



Higher Education and Some Best Practices: A Review

P.Venkata Subbarao, Asst. Professor, Dr.C.S.Rao P.G.Centre, Sri Y.N.College, Narsapur-
W.G.DT., A.P
K.U.B.N.V.Prasad, H.O.D., Dept. of Political Science, Sri Y.N.Degree College, Narsapur
G.Rangababu, HOD, Dept. of P.G.Mathematics, Sri Y.N.College, Narsapur-534 275

Abstract:

The objective of higher education which today is made available only to a privileged section of the country is to bring about social transformation. With the present kind of changes the system may produce individuals who are likely to take care of themselves than become agents of change. It is a class education and we need a mass higher education where the local is not excluded and global is not glorified. Higher education has to be premised on the needs of society, fully funded by the state to be accessible to all, addressing issues of the people and not of the global markets.

Key words: higher education, competitive reality, curriculum transaction

Introduction:

Higher Education today is a complex, demanding and competitive reality. India's higher education system is the third largest in the world, next to the U.S. and China. Higher education has to be assessed from a broader perspective in the context of various types of changes in the micro and macro environment. With globalization and liberalization we are players in the global arena. We need to relook at the contents of our educational system and the quality of curriculum transaction, research and development to enhance the quality that is deteriorating. "The Times Higher Education World University" Rankings 2014-15 have once again demonstrated the distance that Indian Universities needs to travel for achieving excellence in higher education. It is fair to say that we should not be surprised that not a single Indian University is among the top 200 in the major rankings of global universities in the world. While a significant number of universities in the U.S., Canada, U.K., Europe, Australia and Newzealand are

prominently present in the Times 2014 ranking of Universities, recent trends have demonstrated that many countries in Asia and the Middle East have acquired an inspiring presence among the top 200 Universities in the World. These include, Japan, Hongkong, Korea, Turkey, China, Singapore, Israel, and Taiwan. There is a need for transformation of the regulatory environment for seeking fundamental reforms in the higher education sector. Some of the issues that need to be carefully considered while examining the nature of regulatory reform that is needed in the higher education space are being elaborated here.

Benchmark excellence:

India has long been considered to be the second abode for numerous foreign students who come here to gain knowledge, even when there were very few universities like Nalanda and Takshashila. At present, India has more than 300 Universities that include central, state, deemed and private



universities and above 2000 private institutions. Presently, less than 1/3rd of all universities and about 1/5th of the colleges are accredited in India but many of the famous and renowned Universities and Institutions are not going for accreditation. India has two autonomous accreditation bodies namely National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) and National Board of Accreditation (NBA) working under University Grants Commission (UGC) and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) respectively.

Prof. H.A.Ranganath, Former Director, NAAC talking to India Education Review said, " It is very important to uplift the higher education sector in our country and we have to make sure that all the institutions go for the accreditation process either voluntarily or forcefully. The dynamics here are very challenging as there are all sorts of institutions offering different types of programs."

Prof. B.C.Muzumdar, Chairman, NBA highlighted the importance of accreditation by saying, " The parents and the prospective students will choose those programs and institutions which are accredited and employers will also get graduates from those institutions because they are well equipped and thirdly the institutions themselves can Assess, evaluate and improve their quality once they get accredited. It helps public and society as a whole."

The National knowledge commission and Yashpal Committee constituted to suggest reforms for the education sector also suggested for a system of accreditation free from any type of control. Looking at the all these recommendations the Ministry of HRD has come up with a Bill to make

accreditation mandatory for every institution. The Bill also makes way for establishment of a National Accreditation Regulatory Authority (NARA) for higher education sector in India to register and monitor accreditation agencies. These accreditation agencies shall accredit every higher educational institution based on a specified procedure and fees.

According to Prof. Ranganadh , former Director, NAAC, "It has to happen and this law must go through as the future of millions of students is at stake. The institutions should themselves go for accreditation as it is the only way to show public the quality of education they are offering."

Some best practices for quality education:

Quality has become the defining element of education in the 21st century in the context of new social realities. The information communication revolution, the knowledge economy and globalization are greatly influencing the " next society" to borrow the expression of Peter Drucker that has emerged. This networked complex and competitive society places a great premium on education for development. The Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations Consider knowledge as the prime mover of development in the new millennium. How to provide quality education to a large numbers at affordable costs is primary concern of developing countries. Quality, as all of us are aware makes education as much socially relevant as it is personally indispensable to the individual. In this sense quality becomes the defining element of education. In this context quality and excellence should be the vision of every higher education institution. Acquisition of quality and excellence is the great challenge faced by all higher education institutions.



Quality Index: Best practices, the practices which add commendable value to an institution and its various stakeholders, are considered as reliable benchmarks or standards of quality. The best institutions are those which widely use them. Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) is advocating the best practices benchmarking approach for quality enhancement in higher education. The NAAC uses the best practice benchmarking in the form criterion statements to assess the level of performance of higher education institutions.

Best practices:

A Clear Vision and Mission : Every Educational institution should have a clear idea of what its purpose is and why and how they plan to achieve it.

Strategic Plan: Develop a strategic plan that clearly lays down the objectives of the institution and a plan of action for the next few years to guide the institution towards the stated goals.

Setting bench marks for performance Evaluation: To measure the quality of the courses offered as well as all activities of the institution, the Quality Assurance Cell should develop benchmarks. Actual performance should be compared against the standards expected and deviations have to be reported and analysed.

Strong Leadership: Enhance the skills and knowledge of teachers and students to develop a common culture to raise the standard of education and enhance student learning. Parent, alumnae and community contribute to student development.

Curriculum: Curriculum development is one of the key factors for the success of autonomy. To Design a curriculum that

is socially relevant and also imparts skills needed in the work place requires great skill and experience. The guidelines laid down by the UGC in the constitution of the statutory bodies are a great help in obtaining help and direction in curriculum design and development.

Value-based Education: Values should be woven into the fabric of our education system. Every test a student takes is not only a test of her knowledge in the subject, but also a test of her integrity. Regular classes should be set apart for value education and the importance of values in our day-to-day lives can be conveyed through group discussions, case studies and debates.

Collaboration: Knowledge is acquired through constructive ways and students learn effectively through collaborations. Project work, wikis and other group-related activities favour collaboration.

Need for change: Higher education needs change is not contested. The questions however are who should initiate change, how are they to be initiated and where should such change come from? In a democracy that is committed to a higher education to form students for democratic citizenship, if higher education does not confront the various challenges of the country and is not challenged by the socio-economic realities of land, we would produce parasites who would live by the labour of the down trodden in our country. The very objective of higher education which today is made available only to a privileged section of the country is to bring about social transformation. With the present kind of changes the system may produce individuals who are likely to take care of themselves than become agents of change. It is a class education and we need a mass higher education where the



local is not excluded and global is not glorified. Higher education has to be premised on the needs of society, fully funded by the state to be accessible to all, addressing issues of the people and not of the global markets.

Conclusion: It is said that higher education has been made to move away from its focus of generating ideas, contributing to democratic way of life, function as tool for nation building and social change. Higher education is for the transformation of the social and economic order. If University/Higher education institutions administration moves in this fashion, its stand in danger of losing their autonomy quality and their very purpose. Here, we have too much of politics and commercialization in the system. Academicians cannot work in a decadent and suffocating atmosphere. The system needs more freedom, more autonomy, more participation and free flow of academic ideas.

Thus it is seen that higher education in the next century is in for radical changes, unless the society is willing to be indifferent about quality and relevance. The nature of higher education has to change from the present predominantly liberal one to highly professional one. It will only then lead to the prosperity of the nation.

References:

1. Das, Suranjan , " The Higher Education in India and the challenges of Globali-sation," Social, Vol.35, No.3&4, March – Apri, 2007.
2. National Knowledge Commission , "Report on Higher Education ", Government of India, New Delhi, March,2009.
3. Knight.J, and De Wit.H, " Quality and Internationalisation of Higher Education", OECD Publication, 1999
4. Sparrow.H, " Teaching Excellence: An Exclusive Goal in Higher Education Teaching and learning", 2013.
5. Henard, Fabrice, and Deborah Roseveare, " Fostering Quality Teaching in Higher Education: Policies and practices", Institutional Management in Higher Education, 2012.
6. Freire, Paulo, " Pedagogy of the oppressed", Continuum publishing, Newyark, 1970.
7. Gibbs, Graham, and Martin Coffey, " The impact of Training of University Teachers on their teaching skills, their approach to teaching and the approach to learning of their students," Active learning in Higher education Vol.5, N,.2004.