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**IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON HIGHER EDUCATION—CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES**

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**ABSTRACT**

The Indian higher education sector is the third highest in the country, following the United States & China. After freedom, India as a developed country has advanced contentiously in the area of education. Higher Education (H.E.) is nowadays one of the foundations of achievement for any sovereign country. Thus it is essential to know the particular challenges and opportunities in the H.E. The goal of this research paper that recognize the particular collection of challenges and opportunities that are evident in the Indian H.E. System. The paper often aims to estimate the level of involvement of the faculty members of H.E. Institutions need to be changed. The survey questionnaire was also structured to include uniform measures of employee engagement, job performance, job engagement, job satisfaction & intention to stay. Data has been collected from faculty members of the Banaras Hindu University (BHU) by online survey. This paper is potentially between the very few articles that look into the change required for a faculty member.

**KEY WORDS :** Higher Education, Opportunities, Challenges, Quality.

**INTRODUCTION**

India's higher education system is the third biggest student network in the country, behind China & US. In the future, India would be among the big centres of education. Since independence, India's higher education sector has shown a substantial growth in the lots of universities / university institutions & schools. The 'Right to Education Act,' that also provides for mandatory & inexpensive schooling for all children between the ages of 6 and 14, has contributed to a change of the country's education system, with statistics showing substantial enrolment of schools over the past 4 years. The involvement of the private sector in higher education has seen major changes in the country. Actually, greater than 60% of higher education association in India are financed by the private sector. The development of institutions that have become India's home to the prevalent number of higher education organizations in the world over the last decade has accelerated, to student enrolment at the second greatest level (Shaguri, 2013).The lot of universities has augmented 34 times from 20 in 1950 to 677 in 2014. Given these figures, several of these organizations have not been rated among the best in the world by foreign education rating agencies. India has always struggled to create world-class universities.

Knowledge is strength nowadays. The more information one has, the more motivated one becomes. Nevertheless, India appears to face significant problems. Despite significant expenditure in schooling, 25% of the population remains illiterate; just 15% of Indian students attend high school & only 7% graduate (Masani, 2008). The standard of education in India, whether in primary or higher education, is substantially low relative to large developed nations in the world. After 2008, India's post-secondary colleges have only provided enough seats for 7% of India's college-age population, 25% of teaching vacancies are empty nationally,& 57% of college professors seek either a master's degree or a doctor's degree (Newsweek, 2011). Until 2011, there have been 1522 degree-grant engineering colleges in India amid an annual student enrollment of 582,000 (Science & Technology College, 2009) plus 1,244 polytechnics by an annual enrol of 265,000. However, these organizations are confronted with a shortage of staff and questions regarding the standard of education were posed (Mitra, 2008). Given these obstacles, India's higher education sector has a broad variety of resources to address these obstacles and has the potential to develop its reputation at international level. Moreover, greater openness and responsibility, the position of universities & colleges in the new millennium & current science studies about how people learn are of the highest significance. India therefore provides highly

qualified manpower to other countries; it is very convenient for India to move our country from a developing nation to a industrialized world.

### GROWTH OF HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR IN INDIA

If higher education structures develop & diversify, society becomes profoundly worried regarding the efficiency of services, public evaluations & foreign rating of higher education institutions. Moreover, such associations appear to overemphasize work, utilizing academic output as a determine of institutional interest. If such mechanisms struggle to discuss the standard of teaching, it is partially because assessing the feature of teaching is difficult (Hernard, 2008) India has always been a place of scholars & learners. During ancient times, India was also known worldwide for its colleges, such as Taxila, Nalanda, Vikramshila & its scholars. Upon freedom, India had 20 universities, with 500 colleges enrolling 2,30,000 graduates. After independence, India has made substantial gains in higher education data. Up to December 2011-12, this figure rose to 659 universities& 33023 schools. The central government & state governments are annoying to cultivate talent by building on the numeral of universities & colleges to improve higher education. There is no question that much of India's growth in education has emerged from the private sector. In reality, the public sector & private sector do not oppose each other, but at the same time operate in the Indian education market. UGC is the central regulatory body which enforces regulations, informs the government & seeks to communicate between the center & states. Figure 1.1 & 1.2 below displays the development of universities & colleges in India from 1970 to 2012. The number of universities are raised more than six fold in the last four decades & number of colleges has grown from 3,603 in 1970-71 to 33,000 in 2011-12.

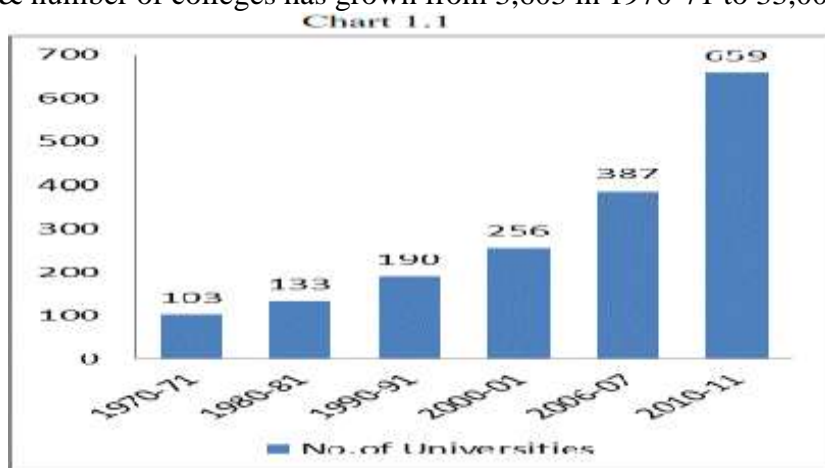
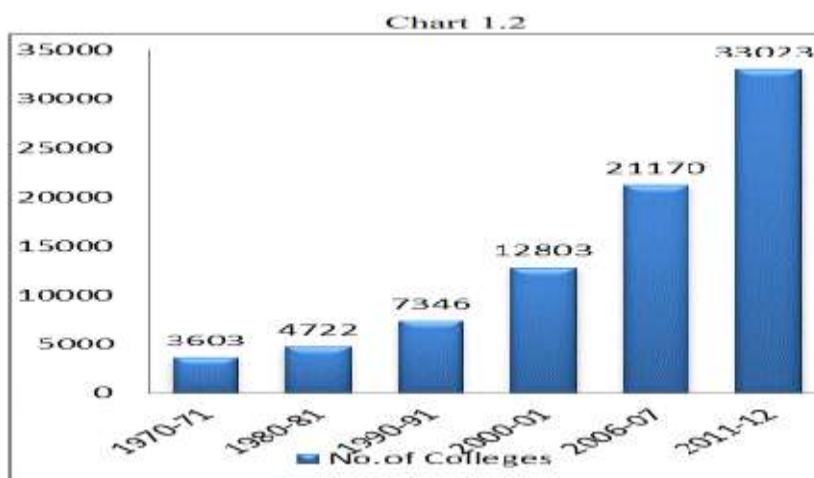


Figure : 1.1



The growth of Universities & Colleges in India from 1970 to 2012

### Challenges in Higher Education in India

This is our 69th year of freedom, but our education program has not yet been completely established. We cannot mention a single university among the top 100 universities in the world. Various policies

have shifted in the past six decades. They sought to improve the education sector and placed in motion different education initiatives, because they were not enough to give an precedent to the world. UGC operates relentlessly and insists on eminence education in the higher education market. They also face a lot of problems & obstacles in our school sector. Some of the main problems in India's H.E sector are listed below:

- **Enrolment** :- India's Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in H.E is just 15%, that is comparatively small compared to both developed and other developing countries. With the rise in enrolment at school level, the availability of higher education organization is inadequate to satisfy the increasing demand in the region.
- **Equity** :- there is no interest in GER between the various divisions of the business. Previous studies have shown that GER in higher education in India differs more between males & females. There are geographical disparities in some countries with high GER, although others are far below the national GER, suggesting major imbalances inside the higher education sector.
- **Quality**:- quality in H.E is a multi-dimensional, multi-level & complex definition. Ensuring standard in H.E. is most critical issues confronting India today. Moreover, the Government is constantly focused on quality education. Today, a significant number of colleges & universities in India are still unable to follow the current standards set by the UGC, and our universities have not been in a position to place amongst the other top universities in the world.
- **Infrastructure**: - poor infrastructure is also a problem for India's higher education system, especially for public sector institutions that suffer from poor physical facilities & infrastructure. There were a huge of colleges working on the second or third floor of the building on the ground or first level, ready-made shelters or photocopying shops operate.
- **Political Interference**: - the bulk of educational establishments are controlled by government figures who perform a vital position in the regulatory bodies of universities. They use innocent students for their greedy reasons. Students plan events, think about their own goals & continue building their careers in politics.
- **Faculty**: - Faculty vacancies & failure of the state education system to recruit & maintain well-qualified teachers had been undermining quality education for several years. Huge amounts of NET / PhD applicants remain unemployed even as there are a ton of openings in higher education, so these eligible candidates instead apply in other divisions, that is the greatest hit to the higher education system.
- **Accreditation**: - According to the data offered by NAAC, since of June 2010, not really 25% of the country's overall higher education institutions were accredited. And of those accredited, just 30% of universities & 45 per cent of colleges were found to be of 'A' quality."
- **Research & Innovation**: - There are very well-known academics in our country whose work is quoted by prominent Western writers. The emphasis on study in H.E institutions is insufficient. There is a require of resources & services, as well as a limited number of professional faculty to provide guidance to students. Most academic scholars are either without fellowships or without earning their fellowships at a period that directly or indirectly influences their study. In comparison, Indian higher education institutions are badly linked to research centers. So, this is another field of difficulty for higher education in India.
- **System of Higher Education**: - Indian education management faces challenges linked to centralisation, hierarchical systems & lack of accountability, openness & professionalism. As a consequence, to enhance the associated colleges and graduates, the responsibility of administrative functions of universities has augmented significantly & emphasis on academics & study has been reduced (Kumar, 2015).

### **Major Challenges before the Indian Higher Education**

The major challenges before the Indian higher education can be stated as follows:

- **Quality and Excellence**: - Quality of higher education has been a primary concern & UGC, despite the huge systemic growth of higher education over the last few years, the quality was further undermined. UGC also developed a range of initiatives to enhance the quality of teaching and learning

in universities & colleges. Plans like Universities to Potential for Excellence (UPE), Colleges with Potential for Excellence (CPE) Special Assistance Program (SAP), Center for Advanced Studies (CAS), etc. have sought to enhance the quality & excellence of higher education. Such additional schemes are needed to enhance the quality & excellence of higher education.

• **Academic and Administrative Reforms:** - A important step for curriculum & structural reforms in H.E was taken during XI Plan UGC. Such changes were targeted at fostering consistency and innovation in teaching & science. Initiating these reforms, UGC has given priority – a) Implementation of the Semester Method (b) Preference based credit program (c) Curriculum revision and (e) Examination reform. Academic & institutional change is an evolving phase or practice. Thus it is essential that inventions in the academic & administrative fields are very important in a competitive world.

• **Globalization of Higher Education:** - Higher education became the most globalized practices. It is arguing that cross-border higher education facilitates the probability of innovation in teaching and delivery methods and promotes greater mobility of student programmers and providers. Unstructured globalization of Indian H.E was already going on for some time, with students & teachers going abroad to study higher education, teaching & research. Indian students have traveled to a large number of universities in the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Australia & New Zealand. In almost the same way, institutions of H.E from the United Kingdom & US have decided to enter into a maximum number of collaborations with the Indian institute. UGC is now introducing the Promotion of Indian Higher Education Abroad (PIHE) program. India also frequency is increased from around 195 countries, most of whom come from the countries of Asia & Africa. Many of these students are enrolled in undergrad courses in India. A number of measures are essential for initiatives to promote the globalization of Indian H.E.

• **Financial Constraints:** - Sufficient resources have been a challenge for higher education. Only around 1.0% of India's GDP is spent on higher education. This is lower than that of countries as United States of America (2.9%), the United Kingdom (1.3%) and China (1.5%). A study in this regard demonstrates that about 75 per cent of maintenance costs go to salaries and pensions, and 15 per cent to claims such as rents, electricity, telephone and examinations in H.E institutions in India. A total of committees & boards have also proposed that the government commit themselves from time to time to spend 6 % of GDP on education. Even so, none of them contributed 6 % of GDP to education. It is to be welcomed that the Central government is taking a bold initiative & increased the distribution for H.E during the XI Plan to Rs. 46,449 crore from meager expenditure of Rs. 3,984 crore as during X Plan. Over the duration of the XI Programme, massive funds have come into the higher education system. But the Governments of the State did not rise to the occasion. At the level of the central government, their budget for H.E has not increasing. In most universities and colleges, vacant positions of teachers have not yet been filled, facilities and services are poorly maintained and repair funds have been stagnating for a number of years. It is therefore essential that various steps be taken by the central government & state governments to facilitate financial assistance to higher education institutions.

• **Poor Standard of Primary and Secondary Education:** - Primary education is the basic pillar of some kind of education scheme, & secondary education is the basic foundation. Everything are well learned about the pitiful condition of Indian primary & secondary education. Until today, all levels of education are still unable to serve their purpose. The majority of primary & secondary school children complete their schooling without enduring adequate training. So they go to higher education, they're faced with a lot of difficulties. When these stages of education are up to standard in their performance, the poor performance of H.E is evident.

• **Quality of Research:** - Teaching & research are associated with important aspects of H.E. The qualities of teaching & research are the basic foundation of growth of any country. Further investigation is among the most important indicators of H.E quality. Study charges are therefore necessary in higher education.

• **Politicization of Higher Education:** - The politicization of H.E is becoming a major obstacle to the quality of H.E. Nowadays, Indian higher education has become a trend, although policy interference



in academic institutions is legally prohibited. Many other political parties influence educational institutions. It seems to be one of the major challenges facing Indian higher education.

• **Unplanned Growth of Institutions:** - The mushrooming of private educational institutions in the country is a testament to the quality of reverting back in H.E. The standard of H.E has been compromise by engineering & medical colleges in the private sector.

• **Increasing Strength of Students:** - Dictum education for everyone is counterproductive to the standard of higher education, as the frequency of students in classes is growing year by year and the proportion of students in classes is being broken. It is definitely detrimental to the quality of H.E.

### **Employee Engagement and Intrinsic Motivation**

Kahn (1990) led the way in the engagement research and defined it as “the harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles” (p. 695). Such harnessing can be altered to suit one’s purpose – thereby a person can put to use variable levels of one’s physical, cognitive, and emotional energies to the work. In this context, we have employed Employee Engagement as a tool to measure the level of engagement in the employees of the organizations in general and faculty members in particular We have also taken into account the intrinsic motivation construct to measure the flow as envisaged by Csikszentmihalyi (1990). Ryan & Stiller (1991) envisage that Intrinsic Motivation has materialized as an essential phenomenon for the H.E. educators - a natural source of learning and achievement. High quality learning and creative zeal are the possible results of Intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000), and, therefore, it seems to come handy when the faculty members who are the pioneer of H.E. learning exhibit intrinsic motivation.

### **RECOMMENDATION FOR IMPROVING QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

There are recommendations and demands from Government, Business, Educational Institutions, Parents & Students to increase the standard of higher education.

**Student-Centered Education & Innovative Approaches:** -Higher education strategies will always be responsive to the requires of learning to read, learning to achieve, learning & learning to become. Student-centered teaching and the usage of innovative teaching approaches would involve different behaviors & skills from teachers. Approaches of teaching by lectures would have to be subordinated to approaches that prioritize self-study, informal interaction with teachers and students, and interactive sessions of seminars & workshops. Remote teaching approaches would have to be included on a large scale.

**Examination Reforms:** – Examination reforms, slowly moving from final, annual & semester exams to daily & consistent appraisal of student success in studying, must be carried out.

**International Cooperation:** -India universities have become the main motivating force for the progress and transition of expertise through conventional roles such as science, creativity, teaching, human capital creation and continuing education. International collaboration is becoming increasingly relevant as yet another tool. With either the increased growth of transport and connectivity, the global village is experiencing a increasing focus on international collaboration & intervention to find suitable solutions to issues of global dimensions & higher education is major of these.

**Increase the number of universities:** -We require more universities as we are more diverse & amount of universities that we already have is too small. On 13 June 2005 the Government of India created a high-level advisory body identified as the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) to advice the PM on the condition of education in India & steps required to improve the field. It was led by Sam Pitroda and submitted its study back in November 2007. NKC proposed that 1500 colleges be set up by 2015 to raise the gross enrolment level to 15%. This also termed for the creation of an Autonomous Regulatory Authority for Higher Education (IRAHE) to track the standard of overall higher education in India.

**Cross Cultural Programs:** -After school, it is imperative to go as far as possible to any position in India & world with the help of governments, because then citizens, cultural, music, literature, faith, technical advances & advancement of human civilization in the world can be understood.

## **CONCLUSION**

In this study, the researcher analyzed the current situations prevailing in India today. It is quite clear that policy changes are being made in the right direction, but what is needed today is for those policies to see the light of day as having any effect. Today, we're worried about the generational dividend, and the first thing that falls to mind is the revamping of the H.E. The system in a satisfactory manner. Although the GER has increased in number, it is still 17.87 per cent, which is among the lowest in the world. In the 12th five-year plan, the UGC launched massive student aid to increase the GER to 30 % by 2020 (Express News Service, 2012). With the aid of the primary data collected, the study was in a position to look at the last dimension of ensuring the involvement of faculty members in one of the leading universities viz. Banaras Hindu University (BHU). The results have been an eye-opener, revealing that a faculty member who finds meaning in his work, experiences spirituality, and is aligned with the role he is offered, is a committed faculty: who thus demonstrates greater JP, JI, JS, ITS, and an inner motivation to work. The basic feature of a faculty member, therefore, is to inculcate the value of dedication to the work entrusted. A future for the H.E. The system in India does not look somber in its entirety. The need is to understand the real requirements; to begin with, problems should be sought at grassroots level. Policy making up for H.E. It was very sound, but the time now demands action on the same with precision. It is also necessary today to have competent faculty members who are engaged in their work and have sound competence in the field of quality. India cannot continue to be below average faculty now that the planet is being turned into a global village. Pedagogy, regulations, evaluation criteria, curricula, infrastructure, all of which need to be revised from time to time to list India as one of the quality players in H.E. System.

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