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## **A STUDY ON VIEWS AND PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS REGARDING THE IMPORTANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE PRESENT SCENARIO**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The responding teachers have stated that one needs to be highly educated in order to survive in the modern society. In fact, because of the constantly shifting demands of the labor market, higher education has grown increasingly important. Today, acquiring a higher degree is seen as a means of landing a good career. In the modern world, "there are many jobs that require it as a necessary qualification." Because of this, there is a great need for professional education. A college degree is a terrific method to start your career in many respected fields, according to this statement. A respondent made the following comment in this regard: "Higher education is vital in the present period to gain high profile positions, to stay up with a dynamic society, and to establish one independently." Higher education will alter the economic landscape of the nation, according to another response. The spread of higher education has improved peoples' quality of life.

***KEY WORDS: Perceptions, Teachers, Importance, Higher Education, Scenario, Quality, Life.***

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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

One of the potential tools for both social and individual advancement is education in all its forms. It is a process by which people not only gain knowledge and informational skills but also values, the capacity to live in and connect with social groupings, as well as the ability to engage in cultural activities and constructive, albeit occasionally non-economic, endeavours. Education



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is crucial to the practise of democracy and aids in holding political leaders responsible. It is also a potent tool for eradicating inequalities and injustice in society since the educational advancement of underprivileged groups can strengthen those groups' capacity to organise politically, fight oppression, and demand a better deal. Because of this, education has been lauded by all civic societies for millennia, and in recent times, having access to it has been seen as a fundamental human right. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states in Article 26(1) that "Everyone has a right to education. At the very least, elementary and fundamental levels of education must be free. The first grade must be completed. Technical and professional education must be widely accessible, and everyone must have equal access to higher education based only on merit.

With the publication of Theodore W. Schultz's article "Investment in Human Capital" in the American Economic Review in 1961, the investment in education further rose to prominence around the world. He claimed in this paper that knowledge and skills were both types of capital that were the result of deliberate investment. If we were to view education as a pure form of investment, the results would indicate that the returns on education were relatively more alluring than those on non-human capital. In this setting, education became acknowledged as a crucial component in the growth of human capital. This new growth is reflected in the rhetoric around education policy in post-Independence India, where the National Policy on Education (1986) and Education Commission (1964-66) both saw education as a special investment in the present and the future.

### **1.1 HIGHER EDUCATION: THE LESSONS OF EXPERIENCE**

A report by the World Bank titled Higher Education: The Lessons of Experience was published in 1994. The primary aspects of the crisis in higher education in emerging nations were reviewed in this research. It concentrated on four main directions for reforming the higher education systems in these countries, namely greater differentiation of higher education institutions, including the development of private institutions; diversification of funding sources



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for public higher education; a redefinition of the role of the state in higher education, with greater emphasis on institutional autonomy and accountability; and an emphasis on the importance of policies explicitly designed to give prioritisation to institutions of higher learning.

This report made the case that, when it comes to the expansion of higher education, higher education shouldn't be given the top priority claim for newly available public resources for education in many developing countries, especially those that haven't yet achieved adequate access, equity, and quality at the primary and secondary levels. This is due to the importance that nations place on achieving universal literacy and the fact that primary and secondary education often yields larger social returns on investment than higher education. Additionally, because of the overwhelming fiscal realities in the majority of developing nations, it will be necessary to increase enrollment and improve quality in higher education with little to no public funding.

The report argued that government should support the growth of private higher education to complement public institutions as a way to manage the costs of increasing higher education enrollments, increasing the diversity of training programmes, and expanding social participation in higher education. The report was in favour of encouraging private participation in higher education. Additionally, it was stated that greater differentiation in higher education, or the growth of non-university institutions and encouragement of for-profit institutions, could help meet the rising social demand for higher education and improve the responsiveness of higher education systems to shifting labour market needs. In addition, the report concentrated on expanding the sources of funding for public institutions by encouraging them to engage in income-generating activities like short-term courses, contract research for industry, and consulting services, as well as by eliminating subsidies for non-instructional costs.

The Report promoted the notion that governments might help free up some of the additional public resources required to improve quality and access at the elementary and secondary levels



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by increasing private finance for higher education through cost sharing and the promotion of private institutions. It placed a strong emphasis on loan programmes including fixed payback loan schemes and income-contingent loans when it came to providing financial aid to poor students.

The report exudes ambiguity and general uncertainty about its subject matter because, at one point, it emphasised that higher education should not be given much priority in development strategies, while at another point, it articulates that higher education is crucial for social and economic development and that higher education development is correlated with economic development because estimated social rates of return of 10% or more in many developing countries.

## **1.2 POLICY PERSPECTIVE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA**

What governments decide to do or not do is referred to as policy. Public policy refers to the decisions and stances made by the state, which is made up of a variety of institutions that all share the fundamental qualities of authority and collectivity. In the context of other decisions made by political actors acting on behalf of state institutions while in a position of authority, a policy expresses decision-making patterns. The term "policy" refers to objectives that can theoretically be met and concerns that can give rise to legal action. There were some significant advances during the 20th century.

After protracted freedom wars, nations like India that had been colonies, semi-colonies, or dependents for decades or even centuries attained political independence. With decolonization, they also arose into modern nationhood, where diverse people of different linguistic groups, ethnicities, and regional identities who had come together during anti-colonial struggles decided to live in unison as a single nation under a single nation-state (Patnaik, 2009:3). In all of this upsurge, education, particularly higher education, played a crucial role in the Indian context. In the second half of the nineteenth century, universities were founded by the British government to support their dominance in India. But the western liberal education also gave Indian intellectuals

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a chance to criticise British rule, and it became a significant factor in the movement to free India from British dominion. Many policies were created after India gained its independence to restructure the educational system to meet the demands of a democratic nation.

Education is listed under Entry in the Union List of the Indian Constitution's Concurrent List. In order to coordinate and establish standards in higher education, research, and scientific and technical institutes, this article grants the Central Government sole legislative authority. Through the CABE, the Union and the States are able to coordinate and cooperate with one another in the area of education. The Union Government is in charge of the country's primary higher education policy. Therefore, the path of higher education growth in the states is determined by the national policy perspective.

After the nature of policy making in a society is influenced by its historical circumstances, the policy perspective for higher education in India since Independence has been explored under two headings that represent two epochs with two qualitatively different socio-economic characteristics:

- Policy Perspective for Indian Higher Education in the Post-Independence Era
- Policy Perspective for Higher Education in Post-Economic Reform Period in India

## **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

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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.

## **2.1 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



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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.

## **2.2 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.

## **2.3 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.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

A few respondents expressed their opinions on the significance of a college degree in the context of the competition in the developing knowledge economy. These educators believe that the best way to combat the degree of competitiveness present now is through higher education. "We can only raise the level of our research and potentially acquire a competitive advantage at the global stage by boosting the quality of higher education," the statement goes. Additionally, "excellent research could likewise accrue benefits to society."



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Additionally, some respondents were able to picture the value of higher education as a tool for social mobility. According to them, higher education is crucial in the current environment since it increases a person's chances of achieving social mobility above and beyond college. Because an individual's earning potential is limitless with a degree, there will be a rise in class.

A few individuals have also discussed the importance of higher education in educating people about their rights, powers, and obligations.

Therefore, these respondents said that higher education was very important for the current socioeconomic environment in terms of the nation's economic development, for each individual's social mobility, and for the creation of an educated society.

A reply, however, offered a different perspective. According to him, "further education is not of great relevance as there are many private universities offering degrees with inadequate staff."

Both in the public and commercial sectors, higher education institutions have grown at an unprecedented rate in recent years. In this context, college professors have been requested to identify the causes of these phenomena. The responding teachers have identified a variety of variables in response to the query regarding the causes of the recent rapid growth of higher education institutions. Favorable government policies have been cited by nearly one-fourth of respondents as a significant factor behind the remarkable expansion of higher education facilities in recent years. According to them, "higher education has become the government's preoccupation." The government has accelerated the growth of higher education through a number of initiatives and plans.





**TABLE-1: VIEWS AND PERCEPTIONS REGARDING THE FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR RAPID GROWTH OF HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

<b>Total Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Favorable Government Policies</b>	<b>Commercialization of Education/Business opportunities in higher education</b>	<b>Globalization and Advent of Multinational Corporations</b>	<b>Increasing Awareness about the importance of higher education</b>	<b>Rise in the purchasing power of people</b>
<b>100</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>08</b>
<b>(100%)</b>	<b>(24%)</b>	<b>(42%)</b>	<b>(14%)</b>	<b>(12%)</b>	<b>(8%)</b>

*Source: Interviews with teachers.*

The political strategy of gaining political mileage in the public sector, according to another respondent, is what is driving the expansion of higher education institutions.

In addition, 42% of respondents said that numerous government initiatives had turned higher education into a successful industry. Due to the supportive legislative environment, business owners became interested in this industry and saw it as profitable; as a result, they made investments in it. Higher education institutions have grown at an unprecedented rate as a result. According to them, the phenomena of the growth of institutions can be attributed to the transformation of education into an industry with a focus on profit. 'Higher education institutions are now more like commercial operations due to the privatization of education; hence many entrepreneurs and businessmen have indicated interest in starting their own universities. Education now offers profitable business opportunities. There is a group of individuals with the resources to invest in these institutions. "In the private sector, higher education institutions are being opened by the proprietors for financial gain or to turn dirty money into clean money." The upshot is that "many of these institutions have sprung up where there is a lack of quality



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education, and it is mostly the business "interests of people which has led to such growth." The spectacular expansion is therefore found in the private self-financing colleges and universities, with the exception of few central universities, IITs, IIMs, and universities' constituent colleges. Therefore, the recent expansion of higher education institutions has been driven especially by private institutions, who have joined the market solely for financial gain, or to take advantage of the excess demand problem in higher education. In this way, the fast proliferation of higher education institutions in recent years has been attributed in large part to privatization and commercialization of education.

One in fourteen respondents (14%) claimed that the emergence of multinational firms and the globalization of the economy have increased the demand for higher education (Table 1). Higher education institutions have rapidly expanded as a result of this. According to their assessment, "there has been a growth in the demand for higher education, more particularly for professional education, as people are more conscious of its relevance in defining their lives and careers in this era of globalization." New institutions have opened up to take advantage of the new job opportunities brought about by the emergence of multinational enterprises. Moreover, "the government is making attempts to enhance higher education facilities in view of the demand for qualified workforce to gain an edge over other countries." All of factors have caused higher education institutions to expand quickly.

One reason for the demand for higher education and its unparalleled rise, according to 13% of the responding teachers, is the public's growing understanding of the value of higher education in modern society. According to them, "people have realized the value of higher education." They are striving to pursue higher education as a result. The number of higher education institutions has increased recently as a result of this.

Only 8% of the teachers who responded to the survey said that "some people's purchasing power has improved and they can afford higher education" in recent years. Therefore, the current



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growth in higher education, particularly in the private sector, is mostly an effort to profit from this increased purchasing power.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The government's policy of supporting the private sector in higher education, according to a sizeable number of respondents, is the primary cause of the exceptional rise of institutions. This government strategy has shown to be advantageous for the growth of for-profit, private higher education institutions. These people feel that "the government is reducing the requirements for opening new universities and colleges in the private sector." "The government has essentially no restrictions governing the opening of new institutions." Additionally, the eligibility requirements have been greatly lowered, making higher education accessible to the typical student who can afford it. One responder said, "The government has implemented methods such as increases in tuition fees, student loans, and privatization to justify the availability and mobilization of resources to expand higher education."

For economic and social progress, higher education is of utmost importance. The primary obligation for providing people with the advanced knowledge and skills necessary for positions of responsibility in government, business, and the professions rests with higher education institutions. Furthermore, one of the major drivers of the nation's economic development in the global economy is the knowledge produced by academic institutions. Teachers have been requested to provide their opinions on the value of higher education in the current environment in this context.

Nearly all of the teachers interviewed agreed that higher education plays a significant role in today's society. They have valued education as the cornerstone of both individual and societal growth. According to them, "higher education is the key to success for an individual as well as for development and prosperity in society." Higher education is crucial for fostering the correct kind of social consciousness as well as for personal development, professional opportunities, and national and economic prosperity. Regarding higher education's contribution to national

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development, a respondent claimed that it "has positively influenced in each and every aspect of our civilization ethos" and "has played extremely significant role in national growth." Higher education is a key factor in any nation's socioeconomic development, but it is especially important for developing market economies like India because of its demographic dividend. The younger generations will need to be prepared with new skills, information, and ideas for the future, hence higher education is crucial for sociocultural, economic, and political progress. "Today, it is very important to address the issues of the developing world." Higher education is thus a public benefit and a merit good.

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