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**DESIGNING EFFECTIVE HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY IN INDIA: CHALLENGES
AND OPPORTUNITIES**

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Abstract

Purpose – In the twenty first century, higher education is a powerful tool in socio-economic development and overall progress of the country. The goal number 4 of Sustainable Development Goals on education clearly highlighted to ensure the quality of education, inclusive education and equal opportunities for all by 2030. India is the third largest educational hub next to China and United States in connection with number of students and educational institutions. However, despite the growing number of educational institutions, international rating agencies have not placed the Indian universities amongst top 150 universities in the world ranking. The research question arises; How far the education policies designed by the various governments in defining and implementing for inclusive growth in the educational sector? What kind of challenges are facing in the higher education system of India? How Indian universities can be transformed as a world class educational institution? The present study aims to highlight the key challenges, point out the opportunities in higher education and to create the Indian universities as world class higher educational institutions across the country.

Key Words-Education Policy, Higher Education, Indian University, Sustainable Development, World Ranking.

Introduction

Education has been envisaged as a precursor not only to national development but also a better quality of life. It is essential not only from the economic point of view but for human development which is crucial for each individual. More than seven decades after independence, a large part of population are not able to enjoy equal access to education especially higher education. Inclusive education is a process of inclusive development in the education system to reach out to all learners to achieve education for all. To ensure better inputs to the system, the Government of India has taken initiatives to constitute commissions and committees for re-structure the education policies from time to time. A large number of universities and institutions have been established for higher learning. Despite the growing number of educational institutions, international rating agencies have not placed the Indian universities amongst top 150 universities in the QS World University Ranking (2019).

The first National Education Policy adopted in 1968 has emphasized the need for radical reconstruction of the education policies, improvement of quality of education at all levels, inculcation of scientific temper and focus on moral values. The National Policy of Education formulated in the year 1986 had stipulated revision of policy in every five years. The latest in the series of education policies include revised National Education Policy and Programme of Action in 1992. As a matter of fact, it is to be noted that the Union Human Resource Ministry has formulated 'Draft National Education Policy, 2019' to keep pace with various development in all stages of education.

Review of Literature

Howlett (2019) in his study has focused on several aspects of formulation and implementation of public policies in governance systems. He has examined the various tools, mechanism and instruments to resolve the policy problems. In public policy formulation process, he has stressed the need to consider logic of policy design and principles behind the selection of policy.

Stewart (2012) has focused that United States was the world leader in education in 20th century.

Now, the other countries around the world have learned from United States and performing better result in education excellence of higher education. The author has designed to promote for better education to the students in rapidly changing globalized and innovative-based world.

The Ministry of Human Development has framed revised Draft National Education Policy (2019) to overcome the challenges facing on education sector in India. The policy has highlighted on quality of education and equal opportunity for all from pre-school to higher education. According to the HRD Ministry, the draft national education policy will meet the present need to improve the quality of education, research, innovation and the lack of manpower in education system in India.

Objectives of Study

1. To study the education polices formulated by the governments for development of Indian education system.
2. To examine the challenges facing in higher education system for designing and implementation of higher education policy.
3. To suggest remedial measures to develop the higher education system and to create Indian Universities as world class higher educational institutions.

Research Methodology

The study mainly descriptive in nature. The analysis is based on secondary sources from national and international literature. Secondary data has also collected from books, websites, various surveys, research papers, articles, journals. Further, due to lack of primary data, the study is mainly depends on secondary data. Hence, the accuracy of the analysis depends upon the accuracy of the data reported by secondary sources.

Role of Designing Policy in Public Policy-Making Process

Public policy is significant component of any political system. It plays an important role in resolving societal problems. Polices are primarily framed by the government to satisfy public needs and demands. The well-planned policies is to shape the society in achieving socio- economic development and maintaining national unity and integrity.

Policy design is mainly based on policy formulation through collection and application of knowledge to the development and implementation of policies to achieve policy goals. In designing public policy effectiveness serves as basic goals, which can build other goals as effectiveness or equity (Peters et al., 2018). However, mainly due to many uncertainties policy makers face in designing polices which can attain their goals not only in the present but also into the future. Thus, designing pubic policy is a complex process in practice for various reasons due to lack of resources, the existence of corrupt and inefficient bureaucrats and other policy actors, improper goals and poor implementation and evaluation. Transforming policy ambitions into practice is a critical problem because of high degree of uncertainty in policy-making process (Howlett, 2019a). Hence, formulation of successful policies depends upon to overcome technical and political problems and need adequate resources (Hiller & Leaman, 1974). In recent years, the policy-making environment is changing rapidly and not confined in single purposes such as health, education and civil society, but now it is concerned at all levels in public administration and multiple sectors (Angelides & Caiden, 1994). Hence, the policy science has emerged as a significant area of study to address the public issues. However, its nature and character is primarily from western, especially American. Developing countries have a different socio- economic and political environment.

Development and Growth of Education Policy in India

The educational scenario in the last few decades is highly influenced by the impact of globalization. Education is a state subject. However, as a result of 76th constitutional amendment it has become joint responsibility both the Centre and the State Governments. Now, the subject education is under concurrent list and the central government can legislate in the field of education in certain areas. After independence, a large number of educational institutions for higher learning have

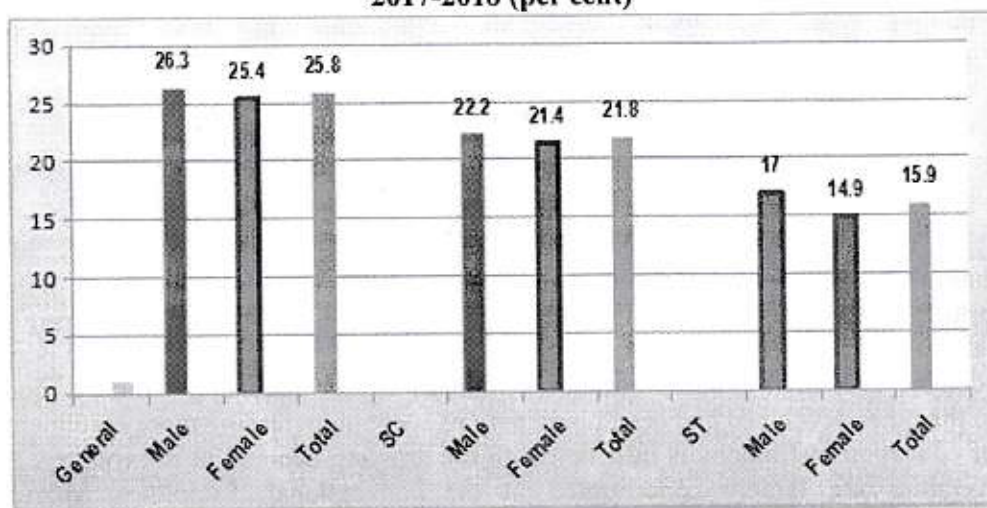
been established and several commissions and committees have been established for development of educational system and its proper implementations of education policy across the country. Radhakrishnan Commission was the first major commission established in 1949 primarily to suggest reforms in higher education. Though, the National Policy of Education 1968 was introduced with positive attitude but many of its recommendations could not fully implemented due to several reasons like lack of funds and improper programme of action for implementation. The National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 was formulated with a view to prepare students for the 21st century to face the challenges associated with global development, emerging technologies and cross-cultural complexities. For the first time, to ensure proper implementation of NPE 1986, the policy makers laid emphasis on the development of a detailed Programme of Action to facilitate implementation of recommendation of the policy in a time-bound manner.

It is noteworthy that National Policy of Education 1986 is based on important recommendations from Kothari Commission 1966. Thus, the main recommendations such as equal educational opportunities for all, social justice, and development has remained as the backbone of the NPE 1986 and revised 1992 policy as well. The Twelfth five year plan has also focused on equal opportunities and quality of higher education. Recently, the Human Resource Development Ministry has framed Draft National Education Policy 2019, to meet the demands among public for improving the quality of education, research and innovation to make India a knowledge superpower.

Challenges in Higher Education in India: Analysis, Discussions and Results

Since independence, a number of important committees, commissions and education policies have been framed by the Indian policy makers in the process of nation-building. However, higher education is facing a number of challenges. The University Grant Commission has stressed the need to improve the quality of higher education and eliminate regional and social inequality in the eleventh five year plan. The provision was kept to open 16 central and 374 model colleges in low GER districts. In spite of expansion of higher educational institutions, there are inequalities in GER among different categories. The enrolment of girl students at higher education is low as compared to boys and the gaps are visible across social categories placed as shown as figure no. 1.

Figure No. 1: Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) at Higher Education level in different Categories 2017-2018 (per cent)



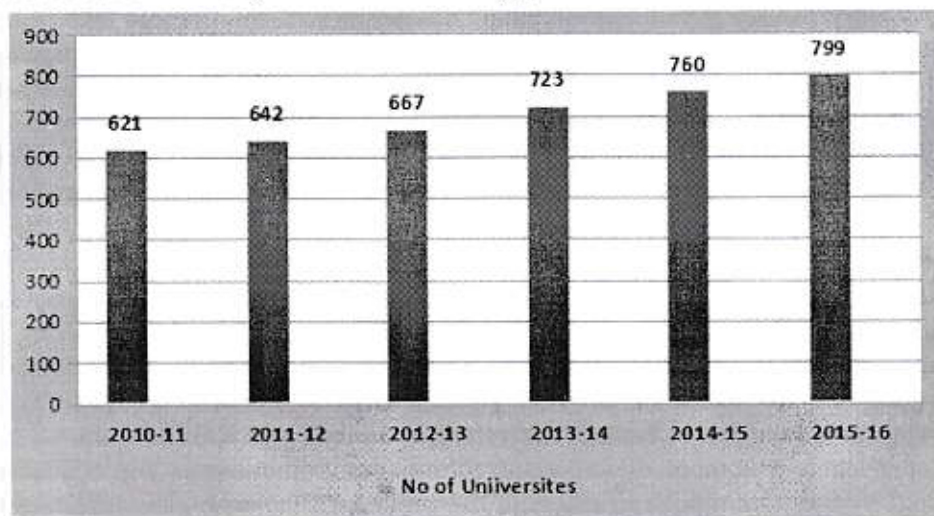
Source: Economic Survey 2018-2019 (Vol.2)

It is evident from figure no.1 that total GER in general category calculated as 25.8% whereas male student enrolment rate (26.3%) is higher as compared to girl students (25.4%). This trends is also visible in category-wise distribution, where GER of girl students is also low in Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribe i.e. 21.4% and 14.9% respectively in 2017-18. Hence, with the increasing more number of girl students at school level, educational inequality in higher education will be removed from country.

Further, in colonial period there were serious inequalities in higher education system. Higher

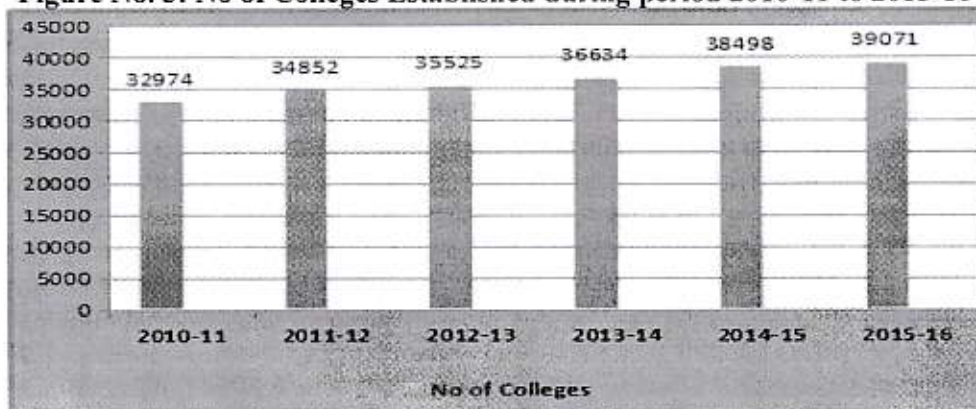
education was concentrated mostly in urban areas and belongs to the upper castes. It was very difficult to find a rural schedule caste or schedule tribe women who is studying in a college. After independence, the number of universities and colleges have increased but they are unable to accommodate all students those passing out from secondary schools. As per AISHE (2016-17) report, the number of university has increased from 621 to 799 and colleges from 32974 to 39071 during the period 2010-11 to 2015-16 are placed in figure no.2 and 3.

Figure No. 2: No of University Established during period 2010-11 to 2015-16



Source: Source: All India Survey on Higher Education (2016-17)

Figure No. 3: No of Colleges Established during period 2010-11 to 2015-16



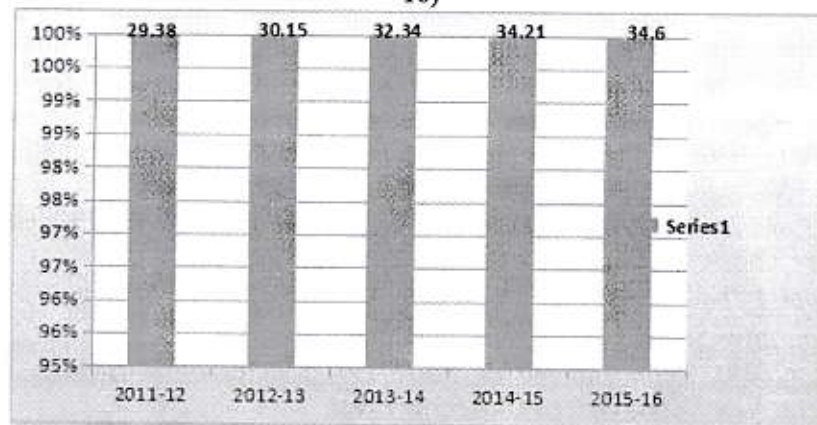
India has always been a land of scholars and learners. In ancient times, India was highlighted all over the world for the universities - Taxila, Nalanda, Vikramshila and its scholars. During the British period, the development of education was concentrated to fulfill the needs of colonial powers. After independence, the growth in student enrolment ratio of higher education which is quite low as compared to the other developed and developing nations without increasing more enrolment at school level, higher education institutions is insufficient to the growing demand in the country. At present, public universities are largely concentrated in the conventional disciplines whereas private universities the student enrolment is overwhelmingly in the market-driven disciplines. The total number of students enrolled in various courses in universities and colleges from 2011-12 to 2015-16 as shown in table no.1 and figure no. 4.

Table No.1: Number of Students Enrolled in Different Courses of Higher Education from 2011-12 to 2015-16

| Year | Ph.D | M.Phil | Post Graduate | Under Graduate | PG Diploma | Diploma | Certificate | Integrated | Total |
|-------|------|--------|---------------|----------------|------------|---------|-------------|------------|----------|
| 2011- | 8143 | 3415 | 336719 | 23174950 | 19615 | 207160 | 1847 | 7412 | 29184331 |

| | 12 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 9 | 9 | 17 | 2 | |
|---------|--------|-------|----------|----------|--------|---------|--------|--------|----------|
| 2012-13 | 95425 | 30374 | 3448151 | 23890309 | 194072 | 2207551 | 191871 | 94664 | 30152417 |
| 2013-14 | 107890 | 31380 | 38222192 | 25500325 | 276502 | 2285576 | 187340 | 125002 | 32336234 |
| 2014-15 | 117301 | 33371 | 3853438 | 27172346 | 215372 | 2507694 | 170245 | 141870 | 34211637 |
| 2015-16 | 126451 | 42523 | 3917156 | 27420450 | 229559 | 2549160 | 144060 | 155422 | 34584781 |
| CAGR | | 4.5 | 3.1 | 3.4 | 3.2 | 4.2 | -4.9 | 16.5 | 3.5 |

Figure No.4: Number of Students Enrolled in Various Courses of Higher Education (2011-12 to 2015-16)



Source: All India Survey on Higher Education (2016-17)

Table no.1 and figure no.4 shows that the enrolment rate in different courses have not grown significantly during the five years as per expectation. The growth of student has increased from 2,91,84,331 in 2011-12 to 3,45,84,781 in 2015-16. The Compound Annual Growth Rate calculated as 3.5 during 5 years but in integrated courses, the CAGR is 16.5 as shown in table no.1.

Poor infrastructure is another big challenge to the higher educational system in India. In rural areas, there is lack of good colleges and schools for the students. Most of the colleges and universities have insufficient in basic infrastructures like furniture, teachers, library and hostel facilities. It is commonly visible that students are dropping out after primary schools due to inadequate secondary and higher educational institutions. It is generally found that the drop-out rate is very high for male students due to financial constraints and lack of interest in education. According to Economic Survey, the transition rate from secondary school to senior secondary and further to higher education is also very low (Economic Survey, 2018-19).

Recommendations for Re-designing Higher Education Policy in India

In the globalizing era, the higher education in India is at crossroads. Hence, there is an urgent need for proper mapping of higher educational institutions wherein the far-flung and remote areas are given due consideration for establishing sponsored institutions/programmes. Efforts should be made to establish more institutions of higher learning to seek autonomy and accreditation in order to promote innovations in terms of offering need-based and skill-oriented course. The quality of education needs to be developed by adding to the curriculum aspects of ethics, human values, environmental safeguards and social justice, etc. Before joining university and college, all faculty members must be possess adequate qualifications and six monthly training to be imparted. Further, student-teacher ratio must be improved to an ideal level, periodic refresher courses/training programmers to all teachers for the rank of Assistant Professor to Professor is also necessary to ensure adherence of the performance standards. A strong interface between Academic Staff Colleges and the Corporate Sectors/other institutions should be established for training to the newly recruited faculty and to help them adapt to the social and technological changes. Intensive-linked continuing and lifelong education of faculty

Conclusions

Higher education should be used as a powerful tool for economic development and overall progress of the country. The developed and developing countries try to improve their educational system, promote their socio-cultural identity and to meet the challenges of the times. To promote inclusive development in our country there is urgent need to promote inclusive education. Thus, it is clear from above mentioned facts that inclusive education is only option which can bridge the educational gaps among all groups and can also provide equal opportunities to all. Higher education in India has expanded very rapidly during the last seven decades after independence, but it not equally accessible to all. In view of the emerging globalized world, higher education policy has to be re-designed according to the changing needs of times which provides an opportunity of equal growth in the area of education for all sectors of the country with emphasis on quality of research and innovations.

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