



Challenges of Higher Education in Urban India: A Historical Analysis

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Abstract

Ancient Indian education scenario was the best model of education with educational institutions served as back bones of country's forward march. These institutions were autonomous, self-reliant & produced learners who were self-reliant & skilled in all trades & expertise. But now, urban Indian higher education scenario is in need of changes on ancient Indian model. Urban India is becoming a global knowledge hub attracting students from far & near. It is considered as an educational center along with its meteoric rise in economic progress. India is becoming part of global knowledge economy. Hence corporate skill based learning has pragmatically helped this boom. The higher education sector is instrumental in adding to this escalation in didactic activities thereby contributing to the growth of Indian economic status. Indian industries always blame on skill gaps. The growth of industries is not always complemented by the growth of skilled man power resources as required. The industry sector always requires additional resourced man power. Higher education has always been a sick child in India. This needs to be rectified to sustain the present flourishing economic scenario.

Key Words: Ancient India, self-reliant, higher education scenario,

Introduction

The higher education sector in ancient India was instrumental in adding to skills & aptitudes. This helped the escalation in instructive activities. Potential higher learning addressed several societal problems as students were trained in various trades & skills. These skills made him self-reliant & self-employed. They contributed to the growth of economic wellbeing besides promotion of educational standards

was sought. But now Indian industrial sector always criticizes on skill gaps in Indian higher educational standards. The growth of industries is not always complemented by the growth of skilled man power. The human resources as required by Industrial sector is not forthcoming hence the man power needs to be trained in employable skills (Pawan Agarwal (Ed) A Half Century of Indian Higher Education Essays 2013). The industry sector always requires additional



resourceful man power which can be fulfilled by Higher education. Higher education has always been a sick child in Indian education scenario. This needs to be rectified to sustain the present flourishing economic situation besides to widen the employment market. (Pawan Agarwal (Ed) A Half Century of Indian Higher Education Essays 2013)

Ancient Indian Higher Education Features

Ancient Indian higher education was a very wide spread arena of skill learning. (Padmini Sengupta - Everyday Life In Ancient India - 2013). It afforded life skills. Potent students learnt the arts of living with self-reliability & confidence. The self-reliance which was needed for good professional & societal life was thus gathered. But with the coming of the British, ancient Indian system of education was modified, learning became commercialized & skills for a sound future life were made hypothetical & theoretical. The student is made to go through the exercises of learning without much support for his future life. Indian higher education sector landscape has been changing since years. (Kurien C .T .-Fifty Years Of Higher Education In India 2013).

The Indian Higher Education Sector-

Judicious reforms in HE field has remarkably transformed HE sector.

The learning outcomes has improved enrollment number has been increased. HEIs have been catering to the different educational needs. Indian HE segment has a well planned expansion post liberalization period. It has emphasized on Student centric learning component which has resulted in the increase in the student enrollment as well as outcomes. (Kameshwari Choudhury (Ed)Higher Education Reform In India Experience & Perspectives 2012).

As knowledge hub India has been a leader in exploiting the technological innovation to its optimal usage. Access, equity & has been its tagline for better performances. Teaching in HEIs has been made an attractive career with rise in facilities, salaries, research amenities, governance of HEIs have been made more flexible with more autonomy & academic freedom as there have been structural changes in HEIs.(Kameshwari Choudhury (Ed)Higher Education Reform In India Experience & Perspectives 2012).

Impact of Urbanization

Increased urbanization has made several options open for the youth to project themselves as pertinent professionals. There is expansion in income levels of people even in rural areas has made higher education a visible dream. Besides, rapid industrialization is demanding greater skill development among



Indian urban youth. The need for optimal utilization of technology has given way for greater demand for highly educated human resource. This has made the HE a locatable vision. This has directly reflected in the expanded enrollment.

Structural Change in Governance in HEIs

Above all, a Structural change in governance in HEIs is attracting urban youth towards HEIs, with voluminous increase in Research & Developmental activities at all level of HEIs, the chances for India to become a premier global supplier of skilled manpower resources has been expanding.

Improved interest in stake holders of HEIs: improved interest in stake holders of HEIs has given the essential boost for the spread of interest & awareness about higher education. Even sub urban semi urban & rural areas are attracting students to study further. (Kurien C.T. -fifty Years Of Higher Education In India Frontline Vol 21 Issue 06 March 2013).

Short falls of HEIs: But Higher education scenario in India has been suffering from certain pitfalls.

1. The outmoded academic regulatory environment of HEIs is not supporting the expansion & enrollment ratio. The HEIs are still following an outmoded

academic environment. The higher education learning is not multi-disciplinary as in ancient Indian education system. Ancient Indian education system channelized a student's potentialities in multi dimensions. He was made to learn 64 various arts & skills which included music, dance, carpentry, jewelry making, art work, painting, bead working, coin minting, metal working, reciting, reading, etc. He was trained in multi-use skills. He was trained to emerge as a skilled professional in various arts which assisted him in his future life. He could pursue any of these skills & he could be self-reliant. Thus he became self-sufficient & self-determining. The government was free to utilize his skills without spending any extra amount.

2. Ancient Indian educational institutions were not governed by any authority; they were sovereign, autonomous & were self-financed. Only few educational institutions received royal grants. This autonomy was a virtual autonomy & this helped the institution & the learner equally in disciplining his character & institutions parameters. Currently Autonomy of academic institutions which's sanctioned on the basis of the academic performance is proving too distant a reality. The actualities of autonomy are



- becoming a farce & HEIs are struggling to implement autonomy.
3. Declining levels of academic productivity, quality, eminence etc is causing a disastrous effect on higher educational prospects. Students are attracted to pursue their career in a foreign land rather than India. This brain drain is causing heavily on Indian economy & HEIs have been a failure in preventing this brain drain. .
 4. Higher education is suffering because graduates are becoming unemployable. Even with high feathered degrees in their lap they are largely unemployable. This is the major source of skill gap as well. Students with a bachelor degree are not finding a suitable job & their degrees are not assisting them to find a decent job. (Jandhyala B. G. Tilak (Ed.) Higher Education in India: In Search Of Equality).
 5. Inflexible academic structure is demeaning the resource mobilization pattern. Human resources are being wasted. Students with High degrees are made to work for low salaried jobs with meager professional upliftment. Sometimes a double degree holder is seen working for a paltry salary in a hotel or a cloth center. This causes underutilization of man power & economy is directly hit by this. (Jandhyala B. G. Tilak (Ed.)
- Higher Education In India: In Search of Equality).
6. Low level of public funding is bugging the Higher education sector. It is affecting the faculty Research activities are very low & hence Standards of academic research is very low. Governmental allocation for HE sector is very poor.
 7. There are several Systemic loopholes such as The affiliating system is unwieldy , Uneven capacity across subjects (like arts , science & commerce), inconsistent policy making, fractional budgetary allocation poor R & D allotment, etc.
 8. Current higher education sector should devote towards making this sector with more funds, more research allocation, & more competency building learning skills. Otherwise the HEIs will suffer. (Jandhyala B. G. Tilak (Ed.) Higher Education In India: In Search Of Equality).
- Conclusion:** Thus an evaluation towards ancient Indian higher educational Pattern with contemporary pattern helps to identify the challenges of HEIs in this urban setting. Ancient Indian education which was a mode of procuring self-reliance & self-identity ,never gave room to skill gaps , But current pattern of education has made individuals depending & non-reliant. Thus a well planned expansion of HEIS, with emphasis on



Student centric learning component is needed.. This will provide more chances of exploiting the technological innovation to its optimal usage besides access & equity.

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