

AN IMPORTANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION – AN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Education plays a very important role in our lives. There is a rapidly growing demand for the higher education in the world today, Although higher education is not-so easy to receive, the rewards of self-improvement, job insurance, development of character, and social improvements. We learn skills like problem solving which would teach us to figure things out for ourselves. Knowledge is a very powerful thing that can change the lives of peoples with a higher Education it insured that people will have a better paying job, They like being able to invest money on higher Education so that they would get a better job and also gain more knowledge and become more powerful and come out with a strong mind, Higher education strengthens and the individuals to act boldly, where ever they go with good knowledge, Education not only plays an important role in our lives, it also has a role in the progress of an individual's mind and country, The major restricted-zones in the developing countries are ignorance and poverty, These can be overcome easily through education, No country will ever look back if the people are fully educated, have some income to support their family, are aware of what is happening in the world and contribute to the country's development. Therefore this paper focuses on the importance of higher education with reference to Indian context.

Key Words: Higher education, Knowledge, employability, developing countries.

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Introduction

Education increases manpower for different sectors of the economy and unique investment for the present and the future. Higher education is essential for any nation for its social and economic development. Higher education includes colleges and university teaching, learning towards which students' progress to attain, higher educational qualification. Higher education imparts in depth knowledge and understanding so as to promote the students to new frontiers of knowledge in different walks of life. It develops the student's ability to question and seek truth and makes them competent to critique on contemporary issues

According to Ronald Barnett (1992) there are four predominant concepts of higher Education.

- Higher Education extends the production of qualified human resources. In this view, higher education is seen as a process in which the students are counted as "products" absorbed in the labour market. Thus, higher education operates as vital input for the growth and development of Business and Industry.
- Higher Education motivates training for a research career, in this view, higher education is a sort of preparation for the qualified scientists and researchers who would continuously develop the new offers of knowledge. Quality within this viewpoint is clearly research publications and transmission of the academic rigour into qualitative research.
- Higher Education offers the efficient management of teaching provisions. Higher education institutions focus on the efficient management of teaching, learning provisions by improving the quality of teaching enabling a higher competition rate among the students. '
- Higher Education extends as life chances. Higher education provides an opportunity to participate in the development process of the individual through a

flexible continuing educational framework. These four concepts of higher education give an overall picture of what is in higher education.

Higher education as embracing teaching, learning, scholarship and research. These activities are, and should be, at the heart of higher Education. But there is a range of associated activities which have increased in significance as higher education has expanded and become a greater element in national life. These include, increasingly, important contributions to' the cultural and business life of local, national and international communities.

The Growth of Higher Education in India

Higher education institutions in India are varied growth levels and also have varying funding mechanism, Higher education institutions under the category of institutes of national importance like IITs, IIMS and the central universities, all funded 100% by the Central Government State Universities are funded mainly by the State Government However, some marginal financial supports is provided by the Central 'Government as Plan grants through various schemes of the UGC, Another category 01 institutions are designated as Deemed to be Universities Broadly, the size of the State University sector is reported to be 57% of the total, 8% is the Central University sector,1% are institutions other than universities established under the State Legislation and likewise,7% ace the institutions of national importance and almost 27% institutions are under the category of Deemed-to-be-Universities. The number of the universities upto the year 2010 has been reported to be 518 by the UGC, The total student enrolment under all these institutions is over 12 million (123 lakhs),There has been a rapid growth beyond the year 2000,The number of universities in year 2000 was 266 and there is almost 100% growth in less than 8 years' period, Also in 1947, the total number of universities were only 20,with student enrolment of about 0.2 million (2 lakhs),

Likewise the college sector which is primarily affiliated to the universities recorded its growth to reach a mark of 25951 in the year 2010,This number was 500 in

the year 1947, Likewise, if we look at stream-wise enrolment in India, Humanities & arts stream constitute the largest percentage among all i.e" 45%; Sciences constitute 18% Engineering & Technology constitute 7% 'and remaining 10% for streams like Law, Agriculture, Medicine and all others ranging from 1 % to 3% each,

The Government of India has emphasized the need for further growth of higher education institutions, incorporating the recommendations of the National Knowledge Commission and also similar recommendations by the planning Commission of India from time to time, In the current plan period, the Govt. of India has already established 8 new IITs, 6 IIMs, 20 NITs, 3 IISERs, and 20 new NITs are proposed and 2 more SPAs, The spectacular growth in the number of higher Education institutions at all levels including deemed-to-be universities etc has elevated, India is a country leading globally in higher education sector along with USA and China,

Higher Education in India is one of the most developed in the entire world, There has in fact been considerable improvement in the higher education scenario of India in both quantitative and qualitative terms, In technical education, the IITs, and in management, the IIMs' have already marked their names among the top higher educational institutes of the world, Moreover the Jawaharlal University and Delhi University are also regarded, as 'good higher Educational institutes for doing postgraduates courses and research in science, humanities and social sciences, As a result, students from various parts of the world are coming today for higher education in India. . "

"The gross enrolment ratio (GER) is "abysmally low" in the country, a senior HRD Ministry official said that India should achieve 30 per cent GER in higher education by 2020, as against the current 11 per cent. "There is no denying that we are abysmally low in terms of GER. We are half of the world's .average in terms of the enrolment in higher education, but its 'not unachievable. [The Economic Times, 22 Dec, 2010).

Present Profile of Higher Education in India

"The Gross Enrolment Ratio of India in higher education is half of the world's average, two-third's that of developing countries and around a fifth that of developed countries. Even though we have been able to achieve an economic growth rate of 9 per cent of GDP despite low enrolment in higher education, it would not be possible for us to sustain such economic growth, maintain our competitiveness and enhance our productivity without at least doubling our higher education enrolment. Unless we can increase access and educational outcomes at secondary and tertiary levels, our demographic dividend might turn into a demographic liability"(Shri Ansari).

India's higher education system is the third largest in the world, after China and the United States. The main governing body at the tertiary level is the University Grants Commission (India), which enforces its standards, advises the government, and helps coordinate between the Centre and the State. Accreditation for higher learning is overseen by 12 autonomous institutions established by the University Grants Commission.

- Higher education all over the world is in the university campuses, while in India, it is 'predominantly in affiliated colleges, many of which are small, under equipped and under staffed. . .
- India has nearly 25,000 colleges, 240 state universities and 39 institutions of national importance and nearly 128 Deemed Universities. For a country of the size of India, with more than a billion populations, the number of universities is too low.
- The few universities that we have, many are loaded with administrative and routine un-academic work because of the affiliating system and the number of affiliated colleges that come under them.

- Nearly ninety percent of the undergraduate students and sixty percent of the postgraduate students are in the affiliated colleges. Consequently, there is no appreciable research atmosphere. This situation is academically quite unacceptable.
- There are multiplicity of national institutions associated with the regulations of universities and colleges in the country with overlapping responsibilities leading to duplication and confusion.(Tandon2008)
- On almost all indications i.e., faculty standards, library facilities, computer facilities: student teacher ratio, higher education is in crying need for upgradation.
- 90% of the colleges and 68% universities across the country are of middling or poor quality

As of 2009, India has 20 central universities, 215 state universities, 100 deemed universities, 5 institutions established and functioning -under the State Act, and 13 institutes which are of national importance. Other institutions include 16000 colleges, including 1800 'exclusive women's colleges, functioning under these universities and institutions The emphasis in the tertiary level of education, on science and technology. Indian educational institutions by 2004 consisted of a large number of technology institutes Distance learning is also a feature of the Indian higher education system.

As per Report, of the Higher education in India, Issues Related to Expansion, Inclusiveness, Quality and Finance, -the access to higher education measured in term of gross enrolment ratio increased from 0.7% in 1950/51 to 1.4% in 1960-61. By 2006/7 the GER increased to about 11 percent. By 2012, (the end of 11th plan objective) is to increase it to 15%.The target of increasing Gross Enrolment Ratio to 15 percent by the end of 11th five year plan and 21 percent GER by the end of 12th five year plan is considered necessary to reap demographic dividends. Improvement of access, along with equity and excellence; enhancing the relevance of higher education through curriculum reforms, vocationalization network and information technology and ,distance education,

along with reforms in the Governance structure, are some of the main, policy objective in higher education.

Table -1
Progress Overview during 2009-10

Indicators	Higher and profession education level achievements
Enrolment in universities and colleges	136.42 lakhs of which 16.69 lakhs (12.24%) in university departments and 119.73 lakhs (87.76) in affiliated colleges.
Enrolment in distance learning	30 lakhs
Enrolment of women	65.49 lakhs
Intake in technical education	14.10 lakhs in degree and 5.09 lakhs in diploma
Institutions in technical education	7272 Degree level institutions and 2324 diploma level
Number of universities	504
Number of colleges	25,951
Faculty	5.89 lakhs
Academic staff colleges	66

Source : Annual Report, MHRD, 2009=10

Some institutions of India, such as the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), have been globally acclaimed for their standard of Education. The IITs enroll about 8000 students annually and the alumni have contributed to both the growth of the private sector, and the public sectors of India. However; besides top rated universities which provide highly competitive world class education to their 'pupil, India is also home to

many universities which' have been founded willi the sole objective of making easy money. Regulatory authorities like UGC and AICTIO have been trying very hard to extirpate the menace of private universities which are running courses without any affiliation or recognition. Students from rural and semi urban background often fall prey to these institutes and colleges.

Three Indian universities were listed In the Times Higher Education list. of the world's top 200 universities - Indian Institutes of Technology, Indian Institutes of Management, and Jawaharlal Nehru University in 2005 and 2006. Six Indian Institutes of Technology and the Birla Institute of Technology and Science - Pilani were listed among the top 20 science and technology schools-in Asia by *Asia week*. The Indian School of Business situated in Hyderabad was ranked number 12 in global MBA rankings by the *Financial Times* of London in 2010 while the All India Institute of Medical Sciences has been recognized as a global leader in medical research and treatment.

Role of Higher Education

Education becomes a major factor in developing the human capital to enable countries to compete successfully in the global economy. Higher education is of paramount importance for social and economic development. Higher education has developed many folds since the beginning of the 20th century. Throughout the world, the issues of autonomy, accountability, funding, impact of technology, growing role of markets, and rivatization of higher education, research, curriculum reforms, massive expansion of education, quality and access, are some of the vital concerns of governance of higher education, which need immediate attention",

- Higher education is at the top of the education pyramid and determines to a large extent the state of the education system of the country, especially its quality. As such it has a responsibility towards the whole education system and therefore towards basic education.

- The system of higher education is the reservoir of the best equipped human resources and physical resources in any country having an obligation to help develop other structures of education including basic education.
- Institutions of higher education cannot isolate themselves from surrounding social problems and therefore, they have to be linked to other sectors of the society
- Higher education is crucial for social and human development and therefore such linkages must be established by promoting basic education. Massive illiteracy in many developing countries is making the role of higher education more challenging.
- Higher education can help promote new and sustainable ways of living, working, producing and travelling that will help achieve wider benefits to human health and wellbeing.
- Higher education has enormous potential to promote prosperity.
- Inspiring and enabling individuals to develop their capabilities to the highest levels to play a major role in shaping a democratic, civilised, inclusive society.
- Higher education also provides opportunities for long learning, allowing people to upgrade their knowledge and skills from time to time based on the societal needs.
- Access to higher education allows for maintaining employability through mobility
- Fosters a dynamic relationship to learning
- Allows for openness to life-long-learning opportunities;
- Improves the ability, of individuals changes and transition periods.

Table – 2

Advantages of Higher Education : Economic Advantages of Higher Education

Public benefits	Private benefits
Increased Tax Revenues	Higher Salaries and Benefits
Greater Productivity	Employment

Increased Consumption	Higher Savings Levels
Increased Workforce Flexibility	Higher Savings Levels
Decreased Reliance on	Improved Working Conditions
Government Financial Support	Personal / Professional Mobility

Social Advantages of Higher Education

- Reduced Crime Rates
- Increased Charitable Giving Community Service
- • Increased Quality of Civic Life
- Social cohesion/ Appreciation of Diversity
- Improved Ability to Adapt to and Use Technology
- Improved Health / Life Expectancy
- Improved Quality of Life for the Offspring
- Better Consumer Decision Making
- Increased Personal Status
- Higher rates of volunteering, voting and donating blood correspond to higher levels of education as do lower unemployment and poverty rates, Similarly, socially valuable behaviors, such as tolerance for the opinions of others, seem to increase with education. A more educated workforce also would lead to higher wages for all, to play a major role in shaping a democratic, civilized, inclusive society.

Conclusion

To sum up higher education is the backbone of any society. It plays an important role in the socio-economic growth and development of country. Education is the key instrument in this process. Higher educational institutions provide the necessary trained and educated manpower required for the development and implementation of various programs needed for the growth and development of a nation. The quality of higher

education decides the quality of human resources in a country, Higher education as we see today is a complex system facilitating teaching research extension and international cooperation and understanding, national development, fostering global competitiveness including ethical values, promotes the use of technology and creating an atmosphere and quest for excellence. In the globalized world opportunities for the educated people are naturally ample in scope. As a result business process outsourcing (BPO) activities have increased competitiveness 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.

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