SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION - PROBLEMS AND SUGGESTIONS

Dr. Inderjit Rao
Associate Professor
Government College for Women
Rewari, India
Email: inderjitrao@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Education being a basic component of human development, its interface with sustainable development is well established. Higher education is perhaps the most important means for empowerment and for a sustainable improvement. Sustainable development is a basic human right unless this target is reached with the potent tool of education, the purpose of higher education would remain unfulfilled in well-being. While the strengths and achievements of higher education are significant, equally, if not more, significant are the problems and weaknesses it is associated with. The quantitative expansion is not adequate, as only about 19% of the youth are enrolled in higher education; inequities among gender and socio-economic groups of population, and between various states are quite marked, especially in certain regions of the country; and the inequalities among different institutions in quality are alarmingly striking.

Keywords: Sustainable Development of Higher Education

PREFACE

Higher education needs a new look, It is an important form of investment in human capital. In fact, it can be regarded as a high level or a specialized form of human capital, contribution of which to economic growth is very significant. It is rightly regarded as the “Key tool of development in the new world economy”. The first and most importantly, higher education helps through teaching and research, in the creation, absorption and dissemination of knowledge. Secondly, It helps in the rapid industrialization of the economy by providing manpower with professional, technical and managerial skills. Thirdly, it creates positive attitudes and makes possible attitudinal changes necessary for the socialization of individuals and also the modernization and overall transformation of societies. Fourthly, higher education also helps in formation of strong nation states and at the same time helps in reaping gains from globalization. After all, it is only those countries that have invested heavily in quality higher education benefited for globalization and conversely, those countries that have no strong higher education system. Lastly, higher education also helps in formation of strong nation states and at the same time helps in reaping gains from globalization. After all, it is only those countries that have invested heavily in quality higher education benefited for globalization and conversely, those countries that have no strong higher education system. Lastly, higher education also helps in formation of strong nation states and at the same time helps in reaping gains from globalization. After all, it is only those countries that have invested heavily in quality higher education benefited for globalization and conversely, those countries that have no strong higher education system. Lastly, higher education also helps in formation of strong nation states and at the same time helps in reaping gains from globalization. After all, it is only those countries that have invested heavily in quality higher education benefited for globalization.

Meaning of Higher Education

It is important to remember that ‘education’ includes ‘literacy’, but it is not confined to literacy alone. It comprehends much more; It is acquiring of knowledge or learning, together with the equipment, which provides the skill and the inclination for making profitable use of that knowledge. Since the acquiring of knowledge and improvement of the skill for its application are parts of a dynamic process, education is a life-long exercise. Higher education is, therefore, never complete in a continuously evolving dynamic personality.
Sustainable Development of Higher Education

During the last 60 years after Independence, higher education has expended in India somewhat remarkably. The number of universities has increased from 20 at the time of independence. Presently 47 Central University, 353 State University, 123 Deemed University, and 246 Private University with total intake 20 Million students in about 35539 colleges are registered. Presently of the total students: 19% students opted science, 37% opted Arts, 18% opted Commerce & Management, 16% opted Engineering and Technology Course. There are 420 Medical Colleges certified by MCI with the capacity of 54145 students, there is one doctor for about 1700 people. In India presently 3289 UG with intake of 15,53,809 seats and 2234 PG Engineering colleges with intake of 1,97,018 seats are registered by AICTE (All India Council for Technical Education). In the field of Management 20 IIM,s and 3900 Management institutes with intake of about 3.5 Lakhs students are approved by (AICTE). 21, Central Institutes, 19 State Government Institutes, 14 institutes in Private sector are registered for providing Hotel Management degrees. India’s higher education system is the world’s third largest in terms of students, next to China and the United States. India educates approximately 19% of its youth in higher education. The main governing body at the tertiary level is the University Grants Commission, which enforces its standards, advises the government, and helps coordinate between the centre and the state. There are also specialized science and technology institutions and industrial research and development laboratories that concentrate on fundamental as well as applied research in the public sector. All these institutions could contribute to rapid accumulation of specialized human capital. Apart From these higher education courses in India. Distance learning is also a feature of the Indian higher education system. Accordingly, India is regarded as having the third largest producer of scientific and technical manpower in the world of nations with an estimated stock of about eight million.

On the whole, today India ranks fairly high in terms of the size of the network of higher education institutions, and enrolment therein. Such an educational explosion has been inevitable as the provision of educational facilities in the pre-independence period was very insignificant; and Independence has created an unfulfilled thirst for knowledge resulting in an abnormal rise in social demand for higher education. Secondly, building up a new socio-economic order after the end of colonial rule required large scale manpower with varied skills, and so the government has deliberately expanded the higher education system significantly.

Asutosh Sir Mookerjee had aptly described the meaning and purpose of higher education in his Convocation Address (1922) at Calcutta University. He said:

“To my mind University is a great store house of learning, a great bureau of standards, a great workshop of knowledge, a great laboratory for the training as well of men of thought as of men of action. The University is thus the instrument of the State for the conservation of knowledge, for the discovery of Knowledge, for the distribution of knowledge, and above all, for the creation of knowledge-makers.”

The emerging open learning system, comprising traditional methods of correspondence courses, and also modern methods of distance education also contribute significantly ‘massification’ of higher education, though a high degree of inequalities does persist between several states, between various groups of populations, and between several states and between several institutions of higher education, besides different kinds of imbalances between different areas of study. But India has made significant achievements in the development of education: the Indian education system was thrown open after independence to all at all levels-rich, poor and middle income classes, men and women, rural and urban populations, backward and non-backward segments of the population. Social and cultural diversity has also become an important strength of Indian higher education. Secondly, as a consequence, there has been a veritable explosion in numbers-students, institutions, and teachers. Thirdly, there has been the development of institutions of excellence, producing highly specialized
human capital. Lastly, it could produce the second largest (next only to China) stock of educated and skilled manpower in the world, and the third largest reservoir of scientific and technical manpower.

While the strengths and achievements of higher education are significant, equally, if not more, significant are the problems and weaknesses it is associated with. The quantitative expansion is not adequate, as only about 19% of the youth are enrolled in higher education; inequities among gender and socio-economic groups of population, and between various states are quite marked, especially in certain regions of the country; and the inequalities among different institutions in quality are alarmingly striking.

I would like to quote Dr. Manmohan Singh statement which he delivered in 2007 on seeing the condition of Higher Education system, “Our university system is, in many parts, in a state of disrepair. In almost half the districts in our country, Higher Education enrollments are absolutely low, almost two-third of our universities and 90% of our colleges are rated as below average on quality parameters. I am concerned that in many states university appointments, including that of vice-chancellor, have been politicized and have become subject to caste and communal considerations, there are complaints of favoritism and corruption.”

OBJECTIVES

1. Present position of Sustainable development of Higher Education in India.
2. Building human capacity for gaining a competitive edge in present scenario.
3. Linking education with development by making it locally relevant so as to develop country at local and global level.
4. Finding problems and extending suggesting to Government, Industries, Educational Institutions, Parents and Students for improving quality in Higher Education.

Suggestions for Improving Quality of Higher Education

There are some suggestions and expectations from all sections of society i.e. Government, Parents, Students, Industry and Educational Institutions for improving quality of higher education:

1. Towards a Learning Society-Every human activity will require contributions from experts and to provide education to all country should invest more and more on higher education and measures will have to be taken to refine, diversify and upgrade higher education and research programmes.
2. A long-term vision is important. The long-term perspective vision would form the basis of medium and short-term plans and policy changes.
3. Balanced development of all layers/types of education. Emphasis on one level of education cannot at the cost of another level of education.
4. Improvement in the quality of higher education, focusing on improvement of quality infrastructure and teachers.
5. Focus has to be given on improving equity in higher education-by gender and also by other socio-economic characteristics.
6. Higher education which is a public good, and nowadays also considered a ‘global public good’, so state should play a vital role in providing higher education instead of private sector.
7. We need to expand higher education, as we have to raise the enrolment ratio from 19% to 30% for the economy to rapid progress.
8. Incentives should be provided to teachers and researchers to make vocational and diploma courses more attractive for the young generation.
9. Methods of higher education also have to be appropriate to the needs of learning to learn,
learning to do, learning to be and learning to become.

10. Public Private Partnership is most essential to bring in quality in the higher education system. Government can ensure PPP through an appropriate policy. To achieve excellence, we thus need to create a real partnership between government, educators and industry- Partnerships that can provide our high-tech industries with skilled workers who meet the standards of their industry.

11. All round development of personality is the purpose of education, but the present day education is neither imparting true knowledge of life and nor improving the talent of a student by which one can achieve expertise in the field one is interested. So, after education, tour to all the places in India and world as far as possible with the cooperation of government is necessary so that one can understand about people, culture, arts, literature, religion, technological developments and progress of human society in the world.

12. For improving quality Academic and administrative audit should be conducted once in three years in colleges by external experts for ensuring in all aspects of academic activities.

13. Indian government is not giving priority to the development of standards in education. India should aspire for the international standards in education and should adopt uniform international syllabus in its educational institutions.

14. Examination reforms, gradually shifting from the terminal, annual and semester examinations to regular and continuous assessment of student's performance in learning should be implemented.

15. Transfer research from universities to specialized research institutes, because universities are traditional home of research. Higher education needs to be empowered, as it alone helps in sustainable social, economic and political development of the nation. The empowerment of higher education should include: (a) Provide basic minimum facilities to all the colleges and universities, (b) recruitment of good quality teachers, (c) regular enhancement of quality of teachers and above all (d) sound policies particularly relating to funding and management.

16. Special efforts are made to preserve and promote educational values critical thinking, and search for truth, and more importantly to inculcate universal human values such as peace, tolerance, non-violence, love, patriotism, social welfare, etc. Lastly, the time has come to create a second wave of institution building and of excellence in the fields of education, research and capability building.

CONCLUSION

Education being a basic component of human development, its interface with sustainable development is well establishes. Higher education is perhaps the most important means for empowerment and for a sustainable improvement in well-being. Improvements in educational attainments are accompanied by improvement in health and longevity of the population and the country’s economic growth. Education reinforces the socio-economic dynamics of society towards e quality and promotes a social order conductive to an egalitarian ethos. Sustainable development is a basic human right unless this target is reached with the potent tool of education, the purpose of higher education would remain unfulfilled. The link between the two must be forged into an inseparable bond to empower the people.

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