



STATUS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN JAMMU: A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS AND STRATEGY

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Abstract

This paper explores the development of higher education in Jammu, a region in the northern part of India. It outlines the historical context, current landscape, and future prospects. The paper also examines key institutions, government initiatives, and the challenges faced by the higher education sector in Jammu. This research paper delves into the current state of higher education in the Jammu division identifying key challenges and proposing a comprehensive strategy for revitalization. The study draws on extensive literature reviews, data analysis and stakeholder consultations to formulate recommendations amid at fostering academic excellence, inclusivity and regional development. The study aims to serve as a comprehensive guide for policy makers, educators and stakeholders invested in the transformation of higher education in the Jammu. It endeavors to contribute to the ongoing discourse on improving the quality and accessibility of higher education in the region.

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I. INTRODUCTION:

Higher education in Jammu has undergone significant transformations over the past few decades. The region, known for its diverse culture and strategic importance, has seen substantial investments in educational infrastructure. This paper aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the evolution of higher education in Jammu, focusing on historical milestones, present developments, and future challenges. Throughout human history, education has been a cornerstone and a driving force behind societal progress. By shaping attitudes,

values, and capabilities, education empowers individuals with the strength and adaptability needed to navigate evolving circumstances. This empowerment, in turn, enables individuals to contribute to both social and national development. As such, education cannot be seen as an exclusive privilege for a select few or confined to a specific period in one's life. Historical evidence underscores the indispensable role of human resources in the advancement of nations. Education is universally acknowledged as a fundamental necessity for human development. Around the world, the aspiration for a higher quality of life is a prominent and clear human expectation. Even in developed and advanced countries, there is a persistent drive to enhance the well-being and quality of life for their citizens. The continuous quest for educational improvement and excellence is a testament to its critical importance in achieving these goals. If we want a better future of the masses, we must offer them good quality education. Education denotes victory of knowledge over ignorance, that of reason over superstitions and of light over darkness, it gives impetus to social maturity and helps in awareness of the world. Education plays a pivotal role in shaping an individual's sensitivities and perceptions, which in turn foster personal growth and development. It not only enhances one's cognitive and emotional faculties but also strengthens social cohesion by promoting understanding and cooperation among diverse groups. Furthermore, education cultivates a sense of national identity and unity, instilling the highest ethical and moral values. Through this transformative process, individuals become more empathetic, responsible, and engaged citizens, contributing positively to the fabric of society and the nation's collective spirit. The unprecedented development in every sphere of life and globalization greatly influenced the education process of all the societies. In modern society good education optimally contributes to the betterment of quality life of the people.

Education is most important factor behind human development. It helps in achieving individual development, technological progress and strengthening the social order founded on the value of freedom, social justice and equal opportunity with the notion of worldwide vision. While the foundation of knowledge and skill is laid down at the primary and secondary levels, human attain the skill of perfection at the level of higher education. In the context of a shifting paradigm, education and learning have experienced a profound transformation. Both India and numerous other countries have undertaken a critical examination of their educational systems, resulting in candid and honest assessments. This reflective process has highlighted various strengths and weaknesses, prompting a reevaluation of traditional methods and the adoption of

innovative approaches to better meet the evolving needs of students and society. By embracing this change, these nations aim to enhance the quality of education, making it more relevant, inclusive, and effective in preparing individuals for the challenges of the future.

In India higher education refers to a level of education that is imparted after +2 stage i.e. at collegiate and university level. Various educational experts, committees and commissions in India in the recent past felt the importance of higher education as an instrument of social change and progress. The National Policy on Education (NPE) of 1986 has emphasized the critical role of higher education in ensuring the nation's survival and progress. This policy highlights the immense potential of higher education to drive national development by disseminating specialized knowledge and skills. Recognizing higher education as a pivotal element, the NPE underscores its capacity to foster innovation, enhance economic growth, and address societal challenges. By equipping individuals with advanced expertise and competencies, higher education institutions contribute significantly to the overall advancement and prosperity of the country. By providing specialized knowledge it prepares the manpower for various areas like production, planning management and technological development

Thus, with its three foundational objectives—teaching, research, and extension—higher education has emerged as a vital segment of the overall educational system. It is expected to play a crucial role in both individual and national development. By integrating knowledge on human growth and development, higher education aims to meet a diverse range of quality and excellence imperatives. These imperatives are essential for enriching the educational landscape, ensuring that institutions not only impart advanced knowledge and skills but also drive innovation and societal progress. Consequently, higher education is positioned to make significant contributions to the personal development of individuals and the broader developmental goals of the nation.

Besides being a hub for agriculture and tourism, Jammu has also emerged as an educational destination. According to the 2011 census, the overall literacy rate in Jammu is 71.98%, with male literacy at 67.16% and female literacy at 61.72%. Despite efforts, the division still struggles to close the gender gap in education, though the gap has decreased from 23.60 in 2001 to 20.25 in 2011. Cross sub-regional and district comparisons reveal that participation in many sub-regions remains minimal, necessitating both short-term and long-term interventions. Strengthening the role of colleges and universities through collaborative linkages is crucial for

enhancing women's knowledge, capabilities, and intellectual aspirations. Restructuring and reorganizing higher education to ensure access with minimal gender disparity is vital.

Following the abrogation of Article 370, Jammu and Kashmir was reconstituted as a Union Territory. This change is seen as a positive step towards the educational advancement of its population. The higher education department of the J&K government is responsible for formulating regulations and policies to improve higher education in alignment with the union government. The department's vision and mission statements reflect these objectives. It aims to transform J&K into a hub of academic excellence by providing equitable access to value-based and quality education that keeps pace with evolving socio-economic and cultural trends. Its mission focuses on promoting quality through sustained efforts, commitment, and dedication, striving to elevate institutions to new heights of excellence.

Jammu is home to 07 universities, including professional, general multidisciplinary, and non-multidisciplinary institutions, as well as 06 institutes of national importance.

Table-1: Universities in Jammu Division

| Name of university | State/ central | Discipline | Est. Year |
|---|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| Central university of Jammu | Central university | Multidisciplinary | 2016 |
| Central Sanskrit university, Jammu | Deemed university | Sanskrit | 2002 |
| University of Jammu, Jammu | State university | Multidisciplinary | 1968 |
| Cluster university of Jammu | State university | Multidisciplinary | 2016 |
| Sher-e-Kashmir university of agricultural science and technology, Jammu | State university | Agricultural science and technology | 1999 |
| Shri Mata Vaishno Devi university, katra Jammu | State university | Multidisciplinary | 2004 |
| Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah university, Dhanour, Jammu | State university | Multidisciplinary | 2005 |

Table-2: Colleges in Jammu Division

| S.NO | District | Number of colleges |
|-------|-----------|--------------------|
| 1 | Jammu | 18 |
| 2 | Kathua | 09 |
| 3 | Udhampur | 09 |
| 4 | Rajouri | 09 |
| 5 | Poonch | 04 |
| 6 | Doda | 05 |
| 7 | Reasi | 04 |
| 8 | Kishtawar | 04 |
| 9 | Ramban | 05 |
| 10 | Samba | 05 |
| Total | | 72 |

Table-3: Higher Education Institutions in Jammu Division

| | |
|---|----|
| Central Universities | 02 |
| State Universities | 05 |
| Deemed To Be Universities | 01 |
| Institutes Of National Importance | 06 |
| Research Institutes | 04 |
| Affiliated Medical Colleges | 06 |
| Affiliated Dental Colleges | 02 |
| Affiliated Medical Unani Colleges | 02 |
| Affiliated Nursing/ Physiotherapy Colleges | 09 |
| Affiliated Engineering Colleges | 07 |
| Affiliated Computer Science Colleges | 06 |
| Affiliated Government Degree Colleges | 72 |
| Affiliated Ayurvedic Colleges | 02 |
| Autonomous Degree Colleges | 03 |
| Affiliated B.Ed colleges(private) | 76 |
| Affiliated Government B.Ed colleges | 02 |
| Affiliated music and fine Arts institute | 02 |
| Affiliated Law colleges | 06 |
| Indian institute of skiing and mountaineering | 01 |
| Affiliated physical science Government colleges | 02 |
| Affiliated Degree colleges/ Oriental colleges (Non-Government | 22 |

The higher education in Jammu has undergone massive transformation in the last two decades with the tremendous increase in the number of universities, institutes of national importance and colleges both private as well as government aided. There is no doubt that this expansion of higher education has lead to its reach to the much needed deprived areas but at the same time the prevailing higher education system in Jammu is more oriented towards generation of

educated unemployed youth rather than focusing on skill development and professional manpower augmentation. Therefore this expansion in education without taking care of its quality and relevance leads to growing unemployment of educated youth. Additionally, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims to overhaul the higher education system, establish world-class institutions nationwide, and increase the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) to at least 50% by 2035. The Indian higher education system is increasingly recognizing the imperative for quality education. To elevate the quality of higher education in the Division, it is crucial to take concrete steps and implement conscious and systematic efforts. Achieving this goal requires a concerted and strategic approach to enhance educational standards and outcomes in the Jammu Division.

1.1 Historical Context:

The foundation of higher education in Jammu can be traced back to the establishment of the University of Jammu in 1969. This institution marked a pivotal moment in the region's educational landscape, providing a much-needed impetus for advanced learning and research. Prior to this, higher education opportunities were limited, with students often having to move to other parts of India for further studies.

1.2 Current Landscape:

Major Institutions

University of Jammu: Established in 1969, it is the primary institution for higher education in the region. The university offers a wide range of undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral programs across various disciplines.

Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University (SMVDU): Founded in 1999, SMVDU is a prominent university located near Katra, offering programs in engineering, management, and humanities.

Central University of Jammu: Established in 2009, this university has contributed significantly to the academic and research landscape of the region.

1.3 Technical and Professional Education:

Technical and professional education has seen significant growth, with institutions such as the Government College of Engineering and Technology (GCET) and various private engineering and management colleges contributing to the region's technical workforce.

1.4 Research and Development:

Research activities in Jammu have received a boost with the establishment of research centers and collaborations with national and international institutions. Areas of focus include biotechnology, environmental sciences, and regional studies.

1.5 Government Initiatives:

The government has played a crucial role in the development of higher education in Jammu through various initiatives:

Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA): This central government scheme aims to improve the overall quality of state institutions by providing strategic funding and support.

Prime Minister's Special Scholarship Scheme (PMSSS): Designed to support students from Jammu and Kashmir, this scheme provides financial assistance for higher education across India.

Infrastructure Development: Investments in infrastructure, such as modern campuses, libraries, and laboratories, have enhanced the quality of education and research.

1.6 Challenges:

Despite significant progress, higher education in Jammu faces several challenges:

Political Instability: The region's political instability has often disrupted academic activities and deterred investments in education.

Brain Drain: Many talented students and faculty members migrate to other parts of India or abroad for better opportunities.

Quality of Education: Ensuring high standards of education across all institutions remains a challenge, particularly in newer or smaller colleges.

1.7 Future Prospects:

The future of higher education in Jammu looks promising, with several initiatives aimed at further development:

Digital Learning: Expansion of digital infrastructure and online learning platforms can increase access to quality education.

International Collaborations: Partnerships with international universities can enhance research opportunities and academic exchange.

Skill Development: Focus on vocational and skill-based education can better align higher education with the region's economic needs.

II. METHODOLOGY:

This research paper draws on both primary and secondary data sources. The information has been gathered from a variety of research reports, academic journals, websites, scholarly articles, higher education institutions, as well as government reports and policy documents. The study focuses on several key aspects of higher education in Jammu. These include the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education institutions, the range of courses and programs offered, the existing infrastructure, and the availability of faculty positions. Additionally, it examines research and teaching practices, the utilization of e-learning and teaching resources, internship programs, and student placements. The paper also evaluates the accreditation status from the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) and assesses the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in both urban and rural institutions across the Division.

The data acquired during the period of study also includes interactions with faculty, students and other stakeholders.

III. SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE JAMMU DIVISION:

1. **INVESTMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE:** Majority of institutions in the Jammu have deficient infrastructure in different forms including insufficient buildings such as classrooms, library blocks, examination blocks, sports complex, dispensary, laboratories and browsing centre. Lack of equipments, scientific material, apparatuses and qualified technicians also hamper qualitative teaching. The upcoming of modern high-tech labs seem to be a distant dream in many institutions of higher learning. In order to boost the infrastructural development it requires to substantially increasing allocation of funds to the institutions of higher education. Therefore up gradation of libraries, laboratories and classrooms is necessary to provide the conducive learning environment.
2. **FACULTY DEVELOPMENT:** Teacher assessment is the appraisal of the ability of the teacher. It includes collection, analysis, interpretation and use of information which forms evidence for the quality development of teaching and learning process. The assessment is more than a measurement which involves issues of value, quality and effectiveness several different criteria and standards of excellence are required for

different faculty members. The interest and motivation of faculty members change as they progress through different career stages and aim for different achievements. Moreover faculty members conduct their work in different ways. Therefore, diversity and not uniformity is the key of their evaluation, not single evidence can adequately represent complex faculty performance. The source of evidence can be faculty colleagues, administration, students, former students and other stakeholders. Special emphasis is to be given for regular updating of faculty through dynamic training processes including online training through SWAYAM, MOOC and DIKSHA portals moreover the standard certification may be given credits for career Advancement Scheme (CAS) for placement of teaching faculty in higher education.

3. **IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW EDUCATION POLICY (NEP2020):** In the prevailing education system including the existing curricula at various levels of education and their implementation it is very crucial to implement new policy of education framed at the national level keeping in view the present and future needs of society aiming at the development of multidisciplinary universities focussing on high quality research and education. Furthermore the implementation of NEP 2020 in the region of Jammu is a challenging task because of so many factors.
4. **CURRICULUM ENHANCEMENT:** The existing curricula in higher education institutions of Jammu need to be innovative and progressive in nature. As per UGC guidelines the new Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) has been implemented in the Division at undergraduate level from 2016, students have been given the option to choose the subject combinations of their choice. As a result numerous subject combinations are available thereby making the curriculum more flexible. English is not among the compulsory subjects to the students. Students from rural background are usually not proficient in English language. The students are very poor in language and they cannot even write an application for the issue of Bonafide Certificate and similar other requirements in various offices. English should also be compulsory for all the students at the undergraduate level by doing necessary reforms in the curriculum. As per the National Education Policy 2020 the lacuna in the existing curriculum should be removed by the essential revision of curriculum at all levels of higher education keeping in view the changing requirements of society.

5. **TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION:**The Digital India Campaign is instrumental in transforming the country into a digitally empowered society and a robust knowledge economy. This initiative aims to bridge the digital divide, making digital resources and infrastructure accessible to all citizens. Similarly, technology is pivotal in enhancing educational processes and outcomes. It facilitates innovative teaching methods, broadens access to learning materials, and supports the development of digital skills. By integrating technology into education, institutions can offer more interactive and personalized learning experiences, ultimately improving the overall quality of education and preparing students for the demands of the digital age. There is lack of sufficient technology at all levels of curriculum delivery in the Division. The e-learning requires further promotion at all levels. The development and delivery of teaching-learning e-content and also the newly introduced learning management system (LMS system) are still at its infancy. Their benefits are not properly getting to the desired stakeholders. There is also the need to popularize and integrate technology-based education platforms like DIKSHA and SWAYAM across all the higher educational institutions of the region.
6. **Infrastructure Development:** Majority of institutions in the Jammu have deficient infrastructure in different forms including insufficient buildings such as classrooms, library blocks, examination blocks, sports complex, dispensary, laboratories and browsing centre. Lack of equipments, scientific material, apparatuses and qualified technicians also hamper qualitative teaching. The upcoming of modern high-tech labs seem to be a distant dream in many institutions of higher learning. In order to boost the infrastructural development it requires to substantially increasing allocation of funds to the institutions of higher education.
7. **Introduction of Vocational and Applied Subjects:** The focus of higher education should shift from traditional subjects to skill development and vocational or applied subjects. In order to remove the mismatch between education system and employment opportunities industrial personnel should be associated with curriculum designing and development. Industry related courses should be introduced to expose and train the students to industrial problems and requirements. Companies should be sought out for organizing placement drives in the educational institutions. This will help in linking our

education system with employment and thereby generating the much needed motivation among the students.

8. **Insufficient Funds:** Almost all the universities in India are starved with funds. Similar plight of the higher education is witnessed in Jammu. Most of the budgetary outlay is spent on the salary component and superannuating benefits. Therefore, meager resources are left for the up keeping and development of the institution. The allocation of funds by the Government to various colleges is insufficient. Therefore, most of the government colleges have been facing a financial crunch which severely hampers the quality of higher education. There are stringent guidelines associated with the utilization of allocated funds which need revision for the optimal, transparent and timely utilization of funds. The corrupt practices at the level of unequal allocation of funds to the institutions need to be identified and checked.
9. **STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES:** providing counselling, career guidance, and support services to enhance student retention and success.
10. **QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS:** Internal Quality Assurance Cells (IQAC): implementing rigorous quality assurance mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of educational programs and institutions. In order to internalize the quality inputs, all the government colleges have established IQACs. Their main responsibility is to maintain quality standards of higher education within the institution. But for reasons better known to the administration these cells are not functioning optimally in most of the institutions. The functioning of IQAC is directly related to the activism and coupling action of both the head of institution and IQAC coordinator. The preferences and hidden interests of institutional heads often hamper its functioning. The usual practice of time pass is a common phenomenon. The activism of IQAC seems to be very imperative for the better quality of higher education.
11. **PROMOTION OF RESEARCH:** Encouraging research culture by providing grants, incentives, and facilities for faculty and students to conduct meaningful research.
12. **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:** Involving local communities in the educational process through outreach programs, social projects, and cultural exchange initiatives.
13. **PROMOTION OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY LEARNING:** Encouraging interdisciplinary studies and collaboration between different departments and disciplines to foster innovation and holistic learning.

IV. CONCLUSION:

The development of higher education in Jammu has been marked by significant achievements and persistent challenges. Continued efforts by the government, educational institutions, and the community are essential to further enhance the quality and accessibility of higher education in the region. By addressing current challenges and leveraging opportunities for growth, Jammu can strengthen its position as a hub for higher education in northern India. To successfully address future challenges in tertiary education, the government must prioritize this sector and provide extensive facilities. Significant enhancements are needed in the physical infrastructure of higher education institutions to support this goal. A transparent and efficient system of recruitment of both teaching faculty and administrators of institutions should be in place. Local Government of UT should also earmark on a substantial expenditure in higher education. The practice of contractual engagement should be stopped as early as possible. The National Education Policy 2020 is not being implemented in its true spirit. There shall be at least one multidisciplinary higher education institution at each district of Jammu. The focus must shift from creation of institutions to their consistent performance. E-learning must be encouraged at all levels of tertiary education including both the teachers and taught. The skill development initiatives are to be given impetus. Digital education has the potential to transform the higher education landscape in Jammu by offering open access to remote resources, facilitating knowledge sharing, and providing flexible online certification and degree programs. By enabling anytime, anywhere, and at-your-own-pace mechanisms for attending classes, digital education can significantly improve the current state of higher education. This transformation will empower the youth, enabling them to contribute more effectively to national development.

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