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## Higher Education: An Emerging Challenge before India

**Jagjit Bhatia**

Assistant Professor, Department of Computer Science  
Hans Raj Mahila Maha Vidyalaya, Jalandhar, Punjab, India

### **Abstract:**

Indian parliamentary system is giving impression like one step forward and two step back in case of various bills related to higher education, it may be commission of higher education research or National Accreditation regulatory authority for higher educational institutions. Now time has come to change the definition of education and mindset of the educational institutions. It is a time to remove the profit making disgrace associated with higher education sector. There should be debate on privatization of education. This privatization in higher education is emerging as capitalism. Do we need a check on affiliation and accountability of emerging private institutions in higher education? It is time to debate on sub standardization of higher education and its challenges.

**Keywords:** educarer, unemployment, NAAC

*“Teaching is a creative profession, it is our duty as leaders and education influencers to offer the right climate to foster innovation.....” Samerchidiac*

### **1. Introduction**

Is there something wrong when we say that the most creative profession of teaching has turned into most lucrative profession of making money? No, there is actually nothing wrong in earning money. After all, the teachers teach students to attain skills to become economically independent and make money. Nevertheless, if the aim of education is left far behind and only the purpose of making huge profits is served, it is then that we must question the system and rethink on the lines that an educator also serves the role of an “educarer” i.e. the one who cares and reaches out to the students. Moreover, such a system which fills the pockets of a few is a huge burden on the national economy because it generates useless graduates without skill, mindset or the prowess to become a contributor. The sad scenario is that these graduates have paid a hefty amount, sometimes selling family gold or silver to attain their “education”.

We as a nation are undergoing a huge amount of rapid change in the education sector with the number of private institutes escalating dramatically with an intensifying apprehension about the standard of educators and graduates declining steadily. The institutes which are mongering money in the name of education fail to get accredited resulting in an overall decline in the quality of education. Although, India can boast of having the biggest education organization in the world in terms of quantity of institutions and second leading in terms of enrollment, yet these institutes fail to come anywhere near to the top 100, 500 or even one thousand institutes of the world. In fact, mushrooming of such institutes has turned education into a type of fast food, quick, easy but serving no mental nutrients manifested in form of poor quality and insufficient research and skill orientation. It is no hidden fact that the rising number of private universities, colleges, institutions poses a serious threat to the entire education system of the nation which is transforming the mission of educating lakhs of Indian students into a target oriented approach of making lakhs for a few in the business of providing degrees and diplomas.

Figuratively speaking, the state and central universities are facing the problem of faculty deficiency (40 and 35%, respectively), almost 60% Universities and 90% colleges have been found to be average or below standard in NAAC authorization and India’s citation index is much below i.e. almost less than half of the world average. Over here, I take the liberty of quoting our ex Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh..“.....almost 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of our Universities and ninety percent of our colleges have scored below average on the quality issues.....appointments are politicized....”<sup>[i]</sup> In this light, we also must be aware of the fact that it is the higher education that plays a key role in shaping technological and developmental aspirations of the nation and inversely, the astounding potential possessed by Indian youth needs quality higher education to prepare them for playing the key role in development of the nation.

Traditionally, India has a rich legacy of advanced learning centered in Gurukuls, Buddha viharas and the madrasas<sup>[ii]</sup>. However, the current evolved system of education in India, which may boast of having more than 650 universities (including central, state owned,

deemed and private), more than 35,000 affiliated colleges with a total enrollment crossing a mark of 200 lakhs <sup>[iii]</sup>, fails to provide quality educational institutes with no Indian University featuring in top two hundred. Moreover and unfortunately, India is a home to many such universities and colleges which have come into existence for the sole purpose of minting money. This has added to the number of unemployable, unskilled and yet “educated” graduates. This state of affairs has been undoubtedly perceived and put forward in the “Note on higher education” by Nation Knowledge Commission, 2006 in their observation “.....a quiet crisis in Indian higher education that runs deep.....”

Let us understand our challenges a little more deeply:

### *1.1. Educating a Huge Multitude (5 Million in the Age Group of 18-24) Without Attenuating the Quality*

The huge population of India which could be its major strength in terms of human resource has turned into a problem. Only one out of seven students in India enrolls for higher education and even there the drop out rate is very high. But the solution definitely does not lie in mushrooming of education factories which churn out unskilled and “uneducated” graduates/literates. Many for-profit education institutions stand for profit and not for the noble cause of education. For each centre of excellence in education, we have thousands of unprofessional education shops which don't meet the minimum set parameters of quality. However, it remains a fact that due to opening of such shops universities and colleges are fast losing their importance as places where students applied to study. They rather have to pursue students in order to keep themselves afloat in the market. So, we can say that education the huge multitude of people is no more a cause of “public good” but it is becoming a commercial commodity to be explored by various business houses. Even the world trade organization “WTO” (1998) has declared that .....‘education also exists as a private consumption item with a price determined freely by the providing institutions’. Looking at this bleak state, it is mandatory that the bottleneck of quantity education be solved, but not at the cost of creating another log jam of low quality of graduates. Education should be subsidized with grants inflow to higher educational institutions and a minimum regulatory check on the quality parameters for higher education institutes should be maintained.

### *1.2. Countering the Educated Unemployment*

Although students graduating from the below standard education institutes pay huge fees and sometimes even borrowed money, yet they fail to attain necessary skills and score low on employability stricture. In fact, they add to the burden of unskilled human resource in India. A recent study by “Aspiring minds” has shown that out of more than five lakh engineers produced in India every year, less than 2.5% possess the necessary skill requirements which mean that more than 93% lack the necessary skills? <sup>[iv]</sup> This is substantiated by the fact that unemployment in graduated youth has increased by more than 10% from almost 19% in 2011-12 to almost 32% during 2012-13 and 46% during 2014-15 <sup>[v]</sup>. This rising number of educated unemployed youth is again due to the over capacity of institutes which are over and above in their number but down in their quality. So, again a check and regulatory measures need to be adopted here.

### *1.3. Reduced Student Enthusiasm and Discipline*

It is a known fact that students feel enthusiastic when they get full attention of teachers. Over enrollment and huge number of students with a poor student: teacher ration goes a long way in reducing the student enthusiasm. Further, the scintillating and glamorous attitude towards education reduces the discipline level of the students. This highly money minded approach towards education steals two key aspects of learning i.e. motivation and discipline. What is left with us is a pack of graduates with low moral values and a society sans morality. What purpose does such education serve...millions for few but millions badly affected.

### *1.4. Lack of Missionary Approach towards Education*

It is without doubt true that the most noble profession is that of teaching someone, it is a giver's voyage and it definitely needs a missionary approach. It is actually quite surprising that the mission of education becomes the victim of factories of education. Today, we need good research centers, we are lagging behind in research. A populous country like China is establishing its supremacy in research. We have many lessons to learn. We must realize that and today student is tomorrow's researcher, teacher, professional and a citizen alias nationalist citizen. A severe lack of noble scheme and a schematic tactic play in earning lakhs will indirectly affect the psychology and future of tomorrows teachers.

### *1.5. Heterogeneous Education System in India*

If we consider India as a geographical aspects we found many setup like rural-urban, rich-poor, states-UT etc. These geographical aspects posed great challenges for educational institutions. Varities of educational institutions may be universities; private universities technical institutes are providing different types and quality of education. Why Indian education system is allowing such type of practices in education in terms of private institutions without authoritarian check.

### *1.6. Multilingual Context*

Language is important tool of education system. Whatever you want to communicate or express, is totally depend upon the command on language. Luckily or Unluckily India is a multilingual country. Every state has its own language and the youth of that state is very much comfortable in his or her own mother language. But of 90% education system is in foreign language i.e. English. Student is

much more comfortable in expressing and conceiving the knowledge in his mother language. But when he encountered with English his 80% efforts is in skirmishing with language.

### *1.7. Lack of National Curriculum and Courses*

According to All India survey of higher education by Ministry of Human Resource and Development and Department of Education there are 633 universities in which 201 Universities are privately managed. There are 42 Central University, 1 Central and 13 State Open Universities, 61 Institute of National Importance, 290 State Public University, 5 Institute under State Legislature Act, 38 Deemed University Government, 11 Deemed University Government Aided and 10 Others. Each university has its own courses and different curriculum. This non uniformity of courses and curriculum state wise is a question mark to quality and integrity of degree and diploma while moving one state to another state.

## **2. Conclusion**

In concluding words, we can say that there is exponential growth in higher education in terms of educational institutions. Growth should be there, but it should be through appropriate policy and its effective implementation. India need adequate policy in term of curriculum and courses and state has to grow its higher education through this policy. Now our country needs a job led growth in term of vocational and technical education. In total population of country, the contribution of youth population of less than 40 years is 65%. This is advantage for India, so young minds need to be provided with quality education which in terms produces skilled and educated human resource. Higher education now has become the important part of Indian modern society, which is tightly knotted with political and social system of the society. Time

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