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QUALITY PARAMETERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN RURAL INDIA BY NAAC

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ABSTRACT

In the 21st century those countries will lead the world who have quality higher education system because higher education not only generates larger personal and social wealth, but all the aspects of development such as intellectual, social, cultural, aesthetic, economical, moral, and human resource are directly or indirectly related to it. In India Higher Education sector has witnessed a tremendous increase in the number of Universities/University level Institutions & Colleges and student's enrolment. To improve the scenario of higher education, the Government of India has started Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA), a Centrally Sponsored Scheme in 2013 and as a result, at present the enrolment ratio is 25%. The country has shown remarkable improvement in the enrolment but the quality is matter of concern till date, which is essential to achieve the goal and implementation of national policy. Poor infrastructure, examination ridden curriculum, memory based examinations, lack of quality faculty members, poor teaching methods, lack of funds, inconsistent government policies regarding higher education, vested political motives, huge demands of young population, political turmoil, growing privatization, lack of access and equity etc. are some of the challenges in higher education. There are many more such challenges and this paper critically analyses all those challenges along with the possible solutions.

Keywords: Higher Education, Quality, Higher Education Institute, Enrolment, Challenges, Solutions

In this emerging scenario of knowledge based society of 21st century, higher education becomes a crucial issue in creating skilled and knowledgeable human resources to meet the forthcoming challenges of the changing world. Higher education imparts in -depth knowledge and under-standing so as to advance the students to new frontiers of knowledge in different walks of life. It is considered to be the major area in promoting and accelerating the process of national development .A nation cannot move without a skilled and competent quality of the citizens. Amartya sen and jean Dereze (1995) argued higher education as one of the most important inputs that influence the all around development of any nation especially in the field of economic, physical, social ,cultural ,ethical and spiritual .Education enables people to build up their capabilities, there by broadening their entitlements and facilitating ex-pansion of freedom which is turn is the primary end and principal means of development .Now globalization and economic liberalization have bought radical changes in our approach to higher education and its related issues i.e. employment ,Management, finance etc. That is why the higher educational system has started to produce stu-dents as marketable products instead of creating ethical, informed and enlightened citizens.

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The economic principle of demand and supply works in the higher educational system also. In this context the role of higher education becomes very crucial especially for rural India which is a significant field of our national enthusiasm as well as integrity.

Higher education for rural India

India as a developing country and one of the influential economies in the world cannot ignore the reality of its rural scenario. The country where the most of the people are below of the poverty line, definitely have some special and energetic programmers for rural development. We are now in the 65 years of our independence; but this achievement has not yet conceptualized to welfare state and fulfillment of the needs of every corner. It is necessary to know clearly that rural development is not limited to the issues for under developed countries, in fact many of the developed countries have very active rural development Programmers. The Main Policy under the term is to develop the underdeveloped villages. Here education as the key instrument for social change and mobility can play a better in rural development of a country like India. In India, the situation is very sensitive that needs a clear vision on rural education and its strategies to improve the socio-economic status of rural peoples. The strategy is as one that achieves desired increase in farm output at minimum costs, makes possible widespread improvements in the welfare of the rural population, and contributes to the transformation of a predominant agrarian economy and facilitates a broader process of social modernization.

According to its own multidimensional nature, rural development is the approach to bring about the desired positive changes in the socio-economic and cultural life of the rural people. For maintenance of equality and fraternity which is one of constitutional and democratic feature of our nation, we must have to link the remote areas to urban so that it transported modernization in thinking and developing outlook towards a balanced society. Therefore the present paper focuses on rural development aims at finding the ways to improve the rural lives with participation of the rural people themselves so as to meet the required need of the area. Education naturally facilitates them to actively participate in their sustainable development in a very integrated development approach. The determining factors of rural development are also dependent on educational consciousness of the masses which influences in better benefit of the rural people. In the context of globalization and effort towards poverty reduction, emphasis should be given on educational opportunities through different ways so that it develops self esteem and self confidence to make own destiny. Higher education must notice only on national development, but also enlightens the rural areas with higher skills to meet the satisfactory employment for raising the 'rural suns'. Higher educational institutions which are established in rural areas have the major role for transformation and up gradation of their personal and social status through proper instruction and guidance. So in this situation some problems have been discussed, which create hurdles in the achievement of positive results:

The Quality of Teachers/Teaching:

Well -Qualified and highly committed teachers are critical to the quality of higher education institutions. It is disheartening to note that most of teachers of colleges in rural areas lack advanced training to cope up with the changing set up. Teaching methods are of

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colonial in nature. Most of the teachers simply dictate notes in class. Therefore they have become only “dictators” in the class. Students often mug up what is being dictated in the class and teaching has been restricted to pass the examination only.

Weak Primary Education System:

Primary education is the foundation of a nation, which among other things depend on the status of its school going population. However, it is sad to note that quality of Indian school System in rural areas is very poor. Most of schools lack basic infrastructure facilities. Most of the children complete their schooling without undergoing adequate training. When they go for higher education they face lot of difficulties. Most of rural students find it difficult to pass the competitive examination like IAS, NET, SLET, CET, banking, staff selection and the like. Most of the questions appearing in these examinations are related to primary and secondary education only. Memorization without realization at the school level makes them forget when they go for higher education. Unless children are equipped with advanced knowledge and training at primary level, their performance will be deteriorated at higher level.

Medium of Instruction

One of the major problems of the students of rural areas is of medium in which they study. Of late in most of colleges, teaching and learning is taking place only in regional languages. At primary level most of students in rural areas study in regional languages. They find it very difficult to study in English. International Language is almost missing in rural areas. We have almost reached a stage where the intelligence of a candidate is decided on his/her ability to speak in English. If he/she communicates in English, then he will be considered to be fit to deliver goods in market. There are many evidences where most of the rural students were failed to impress the interviewers at the time of selection for a job. Unless we equip the rural students in English, we are certainly killing the future of rural boys and girls. Those who stress on regional languages are either well settled themselves along with their kith and kin or retired people. They don't like rural students to give competition to their kith and kin. As the world is moving fast and therefore, communication skills have become most important these days, whether we like it or not English has become the decider of fate of future generations in job market.

Problem faced by students:

In Rural areas, students face difficult conditions for study. Overcrowded classes, (particularly at the time of combining language classes), inadequate library and laboratory to destabilize the quality and interests of the students. It is well known that English is emerged as ‘Unavoidable language’. But in most of the colleges they combine different classes in to one, which sometimes goes up to 120 to 150 students per class. What is required of most important to-day, given least importance? How can a teacher justify the crowd of students in a class? Students certainly are the losers in this state of affairs.

Besides these, no college does admission test or screening of applications at the time of admission. Whoever applies (interested or not interested) will be given admission to the college. In fact most of the students are not academically prepared to courses in higher

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education .Some students take admission due to the pressure of their parents or just for time pass.

Another problem of rural students is that they have limited choice of selecting the courses/subjects. Very few choices are left to them. As a result students are forced to take up subject such as humanities the arts that offer very limited job opportunities and lead to educated unemployment. Laboratory facilities and advanced computer facilities are rarely made in rural areas. Even though most of rural colleges have computer centers, sustainable computer centers hardly exist. In a sustainable computer center the course, syllabus; structure will be changed in tune with the latest developments. We have entered a situation from which it is now almost impossible to live without the computer.

Every year and in every field computers have entered .Every year computer manufactures change the capacity of computer and make advance configuration. That means they are making business out of it . Poor countries are finding it difficult to run with the speed of developed countries. But they cannot sit idle. They have to catch the speed of developed countries. In this race rural colleges / students certainly lag behind because there is no mechanism available in rural colleges to prepare the youth in response to the changed global scenario. This creates a situation of “use it or lose it environment”. In this context Alvin Toffler (1929) said, “The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn”.

What can be done?

In order to arrest the problems of higher education in rural areas sincere efforts should be made to expand the quantity and quality of higher education in rural areas .Rural higher educational institutions should:

- a) Provide increasing numbers of students, especially from disadvantages background, with specialized skills, because specialists are increasingly in demand in all sectors of the world economy.
- b) Teach students not just what is currently known, but also how to keep their knowledge up to date , so that they will be able to refresh their skills as the socio-economic environment changes.
- c) Provide new technology based tools for gathering knowledge and it must become central elements of their education, and curricula should be designed so that students learn how to earn.
- d) The emphasis on English language and communication skills should be doubled.
- e) Improve educational infrastructure, especially access to computer and internet and scientific laboratories and also traditional infrastructure such as libraries , class rooms at both primary and higher education's level.
- f) The recruitment, retention, motivation and long term development of well trained faculty.
- g) Increasing access for economically and socially marginalized population including women.

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Finally to achieve these efforts, a transparent and informal dialogue needs to take place, bringing together educators, industry, government, prospective students and other stakeholders. The higher education must be customizing to fit a century's stage of development, political system, social structure and economic capacities, history and local/indigenous culture.

The role of education in rural communities

Educating communities means developing schools and educating children and leaders. By doing so, rural communities will lead to a healthier and more sustainable future. An education system in rural communities has the opportunity to build capacity and knowledge in the rural populace, helping them to make informed decisions about their farms and to innovate in agricultural affairs. Education also exposes the masses to information and helps prevent the misinterpretation of information. Education can lead to many positive outcomes, such as an improved ability to understand policies, procedures, rights, duties, government schemes, legislation, available benefits, and protection laws.

It is important to understand the need for good quality education in rural areas, as it helps keep rural areas populated. Young people move to urban areas for better opportunities in education and employment, improved rural education is one possible strategy for keeping them in rural areas. It was recently documented that 69% of India's population lives in rural areas. Quality education is a pertinent tool for enhancing quality of life, creating awareness and capability, increasing freedom, and improving overall holistic human development for the people and the nation.

Education is considered a vital element in the development of a society, a system, and a country. I am convinced that a well-supported, easily accessible education system is an efficient means to make people economically conscious, and thereby, make them actively participate in their economic prosperity and cultural development. As an educator, I insist that education should be given first and foremost in the service of democracy, which demands not only to be protected against decisions but to be a part of decisions that influence society in a positive way.

In the long term, education in a rural setting should be focused on making rural people responsible for their participation in the following elements of rural development:

- Employment and income opportunities: increasing the quality of education in rural areas can significantly impact the development of employment opportunities. Studies have shown that the availability of skilled labor, transportation infrastructure, and local markets are prime factors in selecting a community for an industrial placement.
- Increase in productivity of rural labor force: education can improve labor productivity in rural areas, increasing the wealth of a region or area.
- Education develops leadership: with education, individuals gain confidence, knowledge, skills, and experience — all factors that increase an individual's ability to effectively and efficiently lead a group of people towards success. Education helps to identify

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and develop those leaders in our communities who will battle against low-quality education, and poverty, leading to a successful and strong community.

Conclusion:

Now despite of urbanization of our attitude ,we must have to formulate our approach for the rural people so that they can also enjoy the spirit of liberalization in a positive way .For all around progress of the country it is necessary to take every section along and help it grow to its maxi-mum potential .Education is the key which alone can prove a solution to multiple issues. It should be available in all corners of the country if we really want a self dependent society able to solve unforeseen troubles. Higher education opens the door of opportunity and prepares a solid back-ground for ultimate growth in almost all areas. If your fail to receive in the nation cannot find itself fit for facing and challenges of the future .So it is a need of hour to expand higher educational institutions for the rural people to turn them dreams in to reality.

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