**Higher Education in India in Context of Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhaya Philosophy: Emerging Issues, Challenges and Suggestions**

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A university stands for humanism, for tolerance, for reason, for the adventure of the ideas and for the search of truth. It stands for onward march of human race towards even higher objectives. If the universities discharge their duties adequately, then it well with the nation and the people.-Pandit Deendayal Upadhaya

Our university system is, in many parts, in a state of disrepair...In almost half the districts in the country, higher education enrollments are abysmally low, almost two-third of our universities and 90 per cent of our colleges are rated as below average on quality parameters... I am concerned that in many states university appointments, including that of V.C. been politicized and have become subject to caste and communal Considerations, there are complaints of favouritism and corruption. -Prime Minister Mr. Atal Bihari Bajpai

India, even after 69 years of its independence, is far away from the goal of universal literacy. There are number of schools in the country, but they do not have proper basic infrastructure. However on a positive note, India is engaged in the use of higher education as a powerful tool to build a knowledge-based information society of the 21st Century. There has been considerable improvement in the ‘Higher Education' scenario in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Indian professionals are considered among the best in the world and are in great demand. This signifies the inherent strength of Indian education system. The present paper is an attempt, to identify and discuss a number of critical issues, of quantity and quality of Higher Education' in India and identify emerging issues and challenges in the field of Higher Education in India.

**History of Higher Education in India**

In the long past the institution of higher education has been given an important position in the Indian society. There were perhaps three streams of tradition- i. Ancient and medieval Sanskrit and Buddhist tradition. ii. The medieval Arabic and Persian tradition. iii. East and South Indian such as Tamil tradition. It has been found from the writings of Chinese travellers like Fi-Hien, Hiuen-Tsang that there existed ancient seats of learning at Takshashila (5th-6th Century B.C), Kanchipura, Nalanda
In both Sanskrit and Arabic higher learning much secular and scientific learning in law, medicine, mathematics, astronomy etc. was cultivated besides literature, philosophy with the help of books, discussion and memorization. Indian Higher Education in its present form began to appear from the time when British parliament renewed the Charter Act (1813) for educational development in India. College to disseminate English education was established in 1818 at Serampore, Calcutta. McCauley's minute (1835) to promote English education, Charls Woods Dispatch (1854) to establish the universities of Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras in 1857 and the introduction of grants-in-aid for these universities were the major events. Indian Education Commission or Hunter Commission's (1882-83) recommendation to finance University Education in India provided a major impetus to higher Educational development in India. Calcutta University Commission (1917) called as Saddler Commission also recommended for autonomy of universities. The Hartog Committee (1929) report suggested for improvement of quality and standards at the University level education In India. The Abbot-Wood Report (1937) recommendation suggested that English should be the medium of Instruction and encourages the establishment of Polytechnics Colleges, Central Technical Board and Vocational Teacher Training Colleges. Finally Sargent Report (1944) recommendation for the establishment of U.G.C and formulation of blue print for Indian Higher Education structure was the major landmark. At the time of independence there were almost 20 universities and 500 affiliated colleges with the students of near about 0.1million in India. After independence India made various efforts to improve higher education system. The first education commission in independent India, Radhakrishnan Commission (1948-49) also recommended for the establishment of UGC. Secondary Education Commission (1952) pioneered a system of 3 year secondary and 4 year higher education. Indian Education Commission (1964) recommended for the introduction of 3 year Degree course and 4 year Honours Degree course. The National Policy on Education (1968) demanded for qualitative improvement at higher education level. The National Policy on Education (1986) recommended 10+2+3 pattern of educational system. The effects of the recommendation of such commissions can be observed from the present status of higher education in India.

**Critical issues in Indian higher education.**

As India strives to compete in a globalised economy in areas that require highly trained professionals, the quality of higher education becomes increasingly important. So far, India's large, educated population base and its reservoir of at least moderately well trained university graduates have aided the country in moving ahead, but the
competition is fierce; from China in particular. Other countries are also upgrading higher education with the aim of building world class universities. Even the small top tier of higher education faces serious problems. Many IIT graduates, well trained in technology, have chosen not to contribute their skills to the burgeoning technology sector in India; perhaps half leave the country immediately upon graduation to pursue advanced studies abroad, and most do not return. A stunning 86 per cent of Indian students in the fields of science and technology who obtain degrees in the United States do not return home immediately following their graduation. A body of dedicated and able teachers work at the IITs and IIMs, but the lure of jobs abroad and in the private sector makes it increasingly difficult to lure the best and brightest to the academic profession.

The present system of higher education does not serve the purpose for which it has been started. In general education itself has become so profitable a business that quality is lost in the increase of quantity of professional institutions with quota system and politicization adding fuel to the fire of spoil system, thereby increasing unemployment of graduates without quick relief to mitigate their sufferings in the job market of the country. So, the drawbacks of the higher education system underscore the need for reforms to make it worthwhile and beneficial to all concerned.

Most observers agree that Indian higher education, the significant and impressive developments of the past few decades notwithstanding, faces major challenges in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Perhaps the clearest and boldest statement of this issue can be found in the “Report to the Nation 2006” of the National Knowledge Commission which concludes that there is ‘a quiet crisis in higher education in India that runs deep’, and that it has to do with both the quantity and the quality of higher education in India. Recognizing this dual challenge, the former Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, severely criticized in a recent speech the serious qualitative deficiencies in Indian higher education while at the same time announcing plans for a major expansion of the system. Reflecting on the findings of a confidential report by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council, which is affiliated to the University Grants Commission (UGC), he expressed his concern over the fact that two thirds (68%) of the country's universities and 90 percent of its colleges are “of middling or poor quality” and that well over half of the faculty in India's colleges do not have the appropriate degree qualifications. Knowledge is the base for overall growth and if the nation has to be competitive and to be at par with the globalization pace, we will have to respond to the market forces.

According to a study only 25% of engineering graduates are directly employable (Infosys, an IT giant, last year sorted through 1.3 million applicants only to find that around two percent were qualified for jobs.) Quality of education delivered in most
institutions is very poor. While India has some institutions of global repute delivering quality education, such as (Indian Institute of Management) IIMs and (Indian Institute of Technology) IITs, we do not have enough of them. It has very narrow range of course options that are offered and education is a seller's market, where is no scope of incentive to provide quality education. There is clearly a lack of educated educators and teaching is not an attractive profession. It's a last choice in terms of career.

Number of Ph.D.s produced each year is very low and those required by academia is far higher. In fact, at many institutions fresh graduates are employed to teach, leading to poor quality of classroom instruction. Most of the education institutions esp. in states such as Maharashtra and states in South India are owned by politicians. This Education system which is highly regulated by the government has been set up to benefit politicians. The growth of higher education in India has been largely guided by the serviceable prerequisite of the economy. After independence, the role of the state in planning out a development path and also in building higher education institutions was guided by mutuality of purpose. Most observers of higher education comes to the conclusion that performance of higher education institutions has been less than satisfactory in terms of access, equity and quality. Now there is an urgent need to work for the development of the educational sector to meet the need of the emerging opportunities, increasing younger generation population and challenges of the 21st century.

Challenges of Present Higher Educational System in India

Since we have got independence we are facing challenges to establish a great and strong education system. Various governments have come and gone. Of course they tried to establish new education policies in the system but this is sad dictate that they were not sufficient for our country. Still we are facing lot of problems and challenges in our Education System. India recognizes that the new global scenario poses unprecedented challenges for the higher education system. The University Grants Commission has appropriately stated that a whole range of skills will be demanded from the graduates of humanities, social sciences, natural sciences and commerce, as well as from the various professional disciplines such as agriculture, law, management, medicine and engineering. India can no longer continue the model of general education as it has been persisting in for the large bulk of the student population.

Rather, it requires a major investment to make human resource productive by coupling the older general disciplines of humanities, social sciences, natural sciences and commerce to their applications in the new economy and having adequate field based experience to enhance knowledge with skills and develop appropriate attitudes. Responding to these emerging needs, the UGC stated: "The University has a crucial
role to play in promoting social change. It must make an impact on the community if it is to retain its legitimacy and gain public support”. It seeks to do so by a new emphasis on community based programmes and work on social issues. Concepts of access, equity, relevance and quality can be operationalised only if the system is both effective and efficient. Hence, the management of higher education and the total networking of the system has become an important issue for effective management. The shift can occur only through a systemic approach to change as also the development of its human resource, and networking the system through information and communication technology.

**No dharma without free education, free healthcare**

In Deendayal’s dharma-rajya there will have to be, besides, free education for everybody. It is inconceivable, education of the people being in the greatest interest of society, that anybody should have to pay to get him or herself educated; or, if unable to pay, remain uneducated. Education in traditional India was always free. That was the case, until 1947, in Indian states as well. Primary and higher education shall be a charge on the nation. It is equally inconceivable, he says, that people should have to pay for medical treatment, which, like education, will have to be made available, free, to everybody. Health and education will be, in dharma-rajya, the two primary concerns of society.

If two words are required to indicate the direction in which Indian polity should move, they are, he says: de-centralization, and self reliance. Diversity, he says, is an inestimable gift of nature: Indian life, like nature, has been immensely diverse, where life has expressed itself in different colors, sounds, textures. This excessive veneration for centralizing every social and economic function in one authority can produce only disorder, for it will be against life itself. Authority must be dispersed, so long as the different centres of authority, and initiative, are all held together by dharma. Similarly, self-reliance must take the place of this pathetic dependence on what is foreign, in practically every field, in thinking, social arrangements, methods, capital, the ways of production, technology, and standards of consumption. This dependence on the others cannot be the way of progress. But neither does it mean that India blindly follows only that which is ancient. Many old institutions will change and the new ones take their place. Finally, Deendayal advocates the thesis that dharma does not lie either in the rule of the majority or even in the people. Dharma is eternal. It is not sufficient, therefore, that democracy be understood only as the rule, of the people; it must also be a rule for the good of the people. What the good of the people consists in can be determined only by dharma. Hence democracy will have to be also dharma-rajya, the rule of dharma. True democracy is only that where both freedom and dharma combine.
Conclusion

After independence, there has been tremendous increase in institutions of higher learning in all disciplines. But with the quantitative growth has it been able to attend to the core issue of quality. India is today one of the fastest developing countries of the world with the annual growth rate going above 9%. In order to sustain that rate of growth, there is need to increase the number of institutes and also the quality of higher education in India. To reach and achieve the future requirements there is an urgent need to relook at the Financial Resources, Access and Equity, Quality Standards, Relevance and at the end the Responsiveness.

To attain and sustain national, regional or international quality, certain components are particularly relevant, notably careful selection of staff and continuous staff development, in particular through the promotion of appropriate programs for academic development, including teaching/learning methodology and mobility between countries, between higher education institutions and the world of work, as well as student mobility within and between countries. Internal self-evaluation and external review must be conducted openly by independent specialists, if possible with international experts. Report of the National Knowledge Commission if implemented can help boost education sector in India. We are moving towards an era which would be defined by the parameters of knowledge and wisdom. India is heading towards becoming a developed nation by 2020 and knowledge power by 2017. The decisions that are going to be taken on these are likely to hold the key to India’s future as a center of knowledge production. We need higher educated people who are skilled and who can drive our economy forward. When India can provide skilled people to the outside world then we can transfer our country from a developing nation to a developed nation very easily and quickly.

According to former Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh 'The time has come to create a second wave of institution building and of excellence in the fields of education, research and capability building'. We need an educational system that is modern, liberal and can adapt to the changing needs of a changing society, a changing economy and a changing world. The thrust of public policy for higher education in India has to be to address these challenges. However, one university cannot make much difference. If the government welcomes more such initiatives, the future will be ours. We will be able to match and compete with other countries and the dream to be the world's greatest economy won't be difficult to achieve.

References