



NEED OF QUALITATIVE PARADIGM SHIFT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract: *The Indian students are going to USA, UK, Canada, Australia and New-Zealand. The number of Indian students attending higher educational institutions in the United States is the highest from a foreign country. In terms of money Indians are burning millions of dollars to get quality education in these countries. Not only the boys and girls are going to foreign shores from the metropolitan cities but also from small towns of India.*

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INTRODUCTION:

The WTO has changed the out-look of the world. The changes have been observed in all spheres of life-business, commerce, trade, industry, services etc. We have also felt these changes around us in India but the education is the field not touched so far under WTO regime in the desired manner. The question is whether our education especially the higher education needs to be brought under the purview of WTO ? The answer is not that easy. Different people have different versions and evidences to support their views. For us the answer is affirmative – we should allow the change in our higher education system because following facts are there to strengthen our views:

- (i) Students' exodus to developed countries.
- (ii) Deteriorating academic standards in the higher educational institutions.
- (iii) Others.

(i) STUDENTS EXODUS TO DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

Indian universities followed the principles of Lord Macaulay concerned with production of clerks and unfortunately this British legacy was not laid to rest on attaining the freedom from colonial masters. Socialist policy implemented by the government created a mess in our educational institutions and they have failed to come to needs of country with a population increasing at geometric progression rate.

The Indian Universities are out of sync with the ground realities and their output is of no use to the Industry and in the Post-privatization era the Indian students have become redundant as they are having degrees but under-rated skills. The people have been unable to earn their livelihood and failed to become an asset to the economy. Millions of educated youth in country are facing stagnation and despite spending Lacs on education they find themselves in the unemployed ranks.

This has compelled the people to go to developed nations for quality education. The Indian students are going to USA, UK, Canada, Australia and New-Zealand. The number of Indian students attending higher educational institutions in the United States is the highest from a foreign country. In terms of money Indians are burning millions of dollars to get quality education in these countries. Not only the boys and girls are going to foreign shores from the metropolitan cities but also from small towns of India.



Reason behind this mass exodus of students who are willing to shell ten times the amount which they need to spend to get similar education in India perhaps lies in the failure of our education system which has not been able to offer viable and creative solutions meeting the emerging demands.

(ii) DETERIORATING ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Following points are worth mentioning:

- 1) Not a single day passes when we do not come across the news of strikes, protests, marches, gheraos, bandhs and other violent agitational methods leading to the killing of teachers. Needless to say that inefficiency and corruption have also not spared the temples of learning. Wild allegations of financial embezzlements, administrative irregularities and improprieties have been put against not only the clerical staff but college principals and managements and vice-chancellors of universities have also been targeted and attacked by the stakeholders of education in the recent past. This all has resulted into the deterioration of academic environment and decline in administrative and financial systems in educational institutions of higher learning.
- 2) The cherished functions of higher education-the enquiry, search, creation and dissemination of knowledge and instilling sensitivity or social awareness in its students in India are missing.
- 3) Indian higher education is in a miserable condition because 25% of Indian engineers, 15% of its finance and accounting professional and 10% of professionals with general degrees are suitable to work for MNCs.
- 4) Most of the people (read teachers) in higher education are 'by chance' and not 'by choice' as the bored wives of politicians and bureaucrats, unsuccessful sons of eminent educationists, university officials including clerical staff and peons managed to get the highly paid teaching jobs. For these jobs guarantee life long security of tenure, no responsibility and virtually zero accountability.
- 5) The syllabus which is being taught to the undergraduates and post-graduates is the same which was being taught to their fathers and grandfathers and if any changes have been made, they are cosmetic.



6) The so-called professors and teachers do not know what is happening in their respective fields because they are not interested to update their knowledge. They are always busy in petty politics and divided in to the camps like India and Pakistan. Instead of teaching they prefer to hold post such as Deans, Registrars and Controller of Examinations. They have nothing at stake in the future of the students. Their jobs, promotions and pensions are secure –so where is the question of teaching?

7) Universities are acquiring the status of private limited companies with a business goal of profit maximization through expansions spree, permitting new campuses and affiliating numerous B.Ed. colleges and professional institutes run by the politicians and businessmen.

8) Universities are producing thousands of Ph.Ds every year but not a single world class work has come out of the science or social sciences labs. However Indian Universities are taking lead in organizing Seminars, Lecturers and Symposiums where the so called intellectuals have the chance to bask in the glorious sea of mediocrity.

(iii) OTHERS

1) The students are ignorant of the fact that they are being taken for a ride. They are happy with their degrees and life goes on simply till they face the harsh realities of the job market.

2) Excessive political interference in educational administration and to name a few the latest duel between vice-chancellor of Punjabi University Patiala and Chief Minister of Punjab, the rift between Vice-Chancellor of Lucknow and Chief Minister of Uttar-Pradesh and the delay in admission process in IIMs are the recent examples of political insensitivity damaging the fiber of academic environment.

3) With few exceptions the higher educational institutions are fund-starved, under-developed in infrastructure and have inadequate qualified faculty required for imparting innovative and futuristic higher education.

4) The system is also getting obsolete in view of the emerging challenges due to WTO regime. The education system seems to be suppressed under the socio-economic needs, information and technological advancement, growing dominance of science-technology business relationships and quality conscious global competitive environment.



Considering all these factors of different colours and magnitude one is compelled to develop an acute disenchantment with the higher education system. There is urgent need to revamp and upgrade the higher education system by adopting futuristic content and dynamic qualitative approaches to ensure that higher educational institutions are globally competitive. For this we should permit and encourage the foreign and private participants in the field of education and make the best utilization of the WTO regime because handful of IIMs and IITs will not make India a superpower and developed country and Government is willing to spend only between 3 - 4% of GDP on higher education. Therefore, it is concluded that qualitative paradigm shift is needed in the higher education to make India better and stronger.

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