

## IMPLICATIONS OF GLOBALIZATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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The technological engine of globalization is knowledge revolution. It is the tried important revolution that has shook the world, the first two being agricultural revolution and in industrial revolution. The pace and extent of changes being brought about by the present revolution are more far reaching than that brought about either by agricultural revolution or industrial revolution. The most important capital component of agricultural revolution was arable land. It was natural resources in industrial revolution. The new revolution has placed knowledge at the centre stage of the productive process. In other words, knowledge revolution has replaced land capital, natural resources and finance capital by knowledge capital as the most important agent of development. The shifting determinants of development from traditional material based capital resources to non-material knowledge resources clearly indicate that development in future is linked up with acquisition, production and dissemination of knowledge. While it took a few thousand years for agricultural revolution and a few hundred years for industrial revolution to transform the world and its people, knowledge revolution can transform people's lives in decades. Knowledge-based resources are consumed when they are utilized, knowledge resources increase when shared. Material resources are costly to transport and store, whereas knowledge resources are easily transportable at rapid speed and can be stored at negligible cost. These vital differences between material capital and knowledge capital have not only telescoped the time gap in development, but also made it possible to universalize the fruits of this development. Historically, development has occurred under conditions in which access to critical resources was restricted to a relatively small portion of the population. The distinct characteristic of knowledge as a resource makes it possible, for the first time, to multiply and share a crucial resource among the entire population. With the development of modern media that brings sound and video images into every household, and with the advent of the internet that enables us to reach out to sources of knowledge around the world, we could utilize the opportunity to close the development gap that separates the world's most prosperous communities from their poorer cousins.

The gap between the equitable dream and the inequitable reality is the result of the failure to integrate information, knowledge and wisdom.

Information is said to double every three years. This does not automatically lead to a doubling of knowledge over the same period. Information is not the same as knowledge. It is only a raw material for the production of knowledge. The procedure involves both inspiration and perspiration. Systematic training in the form of education can improve both capabilities. The higher the levels of education, and better the quality of education imparted, the greater the opportunities for growth and development. But development by itself cannot guarantee welfare to all. While knowledge empowers human beings, it does not teach them how to use the power that has been placed at their disposal. One needs wisdom to make the right choices. Knowledge is only one of the components of wisdom. The other component is ethics. A wise man's choices are moved by love and informed by knowledge. We need to incorporate an ethical dimension to our developmental policy in order to make the benefits of knowledge revolution available to the majority of the population. Massification of education, including higher education, is the key to massification of human welfare. It is generally accepted that an enrolment rate of at least 20% of the relevant age group (between 17 & 24) is an essential condition for development today where as the developed countries have crossed the 50% mark, India still lags behind at around 8%. The dream of becoming a knowledge super power by 2020 will be a mirage unless there is massification of higher education and technological empowerment of the working class. This would require a fresh conceptualization of the synergic relationship between equity and excellence. Hitherto equity and excellence have been treated as dichotomous entities. In the new context, excellence has to be conceived as equity. The competitive global scenario in the current knowledge based economy demands simultaneous promotion of both quantity and quality of higher education. The old dichotomy between quality and quantity is no longer relevant. We have to devise a national strategy for transforming our demographic burden into a demographic advantage. More than 54% of the 600 odd crores that inhabit our country belong to the below 25 age-group. While most developed nations have to support an aging population, India alone has the advantage of a youthful working population. The surest way to march ahead of other nations in development in the next twenty-five years is to invest now in the development of this human resource.

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A sustainable agenda for higher education has to address the concerns of equity and excellence. It is necessary to go beyond the goal of universal primary and secondary education. We should provide “quality education for all young people” as declared by the Geneva conference of the UNESCO (2004). There should also be provision for adult and continuing education, which would help people to update their knowledge and skills so that they could participate in the economic and social life and live healthy and meaningful lives even in old age. The curriculum at all stages should also be reinvented to inculcate in the learner the personal and societal qualities conducive to sustainable development. This would require a revision of funding strategies to impart quality higher education to all those who have the intellectual competence and emotional aptitude for scholarly pursuits. Though the system of Indian higher education, with more than 17000 institutions imparting education to more than one crore young people and employing more than 4.5 lakh teachers, is the second largest in the world, the enrolment ratios in India at 7% of the relevant age group compares unfavorably with more than 80% in most of the developed countries, more than 50% in developed countries taken together and more than 20% in most of the developing countries.

A sensible national policy on financing higher education has to take into account the pivotal place of higher education in the present context of national development and the inadequacy of the opportunities available for meeting the new requirement. The old game of pitting elementary and secondary education against higher education does not address our real concerns. Education is a continuum in roles. It is clear that India has to go a long way in improving the qualitative and quantitative dimensions of higher education. This cannot be done by merely opening up the higher education sector to market players. In a country where 26% of the population lives below the poverty line, markets will not be able to attract sufficient numbers of young men to higher education. Moreover, market orientation will lead to skewed development, by patronizing only courses and programmes, which have immediate market value and neglecting theoretical studies, and fundamental research, which are important for long term sustained development. This calls for greater financial involvement on the part of the central and state governments to ensure equitable and sustainable development in higher education. Education, especially higher education, has never been the sole responsibility of the state in India. Private initiative has always been welcomed by the people and the governments. But there is a world of difference between private involvement in the earlier decades

and the new wave of private investment. While the earlier intervention was philanthropic in nature, the new mode is market oriented. This has led to the mushrooming of higher education institutions, especially in the professional sector in which the courses have immediate market value. For example, both in terms of institutions and intake in engineering at the undergraduate level, the percentage of institutions and enrolment of the private sector in the total has gone up from 76% in 1999-2000 to 85% in 2003-04. Now we have 977 engineering and technology institutions in the country in the government sector and 764 in the private sector. Corresponding figures in the Medicine is 1349 and 1028, Management courses at the Masters level 505 and 324 and Teacher Education 1541 and 1038 (NIEPA, 2005). The system of higher education in India is more privatized than in most developed countries. While about 80% of the students in the United States attend public institutions of higher learning and only 20% depend on private institutions, the reverse figures are applicable to Asian countries. Educational reforms should aim at simultaneously promoting equity and excellence in higher education. We need to invent a system of financing that could promote expansion, diversification, equity and excellence in higher education. There should in fact be recognition of the principle that excellence is indivisible from equity. Though finances are not a sufficient condition for achieving the desirable goals, they form a crucial necessary condition for moving towards the goals. We should ensure that adequate resources are raised for the qualitative and quantitative expansion of higher education to the desired levels at the earliest. This calls for huge investment, which calls for greater public and private participation in higher education. But the Government, aided and unaided streams should be kept separate and distinct. A healthy competition among the three streams could go a long way in ensuring both equity and excellence. The present tendency to mix up public and private streams will lead to private appropriation of public assets. Hence starting of unaided courses in aided colleges and of aided courses in unaided colleges should be strictly forbidden. There should be greater degree of state spending in education and a greater degree of regulatory intervention to rein in the predatory instincts of private entrepreneurs.

While private initiative in higher education should be welcome, the power to regulate higher education should rest with public institutions. The concept of Private Universities has no place in a system that relies on public regulatory intervention to ensure equity and excellence. While academic collaboration between reputed foreign universities and Indian universities has to be encouraged, such

collaboration has to be worked out within the parameters, of the national regulatory mechanisms. We should refuse to join the GATS regime, which is intended to facilitate commercialization of education at the international level. Multi-nationalization of higher education should aim at creative collaboration for academic innovation rather than commercial exploitation through academic colonization. Educational investment on the part of the central and state government should be raised to levels prevailing in most of the developed nations. This implies that at least 6% of the GDP should be spent on education of which 1.5 to 2% should be set apart for higher education. The Central Government should set apart at least 10% of its budgetary expenditure and the state government 30% of their budget share on education, of which 25 to 33 % should be earmarked for higher education. The present rate of 2% cess on education can be doubled and the additional revenue thus collected transferred to the respective states. A new graduation tax could be levied from prospective employers, exclusively for financing higher education. Institutions should be encouraged to generate funds without compromising equity and excellence. Funds could come in the form of contributions from the public, the parents, the alumni, or through collaboration with industry. Consultancy, assignments and sponsored projects may be undertaken by higher education institutions on the basis of well-defined parameters.

While welcoming private investment in higher education, education at all levels should be kept out of bounds for fortune hunters. Necessary legislation has to be made by the parliament to regulate admission and fees in private higher educational institutions to keep in check the untrammelled freedom granted to self-financing institutions by the recent judgment of the seven-member bench of the supreme Court. Only those who are willing to make some sacrifices by contributing a major chunk of the capital expenditure should be allowed to run educational institutions. A Committee as envisaged in the Islamic Academy judgment should be entrusted with the task of fixing the average of the recurring institutional expenditure in professional and non-professional courses for each state in Government / aided and unaided institutions. Only the recurring cost of education, including the funds set apart for free ships and scholarships, should be levied from students even in self-financing colleges. Government and aided institutions could levy fees to cover 20% of the recurring expenditure as recommended by Punjaya Committee (UGC, 1993)<sup>2</sup>. The amount thus fixed, separately for government/aided and unaided institutions from time to time should be shared in a differential ratio among students categorized into different groups of the

basis of their paying capacity. Admissions should be made strictly on the basis of merit, subject to the conditions imposed by the reservation policy prevailing in the state. A system of need-based scholarships and loans at nominal rates of interest should also be introduced to assist needy students. For this purpose it would be desirable to set up an Educational Development Bank with equity participation from government and private sector.

Ensuring Quality through Diversification of Content and Pedagogy UNESCO Report” Learning: The Treasure Within (1998)<sup>3</sup> visualizes education as an instrument for the comprehensive development of the individual for the performance of both personal and social goals. It has identified the four pillars of learning namely, *learning to know learning to do, learning to live together and. learning to be*

\* Learning to know, by combining a sufficiently broad general knowledge with the opportunity to work in depth on a small number of subjects. This also means learning to learn, so as to benefit from the opportunities education provides throughout life \* Learning to do in order to acquire not only occupational skill but also, more broadly the competence to deal with many situations and work in teams. It also means learning to do in the context of young people’s various social and work experiences which may be informal, as a result of the local or national context, or formal involving courses alternating study and work. \* Learning to live together by developing an understanding of other people and an appreciation of interdependence - carrying out joint projects and learning to manage conflicts - in a spirit of respect for the values of pluralism, mutual understanding and peace. \* Learning to be so as better to develop one’s personality and be able to act with ever greater autonomy judgment and personal responsibility. In that connection, education must not disregard and aspect of a person’s potential: memory, reasoning, aesthetic sense, physical capabilities and communication skills

Keeping the four pillars of life-long education in the emerging learning society, the report envisages the following role for university education. Universities should be central to the higher level of the system, even, if as in the case of many countries there are other non-university establishments of higher education. Universities would have vested in them four key functions: to prepare students for research and teaching to provide highly specialized training courses adapted to the needs of economic and social life to be open to all, so as to cater to the many aspects of lifelong education in the widest sense. international co-operation The implications of these principles on curricular reform are fairly obvious, Excellent education is that which ensures the maximum development of

the physical, intellectual emotional and spiritual potentials of the individual. It should also enable him to become a good citizen, to live in harmony with others. In addition to the above goals, which are common to all levels of education, higher education has to help him grow into an “organic intellectual” and at the same time enable him to earn a decent living, either through self-employment or through wage employment. The emphasis should not be imparting knowledge, but on building up’ competencies for acquisition of knowledge and skills and the ability to use such knowledge and skills in a variety of life situations. Education should also aim at the development of emotional competence, which would enable the individual to live in harmony with the rest of the society, This would require the inclusion of a large dose of cultural material in all courses of study,

The focus of all curricular reform should be the learner. The role of the teacher should not be that of provider of knowledge and skills, but that of a facilitator, an intermediary who will help to provide a congenial atmosphere for the transaction of knowledge and skills. The student should get greater opportunities for grappling with the process of acquisition of existing knowledge and generation of new knowledge. Seminars / problem solving sessions / projects/ field studies should become integral to any reform in pedagogy. The method of evaluation should include diverse programmes like continuous internal evaluation and final external evaluation. The semester mode should be preferable to the annual mode as the former would encourage more focused learning by dividing the content into manageable chunks. It is not to diversify ‘the content of. We also need to diversify the delivery methods. The developments in Information Communication Technology have presently made it possible to maximize enrolment through a variety of methods. The possibilities of virtual learning have to be exploited to the fullest extent, even as we continue to improve and quality of education through the face-to-face mode. Similarly the traditional face-to-face mode can be further improved by integrating JCT into the curriculum., This would require a continual programme of intensive and extensive exposure to the new pedagogy of learning to teachers as well as students and also additional investment for providing the new infrastructure.

While attempts should be made to ensure maximum possible diversification in content, delivery modes and evaluation methods, there should be a certain amount of uniformity in the structure of the courses to ensure comparability of programmes offered in more than 17000 institutions of higher education across the country. The present tendency to diversify the structure of higher education through

the introduction of autonomous colleges, deemed universities and through honours courses would not serve much useful purpose. Apart from encouraging elitism in higher education, such innovations would tend to create a false sense of well being by giving the impression that structural changes would automatically ensure diversification and excellence in education. Democratization of the Governance Structures in Higher Education The goal of democratization of welfare through democratization of higher knowledge cannot be realized without democratizing the governance structures of educational establishments. Kothari Commission (1966)<sup>4</sup> had recommended the constitution of democratic governance structures for higher education institutions and accordingly the Acts and Statutes of most of the universities provided for democratic structures of governance. The “Report on the Governance of Universities and Colleges” (UGC, 1971)<sup>5</sup> recommended the enlargement of the democratic functioning of the universities by including student representatives in the governing bodies of higher education institutions. But the “New Education Policy” (1986)<sup>6</sup> which viewed quantitative and qualitative aspirations as dichotomous and recommended the setting up of islands of excellence in the vast ocean of mediocre higher education institutions paved the way for the promotion of elitism and exclusiveness. Since then, there has been a concerted attempt to dismantle the democratic structures in higher education. Gyanam Committee’s report” Towards Educational Management” (1990)<sup>7</sup> recommended de-politicization of the campus and the idea gained the status of a panacea for all the ills affecting higher education. The apologists of *commercialization* and globalization of higher education deliberately promoted the idea as they found in it a convenient alibi to stamp out all democratic dissent against their divisive agenda, What we need today is a forum where the secular, democratic and equitable ethos of the constitution could be implemented through governance structures that promote the synergic relationship between individual higher education institutions and the larger society in which and for which it operates.

## References

1. Declaration of the Geneva conference of the UNESCO (2004)
2. Recommendations of Punnayya Committee (UGC, 1993)
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4. Kothari Commission Report (1966)
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