ETHICS AND HIGHER EDUCATION OF CHANGING SCENARIO IN INDIA

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Introduction:

“Education is the manifestation of divine perfection already existing in man.”

Education is a systematic process through which a child or an adult acquires knowledge, experience, skill and sound attitude. It makes an individual civilized, refined, culture and educated. For a civilized and socialized society, education is the only means. Its goal is to make an individual perfect. Every society gives importance to education because it is a panacea for all evils. It is the key to solve the various problems of life. Education has been described as process of waking up to life also. By the definition given above we can conclude that education is very important for the human development. In this essay we knew about the ethics and higher education of changing scenario in India.

Education Today:

Today’s education system in India is challenging but needs some changes. The education system in India puts more emphasis on the theoretical knowledge than the practical. The quality of the education must be improved rather than the quantity.

Higher Education in India:

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

As per the later 2011 census, about 8.15% (68 millions) of Indians are graduates, with Union Territories of Chandigarh and Delhi topping the list with 24.65% and 22.56% of their population being graduates respectively. Indian higher education system has expanded at a fast pace by adding nearly 20,000 colleges and more than 8 million students in decade from 2000-01 to 2010-11. As of 2016, India has 799 universities, with a break up of 44 central universities, 540 state universities, 122 deemed universities, 90 private universities, 5 institutions established and functioning under the state Act, and 75 Institutes of National Importance which include AIMS, IIT’S and NIT’S among others. Other institutions include 39,071 colleges as Government Degree Colleges and private degree colleges, including 1800 exclusive women’s colleges, functioning under these universities and institutions as reported by the UGC in 2016. Colleges may be autonomous, i.e. empowered to examine their own degrees, up to PhD level in some cases, or Non Autonomous, in which case their examinations are under the supervision of the university to which they are affiliated; in their case, however, degrees are awarded in the name of the university rather than the college.

Indian higher education need of radical reforms.

Ethics in Higher Education:

Institutions of higher education have a major role to play in preparing the younger generation for a propitious future. Apart from imparting quality education, they need to instill high ethical values and practices amongst the student fraternity. The purpose of this is to discuss the various facts of education and the role of ethics in the field of higher education. An attempt has been made to emphasize and highlight the perspective on the importance of ethics in higher education through a views of literature. A small primary study conducted
involving the faculty of a few universities in India as respondents. The respondents were administered a questionnaire on “Ethics in Higher Education” to gauge a link between the theory and practice.

The Current Scenario of Higher Education System in India:

Now a days it is very frequently observed that students sign up for higher studies with less interest or take is casually. Moreover, there are very few institutions in India who are giving quality inputs so as to inculcate the learning skills amongst students.

Higher education system in India compare to developing/developed countries needs substantial improvement. The percentage of students taking higher education is hardly about 13% whereas the same is varying between 28 to 90%, across the world. The lowest % being 28% and the same is as high as 90% in developed countries.

At one end we claim that India would rank 3rd among all countries by 2020 in education. If we observe overall ranking of relevant institutions it seen that in the year 2000, out of 500 there were 2 Indian universities/institutes were featured in the list, and 1 institution from China. Now almost after decade in 2010 the tables have changed with only 1 institution from India being featured and 32 institutions are featured from China!!

It categorically spells out how much we are lagging behind in terms of overall % of higher educational institutions, number of students pursuing higher education. We are not only beaten in by the developing and developed countries in terms of GDP, exchange of foreign currency but also in terms of number of students pursuing higher education…

Budget allocation by Govt. of India as per 2012 plan is about 6% which is not going to adequate, and therefore allocation must be made appropriately, i.e. minimum 10% in order to improve the scenario. Basic education must reach to maximum number of children from different strata of the society so that they are eligible to pursue higher education.
Over and the above, institutions must also concentrate on giving away quality inputs to the students. Institutions must look into constantly updating the syllabus in order to help students adapt with the changing market scenario. To start with they can look at making education liberal, introduce new practices & applied research work, updating the course curriculum frequently. If such developments take shape in its true sense in our country students would be attracted to pursue higher education which will in turn fulfill corporate expectations. Efforts should also be taken to guide, mentor students and parents to develop and retain interest among students.

The Scenario for Higher Education in India Issues:

The higher education system in India has witnessed remarkable growth; it is being heralded as the largest system of its kind in the world. However, the system continues to be fraught with numerous issues. There are the issues concerning management, which include aspects like access, equity and relevance. The assessment of institutions and their accreditation is something that the regulators need to attend to. There are the issues related to financing and ensuring that education in the country continues to be a public service. It should not be allowed to degenerate into a profit making venture.

A large number of additional students continue to knock at the doors of our institutions for higher education. As a nation we can’t escape the moral obligation of providing high quality higher education to each and every son and daughter of this country. New policies and strategies that will give rise to large number of high quality institutions are the need of the hour. It is imperative that we find the solutions to these problems, as we are now engaged in the using higher education as a powerful tool for creation of a knowledge-based information society that will take India into a bright new future.
In our coverage of the higher education sector in India, we interacted with the leading personalities of a large number of education institutes. These individuals have expressed their views on a range of issues that are of importance to the higher education sector.

**Problems with Higher Education in India:**

Higher education in India suffers from several systematic deficiencies. As a result, it continues to provide graduates that are unemployable despite emerging shortages of skilled manpower in an increasing number of sectors. The standard of academic research is low and declining. Some of the problems of the Indian higher education, such as the unwieldy affiliating system, inflexible academic institutions, and the low level of public funding are well known. Many other concerns relating to the dysfunctional regulatory environment, the accreditation system that has low coverage and no consequences, absence of incentives for performing well, and the unjust public funding policies are not well recognized. Driven by populism and in the absence of good data, there is little informed public debate on higher education on India. Now we shall debate about some of the serious problems that higher education is facing.

1. **Gap in Supply and Demand:**

   India’s gross enrollment rate (GER) is just 19% which is not good. GER is 6% below the world average and at least 50% lesser than developed world like Australia and US. This has to change if we have to really improve state of higher education in India.

2. **Mushrooming of Low Quality Institutes:**

   Mushrooms of low quality institutes all over the country is not good for higher education. These new colleges lack capacity and they are all about fleecing money from students and their parents. There is too much glamour and less quality of education.
3. No Project Based Learning:

Higher education lack project based learning. Young graduates need to learn new skills especially vocational skills that can give them job. So we are focusing on project based learning at all. Just theory is not enough, we also need practical knowledge is also.

4. No Strategy:

There is no strategy for higher education in India. We don’t have foreign students coming to the country and studying here. Government has no plan for this and this is a big challenge.

5. Who Only Serving Industry?

We are obsessed with servicing industry. We all want to get selected in campus selection we we love jobs in servicing sector only. However higher education does not solve the problem when it comes to creating jobs in manufacturing sector. That is the big problem.

Knowledge arbitrage is going to be the biggest challenge for higher education:

The global knowledge economy operates on securing patents and intellectual property rights for its producers so that consumers can pay for use over time. The knowledge economy then is based on building on knowledge and securing its bounds. India’s folk culture is a knowledge sharing culture as reflected in its music, poetry, technology use and more. This conflict shows up in many ways plagiarism in education and industry. On the one hand this folk tradition makes it easier to spread the knowledge arbitrage very difficult, in order to bridge this gap, higher education will have to be vested in creating structures that demonstrate the value of pure knowledge and then its ability to become a viable economy.

Ethical Challenges in Higher Education:
1) **Pressure:** For many parents and societies, higher education seems to be the only valuable goal. The pressure is so high that young persons and their parents use all means at their disposal to get a bachelor or master degree. The effect of this pressure and of one sided public educational strategies is that we have millions of jobless academics and not enough young people with vocational training. But studies show that innovation of a country does not only depend on a strong academic sector, but on balanced educational instruments. Switzerland and Germany are examples: Switzerland is regularly rated among the most innovative countries in the world but when compared with other countries it has a relatively low percentage of young people with a university degree and a high percentage of those who have vocational training.

2) **Finance:** in many countries, academic staff is not well paid compared to other sectors such as the private sector. With the minimum income, teachers are tempted to increase income by receiving bribes in the form of money and sexual services. The effect is that students learn by example. It is a lesson that they are taught indirectly: in order to successful in a profession, one needs to accept immoral behavior. This then continues the vicious circle of corruption, low performance and lack of competitiveness that can also include losing lives: accountants, medical doctors, construction engineers, etc. put people at risk and even take lives if they have a diploma but not the knowledge to practice professionally.

3) **Privatization:** the boom of new, mainly private institutions of higher education in many countries is a positive sign that there is a need, a market and entrepreneurs and investors who are willing to make the most of the opportunity and to take the risk. But strong competition leads also to the temptation of fast success, cheap solutions, lack of qualified teaching staff with integrity and a lack of a sustainable ethical
foundations of these institutions. There is a need therefore not only for a strong academic, but also for an ethical rating of institutions of higher education.

4) **Technology:** Information and Communications Technologies (ITCs) represent a huge potential for higher education and are obviously the back bone of open and distance learning education. The advantages and future potential are still huge. But each technology is ambiguous when looked at from an ethical perspective. It can be used for good and for bad, to save lives and take lives, to democratize knowledge and to control or centralize knowledge. Excellent distance learning possibilities are improved with ICTs but at the same time cybercrime is increasing and cyber security decreasing. The ethical and legal development is always behind technological development. That is why ethics in higher education needs to look at the ethics of technologies, especially ICTs.

**Suggestions and Recommendations for Changing Higher Education:**

With the advent of the globalization it has become imperative to reorient our education system to the global realities rather than continuing with the age old inward looking policies. Developed as well as developing countries like USA, UK and china are now reshaping their education policies with massive thrust on sustainable qualitative higher education along with spirit of dynamism and competitiveness. India in this context requires a comprehensive reforms package to harness optimum potential of its human resources crucial in achieving its socio-economic objectives. Below given some of the important suggestions recommendations to realize the education system.

- While access to qualitative professional higher education needs to be further expanded at the same time equity must be ensured by extending financial and academic support to poor and marginalized sections of the society.
In order to increase access ICTs aided teaching and learning modules should be developed.

Sufficient training programs for faculty members should be conducted to adopt new skills and expertise to develop learning system relevant and contemporary to the requirements of the 21st century.

Quality assurance is key to sustainability of any system. As such, higher education system involving all its stakeholders with appropriate regulatory mechanism should creative thoughts aiming to ensure high quality.

In view of dearth of public funds in a rapidly growing economy, higher education must be based on public private partnerships model.

Academic freedom both for teachers and students should be provided to realize academic excellence.

Concerted efforts both at govt. and private level must be made to attract the best of the talents with a sound compensation package along with perks and amenities.

Conclusion:

Knowledge is the power and therefore has remained one of the most important driving forces of sustaining human existence. For any economy to achieve exponential economic growth, it is essential to gear up skill based activities through a potential, vibrant and dynamic higher education system. Over the years, trade investment, mobility of people and the economy have growth significantly and so the need of revamping the higher education system replacing the age old and non-relevant practices. Looking at the deficiencies in most of the key areas of higher education system of India like accessibility, quality, financing and governance, a strategic paradigm shift in the policy framework and overall functioning is needed to meet growing expectations and societal needs.
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