



**SOCIOLOGY OF HIGHER EDUCATION IMPACT,
CHALLENGES AND CONTRIBUTIONS, AND THEIR CONTEXTS**

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Abstract

According to international standards, India's higher education system lags in several areas. To keep their jobs and the standard of the educational institutions, the faculty of Indian academic institutions must overcome several obstacles. However, Indians have a reputation for making a name for themselves in the academic world and have contributed to many notable fields of study. Some of the best scientists are of Indian descent. It was observed, by McNulty (2017), that Indians with American citizenship place a greater focus on academics and education. The purpose of the exploratory study is to learn what Indian academics and researchers think about higher education. 57 Indian volunteers who had completed higher education participated in the research and answered an opinion questionnaire. Five-point rating scale data were collected, statistical analysis was performed, and discussions were held.

Keywords: Higher education, Indian education, Academic decline, Indian University

1. INTRODUCTION

Based on the authors' experiences teaching sociology in numerous higher education programs in Portugal, this paper aims to focus on a crucial sociological aspect: training. The paper tries to offer a thought on how these procedures may be successful in announcing the sociological perspective in student training in the setting of higher education, favoring the teaching and

learning processes in this component. The accomplishment of this goal necessitates, on the one hand, that Sociology is articulated in a way that is interdependent with training for other components of Sociology, including Sociology as a science and Sociology as a profession, and on the other hand, it necessitates the emphasis on a reflective epistemological conception of Sociology about various interdisciplinary contributions.

Sociology as a Science component refers to a particular set of cognitive standards and tools, accumulated knowledge, and research techniques, and serves as the primary foundation for the development of Sociology as Training and Sociology as Profession components. What, though, is sociology? There are many different definitions, making it difficult to give a straightforward description. Common sense dictates that sociology is concerned with the study of society or the social. In a generally acknowledged synthesis, sociology combines substantive theories with epistemological and empirical techniques to explain the social through other social phenomena.

In conclusion, sociology sets itself apart from other social sciences through its unique method of capturing and examining the concrete social reality and developing appropriate theories, methods, and techniques; as a distinct scientific discipline with its autonomy, it is necessary to comprehend and learn them in a grounded way. As a result, the assertion of a clear and reflexive disciplinarily that embraces interdisciplinary contributions in its analyses and reflections is the main focus of sociology instruction.

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Given that sociology both studies and is a part of society, it sustains itself as a reflexive science whose goal is to critically analyze what it does at various levels (its possibilities, its limits, its procedures), to evaluate the circumstances under which it operates as well as the effects of its activity. Sociology's knowledge permeates society forever and influences it in a "dynamic cyclist" as a never-ending project. Sociology is a branch of study that both participates in and studies society. In comparison to other disciplinary and professional fields, sociology has something relatively unique: a keen sociological self-awareness, a continuous sociological self-reflexivity on Sociology as a social practice and system of representations, a setting for conflicts of interest and games of power, and on the practice of Sociology as a socially conditioned, socially produced, and always having social implications scientific and professional activity.

Students are asked to distinguish between two different types of social reflexivity: (i) technical reflexivity, in which social scientists' knowledge (or that of their clients) is intentionally used to alter reality; and (ii) mediate reflexivity, in which participants in the dissemination of that knowledge through mass media, higher education, and other channels of knowledge apply it to social reality.

The distinct and consistent demarcation of sociological skills has a fundamental bearing on sociology teaching and learning processes because it corresponds to the legitimacy of sociology in each unique institutional environment. About sociology as training in particular, it is crucial to specify, in what can be a challenging consensus, what is intended to be promoted with the teaching of sociology in each unique institutional environment. Information and communication technology is skillfully used to adapt academic courses and curricula to create a student-centred environment. To help students understand and access new teaching methods, teachers teach students how to make the most of information and communication technology. Information and communication technology (ICT) is rapidly becoming a necessary part of the educational process. Many aspects of an individual's life are affected. These changes have forced academic institutions, administrators, and teachers to reassess attitudes, teaching strategies, and future prospects. New barriers to access have emerged.



Figure 1: Education Quality

However, it should be remembered that using instructional strategies outside lectures comes with challenges as well as benefits, especially student participation and teacher-student contact. It's also important to emphasize the prospect of increasing the clarity of students' representations and ideas to "enable an exercise in questioning that reveals the scientific inadequacies of such an argument. In certain instances, this inquiry might even occur in a setting of emotional discomfort within the classroom. Despite appearances, teaching is a challenging job. This job is quite complicated and is influenced by a wide range of elements, some of which the teacher may be able to somewhat regulate depending on the situation. Although not unique factors in this teaching process, self-confidence, experience, and subject-matter expertise appear to assume a high centrality in the teacher's choice of framework and pedagogical style and the ensuing higher learning success.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Ferreira, C. M., & Serpa, S. (2017) a well-founded reflection based on the authors' teaching experience in the Portuguese context, discussion on the teaching of sociology in higher education. We argue that four framing principles—the need to continuously engage sociological imagination, be multi-paradigmatic, be receptive to heuristic interdisciplinary, and, finally, to stimulate reflexivity at many levels—are necessary to capture the specificities of sociology. From our perspective, these principles ought to influence how sociology is taught, restricting what should be taught and encouraging how to do so in a way that upholds these ideals.

David Kember et al. (2007) noted that graduates needed the kind of all-encompassing abilities necessary for lifelong learning. This study's goal was to look at the evolution's process. A university in Hong Kong with 1756 students employed the structural equation model (SEM) to test the fictitious model. Interviews with focus groups of 5–6 students from three programs with a strong capacity development track record were undertaken in order to triangulate against this model and characterize the learning environment more thoroughly. In order to describe the learning environment in accordance with the SEM model, a number of categories were created through the analysis of the interview data. Creating capacity for understanding the key idea through multiple evaluation techniques and active engagement in learning activities in a supportive learning environment seems ideal. Connections between teachers and students grew as a result of engagement, criticism, and support. Collaboration among students and coworkers has increased dramatically as a result of these linkages. The writers came to the conclusion that interpersonal and communication skills are essential, as well as the ability to work well with others.

Srikanthan and Dalrymple (2005) devised a strategy for putting into practice a high-quality holistic model in higher education. The approach used to implement learning in enterprises was based on the Senge model. Senge claims that a "deep learning cycle" contains the actual learning tasks. The movement's complete character includes "guiding ideas," which give people a sense of purpose; "theory, methods, and tools," which allow people to access cutting-edge knowledge; and "infrastructure innovations," which provide people the ability to pursue their insight. From the perspective of the holistic model, the activities were examined. To comprehend the proper instruments, a number of theoretical structures were studied. Infrastructure procedures were also chosen to give people the resources they needed to acquire modern knowledge.

Singh (2011) Considering that there has historically been a threat to higher education, more recent demands for revolution can result in an important transformation. However, the chance to reflect on the goal of higher education, the function of colleges and universities in the new millennium, and emerging scientific research on how people learn meant that these contrasting literatures were not related in a similar way. This change happened as an explicit response to requests for clarity and responsibility. The author looked at how the basic shift in politics affected administrators, teachers, and students at colleges and universities as well as how it affected institutional level behavior. Additionally, we require highly qualified individuals who

can strengthen our economy. We can easily and swiftly transition our country from being a developing nation to one that is developed when India can provide qualified people to the rest of the world.

Gupta and Gupta (2012) examined the current state of higher education in India through the analysis of various statistics and identified the sector's biggest problems. The government's primary activities and proposals to solve these issues were also highlighted in this paper.

Svensson et al. (2017) established the idea of holistic education in the context of action-based corporate training to create a framework for achieving and comprehending the person's integral evolution. The system's objective is to integrate some of the apparent fragmentation in the conceptual framework for entrepreneurial education by linking with a larger range of teaching and learning paradigms as a basis for generating and evaluating instructions. The author offered a structure of Trans-missive, transactional, and transformative teaching strategies to support this multifaceted view of teaching and learning. According to the author, all approaches are required for accomplishing and comprehending the development of the full person, and entrepreneurial education should be planned to provide a reservoir of rich and varied experiences in an authentic learning environment. Eight chosen quotes from 2007 student presentations and a leadership course assignment were used to assess and debate the three teaching strategies. The cited examples show how education can be Trans-missive, transactional, and transformative. Based on the activity and point to it, the modalities can be contextualized in corporate training. Through the blending of several instructional techniques, significant learning was achieved. According to the abundance of quotes, action-based business education serves as a platform for a wide range of learning objectives. As a result, the image provided appears to hold promise as a foundation for approaching and comprehending the person's learning in this situation. The creation of authentic learning environments, as well as the design and analysis of more immediate student delivery in such environments, are addressed as practical parts of teaching.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

A cross-section of society has been selected for the research, consisting of those who are now pursuing higher education or have in the past. The research is a non-experimental survey, and information was gathered through an opinion poll. The research used an exploratory methodology since it wanted to learn what participants thought about the present state of higher education in India.

3.2. Sample

It was decided to use a non-probability sampling process, where samples were taken using a practical snowball sampling technique. The features of the participants are as follows:

- Only adults above the age of 18 were selected for the research.
- Participants in the study were either presently enrolled in or have completed higher education. Any education obtained beyond 12 years of formal education is considered higher education in this context.

- Participants in the study had to be fluent in English (reading, writing, and speaking).
- The research eliminated individuals whose minimal educational requirements did not include a diploma.
- Participants who were seeking higher education but were under the age of 18 were not included in the research.
- The research eliminated those individuals who were not Indian citizens.

3.3. Method of Data Collection

A socio-demographic data sheet was sent to the participants using Google Forms. The form also included a statement on the confidentiality of the replies and said that participation was entirely voluntary. The survey questionnaire, which had questions asking the participants to rank their view of higher education, was delivered after the socio-demographic data sheet had been completed. Each question was rated by the participants on a five-point scale.

3.4. Analysis of Data

Data analysis was carried out using a quantitative approach. The socio-demographic information was initially examined. Each socio-demographic data point's count was selected. To examine each participant's ratings, percentage was used. The outcomes were then spoken about.

4. RESULTS

Two factors have been taken into account while tabulating the findings. The first tabulation was carried out using the socio-demographic information. Based on the participants' comments and evaluations on the five-point rating scale, the second tabulation was completed.

4.1. Results depicting socio-demographic details

According to the examination of the sociodemographic data, there were 57 participants in total. The participants are between the ages of 20 and 66. The age group of 22 years has the highest representation in terms of age. This age group was represented by 12 people out of 57 participants, or about 21% of those who answered.

According to the statistics, there are significantly more female participants than male participants. 46 of the 57 participants—or nearly 80.7%—are female, compared to 11—or nearly 19.3%—of the male group. The participants' educational backgrounds range. 18 participants (nearly 31.6%) had completed their undergraduate degrees, 32 participants (almost 56.1%) had finished their postgraduate degrees, 5 participants (almost 8.8%) had finished their M.Phil.s or other equal pre-doctoral degrees, and 2 participants (almost 3.5%) had finished their PhDs or other equivalent doctorate degrees. Participants are from a range of professional backgrounds. The bulk of the participants are students, with 21 out of 57 (nearly 36.8%) being students, 17 out of 57 (almost 29.8%) being teachers, 15 (26.3%) being from the service industry, and the remaining 4 (7%), being full-time researchers. Additionally, the participants come from a variety of living backgrounds. 91.2 percent of the participants—52—are from metropolitan backgrounds, while the remaining 5 come from sub-urban ones. There were 57 contestants, all of Indian descent.

Table 1: Demographic Profile

| Category | Number of Participants | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|------------|
| Age Range | | |
| 20-21 years | 25 | 49% |
| 22 years | 12 | 21% |
| 23-65 years | 15 | 26% |
| 66 years | 5 | 4% |
| Gender | | |
| Female | 46 | 80.7% |
| Male | 11 | 19.3% |
| Education | | |
| Graduation | 18 | 31.6% |
| Post-graduation | 32 | 56.1% |
| M.Phil./Pre-doctoral | 5 | 8.8% |
| PhD/Doctoral | 2 | 3.5% |
| Occupation | | |
| Students | 21 | 36.8% |
| Teaching | 17 | 29.8% |
| Service | 15 | 26.3% |
| Research scholars | 4 | 7% |
| Residential Background | | |
| Urban | 52 | 91.2% |
| Sub-urban | 5 | 8.8% |

4.2. Results based on the response and ratings of the participants

Based on the mean of 57 answers to each question, the findings are analyzed. The statistics of all participants and their average performance are shown in the table below.

Table 1: Showing the mean of 57 responses to the questions

| Questions | Mean Score |
|--|------------|
| For over 200 years, colonial powers ruled over India. Do you believe this has an effect on India's existing educational system? | 3.05 |
| Do you believe that the present sociopolitical climate has an impact on India's higher education system? | 4.86 |
| Do you believe that religion has an impact on education in India? | 4.57 |

| | |
|--|------|
| What do you think about a gender gap that is evident in Indian higher education? | 2.48 |
| Higher education knowledge frequently has a connection to professional participation. What are your thoughts on this? | 2.54 |
| No Indian university currently occupies one of the top 200 spots in the world's university rankings. What are your thoughts on this? | 2.57 |
| What do you think about the academics who teach at Indian colleges and universities in terms of quality? | 3.62 |
| How much compassion and understanding does an academic now practicing in India have for his or her students? | 3.25 |
| How stimulating is India's present higher education system's curriculum? | 3.54 |
| There is now a "brain drain" situation in India, where intellectuals are leaving the country for the West. How much of this is the fault of the Indian higher education system? | 2.65 |

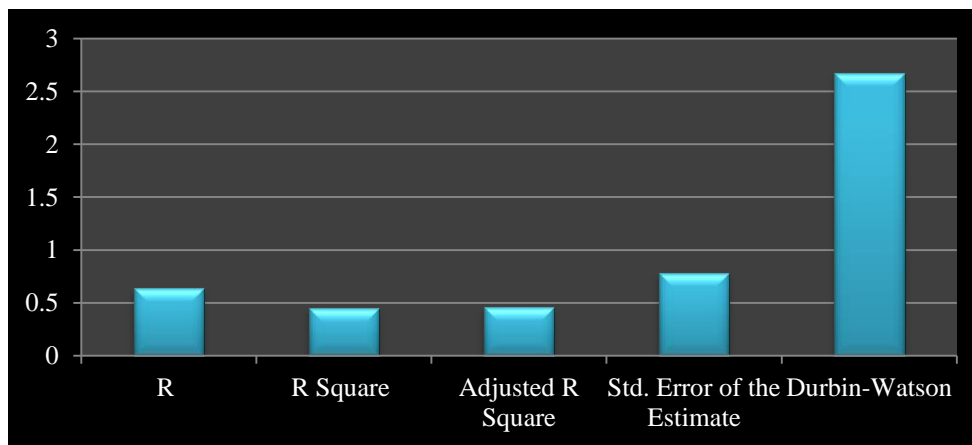


Figure 2: Model Summary

The results were averaged using a five-point rating system, where 1 represents "strong disagreement" with the notion and 5 represents "strong agreement." The average score for each question reflects how much the 57 participants agreed with the topic. The mean scores exhibit a trend whereby the greater the score, the more strongly the notion is accepted.

The average answer shows agreement on the topic when asked about the effect of colonialism on higher education in India. The average response to this query is 3.05.

A reasonably unanimous response was given to the question of whether India's higher education system is influenced by the country's socio-political climate. The average response to this query is 4.86. The idea of whether religious inclination influences higher education is generally accepted in India, where the mean score is 4.57. The viewpoint on whether there is a discernible gender gap in higher education in India is average. This question's typical score is 2.48.

Given that the mean score is 2.54, participants generally agreed that a person's vocational involvement and higher education are related. There is also a tepid consensus that none of the Indian Universities made the top 200 list of universities worldwide. This question's typical score is 2.57. Strong dissatisfaction is evident while considering the qualifications of the academics active in higher education in India. The participants seem to believe that most academics lack sufficient qualifications, as shown by the mean score of 3.62. The mean score for academics' empathy is 3.25, which shows that individuals believe most faculties to have a poor level of empathy. The issue of whether the curriculum is intellectually challenging has a mean score of 3.54. This suggests that the participants find little intellectual stimulation in the program. The participants' mean score on the question of the present "brain drain" from India is 2.65. This demonstrates a degree of agreement with the idea.

5. DISCUSSION

India has a long history of being the center of learning. The Indian subcontinent is linked to some of the oldest and most significant names in educational institutions, including Takhashila, Nalanda, and Vikramshila. Some of the pioneers in the fields of science and education have been recognized to be from India. Indian philosopher Chanakya is said to have flourished about 300 B.C. He is remembered for his well-known book "Arthashastra," which examined the economic principles and the idea of financial gain at the time. The eminent Indian mathematician and astronomer Aryabhata is most known for creating the "concept of zero." From Rabindranath Tagore in 1913 to Abhijit Banerjee in 2019, India has produced nine Nobel laureates. "Nobel Prize Winners from India" The best universities in India, however, are now unable to earn a place among the top 100 universities in the world. Institutions like the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay, and the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, both have worldwide rankings of 513 and 530, respectively.

The idea that the colonial era had a significant impact on India's higher education system is generally accepted in the current research. In the past, socioeconomic and cultural factors have impacted the Indian educational system. Brahmacharya was a period of study for people in the Vedic era. The learner was instructed to get prepared to live independently in the outside world during this period. The current Indian educational system has moved away from the long-standing academic traditions. English script has mostly overtaken Sanskrit, and the majority of Indians are obsessed with learning the language. The substitution of regional languages with international languages like French, German, and Mandarin as the third language for brighter

futures is evidence of the impact of globalization, whose origins are in the legacy of colonialism. The transition from outdoor classrooms that forced pupils to stay in close proximity to nature has been replaced with schooling inside of a building utilizing PowerPoint presentations and cutting-edge classrooms to depict the synthetic equivalent of the natural elements. According to the current research, the socio-political environment has an impact on Indian education. These phenomena may likely be examined in the context of the power held by those with political clout in academic settings. Political influence may have an impact on the education system by causing it to mismanage academic quota, educational finances, and the caliber of faculty members that are hired into the system.

In the research, a religious perspective does appear to dominate how higher education is governed. According to the constitution, India is a secular nation with no official state religion. However, Hinduism is the religion practiced by the majority of the population. Statistics indicate a rise in the number of students who identify as religious minorities. Muslim students seeking higher education have climbed from 5.2% to 13.8% during the last ten years, yet they still make up the least number of students in higher education among all other religious minorities. In a recent study on students seeking higher education in Bangalore, India, it was shown that religion does have a substantial impact on how those students fare. Community politics, religious preconceptions, and gender inequalities across faiths have been the study's main emphasis elements.

In terms of gender equality and representation in higher education, the report presents a neutral viewpoint. Female representation in higher education statistics in India has increased as a result of modernization. The sex ratio seems to be changing as a result of more governmental initiatives and subsidies for female students in school. Government Programs and Policies for Empowering Girl Children, 2019

India hasn't been able to attract worldwide attention in the academic world or hold onto a top position there. The study's subjects have also confirmed it. The nation's premier institutions, including the IITs, have also failed to place among the top 100 universities in the world. The survey also reveals that the participants' perceptions on the quality of education in India are not very favorable. Many professors in Indian universities may not do research, which ultimately lowers the academic standards of the affiliated institutions. Due to a dearth of meaningful research, the National Institute of Ranking Framework (NIRF) for several universities declined. Their assessment of the empathy shown by Indian academics is also supported by the current research. Participants gave Indian instructors a very low rating for their ability to empathize with and understand their pupils. According to research by Devi & Babu (2019), emotional control and stress management are key components of emotional intelligence among faculty members at Indian engineering colleges. Empathy for students might be a lofty goal in a place like India, where societal pressures sometimes prohibit staff from teaching to their full capacity.

In India, the higher education curricula are often out of date and do not satisfy business requirements. According to the current survey, participants agree that the curriculum needs more

intellectual stimulation. In this context, it's also important to pay attention to the fact that curriculum and educational quality are often correlated with the resources available, which might be a problem in the Indian environment. The "brain drain" phenomenon from India has developed into a significant and worrying problem. According to research, the United States today has 79% of skilled workers from India and 88% from China. The proportion of Indians moving to Canada to become permanent residents has climbed to 50% in 2018.

6. CONCLUSION

The idea that India's higher education system is deteriorating has been around for a while. The goal of the research was to evaluate the causes of the drop. The purpose of this research was to alter how Indians perceive involvement in higher education. The study's topics are important and need attention. The future of a nation is determined by its higher education, and academics are those who shape that future. The research aims to clarify these difficulties and bring about a comprehensive transformation of the nation's academic system.

Ethics Approval Declaration

We thus certify that the institutional research ethics committee authorized the current study. The 1964 Declaration of Helsinki and its subsequent revisions, as well as other related ethical principles, were followed in the conduct of the research. The study's data gathering techniques were entirely non-invasive, and participants received thorough information regarding the advantages and disadvantages of taking part. All subjects provided their informed permission.

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