

# REASSESSING HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF EXISTING SOCIOECONOMIC INEQUALITIES - ANALYSING HISTORICAL TRENDS, EVALUATING THE CURRENT SITUATION, AND INVESTIGATING POTENTIAL FUTURE PROSPECTS

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**Abstract** *The goals and effects of higher education on the economy and society have experienced numerous changes throughout history. Considering the context is crucial as institutional and policy processes in higher education evolve, differ among countries, and vary between political systems. This essay compares the utilitarian and inherent conceptual frameworks to examine the purpose of higher education and its institutional components. The analysis of various educational traditions is conducted in a critical manner, and these traditions are utilised as examples to provide insights for current policymaking. This article employs accurate conceptual associations as it recognises the inseparability of higher education from other educational levels. The significance of this lies in the organic integration of social science literature, which provides recommendations for the future based on well-established practices that were previously disregarded due to an excessive dependence on market-driven approaches. This offers novel perspectives on the significance of conceptual "bridging" and reconciliation in advancing policy-guiding theories. The discussion on the purpose of higher education analyses the current trends of growing social inequality in the Western Hemisphere, their connection to the prevalent higher education model, and the essential policy decisions needed to ensure continued growth in participation. This article contends that the prevailing emphasis on labour market-oriented policies in higher education has resulted in an escalating level of rivalry. As a result, higher education has transformed into a conventional marketplace where degrees and achievements are seen as currency that can be exchanged for value in the job market. The original purpose of education was to help people grow, but it has since changed to help with economic development. Owing to the exorbitant expenses associated with tertiary education, despite the purported transparency of regulations, only a privileged minority can actually afford it. Policymakers should contemplate adopting a hybrid paradigm that recognises both the inherent value and the practical benefits of higher education. This shift would help foster inclusive educational systems and contribute to the development of a fair and well-informed society. India is currently experiencing substantial transformations in its social, cultural, and economic sphere. While there is a decrease in job opportunities, business graduates are also lacking the necessary knowledge and skills required by the industry. To bridge the gap between academic coursework and the demands of the business world, commerce education should be comprehensive and extensive focused, and specifically designed to prioritise qualities such as mindset, corporate knowledge, personal presentation, and the cultivation of leadership abilities. In order to make the business curriculum more suitable for society, it is critically important to reform and realign it. The government should strive to develop novel methodologies to improve the nation's educational system.*

**Keywords:** *Instructional Traditions, Restructuring, Comprehensive, Social Inequalities, Educational System*

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## INTRODUCTION

In Western societies, the prevailing human capital theory views education as a conventional type of investment, where the main factor that leads to substantial gains in the job market is the additional salary earned (Becker, 1964, 1993). However, in actuality, the situation is more intricate and it is improbable that this sequence of events will persist,

particularly during challenging economic circumstances such as the one we are presently experiencing. The intrinsic perspective, in contrast, bears some resemblance to the American liberal arts tradition and argues that education should empower students to autonomously determine the course of their lives (Bridges, 1992: 92). While the underlying concept of this decision may involve personal motivations that are not directly influenced by economic

factors, it is possible that this specific choice has an economic foundation. Robinson and Aronica (2009) argue that education has undergone a shift towards a depersonalised and mechanised approach, resembling the assembly-line nature of factory production. They question this concept and advocate for an educational approach that is customised to the unique requirements and abilities of every student. Students place a high value on the quality of education they receive, whereas vehicles are unconcerned about the manufacturing process. Therefore, education cannot be equated to a mechanised assembly process. According to Waters (2012), this manufacturing process is carried out using a bureaucratic system that is rigid, standardised, and highly efficient in terms of productivity, but lacks interpersonal interaction. The system operates with the perspective that children are regarded as the fundamental components for the development of adults, the final outcome that possesses the necessary skills to procreate and give rise to a new generation of “raw materials,” and so on. Waters supports Weber’s (1947, 1968) rationale for the role of bureaucracy in modern society (2012).

According to Durkheim, this refers to a tactic utilised by older individuals to assert control over younger individuals, with the aim of preserving the established social structure (1956, 2006). To avoid the monotonous and unquestionable transmission of existing knowledge, it is crucial to prioritise a learning approach that combines educational and social elements. This is due to the ontological and epistemological implications that education has. The focus of this article is higher education because it comes just before entering the workforce. At this stage of education, the instrumental perspective is more widespread than the intrinsic perspective, in contrast to lower levels of education. Historically, universities have been the primary institutions for providing higher education. The principle of academic autonomy was first established as the foundational concept of its ethos at the Institution of Bologna, the first university in Europe (Newman, 1996). In his study, Graham (2013) categorises higher education models into three distinct types. There are three distinct categories of universities: university college, research university, and technical university. He provides a succinct overview of the evolution of these three paradigms. The university, which prioritised Christian principles, holds the distinction of being the oldest college. Subsequently, as scientific understanding began to challenge the idea of theological truth being universally applicable, a distinct type of establishment emerged, prioritising scholarly pursuits and academic inquiry. Since the establishment of the liberal arts tradition, this particular type of university has thrived and grown in the United States. Proliferating from Cambridge in the 16th century to Berlin under the name Humboldtian University, the research university model initially aimed to accomplish two primary objectives: the accumulation of knowledge and its subsequent application to a broader

societal context. The third category comprises technical higher education models. The University of Strathclyde, located in Glasgow, Scotland, was established on the premises that now house it, during the period of the Industrial Revolution.

The foundation of the technical model was the notion that formal education and institutional validation were prerequisites for the application of industrial skills to the broader society. The introduction of capitalism, nevertheless, brought about a profound transformation in the structure and configuration of labour relations. It began to be believed that the formerly separate fields of education and industry were intricately intertwined in a fairly linear fashion. Universities worldwide employ a hybrid approach, fostering collaboration among diverse higher education cultures and traditions. Some organisations set themselves apart from others by maintaining the reputation and heritage of a particular model. The primary objective of this research is to conduct an exhaustive examination of the influence that higher education has on social inequality, focusing specifically on the Western world. The study will conduct a comprehensive analysis of the institutional and policy factors. The objective of this study is not to perform an in-depth analysis of this issue. The central emphasis in today’s dynamic world is the metamorphosis of higher education institutions. Trow and Brennan (2004) classify higher education into three distinct categories, as outlined in their works from 1979 and 2000. The first category is the elite form, which aims primarily to shape and equip the offspring of the most influential social class intellectually. The second category is mass higher education, which equips students with the requisite skills and knowledge to fulfil technical and economic positions in the labour market. The third option, referred to as the universal approach, aims to support both the general population and students in adjusting to the rapidly changing social and technological environment.

The subsequent sections of this research paper elucidate the inevitable shortcomings of employing either the intrinsic or instrumental techniques in isolation. Social theories and practices should prioritise the cultivation of peace instead of stubbornly promoting competition in a world that is becoming more divided and politicised, with a growing prevalence of social injustices within and between nations. Regarding this matter, this paper considers the intrinsic and instrumental approaches to be mutually reinforcing. This viewpoint has the potential to contribute to the development of educational systems that are more effectively integrated into the fabric of society. This article questions the current utilitarian perspective on education, particularly as it is understood in Western societies, by examining and building upon the arguments put forth by influential critical educators such as Freire, Bronfenbrenner, Bourdieu, and Kozol. Subsequently, the two conflicting concepts are

implemented as a unified and harmonised teaching method, and the research then presents a rationale for an integrated amalgamation of the body of knowledge. This assertion is substantiated by the research conducted by Lu and Horner (1999), Payne (1999), and Durst (1999). Durst (1999) argues that a state of “reflective instrumentalism” can be attained by combining critical pedagogical principles with students’ pragmatic belief that education serves as a mere vehicle for securing lucrative employment. According to Payne (1999), it is recommended to adopt a comparable approach where teachers actively involve students in the subject matter in order to stimulate their creativity. Lu and Horner (2009) argue that in order to engage in a meaningful discussion about job choices within a dynamic social context, it is essential for educators and students to work together in a way that enables the possibility of changing their own viewpoints.

## THE PURPOSE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN WESTERN SOCIETIES

According to Mokyr (2002), education ought to be integrated using the strategies of instilling and liberating to foster cognitive and societal progress. Shapiro (2005) emphasises the significance of higher education establishments possessing a public purpose that transcends self-interest, in order to faithfully represent the society that its constituents envision. According to Barnett (2017, p. 10), a comprehensive philosophy of higher education should not only aim to understand and protect the university, but also to stimulate significant changes within it. Bo (2009) has expressed concerns regarding the purpose and importance of education in modern Western societies. Bo argues that education has become a contradictory idea that limits personal freedom by suppressing students’ ability to express their creativity. As a result, the students experience a sense of systemic confinement rather than emancipation. Bo shares Mokyr’s viewpoint regarding the criticality of upholding the foundational tenets of education as delineated in antiquated philosophies. These principles advocate for a balanced approach that combines indoctrination and liberation, with the aim of fostering both individual intellectual growth and societal progress (Mokyr, 2002; Bo, 2009). Diverse societies and individuals maintain opposing perspectives regarding the goals and objectives of higher education in the present day. It is a collaborative environment where teaching and research can synergistically contribute to the advancement of various types of knowledge, including both practical and theoretical. The recognition and utilisation of individuals’ aptitudes and abilities, in conjunction with the endeavour to secure employment, uphold ethical principles, and fulfil civic

responsibilities, exist alongside the enhancement of labour market proficiencies. It is a location where the pursuit of material possessions and moral values exist simultaneously and vie for dominance. The period following World War II has been marked by the widespread adoption of a standardised approach to higher education. Up until recently, only people from higher socioeconomic levels could pursue higher education (Brennan, 2004). The educational policies of the entire western world, including Europe, were founded upon this concept (Shapiro, 2005). The advancement of information and communication technologies (ICT) has bolstered these policies, facilitating more robust linkages between nations and educational establishments in both business and non-business settings. As a result, higher education has been altered, allowing it to be more easily accessed by a broader range of individuals (Jongbloed et al., 2008). The boundaries of higher education have become less distinct, making it challenging to precisely define the “social contract” that exists between its institutions and the individuals involved. Universities in the current global market face fierce economic competition, as governments no longer hold the primary position.

The demographic composition of the student population in higher education is constantly changing. The higher education sector has evolved into a flourishing global industry. The global competition for recruiting highly skilled individuals is rapidly escalating as an increasing number of countries provide more opportunities for foreign graduates and postgraduates, usually at a higher expense compared to their own citizens (Barber et al., 2013). Prominent developing countries, including China and Singapore, are allocating significant financial resources towards enhancing their tertiary education systems and fostering a more inclusive atmosphere that welcomes exceptionally gifted individuals from around the world. Advancements in technology have led to a transformation in the traditional form of higher education, rendering physical presence unnecessary (Yuan et al., 2013). Adult learners now have the opportunity to pursue advanced degrees, such as graduate or post-graduate degrees, as it is considerably more convenient to study while maintaining employment. These advancements have raised the potential for financial gain, but they also require a substantial monetary commitment in terms of new infrastructure, resources, and technology. Diversifying financial sources is essential, leading to increased interest from other industries (Kaiser et al., 2014). Furthermore, climate change, the widespread occurrence of terrorism, persistent economic instability, and the automation of employment are anticipated to result in heightened migration both within nations and across borders. This, in turn, will inevitably create a higher demand for higher education, especially in economically advanced Western

nations. Given the unpredictable and ever-changing nature of the environment in which higher education institutions function, it is imperative to develop strategies that prioritise adaptability and flexibility. The hybrid approach we propose is similar to this, as it effectively balances both instrumental and intrinsic values.

Presently, the context in which higher education operates is one of a knowledge-driven, digital society in which the economy holds paramount importance. Proficiency in technology, analytical reasoning, and the ability to handle multiple tasks simultaneously are greatly esteemed in the job market, resulting in heightened competition and a more rapid work tempo (Westerheijden et al., 2007). Haigh and Clifford (2011) argue that possessing a strong command of technical and interpersonal skills alone is insufficient. They contend that higher education must prioritise the alteration of attitudes and behaviours, as these factors are vital for the prosperity of a globalized knowledge-driven economy. The trends of knowledge and skill transfer by universities, which “increasingly instrumentalize, professionalize, vocationalize, corporatize, and ultimately technologize education,” have drawn significant epistemological and ontological criticism (Thomson, 2001: 244) (Dall’Alba & Barnacle, 2007; Bourdieu, 1998). According to Livingstone (2009), it is not logical to consider education and the labour market as closely connected economic activities with clear cause-and-effect relationships, as they are grounded in distinct philosophical principles and institutional principles. The current paper challenges this claim by proposing a “bridging” theory that can be practically implemented and utilised to inform policy decisions. This is achieved by providing further details on the assertions put forth by Lu and Horner (1999), Payne (1999), and Durst (1999). The year 2009. When education, particularly at the university level, is regarded as a fundamental entitlement that should be available to all members of society, the concept of human capital, as exclusively defined by the investment perspective, fails to adequately explain the advantages that both individuals and society can derive from education. Citizenship is a significant factor that impacts individuals’ inclination to pursue higher education. In order to provide a comprehensive explanation of this decision, it is crucial to take into account concepts such as social and cultural capital, as well as habitus.

These concepts acknowledge that students pursue higher education not solely for the purpose of achieving success in the job market and earning substantial financial rewards, but also to acquire social and cultural benefits. When examining the motivations for pursuing higher education, it is essential to assign equal significance to these factors (Coleman, 1988; Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu (1984) argues that degrees and credentials are predominantly employed by the ruling class

as a covert means of distinguishing individuals based on their social origins, rather than as indicators of academic achievement, evidence of employable skills, or indications of talent. Bourdieu does not explicitly dismiss the human capital theory, but he articulates significant scepticism regarding its limited social relevance. Beyond that, he perceives it as a means by which those in positions of power maintain their dominance and perpetuate social inequality. Talents and higher education attainment are inseparable in terms of evaluation, as it is based on the assumption that individuals with different abilities compete and interact while performing specific tasks, which can be both unique and widespread. Within a dynamic social environment, the existence of innate traits and acquired abilities suggests that capabilities can be discovered both within and outside of this specific setting. The term “capabilities” pertains to the diverse potential combinations of actions or conditions that an individual can attain or embody, as defined by Sen (1993: 30). Sen argues that capabilities should be considered as a primary goal, rather than just a method to attain another objective (Sen, 1985; Saito, 2003; Walker & Unterhalter, 2007).

Social institutions should assist individuals in accomplishing this aim because skills are essential for wellness, and doing so will increase their sense of life satisfaction. The presence of similar levels of life happiness among individuals with diverse demographic and socioeconomic characteristics does not necessarily indicate parity in social or economic status. This is because the perception of life pleasure is often subjective. People typically base their assessments of life satisfaction on the goals, desires, and expectations they have for the future, all of which are influenced by their socioeconomic situation (Saito, 2003).

The capability approach posits that assessing an individual’s educational attainment, as well as the efficacy of their instructors and curriculum, in isolation, without considering their capacity to transform resources into capabilities, yields diminished benefits. Sen’s capacity approach, introduced in 1985 and further developed in 1993, questions the human capital hypothesis that views education as a typical investment made by individuals. I maintain a sceptical stance towards structuralist and post-structuralist ideologies that give precedence to institutions and authority at the expense of individual agency. According to Sen (1985, 1993), it is exceedingly challenging to assess educational achievement exclusively based on factors such as projected future wealth, test scores, or student enrolment. Such evaluations fail to adequately capture the core purpose of education, which is to enhance the welfare of individuals. It also demonstrates how damaging inefficient education can be, leading to significant lifetime disadvantages for individuals and societies (Unterhalter, 2003, 2005).

Contemporary academic discourse acknowledges that the liberal arts tradition imparts a comprehensive education in numerous fields, including but not limited to the social sciences. Its objective is to equip students with the skills and knowledge necessary to thrive in their careers and as active participants in the community. Kozol argues that the reality differs greatly from this perspective (Kozol, 2005, 2012). Kozol dedicated a substantial portion of his professional life to studying the societal context of American schools, focusing specifically on the dynamics among parents, teachers, and students and how these dynamics have evolved over the years. He highlights the escalating regional disparities and segregation in American schools. Urban schools, specifically, are widely recognised as notable instances of settings where social discrimination thrives, and the current educational system in the United States operates as a mechanism to perpetuate social inequality. Kozol strongly condemns the utilitarian objectives of market-driven education, wherein corporations and the economy hold significant influence in determining the objectives, subjects, and curriculum of schools.

The roles of teachers, parents, and students are simultaneously diminished to that of mere token participants. Hess (2004) agrees that there is an increasing presence of social inequality in US schools, although his proposed solution differs significantly from Kozol's. Schools should be held accountable to the same level of responsibility as regular businesses, particularly in regards to the imparting of essential knowledge. This is because schools are social establishments that operate and engage with the broader economy on a daily basis. Hess argues that top-notch literacy and fundamental knowledge training should be provided in every US school. A standardised national curriculum for all US public schools can be created, and this knowledge is easily standardisable. This would enable all schools to provide all kids, regardless of their social situations, with a top-notch foundational education. Subsequently, every educational institution, educator, and student bears responsibility for their achievements; if they fail to meet the established national standards, the schools will be shut down, the teachers will face unemployment, and the students may be compelled to transfer to different schools or risk being unable to complete their education.

Hess delineates between two categories of reformers: those who advocate for the preservation of the existing state of affairs and do not challenge the government's authority over education, and those who endorse a non-bureaucratic educational system that operates under market competition and is held accountable through measures akin to those employed in the corporate sector. Hess' claim that the laws of market competition are the only effective means to improve and prosper schools lacks sufficient evidence.

This is because there are numerous examples across various industries where the implementation of market competition has resulted in the growth of large multinational corporations, rather than creating opportunities for the less privileged. The intense rivalry within the financial, pharmaceutical, and IT sectors, including major players like Apple, Microsoft, and the creators of IOS and Android software, has had limited positive impact on the disadvantaged or the industry as a whole. Instead, it has led to the emergence of powerful "too big to fail" corporations that exercise significant control, if not outright dominance, over the market. Hess concurs that the educational system in the United States bears a social responsibility, alongside its primary objective of preparing students for the labour market. An effective civic democracy requires engaged individuals who possess the ability to analyse and express their viewpoints, as well as actively contribute to their local and national communities. This calls for a higher education system that prioritises the development of skills directly applicable to the job market (p. 4). Establishing rigorous benchmarks for fundamental knowledge in all American schools is essential and achievable.

These objectives cannot rely solely on rivalry and coercion, as in a society where only the most powerful persist to fulfil the requirements of human development, fairness, and sustainable social advancement. Both the banking education method and the human capital hypothesis prioritise educational attainment as a means to invest in future higher earnings and social mobility. The core tenet of banking education and human capital theory is the premise of a direct correlation between prior individual behaviours and subsequent economic and societal outcomes. Surprisingly, policymakers in Western countries nowadays appear to disregard the significant logical fallacy that arises from this assumption. Freire (2009) argues that a pedagogical approach that challenges and exposes the myths and hidden truths of reality through dialogue between teachers and students fosters the development of critical thinkers who actively engage in inquiry to constantly shape and transform social reality.

Furthermore, this argument is presented alongside the critique of the current state of education. This problem-posing approach to education is significant due to its inherent perspective that human development is largely unaffected by the acquisition of material possessions and the accumulation of wealth through higher levels of education. The term *Building* originated in Germany and, particularly in the post-Middle Ages era, it played a significant role in shaping the ideology that has influenced the German educational system to this day. This occurred during a time when society was characterised by rigidity and theocracy, leading to a particular perspective on education (Waters, 2016). Reciprocally exchanging This saying is closely

associated with the liberation of the mind from superstitions and societal conventions. Despite the presumption of philosophical foundations, education must also have some application in the real world, just like philosophy as a whole, so some context is necessary (Herder, 2002).

## HIGHER EDUCATION EXPANSION AND SOCIAL INEQUALITIES: CONTEMPORARY TRENDS

The rates of enrolment in higher education have consistently risen over the past thirty years. European policies, especially in the Anglo-Saxon region, aim to enhance the inclusivity of higher education by making it more accessible to a wider population (Bowl, 2012). Developing a structure to encourage transparency in higher education presents a considerable obstacle for policymakers, mainly due to the extensive range of individuals comprising the target population. This population comprises members with distinct social commitments and members of diverse socioeconomic, demographic, ethnic, innate ability, talent orientation, and disability groups. Significant barriers arise in the process of policy formulation due to the contrasting vested interests of each group (CFE & Edge Hill University, 2013).

Institutional objectives frequently conflict with what students want to get out of their education, according to Chang et al. (2013). Most students view the purpose of higher education as being primarily to prepare them for better-paying, higher-quality jobs, which is more pragmatic and practical. Arum and Roksa (2011) assert that higher education does not significantly improve students' capacity for critical thought and problem-solving. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that students who articulate a dedication to a "deep purpose" in their academic pursuits tend to attain more favourable outcomes compared to those who solely perceive the worth of college from a purely pragmatic perspective (Entwistle & Peterson, 2004). These findings question the accuracy of the instrumental perspective on higher education, as it suggests that students who have inherent motivation to pursue a degree achieve higher academic and professional success compared to their peers.

Consequently, interactions among social actors tend to align, regardless of policymakers' emphasis on the instrumental perspective. The practical manifestation of the theoretical conflict between the intrinsic and instrumental approaches operates in a dialectical manner. In their 2006 study, Brown and Lauder examined how fundamental changes to education have changed how different socioeconomic and cultural factors are considered when making policy. They reach the conclusion that because they remain dubious of the empirical veracity of the human capital hypothesis that graduates won't necessarily find employment and make more money.

In contrast to the findings of Card and Lemieux (2001), the authors contend that when the wage premium is divided into deciles among graduates instead of using averages, only the most highly paid graduates have experienced a widening wage gap over the last decade. Due to the growing number of graduates and the relatively slow growth rates of high-skilled jobs, there has been an increase in cases of over education. The wage disparities between individuals with a college degree and those without can be more accurately attributed to the stagnant wage growth among non-graduates, rather than the higher earnings achieved by graduates as a result of their advanced education. In a recent study, Mettler (2014) contends that higher education has transformed into a caste system that not only perpetuates but also intensifies socioeconomic disparities. This is primarily due to the United States prioritising corporate interests when formulating policies. Numerous scholars have expressed scepticism regarding the value of acquiring skills and obtaining a formal education at academic institutions and have vehemently opposed the notion of "credential inflation" (Dore, 1997; Collins, 1979; Walters, 2004; Hayes & Wynard, 2006). The study conducted by Evans et al. (2004) focuses on tacit abilities, which are predominantly obtained through informal learning and work and life experience; they are not attainable through formal education. These competencies pertain to the optimal approach for managing intricate problems or embody personal qualities that can be employed to navigate unexpected situations.

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The acquisition of a particular academic degree and the pursuit of higher education constitute a dynamic undertaking with a predetermined goal. Consequently, the acquired knowledge becomes antiquated. Encourage graduates' participation in lifelong learning programs and on-the-job training aligns with regulations such as the Bologna Declaration (Cornfield, 1999). Others argue that institutions should take a more active role, citing the benefits that higher levels of education provide to societies as a whole. This includes encouraging productivity, innovation, and democratization while also lowering socioeconomic inequalities (Harvey, 2000; Hayward & James, 2004). Multiple global organisations collaborate to establish a comprehensive structure aimed at ensuring that higher education effectively enhances graduates' employability (Diamond et al., 2011).

The lack of a dedicated policy framework for low-skilled individuals without a university degree, similar to the Bologna Declaration, could result in a growing gap in job prospects between highly skilled and low-skilled workers. Heinze and Knill (2008) argue that the standardisation of higher education policy, resulting from the Bologna

Process, is influenced by various national socioeconomic, institutional, and cultural factors. However, the impact of the Bologna Declaration on national policy changes remains uncertain, as it is unclear to what degree it has influenced such changes. It is reasonable to assume that countries with greater equality are more likely to converge in terms of these characteristics. Nevertheless, the political discourse on equal opportunity appears to lack persuasiveness when considering the rates of participation in higher education (Brown & Hesketh, 2004; The Milburn Commission, 2009).

The previous research appeared (Bekhradnia, 2003; Tight, 2012) have shown that despite increasing rates of participation among marginalized groups, such as women and racial minorities, inequality persists, as noted by Greenbank and Hepworth (2008). Machin and Van Reenen (1998) found a correlation between parental income and secondary enrollment rates. Their study investigates the factors contributing to low enrolment in a multigenerational setting. Gorard (2008) also highlights the lack of representation of previous inadequate academic performance, which results in early dropouts or poor grades in secondary school, thereby hindering access to higher education. Contrary to expectations, there is still educational inequality remains a significant issue in the present day, despite the attempts made by governments worldwide to enhance participation in higher education among all social groups (Burke, 2012; Bathmaker et al., 2013).

## CONCLUSION

Substantial growth has characterized the domain of higher education since its inception following World War II. The advent of novel technologies motivates individuals to enhance their expertise and competencies, fostering the expansion of a knowledge-based economy and increasing demand for personnel possessing sophisticated proficiencies. The primary objectives of higher education policy in the western world centre on augmenting the size of the population to mitigate social and economic disparity. However, the implementation of such programs has proven to be very difficult because institutions are unable to focus on the most vulnerable people and because there are already conflicts of interest between various interest groups. The increasing commodification of higher education has been observed to restrict access for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds. Increasingly, there are concerns about policymakers' persistent focus on the economic aspects of higher education, despite the potential conflicts with the objective economic reasoning in this field. The third generation of HEIs should be reached. To stay in touch with all of its stakeholders and be able to generate valuable academic material and services,

HEIs should prioritise the third mission, social impact, and cross-sectoral methods. If modern HEIs want to be relevant and have a big impact in contemporary globalised societies, they need to be open to internationalisation. More foreign language instruction should be included in programs, international institutional environments should be created through international friendly rules and regulations, global educational approaches, and methods should be used, research should be produced that addresses global trends and needs, productive international connections and collaborations should be forged, multicultural communities should be expanded, etc. The new demands and trends will force HEIs to adopt fresh perspectives and put them into practice by creating cutting-edge units, platforms, curricula, programs, courses, and other tools. The complexity, interconnectedness, and on-going evolution of global issues call for an emphasis on interdisciplinary research, education, and training of faculty members. It is only possible to find solutions to these problems by combining various skill sets.

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