GLOBALIZATION AND INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION: IMPACT & CHALLENGES

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GLOBALIZATION

Globalization is a complex phenomenon that has had far-reaching effects. Not surprisingly, therefore, the term "globalization" has acquired many emotive connotations. At one extreme, globalization is seen as an irresistible and benign force for delivering economic prosperity to people throughout the world. At the other, it is blamed as a source of all contemporary ills. It may refer to the transfer, adaptation, and development of values, knowledge, technology, and behavioral norms across countries and societies in different parts of the world. The typical phenomena and characteristics associated with globalization include growth of global networking (e.g. internet, world wide e-communication, and transportation), global transfer and interflow in technological, economic, social, political, cultural, and learning areas, international alliances and competitions, international collaboration and exchange, global village, multi-cultural integration, and use of international standards and benchmarks. UNDP in Human Development Report (1999) describes globalization as the increasing interdependence of the world's inhabitants, on an economic, technological, cultural, as well as political level. It is seen as a general tendency towards the liberalization of economic trade, a wider circulation of capital, goods and products, and a quasi-abolition of national borders. The speed of communication and the relatively low cost of processing information have caused distances to be eliminated. The categories of time and space have been completely overturned. Models of consumption, values, and standardized cultural products thus tending to make behaviors and attitudes more similar and wipe out differences across the globe.

SOME POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF GLOBALIZATION

Although globalization seems to be unavoidable to many countries and numerous initiatives and efforts have been made to adapt to it with aims at taking the opportunities created from it to develop their societies and people, in recent years there are also increasing international concerns with the dangerous impacts of globalization on indigenous and national developments. Various social movements have been initiated against the threats of globalization particularly in developing countries. The negative impacts of globalization include various types of economic, political, and cultural colonization by advanced countries on those developing and under-developed countries. Inevitably, how to maximize the opportunities and benefits from globalization to support local developments and reduce the threats and negative impacts of globalization will be the major concerns of developing countries. Some of the positive impacts are:

- Global sharing of knowledge, skills, and intellectual assets that are necessary to multiple developments at different levels;
- Mutual support, supplement and benefit to produce synergy for various developments of countries, communities, and individuals;

- Creating values and enhancing efficiency through the above global sharing and mutual support to serving local needs and growth;
- Promoting international understanding, collaboration, harmony, and acceptance to cultural diversity across countries and regions.
- Facilitating communications, interactions, and encouraging multi-cultural contributions at different levels among countries.

At the same time, globalization, potentially creating serious negative impacts for developing and underdeveloped countries. This is also the major reason why there have been so many ongoing social movements in different parts of the world against the trends of globalization particularly in economic and political areas. The potential negative impacts of globalization are various types of political, economic, and cultural colonization and overwhelming influences of advanced countries to developing countries and rapidly increasing gaps between rich areas and poor areas in different parts of the world. In particular, the potential negative impacts include the following:

- Increasing the technological gaps and digital divides between advanced countries and less developed countries;
- Creating more legitimate opportunities for a few advanced countries for a new form of colonization of developing countries;
- Increasing inequalities and conflicts between areas and cultures; and
- Promoting the dominant cultures and values of some advanced areas.

IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

The thrust of Globalization is expected to push Higher Education to face far-reaching challenges. According to the Spanish sociologist, Manuel Castells, one of the leading authorities on Globalization states, "effects on the university will be more drastic than industrialization, urbanization and secularization combined. It is, the biggest challenge that the University has ever faced for more than a century and a half."

Guy Neave and Frans Van Vught suggest "there was a neo-Keynesian consensus in higher education operating from the end of the war to the late seventies. This consensus saw higher education as having an economic aspect in the advancement of resource development through public investment, a political aspect in raising the overall level of education, and a social aspect in the provision of access and opportunity. This consensus has now broken down due to a greater emphasis on the need for higher education to respond to industry and ensure national economic survival."[1] Robert Cowen makes a similar point in relation to an ideological shift in what he identifies as "the transition from modern to late-modern education systems, whereby the strong political and civic motives of the former are replaced by the dominance of global economic paradigms in the latter.

John Smyth argues "the globalization of world capitalism has had a significant impact on higher education policy and produced changes in the sector. In particular, globalization has caused a major restructuring of the economy, and government has reacted within a corporatist and technocratic framework to create new technology-based industries. This has created moves to reform higher education in order to produce the necessary technocrats. This strategy will not succeed; and that when it fails, higher education will be the scapegoat."

Globalization, as some argue, redistributes exclusion across countries and within the country. In their view, "society splits into two types of people: those 'at the social core' and those who hang on with their

finger nails to the 'social periphery' – even in the world's richest economies. A recent estimate suggests that no more than 20 percent of students currently in higher education will be at the core of the rising Knowledge Economy. The remainder will be a 'subordinate social layer'. This is not a recipe for social cohesion." "Societies on the fringe of the global economy – 'unconnected' are the fashionable word – face exclusion even more devastating tan their present difficulties".

PRESENT SCENARIO OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

As on today we have more than 300 universities, institutions of higher learning and deemed universities, out of which 95 deemed to be universities, 13 institutions of national importance, 19 central universities, 203 state universities, 5 institutions established under state legislation act and about 16,885 colleges including 203 Autonomous colleges. Education System has increased fourteen-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. The total number of students enrolled in the formal system of education in universities and colleges are 70, 49, 000 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 has 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-cent in the developed countries." This is partly because the expansion has been offset by the growth of the population in the relevant age group. Nevertheless, the fact illustrates how difficult it is for developing countries to bridge gaps and to keep pace with the developed world. Massification of higher education has rather been responsible for this expansion. 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.

The Centre, State, Institutions and Regulatory Bodies have taken initiatives in order to face the challenges of globalization. The National Policy on Education 1986 and the revised policy, POA 1992 have made no reference to the operating of foreign universities in India or promotion of Indian Higher Education abroad. In fact there is a need for evolving a clear policy on these aspects of transnational education. However, in the recent past, an attempt has been made to work out the possibility of regulating the entry of the foreign universities. In doing so, UGC has recommended that foreign universities to offer their programmes in India; they should be accredited in their respective country; Degree awarded to the students should be valid for India as well as in the country where degree-giving institution is located; There should be reciprocal arrangements for Indian Universities to operate in those countries from where the institutions/programs have come to India. Government of India M/HRD (DOE) has evolved a mechanism to screen the applications of such institutions for approval and promotion of internationalization of Higher Education through COFIE. COFIE is also expected to promote Indian higher education abroad. The scheme is expected to grant approval to only genuine foreign universities to operate in India. On behalf of GOI already there are several schemes operating which are offered by various regulatory bodies concerned with higher education such as travel grants, seminar Grants, research Grants etc. These schemes support bilateral exchange of academic staff from India to foreign countries. There are also similar programs offered by UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, French, German, Canadian, etc. embassies and Common wealth and such other organizations. All these are aimed at bilateral transaction and aimed at Quality improvement. UGC

provides financial Assistance to universities and colleges for establishment of computer centers and up-gradation/augmentation of computer facilities in the center in order to use computer in research and training. 130 universities have been provided grants for setting up computer centers. 135 training programmes were approved for training teachers in the use of computer. Each programme covers 15 colleges. Computer assistance to college development council of 64 universities has been provided. All the ASC's are equipped with computer facilities. In addition, 4219 colleges have been given financial assistance on setting computer facilities.

GLOBALIZATION – CHALLENGE OR AN OPPORTUNITY

Globalization poses challenges like

· Faculty Shortage
· Quality of education
· Incentive structures

As the world moves on to forging an information society founded on education, India cannot remain behind as a non-competitive knowledge economy. India has to create an environment that does not produce industrial workers and labourers but fosters knowledge workers. Such people must be at the cutting edge of knowledge workers and, in turn, placing India in the vanguard in the information age. This is not to argue that the opportunities opened up by information technology are to be shunned, but to suggest its creative incorporation in the system of education. At the same time it is necessary to recognize the fact that the educational conditions created by information technology are pregnant with the possibilities of intellectual colonization. The breaking of the geographical barriers and communication restrictions are indeed healthy attributes of knowledge dissemination, but it cannot be divorced from the economic and political contexts of knowledge production

Indian education system is one of the most tightly controlled in the world. The government regulates

who you can teach, what you can teach them and what you can charge them. It also has huge regulatory bottlenecks. There are considerable entry barriers: Universities can be set up only through acts of legislation, approval procedures for starting new courses are cumbersome, syllabi revision is slow, and accreditation systems are extremely weak and arbitrary. The regulators permit relatively little autonomy for institutions and variation amongst them.

The shortage of quality institutions is a product of India's regulatory structures. Increased public investment that the government has promised is absolutely necessary to increase access Quotas became a symbol of the state's power over Indian education: its propensity to hoist its own purposes upon academic institutions regardless of their impact on the quality of these institutions. Globalization requires two contradictory transformations in the state: On the one hand, successful globalization requires that the state invest heavily in increasing access to education. But in higher education, globalization also requires the state to respect the autonomy of institutions so that a diversity of experiments can find expression, so that institutions have the flexibility to do what it takes to retain talent in a globalized world and, above all, respond quickly to growing demand. Globalization demands a paradigm shift in the regulation of higher education. In India the debate has only just begun.

There is a mismatch between the supply and demand. As for Indian universities they function today without even the basic minimum facilities and with teachers who have no access to the latest advances in their disciplines. These institutions churn out students who complete their education as outcastes even in their own chosen area of knowledge. What these institutions offer is unacceptable to the fast growing affluent Indian middle class. The situation is likely to aggravate in coming days with the UGC reportedly being deprived of its funding functions and the introduction of an accreditation system which would stamp many an

institution as academic slums without ever the possibility of a honourable redemption. Understandably education is a fertile land for investment, particularly if it comes with a foreign tag.

Two of the strategic and long-term questions that Globalization poses to the higher education system are: (i) 'Commodification' - the use of knowledge as a purchasable and saleable good. (ii) 'Alternative providers' with profit motive of higher education's landscape that are engaged in the transmission of knowledge using Information and Communication Technologies.

Displacing and reinterpreting knowledge raise fundamental questions to the Universities, more so, in the area of autonomy and academic freedom. They also pose questions with regard to the very objectives of Higher Education system in terms of its ethical obligation to make knowledge freely available to those who seek for it. The apprehension is, that the globalization, may herald a basic change in the very role that the Universities play in the society. Defining universities simply as 'service providers' and changing their responsibility to the society for the shorter gains, may in the long run, ruin the very objectives with which the universities were established. The dynamics of Globalization is no doubt a challenge as well as an opportunity.

Higher education today, Globalization or no Globalization, is no more constrained by geographical boundaries. Innovative forms of translocation and transnational education have become a possibility. Multi campus institutions, "franchised institutions learning centers providing university degree, off campus education, distance learning, internet based distance education, virtual universities merging of part studies to combine into a whole for obtaining national as well as international degrees are only few models as examples. As far as higher education is concerned, an enthused and well-informed student has umpteen choices, for the first time in the history of education, to access for a "global marketplace". Yet,

the matter of the fact is, this access remains only as availability. Who can reach to it and how? What alternative provisions are made for those who cannot afford to reach is the crux of the matter.

CONCLUSION

As we have seen that globalization is both an opportunities and a threat. The issue still remains with regard to: (i) the quality of the Indian universities when the cream of students and staff opts for Global choices; (ii) the choice that universities will make towards the poor who cannot afford the global choices; (iii) 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. (iv) the political complexities impinging on the higher education system and the possibilities under given circumstances; (v) the state of the art resource condition and its impact on the infrastructural, library and laboratory conditions; (vi) the computer facilities and Internet access etc. are only a few to be mentioned.

Under these circumstances the so-called India's elite institutions and their capacity to attract and retain world-class faculty and students in the face of attractive offers from foreign universities, research institutes and multi-national corporations is the main issue. The cream of students hitherto the prerogative of these elite institutions might have to choose amongst the second and third level. The apprehension that haunts the Indian mind is that universities and students in India might be the losers in the game of global higher education.

It would be equally interesting to view globalization as a real opportunity for India and can benefit significantly from the global revolution in higher education. Obviously, it would require major policy reforms with regard to university structure; function, structure function relation, funds and the way universities are regulated. It would require closer

links between industries and institutions especially in the growing technology-based sectors, and an entrepreneurial style of leadership to head the Indian universities. Given these inputs, India might be able to capture the benefits of globalization. No doubt, the country has potential and individuals are capable, yet "ifs and buts" appear to be the crux of the matter. The matter is "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 low cost of educated labor, multinationals have been locating many of their labor-intensive operations here. While institutions of higher education are moved to produce fail or mode skilled manpower to suit their requirements. Nobody is clear about what is its contribution to the country's economic growth and to the society at large.

Commercialization of education may in turn penalize the participation of brilliant students coming from poor background. 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; It may contribute for materialism and self-centeredness converting students towards self-centered personality. Already there is a belief amongst villagers that education alienates persons from their grass roots.

In addition to the above, there are other issues, which need consideration in the context of globalization of Indian higher education system. The issues can be classified in **Socio- Economic, Political** and **Academic** categories. Much has already been said in the socioeconomic category, however there are political dimensions to trade in services. The

sovereignty of the state to take decision with regard to free provision of these services, as well as location of these services in difficult areas even if economically inefficient is the issue. Education being on the concurrent list, the states' acceptance becomes essential this would call for amendments in the Education Acts of the states and universities. 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?

What would be the mechanism of mutual recognition, global and national certification? What are the mechanism for accreditation and quality control? What would be the structure of accrediting institution and similarly their functions? All these would obviously bring in the issue of roles of various regulatory bodies in terms of its already defined functions and needed changes. No doubt, it is an opportunity for those who are aware of the benefits, who has the information, who knows from where to get the information, who has the where wit-halts to get this information and has the inquisitiveness to get more and more and take benefit from that. In

India a very small percentage of population is getting all the benefits and yet demanding for more and more. 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 convert the threat into an opportunity it is essential to concentrate on:

· 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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