THE ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN BRINGING SOCIAL CHANGE.

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Abstract

The Higher Education system in India has grown in a remarkable way mostly in the post-independence period to become one of the largest organizations of its kind in the world.

The aim of Higher education is to enable society to make progress through an understanding of itself and its world. Higher education is the instrument of positive and progressive social change and growth.

Key Words:

Higher Education, Social Change, Challenges.

Higher education is embracing teaching, learning, scholarship and research. These activities are, and should be, at the heart of higher education. But there is a range of associated activities which have increased in significance as higher education has expanded and become a greater element in national life. These include increasingly important contributions to the cultural and business life of local, national and international communities. Higher education is but one part of an interdependent system of education and training, it cannot be looked at in isolation. Any dividing line set between further education and higher education, is bound to be somewhat arbitrary. This is true particularly for adults – for example, when making a change of career direction a person may need access simultaneously to a range of programmes spanning both higher and further education and training.

Universities and colleges of higher education are currently the main providers of higher education, but there are many other organizations, most notably colleges of further education, and also professional bodies, firms and private training organizations, which offer programmes of education or training at levels equivalent to higher education. In some cases, such provision is clearly identified as higher education and has a direct equivalence in terms of qualifications awarded or academic and professional recognition.

The aim of higher education is to enable society to make progress through an understanding of itself and its world: in short, to sustain a learning society. The four main purposes of higher education are:

a)   To inspire and enable individuals to develop their capabilities to the highest potential levels throughout life, so that they grow intellectually, are well equipped for work, can contribute effectively to society and achieve personal fulfillment;

b)   To increase knowledge and understanding for their own sake and to foster their application to the benefit of the economy and society;

c)   To serve the needs of an adaptable, sustainable, knowledge-based economy at local, regional and national levels;

d)   To play a major role in shaping a democratic, civilized, inclusive society.

India's Higher Education system is the third largest in the world, after china and the United States. Even though India's Higher Education System faces Various Challenges.

1.   Expansion :

➢   India's GER of 16% was much below the world average of 27%, as well as that of other emerging countries such as China (26%) and Brazil (36%) in 2010.

2.   Excellence :

➢   **Faculty Shortage**: There is 40% and 35% shortage of faculty in state and central universities, respectively.

➢   **Accredited Institutions**: 62% of universities and 90% of colleges were average or below average in 2010, on the basis of their NAAC accreditation.

➢   **Low Citation Impact:** India's relative citation impact is half the world average.

3.   Equity:

➢   There is wide disparity in the GER of Higher Education across states and the Gross Attendance Ratio (GAR) in urban and rural areas, and gender-and community-wise.

➢   **Inter-State Disparity:** 47.9% in Delhi v/s. 9% in Assam.

Education is a powerful and effective instrument of social change and social development. Social change is a gradual but inevitable process that occurs when the existing social system or network of social institutions fall short of fulfilling the needs of society. And also when there are new needs, new discoveries and inventions and evolving thought processes in society. Education is a major vector in society.

Social Change and Gaps in Indian Educational System

In response to social change educational system must also change. The change must be in consonance with the social change so as to meet adequately the new goals and demands of various social groups. Otherwise a gap would be created between the goals and demands of the society and those of the educational system. A number of such lacunae have occurred in the Indian educational system after independence and in many ways it played a dysfunctional role in Indian society. This was accepted and noted by the Kothari Commission very clearly.

- **Technological Explosion**

The innovative exploitation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) holds out much promise for improving the quality, flexibility and effectiveness of higher education. The potential benefits will extend to, and affect the practice of, learning and teaching and research. ICT also supports high quality, efficient management in higher education institutions. There is scope to reduce costs in the future and the potential is great, but implementation requires investment in terms of time, thought and resources in the short term.

- **Emergence Of Knowledge Society**

The development and dissemination of new science-based knowledge has become the most potent force of social change. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are not just new branches in the economy, they are transforming all other activities, from taxi service to distance education, from industrial production to news transmission.

The increasing role of knowledge in today's world has direct implications for the way we conceive of development. Indeed, development must be defined in terms of knowledge and the humane uses to which it is put. Put most simply, development can be measured by the capacity a country has to acquire, use and transmit knowledge, in other words, by its capacity for knowledge management in the broadest sense of the word. A society's wealth and welfare are decided by its capacity to train and educate its people to share in making and applying knowledge in all spheres of life.

- **Entertainment Culture**

Another force that is changing the education system is the digitally – empowered entertainment culture – films, TV, pop music, computer games, streaming video on the internet

styles of education. Education research has been more concerned with influence of students on higher education, Student interest, attitudes, culture and politics influence both their institutions and society, and this is true worldwide. Students are increasingly part of an international youth culture and are a bellwether group that may be a harbinger of further societal trends Education, like entertainment, has been a system that has controlled the learner as well as the TV viewer, deciding what the individual would be given.

- **Multiculturalism**

The rise of multiculturalism and its political implications has strong implications on higher education.

- **Transformation Of University System**

Related to market globalization is another driving force for change – the deregulation of university monopoly. Universities have held a kind of monopoly by controlling accrediting systems, degrees and credentialing. Universities are going to spin off, sell off, out-source or close down many traditional parts of their operations. Higher education as a deregulated industry will see more new alliances, mergers, and the disappearance of some schools. The big universities have already merged many of their activities, including their approaches to government agencies and many major research projects. Competition in providing internet courses, worldwide, is already sometimes almost ruthless.

- **Growth Of Distance Or Distributed Education**

Another force is the acceleration of international electronic learning and distance or distributed education. In June 2000 the World Bank announced that it was taking seriously the likelihood that global electronic education is the best antidote for eliminating poverty in the developing world. The Chronicle of Higher Education, September 19, 2003, reported a survey that 57 percent (of higher education institutions) said that interet. – based courses were already at least equivalent to lecture hall counterparts in educational quality.

Conclusion:

India is engaged in the use of higher education as a powerful tool to build knowledge based information society of the 21st century. The role of Higher education can take justified pride in what it has expanded opportunities, changed and adapted as are needs of the society. Higher education is the most and the influential instruments of bringing about social change in India.

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