



PERSPECTIVES ON HIGHER EDUCATION IN KERALA.

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Abstract

The importance and antiquity of education to bring desirable change in our life, especially the higher education is considered as an essential pillar for overall development of any country in terms of social, economic and political aspects. In Kerala education expanded very rapidly in the last six decades after independence. There are several people from Kerala around globe that are well known for their potentiality and the good skill and technique. During the time of second five year plan there were 10079 educational institutions in Kerala, Today Kerala rank first position in literacy among Indian state. Kerala has special care to the development of an education system that is inclusive and universally accessible. In this research paper, an effort has been made to discuss the present situation of higher education in Kerala and by analysing various data to identify the key issues.

INTRODUCTION

Higher education is very important for a developing country like India to sustainable economic and social development. Higher education system of a nation gives a great contribution to the economic growth and development through fostering innovation and it will increase higher skills. It is a way to improve the quality of life and address major social and global challenges. Higher education is broadly defined as one of the important drivers of growth performance, prosperity and competitiveness. Higher education gives an opportunity to succeed in today's global economy. Globalization and privatization are imposing new challenges to the Indian Higher education system. Modern universities over the world wide provide opportunities to their students to engage and attract professionals into training and professional development with various programmes.

Kerala is a model well known for its achievements in social development indicators. Kerala has taken special care to develop a Higher education system that is inclusive and universally accessible. Kerala still requires some serious interventions to enhance academic quality in higher education levels, and to make education even more inclusive at all levels. Kerala has produced number of scientist, engineers, technologist, doctors, teachers,

and managers, who are in great demand all over the world. Higher education especially technological education has been provide a significant contribution of man power and tools to the world. Kerala has already entered into the era of knowledge explosion. The state is recognized as a highly advanced one in terms of education especially in terms of higher education. However some serious threats also persist and the most important among them is the unscrupulous growth of private sector in higher education.

There has been a rapid expansion in the higher education sector of Kerala. The growth of enrolment has increased considerably during the last two decades. In terms of gross enrolment ratio and in the stock of graduates, Kerala is ahead of other Indian states. Inequalities in higher education are also much lower in Kerala than the all India level. The gross enrolment ratio of women, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes are also higher in the state. Regarding the total number of higher education institutions and infrastructure also Kerala occupies a well commendable position compared to other states. Thus it is a fact that the quantitative aspects of Kerala's higher education system shows a progressive trend but there are important issues of serious concern that are to be noted that Kerala needs to go more beyond its rapid expansion in the education sector.

It is widely accepted that there has been a drastic decline in the quality of higher education to unacceptable levels. Higher education is found to be increasingly becoming less and less affordable by a vast majority of the population, that there is a growing tendency towards the rising household costs of higher education in Kerala. These rising cost will pose problems in ensuring an inclusive higher education system. Another problem is related to the increasing graduate unemployment in the state. The Human Development Report 2005 of Kerala (Government of Kerala, 2006) shows that the state experiences the highest rates of unemployment. All these problems are interrelated and interdependent with each other and leads to the growing phenomenon of privatisation and commercialisation of higher education in the state (Anon. 2018).

Since 1990s the higher education has been subject to major policy shifts and the most important among them is the mushroom growth of self- financing colleges and opened a flood of gates to the higher education sector to private parties who have different interests including commercial interests. Privatisation of higher education also given thrust to the professional and technical education in the state and the proliferation of these colleges. Thus it is highly held that the rapid growth in the higher education in the state is essentially due to the growth of self-financing colleges which are called student- financed or fee- based institutions. The rapid growth of this sector led to the diminution of public sector and public sector displacement in a big way. Privatisation of public higher education is also taking place at a rapid rate in the form of increase in the student fee, increase in student loan programmes, and introduction of self-financing courses in public universities and colleges on a large scale. Thus the high portion of exclusively fee seeking financing colleges and increasing privatisation of public higher education pose serious problems on enhancing equitable access to higher education in the state.

Objectives of the present study

1. To examine the development and present scenario of higher education system in Kerala.
2. To identify emerging issues of higher education sector in Kerala.

Research Methodology

The present study focuses on extensive study of secondary data collected from various national published reports, Kerala State higher education council report, publications from various websites which focus on various aspects and issues related to Kerala higher education System.

Kerala Higher Education System.

Globalization and privatization has been imposing new challenges to the Kerala higher education system. Since the nineties, Kerala higher education system adopted policy of welfare education and provided facility of educational services to the people of state .In Kerala 14 State universities has been functioning. Out of these, four universities namely, Kerala, Mahatma Gandhi, Calicut and Kannur are providing various courses to the students.

Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Thunchath Ezhuthachan Malayalam University, Cochin University of Science and Technology, Kerala Agricultural University, Kerala Veterinary and Animal Science University, Kerala University of Health Sciences, Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies, Kerala Technological University offer specialised courses in specified subject areas (Economic Review 2018). The thirteenth five year plan marked education as the one of the main areas for the state intervention in Kerala. The KSHEC is the principal higher education policy input provider of state. It strives to bring about equity, access and excellence in higher education sector. Kerala has covered a long distance on the institutional capacity in higher education.

Table-1 District wise Arts and Science Colleges (Government & Private Aided) in Kerala 2017-2018

S.NO	District	Government	Private	Total
1	Thiruvananthapuram	10	12	22
2	Kollam	2	13	15
3	Pathanamthitta	1	9	10
4	Alappuzha	1	12	13
5	Kottayam	2	22	23
6	Idukki	5	6	8
7	Ernakulam	5	21	26
8	Thrissur	7	17	22
9	Palakad	7	8	15
10	Malappuram	9	13	22
11	Kozhikodu	10	8	18
12	Wayanadu	2	4	6
13	Kannur	4	9	14
14	Kazargodu	4	2	6
	Total	63	156	219

Source: Kerala Economic Review 2018.

Table -1 shows the impressive growth of arts and science institution in Kerala. Undoubtedly, this is an impressive number of higher educational institutions. There are 219 Arts and Science Colleges in Kerala comprising 156 private aided colleges and 63 Government colleges. Besides these, various un-aided/self-financing arts and science colleges are also functioning in Kerala with the affiliation of universities. But Kerala require a qualitative institution of higher education. Because only few institution is listed in the top list of Indian institutions

Table 2 Enrolment of students in arts and science colleges

Course	Total	Percentage to Total
B.A	92753	33%
B.Sc	102134	37%
B,Com	44723	17%
M.A	14,756	5%
M.Com	6056	2%
M.Sc	18083	7%
Total	278505	100

Source: Kerala Economic Review 2018

Table 2 shows that Total number of students enrolled in various arts and science colleges in 2017-2018. Besides this 57104 students enrolled for various engineering courses in Kerala. Out of the total students enrolled for degree courses, 42.62 per cent are enrolled for B.Sc. degree courses, 38.71 per cent enrolled for B A and 18.67 per cent enrolled for B.Com degree courses. During the year 1956-57 the country have 10,079 institutions under the educational department in Kerala state.

➤ Emerging issues

There are lot of issues for the bad performance of higher education in Kerala. The rapid expansion of higher education in Kerala brought several issues in the present.

Kerala higher education system challenge with issues pertaining to quality and in many institutions and universities problems of faculties, poor quality of teaching are common. Today students have been lots of option. The scenario of the classroom has changing. The 21th century is also the age of science and technology. So ICT play a significant role in the student evaluation .ICT helps the teachers to communicate better way with student. Through ICT pass number of information to student without a very little time. But the Teachers use only common teaching method. Teachers have no serious attention is paid to innovative methods of modern teaching.

Students are the nation builder of future. Privatization in education in Kerala has increased the opportunities by increasing the scope of admission only. But the main aims of most of private education institution are to make maximizing their profits and have every incentive to minimize costs.

Most of the colleges have given notes in the class that will eat up by student. Teachers have been targeted to complete the syllabus before exam without consider the learning level of the student. This is non-productive way of teaching method. Here, questioned the quality of education. Today 40 percentage of student admitted in the

colleges are not keen interested on study. They enough proficiency in the subject they selected. Government has been focused on the pass percentage of result of high school. Number of student passed without quality for higher education. Teachers are not committed to their students. Moreover committed less teachers enjoy with high salary.

Research and higher education system are interrelated to each other. Kerala higher education institution is poorly conducted to leading research centre. Besides the above issues ,Some issues are the higher education system is not free from political interference, the internationalization of higher education , public –private partnership and similar other related issues.

CONCLUSION

Kerala higher education system holds not only in qualitative terms, but also in quantitative terms. Higher education in Kerala has expanded very rapidly after the thirteenth plan .But our educational system has not been able to change its organizational structure and forms. In India, Kerala is the second largest state in the case of spent state domestic expenditure for education. The higher education of Kerala played a major role in the modern era. Kerala is often a role model compare not only with India but also with some other countries. But Kerala higher education system emphasis needs to be focused on promoting inclusive growth in higher education.

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