

BRAND 'EDUCATED IN INDIA'

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ABSTRACT

India is known for its long and venerable history in the field of higher education. In times of yore, the country was pioneer in education system and had become home to the oldest formal universities in the world. The most noticeable among these ancient universities were Takshila (now in Pakistan), Nalanda (in the modern state of Bihar) and Ujjaini (in modern Madhya Pradesh). These were famous in the prehistoric world and attracted students from all parts of India, Central Asia, China and South-east Asia. History of higher education in India had thus begun its journey quite with a bang, which had to encounter temporary obstacles in the form of outside invasion. It is significant that precisely at the same time, half-way across the globe, Oxford University was being established. The brand 'Educated in India' was strongly established during those days itself. However, the history of higher education in India witnessed stages of rapid expansion during the post-independence period. There was tremendous increase in the number of universities in the country, the number leapt from 25 in 1947 to 875 (approximately) as of 2020. The number of students enrolling for higher education has also raised from 0.1 million in 1947 to 3.74 crore students in the country.

Keywords: Education System, 'Educated in India', Brain Drain, Education Sector.

Introduction

Present Scenario of Upper Education System in India

Presently, students in their early ages itself are becoming very much focused towards their higher studies and about their career options. However, the burning issue confronting the students and their parents is that, does the country is equipped with the necessary potential to fulfil our children's dreams or our children need to go to some foreign country to make their dreams come true. After extensive research on this issue, it is indeed reassuring to know that "Our future lies in safe hands".

During the last few years, universities have increased manifold and colleges have mushroomed all over our country to impart higher education. However whether just the availability of educational institutes means do we have a robust higher education system? In this scenario, a conflicting picture arises from the words of our Ex- Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh words, "Our university system is, in many parts, in a state of disrepair. In almost half the districts higher education enrolment are abysmally low. Almost two third of our universities and 90% of colleges are rated below average in quality parameters..."

Unfortunately, we are lacking hugely in terms of quality output from our higher education institutes. This can be confirmed from the fact that barring exception of few institutes mentioned above very little world class research gets published from other institutes, very few new innovations comes from Indian soil.

There are no Nobel prizes awarded to Indian Scientist who has exclusively worked in India and published his research from Indian soil. This is not true for Indians living abroad, so the talent is there but drive to achieve the results from this talent is not there. This has sadly led to a massive "brain drain"

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Internationalization of Higher Education System to Create Brand 'Educated in India'

There is a huge opportunity for foreign institutions to set up campuses in India. Foreign universities along with good quality Indian institutions can attract students and promote India as a hub in Asia for quality higher education and thus increase India's export of education services.

Global trade in higher education is a growing sector. We have a number of strengths including cost advantage and good number of English speaking professionals. Our geographical location makes India a viable destination for Asian students. There is at present no legal and regulatory framework to allow foreign universities to set up campuses in India.

Hence, the commerce ministry wants the department of higher education under the HRD ministry to ensure "early passage" of the foreign institutions bill, albeit with a few changes. However, the thrust of the present bill (UPA bill) appears to be regulation of malpractices rather than encouraging foreign universities which present HRD ministry wants.

Initiatives to be Taken for Building a Brand 'Educated in India'

- **Revamp the education sector to create it as a research-oriented**

The standards and quality of higher education in the country need to be improvised at a faster rate. The entire education sector in the country need to be totally revamped and need to make it vibrant and research-oriented. The educational eco system to be structured in a way that people from all over the world should feel privileged to be a part this system and should always desire to acquire knowledge in this system.

The 'Knowledge temper' among the desiring students can be effectively evolved by the universities and other institutes of higher education. The initiatives have to be taken at the early stages itself i.e, from the primary school levels. Since, the talent among the aspiring students will exposed only when the craving within them gets intensified. Thus, there is an immediate need to create children friendly schools by making them attractive and irresistible for the children and for their parents too. The solutions for the burning issues is student friendly education eco-systems followed by reforms in the policies.

- **Develop Skills in Youths to make them Employable**

The employment avenues among the youths can be increased by improvising and providing skill based education at the primary, higher and tertiary levels in the country. The overall quality of education and education system need to be upgraded.

At present there are approximately 700 universities (including 48 central universities), 16 IITs, 30 NIITs and around 36,000 degree colleges in our country. Approximately 2 crore students participate in informal and tertiary education. Though the figures are very promising but hard to believe that none of the institutions in our country have been ranked as the best among the 200s by the international education rating agencies.

- **Expand Education Infrastructure to Create Employment Opportunity for Youth**

Whilst Europe and China will have an ageing population, India is privileged in this matter as more than 50% of its population comprise of working population meaning people between the age of 25 to 45. And if this population is not efficiently utilized, rather than becoming an asset for the country it can become a liability. They can be converted into dividend if proper skill based training are imparted to them at the right times. However, the standards among our educational systems are very poor, and there is an urgent need to upgrade the standards and enable them to be ranked as one among the best in the world.

Hence, a plan has been developed by the HRD ministry to impart skill development training to more than 50 crore population by 2022 so that they find jobs both inside and outside India, this has to be implemented at the earliest.

- **Higher Education Authority should have Powers to Derecognize Institute**

The National Higher Education Authority should be made powerful and should be authorize to penalise the institutes which are not up to the standards determined. A new statutory agency need to be established under three boards vested with different responsibilities, although working independently but in coordination with one another. As such the statutory agency to be comprised of a regulatory board to look after academics, research and regulatory functions, a financial assistance board for framing policies and regulations for allocation and authorized for distribution of funds, and a higher education councils coordination board to disseminate functions of various councils of higher studies.

- **Replacing UGC with New Statutory Agency**

A panel set up to evaluate UGC's performance has suggested replacing the body altogether with a new statutory agency enjoying wide ranging and quasi-judicial powers on setting standards in higher education.

- **Create Quality Education Infra to Grab Futuristic Jobs**

A perfect match between the supply with demand need to be created. This means employment opportunities can be better met if the students are academically qualified and skilfully trained. As such our universities and institutions of higher studies should imbibe the cutting edges and predict the employment generation arenas in the near future, accordingly, the students should be prepared in this regard. As per the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), a survey undertaken revealed that overall standard of our education system is far below the global standards. Another very important outcome the survey indicated that the learning levels in India, among the schools may be public or private ones, are not very promising.

Recommendations for building the brand 'Educated in India'

A policy framework for the competitive supply of education by non-government organizations needs the subsequent elements:

- **Rating Agencies**

The University Grants Commission (UGC), All India Council for Technical Education, National Accreditation Council, Medical Council of India and professional councils will register or license rating agencies in their area of authority or expertise. Alternatively, a totally new organisation can be founded for the aim of accrediting and monitoring rating agencies.

Some of these rating agencies will specialize in specific subjects, but others could cover multiple topics or broad areas. These agencies would devise a system for rating the standard of educational institutions and offer their services to any or all education service providers, both private and public.

- **Private Entry**

Free entry of registered societies (non-profit) and publicly-listed companies' altogether fields of education should be subject to the subsequent conditions:

- **Quality Rating:** Compulsory rating by accredited agency before accepting any fees from students. Ratings must be renewed each year a minimum of for the primary 3-5 years. Periodicity of compulsory rating is reduced thereafter.
- **Transparent Fees and Accounts:** Fees must be published and known earlier. Accounts must be audited and results made public if revenues/fees received exceed Rs 10 lakh. Unaudited institutions must publish their basic accounts (revenues, expenditure, profits, capital investment, number of scholars, and average fee per student) in a much prescribed format.

- **Subsidy Accounting:**

Any education society that gets below market price land or other assistance must give means-merit-cum scholarships to the needy students equal in value to the effective subsidy.

- **Government Grants and Scholarships**

An impartial system for determining what would be a good and affordable contribution of parents to children's education depending on their family income need to be established. This method would also enable to calculate the eligibility for education loans and grants.

Such an integrated system may be modelled on the government-run online system that exists within the US, but modified to suit Indian circumstances.

The system would make sure that students from the poor and lower middle-classes get the grants and also the loans. However, the middle-classes have to coach youngsters to the extent of their capabilities and interest.

- **Removal/Minimization of Controls and Restrictions**

Specifications of particular infrastructure and number of teachers etc would be redundant, as rating agencies would evaluate institutions supported output, peer evaluation and other relevant aspects.

- **Gradual Reforms**

Such reforms might be phased in gradually if political and administrative risk-aversion make it necessary. We could start with tertiary education and reach educational activity within three years, and to primary education thereafter. We could also start by freeing entry of non-profit organisations (domestic and foreign) registered under the Societies Act, trusts and cooperatives, and follow it up with the entry for registered education companies within three years.

We could immediately allow free entry of 'A' grade global universities (the top 500-1,000 colleges which are identified by various agencies) into India. A 100% ownership of the local unit by the international university would ensure 100% commitment to quality, because it would love to take care of its brand equity.

'B' grade global universities would need to register and find local grading just like the domestic ones. The entry of C grade global institutions should require prior approval and tight regulation.

The availability and quality of education in India will be transformed by introducing modern regulations and promoting competition.

This requires an objective scoring system and therefore the entry of highly-rated educational institutions. The government can then target those areas that only it can do best.

Conclusion

Lakhs of scholars go abroad to study every year, many of whose guardians sell assets or incur debts to meet the expensive costs of living. Outdated ideology prevents us from reforming the system to offer better education facilities at a fraction of the value incurred abroad. The jungle of laws and procedures puts a pall of gloom over every economic activity, including the knowledge industry. The main focus must, therefore, expand from 'Ease of Doing Business' to 'Ease of Educating' in India.

In conclusion education means integrated development of personality which should be imparted through head, hand and heart. Rabindranath Tagore rightly said, "The teaching is that which doesn't merely give us information, but makes life harmonized with all existence".

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