



Opinions of teachers towards the balance participation of all socioeconomic students in higher education

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Abstract

The respondents among instructors offered a number of proposals in addition to their opinions on many issues relating to higher education participation in order to guarantee the fair participation of various socioeconomic groups in society. Nearly all of the respondents emphasized the need for the government to have a more proactive role in the higher education sector. The government's position has been described, nevertheless, with a variety of considerations in mind. One-fourth of the respondents believed that the "state should take its responsibility more seriously." "Economic and political policy should include education policy," the saying goes. "The government must set aside a larger budgetary portion for higher education so that it is accessible to everyone." More public higher education institutions should be established, especially in underdeveloped educational regions. Additionally, "sufficient funds must be provided to already dying ones." Another viewpoint holds that public funding of higher education should be increased rather than relying more on privatization of higher education. Fees ought to be subsidized or lowered. Additionally, these respondents believed that market-oriented courses should be spread evenly alongside liberal education (social sciences, humanities, and pure sciences), as it draws in a lot of students due to its affordability. This position is in contrast to the fact that professional education in particular and higher education in general are increasingly seen as essential prerequisites for participation in the developing global information economy.

Keywords: Teachers', opinions, perceptions, equitable, participation, higher education

1. Introduction

The general growth of any civilization is greatly influenced by higher education. Many policymakers are now convinced, thanks to the experiences of numerous nations over the past few decades, that improving human capital quality is a precondition for attaining sustained and accelerated development rather than just relying on physical capital resources. People have the chance to consider the significant social, economic, cultural, moral, and spiritual challenges that face humanity at this higher level of education. In addition, it offers the training necessary for teachers, doctors, nurses, civil servants, engineers, humanists, business owners, scientists, social scientists, and a variety of other personnel in addition to the high level skills required for every job market. These professionals receive the training necessary to build the capacity and analytical abilities necessary to assist local economies, civil society, educate children, run functional governments, and make crucial decisions that have an impact on entire societies. Therefore, higher education promotes higher quality of individual and social life while also fostering attitudinal changes for modernization and social transformation that result in the formation of a strong nation-state. Higher education also contributes to the national development by disseminating specialized knowledge and skills. Due to the enormous size of these externalities, higher education is heavily funded by the government in practically every nation in the globe, including both developed and developing nations.

The significance of tertiary education in the development of knowledge economies and democratic societies is more important than ever in the societies of today because knowledge is the primary driver of progress. In fact, it is crucial to the development of the intellectual capacity that underpins the invention and application of knowledge. Without the capacity-building contributions of an innovative postsecondary education system, sustained transformation and growth throughout the economy are not conceivable. According to the findings of an OECD study on the factors influencing growth, "underlying long-term growth rates in OECD economies depend on preserving and enhancing the knowledge base". In addition, the fact that more educated people earn more money is another proof that education promotes development. In this way, increased productivity is represented by higher earnings for those with more education. Consequently, higher economic output and growth rates are linked to an increase in the number of educated workers in the economy. Additionally, the expansion of science-based businesses such as those in the chemical, biotechnology, telecommunications, and information systems means that highly educated and scientifically trained labour is becoming more and more important for economic success.

As a result, development theories today contend that developing countries have a better chance of catching up to economies that are more advanced when they have a pool of labour that has the skills to either develop new technologies independently or to accept and apply foreign technology. The World Bank asserts that given this situation, India is in a very advantageous position to make the transition to a knowledge economy, which is an economy that produces, disseminates, and uses knowledge to promote its growth and development.

Earlier, it was believed that higher education was a costly, ineffective public service that mostly benefited the affluent and powerful. Higher education is now recognised to be of utmost importance in order to successfully contribute, in conjunction with other factors, to national initiatives to increase productivity, competitiveness, and economic growth. When viewed from this angle, higher education no longer competes for policy attention with primary and secondary education. Instead, it becomes a crucial addition to other levels of education as well as to government programmes aimed at fostering innovation and performance in all spheres of the economy. Higher education's role in development and progress is being reexamined in light of knowledge-based competition within a globalising economy. It is currently viewed as a "development engine in the new knowledge economy".

Therefore, there are several initiatives being done throughout the world to ensure that students from underprivileged groups of society are included in higher education, and India is no different. The nation has been making concerted efforts in this regard, as seen by numerous official initiatives.

2. Research methodology

The current research study was a multifaceted investigation into the different problems that India's higher education participation faces. In order to gain insight into the policy changes in the higher education sector and their implications for patterns of expansion, access, and equity, the study first sought to understand the policy perspective in post-independent India both in the period prior to economic reforms and the subsequent period. Analyzing the effects of international institutions' policy recommendations on Indian policymaking during the time following economic reforms was another task. On the basis of secondary data sources, such as statistical abstracts, census reports, economic surveys, reports from the ministry of human resource development, the planning commission, the university grants commission, etc., the second component of the study examined trends in higher education participation in India with particular reference to Haryana in terms of institution growth, access, and socioeconomic disparities. The profile analysis of students enrolled in various professional and general higher education colleges in Haryana made up the third component of the study. The study's second component involves examining college professors' opinions and beliefs on a range of topics linked to Haryana's unequal access to higher education. The analysis of student replies to several questions about socioeconomic background and involvement in higher education was the fifth feature of the study.

3. Research design

The current study included quantitative and qualitative research methods and specified a mixed methods research design to conduct the research study because it entailed the multidimensional analysis of many variables affecting higher education participation in Haryana. If we want to capitalize on the advantages of both quantitative and qualitative data, mixed methods research is a useful design to use. Quantitative data, such as test results, produce precise figures that can be statistically analyzed, produce findings that can be used to determine the frequency and amplitude of trends, and can be helpful for describing patterns that affect a lot of people. However, qualitative data, such as open-ended interviews, offer the actual words of the study's participants, present a variety of viewpoints on the subject, and paint a nuanced picture of the circumstances.

Since both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered in the current study, either concurrently or sequentially, and qualitative data supported the quantitative data, an effort was made to investigate the causes of the disparities in higher education participation as well as how teachers and students react to this phenomenon. The goal of the student focus group discussion was to better understand the impact of various socioeconomic factors on higher education participation on the one hand, and the impact of government measures on higher education participation on the other. So, the study's embedded mixed methods design was used.

3.1 Interview schedule for teachers

Open-ended A schedule of interviews with lecturers from various colleges was created to discuss various topics related to higher education participation. The purpose of leaving interview schedules open-ended is to gain access to the perspective of the individual being interviewed, not to influence their thoughts.

The Interview Schedule was standardized by choosing the precise language and order of the questions in advance so that the same questions could be asked from each respondent in the same order. 35 questions about various topics linked to higher education participation made up the initial draft of the interview program.

3.2 Sampling

The applicability of the sampling strategy that has been used, in addition to the appropriateness of technique and apparatus, determines the quality of a piece of study. Determining the population that will be the subject of the research raises questions about sampling that flow immediately from that problem.

4. Results and Discussion

In light of this, these respondents believe that "the government should hold the duty of providing equitable chances for higher education to all." 42 percent of those polled believed that the government should support higher education institutions in their efforts to promote inclusive education by giving excluded groups more incentives. They claim that "with the growing number of private institutions in the higher education sector, it is noted that the fees payable are excessively high for the underprivileged classes." In light of this, these groups should be given access to additional free ships, scholarships, free textbooks and stationary, free hostels, and subsidized facilities in institutions. "More scholarships should be offered," was the statement. It is necessary to "massify" scholarships. Scholarships should be awarded based on need, according to this statement. Additionally, "difficulties at the entry level for scholarships must be removed." In this regard, a respondent stated that "private colleges' acts should be redrafted to make it mandatory for them to develop scholarship programs." In addition, the annual threshold of Rs. 2.5 lac would be increased to Rs. 5 lac for SC students and Rs. 3 lac for STs, OBCs, etc. Margin of non-SC/ST/OBC must be given center stage. Another responder stated that "benefits should be handed to them" and that "socio-economically backward sectors should be reclassified." Another viewpoint holds that economic-based reservations should take the place of caste-based ones.

Table 1: Suggestions by teachers to ensure an equitable higher education participation of diverse socio-economic sections of the society

Total Number of Respondents	More Significant Role of the Government						Possibility for an Equitable Higher Education is not there
	More Public Funding/Expansion of Public higher Education	More Financial Incentives for Excluded Groups	Steps for equalizing opportunities	Special Incentives for Girls	Starting job-oriented courses/Creating new job opportunities	Increasing Awareness about the importance of higher education	
100 (100%)	24 (24%)	42 (42%)	14 (14%)	08 (8%)	06 (6%)	04 (4%)	02 (2%)

Source: Interviews with teachers

Additionally, some of the respondents felt that the student loan program should be adequately executed in order to benefit lower socioeconomic strata. Easy study loans ought to be made available. "There should be a subsidised credit facility from the financial institutions like banks etc. for the fee/hostel expenditure."

14 percent of the respondents said that the government had a substantial role to play in ensuring that students from different socioeconomic backgrounds could compete on an equal footing. According to them, the basic ethos of society should be one of "accessibility, equity, and inclusivity for all sections of society, and this should apply to those who belong to the lower socioeconomic strata." For SC/ST/Girls and disabled people, there should be barrier-free facilities available at all institutions. Additionally, "equitable education quality should be ensured." According to one respondent, "the government should create and implement coaching systems for SC/ST/minorities." Similarly, another respondent recommended that underprivileged groups in society should have access to quality education, English proficiency, and free coaching for competitive examinations. Another suggestion was that "reducing the rate of drop-out among the underprivileged should become the emphasis of five year plans" since "the drop-out rates of disadvantaged groups are noticed to be increasing up as the degree of education goes increased."

Eight percent of those surveyed emphasized the need for the government to provide incentives to increase girls' involvement in higher education. In their opinion, gender equality must exist in addition to socioeconomic equality. Education for girls must be free at the higher education level, according to one respondent. Another opinion has been that girls should be given "a reserve of not less than 33 percent" in all technical and other higher educational institutions. Additionally, "a unique plan for the establishment of a hostel for girls" should exist.

Six percent of the responding instructors advocated for the government to introduce more classes focused on finding a job. Additionally, all courses should provide employment prospects. The employability of humanities courses should be improved, according to a respondent, while professional courses should be geared toward self-employment. "Short-term professional courses and vocational courses should be introduced." Another commenter made the suggestion that "needy students must be supplied with part-time work to finance their higher education fees."

Four percent of the respondents believed that the government needed to launch a program to educate socially disadvantaged groups about the advantages of higher education. "The government should organize awareness campaigns where people are informed about the value of higher education, the resources available for it, and the incentives that should be offered to the socioeconomically disadvantaged groups in society." A respondent made the suggestion, in this regard, of "deputizing experts and teaching faculty from urban areas to rural areas."

A respondent, however, raised his concerns about the likelihood of creating an egalitarian higher education system in the current socioeconomic environment. Nothing can be accomplished for education on its own within the neo-imperial multinational capitalist system, in his words.

5. Conclusion

The advancement of both society and the individual depends greatly on higher education. It provides the younger generation with new abilities, information, and concepts needed for the dynamic work market. Higher education is necessary to establish oneself independently through greater employment opportunities, to stay up with a dynamic society, to create the correct kind of social consciousness, and to inform individuals of their rights, powers, and obligations. Higher education is the only way to combat the amount of competition that is currently present in the burgeoning knowledge economy because it is a key factor in the socio-economic growth of any nation, especially for developing market economies like India with a demographic dividend.

New employment opportunities are being created as a result of the globalization of the economy and the emergence of multinational corporations. New higher education institutions are opening in response to this development in order to take advantage of these opportunities. In addition, the government is working to increase higher education facilities in order to meet the demand for skilled labor and gain an advantage over other nations. However, aside from the rise of a few central universities, IITs, IIMs, and constituent colleges of universities, the private self-financing colleges and universities have experienced extraordinary growth. Due to the government's permissive guidelines and minimal requirements for the establishment of new universities and colleges in the private sector, education has become a for-profit industry where quality education is lacking. Additionally, an average student with financial means can attend these institutions for higher education. Therefore, the recent fast expansion of higher education institutions can be attributed in large part to the privatization and commercialization of education.

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