Indian Higher Education Issues and Challenges

Dr. Y. Praveen Kumar

Assistant Professor of English, Department of English, Government Degree College, Medak,
Government Degree College, Medak, Medak, Telangana-502110

Abstract

This article highlighted emerging issues and challenges in India's higher education (HE) sector, particularly in regional and semi-urban settings. When we realize that India has a highly recognizable higher education system among the world's nations. The research paper has tried to focus on the problems identified with the understudy and the problems identified with the most extensive education system in the third world, with more than five million students in higher education in more than 12,000 colleges and universities. India is additionally a third-world testing and research superpower, spending a vast amount of money on it. The planning and transformation of higher education is exceptionally problematic, with highly dominant politicians who run the institution as a business and profit-making industry, mainly dominating the issue. An academic has rightly pointed out that Indian higher education, in pockets of volatile exams, has poor-quality colleges and the best graduates. Yet, unemployment at home is a reality for some. Legislative issues often suppress grant and contingency criteria in many organizations. India today faces many problems related to a lack of education, poverty, unemployment, global emergencies, and other worldly values.

Keywords: India, Higher Education, Problems, Issues, Challenges, Administration, Quality Education

Introduction

The idea that India has a top-notch educational system and robust educational framework is often exaggerated. The various benchmarks, new courses, evolving curricula, flexible approaches, and teacher preparation make it easier to provide high-quality content. India's e-learning, student-friendly education, growing extracurricular and co-curricular activity adoption, among other factors, draw students from China, Canada, South Africa,

Germany, the USA, the UK, and Australia. Nevertheless, the picture is not positive when considering the employability of the output and the state of underemployment and unemployment. Regrettably, the impoverished cannot access high-quality education, and only a small % of school graduates, roughly 10% choose to pursue postsecondary education. Many students are accused of studying only by memorization, and all curricula are designed with exams in mind rather than learning objectives. Therefore, India's educational system stands in the way of attaining its economic development goals. This study aims to comprehend, assess, and offer answers for the problems and difficulties facing the Indian educational system.

The main objective of the research paper is to study the Indian education system, discuss the challenges and issues, and provide an amicable solution and suggestions for the issues. The research methodology used to pen this paper is experientially based on qualitative research and secondary data analysis. It has

highlighted several systems in the Indian education sector and their shortcomings. It focused on describing the issues and challenges in the system, considering the Indian democratic structure.

The study has a clear perspective on the problems with the Indian educational system and its workable solutions. The following should be kept in mind when evaluating it:

The report covers a broader picture of the Indian educational system. It does not address the fundamental problems in any Indian state. Based on secondary data that is accessible from multiple sources, the analysis is completed. It is devoid of primary data. The researcher does not intend to compare the Indian and foreign educational systems. The conclusions of other researchers and the consensus are the primary sources of inspiration for the solutions.

India is renowned for having top-notch education. The remarkable diversity of Indian education has recently drawn attention worldwide. India has 34 secondary and senior secondary education boards (Studylib, 2017). More than 95% of the schools in India are affiliated with State Boards.

The Government and private own schools. In 2006, 19% of Indian children were privately educated. This figure jumped to 38% in 2014 (MHRD, 2016). Private schooling has been growing continuously and is desirable to people, irrespective of socio-economic status.

In January 2015, the International Schools Consultancy listed India as having 410 international schools. More than 95% of the international schools offer a dual curriculum (international and a national curriculum like CBSE, ICSE or State board). HE in the country has about 152 central universities, 316 state universities and 191 private universities. Other institutions include 33,623 colleges, 1,800 exclusive women's colleges, and 12,748 institutions offering Diploma Courses (Indrail, 2015). UGC coordinates, determines and maintains higher education standards at various levels. Various agencies are responsible for the different professional programmes. AICTE, ICAR, DEC, NCTE, Bar Council of India, MCI, INC, CCH, PCI, and CCIM.

Besides these, open and distance learning is available at the school level, and the National Institute of Open Schooling provides opportunities for continuing education to those who missed completing their school education. Fourteen lakh students are enrolled at the secondary and higher secondary levels through open and distance learning. In 2012, various state governments introduced State Open School to provide distance education. Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) coordinates distance learning at the higher education level. It has a cumulative enrollment of 15 lakh and is serviced through 53 regional centers. The Distance Education Council, an IGNOU authority, coordinates 13 State Open Universities and 119 institutions of distance courses in conventional universities.

Vocational education, All India Council of Technical Education reported in 2013 that there were more than 4,599 vocational institutions that offer degrees, diplomas and post-diplomas in architecture, engineering, hotel management, infrastructure, pharmacy, technology, etc. Annual intake capacity for technical diplomas and degrees exceeded 34 lakhs. In 2016, 10 public and 10 private educational institutions were made world-class. The Rs 1,000 CR allotted to HEs. Rs 1,700 crore was provided for 1500 multi-skill development centers. 62 new Navodaya Vidyalayas were created to provide quality education. A digital literacy scheme was launched to cover six crore additional rural households. The National Skill Development Mission was initiated to train 76 lakh youth (India Today, 2017). Entrepreneurship training was provided across schools and colleges, along with massive online courses. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was introduced to increase focus on the quality of education.

India has been a multi-cultural, multi-religious, and multi-linguistic society. Every State has a different and distinct identity. Dealing with the various aspirations of such people in a democratic country is a challenge for the government of India. The various issues are as follows: In the top 100 universities listed by 'Times Higher Education World Reputation Rankings', none of the Indian universities could be found in the list. In the 2017 rankings by the HRD ministry, only 2,995 institutions (6%) participated from around 51,000-strong higher educational institutions in India. There is a severe regional imbalance, too. In the overall rankings, of the 100 best institutions, 67 are from just eight states. Among the best 100 universities, 40 are in three states. Among the best 100 colleges, 77 are from just five states (Nanda, Prashant K. 2017). Value education is not offered in schools and colleges. If offered, religion and hatred are spread in the name of value education. Many doctors, lawyers, CAs, politicians and government servants who are supposed to be society's saviors suffer from serious corruption charges. Nursing homes are increasing. Suicides are increasing. The meaning of love is eventually changing. The education-led technology, inventions and innovations are being misused.

Women have a much lower literacy rate than men. Conservative cultural attitudes prevent girls from attending schools. Despite the government's attempts to provide incentives, viz., midday meals, free books and uniforms, girls' attendance is poor. Though the minimum age for marriage is eighteen, many girls get married much earlier. Therefore, at the secondary level, the female dropout rate is high.

As per the 2016 Annual Survey of Education Report, 3.5% of schools in India had no toilet facility, while only 68.7% had usable toilet facilities. 75.5% of the schools surveyed had a library in 2016, a decrease from 78.1% in 2014. The percentage of schools with separate girls' toilets has increased from 32.9% in 2010 to 61.9% in 2016. 74.1% of schools had drinking water facilities, and 64.5% had playgrounds.

Many different curriculum systems confuse the students who wish to achieve the same objective, such as Engineering, Medical and Business Administration. At the higher education level, there is no uniformity in the syllabuses taught for the same program. Syllabus revision is done quite often without considering the contemporary requirements of industries. There is a lack of diversity in the subjects one can take in colleges. Flexibility to cross over streams is also lacking.

Teacher absenteeism in India is exorbitant. World Bank estimates show the cost in salaries paid to absent teachers is US$2 billion every year. A study by Kremer et al. found that 25% of private sector teachers and 40% of public sector medical workers were absent during the survey. Absence rates among them ranged from 14.6% in Maharashtra to 41.9% in Jharkhand.

For governments, scoring more is a success. English is becoming the measure of intellect. Hence, today's parents take the least interest in the vernacular medium of education. Due to the perceived notion of inferior quality, government schools are becoming the last choice for many. Education-seeking migration has become a matter of pride for many families. Most school students spend most of their learning time preparing for competitive exams.

Coaching classes flourish due to this unwarranted competition, leading to a class divide.

Primary education is the backbone of a country's education system. If the teachers at primary and secondary levels are unskilled, not qualified and poorly paid, all further studies will be at stake. Hence, more attention is required on primary education rather than higher education. Presently, higher education institutions compete to get quality students. The weaker and less reputable colleges end up with poor students. This affects the employability of youth and creates a class divide.

The system should reward those who deserve the highest academic honor. The crammers should not be rewarded. Our testing and marking systems must be built to recognize original contributions, creativity, problem-solving and innovation. Ranks should be awarded accordingly.

The Indian education system is built on the assumption that if a thing is good for one child, it is suitable for all. However, one massive education system cannot be suitable for all. Some people are visual learners; others are auditory learners. Some kids learn faster; some do it slowly. The syllabus should be designed so that every learner's latent ability is identified and motivated. Hasty and fast learning should be discouraged.

A teacher is an entrepreneur and creator. The performance of a teacher should not be restricted to the classroom. It needs to be opened up for the world to see on the internet. There have to be leaders in teaching positions, not salaried people holding their mantle. Hence, regular training is a necessity.

Education without character is an abortion and will create divisions in society. A country that lowers the quality of education and allows score competition in exams will collapse. The mystified doctors, less skilled engineers, cowardly judges, money-minded accountants, greedy business people, inhuman preachers and ignorant teachers cannot serve for the economy's growth. They will soon and surely doom society with their unethical practices, which no one can resist.

Corrupt politicians supported by corrupt followers and a corrupt police force are increasing. Frauds, burglaries, rape and sexual harassment cases are rising. The government recruited bank managers who worked against the government's development policies. Printing fake notes and introducing plastic rice, egg, cabbage, etc., is becoming uncontainable. Adulteration is everywhere and in everything. Fruits become ripe with chemicals. Even the small kids' products are adulterated. The Govt should deal with such unscrupulous people severely.

If it observes the nation as a knowledge economy, we need to offer quality education to all and not ration it. Admissions in educational institutions should not be based on caste or religion. Financial support to students based on caste and religion should be immediately stopped. It is seen that people earning a good amount of income enjoy Govt incentives, and they become inactive comparatively due to the caste/religion benefits. Baseless reservations create a societal division and lead to brain drain. Reservations will vanish if the scarcity of education is avoided.

Education in India has been regulated on a not-for-profit basis. This encourages corrupt people, money launderers and politicians to use educational institutions to hide their black money and earn heavy income from the education business through clever structuring. The government cannot regulate them. Hence, it is high time that private educational institutions be nationalized in tune with the federal structure and compensate the investors sufficiently. Education up to the tenth standard should be made free of cost.

Education is a country's lifeline, and it has to be given more importance than defence in any country. There is a dire need for revolutionary changes in India's education system, not only in the syllabus and pedagogy, but also in the attitude towards the test and marks system. India can use its vast human resources productively if the learning system is effective. As a child is born, it is painted with religion and caste by the cowardly society and is bombarded with all biased thoughts and unruly philosophies. Every child has unlimited potential, and they should be allowed to be free from our ill thoughts. It should be taught to reduce inequality. We can do a lot. But we are not working with the required seriousness. If the Govt schools are failing, it is primarily because of the non-availability or absence of teachers, no headmasters for governance, lack of initiatives by teachers, lack of guidance to students, lack of infrastructure, increased involvement of politicians and more bureaucratic control.

Indifferent parents, including Govt school teachers, MPs, MLAs and ministers, send their wards to private schools. It is a shameful situation. The government will have to work on it seriously. The schools, Kendriya Vidyalaya and Navodaya Vidyalaya, are far better than public schools. The way of teaching is superb. The qualifications of teachers are unmatchable. These schools are doing wonders, providing quality education and an opportunity to excel. No private school can match their infrastructure; both are Govt schools with very low fees. Why can't we adopt the same philosophy in all government schools? Governments do a lot in education, but are not getting the results, since the attempts are neither completely organized nor consistent. The system of education should be learner-centric rather than mark-centric.

Children must be allowed to choose subjects according to their interests. They should be encouraged to research independently from library books and the Internet and share their findings in class. This will help them to develop self-confidence, self-dependence and openness to criticism. Employability is a serious problem today. Somehow, people get degrees and become unemployed or underemployed. The quality of education is directly linked to the resources available, and the government needs to improve resource allocation to bring about qualitative changes in the field of education. Though the number of students and programmes increases yearly, India has failed to produce world-class universities in both the private and public sectors. The scarcity of quality education should be avoided.

References

1. ASER, 2016, Annual Status of Education Report 2016, http://www.asercentre.org/ p/289.html.
2. Bittersweet, 2017, The collapse of education is the collapse of the Nation, https://www.jamiiforums.com/threads/the-collapse-ofeducation-is-the-collapse-of-the- nation, 1231557/, April 7.
3. Class base, 2016, Education System in India, http://www.classbase.com/countries/ India/Education-System.
4. Indiatoday, 2017, Budget 2017: Education sector analysis, then and now, https://www.indiatoday.in/educationtoday/news/story/budget-2017-education-958329. 2017-02-01, February 1.
5. Indrail, 2015, Higher education in India, https://indrailsearch.wordpress.com/ 2015/06/13/education-higher-education-in-india/, June.
6. Kremer, etc. (2004), "Teacher Absence in India: A Snapshot, "Journal of the European Economic Association.
7. Kumkum Joshi, 2017, How India's education system breaks the country, http://www.dailyo.in/voices/school-education-englishgovernment-school/story/ 1/16610. html.
8. Maps of India, 2016, Education in India, http://www.mapsofindia.com/education, January.
9. MHRD, 2016, Educational statistics at a glance, http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload files/mhrd/files/statistics/ESG20160. Pdf.
10. Prayatna, 2014, Education in India: Past, Present and the Future. Ideas, Policies and Initiatives, http://prayatna.typepad.com/education/datastatistics February 14.
11. Sanyal D. K., 2017, 14 facts about Indian education system and a remedy, https://sanyaldk.in/doing-it-in-open-source-way/14-factsabout-indian-education-system-and-a-remedy/
12. Sasi Kumar V., 2016, The Education System in India, https://www.gnu.org/ education/edu-system-india.en.html, 18th November.

13. Studylib, 2017, Private sector's contribution to K-12 education in India - Current impact, challenges and way forward.,