



## HIGHER EDUCATION STATUS IN INDIA: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

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### **Abstract**

*Education is a very crucial input for any individual and for the economic growth and development of the country. An increase in the literacy rate, especially in women indicates the growth of socio-economic status of the country. Indian constitution says free primary education for both the male and female child up to the age of 14 years. Census 2011 indicates that the literate rate of men is 82.47 against women being 68.08 and the total literacy rate being 75.36 percent. According to All India Survey of Higher Education census 2011, it is said that the Gross Enrolment Ratio in Higher Education (2011) in male is 20.8 and female is 17.9 overall found to be 19.4.*

*India can be seen as a developed nation by 2020, if there is focus on the development of the Education system. Higher Education plays a very prominent role in the understanding the countries potentiality for the socio-economic growth and technological development. In the current scenario it can be seen that there is high demand among the youth to take up higher education. This paper is a conceptual analysis tries to highlight the problem faced by the student to pursue higher education. A Vicious Cycle of Higher Education through 5E's model tries to show how pursuing higher education benefits the individual, society and also the increases Socio-Economic status of the country. The paper tries to suggest the Measures and Initiatives to be opted by the Institution/Universities to encourage Higher Education.*

*Higher education system is become the need of the day and essential for social-economic development of the country. There is a rapid expansion in knowledge and skills giving rise to enormous scope for educational innovations and initiatives. The institutions/universities have to be more responsive to the demands of the economy and requirements of the industry with the changing employment scenario. There is a need for quality education system to build a pool of highly competitive and knowledge based human resources to sustaining competition and to contribute for the social and economic development of the country.*

### **Introduction**

Education is a very crucial input for any individual and for the economic growth and development of the country. An increase in the literacy rate indicates especially in women indicates the growth of socio-economic status of the country. Indian constitution says free primary education for both the male and female child up to the age of 14 years. Census 2011 indicates that the literate rate of men is 82.47 against women being 68.08 totalling literacy rate being 75.36 percent. In Karnataka, based on the information available through secondary sources (collegiate education) during 2012-13 the student strength in Government colleges is 1,96,292 and Private aided degrees colleges being 2,15,029 out of which 94,779 in Government college and 1,04,314 in Private aided degrees colleges are female. Knowledge is the driving force and has always been a distinguishing characteristic of human beings where the unique capacities of the individuals is being formulated and continuously transmit of knowledge taking place from one generation to another globally.

According to the All India Survey of Higher Education census 2011, it is said that the Gross Enrolment Ratio in Higher Education (2011) in male is 20.8 and female is 17.9 overall found to be 19.4. According to the 2011 census, it can be stated that the literacy rate is observed to be more in urban areas as compared to rural and the female literacy rate is on the lower side compared to male in India and also with specific to Karnataka State. The same is being shown in the Table below.



**Table - 1: Literacy Rates in Karnataka and India**

	Karnataka	India	Karnataka (Rural)	Karnataka (Urban)
<b>Persons</b>	75.60	74.04	68.86	86.21
<b>Males</b>	82.85	82.14	77.92	90.54
<b>Females</b>	68.13	65.46	59.60	81.71

Source: 2011 Census

India can be seen as a developed nation by 2020, if there is focus on the development of the Education system. Higher Education plays a very prominent role in the understanding the countries potentiality for the socio-economic growth and technological development. In the current scenario it can be seen that there is high demand among the youth to take up higher education.

According to Swami Vivekananda “Education is not the amount of information that is put in your mind and runs riot there undigested all your life. The use of higher education is to find out how to solve the problems of life. Education, can unlock all doors for a progress. A nation advances in proportion to education and intelligence spread among masses. It can help India to grow into her full potential as a strong united nation with strong moral and cultural values”.

**Table - 2: Number of Institutions/Enrolment**

Sl. No.	No of Institutions/Enrolment	Year (2010-11)
1	Universities	523
2	Colleges	33023
3	AICTE Technical Institutions	11809
4	Distance teaching Universities/Institutions	200
5	Enrolment in Univ. and Colleges (in lakhs)	169.75
6	Enrolment in Open Distance Learning (in lakhs)	37.45
7	Enrolment in post sec./post grad diploma (in lakhs)	18.56
8	AICTE approved technical programs	10364
9	Intake in AICTE approved technical programs (in lakhs)	26.15

Source: Annual Report (MHRD) 2011-12

**Table - 3: No. of Colleges, Universities and the Faculty Strength**

Year	Colleges		Universities		Faculty Strength	
	Nos.	Relative growth	Nos.	Relative growth	Nos.	Relative growth
1950-51*	695	= 1	30	=1	23,549	=1
1960-61	1,542	2.22	55	1.83	59,673	2.53
1970-71	3,604	5.13	103	3.43	1,28,876	5.45
1980-81	4,722	6.79	133	4.43	1,93,341	8.21
1990-91	7,346	10.57	193	6.43	2,63,125	11.17
2000-01	12,806	18.43	256	8.53	4,11,628	17.48
2010-11	31,564	45.42	-	-	8,16,966	34.69
2011-12	35,539	51.14	574	19.13	9,33,761	39.65
2012-13	-	-	700	23.3	-	-

Source: UGC Higher Education at a Glance – June, 2013 / Annual Status of Higher Education in States and UTs 2013

\*The Year 1950-51 is considered as the base value for calculating the relative growth.

The Table–2 shows the details of the number of Institutions/Enrolment for the year 2010-11 as per the Annual Report (MHRD), 2011-12. From the Table 2 and 3, it is clear that there is an increase in the number of Colleges and Universities. The Table-3 clearly shows that the number colleges have increased from 695 in the year 1950-



51 to 35,539 in the year 2011-12 and the universities has increased almost 23 times from 30 universities in the year 1950-51 to 700 university in the year 2012-13 and the faculty strength has increased almost 40 times from the year 1950-51 to the year 2011-12. This clearly shows that the importance towards education has been showing a very positive significant growth in the span of seven decades, as this not only enriches ones knowledge but also contributes for the economic growth and development of the country where the knowledged employees/workers can contribute through their Innovative ideas in R&D development.

Based on the information available through secondary sources, it is seen that the approximately 11 per cent of the youth in India is in higher education as compared to 20 per cent in China. The main governing body at the tertiary level is the University Grants Commission (India) which enforces its standards, advises and coordinates with the government at the centre and the state. Universities and its constituent colleges are the main institutes of higher education in India. Apart from these higher education institutes there are several private institutes in India offering professional courses in India. Distance learning is also a feature of the Indian higher education system.

### **Approving Bodies for the Implementation of Quality Education**

All universities come under the jurisdiction of the University Grants Commission (UGC), all institutions of technical education (IITs, IIMs, IISCs, IISERs, NITs, SPAs) are regulated by All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE). It is mandatory for all institutions to be recognized by the appropriate national level statutory bodies established by the Government of India for compliance to quality standards.

Department of Higher Education of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) is the highest authority in Indian Central government which is responsible for secondary and tertiary education system. More than 100 bodies having different functions and responsibilities fall under Department of Higher Education, for instance - University Grants Commission and All India Council of Technical Education, besides Central universities and reputed Institutions like IITs, IIMs, IISCs, IISERs, NITs, SPAs.

**University Grants Commission (UGC)** is a statutory organization established by an Act of Parliament in 1956 to maintain the standards of the universities and also the educational institutions. UGC also provides grants to qualifying universities and colleges with suggestive measures for both the Central and State Governments for the enhancement of Higher Education status. UGC also conducts National Eligibility Test (NET) for Lectures positions required at the Institution/College and the University level

**All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)** is a statutory body constituted under the AICTE Act, 1987 to ensure delivery of quality education through proper planning and development of the technical education system throughout the country. AICTE is responsible for the delivery of quality technical education with the standard norms and regulations to be followed by technical education system. The focus is basically on delivering research and training programmes in Engineering, Management, Science, Art, pharmacy and so on. Under the AICTE regulations, the institution providing technical education can be established only with the prior approval of AICTE. The recent Supreme Court judgment has completely turned the situation by holding that the AICTE's role with respect to technical colleges (affiliated to university) is restricted to just advisory & recommendatory and the powers of defining and maintaining the standards of technical education vest in the UGC.

**National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)**The outcome and the recommendations of the National Policy in Education (1986) have laid special emphasis on improving and maintain of quality of higher education in India. According to NAAC, Bangalore – 2013, Accreditation ensures that the education delivered in a particular stream/college is of an acceptable quality and as per the standards prescribed. In India, Accreditation in higher education has been seen as a voluntary exercise over the years. Only a small percentage of Higher Education Institutes have opted for accreditation. It is seen that out of 574 universities only 179 universities (only



31.18%) i. e, one third of the Universities had been accredited by NAAC and 395 – Universities are not accredited.

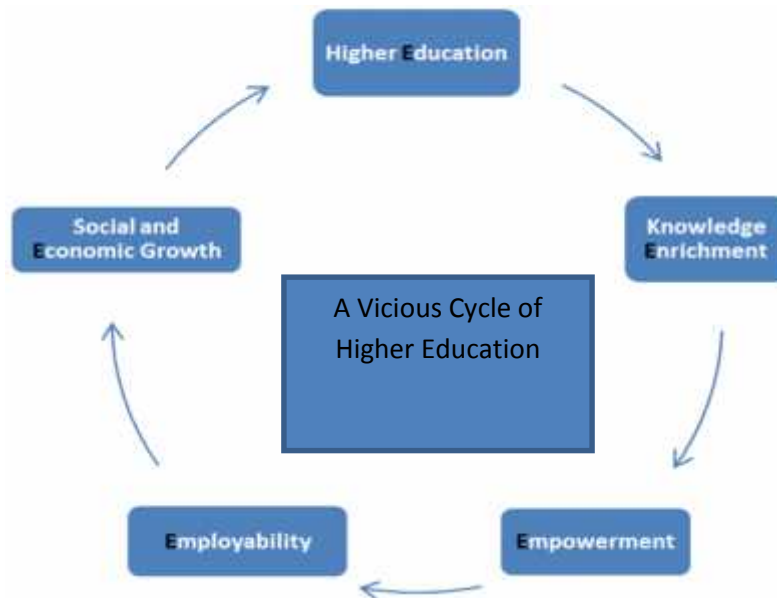
**National Board of Accreditation (NBA)** was constituted by the AICTE, as an Autonomous Body, under Section 10 (u) of the AICTE Act, 1987. The NBA periodically conducts evaluation of technical institutions or programmes on the basis of guidelines, norms and standards as specified and to make recommendations to the AICTE or to the other bodies regarding recognition or de-recognition of the institution or the programme.

### **Problem faced by the Students to take up Higher Education**

1. Based on the information available through Economic Survey of Karnataka 2013-14, The percentage of population below poverty line (2011-12) in India is seen to 21.92 (Rural – 25.7 & Urban – 13.7) and in Karnataka is 20.91 (Rural – 24.53 & Urban 15.25). As the **cost of higher education** is quite expensive the affordability of the individuals becomes very limited due to their financial status and at the same time the family constraints and the **mind-set** towards the female becomes an hindrance for an individual to proceed for higher education especially to study in international universities
2. **Lack of financial support** to take up higher education as it is expensive especially in technical and medical field and also when higher education has to be pursued abroad.
3. The Institutes and the Universities, **lack in basic infrastructure facilities** such as proper infrastructure, libraries facilities with adequate books and journals, Technological facilities, availability of laboratories and classrooms to provide quality education and research oriented activities.
4. Based on the information available through secondary sources it is seen that the student enrolments has increased 100 times between 1950-51 and 2011-12 and the number of teachers has been decreased by 40 times indicating that the student-teacher ratio has declined around 2.5 times over this period. **Availability of the quality faculty** with required skill and knowledge for the developing individually and giving practical exposure to student is limited.
5. The **availability of experienced faculties** in the majority of the Universities and Institutes/colleges is observed to be less and small in number. Faculties with less experience and exposure to the subject and the industry are in the academic field which will have impact on education quality and Research activities. Consistent growth in faculty strength is not up to the mark based on the student enrolment.
6. Research is an essential component in higher education. As per a study, India's share in R&D is 2.1% while China share is 12.5% towards spending to the total global R&D. There is lacuna in the **Research and Development (R&D) activities**, as majority of the institutions and the universities are recognized based on the research activities carried out and the outcome of the same which will benefited the society socially and economically.
7. There are many institutes and universities offering broad range of courses, where students register for the course and after their completion of the degree, the student face **placement and employment** problem as there is a huge competition locally and globally. The ratio between the available job opportunities and the students graduating is mismatching.
8. **Very few Institutes and the Universities have been accredited;** Accreditation signifies the pre prescribed standards focusing on infrastructure, facilities provided, quality of faculties' recruited, on-going R&D activities, placements and so on. National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), which is an autonomous body established by the UGC to assess and accredit institutions of higher education in the country.
9. Indian Higher Education system suffer deficiencies, as a result of this the graduates coming out will face unemployment problems, Inflexible academic structure and the eroding **autonomy of academic institutions** may lead to the diluting of the course curriculum and not sufficient skill to handle the task and lacuna to compete effectively in the global market.



**Figure: A Vicious Cycle of Higher Education through 5E's**



Source: Author

The Above figure is self-explanatory, which clearly depicts that the higher **Education** leads to knowledge **Enrichment** where there is scope for development in Research related activities this in turn **Empowers** the individual to get self-equipped and take up **Employment** or can also become an **Entrepreneur** and start up the business of his own, can create jobs for ample number of individuals leading to the improvement and growth in the Social – **Economic** status of the country. The **Vicious cycle of Higher Education through 5E's** clearly shows that the education is one of the tool which can be used in order make individual not only acquire knowledge but also at the same time proper utilization of the knowledge make an individual to be economically lead a better life style and also contributes for the country's socio-economic status.

#### **Measures and Initiatives to be taken by the Institution/Universities to encourage Higher Education**

1. The Institutes and the universities should provide adequate **infrastructure facilities** with well-equipped laboratories, libraries with sufficient books and journals, classrooms with incorporated technological equipment's such as digitalized classrooms for fast deliver of quality education and research oriented activities.
2. The Institutions and the Universities has to address the problem of the facility shortage to have a **proper balance between the faculty and the student** ratio as per the prescribed norms of the statutory bodies. There is a need for faculty with a blend of both industrial and academic experience to have a better understanding of the expectations of the challenging global market.
3. **Encouraging faculties to take up higher studies** and research oriented activities such as publishing articles, registering for Doctoral and Post-Doctoral programmes.
4. **Industry – Institute Interaction** is an essential component for any Institute/ University. The faculty exchange programme is essential to know the latest developments happening in the industry and in turn the same can be delivered to the students.
5. **Regular Revision in the Syllabus/Course Curricula** is required to meet the expectation of the industry and the students can be equipped and prepared to meet the challenges of the highly competitive world. Involvement of Industry person in the framing of the Syllabus and academics is essential.



6. **Regular conduction of programmes** such as PDP for both the Faculty and Student Development Programmes should be organized by the Institutes and the Universities to know the current trends and also for the faculty and students to meet and sustain the competitive environment.
7. Permission should be given to the Faculty and the students by the Institutes/Universities to **undertake quality oriented research studies**, consultancy and training programme, nationally and internationally to get practical exposure.
8. Creating awareness among the students about the importance of higher education and the benefits, so that the students enrol themselves for higher education. **Student exchange programmes** to carry out research projects at Institute/University level. Admission of students from foreign countries to the Indian Institutes/Universities.
9. There is a need for **adopting new teaching pedagogy** by the faculties with the help of latest technological developments which can promote quality teaching and with centre of excellence, as these new technologies - learning and teaching can be made reachable to many.
10. To be business partners and have **collaboration with the stakeholders** of other higher education for to deliver quality and value based education to meet the needs and standards of the industry and also making the students to be competitively fit.
11. The institutes and the universities have to encourage and offer **programmes and train the students** in such way that the student after graduation can take up **self-employment** to overcome the placement and employment problems. On the other hand the industries have to find and come out with new areas and avenues where these graduate students have been employed and their skill and knowledge is being effectively used. The working age population can be an asset to the country if there is higher employability.
12. The higher education institutions **may be given full autonomy to establish linkages** for both the academic and research oriented activities in India and abroad with their other industry, institutions and professional bodies with a focus and need for developing synergy between research work carried out at the Universities and their applicability in the Industry with mutual beneficial.
13. There is a need for **funding support and increase spending on R&D** for development of new technologies to deliver quality education and promote excellence. The introducing of new technologies in education have potential to change the teaching-learning paradigm such as education through satellite (EDUSAT), e-learning programmes, Distance education programmes and so on.

## Conclusion

India considered being world's third largest students enrolled for higher education followed by China and the United States with an advantage of English being the primary language of higher education and research where India takes a better stand than China. India has the world's largest pool of youngsters and the correlation between higher education and nation building is indisputable. . The Prime Minister, Mr. Manmohan Singh has said that the 21<sup>st</sup> Century will be the "knowledge century" and also affirmed the Government's that "the time has come to create a second wave of institution building and of excellence in the field of research, education and capability building so that we are better prepared for the 21st century". Knowledge is seen as a driving force and has been a distinguishing characteristic of human beings where the unique capacities of the individuals is being formulated and continuously transmit of knowledge taking place from one generation to another globally.

According to the University Grants Commission (UGC), India needs 1500 more universities with sufficient Research and Development (R&D) facilities by the end of the year 2015 in order to compete and sustain the global market. The Institutes/Universities has to create suitable environment and conditions for attracting and nurturing young talented individuals to take up R&D and give scope for knowledge enhancement to all the needy irrespective of caste and creed. The young researchers who take up faculty positions in the reputed institutions should be supported with substantial grant to undertake research, the outcome of this will show improvements both in quality and quantity reflecting in the research publications and contributing new developments.



Higher education system is become the need of the day and essential for social-economic development of the country. There is a rapid expansion in knowledge and skills giving rise to enormous scope for educational innovations and initiatives. Following traditional education system in the Indian universities may lead to rigid and it becomes difficult to change and adapt to new innovative practices. The Institutions/Universities have to be more responsive to the demands of the economy and requirements of the industry with the changing employment scenario. There is a need for quality education system, the Institutes/Universities has to recognizing the importance of requirement of quality skilled human resources at all levels, where in the Institutes and University need to build a pool of highly competitive and knowledge based human resources who are capable of sustaining competition, increase the employability rate and contribute for the social and economic growth of the country.

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