovative ways to reach diverse learners, and on the other, helped students discover and exercise their distinctive learning styles to chart an educational pathway that is personally meaningful and relevant.

Issues Which Need high attention In Indian Higher Education-

Despite the strides of progress, India's higher education institutions are not yet the best in the world – India has fewer than 25 universities in the top 200. Few issues are-



UGC Interventions towards quality Enhancement in Higher education

To overcome the issues HE institutions should bring necessary changes along with UGC interventions.

Schemes exclusively meant for Universities

- General development Assistance to Central, State and Deemed universities (Includes 16 merged schemes)
- One time Catch up grants to Non-12B State Universities funded by State Governments
- Operation 'Faculty Recharge': initiative for Augmenting the Research and Teaching Resources of Universities
- Enhancing Faculty resources of Universities - ENCORE
- Establishment of Rajiv Gandhi chairs in Universities
- Academic Staff Colleges
- Special Assistance Programme
- Centres with Potential for Excellence in Particular Areas (Envisaged to identify 25 Universities during XI Plan)
- Area Study Centers in Universities
- Universities with Potential for Excellence
- Establishing/Up gradation of Computer Centers
- UGC-INFONET Connectivity Programme
- UGC-INFONET Digital Library Consortium
- Promotion of Yoga Education and Practice of Positive Health in Universities
- Incentives for Resource Mobilization
- Development Assistance for Up gradation of Existing and New Management Departments in Universities

Schemes meant exclusively for Colleges

- Development Grant to Colleges (includes 14 merged schemes)
- One-time Catch-up Grant to Uncovered (Non-12B) Colleges
- Development Assistance to Colleges for the Construction of Buildings
- Construction of Women's Hostel for Colleges
- Establishment of New Model Degree Colleges in Educationally Backward Districts with Low (GER)
- Faculty Development Programme for Colleges
- Organizing Conferences/Workshops/Seminars in Colleges
- Autonomous Colleges
- Colleges with Potential for Excellence
- Instrumentation Maintenance Facility (IMF) in Colleges
- UGC-Network Resource Center (UGC-NRC) in Colleges
- Jubilee, Centenary Grants to Colleges

Schemes meant for both Universities and Colleges

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Providing additional assistance to Universities and 5,500 Colleges already covered under Section 12(B) of the UGC Act, 1956• Development of Women's Studies in Indian Universities and Colleges• Capacity Building for Women Managers in Higher Education• Establishment of Special Cells for SCs & STs in Universities/ Deemed to be• Universities and Grant-in aid Institutions & IUCs receiving Central Assistance• Innovative Programmes• Setting Up of Media Centers/ Affiliated Media Centers• Career Oriented Courses in Universities and Colleges | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establishment and monitoring of the Internal Quality Assurance Cells (IQACs) in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)• E-Content Development• Strengthening Social Science and Humanities Teaching and Research capacity• Research Fellowship in Humanities & Social Sciences Students• Development of Sports Infrastructure and Equipment in Universities and Colleges• Guidelines for Universities, Research Institutes and Colleges for• Procurement, Storage, Usage and Disposal of Radioactive and other Hazardous materials/Chemicals• Epoch Making Social Thinkers of India• Human Rights and Values in Education• Lifelong Learning and Extension |
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Schemes meant for professional development of Faculty of Universities & Colleges and for recognition of Academics of eminence

- Modified Guidelines for Post Graduate Merit Scholarship Scheme for
- University Rank Holders at Undergraduate Level
- Research Fellowship in Science for Meritorious Students
- Junior Research fellowship (JRF) in Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences
- Junior Research fellowship in Engineering and Technology
- Junior Research fellowship (JRF) and Research Associateship (RA) for Foreign Nationals
- Fellowship to M.Phil/Ph.D Scholars in Central Universities
- Dr. S. Radhakrishnan Post-Doctoral Fellowship (PDF) in Humanities and Sciences (including languages)
- Dr. D.S. Kothari Post-Doctoral Fellowships in Sciences, Medical Sciences & Engineering Sciences
- Post-Doctoral Fellowship to Women Candidates
- Post Graduate Indira Gandhi Scholarship Scheme for Single Girl Child
- Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship for SC/ST Candidates
- Emeritus Fellowship
- Special Honorarium to teachers who are Fellows of at least two of the four Science Academies identified by UGC
- Research Awards
- Major Research Project
- Minor Research Project
- Incentivisation of Teachers, Subject/Discipline based Association for Organization of various Academic and Research Activities
- Travel Grant Scheme for College Teachers/College Librarians/Vice Chancellors/Commission Members and UGC Officers
- Appointment/ Honorarium of Guest/Part-Time Teachers

Some Challenges & suggested solutions to them-**1) Education is not the focus of many universities-**

Universities are in the business of selling a lifestyle, prestige, and status. And they invest in things that increase their competitiveness in these areas. Foundation, major spending at universities includes infrastructure, administration, scholarships and sports teams, but investing in classrooms and professors, which could actually impact student learning, isn't on this list. It's a sign that education is secondary to other interests.

2) University learning is linear, one size fits all-

Universities have a linear learning model. Students must follow a curriculum. Start at point A, end at point B. A typical university education is linear - teacher focused, not student focused. The process of learning is controlled by the teacher, just as the process of getting a degree is controlled by the university.

The problem is that linear learning is expensive, both in terms of money and in time. As a student, the path to a degree is set. Student choice is available, but mostly limited to electives. In the classroom, lectures are "one-size-fits-all" approach to learning. There is no tailoring to individual learning styles or interests.

Many IIT graduates, well trained in technology, choose not to contribute their skills to the technology sector in India; perhaps half leave the country immediately upon graduation to pursue advanced studies abroad, and most do not return.

Solutions-**Connect teachers directly with students through a digital marketplace-**

Teachers are focused on facilitating quality education. A digital marketplace where students and teachers find each other online. The digital education marketplace does not require expensive physical infrastructure. It's just teachers and students finding each other the 21st century way - over the web. To some extent, MOOCs have begun this process. Reward teachers financially for creating great courses. Incentivize teachers to create innovate with new learning environments Attract new teachers to the field of teaching who would otherwise go elsewhere

A virtual curriculum based on needs of a student

We must get rid of general education requirements and make them live virtual classrooms that are in many respects, as capable and dynamic as their physical counterparts. With multi-way video, video study groups, and social media integration, the virtual classroom of today and tomorrow is nothing like the virtual classroom of yesterday.

Self-directed learning-

Students learn better when they control their experience. We can empower students by giving them choice in the classes they choose and in how they wish to learn. Students choose what they want to learn, when they want to learn it. With teachers competing for students, teachers will innovate and students will choose to take classes from the best teachers. This open learning model puts the student at the center of education, not the University.

Conclusion-

The higher education system of India had passed from various difficult situations in the post Indian independence period. But still the Indian education system has progressed well. There are several improvements in the Indian education system from various perspectives. The authorities involved in the management of higher education system in India like UGC, AICTE, QCI, DEC, BCI have made serious efforts to improve the quality education in India and also to match Indian education standards with the international norms. The future of our economic system, and thus our nation, is directly coupled to our ability as a nation to establish and keep a high quality higher education system. If suitable and necessary recognition and support will be extended to Indian educational institutes and universities then India has the potential for extending frontiers of knowledge in all disciplines.

In conclusion higher education means integrated development of personality which should be imparted through head, hand and heart. Rabindranath Tagore rightly said, "The higher education is that which does not merely give us information, but makes life in harmony with all existence".

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