The Quality of Education and its Challenges in Developing Countries

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Abstract

In today's competitive environment with globalization and GATS (Global Agreement on Trade in Service) drive for quality becomes an important slogan for the all the countries Higher education is becoming a necessity in the developing countries such as India, China, Malaysia and Kenya among others. The need for higher education is due to economic growth. The job market awaits knowledgeable workers, hence a need for quality education. Besides that the parents in the developing countries want their children to have a bright future, which they think will be achieved only through education. Therefore, there has been an influx of students in the higher learning institutions posing various challenges in the education sector. This paper depicts various problems in the developing countries as well as the remedies in higher learning. It also shows the influence of education and the rise of the economy in the developing countries as well as the measurement of its qualities in these nations. The government of the developing countries is also urging the community to participate and assist the higher educational establishments fully. The community is showing significant participation by funding various students as well as founding several institutions of higher learning. The remedies have led to the establishment of various private institutions, ease of movement of students across the globe as well as becoming a profitable business. The latter has resulted in the creation of the national quality assurance and other regulatory systems to enhance the quality of education in these nations.

Introduction

In a report released by the World Bank in the year 2002, it states that the higher economic productivity of a nation in the labor force has to be more knowledgeable. Therefore, there is a need to improve the quality of education in higher learning institutions. It also argues that the countries which are advancing in the economies are the ones that are making strides in the education sector. Most areas such as engineering, medicine, information technology among other areas in a nation require highly trained personnel and creativity. Therefore, according to the report education is the backbone of every society as it influences various parts of the country's economy (Barro & Lee, 2013). However, the developing countries are still facing challenges in the economic growth because of the problems in the education sector. With the increasing number of Higher Education Institutions coming forward for accreditation and assessment, there is a demand for an appropriate mechanism for accreditation.

Higher Education in India

The types of Institutions offering Higher Education in India can be categorized under (1) central universities, (2) state universities, (3) private universities, (4) deemed-to-be universities, (5) institutions of national importance (INI) (6) Institutions under a state legislature act, and (7) colleges. Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), Indian Institutes of Information Technology

(IIITs), Indian Institute of Management (IIM), National Institute of Technology (NIT), National Institute of Technical Teachers & Research (NITTRs), National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education (NIPER) providing specialized education in HE under INI. The higher education in India also adopted programs to support small scale industries and to enhance design and creativity. Based on the Indian Design Report the Govt. of India setup National Institute of Design (NID) , Industrial Design Centre (IDC) under the ages of Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Mumbai in 1969 and National institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) in 1986 under Ministries. Table 1 describes the types of higher education institutions and the number of each.

Table-1: Number of Institutions by Type 2014-15 (India)

		Type	Number
Higher Education	**University**	Central University	43
		State Public University	316
		Deemed University	122
		State Private University	181
		Central Open University	1
		State Open University	13
		Institution of National Importance	75
		State Private Open University	1
		Institutions under State Legislature Act	5
		Others	3
		Total	**760**
	College		**38498**
	Stand Alone Institution	Diploma Level Technical	3845
		PGDM	431
		Diploma Level Nursing	3114
		Diploma Level Teacher Training	4730
		Institute under Ministries	156
		Total	**12276**

Source: Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India

Table-2 : Level-wise Enrolment in Higher Education 2014-2015 (India)

Level	All Categories		
	Male	**Female**	**Total**
Ph.D.	70	48	118

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M.Phil.	14	19	33
Post Graduate	1867	1986	3853
Under Graduate	14467	12705	27172
PG Diploma	121	94	215
Diploma	1788	720	2508
Certificate	74	96	170
Integrated	87	55	142
Higher Education Total	**18488**	**15723**	**34211**

Source: Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India

Challenges in Higher Education

One of the problems affecting the quality of teaching includes an increase in the number of students. The latter has led to an increase in the growth of abilities among the students which calls for remedial classes. These have been difficult to practice in the developing countries because of inadequate funds in the education sector. Another challenge is the languages that the institutions use in teaching in the developing countries (Dirk, 2001). In some countries, they are changing from using the official language which is English to their native languages such as Bahasa Malaysia. At times you find that the textbooks that the students are using are in English, whereas the handouts that the lecturers use are in the native languages. It poses a challenge in the education sector as it becomes difficult for the students to understand the content. In some developing countries such as Malaysia in Asia, there is a challenge of having several off campuses in several towns. It has led to the students spending limited time on the campus (Barro & Lee, 2013).

Due to economic inflation as well as globalization, there has been a high demand for higher education in the developing countries. The competition in the job market where individuals are competing for better positions as well as improvement of technology creates a greater need for higher education. Therefore the number of students in the universities has been so high than in the past years. A large number of students lead to the scarcity of resources in these developing countries. The nations cannot fully back as well as fund the students (Stromquist & Monkman, 2014). According to Oketch (2009), the World Bank states that the developing countries have left the burden of higher education to parents and students and is rapidly increasing the number of private universities.

Table-3 Average Number of Institutions Providing Engineering Education
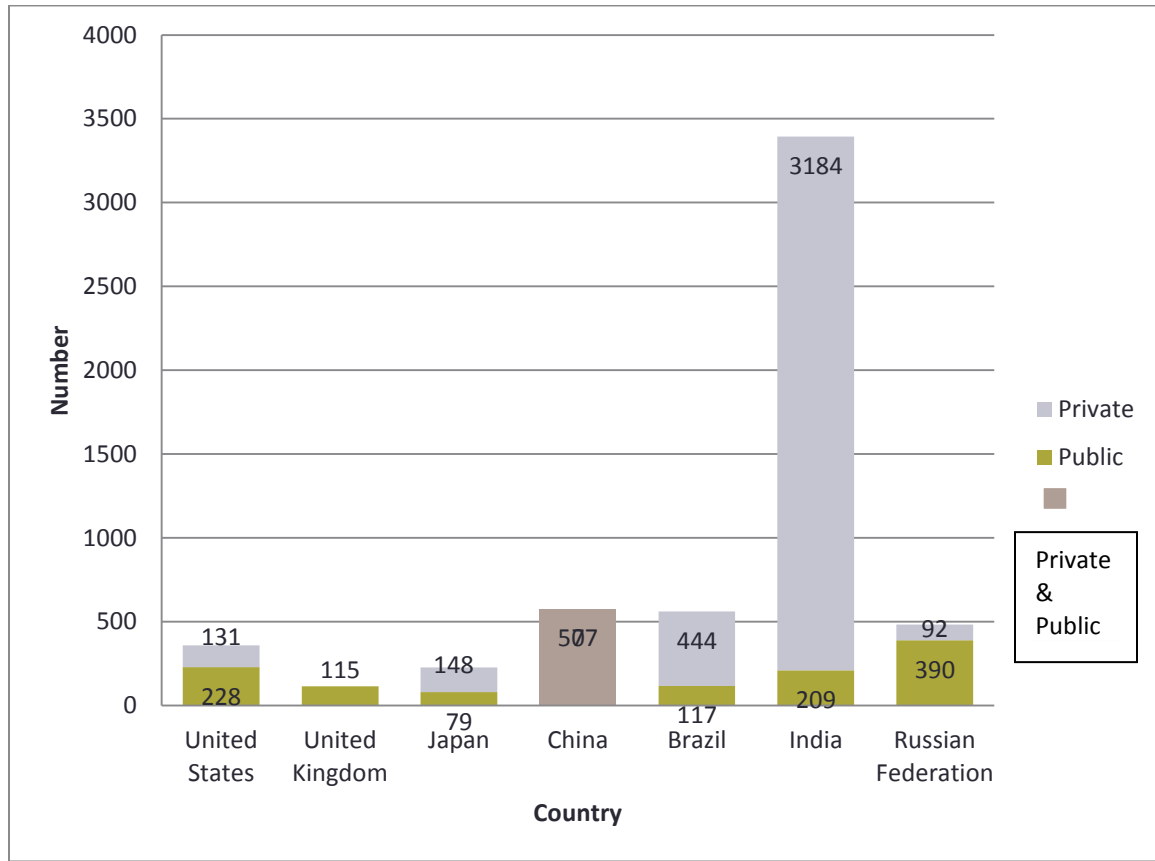
Source: South Asia Development Sector Report 2013

Pupil Teachers Ratio

Some limitations are affecting the private institutions such as lack of qualified staff. The number of lecturers in developing countries is scarce affecting the delivery of content to the students due to lots of work the lectures leave handouts for students to study on their own. There is also a challenge for the teaching staff to student ratio which is extremely high. The latter affects the instruction time that is planned for a particular course. It affects the knowledge that the students will acquire as the institutions will produce less skilled individuals. The teaching staff pay is also affecting the higher institutions of learning in the developing countries (Arends, 2014).Table-3 shows the Pupil Teachers Ratio in higher education in India.

Table-3 Pupil Teachers Ratio (PTR) in India

Years	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
PTR	21	24	26	24	23	25	24

Source: All India Survey on Higher Education 2015-16

Cross-Border education

The developing countries are also embracing cross-border education which also has several challenges. One of the challenges of the cross-border education in higher learning in developing countries is that they find it difficult to compete with others in the nations with significant economies because of its scarce resources. The developing countries carry education as a public good, but in the high economy countries, the primary drive is private profits (Williams, & Harvey, 2015). Therefore, it can impend government power of higher education. The latter puts the upper learning in the countries in the developed countries at a significant advantage as they can question the government in case of any defect in the education sector as opposed to the developing countries. Another challenge is the commercialization of cross-border education. The transnational education is so expensive than the education in developing countries. It makes it difficult for some of the students in the developing countries to afford. Therefore, most of the students in the developing countries will not get a higher quality education as those in the top economic countries.

Measures to improve the Quality of Higher Education

Accreditation system in India:

In India promoting quality in education has been the main focus of almost all the committees constituted in different stages for the development of higher education system. After the independence in India the National Policies on Education (NPE) 1968 and 1986, and the constitutional amendment of 1976 have played a major role in improving the quality of education. In appreciating the quality assurance system, NPE and POA-1986 recommended the establishment of a National Accreditation body to ensure the standards of education. Based on this, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) was established by University Grants Commission (UGC) in 1994 which undertakes the instructional evaluations and the National Board of Accreditation (NBA) setup by AICTE (All India Council for Technical Education) for periodic evaluation of technical institutions & professional programmes in India.

NBA assesses the qualitative competence of educational institutions from diploma level to post graduate level in Engineering & technology, Management, Pharmacy, Architecture, Town Planning and related disciplines. It is also concerned with Academic ambience, infrastructure, financial resources, and computational resources, avenues to mould and develop students' personality and learning characteristics. NBA has recently switched over to Outcome based Accreditation system. The newly derived parameters are: 1. vision, mission and Program educational objectives 2. Program outcomes 3. Program curriculum 4. Student's performance 5. Faculty contribution 6. Facilities and technical support 7. Academic support units and teaching – learning process 8. Governance, institutional support and financial resources 9. Continuous improvement.

NAAC grades Institutions; stimulates their academic environment; promotes innovation and reforms, self-evaluation and accountability in higher education. The NAAC emphasizes to usher in continuous quality in higher education through a combination of internal and external quality assurance practices. NAAC has developed detailed guidelines and action points for the efficient functioning of the Institutional Internal Quality Assurance Cells IQACs. To address the large volume assessment of affiliated institutions, NAAC follows a two-step process –

Accreditation assessment readiness and Comprehensive assessment process. Essentially Institutional Eligibility for Quality Assessment IEQA is granted in the planning stage of Assessment and Accreditation, which ascertains whether the institution meets the threshold level of quality. If the institution is not Accreditation ready, then NAAC advises further measures to be undertaken to qualify for IEQA status.

The Ministry of Human Resource Development, India has recently introduced the new methodology of ranking Academic Institutions by NIRF – National Institutional Ranking Framework. The National Board of Accreditation (NBA) will continue to be the Ranking Agency on behalf of NIRF for 2017. The ranking parameters as defined by NIRF are: 1. Teaching, learning & resource 2. Research and professional practice 3.Graduation outcomes 4. Outreach and inclusivity 5. Perception.

Technical Education Quality Improvement Program (TEQIP)

The government of India initiated Technical Education Quality Improvement Program in promoting engineering education in India. The programme focuses on Faculty Development, Technical and Support Staff Development, Equipment and Facility Improvement, Curriculum Improvement, Curriculum Implementation, Course Flexibility, Student Evaluation, Learning Resources, Interaction with Industry, Research, Distance Education, Academic Sharing, Staff Development, Human Resources Sharing, Learning Resources and Library Facilities Sharing, Physical Resource Sharing, Expertise Sharing, Joint Ventures and System Management Capacity Improvement.

Learning Instruction, Material and Infrastructure

The universities are undertaking several remedies to correct the challenges. For instance, on the issue of having an influx of students from the rural areas which leads to an extensive range of abilities. The universities have remedied this by having instructions that match all the needs of the student. On the issue of using the native languages in giving instruction while the content is in English, they have decided to give direction via print word. These aids in simplifying communication between the native languages and English. On the issue of fewer contact hours because of the introduction of several off campuses, they came up with a decision of producing well-structured materials. The materials should be well structured for greater student understanding of the content as well as substitute face to face interaction (Brown, Bull, & Pendlebury, 2013). The latter will also enhance individualized study. The developing countries have tried to cope with the challenge of a vast number of students in the developing countries which leads to a scarce resource. They are doing this by supporting the building of private universities. The privatization of higher education is filling the gap brought by strong demand for higher education. The latter is also assisting in increment of the students enrolling in the universities.

International Collaboration

Academic collaboration programs between the Foreign universities and Indian institutions and organizations are aimed at meeting the rapidly growing Indian educational needs by leveraging mutual capabilities. A part of the core mission of all educational institutions is to

prepare their students to compete in the global economy. These collaboration programs contribute to that goal by giving students and faculty members international experience and global perspectives. International Research Collaboration has always helped institutions to keep abreast of international technology and to share expertise and resources.

The countries are trying to solve the issue of small staff by internalization and increasing of the lecturers' mobility. Because of lack of enough faculties in the developing countries, most students are joining other higher institutions in the globe. Therefore, just as there is high mobility of students across the world, the higher institutions of learning in the developing countries are trying to increase the mobility of lecturers.

Financial Support

The developing countries are trying to cope with the issue of scarce resources by borrowing grants from various non-governmental organizations. The non-governmental organizations from the greater economy countries are readily coming in to help these institutions in developing countries. The NGOs are also partnering with the universities and sponsoring the students who score highly in their bachelors to further studies in their countries. The latter is also boosting the education of the developing countries. It is because the students come back to their country and aid in the upgrading of higher learning in their countries as well as motivating the other students (Imrie, Cox, & Miller, 2014). On the issue of the high teacher to student ratio, they are trying to remedy this by employing cross-border teaching staff as discussed earlier. However, it is hard to fully achieve the latter due to low economies in the developing countries, thus they are embarking on giving them incentives. Giving the teaching staff incentive motivates them, and they do their best despite the higher ratios. Some developing countries such as Indonesia are trying to cope with the challenge of strikes due to low pay. They are doing this by increasing the teaching staff pay twice if one meets certain criteria. They are trying to remedy the issue on irresponsible teachers by supervision. Some countries have come up with a particular body that makes visits to the learning institutions to check on the teacher compliance as well as its standards.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, it is true to say that higher education in the developing countries is undergoing various challenges. The latter's chief cause is the increase in demand for higher learning whose primary reason is the high economic value given to education recently. Various measures are taken in these developing countries one been privatization of the education sector. The latter has brought about some changes to the developing countries which made the stakeholders of education in the developing countries come up with the system of quality assurance.

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