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Understanding Global Perspectives in Higher Education: Addressing Issues, Challenges, and Solutions

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ABSTRACT: This research work is intended to study “Understanding Global Perspectives in Higher Education: Addressing Issues, Challenges and Solutions”. No doubts, higher education plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of individuals and societies, serving as a crucible for knowledge, innovation, and societal progress. As, Higher education institutions operate within an increasingly interconnected global landscape, a myriad of issues and challenges have emerged. This research paper delves into the key global perspectives in higher education, exploring the prevalent issues, challenges, and proposing potential remedies to navigate these complex issues.

KEYWORDS: Holistic education, teaching and learning paradigms, combining experiential based learning, pedagogy

I. INTRODUCTION

Current State of Education

In order to foster economic and industrial progress, a nation must cultivate a proficient workforce in substantial numbers. At the outset of India's independence, with 20 universities and 591 colleges, tertiary-level student enrollment was a mere 0.2 million. Since then, India has witnessed remarkable growth, now boasting a highly developed higher education system, ranking third globally in enrollment, after China and the United States. However, the growth has not met the recommended investment targets. Despite the Knowledge Commission's suggestion of allocating 6% of GDP to education, only half of this target has been achieved over the last 50 years. The tertiary level is overseen by the University Grants Commission (India), with expansion, inclusion, and excellence as key policy objectives.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

David Kember et al. (2007) emphasized the need for graduates with comprehensive skills for lifelong learning. Their study, conducted in a Hong Kong university, employed a structural equation model and interviews to understand the learning environment. Srikanthan and Dalrymple (2005) proposed a holistic model for higher education implementation, drawing from Senge's learning cycle. Svensson et al. (2017) introduced the concept of holistic education in corporate training, advocating for a balance between transmissive, transactional, and transformative teaching methods. The methodology followed the Senge model to implement learning in organizations. According to Senge, actual learning task takes place within a “deep learning cycle”. The comprehensive nature of the movement to start the learning cycle is: “guiding ideas”, which render a feeling of cause; “Theory, methods and tools” to permit mankind to grasp up to date expertise; “Infrastructure innovations” to provide mankind the chance to chase their insight. The activities were considered from the stance of the holistic model. The series of theoretical constructions were investigated to understand the appropriate tools. Infrastructure process were also determined to provide people with the resources they required to develop up to date expertise. Singh (2011) highlighted the need for revolutionary changes in higher education to address contemporary challenges. Gupta and Gupta (2012) analyzed the challenges in Indian higher education, presenting government initiatives to tackle them.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study focuses on enhancing teacher effectiveness and student engagement in higher education. It introduces a framework linked to various teaching and learning paradigms, emphasizing holistic learning. By raising the following question

- How should teachers educate.
- What is it they ask for?
- It delves into the nature of what teachers scrutinize/examine and, in the end, assign grades to.

- d) Addressing these central questions is vital for obtaining a more coherent understanding of the subject matter.

IV. STRATEGIES FOR RADICAL CHANGE

4.1 Experiential Learning Theory (ELT):

ELT proposes a dynamic learning cycle, integrating action/reflection and experience/abstraction. It emphasizes learning as a process, requiring the resolution of conflicts and leading to holistic adaptation. These two dimensions define a holistic learning space wherein learning transactions take place between individuals and the environment. The learning space is multi-level and can describe learning and development in commensurate ways at the level of the individual, the group, and the organization. ELT integrates the works of the foundational experiential learning scholars around six propositions which they all share.

(1) Learning is best conceived as a process, not in terms of outcomes

- a) In order to improve learning in higher education, the primary focus should be on engaging students in a process that best enhances their learning process
- b) A process that includes feedback on the effectiveness of their learning efforts.
- c) According to Dewey (1897: 79), education should be seen as an ongoing reconstruction of experience, emphasizing that the process and objective of education are inherently interconnected.

(2) All learning is re-learning.

- a) Learning is best facilitated by a process that draws out the students' beliefs and ideas about a topic. Therefore they can be examined, tested, and integrated with new, more refined ideas.

(3) Learning requires the resolution of conflicts between dialectically opposed modes of adaptation to the world.

- a) Conflict, differences, and disagreement are what drive the learning process.
- b) In the process of learning one is called upon to move back and forth between opposing modes of reflection and action and feeling and thinking.

(4) Learning is a holistic process of adaptation.

- a) It is not just the result of cognition but involves the integrated functioning of the total person – thinking, feeling, perceiving, and behaving.
- b) It encompasses other specialized models of adaptation from the scientific method to problems solving, decision making and creativity.

(5) Learning results from synergetic transactions between the person and the environment.

- a) Stable and enduring patterns of human learning arise from consistent patterns of transaction
- b) between the individual and his or her environment.
- c) The way we process the possibilities of each new experience determines the range of choices and decisions we see.
- d) The choices and decisions we make to some extent determine the events we live through, and these events influence our future choices.
- e) Thus, people create themselves through the choice of actual occasions they live through.

(6) Learning is the process of creating knowledge.

- a) ELT proposes a constructivist theory of learning whereby social knowledge is created and
- b) recreated in the personal knowledge of the learner.
- c) This stands in contrast to the 'transmission' model on which much current educational practice is based where pre-existing fixed ideas are transmitted to the learner.

4.2 Technology

- a) The significance of soft infrastructure, workforce reskilling, and the utilization of technology for development is underscored. The discussion should encompass the potential of online education platforms and advancements such as 5G technology.
- b) It is imperative that students update themselves to stay relevant in the job market, considering the compounding effect of the digital transformation.

c) Ensuring the skillfulness and adaptability of current education seekers is crucial for successful reskilling, especially in the context of ongoing technological advancements like Robotic Process Automation, AI, Virtual Reality, IoT, Big Data Analytics, Cloud Computing, and 3D printing.

d) Online education platforms have significantly expanded educational reach. An initiative by the Government of India involves the Telecom Department funding a 5G Technology Test-Bed anchored at IIT, Madras, with expectations for rollout in 2020, aligning with global trends. However, it is essential to use technology both for development and cautiously considering its potential for destruction.

4.3 Societal Maturity/Immaturity

a) Addressing societal challenges such as gender inequality and immature behavior is crucial for holistic development.

b) As Indian mindset pertains to patriarchal society and females usually caught up in 3Ms and along with that economy is going through/facing societal immature behaviour which further crops the issues like gender inequality, glass ceiling. 3M i.e. marriage, maternity and motherhood disrupts women careers at the initial stage

4.4 Quality Education

a) The need for a holistic approach to education, aligning with recent reforms, is emphasized to produce employable graduates.

b) According to a recent government report two-third of India's colleges and universities are below standard. Real Education involves all aspects of the educational procedures with an eye to help students grow in curiosity, attentiveness, open-mindedness, intellectual thoroughness and intellectual courage. Our primary, secondary and higher education systems are not producing employable output.

c) Contemporary critics often portray our schools as 'factories,' primarily generating a large number of doctors and engineers.

d) The current need is to provide education that focuses on a holistic approach, aiming to replace closed-mindedness with openness. The ultimate purpose of education should be to foster open-minded thinking.

e) Recent reforms, such as demonetization, GST, RERA, Bankruptcy Act, shell company evisceration, ease of doing business, UPI, Digital India, and MUDRA Scheme, collectively strengthen each other, creating a practical ecosystem for higher education.

4.5 Teacher-Student Relationship

a) Positive teacher-student relationships are seen as crucial for success, fostering collaboration and passion for learning.

b) Teacher-student relationship promotes a sense of familiarity and motivates students to participate in collaboration.

c) Teacher student association allow teachers to handle the students in the same way, regardless of their background.

d) A student who has positive and supportive association with teachers will achieve high levels of success as compared to those who have not good interaction and relationship with their teachers.

e) Positive relationships help students learn and upgrade their passion to learn.

4.6 Teaching Pedagogy

a) Balancing teacher-centered and learner-centered pedagogies is proposed for educational success and societal contributions. Teaching pedagogy means how teachers and students interact and the instructional approaches are executed in the classrooms. There are two approaches, which seem contradictory but they complement each other for realizing the educational goal.

b) The two approaches are teachers-centred pedagogy and learner-centred pedagogy.

c) learners-centred pedagogy has focus on the previous/ former knowledge and new experience for creating knowledge.

d) It is essential to adopt a suitable pedagogical approach that facilitates educational success, progress, the acquisition of technical skills, and the ability to contribute effectively to society.

4.7 Assessment and Feedback of Facilitators

a) Effective facilitators are described as learner-centered, encouraging self-awareness and decision-making.

b) A good facilitator should be more learners centred without creating chaos in the classroom.

c) For a good facilitator one should make learners aware, find out the aim of the learners, and indulge students in making some decisions in addition to be a good observer and listener

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENHANCING HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY

Suggestions for improvement include:

1. **Transitioning towards a learning society.** As we move towards a learning society, every human activity will require to contributions from experts, and this will be place the entire sector of higher education in sharp focus. Although the priorities, which are being assigned today to the task of Education for All, will continue to be preponderant, the country will have to prepare itself to invest more and more on higher education and, simultaneously, more measures will have to be taken to refine, diversify and upgrade higher education and entire research programmes.
2. **Strengthening industry-academia connections.** - Industry and Academia connect necessary to ensure curriculum and skills in line with given requirements. Skill building is really very crucial to ensure employability of academia to understand and make sure good jobs (keeping in view knowledge + skills+ global professional skills = good jobs).
3. **Providing incentives to teachers and researchers.** Industry and students are expecting specialized courses to be offered, so that they get the latest and best in education and they are also industry ready and employable. Vocational as well as Diploma courses need to be made more attractive or appealing to facilitate specialized programs being offered to students. Incentives should be provided to teachers and researchers to make these professions more attractive for the younger generation.
4. **Focusing on innovative practices.** The new technologies offer vast opportunities for progress in all walks of life. It offers opportunities for economic growth, improved health, better service delivery, improved learning and socio-cultural advances. Though efforts are required to improve the country's innovative capacity, yet the efforts should be to build on the existing strengths in light of new understanding of the research- innovation-growth linkage.
5. **Mobilizing resources for higher education.** The decline in public funding in the last two plan periods has resulted in serious effects on standards due to increasing costs on non-salary items and emoluments of staff, on the one hand, and declining resources, on the other. Effective measures will have to be adopted to mobilize resources for higher education. There is also a need to relate/revise the fee structure to the student's capacity to pay for the cost. So that, students at lower economic levels can be given highly subsidized and fully subsidized education.
6. **Implementing student-centered education.** Methods of higher education also must be appropriate to the needs of learning to learn, learning to do, learning to be and learning to become. Student-centred education and employment of dynamic methods of education will require from teachers new attitudes and new skills. Methods of teaching through lectures will have to subordinate to the methods that will lay stress on self-study, personal consultation between teachers and pupils, and dynamic sessions of seminars and workshops. Methods of distance education will have to be employed on a vast scale.
7. **Embracing international cooperation.** PPP is most essential to bring in quality in the higher education system. Governments can ensure PPP through an appropriate policy. University Grants Commission and Ministry of HRD should play a major role in developing a purposeful interface between the Universities, Industries and National Research Laboratories (NRLs) as a step towards PPP. Funding to NRLs by the government should ensure the involvement of institutions of higher education engaged in research activities to facilitate availability of latest sophisticated equipment. There has been some effort both by the government and the private education institutions to develop the teaching staff at various levels
8. **Establishing a fair quality assurance system.** There are some suggestions and also an expectations from Government, Industry and Educational Institutions. However, this needs to be intensified with appropriate attention to all the aspects related in order to prepare quality and sufficient number of educational staff. Such efforts, need a very serious structuring for the research base institutions. We have to be optimistic that private-public partnership and the Industry interface will take place in the field of education at all levels, and particularly in the backward regions, which is the need of the hour. To achieve excellence, we thus need to create a real partnership between government, educators and industry- Partnerships that can provide our high-tech industries with skilled workers who meet the standards of their industry.
9. **To Provide Need Based Job-Oriented Courses-** All round development of personality is the purpose of education. But the present day education is neither imparting true knowledge of life and nor improving the talent of a student by which one can achieve laurels in the field one is interested. So, combination of arts subjects and computer science and science and humanities or literature should be introduced so that such courses could be useful for the students to do jobs after recruitment in some companies which would reduce unnecessary rush to higher education. The programme must be focused on graduate studies and research and developing strategies and mechanisms for the rapid and efficient transfer of knowledge and for its application to specific national and local conditions and needs. Meritorious doctoral students should be recognized through teaching

assistantships with stipends over and above the research fellowships. Finally, it is based on knowledge only vision of the future life and work can be had; based on this vision only a broad ambition can be fixed for oneself; and based on this ambition only one can lead interesting life doing satisfying job to do remarkable achievements in some field in the world.

10. **International Cooperation-** Universities in India have been a primary conduit for the advancement and transmission of knowledge through traditional functions such as, research, innovation, teaching, human resource development, and continuing education. International cooperation is gaining importance as yet another function. With the increased development of transport and communication, the global village is witnessing a growing emphasis on the international cooperation and action to find satisfactory solutions to problems that have global dimensions and higher education is one of them.
11. **Towards a New vision-** India realizes, like other nations of the world, that humanity stands today at the head of a new age of a large synthesis of knowledge, and that the East and the West have to collaborate in bringing about concerted action for universal upliftment, and lasting peace and unity. In this new age, great cultural achievements of the past have to be recovered and enriched in the context of the contemporary advancement so that humanity can successfully meet the evolutionary and revolutionary challenges and bring about a new type of humanity and society marked by integrated powers of physical, emotional, dynamic, intellectual, ethical, aesthetic and spiritual potentialities.

VI. CONCLUSION

The paper underscores the power of knowledge and the urgency of holistic education to empower the workforce. It emphasizes the need for radical reforms to avoid the demographic dividend turning into a liability. The paper presented the framework reflecting the significance of holistic education in higher education to enhance workforce employability. Additionally, the paper delves into aspects such as the effectiveness and engagement of educators, teaching pedagogy, and the importance of assessment and feedback to substantiate the concept of demographic dividend. Urgent reforms and substantial changes are deemed necessary at this juncture to avert the risk of our youth transitioning from a demographic dividend to a demographic liability.

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