Quality Concerns in Higher Education in India

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Abstract- The aim of this paper is to present a general view and a brief literature review of the main aspects related to quality concern in global higher education. It provides an overview of accreditation as a mechanism to ensure quality in higher education. India needs multi-dimensional and broad-based quality education to maintain its leadership in the 21st century, therefore India should show the concern over the quality in Education as the education in India is not competitive in terms of the quantity and quality with other countries. Due to the reason of some Factors influencing quality in higher education that is politicizations, poor quality of intake, inadequate student service, inadequate material resources, non accountability of institutions, overcrowd classroom, influencing teaching, examination reform, teaching methods etc. and Challenges to quality higher education that is lack of access and equity, poor government budget, poor infrastructure inadequate number of faculty members, improper teaching methods etc.

Indexed Terms- Quality, Concerns, Higher Education

I. INTRODUCTION

Higher education is a powerful tool to build modern, value-based, knowledge based, culture based, and peaceful society which can lead the country towards becoming super power in the world. It is also considered one of the important and strong tools for the development of any country. Primary education is necessary for creating base, while, higher education is extremely important for providing cutting edge. Higher education contributes to the growth of nation by providing specialized knowledge and skill manpower.

- Higher Education in India:

India's higher education system is the second largest in the world, after the United States. 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. Accreditation for higher learning is overseen by 12 autonomous institutions established by the University Grants Commission. Indian higher education system has expanded at a fast pace by adding nearly 20,000 colleges and more than 8 million students in a decade from 2000-01 to 2010-11.

- Meaning of Quality in Education:

The quality in education need to be defined in the wider sense of the overall aim of education as the all round development of the individual and his commitment to social objectives; and viewed in this context, there is no doubt that vigorous efforts will have to be made to improve these to suit the changing needs of the country. It has become increasingly evident that the relevance of education, its significance, its validity for personal aspiration, its link with societal needs and goals, its efficiency and impact are the basic parameters of every educational system.

Quality in education can also be interpreted from a different viewpoint; it means educational standards are judged from examination results. An educational institution that shows high pass percentage is considered to be an institute of great quality.

- Concern for the Quality of Higher Education:

India needs multi-dimensional and broad-based quality education to maintain its leadership in the 21st century, therefore India should show the concern over the quality in Education as the education in India is not competitive in terms of the quantity and quality with other countries. Quality in higher education is a burning issue which can be ensured through regular review of the function of the institutions either through self assessment or through outside agencies and by accrediting the institutions. The expansion of higher education over the years has also resulted in educational malpractices, which exist in the form of

capitation fees being charged by the private institutions at the time of admissions in addition to the fees.

The entry of large number of private institutions has also resulted in rapid increase in proceedings involving students, teachers, employees, management of higher educational institutions and universities and other stakeholders negatively impacts the quality of education and efficient function of the institutions. Also there has been spurt in activities of Foreign Educational Institutions operating in India since mid 1990s. While some of them are resorting to various mal-practices to appeal and attract students, particularly in smaller cities and towns. Many of these institutions have come up since there is yet neither a centralized policy nor the regulatory regime.

University Education Commission (1948-49) rightly felt the uneasy sense of the inadequacy of the higher education system particularly in terms of quality and standards. Reiterating the importance of quality in higher education and its sustainability, the Kothari Commission in (1964-66) remarked that "the situation of higher education was unsatisfactory and even alarming in some ways that the average standards have been falling and rapid expansion has resulted in lowering quality". We have to therefore, gear up the machinery of higher education to fulfil the aspirations of people and be conscious towards quality maintenance as well as its role to elevate the country to new heights. In his message, Dr. Radhakrishnan communicates "there is need for change in the perception and attitude of universities realizing that their field is wider, task is greater and goal is higher in building a strong and happy India." The universities are not merely places of conferring degrees and distinctions. They besides being places of learning, also centres of service and wholesome development of human personality of men and women turning them into fine human beings. This will demand for quality education at higher education level.

India needs to emphasize on quality education and following key issues for improving the quality of higher education in India:
• Quality Concept of Higher Education in India
Quality is perceived differently by different people. Yet, everyone understands what is meant by "quality." In a manufactured product, the customer as a user recognizes the quality of fit, finish, appearance, function, and performance. The quality of service may be rated based on the degree of satisfaction by the customer receiving the service. The relevant dictionary meaning of quality is "the degree of excellence." It means there must be some important criteria, characteristics, distinguished element of a product, organisation or institutions that gives satisfaction to the people who avails the service. It is connected with the feeling of satisfaction and perception of the people.

The students who complete their UG and PG course have very low job opportunities. Another serious issue is the gap between demand and supply implying that the youths are not eligible for the job market. This leads to wide spread unemployment among the higher educated graduates.

To improve the quality of higher education in India, we must maintain parameters of quality education. The parameters of quality higher education are: sufficient number of quality faculty members, profile of the students entering into the higher education, infrastructure of the educational institutions, curriculum, appropriate teaching method, examination pattern, learning resources, national agencies, government policies and institutional leadership etc. India has one of the largest education systems of the world. Therefore, different stakeholders must work on these parameters on their respective levels to maintain and improve the quality of higher education in India.

• Factors Influencing Quality in Higher Education:
Quality in education depends on several factors. A few of them include:

• Politicization:
Politicization of higher education has posed a serious threat to the quality of higher Education. Appointment of Vice-chancellors in many instances is being viewed politically. The challenge of education document indicated that de-politicization is not an early acceptable condition for the political parties in the country.

- Poor quality of intake:

In order to attract students for admission, the colleges go on awarding high grades/marks to undeserving candidates. The colleges/university departments admitting students on the basis of career marks get cheated in many situations and thus get poor quality of students.

- Managerial Inefficiency:

Generally, principals are appointed basing on the seniority and the managerial efficiency is not taken into account. There is no regular orientation programme for newly appointed principals. It affects the quality of education as they don't have the influential managerial skills.

- Overcrowded Classrooms:

Lack of adequate number of teachers and classrooms force many colleges to reduce their number of groups and merge them into larger groups making it possible for a teacher to carry out effective classroom interaction.

- Inadequate Student Services:

Most of the higher education institutions today are not capable enough to provide services like conducting orientation programmes, health services, hostel facilities, guidance and counselling services to the students.

- Inadequate material resources:

Most of the higher education institutions at present does not have proper material resources like building; play ground, good number of classrooms, infrastructure, laboratory with sufficient equipments, toilet facility, and staffrooms.

- Non- accountability of institutions:

Non-accountability of the institutions leads to the poor quality in higher education.

- Inefficiency in Teaching:

An effective teacher needs to be lifelong learner and need to strengthen his knowledge voluntarily. A good institution is known by its teachers. The institution should be supplied with various journals and good library facility which will energize the teachers' proficiency and competency.

- Examination Reforms:

Reforms in the examination system is the most common phenomenon in the recent past. Most of the researchers and academians are not satisfied with the present examination system. It may be true for years because the pitfalls in the evaluation system make the examination system ruin. The evaluation is not reliable. This can be changed by using the new methods of grading system and other various innovative methods.

- Teaching Methods:

The curriculum framework should be such a way that it should provide new knowledge which is useful to the society and also provide the employability opportunities. The teachers should use qualitative teaching learning material and also aware of use of multimedia, IT and OHP.

There are other factors also which are affecting the quality of higher education such as motivation of the teachers and students, favorable environment for teaching-learning process, irrelevance of the curriculum leading towards the low employability etc. which needs to be improved for enhancing the quality of higher education in India.

- Challenges to Quality Higher Education in India
- Lack of Access and Equity:

The lack of access and equity is the most serious challenge faced by Indian higher Education. In some areas or town or states the access of higher education is absolutely colleges are very scares. There are some districts with reasonable population and demand of higher education does not have even single universities; for example the Murshidabad district with 8 million populations does not have any single university. There is also disparity among different social caste and religious groups and regional disparities in the higher education. These challenges are needs to be addressed very soon

- Poor Government Budget:

Low budget is a serious challenge in the field of education. Very meagre amount of fund is allocated for the education system. And the matter is that most of the allocated fund is spend in school education, very less amount is spend on higher education sector. The

amount of scholarship is significantly low and Public expenditure on scholarships has been declining over the years. For education an extremely low percentage of graduates in India avail student loans.

Sometimes the fellowship of research scholars are not transacted in the due time that leads to frustration among the scholars. Though some quantitative development is seen, but due to low budget quality of higher education is facing a serious challenge.

- Gap between Demand and Supply:

India has a huge growing young population. They demands education after finishing their higher secondary education. But it fails to meet the demand of the people. According to a study conducted by ASSOCHAM 93 per cent MBA graduates are unemployable. It is because the availability is not up to the demand of industry. Another thing is that, due less job opportunity students continue their study after finishing their course of study. This leads to over demand of education in higher level.

- Poor Infrastructure:

Though India has tremendous development in the higher education, still there are large number of colleges, institution and universities where even the basic facilities are not available. Old classrooms are there; lack of sufficient building, staffrooms, library or resource rooms laboratory, technological facilities, instruments for practical classes, toilets and urinates, drinking water facilities etc are there. The poor infrastructure of institutions directly throwing challenges to the quality of higher education. This problem is found basically in rural areas.

- Inadequate Number of Faculty members:

Another serious challenge to the higher education is insufficient number of faculty members in the colleges and universities. Without the teachers the intended learning outcomes cannot be achieved. Even the single teachers have to teach number of different subjects to large number students along with other work load. Thus the student teacher ratio on the whole is at a lamentable state.

- Improper Teaching Method:

At the tertiary level there is no such formal training for the faculty members. Therefore the unqualified or untrained faculty members are appointed. As they don't have knowledge of pedagogy and teaching techniques, their quality of teaching is very poor and the learning outcome is meagre.

CONCLUSION

Thus it can be concluded that education is the key to the progress especially higher education which provides the cutting edge and skilled manpower. But, quality of higher education is declining and is a matter of concern for all the stakeholders as well as for the whole nation. Indian higher education has expanded in quantity but lacking behind in terms of quality. India cannot progress until it higher education system is qualitatively strong enough because this poor quality is resulting in low employability, low performance of the specialized individuals, lack of innovative and creative ideas etc. which are the key elements of success and progress in present time. In all, there is a need to enlarge the adaptive capacity and quality of the higher education system so that it is more responsive to the changing world of work and meets the diversified needs of economy – both domestic and global. For that purpose diversification of the Indian higher education and training system has to be pursued as a goal. This can be achieved by having a proper mix of public and private, formal and non-formal institutions. In this paper is present a general view and brief lit. review of the main aspects related to quality concern in higher education.

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