

Problems & Challenges in Higher Educational System in India

Mrs. Snehal Subhash Waykos

Ph.D. Researcher, Department of Education,
Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University,
Aurangabad

INTRODUCTION

Education is very important & essential for all human beings. No one would argue about the validity of this statement. But good education in various countries is very limited. Most of the times, the scarce resource of a good school education is only available to few elites of the society. This seems to be especially true regarding India. India has a gross enrollment rate of 24.5 percent. Gross enrollment rate represents the number of students that are opting to enroll to a higher education after graduating from high schools. This means that in 100 students, who finish high school education, only 19 will enroll for higher education. India's gross enrollment rate is around 6% below the current world average and over 50% below first world countries like the USA and Australia. The government aims to increase this percentage by at least 30 percent before the end of 2020. Before the government can do so, a great deal of critical analysis needs to be done about the importance of education accompanied by the implementation of new rules and regulations that could make the quality of education in India better. To start this great revolution, here is an in-depth analysis of what are the fundamental problems with India's educational system and how they should be changed. The major problems of education sector has been given below-

1. **Gross enrolment pattern**

At present, in India, there are about 1.90 crore students enrolled in various streams of higher education. Despite the large number of students studying in various streams, we have not seen any major shift in the productivity as skills and talents are deficient to support economic activities. Hence, there is a serious concern on employability of these educated persons. The gross enrolment ratio (GER) for higher education in India is 24.5 percent. However, the enrolment level varies across states. We also need to recognize that our enrolment level is far below several other countries. For example, according to a Report, GER is 23 per cent for China, 34 per cent for Brazil, 57 per cent for U.K., 77 per cent for both Australia and Russia and 83 per cent for the U.S. In this context, the attempt of Government authorities to increase the number of students by 2020 so as to reach GER of 30 per cent becomes a big challenge.

2. Lack of Hands-on Experience

Every year, a list of the world's top 200 universities is published. For year 2016-2017, only 3 Indian universities are in this list. This does not mean, however, that the country doesn't have a good standing. The number one thing to note about this is the fact that most universities that offer higher education focus on textbooks and they completely lack in giving students a hands-on experience. It's common knowledge that a child who does not have much exposure with other children often have difficulties in reaching basic milestones like talking, walking & many more. But a child that is exposed with adults and other children often have a faster time developing their skills. If a student is given thousands of books to read but not given enough time to apply what he has learned, he will not be able to develop his skills. On average, an engineering student has to study over 40 subjects; this is probably equal to around 6000 hours of attending classes and more than 300,000 pages of engineering information. Of the 6000 hours devoted to studying, only around 500 hours is actually spent on hands-on lab work. If the government wants to reach its goal of a 30% GER by 2020, the education in India should be more project-based or hands-on.

3. Student-teacher ratio-

Another challenge for improving the Indian education system is to improve the student teacher ratio. In India, this ratio is very high as compared to certain comparable countries in the world. For example, while in developed countries this ratio stands at 11.4, in case of India, it is as high as 22.0. It is even low in CIS (10.9), Western Asia (15.3), and Latin America (16.6). This brings the necessity to recruit quality teachers and strengthen the teachers required to handle classes. I also feel that like in developed countries where students are given part-time teaching assignments, we can also explore such possibilities in technical/higher education to handle lower level classes. It is also expected to help the students in meeting their education expenses partially.

4. Wrong Medium of Language

Most higher education institutions use English as a medium of teaching. But not all Indians use this language. In fact, most students don't even understand this language. The system of education in India should first focus on teaching using the mother tongue and move on to English upon higher education. There are countries like the Philippines that are now putting emphasis on teaching in the mother tongue. They only introduce the English language upon entering higher grade levels because they want to first focus on the child's core skills. This should also be implemented in India in order to empower our youth.

5. Uninspired Educators

Educators must inspire their students to want to do more in their lives. They should be able to help their students realize the importance of education. Educators must also be inspired in order to just that. Not all educators have the inspiration to pass on to their students. There are teachers who actually go by the thinking that they will get paid whether or not their students learn from their classes. Unfortunately, this is a common thinking for most educators in India. Not that they don't know what they are doing. It's just that they don't have the necessary incentive to strive to be better at the profession they chose to do. The government should find a way to give educators a reason to be excited to teach every day. One good example would be opening up the classroom to the world to see. Some universities in other countries have what they call an "open day" wherein parents can actually go to the classrooms to see what their kids are learning in school. This kind of event can help inspire teachers to do more in order to build their reputation.

6. Educators not Salaried Enough

The government should also focus on providing great benefits to educators. In fact, most educators are not efficiently trained because the government doesn't have enough resources to pay trained educators. Moreover; their pay grades are way too less than those of developed countries. This reason makes most of the students, move away from taking education related jobs or academe. Till the time the perks associated with teaching are not high, the people associated with the teaching profession will be of mediocre class. In order to improve education in India, the government should put emphasis on training educators and providing them with great benefits.

7. Lack of Relevant Industry

Today India is known for the service industry. The days are gone when students wanted to be doctors, engineers, architects and the like. Most of the students of today often end up in the service industry after completing higher education. With the rise of IT industries and BPO companies, Indian graduates usually end up as call center agents because of the high salary. If not in the IT industry, most Indian graduates of higher education often end up in an industry that has nothing to do about what they studied for more than 4 years in the university. In order to encourage students to further their studies and enter higher education, the government should create more industries. If a student knows that there is an opportunity to have a better standard of living by finishing a certain course or degree, the country's GER will definitely increase as planned.

8. Infrastructure facilities

One of the factors why the capacity utilization is low in upcoming institutions is their inability to provide necessary physical infrastructure to run the institutions. The infrastructure facilities desirable to rank the institutions of better quality include real estate, state of the art class rooms, library, hostels, furniture, sports facilities, transport, commercial buildings, etc. We need to ensure apolitical private sector participation in the establishment of colleges for providing quality physical infrastructure.

9. Low Quality Institutions

Because of the very short supply of institutions that offer higher education, there seems to be a great increase of low quality institutions popping up like mushrooms over the country. Businessmen and politicians often start colleges that offer higher education because there is a huge demand for education. In various states in India, the number of colleges in the relatively small town is overwhelming. This casts doubts about the motives of the people who put up these institutions. It is questionable whether they are in the higher education industry because of their passion to teach or if they are simply grabbing the opportunity to gain from getting admissions as well as donations. If the government wants to get a higher education GER, they should focus on regulating the incorporation of educational institutions. They should ensure that the higher education institutions in the country are there for the right purpose and not just to make a good profit.

10. No Focus in Building a Personality

India's higher education system does not focus on the student but the grade. Most institutions think that academic qualification and certification from a higher education institution is far more important than a building a personality. Most companies, however, would rather have an employee that is flexible and can work through adversities than have an employee that has good grades but no personality to show for. You can ask any HR department personnel and they will all agree to this. Even though their higher education grades are a good indication of a person's ability, these do not paint the whole picture. If the country wants to improve the educational system, they should provide more programs and workshops that can help build a well-balanced individual.

11. Accreditation & quality standards

In order to improve the skills and talent of our students, there is a need for raising the quality and standards of our education system. It is well-known that many of our professionals remain unemployed, despite lot of opportunities being open in the globalized world. One of the major factors is the lack of quality education resulting in qualified but not employable category. We

need to introduce or activate the mechanism for rating and ranking universities/colleges. At present, there is no compulsion for institutions/colleges to get accreditation in India. Government has already mooted a proposal to introduce accreditation. We, therefore, require standard rating agencies to give accreditation to universities/colleges/schools.

12. Lack of Skill Sets

Students are not taught any specific skills that will benefit them in finding jobs. There are a lot of industries after graduation, but the companies don't hire employees without necessary experience. If only universities provide training and skill sets that could help them land jobs, more students will be willing to enroll for higher education. The educational institutions in the country should focus more on providing technical skills development. Instead of concentrating on higher education textbooks, schools should concentrate on providing trainings. Some skill sets that employers look for include computer know-how, decision-making, system analysis, sales and marketing. If the education system in India focuses on these skill sets, more students would be able to realize the importance of education.

13. Lack of Ambition

The Indian educational system does not inspire students to create better lives for themselves. Students lack the ambition to be better. They are satisfied to get high paying jobs without the ambition to actually be a good citizen. This is also the main reason why most graduates just end up taking high paying IT jobs. The salaries they get from BPO companies are relatively bigger compared to other industries. The government should design a school education system that will motivate them to create their own businesses and help out their fellow citizens in the future. Education should be a person's key to success in the future. With India's current educational system, there is no wonder why the country is still on top of the list when it comes to high rates in poverty. In order to move out from poverty, the government should reconsider its allocation of its resources. They should focus on providing better quality education in India. The government should provide more long-term projects that could sustain the quality of school education in the country. Once the education problem is addressed, all other problems stemming from it will also be addressed.

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