Private Higher Education in India: Challenges and Prospects

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Abstract

India's higher education landscape has significantly transformed over the past few years. Most reforms during this time have significantly impacted the country's rapidly expanding Private Higher Education Institutions (PrHEIs). As a result, this sector has witnessed significant growth in recent years, offering alternative routes for students seeking quality education beyond the traditional Public Higher Education Institutions (PuHEIs). This paper aims to explore the challenges and prospects PrHEIs face in India.

The desk research was conducted to review existing literature on the topic. We analysed academic articles, research studies, and reports that discuss the challenges and prospects of private higher education in India. This provides a theoretical framework and a foundation of knowledge on the subject.

With over two million students, private HEIs currently make up over 40% of the Indian HE sector. The rising demand for high-quality education has contributed to the tremendous growth of private higher education in India in recent years.

Private higher education in India faces several challenges such as Access and Affordability, Quality of Learning and Teaching, Regulatory Barriers, Research and Innovation.Despite these obstacles, private higher education in India has a bright future, with the potential to work with governmental programmes and utilise modern technology.

Keywords: Challenges, Prospects, Private Higher Education, India

Introduction

The formal education system in India is multi-layered, vast and diverse, comprising various levels and types of institutions. Central and state governments govern it, each with its own education board and policies.

Formal education includes primary and secondary schools, graduation, post-graduation and diploma courses. State and central bodies, viz govern schools—Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE), state and international boards.

Early childhood (Pre-Primary) education in India is not compulsory but is recognised as an essential foundation for a child's development. It typically includes preschools, playgroups, and nursery schools. Primary education in India starts at the age of five or six and lasts five years. It is free and compulsory for children aged 6 to 14 under the Right to Education (RTE) Act. The curriculum usually includes languages, mathematics, science, social studies, and physical education. Secondary education in India comprises two main stages: lower secondary (classes 6-8) and upper secondary (classes 9-10). It continues primary education and prepares students for higher education or vocational training. In addition, the curriculum includes core and elective subjects based on the student's interests and future goals. Higher secondary education in India is typically two years long (classes 11-12) and is also known as the 10+2 system. Students choose one of three streams: science, commerce, or humanities. Science stream students often pursue careers in engineering, medicine, or other science-related fields, while commerce and humanities stream students may choose careers in business, arts, social sciences, or other related fields. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) such as Universities and colleges offer undergraduate education in India, leading to a bachelor's degree. The duration of undergraduate programs varies depending on the field of study, generally ranging from three to four years. Typical bachelor's degrees include Bachelor of Arts (BA), Bachelor of Science (BSc), Bachelor of Commerce (BCom), and Bachelor of Engineering (BE). Postgraduate education includes master's degrees and doctoral degrees. Master's degrees are typically two years long and require completion of a bachelor's degree in a relevant field.

Doctoral degrees (PhD) are research-based and require the submission of a thesis or dissertation based on original research. India also has a robust professional education system, including fields such as medicine, engineering, law, management, architecture, and more. Professional bodies or councils typically regulate professional courses and require specific qualifications and licensing to practice in the respective fields. In India, technical and vocational education and training (TVET)

focuses on providing practical skills and knowledge for specific industries or trades. It includes industrial training institutes (ITIs), polytechnic institutes, and vocational training centres. Distance education or online provides opportunities for individuals unable to attend regular classes. It allows flexible learning through correspondence courses, online programmes, and open universities (Figure 01).

Though governed by the University Grants Commission (UGC), higher education in India has a 3- tier structure comprising the university, college and course. In addition, different regulatory bodies such as the Medical Council of India (MCI), All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and the Bar Council India (BCI), among others, manage different professional courses.

Figure 01: Overview of Education System in India

Source: KPMG in India's research & analysis 2017
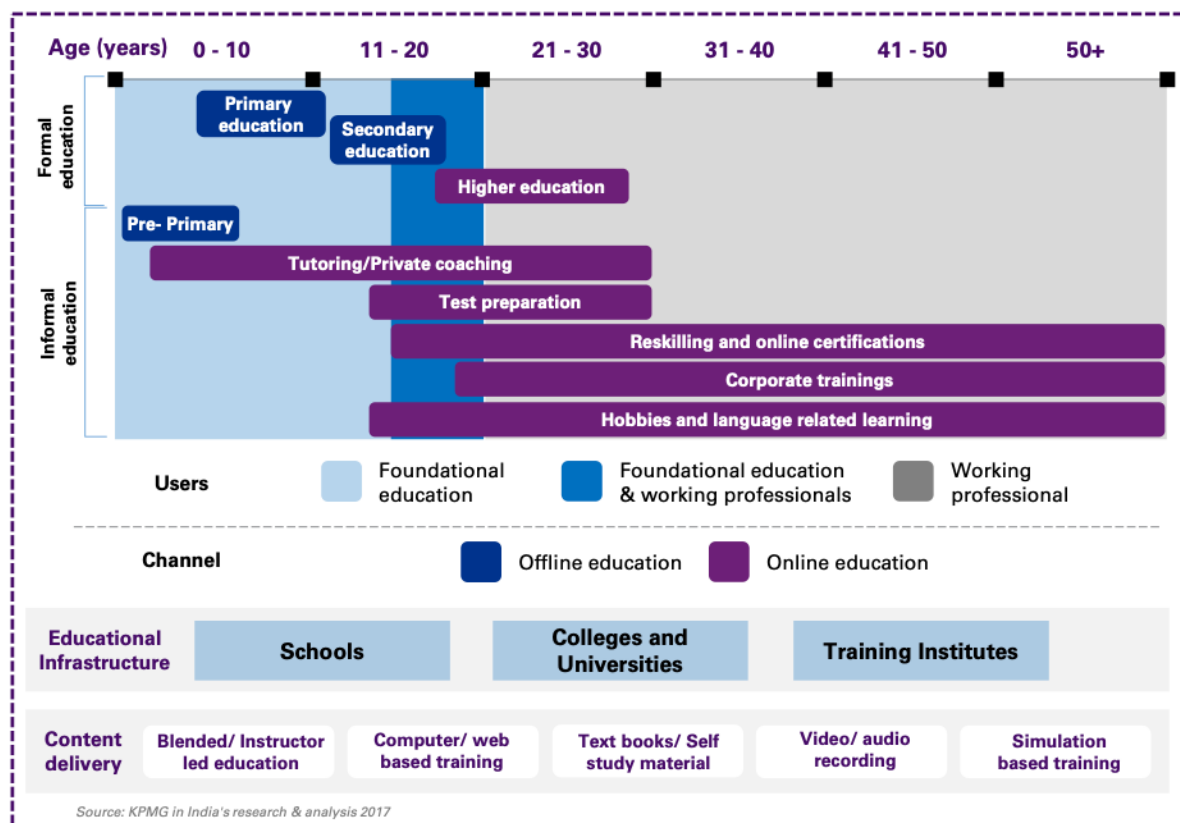
One of the largest education systems in the world, that of India has been the topic of numerous acclaimed books, academic papers, case studies, and replications (Everitt, 2014). India's higher education system was the world's third largest in terms of students, next to China and the United States (Sheikh, 2017) and now it has become the world's second largest higher education system, with around 38 million students in 50,000 academic institutions (including 1,057 universities) and a goal of doubling gross enrolment rates from the current 26.3% to 50% by 2035 (Altbach, 2022).

Since independence on 15 August 1947, India's Higher Education sector has witnessed a tremendous increase in Colleges, Universities, and Institutions. At the time of independence, India had 20 universities and 500 colleges, enrolling about 2,30,000 students.

The majority of PuHEIs can be divided into two groups: those run and supported by the federal government (such as Central Universities, Institutions of National Importance, Central Open University, Government Deemed Universities, and Government Aided Deemed Universities) and provincial/state governments (like State Public Universities, and State Open Universities). Also, private universities are run by a person, a trust, a society, or a private business (State Private Universities and Private Unaided Deemed Universities).

Table 01: Type and number of universities

Type of university	Number of Universities
Central University	48
Central Open University	1
Institution of National Importance	135
State Public University	386
Institution Under State Legislature Act	5
State Open University	14
State Private University	327
State Private Open University	1
Deemed University- Government	36
Deemed University- Government Aided	10
Deemed University- Private	80
Grand Total	1043

Source: University Grant Commission and AISHE Report, 2019-2020

The federal government has given a high-performing institution of higher education a special status known as a "deemed university," which entitles it to confer degrees similarly to universities (Table 01). Private universities and deemed to be universities are empowered to award degrees which are specified by the UGC under Section 22 of the UGC Act, 1956. Private-aided institutions are those that receive ongoing and one-time funds from the federal, state, or municipal governments but whose management and decision-making power is mostly exercised by a private individual, trust, society, or business. Most non-recurring expenses for unsupported private institutions are sponsored by an individual, a trust, a society, or a private organisation, and the financing agency also controls most of those institutions' management (Gandhi & Ahir, 2022).

The University Grants Commission (UGC) of India created the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) as an independent agency to evaluate and certify higher education institutions throughout the nation. The Commission was founded in 1994 with the purpose of grading or accrediting universities in accordance with a set of predetermined quality requirements. In India, the NAAC accreditation is well-respected and is utilised as a benchmark for quality by a variety of stakeholders, including students, parents, employers, and governmental organisations (Bhushan & Verma, 2017).

India undoubtedly boasts one of the world's most complex higher education systems. The majority of undergraduate students attend private, varying-quality colleges. The central government institutions comprise roughly 7% of the finest public universities and research centres worldwide. However, a tiny, recently developed, highly regarded private university sector also exists (Altbach, 2022).

Methodology

The primary purpose of the study is to analyse the challenges and prospects of private higher education in India via a literature review and analysis of secondary data such as websites, and relevant articles on Google Scholar, notably by presenting a synopsis of private higher education institutions in the country, in order to identify the main challenges faced by PrHEI and assess the prospects for the future.

Aims & Objectives

The study aims to identify the critical issues PrHEIs face and examine potential opportunities for their growth in India with the following main objectives:

- To understand the role of Private Higher Education Institutions in India
- To examine the recent growth trends of Private Higher Education in India
- To identify the main challenges facing PrHEIs in India
- To evaluate the prospects for the Private HEIs in India

In complement to the above, relevant documents, such as government policies, reports, and academic publications, will be analysed to gain additional insights into the context of private higher education in India.

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Literature Review

Private Higher Education

India's higher education landscape has significantly transformed over the last decade. Most of the changes over this duration have substantially affected the fast growth of PrHEIs. As a result, this sector is witnessing the most extensive disruption in its history, resulting in a remarkable increase from around 190 private universities in 2012 to 421 in 2022 (Mathews, 2022), with a more than 121% growth rate.

Private higher education institutions (PrHEIs) are those that have complete autonomy, own campuses, are not recipients of government grants, and have the authority to confer diplomas and degrees. Thus, PrHEIs are treated like any other corporate body operating for profit, though PrHEIs do not want to disclose the attention of profit-seeking to students (Akinwalere, 2023). The most explicit understanding of a PrHEI is that of an organisation with private ownership and funding, while a PuHEI is an organisation with state ownership and funding (Qureshi and Khawaja,2021). There are regional differences in the spread of private higher education worldwide (Goel, 2013).

Private institutions in India are governed by a complicated regulatory system comprising numerous governmental entities, each with its own set of guidelines and specifications. This may make it challenging for HEIs to get licences and permits, which may cause delays and uncertainty. In addition, the legal framework for private higher education in India is disjointed and inconsistent, according to research by the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA).

Challenges of Private Higher Education

The private education market in India has expanded significantly during the past few years. It does, however, also have a few challenges and more chances for improvement.

Indian government policies encouraging private investment in higher education, rising demand for education, and economic liberalisation have all contributed to the country's private higher education sector's explosive growth during the past few decades. However, there are significant obstacles to private higher education in India, including a lack of quality control, legal impediments, and insufficient funding. A study by the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) found that private institutions, compared to public universities, spend far less money per student, which may result in a lesser standard of education.

By using a variety of academic sources, this part of the literature review examines the difficulties and complications of private higher education in India:

Access and Affordability: The foremost plausible challenge could be related to access and equity. Many students cannot afford the hefty tuition costs charged by PrHEIs, which mainly rely on student fees for income (Tilak, 2002). Private HEIs might therefore be compelled to make infrastructure and quality-related sacrifices. In addition, low-income students find it challenging to enrol in private HEIs because of their frequently high tuition costs. Due to the imbalance this causes in the educational system, students from less advantaged economic backgrounds have fewer options (Bordoloi, 2012).

Quality of Learning and Teaching: Another main issue related to PrHEIs is the quality. Quality in PrHEIs is a multi-dimensional, multilevel, and dynamic concept. Ensuring quality across all HEIs, whether public or private, is among India's foremost challenges today. However, Government is continuously focusing on quality education. Still, Many HEIs cannot meet the minimum prerequisites set by the UGC. Therefore, no HEI could place in the top-ranking universities of the world. (Sheikh,2017).

Variations in quality and standards of learning and teaching make the sector heterogeneous in terms of quality and standards. A lack of quality in the research-informed teaching, research, and infrastructure also leads to a poor learning environment, which in turn harms the overall development of the students (Matthews, 2016). As mentioned earlier, the NAAC team evaluates the overall quality of any institution, whether public or private, by examining the instruction, curriculum, and other factors such as the number of published papers from each department/faculty, etc. The NAAC for colleges and universities and the National Board of Accreditation for evaluating the quality of engineering and technology, management, pharmacy, architecture, and other fields have complicated external quality assurance arrangements. However, the NAAC has only accredited a small percentage of academic institutions (14% of colleges and 35% of universities) (Altbach, 2022). This leads to another problem plaguing India's private higher education- lack of quality control. There is no standardised system of accreditation or assessment, and the quality of education offered by private colleges varies greatly. This may result in a lack of openness and accountability, which makes it challenging for parents and students to compare the quality of various institutions. Moreover, many private colleges in India fail to achieve fundamental quality standards, such as having competent faculty and suitable infrastructure (UGC, 2012).

Regulatory Barriers: A third issue raised for PrHEIs is regulatory barriers. Compared to state universities, PrHEIs are subject to less restrictive restrictions. As a result, there is a lack of accountability and transparency, perhaps resulting in a drop in educational quality. Private unaided and aided universities, private unaided and aided deemed universities, and private aided and unaided colleges are all examples of private higher education institutions in India, as was previously addressed. A unique structure governs private universities to ensure quality and prevent commercialisation, and they are subject to UGC standards, which are periodically updated. These universities are governed by the UGC, which also allows them to address any deficiencies before taking appropriate action. Private organisations provide funding for, and the UGC regulates, deemed universities (UGC, 2013). A study by the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) found that the regulatory framework for private higher education in India is fragmented and lacks coherence. The study identified that multiple regulatory bodies, including the University Grants Commission (UGC), All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), Medical Council of India (MCI), and Bar Council of India (BCI), among others, are responsible for regulating different aspects of private higher education. This fragmented structure can lead to overlapping jurisdictions, conflicting regulations, and a lack of unified policies.

Employability: Employability could be another significant factor. PrHEIs might not give students enough hands-on experience, resulting in a lack of employability skills and fewer prospects for employment in the future. Regarding student employability outcomes, the Indian higher education system is not very accountable (Tiwari & Anjum, 2018). The ideas are taken directly from Western intellectuals; indigenous theories and substance are lacking, which lowers employability (Iyer et al., 2014). Besides this, cultural differences affect learning styles (Manikutty et al., 2007). Moreover, as we know that for management graduates, analytical capabilities, emotional intelligence, soft skills, business knowledge, and communication are essential (Bhatnagar, 2020): however, very few private institutions follow these parameters.

In other words, Inadequate entrepreneurship and employability development is reflected in the failure of most start-ups in their initial or middle stages despite some success because the founders cannot control inorganic expansion (Tiwari et al., 2019). In addition, graduates' employment prospects are being harmed by outdated coursework and a shortage of instructors. The curriculum is primarily theoretical and places minimal focus on the practical skills required for industry work.

Grades are valued more highly than practical life skills, which causes students to become credentialed with paper degrees rather than developing the abilities they need for a better professional life. Students' attention has shifted away from strengthening their core topic knowledge and towards enhancing their English communication due to an overreliance on soft skills during campus interviews. The entrance exams primarily evaluate memory and speed, ignoring cognitive process (such as reasoning and critical thinking), and personal integrity. Poor employability results from a lack of self-motivation to learn. No one is concerned about learning because teachers offer free internal grades to make it simple for students to pass the semester (Shukla & Bhatt, 2021).

Research and Innovation: Private higher education institutions in India often face challenges in developing a solid research and innovation culture. Limited research funding, infrastructure, and collaborations hinder the ability of private institutions to conduct high-quality research and contribute to knowledge creation. Therefore, encouraging research and innovation in private institutions is crucial for their growth and development.

Due to economic and demographic development, the Indian higher education system will likely undergo a significant transition in the ensuing ten years. Although the system has made great strides over the past ten years, there are still four significant issues that need to be addressed: the supply-demand mismatch, low quality of teaching and learning and traditional pedagogical methods, limitations on research capacity and innovation, and uneven growth and access to opportunities (Rani, 2017). Due to the limited access to higher education in the past, universities and colleges were elite. An advantage was seen in the "distinctiveness and exclusivity of an Oxbridge degree." In actuality, quality was meant to be embodied by universities rather than having to be demonstrated to the outside world. Prior to now, a concern for quality was typically associated with an institution's reputation, and without any established criteria, it was nearly impossible to quantify quality (Church, 1988; Gupta, 2021).

The government is restructuring and redesigning every aspect of higher education, including funding, leadership and management, quality assurance, accountability, relationships with industry, international collaboration, and how teaching and research are carried out to address these challenges. In addition, other suppliers are looking forward to legislation allowing them into the market. As a result, the business sector is expected to expand higher education in India significantly (Everitt, 2014).

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Prospects for Private Higher Education

Despite these challenges, there are several reasons for optimism regarding the future of private higher education in India. The rising need for education in India, which is anticipated to continue in the future, is one important driver. By 2025, India is expected to have the highest tertiary-age population in the world, with over 119 million young people in this age group (Bothwell, 2015). Moreover, by emphasising equity, inclusivity, and improved quality, the National Education Policy (NEP) intends to restructure India's current higher education system. The goal is to develop a higher education system with numerous institutions of various disciplines and modernised curricula, pedagogies, and evaluation procedures (Gandhi & Ahir, 2022). Given the ongoing changes in the higher education environment, quality teaching has also become important (Soni & Patel, 2014). With bursaries and scholarships, private institutions are expressly expected to commit to ensuring quality and equitability in education. The policy also focuses on a trend to provide faculties and institutions more autonomy where autonomous boards manage the institutes with competent members who are independent in their academic and administrative pursuits (NEP, 2020).

Private higher education in India plays a significant role in the country's education system. It has grown significantly and has become a popular choice for students seeking quality education and specialised programmes. Here are some critical prospects for private HE in India:

Blended Learning: India's PrHEIs have embraced the idea of blended learning, which blends traditional classroom instruction with online learning. With this strategy, learning is more adaptable and individualised for each learner. As a result, numerous private colleges have invested in developing effective e-learning systems that let students access course materials, turn in assignments, and communicate with professors online (Kumar & Ganesh, 2022).

International Collaborations: Many private universities collaborate with international institutions, allowing for exposure to global standards and practices.

Table 02: Indian PrHEIs and Ties-Up with International HEIs

Indian PrHEI	Ties-Up with International HEI
Ashoka University	Yale University, University of California, Carleton College, University of Michigan, King's College
BML Munjal University	London's Imperial College Business School
Azim Premji University	Michigan State University
Indian School of Business (ISB)	Deakin University, Australia
Nitte University	University of Miyazaki, Japan
Shiv Nadar University	Babson College, USA,

Source: SiliconeIndia

Experiential Learning: To prepare students for the real world, private higher education institutions in India have realised the value of hands-on training and experiential learning. Numerous private colleges have established modern labs, simulation centres, and industrial partnerships to give students hands-on learning opportunities (Gupta, 2023).

1. Ashoka University
2. Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS) Pilani
3. Integral University (IU)
4. Jindal Global University
5. Manipal Academy of Higher Education

Infrastructure: To give students a positive learning environment, private higher education institutions in India have invested significantly in building top-notch facilities. To meet the demands of its students, many private institutions have constructed contemporary classrooms, auditoriums, libraries, sports facilities, and residential complexes (Goel, 2021). In addition, several private universities in India provide excellent infrastructure and facilities for their students. Here are a few highly-ranked private universities in India that are known for their modern infrastructure and facilities:

Ashoka University: Located in Sonepat, Haryana, Ashoka University is a private university listed in the top ten private universities in India with an innovative multidisciplinary curriculum that combines the humanities, social sciences, and the sciences. The institution has also invested in building a top-notch campus with state-of-the-art amenities like a library, sports complex, and student dorms. (https://www.ashoka.edu.in)

Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS), Pilani: BITS Pilani is a private engineering and science university at the fore of teaching and facility innovation. The institution has implemented a practice school programme that lets students work on tasks from the business world and earn real-world experience. BITS Pilani has also invested in building top-notch research facilities, including a nanotechnology research centre and a centre for renewable energy.

Integral University (IU): Integral University, a seat of educational excellence, is a premier university in Lucknow, the capital city of the state of Uttar Pradesh, India. Integral University is accredited by NAAC and recognized as a Scientific & Industrial Research Organisation (SIRO) by the Department of Scientific & Industrial Research, Ministry of Science & Technology, Government of India. (https://iul.ac.in/About/Overview/Overview.aspx)

O.P. Jindal Global University: Established in 2009, O.P. Jindal Global University is recognised as **an** Institution of Eminence by the Ministry of Education, Government of India. It is also ranked the No. 1 Private University in India in the QS World University Rankings 2023. With 12 schools, more than 10,000 students, 45+ programmes with a 1:9 faculty-student ratio. (https://jgu.edu.in)

Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE): The Manipal Education and Medical Group (MEMG) programme is an innovative experiential learning initiative that MAHE is India's Top Ranked Private University for Engineering, Medical, MBA, Pharmacy, Fashion Design and Architecture courses. The University is located in Manipal, Karnataka, has put in place. Through the programme, students can work in the media, healthcare, and other industries to obtain real-world experience. MAHE has also created modern infrastructure, including a simulation centre, research labs, and athletic facilities. (https://manipal.edu/mu.html)

Integral University (IU): IU a private university in Lucknow, the capital of Uttar Pradesh, India. With many admirable purposes and goals, integral university has been one of the most significant centres of excellence in education. This university's goal is to innovate in education by reorganising classes and implementing cutting-edge teaching and learning techniques that focus on the comprehensive personality development of students. Furthermore, in order to bring all segments of society into the mainstream for India's overall development and to provide modern, scientific, and moral education for social upliftment, it is also vital to foster a friendly environment and thereby contribute to further strengthening the spirit of national integration, secularism, and international understanding.
(https://www.iul.ac.in/About/Overview/Overview.aspx)

Growth and Expansion: India has one of the largest higher education systems in the world, primarily dominated by private sectors (KPMG,2017). Private universities and colleges have experienced substantial growth in recent years. The current share of private HEIs in the Indian HE sector is around 40%, with more than two million students (Mathews, 2022).
According to the All India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE), the country's total number of private colleges is 31,390. Besides, there are 388 private universities and 88 private deemed to be universities functioning in the country (Mint, 2021).
In 2005, there were less than 20 private universities in India. However, in 2010, they accounted for 33% of total higher education enrolments in the country and reached 59% in 2019 (Collet, 2021). In terms of institutions, about **400 out of the 1,000**

Indian universities are private, and 65% of the 40,000 Undergraduate colleges are private, according to the last numbers of the *All India Survey in Higher Education*. They offer various courses and programmes across various disciplines, including engineering, management, medicine, law, arts, and sciences.

Specialised and Professional Programmes: Private higher education institutions in India often specialise in specific fields or offer professional programs to meet the demands of industries. They strive to provide industry-relevant curricula, practical training, and internships to enhance students' employability.

Flexibility and Innovation: Private institutions are known for their flexibility in programme offerings, course structures, and teaching methods. They can quickly adapt to changing market demands and introduce innovative approaches to teaching and learning.

Entrance Exams and Admissions: Private universities in India usually have their own entrance examinations and admission processes. They may have specific criteria for selection, including academic qualifications, entrance test scores, and personal interviews.

Affordability and Scholarships: Private higher education in India often have a higher fee structure than public institutions. However, many private universities offer scholarships, financial aid, and instalment payment options to make education more accessible to students from diverse backgrounds.

Research and Innovation: Private institutions are increasingly emphasising research and innovation activities. They encourage faculty and students to engage in research projects, collaborate with industry, and contribute to advancements in their respective fields.

Industry Connections and Placements: Private institutions often have strong ties with industries and corporate organisations. They actively engage in industry-academia collaborations, internships, and placement programs to enhance students' job prospects and facilitate their transition into the workforce.

Regulatory Framework: Private higher education institutions in India are regulated by various regulatory bodies, such as the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE). These bodies ensure compliance with quality standards, academic regulations, and accreditation processes.

Finally, government policies are starting to acknowledge the significance of private higher education in India. The government has recently implemented several programmes, such as tax incentives and subsidies for private institutions, to encourage private investment in education. Additionally, the government has strengthened the framework for regulations governing private higher education, such as creating a national accreditation organisation (Rai, 2018).

Conclusion

Private higher education in India faces many challenges, including funding, regulatory barriers, and quality control. Concerns regarding the calibre of private providers have been raised in various nations due to lax educational standards and ineffective quality certification mechanisms. There are worries that many private providers are "diploma mills" or "garage universities" that serve students with little added value due to the enrolment's rapid increase. These worries have significantly increased as internationalisation and online education rise (Levy, 2013; Parker, 2012). However, there are reasons to be optimistic about the prospects for private higher education in India, including the growing demand for education, the increasing role of technology, and government support for private investment. The Indian population has grown by 324 million between 2000 and 2020, going from 1,056 bn in 2000 to 1,380 bn in 2020 (Collet, 2021). Consequently, India's public higher education system cannot absorb all the new students. Therefore, there was dire demand for Private Higher Education to come forward and absorb the rapidly increasing demand. Private higher education institutions in India contribute significantly to the overall development of the education sector. They offer choices to students, contribute to research and innovation, and play a vital role in producing a skilled workforce for the country's economic growth.

Since the market economy and globalisation have taken hold, there is a lot of pressure on HEIs to demonstrate their value in terms of quality and "value for money/time spent" in pursuing higher education and/or professional training from a variety of stakeholders, including students, faculty, administrative staff, governing bodies, funding agencies, future employers, accreditors, media, politicians, local and central government, multinational corporations, or transportation. These days, both in India and elsewhere, higher education is viewed as having legitimacy through quality certification (Stensaker, 2007).

The growing influence of technology in higher education has a great impact in e-learning and infrastructure. By 2025, online learning is expected to be widely used. We foresee the employment of e-learning platforms in numerous private and public educational sectors across the globe. In India, the usage of internet and digital technology is growing quickly and is assisting private institutions in overcoming some of their issues. Online courses, for instance, can lower education costs and improve access to higher education for students in rural locations. Online courses have the potential to change higher education in India by making it more accessible, inexpensive, and flexible, according to a study by the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) (Palvia et al., 2018).

Many private higher education institutions have common goals to reach the utmost potential for the younger generations. they make sure that our future generation is well equipped with knowledge, competency, and relevant skills. In order to bring peace, tranquilly, prosperity, and happiness to the entire world in general and to our country in particular, it is important to equip the younger generation with a global viewpoint.

In conclusion, private higher education in India has bright future potential. The private sector has become a significant role in the education industry due to the rising demand for higher education. Private colleges benefit from specialised courses, cutting-edge facilities, and a curriculum focused on the student's needs.

Additionally, the National Education Policy (2020) and the Skill India Mission of the government have allowed private institutions to work together and deliver high-quality education. Additionally, the development of digital technologies has enabled private institutions to provide online courses, opening up education to a broader audience. However, other issues must be resolved, such as price and quality control. The government must regulate the fees they impose to prevent private organisations from charging unaffordable prices. Additionally, a robust accrediting mechanism is required to guarantee that the quality of education offered by private colleges meets international standards.

Overall, private higher education in India can alter the game regarding delivering top-notch instruction and advancing the nation's socioeconomic growth with the correct legislation and regulations.

Private higher education in India faces challenges such as accessibility and affordability, quality standards, regulatory barriers, employability, and research and innovation. However, it also presents opportunities for blended learning, international collaboration, growth and expansion, specialisation, and niche programmes catering to specific career goals and industry demands.

Recommendations

Indian private higher education sector is expanding very fast, irrespective of various challenges, but there is no reason these Challenges cannot be overcome.

- We recommend that it is time for a more coherent regulatory framework that provides clear guidelines and standards for private higher education institutions. The absence of a cohesive approach can create confusion for institutions and hinder the development of a robust and consistent quality assurance mechanism.
- We recommend streamlining the regulatory framework by establishing a single regulatory authority for private higher education. This would help harmonise regulations, reduce duplication, and ensure a more efficient and effective oversight mechanism.

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- Review the importance of accreditation and quality assurance mechanisms in private higher education. We emphasise the need for a transparent and rigorous accreditation process that evaluates institutions based on predefined criteria and standards. This would ensure that only institutions meeting the required quality benchmarks can operate.

- Implement strict quality assurance mechanisms to ensure private institutions meet prescribed education standards. This can include accreditation processes, regular audits, and performance evaluations to maintain and improve the quality of education private institutions offer.

- Measures should be taken to make private higher education more affordable and accessible to students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. This can be done through scholarships, grants, and partnerships with funding agencies to support deserving students financially.

- Incorporate skill development programmes and industry-relevant courses in the curriculum of private institutions. Collaborate with industry partners to design programs that equip students with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in the job market.

- Establish research centres, grant research and encourage faculty members to engage in research activities. Promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship within private institutions to contribute to knowledge creation and societal development.

- The government should create a favourable policy environment that supports and encourages private higher education institutions. This includes providing financial incentives, research grants, tax benefits, and promoting public-private partnerships in education.

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