# MANAGING THE CHALLENGES TOWARDS BALANCED HIGHER EDUCATION LEVELS IN INDIA

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## ABSTRACT

*It is by now universally accepted that the level of development of any nation depends upon the level of educational development within the country. Human Resource (HR) is an important resource of a country which ultimately is responsible for making constructive use of available "Physical Resources" in the country*

*As the Physical resources required for the development of a country are always comparatively scarce, its utility should be carefully monitored and should be put to effective, efficient and optimum use. Human Resources (HR), particularly the young generation should grow up to be responsible citizens being consciously and / or subconsciously aware of the ever growing needs and responsibilities for the same. This can be achieved only if the dropout rate is decreases and enrolment rate is increased at schools, colleges, universities particularly for higher education.*

*To bring out effective solutions, the problems and challenges before 'Education' particular Higher education needs to be examined, so that they can be dispensed with and the Human Resource of the nation can be satisfactorily armed to fight back the problem and challenges posed before it.*

*Thus the machinery of the economy can be propelled towards leading the country to take off its flight to scale greater heights.*

*However, proper understanding and management of the problems and challenges is inevitable, so that the solutions are properly sought and applied.*

***Keywords:*** Education, Higher Education, Human Resource

## INTRODUCTION

Before discussing  the issues and challenges in Higher education a quick brief understanding of the term 'education' and then 'Higher Education' will give a better understanding of the issues and challenges posed by it.

'Education' is derived from the Latin word 'educare' which means 'to lead out'. Hence the educator imparting education should carefully try to be a leader, rather than just a

dictator of information. He / she should enthuse, inspire and guide his / her students to be more knowledgeable so that the teaching – learning process does not appear to be a 'nightmare' or 'pain in the neck' but rather evolves as a joyful experience to be cherished throughout the lives.

Education is a process of step by step training the mind of the learner in a particular subject through theoretical and practical information imparted. It may be intellectual and / or moral education.

Higher education is imparting knowledge or education through colleges and universities to degree or it's equivalent level.

The main mission of Higher Education is to train the minds to think logically and rationally, so that gradually Research Work can be successfully undertaken. The Researcher through his / her research helps to drive away darkness and throw enough light on his / her research area, thus serving the community at large.

## OBJECTIVES OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The objectives of Higher Education were set during the 10th Plan. This period started from 1st April 2002 and ended on 31st March 2007.
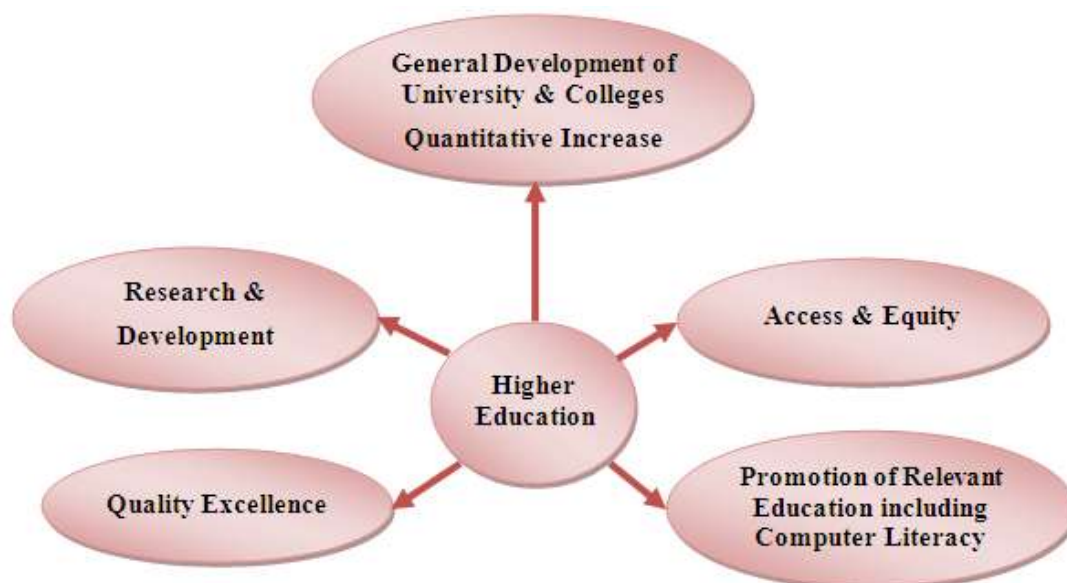
The objectives of Higher Education were as follows:

- To increase the quantity of education, but nevertheless, the quality of education through effective teaching, thus strengthening and enhancing Higher Education.

- Through research, making Higher Education more effective and relevant to business community.

- Making Human Resource more efficient to achieve meaningful sustainable development and empowering them to withstand global competition which is vital for survival in modern times.

- Meaningful and profound transformation of Higher Education.

- To adopt and enhance Technologies in the education process.

- Injecting a blend of tradition with modernity so that old values are not perturbed and at the same time educationally enriched Human Resource is ready for globalization, in the true sense of the term.

## UGC – Apex Nodal Agency

Central Government has appointed University Grants Commission (UGC) as its apex nodal agency to function under UGC Act, 1956. The Central Government has passed on to UGC the responsibility of coordinating and maintaining standards and norms of Higher Education in the country.

For managing, strengthening and advancing Higher Education and for balancing quality and quantity of Higher Education during the 10th Five Year period [1], UGC has identified 5 sector priority areas – stepping stones to balanced higher education levels in India, in the present Indian scenario.

**Let Us Examine These Five Sector Priority Areas Along With Their Problems And Challenges.**

**General Development of Universities and colleges:** For General Development of Universities and colleges, funds are provided to improve basic facilities and infrastructure therein.

Technical education grants for teachers, particularly development of women and sports, professional courses publications, organizing seminars, conferences workshops, etc, travel grants, computer education and cultural exchange programs.

However one would always have a question in mind. Are the funds utilized for the purpose for which they were sanctioned?

**Access and Equity:** Equitable accessibility to Higher Education, to all, is desired. Higher Education should never be a privilege or monopoly of the privileged sections of society. Fruits of the efforts, to spread Higher Education, should reach the less privileged too. Any person desirous of Higher Education should be able to have quick access to it. Funds are provided specially for Universities in backward areas. Any person even from a stray or remote area wanting to have accessibility to higher education, should be encouraged and trained particularly in population education, civil services, human rights, value based education-trying to emphasis the right values and do away with wrong values prevailing in the backward societies, on his return back to his roots. Such an educated person can go a long way in educating others around him.

But another question is will the under privileged return to his roots on securing Higher Education? Or will he give emphasis only for his personal development.

**Promotion of relevant Education:** It was very often observed in the past that the degree holders were not properly groomed in the direction of being a real help to his employer. Studies of different courses were not actually catering to market demands.  Hence, promotion of relevant education was a major challenge before Higher Education system

during the 10th Plan. To face this challenge career oriented courses were introduced. Changes were made in the undergraduate and postgraduate education. Eradication of computer illiteracy was desired, as the business world of the country had already embraced computerized systems for work, to be conducted economically, effectively and efficiently.

But one would always like to reexamine whether the syllabi and courses are really relevant or are there still some loopholes? Or is it that there still is the scope for Higher Education being more conducive and relevant?

**Quality and Excellence:** Higher education quantum increased, will not help much if the quality of higher Education is compromised with or overlooked.

Output of Higher Education should have the ability and capability of not only assembling but also analyzing and disseminating 'Knowledge'. More funds are allotted to Universities rather than colleges for this purpose. The quantum of funds are allotted or allocated to existing universities and colleges having potential for excellence. Colleges and universities are also given sanctions and grants for the same. Programs under which funds are allotted are:

- Digital repository of research and teaching material.
- Internet connectivity for Universities under UGC.
- Info net initiative and campus local area network.
- Promotion of Indian Higher Education abroad
- Promotion for Hindi (Raj bhasha).
- Information Communication.
- Teaching innovations in various disciplines
- Computer Education.
- Training of Academic Administration.
- Faculty Improvement programs.
- Consortium for education communication.
- Recourse Mobilization Incentives
- Assessment and Accreditation.

This crucial priority sector has many issues plaguing it. To face the challenges posed by this priority sector, only Herculean efforts would have to be undertaken.

**Strengthening of Research:** Research is an important component of Higher Education. Hence the need arises to identify good researchers in different subjects in universities and colleges. Funds for the right researches are given to strengthen infrastructure in Science and Technology, Arts, Humanity, Law, Social Sciences, allied disciplines, etc. Awards for research, awards for professors of eminence go a long way to encourage research work. Creating a healthy research environment is also of paramount importance.

Kapil Sibal, Union HRD Minister has said [2] "Difference between a developed and developing Nation is not the GDP, but the difference is the number of children going to Higher Education Institutions."

Question arising here is, will research work done, or to be done, fall in line with the ever increasing population of the nation?

## CONCLUSION

Higher Education should also be well equipped to deal with old and new problems facing the society and should suggest remedial measures for managing the same.

Higher Education should help in mitigating issues like Corruption, Disaster Management, Population Control, Unemployment, Inequitable distribution of resources, etc.

Higher Education should through its output help education to reach even in stray and remote areas. It should also be helpful in understanding local governance, fighting terrorism, protecting environment, controlling inflation, understanding Right to Information and Right to basic Human Rights.

But it is distressing to note that at present, out of 6% GDP (Gross Domestic Product) spent on education, only 1% is allocated for Higher Education. There is need to inject more funds for Higher Education sector and also to ensure that the funds are actually used for the purpose for which they are sanctioned. Proper control for the same should also be exercised to improve the overall health of Higher Education system.

Hence the need of the hour is that the Higher Education should churn out, not only specialists but also generalists (who are a good blend of tradition and modernity), not just problem thinkers but also problem solvers and not just managers but leaders to lead the nation in the 21st century, well equipped to break many a vicious circles –thus making the country powerful to face competition and survive and prosper in the Era of Globalization.

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