Assessing the Perception of the Current System of Higher Education in India among College Students

Sentsuthung Odyuo

Research Scholar, Department of Sociology & Social Work,
Christ University, Bengaluru, Karnataka

Abstract

India's higher education system is one of the world's largest in terms of the student population. The Higher Education sector in India has witnessed a tremendous increase in the number of Universities/University level Institutions & College's post-independence. However, there are issues that are hindering the system to be qualified as a top-notch globally. This paper examines the perception of Higher Education in India among college students with an aim to examine the extent of disparity in the system, to understand the required standard of higher education and to recommend changes that may arise in the process associated for improvement of higher education in India. The study was undertaken with an online survey by collecting data from different researcher scholars and postgraduate students with different specialisation, gender and age groups enrolled in the university. The findings from the study demonstrate the subjective interpretation of higher education from the narrative of the participants.

Keywords: Higher Education, Perception, University, Survey, Recommendation.

I . INTRODUCTION

Higher education in India is in a very miserable condition. Even after 62 years of independence, higher education is not accessible to all classes of people. Looking at the stance of growth in the education system, the driving factor that is shaping the progress of higher education is very minimal, the state of India even though has a remarkable history of progressive education it could not meet the required standard, and one good reason is the failure to secure a good spot in the global university ranking. The reason is plenty, there is a lack of transparency in the system, the policies are not far-reaching, there is no proper supervision in inclusivity and the curriculum does not meet the standard for transformative progress. India as a developing country with a high rate of illiteracy and some other social problems is not limited to capital and other resources alone, there is a huge range of diversities, but to build an authentic space it needs

solid supervision. Students need to be facilitated on the wide spectrum of availability in the market and not just confinement to a certain amount of space.

Education has the potential to contribute to the development of economic growth, improving the Quality of life and to have a positive sustainable life, education should not be something that is just about degree hunting rather than learning for learning's sake or for adorning one's mind to carve out a niche for himself in life or for leading a socially relevant life of a citizen conscious of his rights and duties, being the end in India (Mathur,1992).

The system of higher education in any society is deeply involved in the creation and dissemination of knowledge as well as developing among its students the skills necessary for its acquisition and utilisation. As knowledge has become a critical factor in determining the prospects of society, it has assumed more importance than ever before

(Bhoite,2009). The overview of the development pace of India in the last two decades can be attributed to the higher education framework. In the event that India needs a more prominent development, it must transform its universities and other higher specialized educational establishments to world-class institutions, the system must be reformed to safeguard the interests of the researchers, besides providing a platform for research and ensuring quality education. The report provided from the Ministry of Human Resource Development (2019) states that Higher education in India is constituted by five groups of institutions: Central, State, Deemed, Institutions of National Importance and State private universities and as per the report of UGC, there are more than hundreds of such institutions. PWC report (2012), India has a federal set-up and the Indian constitution places education as a concurrent responsibility of both the center and state. While the centre coordinates and fixed standards in higher and technical education, school education is the responsibility of the state

II.OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To examine the perception of higher education in India

To understand the extent of disparity in the system

To understand the required standard of higher education

To recommend changes that may arise in the process

III. METHODOLOGY

The study is based on the quantitative method of study. A self-constructed questionnaire was prepared as part of the tool for the data collection, around 20 questions were prepared which had more close-ended questions, it was prepared and circulated through a google form. A simple random sampling technique was used to gather data from the respondents. Out of 200(or more) researcher scholars enrolled at Christ University, few researchers from different specializations were chosen as samples to gather data and few Postgraduate students from the same university. For analysis, descriptive statistics through frequency analysis and a costume table was formulated to input certain data using SPSS software.

Figure1: Demographic representation of the respondents'

Based on the above representation (table 1), the demographic details of the respondents were formulated and carried through the process of examining gender, educational qualification, and specialization. All together scholars from 15 different specializations gave their responses with 10 men and 15 women.

IV. INTERPRETATION & ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The data was segregated into different tables and figures based on the similarity of the questions, most of the questions revolve around the stakeholders' perception of the present education system of India.

Table 1: Showing perception of respondents about general overview related to higher education.

		Yes	No	Maybe	Other
Do you think there is diversity in the higher education system in India?	Count	8	7	10	0
	Row N %	32.0%	28.0%	40.0%	0.0%
Do you think language barrier plays a vital factor in suppressing quality education?	Count	17	0	8	0
	Row N %	68.0%	0.0%	32.0%	0.0%

Row N% represents the total percentage

The first set of tables inquired about the perception of the general understanding of higher education, a question on the significance of diversity and if that is prevalent in the system was asked. A blog written on diversity in the educational system (IMPORTANCE OF STUDENT DIVERSITY IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS,2019.)states that Race, colour, ethnicity, gender, cultural-political-religious affiliations, nationality, language, social & economic backgrounds, mental & physical abilities – everything adds up to student diversity in a college/university. Based on the table shown above, 32% think that there is diversity in the

system, wherein 28% differ with the opinion, the majority (40%) aren't quite sure of the prevalence, the reason could be because they were not aware of the need for the diversity. The other question was based on the language barrier in the education system, keeping in mind that language plays a significant role, it was taken into account for further understanding. The Majority (68%) share their view that language barriers hinder the quality of education, and the rest weren't sure. Schenkman(1954), related to both politics and education is the language problem. No other problem has caused greater controversy among educationists in the past or in the present.

Table 2: Showing the perception of the respondent to understand the development of higher education.

		Agree	Strongly agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Other
Privatization of educational institutions is necessary for the development of higher education?	Count	11	1	10	2	1
	Row N %	44.0%	4.0%	40.0%	8.0%	4.0%
Democratic dissent among the student community is crucial for transforming college/universities?	Count	21	3	1	0	0
	Row N %	84.0%	12.0%	4.0%	0.0%	0.0%

From the given table, the two questions were based on the most heated argument at the recent time in educational institutions, it is to understand the significance it carries for transforming the system, the question whether privatization is necessary for the development of higher education was sought, there was a similar distribution in the response 48%(agree/strongly agree), and 48%(disagree/strongly disagree), and a handful

4%(single respondent) gave the answer as other. The other question was based on the ever-debated theme of whether democratic dissent should be allowed in institutions, the question was framed in such a way that the respondent will reveal their understanding whether it is crucial for transforming institutions, majority believes that it is important, only 4% voted for disagreement.

Table 3: Level-1 Showing the perception of the respondents to understand the changes required in the system.

		Yes	No	Maybe	Other
Do you think the institutional framework of higher education of India needs some ratification in the system?	Count	19	0	6	0

	Row N %	76.0%	0.0%	24.0%	0.0%
Do you think Foreign Education policy needs to be implemented for better service and monitoring of the education system?	Count	16	0	9	0
	Row N %	64.0%	0.0%	36.0%	0.0%
Do you think the ideal student-teacher ratio plays an important factor for quality education?	Count	18	0	7	0
	Row N %	72.0%	0.0%	28.0%	0.0%
Do you think the present government is doing enough to improve the education system of India?	Count	2	17	6	0
	Row N %	8.0%	68.0%	24.0%	0.0%
Do you think establishing accreditation agencies for ranking universities enhance the standards and quality of higher education?	Count	15	2	8	0
	Row N %	60.0%	8.0%	32.0%	0.0%

The above table was framed to understand the perception of the respondents if there are rectifications that are needed at the present education system of India, the question was prepared to have a pointed/direct answer (Yes/No/Maybe) for the questions. 76% of the respondent affirmed that Institutional framework

of higher education should be ratified, the larger population are of the view that the current system does not have the credibility to substantiate the growth and the development of the educational system in India. An intervention-based question was also framed to understand the perception of the respondent, the first question was to inquire if

the implementation of foreign education policy will have better services and monitoring, 64 % responded positively and the remaining “maybe”. Another question was asked if establishing accreditation agencies may enhance the quality of the system, 60% responded that it is necessary, 8% for a No and the remaining 32% could not decide. Studies reveal that it is necessary to have a proportioned student-teacher ratio, a similar question related to the study was asked if the ideal student-teacher ratio plays an important factor for

quality education, 72% responded that it is necessary. The last question was to state their opinion if the present Government is doing enough to improve the education system, interestingly the highest negative answer from table 3 was garnered from this question wherein 68% responded that the government are not doing enough to improve the system, 24% stayed in the middle ground and the last few remaining 8% voted in support of the government.

Table 4: Level-2 Showing the perception of the respondents to understand the changes required in the system.

		Agree	Strongly agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Other
Inculcation of humanistic value to the students will improve the education system.	Count	6	14	5	0	0
	Row N %	24.0%	56.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
New technologies play an important factor in improving higher education efficiency and productivity.	Count	15	10	0	0	0
	Row N %	60.0%	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
The policy of foreign exchange students in college/universities enhance the growth of education.	Count	20	5	0	0	0
	Row N %	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
For transforming the education system progressive curriculum is a must.	Count	16	8	0	0	1

	Row N %	64.0%	32.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.0%
Quality education is indispensable for social, economic and cultural transformation?	Count	18	7	0	0	0
	Row N %	72.0%	28.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

The above table 4 has been prepared with a similar question related to table 3, the respondents were asked if inculcation of humanistic value will improve the system, 100% agreed to the statement, 24% simply agreed wherein 74% strongly agreed. Another 100% agreement culminated, the question if quality education is indispensable for various purposes, 72% agreed while 28% strongly agreed. From the above table, it can be classified that the majority of the respondents agreed to the fact that the policy of foreign exchange will enhance the growth of education, the respondents also agreed (majority) that systematic progressive curriculum and implementation of new technologies will transform the education system.

Respondent's rate on the education system

Estimation:

- **0 - 2: Very Poor**
- **3 - 4: Poor**
- **5 - 6: Average**
- **6 - 7: Good**
- **8 and above: Very good**

The above estimation shows the rating of the respondent's view on the present education system, they were asked to rate (0-10) based on their preference the present education system of India, as indicated the scale in numerical representation, there was not a single respondent who gave a point that is 8 and above neither 1 or 0, 5 points (average) was recorded the highest with 32%, followed by 6 points (good) with 24%, the lowest points recorded is 2 and 3 with 4% each.

The overall performance, based on the above score can be justified that it has an average performance, not too good nor too poor. The respondents were also asked to evaluate the current situation if they think the present-day scenario of Higher education in India meets the required standard of quality education, 56% of the respondent voted that it does not meet the required standard, which is above average, 24% of the respondent could not decide and the rest 20% voted that it does meet the required standard, which is below average.

V. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the result that was gathered through the perception of the stakeholders, it can be concluded that the whole spectrum of understanding the present-day scenario of higher education in India has a wide range of variables to be taken into account. It can be noted that the Government has partially failed to address the transformative innovation in designing educational policies in India, there are several factors that need to be addressed without further delay. It is important to have diversity in institutions, some of the top universities in the world have a high percentage of diversity in the framework, but that is something which has been lacking in the Indian education system, the study revealed that there is an absolute dearth of diversity in universities operating at various levels.

Concept of privatising educational institutions

Another factor that paves the way in the process of transforming higher education is the concept of

privatising educational institutions, there has been a lot of successive debates on this regard, India still being a developing country with poverty creeping its end, it will be difficult for all the population to be enrolled in an institution that has high fee structures, the status from the research shows that there is an undivided explanation when it comes to this issue, half of the respondent could not agree with the fact that it should be privatized, for some the other way round. For the purpose of the study, it will be assumed that privatization of institutions may or may not have any consequences in the growth of higher education.

Fostering democratic dissent in educational institutions.

Another promising revelation is the understanding that having a democratic dissent in educational institutions will equip the education system in a progressive manner, having looked at some of the universities in India, most of the institutions do not allow such acts because of the belief system that it may hamper the atmosphere of the college/university. However, the study revealed otherwise, more than 90% of the respondents agreed to the fact that having a democratic dissent in educational institutions may actually transform the education system, this could be another pathway for progress in the growth of the education system in India. The study also shows that Inculcation of humanistic value to the students will improve the education system and having that quality education will further contribute to social, economic and cultural transformation. The research also revealed that a systematic progressive curriculum and an appropriate teacher-student ratio will have a greater impact on the growth of education.

Suggestive Intervention: Feedback from the respondents

To seek and understand the perception of Higher Education in India, the participants also gave a vivid description and suggestive methods of how they think it will enhance and improve the system.

“There is a need for Overall changes in the education system”.

“Review education policies, encourage leaders to solve this crisis”.

“There should be a sufficient fund allocation for research in varied interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research”.

“Researchers in different fields need to rise and seek for better implementation of educational policies”.

“Make learning to apply and relate to our real lives rather simply making it more complex in theories”.

“Higher Education in India is being concentrated by rote learning, lack of employability and skill development due to the low quality of education. If we update the system, Indian universities can make it to the top”.

“The Indian education system needs to change and adapt as per global education standards and strive towards equity and real means of quality education”.

“Lack of Infrastructure is a big challenge to higher education in India, therefore this should be a priority”.

“I honestly have no idea. There's so much wrong with it, that I don't even know where to begin making a list. I don't have any radical or workable ideas on how to change things either. I just hope that the government and people notice that there is something wrong and work to rectify it. God help the students in the meantime”.

VI. CONCLUSION

Although the Government of India has been able to improve some of the required standards of educational development in reference to adequate

infrastructural facilities in government, central or state universities and in promotion of women education, some of the policies need to be rectified, the government should also emphasis on collaboration with foreign-related policies and be able to cope up with the modern trend of technologies because the later has become an ideal tool in the recent development for education. Sharma (2005), in order to strengthen national intelligence, to increase contacts with the scientific and intellectual community of the world, and to increase capabilities and upgrade knowledge for further development, our country has no option but to strengthen its higher education system. The study revealed that it does not meet the required standard for a progressive and quality education, with only a handful of positive remarks made by the respondents it does not evoke substantial requirement to meet the criteria in many factors, these could also be the reason why India could not feature in the top 200 global rankings. A possibility may evolve in the future if the statistics in the study are carefully studied and with the implementation of all the required policies and standards. (Mukherjee, 2019), if India now does the things now required to be done and transforms its higher education sector, it would be equivalent to a major social revolution. The rest of the 21st century could then belong to India

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About the author

The author is a postgraduate holder from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai and currently undergoing research at Christ University, Bengaluru in the department of sociology and Social work. His area of interest includes varied themes related to interdisciplinary studies mostly areas related to gender, education and tribal studies.