

GLOBALISATION AND HIGHER EDUCATION THREAT OR OPPORTUNITY

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Abstract

India has successfully created one of the leading higher education systems in the world. It has proved its worth in this arena also. Eminence of many top institutions is recognized to be analogues to the best in the world. However, Indian education system faces problems from the issues that keep originating from disparities and developmental practices adopted. As a result of which even after all the remarkable development in the areas of Information Technology, space science, nuclear technology, oil exploration, industrial production etc., India is still not able to eradicate its problems of poverty, ignorance and underdevelopment completely and successfully due to various reasons. Nearly one-fourth of the population is still below poverty line; one-third are illiterate and disparities amongst rich-poor, urban-rural, educated-uneducated are high, which are posing hindrances in the developmental phenomena.

Now as the country has opened its door to the foreign contributors in the fields like education, the country has to face challenges of globalization and pressures of liberalization while continuing its fight against poverty, illiteracy and disadvantages to upgrade its stature from developing to a developed economy. Keeping the above in view, present paper deliberates the impact of globalisation on higher education with the analysis of the opportunities and threats.

INTRODUCTION

Education system in India has got a history which can be dated centuries back to the age of Buddha and, now, along with passed span, there has in fact been substantial improvement in the higher education state of affairs of India in both quantitative and qualitative terms post globalization. Globalization has brought in a number of changes in the world today changing in to a global market.

The direct interrealtion between the industry, corporate world and higher education has brought a transformation in the skills required for various jobs. The process of globalization has brought significant transformation in the world trade, communications, educational activities and economic relations since the latter part of 20th century.

Student's option for higher education is no longer constrained by national boundaries. For the first time in history in the era of globalization, world's student population truly have access to a 'global market place' of higher education.

The number of students who are able to pursue education in other countries has really changed, with the advent of a new Indian middle class and increased wealth of the Indian upper class, as a result of which there has been a rapid integration of countries across the globe in terms of commodities as well as finance.

GLOBALIZATION

Globalisation can be most commonly defined as the process of international integration arising from the interchange of world views, products, ideas, and other aspects of culture, which promises dramatic and rewarding change to the higher education systems of the developed as well as developing countries. If we analyse the case of the developing countries like India, where the system is facing the scarcity of resource, it threatens the stability needed to build the well performing system. Developing countries get entangled in the volatile atmosphere of the Globalisation as there is a kind of an unexpected change which requires an immediate adjustment (willingly or unwillingly) both to that quickening pulse of international change, and accordingly it brings reform on several fronts simultaneously, which gives rise to a grim plight under the given resource status of higher education.

Taking into consideration the positive contribution of the Globalisation in India in form of the opportunities, the evolution of information technology has enhanced the relationship between economic development and higher education and resultantly, highly skilled and educated people became an important pillar in economic growth. Thinkers like Gregor (2002) believes that, policy makers realized that universities are key contributors to economic prosperity.

The evolution of technology, according to him, increased the competition between universities themselves. The process goes on in the manner that, Universities realize the existence competitive programmes from national and international academic institutions. As a result, governments and universities became responsible for improvement in higher education. Council for Higher Education (2008) confirms that some western nations have the goal of becoming global leaders in higher education. This new goal requires re-evaluation of curriculum and programmes to make them adequate for the challenges of globalization.

Adding to this, according to Gregor (2002), the shift toward globalization has encouraged academic institutions, especially US universities, to improve the skills of their graduates to meet the needs of national and international markets.

While it can be true that some Indian universities are going global, it can be argued that many other nations are also going global which again gives rise to a stiff competition in the field of higher education also.

Like the other sectors, there exist and a nexus between the industrial and education sector also and a strong relationship among them can be important for the sustainability of the both system. In India, quality of higher education was also an important agenda of the government reform. In the recent span, Indian reform policies gave much weight to the quality of higher education.

This has been done keeping in view the undeniable fact that our nation has a need for new technology and education to improve their social and economic life. For example, in the field of information technology, its advancement is helping people around the world connect in a unified global culture. This technological development encouraged universities to interact effectively with students from different nationalities. There is no more a distance hindrance by the augmentation of the concepts like Virtual classes. Foreign universities have opened their doors for Indian students and providing their access towards the specialised courses through student Visa.

Higher education systems around the world, according to Olaniran and Agnello, have encouraged the use of technology, enhanced individual's capabilities, and responded to future demand in order to compete in a global market.

Concepts like online universities, private universities, and other privately owned and managed programs are the resultant accomplishments.

Higher education systems in developed countries like USA, UK became exporters of the commodity of education to developing countries like India. Indeed, both developed and developing countries are benefiting from each other.

The profitability of the higher education industry can also being realised from the increasing demand for academic degrees. The development in technology has also affected cultures in many countries around the world. According to Olaniran and Agnello, technology has encouraged the creation of global culture and global education but may diminish cultures of smaller and poor countries

The points to be taken in concern to this development are:

- Parity in the Benefits of globalization to the different sections of the society – which is believed to be “far uneven”.
- Its role in creating greater social inequality – widening the gaps between the unaffordable and affordable
- Its role in disturbing the indigenous culture, tradition and values.

- Its role in huge investment in foreign currency and still not the confirmation of the jobs from it can be earned back.

THE INDIAN SCENARIO

As on today we have more than 300 universities, institutions of higher learning and deemed universities, out of which 130 deemed to be universities, 13 institutions of national importance, 41 central universities, 274 state universities, 5 institutions established under state legislation act and about 26,885 colleges in India. Education System has increased sixteen-fold in terms of the number of universities and thirty three-fold in terms of the number of colleges, in comparison to the number at the time of Independence.¹ At the beginning of the academic year 2004, the total number of students enrolled in the formal system of education in universities and colleges was 99.53 lakh- 12.97 lakh (13.3 per cent) in university departments and 86.57 lakh (86.97 per cent) in affiliated colleges and 4.37 lakhs teaching Faculty employed making India's system of higher education the second largest in the world. "To finance this expansion, the Government of India consistently increased its share in the total expenditure on higher education—from 49.1 percent in 1950–51 to more than 90 percent today.

It is significant that despite these impressive statistics the system caters to hardly 6 percent of the relevant age group, as compared to more than 80 per-cents in the developed countries." This is partly because the expansion has been offset by the growth of the population in the relevant age group.²

CHALLENGES

There is no doubt that it is a difficult task for developing countries to bridge gaps and to keep pace with the developed world. Massification of higher education can rather been responsible for this expansion. One of the main reasons is that resource constraints are severe, and the quality of education available to most Indian students is questionable in terms of its ability to face the challenges posed by further education as well as employment market. The situation is further complicated by the rigidities of the higher education system, the political pressures from regional, religious and caste-based groups, and related problems.

GLOBALIZATION: OPPORTUNITY OR THREAT?

Globalisation has got innumerable opportunities in the field of higher Education in diverse fields. now, appears to be immense, and areas are diverse. The incredible development in information technology has promoted learners' method of learning in both the formal and distance modes.

According to (Evans, 1995)- Globalization is simply putting 'the space - time compression' which brings together nations, cultures, economies and at the same time increasing Interdependency.

Concepts like Distance education and virtual Institutions, that is commonly regarded to be an industrialized form of education, is now taking place in India, which is proving to be more cost effective.³

INTERNATIONAL AVENUES

With the opening up of foreign boundaries, the aspiring students who are left out and failed to secure their seats in India's premiere and even leading Institutions can now go abroad to fulfill their aspirations. With the fast growing Information and communication technology (ITC) the availability and flow of academic resource materials is providing input to the academicians to compete anywhere in the world.

It assists in research practices and inspires the Indian academicians for research and publications on issues that are of international importance in order to make their mark in their respective disciplines. For Example, countries Germany has soften its entry requirement conditions to make it accessible for Indian students who are aspiring to build their career in pioneering researches.

The envisioned policy reform has facilitated in opening up space for establishment of private universities, easing and eliminating research restrictions, entry of graduate students, encouragement for "foreign collaboration" in the university sector and joint ventures in an academic activities as it now exists in private industries.

System-wide higher education reform and incremental approach to liberalization of higher education may help India to take advantage of opportunities in the new global environment.

POLICY CONCERNS

Policy makers in India might have to be concerned with increasing adult participation in continuing education and training, particularly in relation to enhanced employability.

Globalization, as a process no doubt has coined the concept of decentralized educational governance and control. The centre has viewed decentralization as a way to increase efficiency by giving more responsibility to local level functionaries, which in turn is expected to increase motivation and accountability. Further it is trying to involve the local community in the very planning and decision-making process of education and making them responsible for "the state of the art".

Internet with its potential global reach performs its role successfully as an interactive medium. It has the capacity to bring knowledge and prosperity to isolated and marginalized individuals and nations. But limited access to the Internet, the "digital divide," or the disparity creates inequity that exacerbates other inequities. No developing country has benefited more from the digital revolution

than India, and in no country is the digital divide wider or deeper. On the other side of the digital divide are the 45 percent of the population who cannot read or write (57 percent of the female population), the 44 percent who survive on less than Rs. 50 per day, and those who live in the 370,000 villages where there is no telephone connections.

Financial restraints in India have resulted in the emphasis over the cost-efficiency concern. This actually needs the constant performance evaluation and quality watch at all levels of education which in turn can pave way for private players in this field but this phenomenon actually is affecting the parity issue.

Thus, the major apprehension of globalization has been to fulfil the national objective of equality.

Education has also become a paid subject where the access is subject to the payment of appropriate prices after privatisation. Thus it has become a mode of revenue for the Government and so the government is encouraging the establishment of even larger number of private institution and universities since then.

But along with this phenomenon, there is an on-going concern for the class with unaffordability issue. The process and effects of economic and cultural globalization are becoming evident in our educational Programmes and are expressed by teachers and students with particular reference to the ways in which the global media (such as television media and internet) are deployed in the construction of knowledge. - The threat is possibility of erosion of national values by imbibing the alien culture. The changes that are taking place in the country, even at the lower level of the country: a drastic change can be assessed in terms of the power relations and consciousness at various level of the civil divide.

As a result of the ingress of the foreign capital huge macro level change in technology and media have also made their places and influence upon the Indian society but the mass result of such drastic and unexpected changes in culture by the Indian appetite in facing the new capitalist orders are yet to be realised.

This can pose a threat to the national cultural values. In India, during this period of globalization, much of the contemporary thought has gone into the issues of programmed learning, multimedia teaching, macro-micro-teaching, distance learning and other problems related to curriculum. No subject has been so much neglected as has been done to the development of humanistic values, creativity, cultural, moral and spiritual dimensions in the teaching-learning process. - The threat is for the erosion of rich and old culture of human values.

According to (Edward, 1994), the philosophies of the states and of multinational agencies brought the technological Revolution. The process has been further promoted by the transport system, communication network, and it has increased the Economic activity, but Globalization does not necessarily result in homogenizations; on the contrary, it is leading to the strengthening of the ethnic identities both at local & regional levels - The threat is to the Nations Integrity.⁴

POINTS OF CONSIDERATIONS:

- The key issues thus comprise the following:
- Up gradation of the quality of the Indian universities when the quality mass of students and working group switches for Global choices;
- The choice of decision that universities will make towards the poor who cannot afford the global choices;
- The standards of universities and the capacity to compete with the world market. Our universities will raise standards and employ all those business tricks to attract foreign students to our universities.
- The political complexities impinging on the higher education system and the possibilities under given circumstances;
- The state of the art resource condition and its impact on the infrastructural, library and laboratory conditions;
- The computer facilities and Internet access etc. are only a few to be mentioned.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Globalisation can no doubt be viewed as a huge opportunity for a country like India and this actually was the reason of the transformation of India from a closed economy to an open one where gradually most of the key sectors were opened keeping a welcoming approach in mind. One of those key sectors is Education also where the benefits from global revolution can be very well realised.

But if this profit has to be realised in real terms then, it would require major policy reforms. These reforms involve both structural and Institutional reforms. Which will further involve reforms with regard to university structure; function, structure function relation, funds and the way universities are regulated.

It would also require firm associations between industries and institutions especially in the growing technology-based sectors, and an entrepreneurial style of leadership to head the Indian universities.

The above mentioned remedial actions can make India a strong deserver to reap the benefits of Globalisation. It will be very well able to capture the benefits of globalization as there is no doubt that the country has inormous potential and individuals are capable, yet the subjective dilemmas appear to be the crux of the matter.

The goal shall be “how to achieve the concrete gains from existing higher system, competing with Global trends without sacrificing national goals of higher education and development and without abandoning its commitment to Indian tradition and cultural values is a real challenge.

With the liberalization of the country’s economy, global market forces have generated new fears and dilemmas for higher education in India. In order to take advantage of the India has always been a lucrative destination for foreign entrants due to its abundance in raw materials in the form of low cost of educated labor, natural resources, high population and unused materials etc, this has always been the reason that multinationals have taken interest in locating many of their labor-intensive operations here.

REAL CONS INVOLVED:

- While institutions of higher education are moved to produce fail or mode skilled manpower to suit their requirements.
- The idea is still blurred that what is its contribution to the country’s economic growth and to the society at large.
- Commercialization of education may in turn is unjust in a sense and penalize the participation of brilliant students coming from poor background with their unaffordability of costlier education.
- Also, in nation building an overwhelming emphasis on commercialization and competition also involves risk of undermining the inculcation of higher values of sacrifice, service and commitment to the country,
- A loss that may be difficult to overcome on national ground
- It may contribute for materialism and self-centeredness converting students towards self-centred personality.
- As per the belief amongst villagers that education alienates persons from their grass roots.

CONCLUSION:

The context of Globalisation of higher education needs to be inculcated from the angle of different important angles like, Socio-Economic, Political and Academic which pertains to the allocation of the Education resource and degree of efficiency in the same. Internationalization of higher education

where in mutual sharing of knowledge, skills and research generally takes place with the objective of mutual benefit and also aimed at national and global development? In this, globalization process the issue of relevance of programmes is questioned in term of relevance to whom?

Globalisation is an opportunity for those who are aware of the benefits due to their vigilance and inquisitiveness, which have proper access to the information. Every individual wants to lead a complete and successful life with most of the amenities and basic necessities though only a few actually gets the affordability of availing them due to limited supply of resources insufficient for unlimited demands.

It is a threat for those who are ignorant and has no information, and no means to get this information, and not even know from where to get this information and to the extent not even known that they do not have the information, and impact of this status on them. This group, which is large enough to ignore, would remain the sufferers.

To improve this plight and convert it into opportunity the following steps shall be taken:

- Urbanization of Rural areas i.e. provide all those facilities to rural mass;
- Nationalization prior to Globalization;
- Equalization of access and opportunities;
- Decentralization of powers to the stakeholders;
- Qualification of existing institutions to the international standards.

With these, preparation probably the impact of globalization would be positive.

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