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### RESEARCH ARTICLE

#### CHALLENGES TO HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE ERA OF GLOBALIZATION.

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#### Abstract

India adopted liberalization in its economy after 1990 and it affected education sector like others. India Challenges to Higher Education in the era of Globalization gradually expanded own education system. The increase in enrollment in higher education became target in 12th Plan. The National Knowledge Commission suggested to establish an independent regulatory authority for higher education like Telecommunication and Power Sectors. The autonomous Universities and Colleges started to take place, thus, India opened education sector to private investment. But, India still faces many challenges in education sector like lack of international standard and qualities, entry of foreign universities, political interference etc. which Indian education sector has to solve.

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#### Introduction:-

The year 1990 will be remembered as a milestone in the History of India. Because, after 1990 Indian government has accepted the policies of liberalization, privatization and globalization. The policy of L.P.G. gave a new dimension to Indian political, social, economic, cultural and educational system. The establishment of W.T.O. and G.A.T.T. now commits practically all the countries to liberalization through structural adjustment.

After 1990, there is paradigm shift in education from service to business, has been the result of a growing concern with the fruit-bearing qualities of education as opposed to its light-bearing qualities. The World Bank in its report Higher Education: lesson of experience (world bank, 1994) projected higher education as "non-merit good" as against primary and secondary education which were classified as "merit good"<sup>1</sup>. On the basis of externalities or social return, it was argued that higher education brings in greater personal benefits to the individual concerned than to society as whole and the government of developing countries would not be justified in spending their sources on higher education. The document advocated a programme reduction of public expenditure in higher education.

#### Current status of higher education in India:-

If we look at the current status of higher education among the developing economy, undoubtedly, it is a matter of pride for all of us that India has tremendously expanded own education system. For example, at the time independence, the number of universities was no more than 20, college around 500, the number of university and college teacher was only 15000, and total enrolment was less than 1.0 lakh. By the end of tenth plane, the Indian higher education system had grown into one of the largest in the world having 400 universities 20,000 colleges, a faculty strength of 4.92 laks, and an estimated enrolment as many as 140 laks students<sup>2</sup> (Govt. of India, 2008:21-22)

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Despite the impressive expansion of the number of institutions, faculty and students, access to higher education, measured in term of gross enrolment ratio (GER) could not go beyond 11.00 Percent, as late as 2004-05. India's ratio is very low compared with world average of 23.2 percent, 54.6 percent for the developing countries, and 22.0 percent for Asian countries (ibid: 22). The disappointingly low average level of G.E.R. looks all the more depressing if we take cognizance of rural-urban, male-female, and social-group differentials, besides the inter-regional digital divides. For example, in 2004-05, the GER was a mere 6.70 in rural against 19.90 for urban India; it was 9.10 for female against 12.40 for males; it was only 6.57 for scheduled caste, 6.52 for scheduled tribe and 8.77 for other backward classes, and so on (ibid: 22). As regard inter-regional disparities, in 2002-03, Nagaland and Jammu-Kashmir languished at the tail- end with a GER of around 5.0; Tripura and Arunchal Pradesh with a GER of 6.0, and Bihar, Jharkhand, MadhyaPradesh, Chhattisgarh and Uttar Pradesh with a GER of 7.0-8.0 (Anandakrishnan, 2008:73).

### **A vision for Higher Education in Eleventh plan:-**

#### **Vision document of 11th plan:-**

If we assess the Vision document of 11th five-year plan and future policy of Indian government on higher education then it can be easily understand that the Indian govt. seems to be determinant to almost double the gross enrolment ratio to 21.0 percent by the end of 12th plan, with an interim target of 15.0 percent by the end of eleventh plan. To achieve this, the enrolment in university and colleges needed to be substantially raised, say, at an annual rate of 9.0 percent to reach 21 million by 2011-12. This requires an additional enrolment of 8.7 lakh students in universities and 61.3 lakh in colleges. We can archive this target by expansion of existing institutions; creation of new government funded universities and colleges; special programmes for targeted expansion of central universities, and so on (Govt. of India. 2008b: 26)4. The eleventh plan sets a gigantic task for the nation, namely, to:

- ❖ Set up 30 new central universities, including 14 world-class universities.
- ❖ Set up 8 new IITs, 7 new IIMs, 20 new NITs, 20 new IIITs, 3 IISERs.
- ❖ Creates new 370 colleges in district with less than average GER, so as to have at least one college in each district.

#### **National knowledge commission report:-**

In spite of the above targets, the report on higher education submitted by Sam Pitroda on behalf of the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) on January 12, 2007 has suggested an increase in the number of universities from 400 to 1500 by 2015.5 The National Knowledge commission also suggested to frame an independent regulatory authority for higher education like Telecommunication and Power sector. The commission advocated for the separation of the affiliated colleges and university from each other. This would enable the university to focus on teaching and research at the postgraduate level and the colleges would be free from university in case of administration and governance. The autonomous universities and colleges would set innovative curricula; provide quality benchmark and conduct examination and forge link with other institutions and deal with sponsoring and funding agencies.

The Knowledge commission suggests that foreign education institutions should be allowed in with policies to ensure that there is incentive for good institutions and disincentives for sub-standard institutions to come to India. On fees and financing, it suggests that the principal- those who can, must pay and those who cannot, must not be denied admissions but provide education loan or scholarships.6

#### **Challenges to higher education in India:-**

After, pursuing the neo-liberal policies, the Indian government has opened the higher education sector to private providers; either through public-private participation or foreign direct investment the Indian society is divided, while one section is opposed to co modification of higher education. The other section thinks that involving the private sector is the only way out and public policy fails to recognize the role of private sector in the development of higher education in our country. The private promoters are not only run the institutions from tuition fees revenue but are also able to generate surpluses money that are reinvested in their education ventures.

This also shows that a large number of families are now willing to spend almost all their earnings in order to educate their children, they think that education is the best form of investment for their upward mobility.

Despite the expansion of higher education in India, last 20 years of L.P.G. has created many challenges for our education system. Our former H.R.D. Minister Sh. Arjun Singh has himself accepted on dated 10 oct.2007 during

conference of vice-chancellor in Delhi that “higher education in India becomes a sick child”. We have moved from classes to masses but this expansion has not been accompanied by increase in quality of education. In most cases this massive expansion has resulted into steep decline in the quality of education. Another challenges that are faced by our education system in the era of globalization can be discussed as follows:

**Privatization:-**

In the present world of globalization, there is growing trend towards privatization of higher education. Nowadays everyone is harping upon privatization, withdrawal of government grants to universities and colleges, “Birla-Ambani Report (2000)” and so on, whereas privatization is not a panacea for all the ills and evils of higher education. India is country inhabited by poor people. India cannot afford to follow blindly privatization like developed world. Privatization of higher education will give rise to many new problems such as a) high fee structure, b) fleecing of poor parents, c) low salaries to teachers, d) exploitation of teachers and e) no security of service.

**Self-finance Courses:-**

For the last few years universities and colleges are being encouraged to start new courses generating their own resources. U.G.C. is also providing some fixed grant to run these courses. By opening self-finance courses along with grant based sanctioned course, the colleges and universities are in a way accepting privatization. Now government pleads that if non- government colleges can run self-finance courses, they can also run other courses. So there is no need to give grants private colleges. Well qualified lecturer in these self- finance courses are getting salary between Rs.3500-5000 a month whereas starting salary of a regular lecturer is Rs.20, 000/ per month in old scale. Some educational thinkers oppose the self-finance aspect of higher education because these courses attract students having less ability and more pay ability. So, it is a hard fact that quality of education in self-financing and privately run institutions is deteriorating.

**Lack of international-standards and qualities:-**

Today universities and colleges are not only to preserve and transmit knowledge inherited from the past, but, they are also expected to generate and disseminate knowledge. They are also expected to provide necessary manpower with skills and expertise to public and private services. Unfortunately, the image of our universities and colleges is far from true. Most of our institutions are characterized by poor teaching, over crowded classrooms, lack of competent faculty and absence of infrastructure. Survey conducted by London Times Higher Education and report published in The Indian Express on dated 10 march 2009 has clearly mentioned that “No Indian universities in global top list of 200 hundred universities”

**Entry to foreign universities:-**

In near future, due to the pressure of globalization Indian government may allow foreign universities to open their branches in India. The U.G.C. Chairman Prof. Sukhdeo Thorat himself give some indication during vice-chancellor conference in Delhi on dated 10 oct.2007 that, “ they are not against giving entry to foreign universities provided that their must be some safe guard to protect the Indian universities from unwanted competition.” If the foreign universities give permission to open their campus in India than students will prefer to join these India based foreign universities and college. Desi universities will lose their relevance and no one will like to go to them.

**Unregulated proliferation of private colleges and universities:-**

These days, unlimited, education; engineering; Management College are opened in Haryana, Punjab and other states. This unregulated private higher education can have serious repercussions on equity and quality. It can lead to large-scale exploitation, corruption, and chaos. Perhaps the policy makers have no time to think about the future of coming unemployed army of engineers, teachers and management professionals.

**Powerless professional councils:-**

**In addition to the U.G.C.**, the center has set up more than dozen professional councils like N.C.T.E., A.I.C.T.E., M.C.I. etc. Incompetent and unqualified persons are selected as members of these professional councils and they use their office for their personnel benefit. The failure of professional councils laid in not having devised a mechanism at their own level and in not having framed appropriate rules and regulations. At the same time, they also did not evolve a system of supervision and control over the institutions, which they are required to deal with

**Decline public expenditure on higher education:-**

Despite repeated promises in the last fifty seven years from the powers that be, that 6% of G.D.P. will be spent on education, while the union budget has never gone beyond the 3% mark, the state budget generally remain around 1%. In this meager support for education, the share of universities and colleges generally stands below 20% mark, the rest 80% going to schools and related sector. Again the H.R.D. Minister gives a falls promise during vice-chancellor conference that "The allowance in education would be increased 5% G.D.P. by the end of 11th five year plan and will be increased to 6% subsequently in the next five years.

**Political interference and declining Autonomy:-**

Political leaders of all parties consider university as a government department. Neither political leaders nor bureaucrats are aware of the long-term benefits of autonomy of institution of high learning. There is interference in each and every appointment of the universities and colleges. Vice-chancellors post which is filled by retired bureaucrats or military generals and not by academicians. Knowledge commission report also gives its recommendation to de- politicization of higher education.

**Open universities and correspondence courses:-**

Reforms relating to mobilization of resources to reduce the public cost include promotion of distance learning, encouraged of private sector and cost-recovery method. Access to higher education through non-institutionalized structure like the open learning system has expending in India. Open universities have been established both at the national and state levels. These days, correspondence courses have become a very lucrative; these are money-spinning machines for universities. Too much emphasis on distance learning and correspondence courses are fraught with many danger such as: a) less admission in colleges, less admission means less income to already poor colleges, b) fall in education standards, c) increased burden on limited regular clerical staff.

**Education loan schemes:-**

All private and public sector banks float student funding and education loan schemes. Under these schemes individual students are expected to meet the cost of higher education. These loan schemes are operated on commercial lines like car loan and housing loan. Basically the education schemes shifts the responsibility of higher education from state or society to parents or individual household. The philosophy of loan treats higher education as a highly individualized commodity.

**The role of NAAC in higher education and excellence:-**

The issue of excellence becomes more complex owing to the above challenges. Many feel that excellence is not possible in the prevailing situation. Even than institution like NAAC is endeavoring since 1994 to develop a quality education in India. Despite its efforts and multifarious activities, NAAC is still far from providing excellence in higher education. A major constraint is that the NAAC is an autonomous body of the university grants commission (a central government agency) whereas most of the colleges and universities are under state governments. Many a time state government and its educational institutions never follow NAAC's directive nor cooperate with its efforts to bring excellence. Many criticize that the judgment of the peer team are neither fair nor objective. On the one hand similar institutions with contrast in quality, infrastructure and strength get the same grade. ON the other hand institutions with contrast in quality, infrastructure and strength get the same grade.

**Role of teachers:-**

Role of teachers is not up to the mark. They should be role models for students. Dedicated and deserving teachers are greatly lacking in higher education. Mostly are interested in getting high perks, facilities and security of service but not in teaching, research and excellence. With the proliferation of universities and colleges many undeserving candidates have entered into this noble profession that has proved a ban for institutions of higher learning. The system is totally helpless before them.

**Ragging in educational institutions:-**

In the latest ruling, the Supreme Court has asked the all-state authorities to come down heavily on ragging related cases in higher educational institutions as pr the guidelines recommended by Raghvan committee. The court while endorsing the report of the committee ruled that the suggestion of the committee would be binding for all educational institution and any inaction from the part of institution could lead to its de-recognition. Based on the explanation and various analysis of the committee, the court said that all academic institutions should carry ragging related instructions and warning in their prospects, as academic institution have the primary responsibility in this

regard. Besides of the above provision, ragging is reported from time to time in our country. Latest report is from Himachal Pradesh, where a student of Tanda medical college was died due to ragging by senior.

**Suggestions and conclusion:-**

In some it is suggested that a) All out privatization is not good for higher education in India. Government should not curtail grants to the universities and colleges; b) Colleges should desist from starting self-financing courses instead they should insist that new courses will be started only if government gives them grants; c) There should be some check on the haphazard growth of correspondence and distance courses; d) syllabi should be modernized and updated and teaching aids and information technology should be utilized; e) New colleges and universities should be opened with great care and restraint. These should be opened keeping in view needs of the people and resources of the state; f) Every one involved in higher education should work sincerely to restore the credibility of institutions of high learning. G) Political interference in the functioning of higher education should be stopped. H) Besides the education loan, government should provide scholarship to the needful students. I) Ragging should be dealt with tough law.

The NAAC experiment is also not met with the desired success. Despite twelve years of its existence it has succeeded in assessing and accrediting only one fourth of universities and colleges existing all over India. Even most of the assessed and accredited institutions are far from academic excellence. There is need even to improve the NAAC structure, working, procedure, criteria and strategies. In a polity such India's, where structured inequalities have been entrenched, privatization and globalization are sure to reinforce existing inequalities and to foster in egalitarian tendencies. This requires the social supervision of the private sector and effective measures for offsetting imbalances resulting from unequal economic capacities of the population. Thus, we confront a dilemma: Theoretically, how do we advance equality without sacrificing quality? That is the challenge in higher education at the beginning of the new millennium.

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