

## **"Challenges and Opportunities in Higher Education in India: A Comprehensive Study"**

**Dr. Shrutee Kanwar**

Assistant Professor

Gautam Buddha University, Greater Noida

### **Abstract**

A nation's development is influenced by a variety of elements, but one of the most important is education. It needs to change in order to meet the challenges of the present and the future. It's a great opportunity to consider the moral, ethical, and spiritual issues that humanity is currently confronting. India's economy depends on its citizens becoming more productive and educated. Because of their abilities and expertise, many Indians in the region have achieved success. If India wishes to become a significant educational hub or a prosperous economic partner on the global arena, it must invest heavily in improving the quality of its educational system, particularly its universities and the research and development they conduct. The general prosperity of India's higher education institutions is the main subject of this study. This study aims to evaluate contemporary problems in Indian higher education. According to the article's conclusion, initiatives are necessary, and they must include solutions that take into consideration the demands of a wide range of stakeholders, including students, business sector members, teachers, parents, and government officials.

**Keywords:** higher education, educational centres, educational development, strategies and solutions, quality education etc.

### **Introduction**

Expanding access to higher education must be a top priority for nations like India, which are still going through a significant demographic and economic shift. Following independence, India's higher education system grew remarkably quickly. In many different professions, Indian scientists, engineers, physicians, educators, and business executives are highly sought after. Because of the significant labour contribution and tools provided by higher education, especially technical education, India is currently among the top 10 nations in terms of its economic and technological capabilities. The era of the knowledge boom has arrived in India. Its potential is demonstrated by its achievements in the nuclear and space sectors. Spacecraft, satellites, the internet, and other products of scientific research will be introduced throughout the next few decades. Higher education provides a prism through which to view the world's most important social, cultural, moral, economic, and spiritual challenges. Increasing a country's standard of living by creating more educated inhabitants is one benefit of expanding access to higher education. India's young population will soon outnumber all others. However, there isn't a robust correlation between people and degrees. The full potential of the young working population is one benefit of the expanding youth population. However, if we fail to ensure that people have access to quality education and secure employment, we may let loose a torrent of destructive emotions onto the Indian economy. A well-educated citizenry is the key to a sustainable future. According to the Education Commission (1964–1966), "the density of a nation is shaped in its class rooms," which is a fitting metaphor for the role of education in social and economic upheaval. Assuming that human capital's radiance is the

bedrock of a self-sustaining economic activity, education builds human capital, the building blocks of economic progress.

### **Primary Education vs. Higher Education in India**

The necessity of laying a solid foundation cannot be overstated before tackling the challenges of higher education. The lack of elementary education is preventing millions of Indians from being rescued from poverty, which is the country's most important concern. A kid can enter the first grade of elementary school once they have reached the age of 5. What is meant by "primary education" goes well beyond the "basic minimum" of a classroom, books, and a teacher, and encompasses the child's daily requirements such as food, clothing, and a place in which to study and grow. The government currently provides the bare minimum for schools, including furniture, instructional materials, and textbooks and faculty. For future success in the real world, they must now also assist children in expanding their imaginations and uncovering their latent abilities. Investment in public health and elementary education is crucial if we are to provide the social mobility necessary to help individuals escape poverty. On the other hand, going to college won't fix this issue. After completing high school, sometimes known as "10+2," a student is eligible to enrol in a university. Hence, if a child is five years old and their family earns less than the federal poverty level, the child's priority should be elementary school, not secondary school. So, if the government exclusively invests in higher education, it will not improve children's status because universities are the focus of such investment. The mind of a child growing up in poverty has already been moulded by the time he or she reaches the age of 16. So, the government's investment in higher education is fruitless. That is the dissimilarity between secondary school and college.

### **Issues and Challenges of Higher Education in India**

Since gaining independence, India has struggled to build a solid educational system. Several administrations attempted to revamp the country's education system with innovative and effective measures, but their efforts were ultimately insufficient. Several obstacles persist for Indian students in the United States. The government of India understands that the modern world presents higher education with unprecedented challenges.

The UGC has stated that graduates from a wide variety of fields, including business, the humanities, natural sciences, social sciences, and the various professional fields of hospitality, tourism, agriculture, law, management, medicine, and engineering, will be expected to possess a wide variety of skills. The Indian higher education system has numerous fundamental flaws. Among these include extensive regional, income, gender, and racial disparities, a low student enrolment rate, outdated and antiquated teaching techniques, deteriorating research standards, unmotivated students, overcrowded and undersized classrooms, and a lack of infrastructure and resources. On top of worries about falling quality and inadequate resources, many private schools have been accused of taking advantage of children in outlying areas. The following are a few important aspects to be discussed with respect to

1. Compared to countries such as China and Brazil, India has a dismally low enrolment rate in higher education (18%). There is a massive supply-and-demand mismatch. The Indian

government has set agoal of 30 percent gross enrolment in higher education by 2020, which would require an additional 14million university spots to be made available in that time.

2. Insufficient infrastructure and facilities exist at several educational institutions. Several Indian collegeslack the necessary resources to effectively educate their students. Nowadays numerous privateuniversities are also providing online education. Several schools still don't provide their children withaccess to the internet and Wi-Fi.

3. Concerns have been raised about the Indian education system due to a number of factors, including ashortage of qualified teachers, the use of antiquated and ineffective teaching methods like the use ofchalkboards and blackboards, an absence of accountability and quality assurance measures, and thedivision between classroom instruction and academic research.

4. Restrictions on research exists due to a dearth of PhD students in India. There is a shortage of excellentresearchers in India. There is a paucity of early-stage research experience, a sluggish ecology forcreativity and innovation, and a lack of industrial engagement in the Indian school system.

5. Disparities in economic development and opportunities for various segments of the Indian populationand different regions is still prevalent in India. India faces a serious problem with the skewed expansionof its higher education system. More people in India are living in poverty and India is considered a "severe dual economy" by the World Bank.

6. The Indian education system places greater emphasis on theoretical knowledge than actual experience.Like with many other fields, many positions have stringent minimum percentage requirements.

7. Most professors or higher authorities are disinterested in education-related activities; thus, they rarelyget involved in governing the field. For the most part, they focus on their own development for severalreasons. Instructors still use time-honoured techniques like the chalkboard and blackboard to conveyinformation. They are not fond of incorporating multimedia presentations into classrooms due to thereason of being untrained in the specific domains. Furthermore, they are not current with the knowledgethat is available or the requirements of international business.

8. Many graduates of prestigious institutions like the Indian Institutes of Technology and the IndianInstitutes of Management look for permanent residence and employment in countries like Australia,the United States of America, Canada, and other English-speaking nations after finishing their studiethere. They hope to work for multinational corporations and eventually relocate overseas. There oughtto be firm standards in place to ensure that graduates put national service ahead of personal ambitions.

### **Suggestions for Improving Quality Education in India**

There should be varying degrees of access granted to users at universities. Time and attendance recordswill be kept accurately for both students and teachers. Admissions quotas and other forms of reservation havebeen implemented for diverse groups;however, this has had a negative impact on education quality. We haveto hire someone from the reserved group



even though he is not qualified for the job just to make quotas. The National Assessment and Accreditation Council found that 70% of universities and 90% of colleges were "of middling or poor quality," and that far over 50% of India's college teaching personnel lacked the necessary degree requirements. Neither industrialised nor developing countries have Gross Enrolment Ratios for higher education that are lower than India's alarmingly low 20%. There is a growing need for higher education, but the supply of colleges and universities is falling short. Quality in higher education is not a single, unchanging concept; rather, it is multifaceted and multi-layered. One of India's biggest challenges is preserving a culture of academic excellence in the country's institutions of higher learning. However, the focus of the administration has been and will remain on raising educational standards. Still, our educational institutions are not up to par with the best in the world, and many Indian universities fail to meet even the most fundamental requirements outlined by the University Grants Commission (UGC). There is a serious issue with the physical facilities and infrastructure of public sector institutes in India's higher education system. There are numerous colleges and universities on the higher levels, while the ground and first floors are occupied by ready-made hosiery stores and copy centres, respectively. Higher education is a priority for many stakeholders, including policymakers, businesses, academic institutions, parents, and students. Creativity and a revolutionary approach at all levels of education in India are needed to make the country's education system more competitive on the global stage. Our nation's higher education institutions need to improve in both quality and prestige. To attract new students, colleges and institutions should update their facilities. The government should facilitate partnerships between top Indian universities and top foreign institutions, as well as link national research labs with the research centres of top universities, in order to elevate the standard of education and promote interdisciplinary study.

The needs of graduate students should be prioritised by providing them with access to relevant and stimulating coursework. As a result, fewer people will feel the need to further their education and they will be more likely to find gainful employment after being recruited by an employer. Politics, favouritism, and the quest for profit have no place in higher education, regardless of whether the institution is public or private. The goal of higher education should be to broaden students' horizons, not confine them to a single discipline. Learning to learn, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to become are all distinct goals for which higher education approaches must account. In order to provide students with a more personalised learning experience, educators will need to develop new perspectives and skills. Traditional lecture-based teaching methods will need to take a back seat to more modern alternatives such as self-study, one-on-one consultations between teachers and students, and interactive seminars and workshops. It will be necessary to rely heavily on various forms of distance education. More regular and on-going assessments of students' progress towards mastery are required, and reforms away from end-of-course, end-of-year, and end-of-semester tests are required. International cooperation among universities in India helps with traditional university tasks like research, innovation in teaching, human resource development, and lifelong learning. Cooperation across national boundaries is also rising in significance.

We are witnessing an increase in the number of initiatives aimed at boosting international cooperation and action to address issues with global significance, such as the

standard of higher education, as the world's transport and communication infrastructures continue to develop. After receiving an education, it is important for people to travel to different parts of India and the world, with the help of the government, in order to learn about other people and their ways of life, as well as other cultures, arts, literature, religions, technologies, and the general advancement of human society. To ensure the highest standards in all facets of higher education, universities must undergo an academic and administrative audit every three years, conducted by outside specialists. There is a need for the colleges that rely on their own resources to pay their own way to seek accreditation and ensure that they meet all of the criteria. In order to better serve their students, universities and colleges need to acknowledge the importance of providing a high-quality education and present a strategy to do so. India's educational system should aim to be on par with the best in the world. It is possible to pursue higher education in the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, etc. at a number of different universities, both on campus and through correspondence. Just as top universities in other parts of the world are able to cater to international students by providing them with access to their programmes, so too are universities in India able to provide courses of study to those from outside of their home country. To get there, it needs to implement a curriculum that is consistent with international standards throughout all of its schools. Finally, education should foster the flourishing of individuals' personalities rather than stifling their innate talents and abilities. The opportunities available to educated persons in today's globalised society are vast. Because of the rise of BPO services, global trade has become more competitive, which has resulted in the manufacturing of higher-quality items that are more widely distributed. This is how the world can be improved so that all men can live in peace and wealth and make strides forward in civilization. Our university libraries house a wonderful assortment of literature, but they are not so organised but jumble. A library needs to be available online and provide quiet study areas. More effort should be made by Indian universities to provide education on par with that found in universities abroad.

### **Prospects of NEP 2020**

The Government of India's National Education Policy 2020 has provided a glimmer of optimism for the future of all Indian languages. Under the heading "Multilingualism and the power of language," the linguistic issues have been handled with great care. Paragraph 4.11 acknowledges that young children benefit from learning and comprehending significant concepts in their native language or mother tongue. Thus, the home language or mother tongue shall be used as the medium of instruction for as long as possible, at least through fifth grade but ideally through eighth grade and beyond. Following this, every effort will be made to ensure that the local or home language is taught as a second language. For their part, public and private institutions alike will adhere to these regulations. To put it simply, this is the new education policy's crowning success. When youngsters are at this state, their potential is at its maximum. The mother tongue, also known as the home language, vernacular language, or regional language, has been designated as the language of teaching throughout this time period. This has far-reaching repercussions and will help build our national spirit. The same language he uses to talk to his mom and others in his near vicinity also connects him to people across time and space. Thus, language provides continuity and scope without which an

overarching nationality could not be constructed; it provides tangible, emotionally significant products that the individual inherited from previous generations and can expire the longer-term ones which, within the present, link him to a widely dispersed population, most of whose members he does not and will never know personally. Throughout the first few years of a child's life, he learns the language through which he interacts with his mother, family, and environment. This has a profound effect on his cognitive growth. Significantly, Rutherford notes that "there is at least one trait that is consistent to all successful language-learning experiences we've ever known, and that is that the learner gets exposed a technique or another to an adequate amount of the information of the language to be acquired" (NEP 18).

In this age of constant connectedness and online education, it is impossible to avoid using English. He will be able to learn what he needs to in the future. The load of the system has also been placed on the shoulders of the educational policy. English is not a "typical" foreign language like Spanish, Russian, or German. Communicating in the person's own language may help alleviate some of the first hesitation, fear, and worry. The government of India has emphasised the importance of learning Sanskrit in its new Education Policy 2020. Even though it has survived in Tatsam/Prabhav and Apabhramsa, two Indian regional languages, some people still believe Sanskrit to be extinct. Sanskrit has so much to offer as a language that it should be taught to a wide audience. The Central Government has made a number of steps in the appropriate approach to ensure Sanskrit's sustained success. Sanskrit's influence on modern Indian languages is evident. Sanskrit is a source for many foreign terms. Sanskrit and other ancient languages have been given new prominence as a result of this approach, which has given the phrase "Indian Linguistic Region" new significance. Sanskrit classes will eventually be required of all students. A broader context than only Sanskrit courses at certain colleges will be considered. Connections to other modern and vital fields like mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, language, drama, yoga, and more will be woven into the Sanskrit curriculum to make it more interesting and relevant to students. It is stated that Sanskrit not only has a classical literature larger in volume than that of Latin and Greek, but also contains rich troves of knowledge in the fields of mathematics, philosophy, grammar, and music, making it an important modern language recognised in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India.

## **Conclusion**

The NEP 2020's new vision will undoubtedly bring positive changes to our education system, as these are necessary for the development of any civilization. The Indian government recognises the essential role that education policy plays in fostering the country's overall progress. Its ultimate goal is to ensure that every Indian language survives and thrives. First time ever, the interests of the Indian people were taken into account in educational policy, and the mother tongue was made the medium of instruction at the elementary level. Further, incorporating Indian languages within the educational system helps to preserve and develop them. By using everyday language in the classroom, we can revitalise dying tongues and strengthen cultural ties to the next generation. Undoubtedly, this will result in a marked improvement in the students' overall imaginative capacities. Educating children in their mother tongue is essential if India wants to leave a lasting cultural and social legacy in the



minds of the next generation. Anything done without first learning one's mother tongue is useless. Every country must have a comprehensive education policy that takes into account both historical precedent and the realities of the present moment, as well as the opportunities that lie ahead. Surprisingly, governments have neglected education following the first in 1968 and the second in 1986. All of India's languages, including Hindi, have been given a boost in status. This document upholds democratic principles of majority rule. In this age of knowledge, it is essential to invest in education, research, and innovation while maintaining the values of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'.

## REFERENCES

1. Chahal, M. (2015). *Higher Education in India: Emerging Issues, Challenges and Suggestions*. International journal of business quantitative economics and applied management research, ISSN: 2349-5677, Vol 1, (11).
2. Kelman, H. C. (2023). *Language as aid and barrier to involvement in the national system*. IJCRT2307794 International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts (IJCRT) www.ijcrt.org Vol 11(7), ISSN: 2320-2882.
3. MHRD "National Education Policy 2020", Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, New Delhi. 2020
4. Rubin, J. & Jernudd, B. (2019). *Language as aid and barrier to involvement in the national system*. In *Can language be planned? Sociolinguistic theory and practice for developing nations*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press pp. 21-50.
5. Sheikh, Y.A (2017). *Higher Education in India: Challenges and Opportunities*. Journal of Education and Practice ISSN 2222-1735, Vol.8 (1).