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MOMENTUM JHARKHAND: A STATE ON THE MOVE TO TRANSFORM THE HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION SECTOR

Abstract:

Jharkhand is a state in the eastern part of India, carved out from the larger state of Bihar in 2001. The state has abundant natural resources such as minerals and forests and is also home to large number of small and large industries that exploit these resources for development. However, the state and much of its population haven't had a fair share of this development with the state's poor report card having one of the lowest per capita incomes and human development indicators among the other states.

This phenomenon could be attributed to the fact that education and especially the higher education in the state hasn't kept pace with the changes in the Indian economy. The participation rate is one of the lowest in the country at 15% and the quality and relevance of education imparted in the colleges and universities leaves a lot to be desired with poor industry-academia linkages, low employability of students, inadequate number of qualified and trained faculty and absence of research and development.

However, with a change in government in 2015 ushering visionary political leadership and dynamic administrative enthusiasm the higher and technical education sector in the state is at the cusp of a transformation. The state has a firm resolve to disrupt the status quo at the universities and colleges so as to power a knowledge based economy and society. The initiatives range from operational reforms in regulatory framework, rules and regulations, governance and management to meeting mandatory requirements of Quality Assurance and Accreditation, introducing Choice Based Credit System to strategic initiatives such as developing a policy to increase private sector participation to increase enrolments and quality, rationalisation of courses, setting up Centres of Excellence and pursuing internationalisation. This paper seeks to detail out the context of the higher and technical education of the state, roadmap for excellence, initiatives undertaken and the course of action for the medium to long term future. The paper highlights the enablers and catalysts of this direction and pace of movement which can be useful inputs for design and implementation of transformation programmes in other states with similar context.

Keywords:

higher education, technical education, quality, enrolment