

**For The Institute of Company Secretaries of India – Centre for Corporate
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“Theme: Challenges in Higher Education”

Challenges in Higher Education – the way ahead

Presented by

Mr. Navin Mukesh Punjabi

Assistant Professor

H R College of Commerce & Economics

BMS, M Com, PGDBA, UGC NET (JRF)

Pursuing Ph.D under the able guidance of Prof. Dr. P.S. Rao, University of Mumbai

Residence: 249, Kirpa Niwas, 1st Floor Sion East, Near Premier High School, Mumbai 400022

Mobile: +91 9920177199 Residence: +91 022 24094345

E-mail: navin.punjabi@gmail.com

**Office: H R College of Commerce and Economics. 123, Dinshaw Wachha Road, Churchgate Mumbai
400020 Tel: +91 022 22876115 / 22042195**

Abstract:

India sends more than 1, 00,000 students to the US and approx 85,000 students to the UK for Higher Education. India is the highest contributor to the growth of education in these two countries. On the other hand the GRE of India is just 12.4% which is one of the lowest in the world which brings us to the question is the Indian Higher education system geared up to train the pool of young Indian population which constitutes nearly 52% of the total Indian Population. The paper aims to address challenges and Issues in the Indian Higher Education Space. It also highlights the need for more spending on education by the government which is lowest compared to other developed nations. The researcher suggests the need for one regulator for higher education as compared to the 27 different regulators for different faculties. The paper talks about the state of Indian Universities and how they have to strike a balance between quantitative expansion and qualitative enrichment and also how India universities at the present moment are high on teaching so called as teaching universities and how they need to balance between teaching and research and become an ideal university. The paper address to need for Indian institutions to partner with the industry to produce graduates which are Industry ready.

Paper Type: Conceptual Paper

Keywords: Higher Education, Industry Partnership, Teaching, employability

Introduction:

India is the 2nd largest populous country in the world with population of over one billion people. More than 52% of the population is less than 25 years of age and 65% the population is below 35 years of age (Census, 2011). According US Census Bureau, 2002 India is expected to be the supplier of manpower to the rest of the world it is expected to have a surplus of 47 million working population by 2020. The population demographic in this age can act as a demographic dividend for the country (Basu, 2007), However if the population is not trained will act as a demographic burden. This is where the education system in the country plays a vital role in shaping the country population into an asset. The paper aims to create an awareness of the challenges in the higher education space in India and suggests measures that the policy makers can take to overcome these challenges. India GRE¹ is 12.4% as compared to the

¹ GRE: Gross Enrollment Ratio, is a statistical measure used by the United Nations to measure education index of a nation. In the context of higher education, it measures the total population of all ages enrolled in different education programs to the total population of the country in the age group of 18-23.

world average of 23.2%. According to the Yashpal committee on 'Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher Education' the target GRE is 21% by 2015. The National Knowledge Commission under the chairmanship of Mr. Sam Pitroda has the target of 15% GRE by the year 2015. With the GRE abysmally low as compared to the world average the regulators are focusing on Quantitative Expansion and on the other hand there is invisible wall between Industry and academia (Yashpal, 2008). Indian Institutions in order to bring the GRE number to the world average are focusing on Quantitative expansion which raises a lot of concern on the quality education in India and many educationalist site this a major reasons why Indian students prefer to go to the USA and UK (Pratibha Jain,2005). Most Indian Universities are focused on Teaching as compared to the universities of the west which are focused on Research. There is a need to balance the orientation of the Indian Institutions to become ideal institutions of teaching and research.

The quality of graduates from institute of higher education is viewed as unemployable especially engineering graduates (Mc Kinsey 2007). The challenge is to produce employable graduates for that one needs effective facilitators/teachers, without good teachers investment in education is investment in brick and mortar. However 35% posts are vacant in Central Universities; 33.33% in National Institute of Technology and 35.1% in other central education institutions. Moreover most of the universities teachers who were non NET/SET and were approved go on strike as their status is not clear as if approved or unapproved and if they can get promotion or no. So practically during the strike period universities are operating at only 50% of their capacity as 35% posts are vacant and assuming only 15% of the staff is in a dilemma of their approval which is a highly probable number. The papers suggest solutions for attracting quality talent to the teaching profession by creating a teaching cradler and remunerating them equivalent to a Class I IAS officer in the administrative Calder of the Government. And giving them all perks and incentives as to an IAS class I officer. Teacher are the one who create teh intellectual capital of the country and investing in teacher will give a multiplier effect to the intellectual capital of the country. The papers aims to throw light upon the issue of teaching university v/s research university and the what will be the ideal scenario for Indian Universities if 'Pasteur's Quadrant' where fundamental research should be converted in to applied research. The papers talks about the importance of industry academia partnership and how the students are ultimately the input of the corporate sector and how the corporate sector can be involved in Curriculum development, teachers to be involved in Consulting assignments and corporate partnership for applied research. The paper cites examples of academicians who have been successfully played the role of independent director on the board of

various companies and corporate should encourage such partnerships. The researcher highlights the need for corporate to invest in institutions building and training the students as per their needs as ultimately the output of the institute is the input of the corporation and if the input is not up to the mark as desired by the corporate they will have to invest time, money and other resources in training the input. The researcher predicts that corporate who will start universities with focus in their line of business and will produce quality trained output which will be ready to be employed in their company from day zero. Companies like NIIT has set up a university in Gujarat which trains staff of ICICI bank the visiting professors are from ICICI bank and share real live cases about customers and situations they have come across in their careers they also train the students on the software's used by the employees of ICIC bank. Students are given product and process training and then when they graduate are offered jobs at ICICI bank according to their skill sets which usually the students appreciate and accept.

The presence of multiple regulators in the Indian higher education space is another challenge as institutes have to comply with norms from multiple regulators which creates confusion and stress in the institutes. The National Knowledge commission under the chairmanship of Prof Sam Pitroda recommended the setting up of a single regulator IRAHE (Independent Regulatory Authority for Higher Education) and also in 2008 Prof Yashpal Recommended setting up a single regulator NCHER (National Council for Higher Education and Research). The above two recommendations suggest a strong need for a single regulator as compared to the 27 regulators present for various faculties.

The government spend on education is just 13.63% as a percentage of education expenditure and 3.77% of the GDP which is one of the lowest spend on education in the world. India in order to retain the students in its own country has to invest in education infrastructure i.e. both physical infrastructure and training of teachers which will create a multiplier effect by in turn producing good quality students who are industry ready.

The aspect that the paper has not covered is the two pending bills in the parliament on Private University bill and the Foreign Universities Bill which want private universities to set up their campus in India and the Foreign University Bill which will allow Harvard and Wharton to set up their campus in India and recruit student.

‘Ultimately teaching is one profession which creates all other professions’ and all stakeholders should realize the importance of teachers in the education system. As without good quality teachers investment in education is investment only in brick and walls.

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