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## **THE CONFRONTS & PROSPECTS OF ADVANCED EDUCATION IN INDIA.**

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**Abstract:** Glancing through the past trend of education in India, we are witnessing a rapid revolution in the higher education system, this rapid transformation in higher education is not only contributing maximum towards development but also is making the country to realize that the economic success of the states is directly determined by their education systems. The strength of any country is education and thus an educated nation is inevitably a developed 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. Although there have been lot of challenges to higher education system of India but equally have lot of opportunities to overcome these challenges and to make higher education system much better. It needs greater transparency and accountability, the role of colleges and universities in the new millennium, and emerging scientific research on how people learn is of utmost important. India need well skilled and highly educated people who can drive our economy forward. India provides highly skilled people to other countries therefore; it is very easy for India to transfer our country from a developing nation to a developed nation. The paper studies to focus on the challenges of advanced education in India coupled with to point out the opportunities in higher education system in India.

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**Introduction:** The post-secondary education termed as higher education or advanced education is an optional final stage that occurs after completion of secondary education. Often delivered at universities, academies, colleges, seminaries, conservatories, and institutes of technology, advanced education is also available through certain college-level institutions, including vocational schools, trade schools, and other career colleges that award academic degrees or professional certifications. India's higher education system is the world's third largest in terms of students, next to China and the United States. In future, India will be one of the largest education hubs. India's Higher Education sector has witnessed and will be witnessing tremendous increase in the number of Universities/University level Institutions & Colleges since independence. Even though the 'Right to Education Act' which stipulates compulsory and free education to all children within the age groups of 6-14 years, has brought about a revolution in the education system of the country with statistics revealing a staggering enrolment in schools over the last four years, the involvement of private sector in higher education has seen drastic changes in the field. Today over 60% of higher education institutions in India are promoted by the private sector. This has accelerated establishment of institutes which have originated over the last decade making India home to the largest number of Higher Education institutions in the world, with student enrolments at the second highest (Shaguri, 2013). The number of Universities has increased 34 times from 20 in 1950 to 677 in 2014. Despite these numbers, international education rating agencies have not placed many of these institutions within the best of the world ranking. Also, India has failed to produce world class universities.

In the days when few learners progressed beyond primary education or basic education, the term "higher education" was often used to refer to advanced education, which can create some confusion. This is the origin of the term high school for various schools for children between the ages of 11 and 18.

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Advanced education includes teaching, research, exacting applied work (e.g. in medical schools and dental schools), and social services activities of universities. Within the realm of teaching, it includes both the undergraduate level, and beyond that, graduate-level (or postgraduate level). The latter level of education is often referred to as graduate school. In addition to the skills that are specific to any particular degree, potential employers in any profession are looking for evidence of critical thinking and analytical reasoning skills, team working skills, information literacy, ethical judgment, decision-making skills, fluency in speaking and writing, problem solving skills, and a wide knowledge of liberal arts and sciences.

Since World War II, developed and many developing countries have increased the participation of the age group who mostly studies higher education from the elite rate, of up to 15 per cent, to the mass rate of 16 to 50 percent. In many developed countries, participation in higher education has continued to increase towards universal. Higher education is important to national economies, both as an industry, in its own right, and as a source of trained and educated personnel for the rest of the economy. College educated workers have commanded a measurable wage premium and are much less likely to become unemployed than less educated workers. However, the admission of so many students of only average ability to higher education inevitably requires a decline in academic standards, facilitated by grade inflation. Also, the supply of graduates in many fields of study is exceeding the demand for their skills, which aggravates graduate unemployment, underemployment, credentials and educational inflation. Today, Knowledge is power. The more knowledge one has, the more empowered one is. However, India continues to face stern contests. Despite growing investment in education, 25 percent of its population is still illiterate; only 15 per cent of Indian students reach high school, and just 7 per cent graduate (Masani, 2008). The quality of education in India whether at primary or higher education is significantly poor as compared to major developing nations of the world. As of 2008, India's post-secondary institutions offer only enough seats for 7 per cent of India's college-age population, 25 per cent of teaching positions nationwide are vacant, and 57 per cent of college professors lack either a master's or PhD degree (Newsweek, 2011). As of 2011, there are 1522 degree-granting engineering colleges in India with an annual student intake of 582,000 (Science and Technology Education, 2009) plus 1,244 polytechnics with an annual intake of 265,000. However, these institutions face shortage of faculty and concerns have been raised over the quality of education (Mittra, 2008). Despite these challenges; advanced education system of India equally has lot of prospects to overcome these confronts and have the capability to make its identity at international level. However, it needs greater transparency and accountability, the role of universities and colleges in the new millennium, and emerging scientific research on how people learn is of utmost important. India provides highly skilled people to other countries therefore; it is very easy for India to transfer our country from a developing nation to a developed nation.

**Confronts of Advanced Education in India:** It is our 71<sup>st</sup> year of independence ( Aug 2018 ) and still our education system has not been developed fully. We are not able to list a single university in top 100 universities of the world. Even though various governments have changed during these six decades they have not only tried to boost the education system but also have implemented various education policies and they were not sufficient to put an example for the universe. UGC is continuously working and focusing on quality education in advanced education sector. Still we are facing lot of problems and challenges in our education system. Some of the basic challenges in advanced education system in India are discussed below:

1. **Standard of Living:** Although the country is about to attain the status of “Developed Country”, the number of people below the poverty line is more in India. Thus, such people of the nation are still lacking in basic amenities like food, clothing and shelter. Accordingly basic primary education itself is pathetic and advanced education is purely unbearable for such citizens.
2. **Economic Conditions:** In the today’s scenario of advanced education, the role of computers is similarly significant and thus the ICT literacy level is to be raised necessarily. To raise ICT literacy level, it is obvious that every home should have computers with internet access. Simultaneously,

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glancing through the economic status of the citizens, majority of the families who are above poverty line too have no computers because of their unsecured economic conditions.

3. **Enrolment:** The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of India in higher education is only 15% which is quite low as compared to the developed as well as, other developing countries. With the increase of enrolments at school level, the supply of higher education institutes is insufficient to meet the growing demand in the country.
4. **Equity:** There is no equity in GER among different sects of the society. According to previous studies the GER in higher education in India among male and female varies to a greater extent. There are regional variations too some states have high GER while as some is quite behind the national GER.
5. **Cultural Factors:** Culture is a system of shared values, beliefs and perceptions that influence the behaviour of every individual. There are different groups based on religion, caste, occupation, income, age and gender and each group exerts influence on the behaviour of people in their respective places through which people are not savvy with advanced education.
6. **Traditional Life:** Nevertheless country is developed or developing, Life is still governed by customs and traditions and people do not easily adapt new practices in advanced education.
7. **Quality Assurance:** Quality in advanced education is a multi-dimensional, multilevel, and a dynamic concept. Currently, Guaranteeing quality in advanced education is amongst the leading challenges being faced in India. However, Government is continuously focusing on the quality education. Still Large number of colleges and universities in India are unable to meet the minimum requirements laid down by the UGC and our universities are not in a position to mark its place among the top universities of the world.
8. **Infrastructure:** Poor infrastructure is another challenge to the advanced education system of India particularly the institutes run by the public sector suffer from poor physical facilities and infrastructure. There are large number of colleges which are functioning on second or third floor of the building on ground or first floor there exists readymade hosieries or photocopy shops.
9. **Political interference:** Most of the educational Institutions are owned by the political leaders, who are playing key role in governing bodies of the Universities. They are using the innocent students for their selfish means. Students organise campaigns, forget their own objectives and begin to develop their careers in politics.
10. **Faculty:** Faculty shortages and the inability of the state educational system to attract and retain well-qualified teachers have been posing challenges to quality education for many years. Large numbers of NET / PhD candidates are unemployed even there are lot of vacancies in higher education, these deserving candidates are then applying in other departments which is a biggest blow to the higher education system.
11. **Accreditation:** As per the data provided by the NAAC, as of June 2010, “not even 25% of the total advanced education institutions in the country were accredited. And among those accredited, only 30% of the universities and 45% of the colleges were found to be of quality to be ranked at 'A' level”.
12. **Research and Innovation:** There are very nominal scholars in our country whose writing is cited by famous western authors. There is inadequate focus on research in advanced education institutes. There are insufficient resources and facilities, as well as, limited numbers of quality faculty to advise students. Most of the research scholars are without fellowships or not getting their fellowships on time which directly or indirectly affects their research. Moreover, Indian Advanced education institutions are poorly connected to research centers. So, this is another area of challenge to the advanced education in India.
13. **Assembly of advanced education:** Management of the Indian education faces challenges of over-centralisation, bureaucratic structures and lack of accountability, transparency, and professionalism. As a result of increase in number of affiliated colleges and students, the burden of administrative functions of universities has significantly increased and the core focus on academics and research is diluted (Kumar, 2015).
14. **Student Engagement:** Even though private institutions often offer class sizes of 25 or fewer students. In advanced education system, this allows each student to actively participate and to get noticed by professors. It also allows students to develop a stronger sense of community and peer relationships for social and academic purposes. However the student engagement with professor or

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academics mainly depends on his academic integrity or keen interest towards pursuing their advanced education.

15. **Tangibles:** There are many basic problems facing advanced education in India today. These include inadequate infrastructure, modern equipments and facilities, large vacancies in faculty positions and poor faculty thereof, low student enrolment rate, outmoded teaching methods, declining research standards, unmotivated students, overcrowded classrooms and widespread geographic, income, gender, and ethnic imbalances. Some institutions are lacking in support services that include accommodation facilities and sports facilities.

**Prospects of Advanced Education in India:** India is a large country, with an estimated population of young people aged between 18 to 23 years to be around 150 millions. The sheer size of the market offers huge opportunities for development of the advanced education sector in India. India now boasts of having more than 33,000 colleges and 659 universities, which has been quite a remarkable growth during the last six decades. In the last decade we witnessed 21.4 million enrolments, which make India the 3rd largest educational system in the world. Unfortunately, the educational infrastructure of India is inadequate to handle such huge volumes. In spite all the government spending in the educational sector, it is just too insufficient to meet the growing requirements. Therefore, advanced Education sector has now been identified as one of the promising areas for private and foreign investments. It offers immense investment opportunities in both non-regulated and regulated segments (Nexus Novus, 26 July, 2013).

Indian advanced education system is growing very fast irrespective of various challenges but there is no reason that these Challenges cannot be overcome. With the help of new-age learning tools, it is easy for country like India to overcome these problems and bring a paradigm shift in the country's advanced education sector. With such a vibrant country with huge population properly educated, the possibilities are endless. If knowledge is imparted using advanced digital teaching and learning tools, and society is made aware of where we are currently lagging behind, our country can easily emerge as one of the most developed nations in the world. There are opportunities for strategic engagement and capacity building in advanced education leadership and management at the state level. There are opportunities for India to collaboration at national and international level on areas of systemic reform, including quality assurance, international credit recognition, and unified national qualifications framework. Equality of educational opportunity in higher education is considered essential because higher education is a powerful tool for reducing or eliminating income and wealth disparities. The idea of equalising educational opportunities also lies in the fact that "the ability to profit by advanced education is spread among all classes of people. There are great reserves of untapped ability in the society; if offered the chance they can rise to the top. A great deal of talent of the highest level is, in fact, lost by an inegalitarian system of education" (Balachander, 1986). The need to enhance the employability of graduates is presenting entry points for collaboration in enterprise education and entrepreneurship, links with industry, research skills and the wide range of transferable skills, including English. The emerging interest in Indian advanced education institutions in the vocational skills market provides areas for potential engagement with international partners. There is a need to build stronger relationships and increase mutual understanding in advanced education by increasing support and participation in platforms (conferences, workshops, seminars) which enable debate and dialogue with other countries of the world.(British Council, 2014).

Some of the opportunities in advanced education system in India are discussed below:

1. **Rapid Transformation:** In the last two decades, 40% villages have been connected by road, in next 10 years another 30% would be getting connected. More than 90% villages are electrified, though only 44% rural homes have electric connections. This rapid growth implies that even the rural India is in the state of getting transformed to develop India at the earliest because the children of rural India are enrolled to the school education and thus this small initiation of school education might tip them to advanced education.

2. **Study Loan:** The government of India is assisting the economically unsound students to pursue their advanced education by providing student loan which is designed to help students pay for post-secondary education and the associated fees, such as tuition, books and supplies, and living expenses. This study loan may differ from other types of loans in the fact that the interest rate may be substantially lower and the repayment schedule may be deferred while the student is still in school.
3. **Scholarships:** One of the most significant differences between public and private institutions is the costs. According to the National Centre for Education Statistics, the average cost for tuition, room and board in private institutions is more than double the same cost at public institutions. However, many students do receive financial aid, including scholarships and grants, which are funded by endowments and private donations. This assists the financially unsound students to pursue their advanced studies.
4. **Rising ICT Literacy Level:** The ICT literacy level has improved from 36% to 59% and shall reach 100% at the earliest. This increased literacy level assures growth of advanced education too.
5. **Increasing avenues:** With the boom of Information Technology segment in India, many software companies are spreading their branches across India. This spread is providing birth to abundant openings, and thus advanced education shall be the basic requirement to fulfil any job avenue.
6. **Prestige:** Through advanced education, institutions typically maintain a high degree of academic brilliance. Selective entrance criteria help private institutions maintain their high standards. This prestige benefits graduates in the marketplace, because their universities carry positive weight in the minds of potential employers.
7. **Reliability:** Through advanced education, it can be reliably considered as to what extent the knowledge gained is correct and up-to-date and hence there by providing proper fault free reliability.
8. **Guaranteed Performance:** Through advanced education, performance is the abilities expected of a graduate and also guaranteed as per the needs.

#### **Suggestions Improving the System of Advanced Education:**

1. There is a need to implement inventive and transformational approach from primary to advanced education level to make Indian educational system globally more relevant and competitive.
2. Advanced educational institutes need to improve quality and reputation.
3. There should be a good infrastructure of colleges and universities which may attract the students.
4. Government must promote collaboration between Indian higher education institutes and top International institutes and also generates linkage between national research laboratories and research centers of top institutions for better quality and collaborative research.
5. There is a need to focus on the graduate students by providing them such courses in which they can achieve excellence, gain deeper knowledge of subject so that they will get jobs after recruitment in the companies which would reduce unnecessary rush to the higher education.
6. Universities and colleges in both public private must be away from the political affiliations, Favouritism; money making process should be out of education system etc.
7. There should be a multidisciplinary approach in higher education so that students knowledge may not be restricted only upto his own subjects.

Finally,

Education is a process by which a person's body, mind and character are formed and strengthened. It is bringing of head, heart and mind together and thus enabling a person to develop an all round personality identifying the best in him or her. Advanced education in India has expanded very rapidly in the last six decades after independence yet it is not equally accessible to all. India is today one of the fastest developing countries of the world with the annual growth rate going above 9%. Still a large section of the population remains illiterate and a large number of children's do not get even primary education. This is not only excluded a large section of the population from contributing to the development of the country fully but it has also prevented them from utilising the benefits of whatever development have taken place for the benefit of the people. No doubt India is facing various challenges in advanced education but to tackle these challenges and to boost advanced education is utmost important. India is a country of huge human resource potential, to utilise this potential properly is the issue which needed to discuss. Opportunities are available but how to get benefits from these opportunities and how to make them accessible to others is the matter of concern. In order to sustain

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that rate of growth, there is need to increase the number of institutes and also the quality of advanced education in India. To reach and achieve the future requirements there is an urgent need to relook at the Financial Resources, Access and Equity, Quality Standards, Relevance, infrastructure and at the end the Responsiveness.

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