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Status and challenges of the higher education in India

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Abstract

University system is exposed to many challenges, such as political interference, lack of accountability, inadequate funding and general student indiscipline, on and off the university campus. Today, higher education is facing two major issues. Increased level of competition on one hand and declining resources at the other. The challenge of competition has been reflected in concerns about the degree to which institutions-both public and private, and to some extent, global media networks are penetrating the system of higher education. The management of the universities plays a crucial role in the development of higher education. The main problem in the university administration is the problem of the non-teaching staff. Since Independence higher education has grown in the country substantially. Most of the universities in India are still functioning with out-dated procedures, rules and regulations. The main objective of the present study is examined the status and challenges of the higher education in India.

Keywords: Higher Education system, Resources, Penetrating, Inefficiency and Mismanagement.

1. Introduction

Higher Education in India is one of the largest and oldest systems of higher education found anywhere in the world. As of now there are 320 Universities, of which nearly 131 are of Affiliating Universities. Besides there are deemed universities, institutions of national importance, institutes and over 15500 colleges. Together they offer a wide range of degree and diploma programs across the length and breadth of the country. The higher education system in India has constantly striven to build new college as places of culture and of learning open to all and, above all, reinforcing the theme of learning throughout life, participating in and contributing to major debates concerning the direction and future of society is seen as a major task, and a moral obligation as well, of the colleges system. India has had a long tradition of inquiry and articulation of concepts of colleges, self, role of state, economy, social order and other related matters. The methodologies adopted were subjective and objective and included observation, conceptualization, verification, articulation and teaching. The higher education system in India recognize its key responsibility in training teachers, in establishing links with teacher training institutions at other levels and in training teacher trainers. Efforts are being made to bring in teachers from the commercial and social sectors to facilitate interchange and build links with the education system. The secondary education system in India is facilitating access to the common heritage of knowledge and research. It is fulfilling its moral obligation to society in exchange for the resources assigned to it by society. Recently, a task Force on Fundamental Duties laid down in the constitution has been constituted so that the same can be reflected in the curriculum. This would also lay down a code of accountability of all stakeholders in the educational system.

Objectives

The Main Objective of the Present Study is examining the Status and Challenges of the Higher Education in India.

Source: the present article is based on secondary data.

1.1. Challenges:

University system is exposed to many challenges, such as political interference, lack of accountability, inadequate funding and general student indiscipline, on and off the university campus. Universities autonomy is grossly misused to suit the interest of some of the key positions or some students or higher authorities.

Many vice-chancellors are helpless and suffer silently. Cordial relations and greater co-ordination between teaching and non-teaching staff deteriorated leading to malfunctioning of universities. Improved relationship between teaching and non-teaching staff and their relationship with the Vice-Chancellor will take the higher education to great heights otherwise higher education will have silent death.

Today, higher education is facing two major issues. Increased level of competition on one hand and declining resources at the other. The challenge of competition has been reflected in concerns about the degree to which institutions-both public and private, and to some extent, global media networks are penetrating the system of higher education. It is to these challenges that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) appears to be seen as a solution.

The management of the universities plays a crucial role in the development of higher education. The main problem in the university administration is the problem of the non-teaching staff. Universities are over burdened with excess non-teaching staff. There is an urgent need to prune the expenditure on non-teaching staff. The upward mobility of the administrative staff is from lower division clerk to higher cadre give rise to administrative problems. They lack necessary training and skill required for work.

Thus, many of the academic and non-academic problems mentioned earlier need serious consideration. It may be dealt with by various Commissions and Committees and by individual scholars. However, it is unfortunate to note that the governance of universities, though important and require immediate attention was not taken up by either Government or the UGC.

Most of the universities in India are still functioning with out-dated procedures, rules and regulations. In this context, the Education Commission aptly pointed out that "The pattern of university administration in India has not only become obsolete, but has never received that kind of specialised consideration and planning which are needed to design the policies and techniques and practice and machinery for decision-making need, for a forward looking and dynamic economic organisation.

1.2. Absence of Forward Planning:

The pressure on the university administration has been increasing considerably over the years due to rapid growth in the size of the universities over the last three decades in terms of number of students, courses, teachers, etc. There has been sizeable increase in the volume of work in the administration which was created primarily to monitor the required administrative services to the students and teachers. Further, long-term planning needs to be given more attention in the universities. States are utilised properly and the schemes executed on time, but also to ensure better services to students and teachers.

1.3. Lack of Clarity in Duties and Responsibilities:

No specific duties and responsibilities have been assigned to different levels in the hierarchy, viz, Deputy Registrar, Assistant Registrar, Superintendent, Senior Assistant, and Junior Assistant. The duties and responsibilities and the roles of different categories of staff have not been clearly defined and made known to them. As a result, there is no proper distribution of work. Due to inadequate powers and specific responsibility to deal with matters independently at supervisory level, much of the routine work has to be dealt

with by senior officers and more often such matters are referred to Vice-Chancellor.

1.4. Lack of Decision-Making at all Levels:

The entire system of university administration is suffering from lack of decision-making at all levels. The observations on the management process of the universities reveal that there is no specific delegation of authority to the different levels. Consequently, fast decision-making is totally absent at almost all the levels and hence important and routine matters are passed on to the higher officers. While the decentralisation which is more necessary for an educational institution is found only on paper, it is the centralisation of authority which prevails in practice.

1.5. Practice of Old Methods:

The administrators of the universities have continued to adopt in their functioning and operating the same methods, procedures, rules and regulations which have been in practice for many years. Most of these methods and procedures are no more relevant to the present environment existing in the universities.

1.6. Faulty Staffing Procedures:

Staffing is selecting and employing, training and developing, and placing and orienting people in favorable and productive work environments. In performing this function, management determines the mental, physical, and emotional requirements of work positions through job analysis, job descriptions, and job specifications and then finds the necessary employees with the personal characteristics - such as abilities, education, training and experience - needed to accomplish the job.

Turning to the methods of training and development of the staff, while some attention is paid in the case of teaching staff, it is completely neglected in the case of non-teaching staff. Most of the universities do not have any job evaluation schemes and whether one works or not, one gets annual increments regularly and also promotion on time-scale basis, particularly in the case of non-teaching staff.

1.7. Ineffective Leadership:

Leadership stands out as an instrument for bringing stability and control to the university system. But unfortunately, those who are becoming the heads of the institutions are unable to lead the people effectively to the common goal due to lack of knowledge of the skills necessary for a leader.

1.8. Lack of Motivation and coordination:

The purpose of motivation is to create conditions in which people are willing to work with zeal, initiative, interest and enthusiasm, with a high personal and group moral satisfaction, with a sense of responsibility, loyalty and discipline and with pride and confidence in a most cohesive manner, so that the goals of an organisation are achieved effectively. The theory of motivation has undergone many changes in the recent past. Even in India many of the business firms have started using these theories.

1.9. Personal Management:

Several universities have a large ministerial and class IV Staff which in some cases runs into thousands in strength far exceeds their legitimate work requirements. Universities will be well advised to institute immediate enquires into this

aspect of their personnel management and to take steps to restrict further requirements to such positions.

The objectives of personnel management in any organization may be summarized as follows: [1] Effective utilization of human resources in the achievement of organizational goals. [2] Establishment and maintenance of an adequate organizational structure and desirable working relationships among all members of the organization. [3] Securing integration of the individual and informal groups with the organization, and thereby their commitment, involvement and loyalty. [4] Recognition and satisfaction of individual needs and groups goals. [5] Provision of maximum opportunities for individual development and advancement. [6] Maintenance of high morale of human organization. [7] Continuous strengthening and appreciation of human assets.

1.10. Political Interference:

A major cause of the administrative inefficiency and mismanagement in universities is undoubtedly political interference and the politicization of our campuses. This is a direct result of low political standards set by the country's political parties. The point to be stressed here is that universities can do a lot on their own to improve their internal administration and contain the evil affects of 'politicization'. They should be really serious about it.

11. Academic Council:

Some of the problems which vitiate a university's day to day atmosphere can also arise from the practice of electing members to various university bodies. In determining the composition of the Council it is important to provide representation to all the faculties through Deans of faculties, Head of Departments, Professors, Readers and Lecturers. In the case of affiliating universities the Council should in addition provide representation to Principal of Colleges and College Teachers.

1.12. Appointment of Vice-Chancellors:

No single matter can affect the working of a university more profoundly than the selection of its Vice-Chancellor. The Vice-Chancellor of a university is its chief academic and executive officer. In a very real sense he is the keeper of the university conscience who must set the highest standards of conduct and performance by personal example and deal firmly with indiscipline or other malpractices. To be equal to his responsibilities he must have the strength of character to resist firmly the many pressures that seek to relax standards of training, scholarship and student behavior.

1.2.1. Status of Higher Education in India

Since Independence higher education has grown in the country substantially. Now there are approximately 652 universities, 28,000 colleges, within estimated 106 lakh students enrolled in the higher education institutions. Merely increasing the number of higher educated institutions and their enrolment capacity will not achieve the national system, its access to those who desire, and equity measures ensuring fair and important treatment of the disadvantaged sections of the society.

Table 1: Distribution of universities & University Level Institution in India

Type of University	India (As on 17-09-2012)	Percentage
State University	299	46
Private University	140	21
Institution of National Importance	39	6
Deemed University	130	20
Central University	44	7
Total	652	100

Source of Data: UGC

The expansion of higher education without maintain quality in not desirable. The quality is first essential requirement for an institution. It is more so in case of higher education institutions because it is where the youth is shaped. There is a growing concern for quality and those who positively respond to this will survives and prosper. Hence there is a dire need to enhance and maintain quality in our educational institutions. It is in this context of deterioration in quality, that the National Policy on Education, 1986 and the Plan of Action, 1992 spelt out the strategic plans for the education policies, and advocated the establishment of an independent national accreditation organization for higher education. To fulfill this need the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) was established at Bangalore in 1994 by the university Grants Commission to Assess and Accredite institutions of higher education in the country. It is an external quality Assurance Agency like the higher Education Quality Control Council of the UK and is a member of the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in higher Education (INQAAHE)

Table 2 Growth of Institutions in the Eleventh Plan

Category	2006-07	2011-12	Increase	Growth Rate (%)
Central Institutions				
Degree Awarding Institutions	75	138	63	13.0
Colleges	58	69	11	3.5
Diploma Institutions	14	24	10	11.4
Sub Total	147	231	84	9.5
State Institutions				
Degree Awarding Institutions	253	316	63	4.5
Colleges	9,500	13,024	3,524	6.5
Diploma Institutions	2,151	3207	1,056	8.3
Sub Total	11,904	16,547	4,643	6.8
Private Institutions				
Degree Awarding Institutions	80	191	111	19.0
Colleges	13,706	19,930	6,224	7.8
Diploma Institutions	7,220	9,541	2,321	5.7
Sub Total	21,006	29,662	8,656	7.2
Total	33,057	46,446	13,383	7.0

Source of the Data: MOHRD, UGC

The above table shows about the particulars of "Growth of Institutions in the Eleventh Plan". Growth rate of Central Level Degree awarianing institutions is 13 per cent growth rate of central level colleges is 3.5 per cent and growth rate of central level diploma level diploma institutions is 11.4 per

cent, totally subtotal growth rate is 9.5 per cent. While, growth rate of state level degree awarding institutions is 4.5 per cent, growth rate of state level colleges is 6.5 per cent and growth rate of state level diploma institutions is 8.3 per cent growth rate of private level degree awarding institutions is 19 per cent, growth rate of private level colleges is 7.8 per cent, and growth rate of diploma institutions is 5.7 per cent. Finally concluded that above the table central level institutions are high growth rate and then lower growth rate central to state level institutions.

1.3.0. Conclusion

In India after independence, there has been tremendous increase in institutions of higher learning in all disciplines. But with the quantitative growth has it been able to attend to the core issue of quality. India is today one of the fastest developing countries of the world with the annual growth rate going above 9%. In order to sustain that rate of growth, there is need to increase the number of institutes and also the quality of higher education in India. To reach and achieve the future requirements there is an urgent need to relook at the Financial Resource. With the advent of globalization the character of higher education is set of change. Higher education to be meaningful and productive must have avenues for excellence to flourish and develop. There will be a premium on quality with bench making of programmes assuming importance. The impact of technologies will progressively increase. So Indian universities need to look and a head and prepare themselves for far reaching changes. Unless the quality aspect is not taken care of the malady that exists in higher education will never be eliminated.

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