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RESEARCH ARTICLE

DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA SINCE INDEPENDENCE TO MODERN ERA

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Abstract

The institutional framework of higher education in India consists of Universities and Colleges. As reported in 2019, India has 993 universities and 39,931 colleges. One of the key objectives of the Department is to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education to 30% by 2020. Higher Education system in the country is governed by multiple agencies with University Grant Commission (UGC) as the apex body. The rule and regulations by these agencies makes the higher education system more complex. The various stakeholders in the regulatory framework in the country are State Governments, professional councils like University Grant Commission (UGC), All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) etc. and five professional councils at the state level like Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI), State Educational and Research Council (SCERT) etc. This regulatory arrangement of higher education in India is very complex and disfunctional. Global Initiative for Academics Network (GIAN): The programme seeks to invite distinguished academicians, entrepreneurs, scientists, experts from premier institutions from across the world, to teach in the higher educational institutions in India.UGC's Learning Outcome-based Curriculum Framework (LOCF) in HEIs.by updating curriculum fromacademic year 2019-20.and adopting learner centric teaching learning processes bysuitable improvement in the pedagogy.

Introduction:-

The institutional framework of higher education in India consists of Universities and Colleges. As reported in 2019, India has 993 universities and 39,931 colleges. One of the key objectives of the department of higher education is to increase Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in which to became from 25.8 per cent in 2017-18 to 26.3 per cent in 2018-19, while in absolute terms the enrolment increased from 3.66 crore to 3.74 crore students, according to All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE). Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education is to increase up-to 30% by 2020. India's Higher Education sector has witnessed a tremendous increase in the number of Universities/University level Institutions & Colleges since independence.

There is no equity in GER among different sections of society. GER for males (26.3%), females (25.4%), SC (21.8%) and ST (15.9%) there are regional variations too. While some states have high GER some are far behind the

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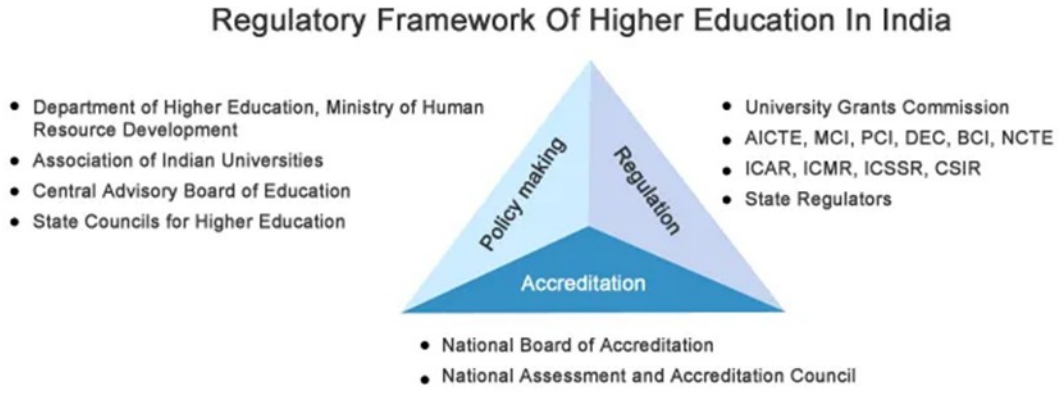
national figures. The college density (number of colleges per lakh eligible population) varies from 7 in Bihar to 59 in Telangana as compared to All India average of 28. Most of premier universities and colleges are centred in a metropolitan and urban city, thereby leading to the regional disparity in access to higher education.When India gained independence in 1947, the nation had a total of 241,369 students registered across 20 universities and 496 colleges. In 1948, the Indian Government established the University Education Commission to oversee the growth and improvement of higher education. In the 1960s and 1970s, the government increased its efforts to support higher education by not only setting up state-funded universities and colleges, but also providing financial assistance to private institutions, resulting in the creation of private aided/ grant-in-aid institutions.

India's higher education system is 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, advises the government, and helps coordinate between the centre and the state. In the prestigious Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings 2020, only three Indian Universities- IIT-Bombay, IIT-Delhi and IISc (Bangalore)- have been included in the top 200 institutions.

The aim of education is gaining knowledge, not of facts, but of values" –William S. Burroughs

Development of any nation solely depends on the quality of human resources; and good human resource is produced through quality education. Education provides people with an opportunity to reflect on the social, cultural, moral, economic, and spiritual issues and contributes towards the development through propagation of specialized knowledge and skills in India, even after 70 years of its independence, is far away from the goal of universal literacy. The fact that India's higher education system is churning out millions of graduates who are unemployable speaks of the need to improve the quality of education in the country. However, on a positive note, India is engaged in the use of higher education as a powerful tool to build a knowledge-based information society of the 21st Century. Indian professionals are considered among the best in the world and are in great demand. This signifies the inherent strength of the Indian educational system.



Some major factors are including which are responsible for backwardness of higher education-

Quality:

Higher Education in India is plagued with rot learning, lack of employability and skill development due to the low quality of education.India's higher education standards have not been up to international standards and due to this its share in hosting international students is very low. Many measures have been suggested to improve education standards including to allow foreign educational institutions to enter. Foreign institutions can help improve education quality-Experienced faculty,Technological boost,Publicity etc.

Infrastructure:

Poor infrastructure is another challenge to higher education in India. Due to the budget deficit, corruption and lobbying by the vested interest group (Education Mafias), public sector universities in India lack the necessary infrastructure. Even the private sector is not upto the mark as per the global standard.

Faculty:
Faculty shortages and the inability of the state educational system to attract and retain well-qualified teachers have been posing challenges to quality education for many years. Shortage of faculty leads to Ad-hoc expansion even in the premier institutions. A new way of teaching has the capacity to bring new changes to the education system.

The Pupil-Teachers ratio though has been stable in the country (30:1), however, it needs to be improved to make it comparable to USA (12.5:1), China (19.5:1) and Brazil (19:1).

Outdated Curriculum:
Outdated, irrelevant curriculum that is dominantly theoretical in nature and has a low scope for creativity. There is a wide gap between industry requirements and universities' curriculum that is the main reason for the low employability of graduates in India.

Accreditation:
The Indian laws require that universities be accredited unless created through an act of Parliament. Without accreditation, the government notes, "These fake institutions have no legal entity to call themselves as University/Vishwvidyalaya and to award 'degree' which are not treated as valid for academic/employment purposes.As per the data provided by the NAAC, as of June 2010, not even 25% of the total higher education institutions in the country were accredited. And among those accredited, only 30% of the universities and 45% of the colleges were found to be of quality to be ranked at 'A' level.

Regulatory issues:
Management of the Indian education faces challenges of over-centralization, bureaucratic structures and lack of accountability, transparency, and professionalism. As a result of the increase in a number of affiliated colleges and students, the burden of administrative functions of universities has significantly increased and the core focus on academics and research is diluted.

Research:
Poor fund allocation in research, Low levels of PhD enrolment, fewer opportunities for interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research, Low levels of industry engagement, Low quality of research work, etc. are some of the factors affecting the research ecosystem in India.

India's investment in R&D has remained constant at around 0.6% to 0.7% of India's GDP. This is below the expenditure of countries like the US (2.8), China (2.1), Israel (4.3) and Korea (4.2).
If we see the ancient period education system in India-

Education in India dates back to its early civilization time where teaching and learning process revolved around the 'Gurukul System'. It was a residential concept wherein the students were educated under the guidance of a "Guru" in different areas of religion, philosophy and science. Historians speculate that these centres had a remarkable resemblance to the European medieval universities that came up much later.

The initial education system in India gradually got obscured due to subsequent invasions and disorder in the country. In the early modern age, the Islamic influences enriched the traditional learning centres and brought in the disciplines of Geography, Administration, Law, and Arabic Mathematics to India.

A major change in the design of higher education was brought by the European rulers. The British established the formal system of higher education focused on languages, literature, history, and philosophy. These learning centres were focused on generating English-speaking working-class people for the British administrative services, army and trade. The British model of University system, inspired by the University of London, continued to expand across India, leading to a rising number of higher learning centres by 1947.

The higher education system in India grew rapidly after independence. By 1980, there were 132 universities and 4738 colleges, enrolling around five per cent of the eligible age group in higher education. The number of institutions in India is four times more than the number of institutions both in the United States and the entire Europe.

Present-day Scenario:
India is dashing headlong towards economic success and modernization. It is counting on high-tech industries, such as IT and Biotechnology, to propel the nation to prosperity. Currently, Indian higher education system has many favourable factors to its advantage. India has a large higher education sector, the third largest in the world. It uses English as a principal language of higher education and research and has an extensive academic tradition. Academic liberty is appreciated and there are a small number of high-quality institutions that can form the foundation of quality education. The fact that State Government, rather than Central Government, manoeuvres vital responsibility for higher education, creates a rather cumbersome structure, but the system allows for a diversity of policies and approaches.

Yet the weakness clearly outweighs the strengths. India educates approximately 10 per cent of its youths in higher education. Even though, none of its universities occupy a solid position at the top. A few of the best universities have some excellent departments and centres, and there are a small number of outstanding undergraduate colleges.

UGC recently released a report describing the current scenario of the Indian Higher Education System. It shows that despite the growing numbers of colleges and enrolments, it is not adequate enough to cater to the educational needs of the increasing young population.

Recent Initiatives Taken by the Government:
Education Quality Upgradation and Inclusion Programme (EQUIP) has been recently launched:This is a five-year vision plan to improve the quality and accessibility higher education over the next five years (2019-2024).Double the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education and resolve the geographically and socially skewed access to higher education institutions in India, position at least 50 Indian institutions among the top-1000 global universities.

Revitalising Infrastructure and Systems in Education (RISE) by 2022

Qualitatively upgrade the research and academic infrastructure in India to global best standards by 2022.
Measures to Improve the Quality of Higher Education.

One of the most efficient ways of tackling the problem of poor educational quality is by sharing the resources between private and public schools. It is vital to remember that the quality of education is directly linked to the resources available and it is important for the government to improve the resource allocation to bring about qualitative changes in the field of education. To enable the higher education sector to take on the emerging competition from the Asian countries, there is a need to loosen the hold of the government over the higher educational institutions.

The Government should undertake the following measures to improve the quality of higher education:

Encouraging Individuality:
Albert Einstein once said, “Everyone’s a genius. But if you judge a fish on its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.” With the difference in ability, aptitude and interest of a student and the societal demands of expertise and specialization, the standardized testing and curriculum does not give much scope for the students to relate to the world of work and wages. Creativity that has nurtured our influences in almost all of life’s passions and interests drops dead at standardized tests. The current educational system expects conformity and rewards predictable behaviours, both intellectually and emotionally.

Tech-Savvy Methods of Teaching:
The new technologies offer vast opportunities for progress in all walks of life. The focus should not be on installing hardware but creating new, high-quality content such as intelligent teaching systems and tools that will help students to hone basic skills like reading and mathematics, and developing content in multiple Indian languages. Free high-speed internet connections can be provided to all schools through a simple scheme by which the government could reimburse internet service providers directly.

Making the Curriculum Dynamic:
Currently, the curriculum in higher education is outdated in most cases. It is stale, dogmatic and teaches things that the world has moved on with. To infuse dynamism, the curriculum needs to be progressive in nature. Students need

to be given the option of doing multiple courses. The spirit of curriculum should be projects-driven and not exams-driven.

High-Tech Libraries:
The university libraries have a very good collection of books, but they are all in mess. A library must be online and helpful for serious study. Indian universities should concentrate more on providing quality education which is equivalent to that of the global standards. Instituting this notion in the education system will be of great help as anyone will be able to access the books and required study materials from anywhere with amazing effortlessness. Moreover, the E-libraries can be updated swiftly with new material and books.

The Power of Alumni:
One of the most unappreciated potentials in Indian education system is the power of the Alumni. Excluding the IIT's and a few other top institutes, the concept of Alumni networking is non-existent. Once you launch a sincere network which is transparent, it would give the avenue as well as the confidence for the alumni to contribute in terms of money or academic expertise.

Equity:
Make India into an education hub by making available high-quality research infrastructure in Indian higher educational institutions.To allow access of HEFA funding to institutions like Central Universities, AIIMS, IISERs and newly created Institutes of National Importance, without creating any additional burden to the students.Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA) has been tasked to mobiliseRs. 1,00,000crores for this initiative.

UGC's Learning Outcome-based Curriculum Framework (LOCF)

LOCF guidelines, issued by UGC in 2018, aims to specify what graduates are expected to know, understand and be able to do at the end of their programme of study. This is to make student active learner and teacher a good facilitator.

Graded Autonomy to Universities & Colleges:
3-tiered graded autonomy regulatory system has been initiated, with the categorization based on accreditation scores. Category I and Category II universities will have significant autonomy to conduct examinations, prescribe evaluation systems and even announce results. Global Initiative for Academics Network (GIAN): The programme seeks to invite distinguished academicians, entrepreneurs, scientists, experts from premier institutions from across the world, to teach in the higher educational institutions in India.

All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE): The main objectives of the survey are to- identify & capture all the institutions of higher learning in the country; and collect the data from all the higher education institutions on various aspects of higher education.

National Institutional Ranking Framework was developed in 2015. The rankings are published annually since 2016. It outlines a methodology to rank educational institutions across the country based on five broad parameters:
1. Teaching, learning and resources;
2. Research and professional practice;
3. Graduation outcomes;
4. Outreach and inclusivity; and
5. Perception.

Regulatory and governance reforms:
Restructure or merge different higher education regulators (UGC, AICTE, NCTE etc.) to ensure effective coordination.Amend UGC Act to give legislative backing to regulatory structure.Allow foreign institutions to operate joint degree programmes with Indian institutions.Link university grants to performance select Vice-Chancellors of universities through a transparent & objective process.UGC's Learning Outcome-based Curriculum Framework (LOCF) in HEIs. by updating curriculum from academic year 2019-20 and adopting learner centric teaching learning processes bysuitable improvement in the pedagogy.

Creating 'world-class universities': 20 universities – 10 each from the public and private sector – are being selected as 'Institutions of Eminence', to help them attain world-class standards of teaching and research. A graded mechanism to ensure additional funds flow to top public universities should be developed, as in China & Singapore.

The Draft National Education Policy, 2019 recommended restructuring of the higher education system into Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3.

Tier 1 includes research universities focusing equally on research and teaching, Tier 2 includes teaching universities focusing primarily on teaching; and Tier 3 includes colleges focusing only on teaching at undergraduate levels. All such institutions will gradually move towards full autonomy - academic, administrative, and financial. The idea is to spread 'research culture' at the undergraduate level.

Increased focus on vocational and profession led education: Include vocational subjects in mainstream universities to allow for greater acceptance and utility for vocational learning.

Accreditation Framework:
All higher education institutions must be accredited compulsorily & regularly, by agencies, empanelled through a transparent, high-quality process.Performance-linked funding and incentives: All central universities should develop strategic plans for getting into the top 500 global universities rankings in the next 10 years. Funding to these institutions should be linked to performance and outcomes through the MHRD and newly constituted Higher Education Funding Agency.

Distance and Online Education:
Broaden the scope of Massive Open Online Course (MOOCs) and Open and Distance Learning (ODL) to provide access to quality education beyond geographical boundaries.Distance Learning or Distance Education is a term used to refer to students who do not have to be physically present at a school, college or university in order to attain an education. Its origins are college correspondence courses whereby education materials were posted to the student, with the majority – if not all – of the course learnt through a postal correspondence between the student and the educational institution. For the history buffs, the first modern day correspondence course was shorthand taught over postcards, an initiative in the 1840's run by Sir Issac Pitman. Today, distance learning is frequently used as a catch-all term to refer to online learning despite differences between the two.

Online learning courses are 100% online, providing students with an incredible amount of flexibility in choosing where they learn, when they learn and even how they learn. With Online Learning Courses, students have access to a virtual platform – such as Moodle, Collaborate or Blackboard – that is hosted with pre-recorded lectures, student resources and e-books. This is in addition to the full digital library that a university houses.This learning platform, commonly termed as a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) allows for interactive learning tools such as discussion forums, group projects or online self-test quizzes to keep students both engaged in the content, as well as encourage interaction with their fellow peers. Given how much of today's working environment requires facilitation through online correspondence, an Online MBA or Online Masters Degree is an excellent way to learn essential communication skills by proxy.

Conclusions:-

Keeping in perspective the rapid changes taking place in the society, higher education should possess various qualities like inculcation of confidence and ability to take responsibility and prepare students to be effective within the circumstances of their lives and work, and promote the pursuit of excellence in development and application of knowledge and skills. Government should take certain appropriate policy measures to improve the education system. India, today, is one of the fastest developing countries of the world. And hence, needs an educational system that is modern, liberal and can adapt to the changing needs of a changing society, a changing economy and a changing world.

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