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Issues and challenges in digitalization of higher education

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Abstract
Education is the backbone of every country. A country will not be able to survive in the competitive world, if its education system is not capable of contributing for its development. Indian Education System is widely criticized in multi-dimensions for its failure to create required employability in its students according to the industry requirements and its inability to contribute to inclusive growth in the Nation as a whole. But if anything new arises, it always have its own issues and challenges for is survival and this paper attempts to highlight the issues and challenges in digitalization of higher education.

Keywords: digitalization of higher education, Indian Education System

Introduction

As digital resources have become more integrated within higher education programs, colleges and universities have seen the value of developing in-house organizations to guide the institution's path on education innovation. However, there is no blueprint for creating such an entity on campus or deciding what its main focus should be (research and development, online education and MOOC development, pedagogical innovation, etc.).

"Digital higher education efforts combine needs for stable and scalable content-delivery systems, subject matter, and pedagogic experts, researchers who craft interventions but also have to handle 'big data,' and complicated programmatic considerations, given that we also offer residential programs," said Tingley. "That is not easy, so we wanted to make people focus on identifying challenges rather than selling solutions.

Issues and Challenges

India has been a multi-cultural, multi-religious, and multi-linguistic society. Every State has a different and distinct identity. Dealing with various aspirations of such people in a democratic country is indeed a challenge to the Govt of India. The various issues are outlined here:

- **Lack of quality education**

In the top 100 universities list by 'Times Higher Education World Reputation Rankings', none of the Indian universities could be found in the list. In the 2017 rankings by the HRD ministry, only 2,995 institutions (6%) participated from around 51,000-strong higher educational institutions in India. There is severe regional imbalance too. In the overall rankings, of the 100 best institutions, 67 are from just eight states. Among the best 100 universities, 40 are in three states. Among the best 100 colleges, 77 are from just five states (Nanda, Prashant K. 2017).

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- **Corruption in education**

Corruption in Indian education system has been eroding the quality of education. It is one of the major contributors to domestic black money. Payment to Management at dark rooms and seeking admissions is increasing. 'Get full salary in the account, pay back part to Management by blank signed cheques' is also a practice in some private schools.

- **No proper value education**

Value education is not offered in the schools and colleges. If offered, religion and hatred are spread in the name of value education. Many of the doctors, lawyers, CAs, politicians and Govt. servants who are supposed to be the saviours of the society, suffer from serious charges of corruption. Old-age homes are increasing. Suicides are increasing. The meaning of love is eventually changing. The education-led technology, inventions and innovations are being misused.

- **Poor Women's education**

Women have a much lower literacy rate than men. Conservative cultural attitudes prevent girls from attending schools. Despite Govt.'s attempts to provide incentives viz. midday meals, free books and uniforms, girls' attendance is poor. Though the minimum age for marriage is eighteen, many girls get married much earlier. Therefore, at the secondary level, female drop-out rate is high.

- **Lack of Facilities**

As per 2016 Annual Survey of Education Report, 3.5% schools in India had no toilet facility while only 68.7% schools had useable toilet facility. 75.5% of the schools surveyed had library in 2016, a decrease from 78.1% in 2014. Percentage of schools with separate girls' toilet has increased from 32.9% in 2010 to 61.9% in 2016.
74.1% schools had drinking water facility and 64.5% of the schools had playground.

- **Curriculum issues**

There are many different curriculum systems that confuse the students who wish to achieve the same objective such as Engineering, Medical and Business Administration. At the higher education level, there is no uniformity in the syllabuses taught for the same programme. Syllabus revision is done quite often without considering the contemporary requirements of industries. There is lack of diversity in the subjects one can take in colleges. Flexibility to cross over streams is also lacking.

- **Public school workforce absenteeism**

Teacher absenteeism in India is exorbitant. World Bank estimates show the cost in salaries paid to absent teachers is US $2 billion every year. In a study by Kremer, etc., they found 25% of private sector teachers and 40% of public sector medical workers were absent during the survey. Absence rates among them ranged from 14.6% in Maharashtra to 41.9% in Jharkhand.

- **Wrong societal outlook**

For Governments, more scoring is success. English is becoming the measure of intellect. Hence, parents of today take least interest in vernacular medium of education. Due to the perceived notion of inferior quality, Govt. schools are becoming the last choice for many. Education-seeking migration has become a matter of pride for many families.

Most of the school students spend majority of their learning time in preparing for competitive exams. Coaching classes too flourish due to this unwarranted competition, leading to a class-divide.

Conclusion

Education is a country's lifeline, and it has to be given more importance than defense in any country. There is a dire need for revolutionary changes in the India's education system, not only in the syllabus and pedagogy, but also in the attitude towards the test and marks system. India can use its vast human resources productively if the learning system is made effective. As a child is born, it is painted with religion and caste by the cowardly society and is bombarded with all biased thoughts and unruly philosophies. Every child has unlimited potential and it should be allowed to be free from our ill thoughts. It should be taught to reduce the inequality. We can do a lot. But we are not working with required seriousness.

If the Govt. schools are failing, it is primarily because of non-availability or absence of teachers, no headmasters for governance, lack of initiatives by teachers, lack of guidance to students, lack of infrastructure, increased involvement of politicians and more bureaucratic control. Indifferent parents including Govt. school teachers, MPs, MLAs and ministers send their wards to private schools. It is a shameful situation. The government will have to work on it seriously.

The schools Kendriyavidyalaya and Navodayavidyalaya are far better than public schools. The way of teaching is superb. The qualifications of teachers are unmatchable. These schools are doing wonders, providing not only quality education but also opportunity to excel. No private school can match their infrastructure; both are Govt. schools with very low fee. Why can't we adopt the same philosophy in all Govt. schools? Governments do a lot in education, but not fetching the results, since the attempts are neither completely organized nor consistent.

The system of education should be learner-centric rather than mark-centric. Children must be allowed to choose subjects according to their interests. They should be encouraged to research on their own from library books and the Internet and share them in the class. This will help them to develop self-confidence, selfdependence and openness to criticism.

Employability is a serious problem today. Somehow people get degrees and become unemployed or underemployed. The quality of education is directly linked to the resources available and it is important for the Govt. to improve resource allocation to bring about qualitative changes in the field of education.

Though Digital Education is now a global phenomenon, with vast numbers of students seeking to go for it and these shifts all points to one truth: rapid globalization and enormous flood of knowledge across the world and an increasing number of choices about what, how and where.

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