MANAGEMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

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ABSTRACT

This paper deals with how higher education system in India was managed in past. In early civilization time where teaching and learning process revolved around the 'Gurukal system'. In the middle ages students from Central Asia, China, Middle East, South East Asia and Rome focusing on Literature, Philosophy, Astronomy, Architecture used to come to India whose influence can be seen across the world in terms temples, construction and irrigation systems. In next part this paper elaborates what is current situation of management of higher education in India. The UGC recognizes the Universities to award degrees through affiliation process. In the last part this paper concludes with future situation in management of higher education and opportunities.

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Keywords: *UGC, AICTE, MHRD, Philosophy, Astronomy, Architecture.*

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Introduction

India with second largest population is the third largest higher education system in the world by volume of students enrolled. Government of India through Ministry of Human Resource development (MHRD) under the Department of Higher Education shapes the policies related to higher education. The University Grants Commission (UGC), a statutory body established in 1956 through Parliament enacted law is responsible for co-ordination, evaluation and maintaining standards of higher education in India. UGC is responsible for establishing central universities across India and for recognizing Deemed to be Universities run by privately funded trusts and Universities established by the Twenty eight States across India. UGC has established statutory Councils to promote, provide grants, set standards and establish professional education in different areas.

Management of Higher Education in India: Past

Education in India dates back to its early civilization time where teaching and learning process revolved around the 'Gurukal system'. This system had been a residential concept wherein the students were educated under the tutorship of a teacher in various areas of religion, philosophy and science. Modern concept of University style education was established around 6 BC at Nalanda and Takshila .The concept centralized learning centres with multiple streams continued till the arrival of Europeans to the Indian subcontinent. These higher learning centres were nerve centre of different dynasties which ruled across India for thousands of years and generated the required human resources for construction, irrigation and warfare.

In the middle ages upto 1200 AD the religion based higher learning centres were established throughout the Indian peninsula. These learning centers attracted students from Central Asia, China, Middle East, South East Asia and Rome focusing on Literature, Philosophy, Astronomy, Architecture whose influence can be seen across the world in terms temples, construction and irrigation systems.

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In the early modern age after 1200 AD the Islamic influences enriched the traditional University learning centres and brought in the disciplines of Geography, Law, Administration and Arabic mathematics to Indian subcontinents.

Major change in the traditional style of higher education was brought by European rulers from 1600 AD. Till 1850 informal European style learning centres were established throughout India Their main focus was in development of European language speaking administrators and clerks for enriching the establishment of their rule. The British were successful by 1800 in controlling much the Indian sub-continent under the rule East India Company. The British established formal system of higher education which continues till date. Lord Macaulay made English as the language of instruction across the education system. The British style Universities were established in Calcutta, Mumbai and Chennai in the year 1857 based on the model of University of London which is foundation of the modern higher education system. Universities focused on languages, literature, history and philosophy. These learning centers were focused on generating English speaking employees for British services, army and trade. Modern Science and engineering education which flourished in Europe and America during the late 1800 were not main focus under the British rule. By 1903 the Indian Institute of Science was established by Tata with focus on research in science and engineering which is the first higher technical learning system in modern India. The British model of University system continued to expand across India leading to growing number of higher learning centers by 1947.

Management of Higher Education in India: Present

The UGC recognizes the Universities to award degrees through affiliation process .The affiliation process allows Colleges run the recognized courses of the Universities in Arts, Science, Commerce, Crafts, Law, Pharmacy and other specific areas. The colleges are affiliated to respective Universities across all the states as per their geographical locations. These colleges are either run by State Governments or by the private trusts. These colleges running the the specific courses in different areas are required to obtain approval from the respective councils. This was further enhanced in 1986 through National Policy on Education (NPE) and Plan of Action in 1992.This policy framework allowed India to take higher education to all across sections of the society and locations. Through this framework of affiliation funding of higher education at PG and UG level were distributed between private investors, State and Central Government. Through the NPE in 1986 to take higher education to the masses Distance Education Council was formalized which led to huge rush in the number of students pursuing higher education through distance mode through establishment of Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi which standardizes, approves and affiliates open education system. In Maharashtra Yashawantrao Chavan Open Univesity was established in 1992.

After 1992 when the University affiliation systems was opened to private investors with less bureaucracy, India has seen tremendous increase in the number of Universities and colleges across India. Most of the Universities cater to large number of affiliated colleges in a particular geographical location in India. Over the last three decades the University education system has reached stagnation in terms of up gradation, R & D and administration. Large volume of students coupled with strict government's norms and lack of industry investment in University and College research has resulted in turning these colleges as mass training centers for generating skilled manpower for service industry and totally neglecting science and research.

A country with history of 5000 years and having population of 1.25 billion is changing slowly. The consistent growth rate of India in last two decades is due to higher education system which has generated skilled manpower for speedy industrialization and knowledge based economy. India has become the main centre for IT & IT enabled services and manufacturing industry. Though education system has been able to support service industry, Research & Development (R &D) at Universities and industries have not kept pace with developed countries which has created huge divide within the society. The progress which has been made in last two decades has not reached all sections of the society. The present crisis in environment, energy, poverty, security concerns within India has been mainly due to lack of indigenous cost effective technology to address these issues. This directly correlates to quality of higher education in India especially quantity and quality of R & D in higher education system. Universities and colleges have become training centers for the service based industry of the country with short term economic development of the society rather than focusing on long term development of a society which is reliable, stable and prosperous. Many factors have contributed to the degradation of higher education system since independence in 1947 which can be broadly grouped into the following factors but not limited.

India's higher education system is third largest in the world, next to the United States and China. The main governing body at the tertiary level is UGC, which enforces its standards, advises the government, and helps coordinate between the centre and the state. Accreditation for higher learning is overseen by 15 autonomous institutions established by the University Grants Commission (UGC).

All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), the regulatory body for technical education in India, has called "upon the students, parents and the general public not to pay any capitation fee or any other fee other than that mentioned in the Prospectus. AICTE is trying to extirpate private universities that run unaffiliated or unrecognized courses. Students from rural and semi urban areas are often trapped by such institutes.

The National Institute of Technology (NITs), Indian Institutes of Information Technology (IIITs), Indian Institutes of Technology are among the most prestigious institutions within the technology sciences. Indian Institute of Science and Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISERs) are the premier research institutes in the field of science education and research. There are huge number of colleges affiliated to various universities that provide all undergraduate courses in India. Technical education is growing rapidly in recent years. It now appears that almost 500,000 engineers are graduated annually, and there is also a corresponding increase in the computer Science graduates. Furthermore, each year, almost 350,000 students are enrolled in engineering diploma programs.

Management of Higher Education in India: Future

India is one of the fastest growing market for education field. Furthermore, the corporate world has identified that a huge proportion of our graduates are not employable and the dissatisfaction of the students with current education system too, has reached a peak level. This makes the current time to be the best to do a startup in the education sector.

Online Learning is Slowly becoming Mainstream

Internet access is becoming common and among many uses, one of the major use of internet is for learning. From just being a source for references, Internet is becoming a place where students can even get degree courses. Even in terms of online education, skill based courses specifically will be more in demand. More than 90% of India's college and university students crave for a mobile phone and/or an internet connection. The youth use mobiles and data connectivity as a staple for information processing, communication and sharing of knowledge.

The ridiculous affiliation system has made classroom teaching the weakest link in Indian higher education system. Weak classroom lectures are too boring for the youth. With inexpensive data connectivity, future students will find new ways to acquire knowledge. Their dependency on books and classroom lectures will come down, even as they seek information, data and new theses from online databases, journals, research articles, e-books, or by directly connecting with industry professionals, scientists and knowledge workers.

Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, and Big Data will Change Pedagogy

Education technology writers such as Barbara Kurshan have noted that AI (which helps Facebook suggest friends, powers Siri to answer your queries or helps Google in its driverless cars) can in the next few years create "virtual mentors for learners", assist learners in getting 21st-century workplace skills (such as team work and self-direction); bring about vast amounts of data for individual learners, learner behaviour and provide personal context to them; increase inter-connectedness among classrooms far and wide across the globe; and take learners outside the classroom or make learning a part of life outside class.

Research-based Teaching will Inform how Students Experience Learning

New technologies will help us challenge traditional paradigms such as class lectures, terms and modes of assessment. They will allow us imagine new ways of learning. Researchers will offer live and real-time inputs to students and make learning fun and experiential. Peer-based formal and informal networks of students will be able to communicate with each other across the globe and with the teacher(s), giving way for new teaching and learning styles. In other words, university education will be marked by disaggregation of programmes into smaller courses, logically strung together for gaining specific competencies. Learning will happen at any point of the professional careers of students, who will seamlessly switch between work and learning.

Personalisation, Customisation and Contextualisation in all parts of the learning experience

Higher education of the future will become modularised and courses will be in a new paradigm beyond the three or four credits of today. Each chapter or learning module will become customized to suit different learning styles or even different teaching styles of faculty. And the content can come from different sources to meet the learners' aspirations and needs.

Learning will not be confined to classes, but even outside. Students can be virtual apprentices for a researcher or in an industry, with one mentor leading dozens of students to become consummate professionals in the new age.

Degrees may Lose their Dominant Position

As technology obsolescence and demand for new knowledge/new competences gather pace, curricular changes will need to be agile. Or HEIs will start looking for short courses to meet both demands. So the objective of study will not be merely for an ultimate degree. (Already a few multinational employers have said they are not particular about degrees. Rather, they want potential recruits to take up specific competency-based assessments to enter new age jobs).

So, four- year degrees with fixed branches and curriculums, the study of 30 courses across six-month semesters to add up to 160 credits and so on can all become passé. Universities and HEIs will then have to create pathways for youth to move in and out of university as part of a life-long learning cycle, and enable students to add up credits earned over long periods to gain a certificate, diploma or degree. But each course will be centered more on competence and skills than mere bookish knowledge. In essence, learners will take more control of the university experience and become the centre for all curriculum-making, pedagogical practices and competence building.

Thus, the main driver for students to enrol in higher education programmes will be "how to combat the obsolescence of knowledge and technology?" HEIs will become acutely aware that what they teach students today has to prepare them for a unforeseeable future—how can we help them become global leaders and professionals in the coming years? Indeed, it will be interesting to see how higher education wakes up to this possible scenario—a new disaggregated learning paradigm where a degree is not the motivator, but learning to keep acquiring new competencies.

Rather than wait for this tsunami of change to hit them, Indian HEIs have to become change agents. They need to look at new types of pedagogy. They need to start creating short courses with sharp inputs and measurable results attained through differentiated assessments and tested via real time projects or case studies. Within themselves, institutions have to train teachers in using technology to disseminate and share new knowledge to students and facilitate students to go beyond textbooks. They must convince students and parents to invest time and effort to learn outside the class. Universities have to build stronger bridges with professionals and industry, and also offer value-adding courses especially in emerging technology areas. And they must take most important first step: trust the next generation. They need not be policed and disciplined. India's youth are clear about their needs. They want space to learn and enjoy the path of learning.

In short, if we avoid all above discussed pitfalls, can become a leading education system in world.

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