

Higher Education in Jammu and Kashmir Its Expansion and Quality Control

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Abstract : *Higher education in Jammu and Kashmir has expanded rapidly over the past one decade. This growth has been mainly driven by private sector initiatives. There are genuine concerns about many of them being substandard. Due to the government's ambivalence on the role of private sector in higher education, the growth has been chaotic and unplanned. The regulatory system has failed to maintain standards to check exploitation. In this paper an attempt has been made to highlight the problems pertaining to expansion and quality control in J&K. It also describes certain suggestive measures to overcome these impediments.*

Key Words : *Higher Education; Jammu & Kashmir; Expansion; Quality Control*

1. Introduction

In a society full of diversity, ideologies and opinions, higher education means different things to different people. The pluralism of views is quite inevitable and some would opine it should be like that only. However, as we intend to discuss and learn more about quality in higher education, we should ask ourselves, what is higher in higher education? You, as a teacher/stakeholder of higher education, will agree that it is not just about the higher level of education structure of the country. There is more to it. In terms of the level, higher education includes college and university teaching learning towards the students' progress to attain higher education qualification. Higher education imparts in-depth knowledge and understanding so as to advance the students to new frontiers of knowledge in different walks of life (subject domains). It is about knowing more and more about less and less. It develops the students' ability to question and seek truth and makes him/her competent to critique on contemporary issues. It broadens the intellectual powers of the individual within a narrow specialization, but also gives him/her a wider perspective of the world around (Arunachalam, 2010).

According to Barnett (1992), there are four predominant concepts of higher education:

- I.** Higher education as the production of qualified human resource: In this view higher education is seen as a process in which the students are counted as "products" absorbed in the labour market. Thus, higher education becomes input to the growth and development of business and industry.
- II.** Higher education as training for a research career: In this view, higher education is preparation for qualified scientists and researchers who would continuously develop the frontiers of knowledge. Quality within this view point is more about research publication and transmission of the academic rigour to do quality research.
- III.** Higher education as the efficient management of teaching provision: Many strongly believe that teaching is the core of educational institutions. Thus, higher education

institutions focus on efficient management of teaching-learning provisions by improving the quality of teaching, enabling a higher completion rate among the students.

- IV.** Higher education as a matter of extending life chance: In this view, higher education is seen as an opportunity to participate in the development process of the individual through a flexible, continuing education mode.

Interestingly, all these four concepts of higher education are not exclusive; rather they are integrated and given an overall picture of what is in higher education. If we look at the activities of colleges and universities, we will realise the teaching, research and extension from the three main functions of higher education. As the topic is pertaining to J&K it is pertinent to mention the issues related to expansion and quality control of higher education.

Jammu and Kashmir State lies in the northern part of India with population 12548926 and covers the area of 22, 2,236 sqkms. The State is divided into three regions namely, Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. The State constitutes 22 districts for administration and carrying out developmental programmes. The State has its own constitution besides the constitution of India and enjoys special status under article 370. As per Economic Survey 2011-12, the State lags far behind in social sector i.e. education, public health, sanitation, and social welfare. Per capita income comes out at Rs. 41833 per annum as against the national average of Rs. 60,972/-. J&K figures among the last four most illiterate and educationally backward state. The population is largely rural and habitations are spread out amongst remote mountainous regions. The child population between 6 to 12 years is roughly 18 lakhs. Literacy rates have increased by about 14% between 2001 and 2011, but female literacy is still abysmally low at 58.01% (Planning Commission Govt. of India, 2013).

2. Objectives

In order to carry out a study in systematic way following research objectives has been formulated.

- 2.1. To analyse the Expansion of higher education in J & K.
- 2.2. To explore the main areas where improvements are seriously needed for enhancement of overall quality of higher education institution in J & K.

3. Methodology

The data was collected with the help of secondary sources pertaining to institutions of higher education of J & K, and analyse the expansion and how to maintain the standards of quality control of higher education.

4. Expansion of Higher Education in Jammu and Kashmir

An outcome of education is composed of both quantity and quality of educational system. In higher education system quantity can be measured by the number of graduates. On the other hand it is rather difficult to measure its quality, but it can be reflected in the performance of its graduates and post graduates. Regarding the expansion of higher education in J&K at present there are two central universities, five state universities, two agriculture universities, one National Institute of Technology, eleven satellite campuses. Besides that there are more than three hundred undergraduate colleges. The detailed description is shown in table 1.

Table 1: Institution of Higher Education in J & K

Division		Type of Institution	No.
Institutions in Kashmir Division		State Universities	2
		Agriculture University	1
		Central University	1
		NIT	1
	Institutions Affiliated with Kashmir University	Satellite Campuses offering (P.G Programmes)	3
		Government College of Education offering (B. Ed & M. Ed)	1
		Private Colleges of Education offering (B. Ed)	66
		Govt. Degree Colleges offering (BA, BSc, B.Com, BBA, BCA, MA, MSC)	53
		Govt. Medical College offering (MBBS, MS, MD, Diploma)	1
		Govt. Dental College offering (BDS, MDS)	1
		Government College of Physical Education offering (BPED, MPED)	1
		Oriental Colleges offering (Fazila)	2
		Private colleges offering (BBA, BE, BCA, MBA, MCA)	9
		Private Medical colleges with offering (BUMS)	2
		Private College offering (B Sc Nursing)	1
		Private Colleges offering (B A LLB)	4
Institutions in Jammu Division		State Universities	3
		Agriculture University	1
		Central University	1
	Institutions Affiliated with Jammu University	Satellite Campuses offering (P.G Programmes)	8
		Govt. Degree Colleges offering B.A, B. Sc, B.Com, BBA, BCA, MCA, M.A, M. Sc.	43
		Private Colleges offering B.A, B. Sc, B.Com	18
		Private Colleges offering B.C.A	12
		Private Colleges offering B.B.A	12
		Government Colleges offering B. Ed	1
		Private Colleges offering B. Ed	72
		Government Colleges offering B.E	1
		Private Colleges offering B. E	3
		Private Colleges offering B.A. LLB	5
		Private Colleges offering MBA	4
		Private Colleges offering MCA	4
		Private Colleges offering B. Pharmacy	1
		Private Colleges offering PGDBM	1
		Private Colleges offering PGDCA	4
		Government Colleges offering M.B.B.S/M.D./M.S.	1
		Private Colleges offering M.B.B.S/M.D./M.S.	1
		Government Colleges offering BDS	1
		Private Colleges offering B. Sc Nursing	2
		Private Colleges offering B. Pht.	1
		Government Colleges offering B.A, MS(Ayurveda)	1

Source: Prospectus Kashmir University 2014
http://www.jammuuniversity.in/LIST_OF_COLLEGES.pdf

From the above table it clearly indicates that the expansion of higher education in J&K is gigantic both in government and private sector. While looking in the growth rate of colleges in India among the top five states J&K is falling on number third having 13.6 in 2005 (UGC 2005). In 2005 J&K had only 162 colleges, but at present this number has been doubled. The enrolment ratio in 2004-05 in J&K was above 13, falling at ninth place in India states.

If we look at the present in the higher education of state J&K visa-vis its quality, one does not feel shy to express its apathy as it suffers from many drawbacks that have affected its quality especially in the college sector of higher education. The main concerns that affect our higher education today are:

1. Mushroom growth of ill equipped, ill provided and inadequately staffed colleges, defective admission policy in colleges that makes our colleges' hub of uninterested and non-serious students who consider colleges as a waiting hall. The admissions are provided beyond intake capacity of the colleges. There is always water tight subject combination offered to students without consideration of their interests, aptitudes and needs.
2. The examination system is not appropriate. They are not conducted in a fixed time frame and results are not announced in a reasonable time after the examinations are over. It is worth mentioning that examinations test only cramming and retention power of the students. They however, do not test the understanding, creative thinking and application. The existing examinations do not fulfil the real objectives of testing. They fail to measure the qualities that are meant to be assessed through them. They measure only a limited sphere of achievement and exclude from their scope skills, interests, intelligence, attitudes, physical and social development and other personality traits (Harvey and Green, 1993).
3. The deficiency of trained and skilled manpower in offices, laboratories, libraries and also in teaching learning process. There are number of colleges which are without proper accommodation, faculty, laboratories, libraries, computer labs etc. Therefore, it affects the quality of teaching.
4. There has been a tremendous growth of teacher education institutions in the J&K State during last 20 years. In 1981 there were only three B. Ed colleges with an intake capacity of 300 students. But at present a large number of B. Ed colleges have been established in private sector. The number has reached to 140 colleges out of which 73 in Jammu and 67 in Kashmir. Most of the colleges lack infrastructure, library, laboratory facilities and competent faculty.
5. The attitude of college teachers towards research and extension work is not positive. They do not find resources time and conditions conducive for research and extension work in their colleges. Besides, they are largely overburdened with teaching learning process warranted by excessive enrolment which always remains beyond the intake capacity of the college. As a result the students too are not exposed to research experiences at under graduate level.
6. It is evident that expansion of higher education in J&K was remarkable, the main part played by the private sector. The band of unemployed youths has been come out from these colleges and Universities. The growth rate of unemployed youths has been increased every year. The State government could not create the jobs for such a huge band, and is the main issue in front of the state government. The state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) has shown high economic growth but has not been able to meet the aspirations of the youth who are looking for opportunities of employment. Frequent disturbances have created an atmosphere of uncertainty, impacting employment creation which has alienated the youth. The number of job seekers increases every year. The below table shows the trend of job seekers in every year.

Table: 2. Job Seekers in Jammu and Kashmir

Year→	October 2008	November 2009	March 2010
Job Seekers	80529	447653	588532

**Source (Report of the expert group 2011)*

5. Quality Control of Higher Education in J & K

Development of any country is based in the development of human beings and human beings are developed by and at the educational institutions. There is no doubt that we have succeeded in expending the higher education. But the quality of higher education is still distant. There is growing of institutions of higher education in J&K with fanciful programmes but with sub-standard facilities which consequently lead dilution of standards.

Mukhopadhyay (2005) has proposed a workable strategic plan for the adoption of total Quality Management in Higher Education Institution. He has built the strategic plan in seven steps.

- i. Beliefs, vision , mission , goals
- ii. Institutional assessment and SWOT analysis
- iii. Learner's need assessment and client education.
- iv. Quality policy and intervention plan;
- v. Cost of quality,
- vi. Planning for implementation , and
- vii. Evaluation and feedback.

In order to maintain the quality control in higher institutes of learning India in general and J&K in particular. The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), a premier Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) established by University Grants Commission (UGC) New Delhi has been in operation since 1994. NAAC has been primarily addressing and accreditation related to quality sustenance and quality enhancement in Higher Educational Institutions (NAAC, 2004).

NAAC has pointed out seven broad areas or criteria's with many key aspects under each criterion. Each area has been given weightage as per its importance. These broad seven areas are as under:

- i. Curricular Aspects.
- ii. Teaching learning and evaluation.
- iii. Research, consultancy and Extension.
- iv. Infrastructure and learning Resources.
- v. Students support and progressions.
- vi. Governance and leadership.
- vii. Innovative practices.

On the above seven parameters the quality of a College or University is being ascertained and a grade awarded. The grade that is conferred upon a College or University indicates its overall quality (NAAC, 2004).

How quality of Higher Education could be enhanced. According to Vargese, "*Quality products and quality service begins with quality thinking (Goel and Goel 2005)*". Whether we consider education a products or service, one thing is clear that is, it has to be marketable. Therefore, it has to be good and acceptable to the cliental. The institution of higher learning should function

to produce good students for different specialization. This is to be done by the facility with the help for infrastructure and learning resources.

5.1. Areas to Maintain the Quality of Higher Education

The following are the main areas where improvements are seriously needed for enhancement of overall quality of higher education institution in J&K.

- 5.1.1. Provision of Sufficient Finances:** The rapid expansion of higher education with limited resources has created lots of problem deficiencies that need to be met out on priority basis. For provision of sufficient infrastructure, material resources, manpower facilities on regular basis, we need sufficient financial resources, so that there deficiencies are sorted out. Public support for higher education might be at least 9.65% of the GDP as the National Knowledge Commission recommends but unfortunately it stands at merely 2.5% (National Knowledge Commission, Report to the Nation, 2006).
- 5.1.2.** The higher education sector is facing a manpower crunch as the most competent and skilful are not being attracted by education profession for want of fewer employments. In comparison the other profession like *bureaucracy*, medicine, engineering information technology etc. teaching profession is less preferred. This has resulted in the dearth of faculty and other supportive staff. Though due to usage of modern technology in education, the role of teacher has somewhat changed but its need and importance has further increased without teacher, no student can compete his educational needs. We have to attract the talented youth towards education profession so that they could best educe the skills and potential out of student's abilities (Aggarwal, 1994). If we succeed in the aspect of higher education, certainly our higher institutions of learning will produce skilful, smart, hardworking, and dedicated leaders who will contribute to their personal life as well as help J&K in making a developed state. Besides teaching faculty, our institutes are in need of skilful supportive staff in laboratories, libraries, offices and physical education departments. In addition in-service training programmes need to be strengthened so that the skills and competencies are further developed in the manpower which will ultimately result in their discharge of duties more efficiently, effectively and with dedication.
- 5.1.3. Provision of Infrastructure:** The lack of infrastructure in the existing colleges and Universities has badly affected the quality of higher education in J&K. The expansion of higher education in terms of establishing of new Colleges and Universities has not been supplemented with sufficient buildings, libraries, laboratories, playground, and other material inputs especially in case of colleges. So there is immense need to provide such physical facilities to colleges and Universities so that these could compete with other institution of higher learning anywhere in the India. The strong wave of globalization and trends in internationalization of higher education stress the need to develop a strong and vibrant higher education system. Only those societies could harvest the gains of globalization that have strong and wide spread higher education system. And that is possible only when heavy investments are made in the area of infrastructure development.
- 5.1.4. Need Based Curriculum:** Curriculum is sum total of all the learning experiences provided to students by the educational institution. It consists of the means, media and materials and it has two components: (i) Organized classroom and institutions (ii) Various activities beyond the organized class room instructions.

The Indian Education Commission (1964-66) had noted that education should be related to “the life needs and aspirations of the people and to make it an instrument of social change. It is therefore a right time that the existing educational system should be revamped to respond to the growing needs and demands of the modern global world order. Our institutes of higher learning are required to respond to the local, national and global requirements in terms of supplying skilful and technical manpower. For this purpose the curriculum need to redesigned in a proper planned manner so that the pass outs of our colleges and Universities could best fit in the local as well as global job market so that the employability and empowerment of students is ensured. In the revamped curriculum, the analytical ability and communication skill of students must get predominant position. Systematic thoughts, progressive ideas, positive attitude and planned work alone determine the success of students. There must be student centric learning process aided by teaching technology. In short, planning, decision making, confidence building, communicating, self-starting and achieving abilities in a time bound manner should be developed among students through provisions in the curriculum.

5.1.5. Provisions of Facilities to Promote Research and Development: Research matters more than anything else in defining excellence in institutes of higher education. It is an important parameter in ranking the Universities worldwide. But unluckily, Indian higher education system is known for its poor standing in research because the inputs needs for research like equipment, or instruments, chemicals, library etc. has always been insufficient. Besides, we have failed to create a research environment in our colleges and universities. There is an immense need of developing a strong research culture with good leadership, appropriate management structure, research oriented faculty, infrastructure and funds in our colleges and Universities. There should be collaboration between institutes of higher learning and industry and other research and development organization (Planning Commission GOI, 2009).

5.1.6. Provision of Appropriate Teaching/Learning Experience and Technology: In order to ensure quality education at higher institutions of learning certain intervention are needed in provision of teaching learning experience as per the latest research in the fields of pedagogy. An interactive teaching learning modal , or a simulated experiment on computer or by the literature research in the library or internet need to adopted so that students are helped to create a culture of critical enquiry , analytical thinking and reasoning. Since, we are living in a technologically advanced era in which every aspect of life is more or less regulated by modern technology. So, there is need to integrate technology with pedagogy. The educationists, IT professionals, Media, policy makers, planners and researchers and administration have to work and plan together (Planning Commission GOI, 2009).

5.1.7. Change in Examination System: The existing examination and evaluation system is considered to be the most defective, as it does not evaluate the individual performance and abilities in totality in real sense. So as comprehensive evaluation scheme need to introduce in our higher institution of learning's. The main objectives of tests and evaluation are mastery, diagnosis, and reporting progress, so our examination and evaluation system should include all these technique and tests that really measures acknowledge, competencies, attitudes and skills. For this purpose a continuous assessment throughout academic sessions needs to be designed and implemented by teachers along with the existing, essay type, objective type or performance type test. This will help in gaining the substantial information's about or individual that is required in variety of educational decisions, and placements in the job market.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

Higher education in J&K suffers from several systemic deficiencies. As a result, it continues to produce graduates that are unemployable despite emerging shortages of skilled manpower in an increasing number of sectors. The standards of academic research are low and declining. Some of the problems of the J&K higher education, such as – the cumbersome affiliating system, inflexible academic structure, uneven capacity across various subjects, eroding autonomy of academic institutions, and the low level of public funding are well known. Many other concerns relating to the dysfunctional regulatory environment, the accreditation system that has low coverage and no consequences, absence of incentives for performing well, and the unjust public funding policies are not well recognised.

Despite, its impressive growth, higher education in J&K could maintain only a very small base of quality institutions at the top. Standards of the majority of the institutions are poor and declining. There are a large number of small and non-viable institutions. Entry to the small number of quality institutions is very competitive giving rise to high stake entrance tests and a flourishing private tuition industry. In the State private institutions are more as compared to government institutions. While public funding declined (in real terms), enrolments in higher education institutions grew to meet the surge in demand. This further deteriorated academic standards. As a result, the institutions were forced to raise their tuition fees to sustain themselves. Emergence of private providers and increase in tuition fees in public institutions without any substantial programme for students' financial aid has made higher education beyond the reach of the poor. The paper discusses feasible strategies to overcome this and make higher education affordable and accessible to all.

To conclude it can be well said that higher education is the backbone of any society. It is the quality of higher education that decides the quality of human resources in a country. Higher education, as we see today, is a complex system facilitating teaching, research, extension and international cooperation and understanding. The expansion of higher education in J&K is very vast, especially in private sector. There has been tremendous growth in teacher training colleges, the main reason behind this is lack of monitoring and proper evaluation due to which, quality education suffers. Besides that State government does not implement the recommendations of NCTE. Therefore, need of the hour is to overcome the impediments that are prevailing in the higher education system in J&K, in order to promote quality education and academic excellence so that we can produce a youth which are repertoire of skills, well equipped with knowledge, attitudes, values and abilities to help them perform their task effectively. Operationalization of the strategy calls strong determination, meticulous planning, innovative and participatory methods of programmes, implementation and a considerable amount of financial resources.

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