Indian Education System In The 21st Century: Challenges And Opportunities

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Abstract

The present research paper's main aim is improvement in the educational system of India. Education is not seeking a degree, but to find out the truth and untrue problems in society. Education is a National Strength. A developed nation is inevitably an educated nation. Indian higher education system is the third largest in the world, next to the United States and China. Since Independence, India as a developing nation is contentiously progressing in the education field. India aspires to build a knowledge-based society that critically values research and scholarship through publications as a central component of university development. The Indian education system is one of the oldest education systems in the world. Many schools and colleges organize various competitions like speech and essay competitions. Currently, India's out-of-school children are very high, with low educational expenditure, high education unemployment rate, low education enrolment, low-quality teachers and educational institutes, etc. the future scenarios of the political, social, cultural, and economic sectors will depend on the contributions of the effective education policy and scientific and technological innovations and changes, unprecedented socio-economic challenges and opportunities, surprising socio-political reforms and amazing cultural reawakening. This article tries to introduce the issues and challenges of the 21st century in India. Things are changing in our Education System very quickly. The world is becoming interconnected; technology is continuously altering our relationship with information. Changing global conditions demand that we rethink what, but even more important, how we learn and lead.

Keywords: Indian Education System, Issues, Challenges, and Opportunities

Introduction

"Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family." –   Kofi Annan

Indian Education System was totally based on concepts like the futility of material pleasures, the short-lived nature of the very existence, or life in general. The education system developed on these principles only. This is the reason why Indian sages sang praises of an invisible world and talked about spiritual superpowers. The sages lived a life based on these principles. Education in India is seen as one of the ways to upward social mobility. Good education is seen as a stepping stone to a high-flying career. India possesses a highly developed higher education system that offers facilities for education

and training in almost all aspects of human creative and intellectual endeavours. Indian higher education system has undergone massive expansion in post-independent India with a national resolve to establish several universities, technical institutes, research institutions, and professional/non-professional colleges all over the country to generate and disseminate knowledge. India's higher education system is the world's third-largest in terms of students, next to China and the United States. In the future, India will be one of the largest education hubs. India's Higher Education sector has witnessed a tremendous increase in the number of Universities/University level Institutions & Colleges since independence. According to the Indian Constitution article 21 (A), the right to Education for the state shall provide free and compulsory education to all (6 to 14 years) children, and article 45, provision for early childhood care and education to children below the age of six years.

The future world of learning is one where the forces of globalization, pervasive technology, and innovation demands in the learning environment combine to form a dynamic setting that is both challenging and difficult for educational leaders. Together with the changes, new expectations have knocked on our doors. The first aim of our education was the round development of a child, Father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi once said "By education, I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child and body, mind and spirit". It is quite apparent that all-around development is like a daydream because the current system is not developing all-around ability in the child. According to Warren Bennis-"Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality". Educational leadership in the 21st Century should be modern to face the challenges in the digital age. Schools are starting to do education differently.

All the issues and challenges did not rise in a day, they took a long period. If we look back in time. In ancient times India was at the top of education and knowledge. This was the country in which students used to come from all over the world to acquire knowledge and education. No country in the world was even near to it. The Story starts with the invaders. First Muslim invaders who tried to destroy the culture and knowledge of the country. After them came the British invaders. They left our country in the condition of a beggar and gave us many things like poverty, corruption. Injustice, unemployment, and many other problems are now standing up as a challenge for our education system, which can cope by adopting perfect educational leadership.

Need and Importance of Education
Education, as you are aware, is vital to human resources development and empowerment in the stages of growth of a nation. In any education system, higher education encompassing Management, Engineering, Medicine, etc., plays a major role in imparting knowledge, values, and developing skills and in the process, increasing the growth and productivity of the nation. While the government is committed to providing primary education and certain facilities/subsidies for higher education, given the higher cost involved in the establishment of higher education institutes, we are witnessing the entry of the private sector to run educational institutions.

On the need for education, I wish to quote our Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, who once said that education not only molds the new generation but reflects a society's fundamental assumptions about itself and the individuals which compose it. The famous philosopher Einstein while discussing the need for education has projected the following fundamentals:

1. To educate the individual as a free individual; to understand and use critical thinking
   skills.
2. To educate the individual as a part of society – virtually all our knowledge, our clothes, our food is produced by others in our society, thus, we owe Society and have the responsibility to contribute back to Society.
3. Through education, knowledge must continually be renewed by ceaseless effort, if   it
   is not to be lost. It resembles a statute of marble that stands in the desert and is continually threatened with burial by the shifting sand. The hands of service must ever be at work, in order that the marble continue to lastingly shine in the sun.

Issues and Challenges:

Issues Faced in Indian Education

Administrative issues faced by the Central Government

1. Geographical vastness and diversity in the nation
2. Poor governance and lack of responsibility
3. Improper coordination with states
4. Communication Gap
5. Social, cultural & emotional issues of the people
6. Poverty
7. Corruption and leakages of fund
8. Teaching learning environment
9. Poor Implementation of the Right to Education and New Education Policy (NEP2020)
10. Framing of Curriculum

Issues Faced by Indian Education:

1. Lack of proper curriculum
2. Lack of professional teacher
3. Lack of teaching material
4. Lack of Fund
5. Poor infrastructure
6. Lack of space
7. Lack of facilities
8. Discipline

9. Classroom Distractions
10. Gender Bias
11. Poor attendance of teaching and non-teaching staff
12. Issues of adolescence
13. Girls' problems

The Indian literacy rate is 77% (2023 figure), level is well below the world average literacy rate of 86.3% of all nations, India currently has the largest illiterate population Despite government programs, India's literacy rate increased only slightly and 1990 study estimated that it would take until 2060 for India to achieve universal literacy at than the 2011 decadal literacy growth of 9.2%, which was slower than the growth seen during the previous decade. There was a wide gender disparity in the literacy rate in India: effective literacy rates (age - and above) in 20ll were 82.14% for men and 65.46% for women. The census provided a positive indication that growth in female literacy rates (11.8%) was substantially faster than in male literacy rates (6.9%) in the 2001- 20ll decadal period, which means the gender gap appears to be narrowing. At present 2023 Indian literacy rate is 77%, As a whole, the global literacy rate is high. The literacy rate for all males and females that are at least 15 years old is 86.3%. Males aged 15 and over have a literacy rate of 90%, while females lag only slightly behind at 82.7%. However, massive country-to-country differences exist. Developed nations almost always have an adult literacy rate of 96% or better. In contrast, the least developed nations manage an average literacy rate of only 65%. Direct country-to-country comparisons of literacy tend to be inexact. This is due mainly to two confounding factors: Many countries do not report their literacy every year, and many countries have mismatched definitions as to what qualifies as literacy. This is real scenario of education system of India, where we are standing, we are trying to achieve education for all, we are trying to diminish gender disparity in the literacy rate in India, we are going for quantity education but we are trying for quality education also. Our aim of education is all round of development of a student is quite apparent that all round development is like a day dream because the current system is trying to developing single ability in students. Now as we see in the society that the level of our social, moral, cultural values and ideals are going downwards, we are acquiring western culture and social values which are totally different from ours. The top issues are:

Skills are invaluable for all students to succeed in both college and career ' skills are undervalued and under-rated in the present educational system.

Challenges are:

1. Access to Education
2. Quality of Education
3. Cost of education
4. Discipline

5. Unemployment
6. Poverty
7. Casteism
8. Un-satisfaction of Youth
9. Corruption
10. Privatization of education
11. Unawareness of teachers.
12. Political Unwillingness
13. Dearness
14. Character of Teacher

All these issues and challenges did not rise in a day they took a long period. If we look back in time, in ancient times India was at the top in education and knowledge. This was the country in which students used to come from all over the world to acquire knowledge and education. No country in the world was even near to it. Then what happened to our great country?

The story starts to form the invaders first Muslim invaders who came to the country to loot it and tried to destroy the culture and knowledge of the country. After them came the British invaders. They left our country in the condition of a beggar and gave us many things like poverty, corruption, injustice, unemployment, and many other problems which are now standing up as a challenge for our education system. And, now as we see in society that the level of our social, moral, and cultural values and ideals is going downward toward hell. We are acquiring Western culture and social values which are totally different from ours. We believe in spiritual education and they believe in physical or worldly education. Then how can we develop our current education system because it provides us only the mob of unemployed youth?

Conclusion

In the 21st century educational leaders and teachers play a positive role and create such an environment that will able to cope with issues and challenges, where students will learn by doing. The education system will meet the current demands of students and education will be available for all students to succeed in both education and career. These issues need to be solved immediately for better development of the education sector as well as to fulfill the educational and vocational demands of society. On the other hand, in education absenteeism of students and teachers' old education policies, privatization and commercialization in educational institutions, casteism, poverty, educational corruption, etc., the Government needs to improve the education system and at the same time the officials, staff, teachers, parents should also change their attitude and realize the true worth of education.

Recommendation

1. Improvement of the rural education system and government school education system in India
2. Control of education corruption in India
3. Control of education in non-recognized universities in India.

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