



Linking of secondary education with Higher education in India

Dr.R.Siva Prasad Institute of Advanced Studies in Education (IASE), Andhra University, Visakhapatnam-530 003.

Abstract:

"Traditionally, the focus has always been on a modest number of central institutions but the reality is 96 per cent of the students are from states. We have been devoting more resources to a small number of elite institutes while state institutions are languishing in mediocrity." The Kothari Commission emphasized on expansion of higher education, enhancing quality of higher education and research; and use of dynamic techniques for management and organization". Education is the most crucial investment in human development. Education strongly influences improvement in health, hygiene, demographic profile, productivity and practically all that is connected with the quality of life. The growth in the overall literacy rate and that among women especially, the rise in the number of institutions at all the levels and the increase in the variety of institutions for higher studies are indeed impressive. But the number of higher education institutions is not commensurate with the size of the country, and public expenditure on education has not increased significantly. This article provides the link between secondary and higher education system and specifies the need to enhance the enrolment ratio into higher education.

Key Words: Central Institutions, Dynamic techniques, Quality of life, Mediocrity.

1. Introduction

India, country with glaring contrasts says that, we are the third largest higher education system in the world but only 7per cent of our youth are enrolled in higher education (age group of 17-24); We say we are country of intellectuals supplying manpower to the world but 35per cent of the population is illiterate; We have a target of enrolment in higher education i.e., 20 per cent by 2020 but the school drop out rate (1st to 10th) is 62.69per cent (some states and communities upto 90 per cent); We have

got 73per cent population residing in rural areas but 90per cent (approximately) of educational institutes are in urban areas (particularly in higher education); India's national policy says "education is social good" but many governments are withdrawing from the responsibility; Our tradition says "*Maatru Devo Bhava*" i.e., "Mother is like God", but women illiteracy rate in the country is 45per cent.

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is the national programme launched in 2001 to achieve universal



primary education by 2007 and universal elementary education by 2010. The focus of SSA is on decentralized planning process with an emphasis on participatory planning approach to ensure full participation of all children of the relevant age group through increasing access to education of equitable quality for all. In view of the demands of rapidly changing technology and the growth of knowledge economy, a mission for secondary education is essential to consolidate the gains of SSA and to move forward in establishing a knowledge society.

2. National Policy on Education

The scheme of Vocationalization of Education at 10+2 stage was introduced to regulate admissions at College level. The purpose was to divert at least 25per cent students of 10+2 stage to self-employment or wage-employment, while providing them with vocational competence in a field of their choice. However, the scheme has not taken off due to logistic and academic constraints which require streamlining and strong industry-institution linkages. At present, only 4.8 per cent students are opting for vocational stream, against a target of 25per cent.

In 1968, the National Policy on Education was adopted based on the recommendations of the Kothari Commission, which led to the considerable expansion of education facilities all over the country. In rural habitations, schooling facilities were developed within a radius of one

kilometer but these did not get translated into detailed structure of implementation. The overall national drop out rate from 1-10 standards is 62.69 per cent, which is a matter of concern. The drop out rates at different levels of school education is primary 31.47 per cent, middle 52.32per cent and secondary 62.69 per cent. One thing, notable, is that there is hardly any difference in drop out rate in boys and girls.

In socially disadvantaged groups, the rates are further higher in case of Scheduled Tribe the drop out is 79per cent at national level. These figures indicate that education is not reaching to these communities in true sense. We are quite ambitious for expanding enrolment in higher education system from 7per cent today to 20per cent by 2020. If the national overall dropout rate is 62.69per cent then how many students will be eligible or capable to take higher education in terms of quantity and quality? With the approximate passing rate of SSC (55per cent) and HSC (45per cent) only 10per cent of the students will be eligible to enter higher education, but how many are really capable, is a matter of debate.

In order to meet the educational needs of those who were unable to enroll themselves in the formal system, opportunities were provided through the National and State Open Schools, utilising multi-media packages and contact centres. For those who intended to discontinue education after ten years of schooling, vocational courses with



strong linkages to the world of work were recommended. Improvements in the quality of education, particularly in science, mathematics and computer literacy, were emphasized with Central support being provided for the purpose.

The Prime Minister's Special Action Plan (SAP) has stressed the need for expansion and improvement of social infrastructure in the field of education. Its aim is to move towards equal access to and opportunity of educational standards up to the school-leaving stage. It tries to improve the quality of education at all levels - from primary schools to our universities.

The findings of a confidential report by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), confirm the fact that two thirds (68per cent) 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. Another fact is that only 7 percent of India's 18 to 24 year olds enter higher education (compared to 21 percent in Germany, and 34 percent in the US). These findings lead the central government to prepare plans to set up at least one "central University" in each of the 16 (of India's 28) states that do not currently have one, and at least one degree-granting college in each of the 350 (of 604) districts that are without one.

A Parliamentary Standing Committee in its report in May 2013, recorded the following figures. Against

16,324 sanctioned teaching posts in central universities, 6,254 posts — 38per cent — were vacant. Information for only 47 state universities (out of a total of 297) was available showing that out of 11,645 sanctioned posts, 4,710 or 40per cent posts were lying vacant. "A critical patient has to be given emergency treatment under close monitoring," the standing committee wrote in anguish.

3. Development of higher education in India

One of the striking features of the development of higher education in India over the last few decades has been the extent to which private institutions have entered the scene and attempted to respond to the massive demand for education at the post-secondary level. This is particularly true in the fields of engineering, medicine, and management, and much less at the broader level of university education. The institutional variants of privatization range from small technical colleges to internationally recognized professional schools. While the government's share in overall education expenditure has declined from 80 percent in 1983 to 67 percent in 1999, private expenditure on education has increased more than ten times over the same period. In the field of professional training in particular, the size of the private sector is formidable: According to 2003 figures for 19 major Indian states from the Medical Council of India (MCI) and the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), of 198 Medical Colleges, 44 percent were private, and of 1102 Engineering Colleges, as many as 92



percent were private, similar conditions prevail in business management. In some instances, competition between public and private institutions has begun to produce improvements on both sides. Looking beyond these numbers, however, and the generosity of so many sponsors of higher education institutions notwithstanding, privatization in Indian higher education appears not to be an unmitigated success. It is clear, on the one hand, that in order to meet the massive demand for higher education; India will need to attract significant private investment in terms of both philanthropy and individual fees.

None of these measures is easy; all of them will have to overcome deficits where standards for academic recruitment have been rather lax or arbitrary, where the remuneration of teaching in higher education has been rather dismal (compared to opportunities both abroad and in the private sector), where graduate and doctoral programs have been short on capacity, academic rigor, and financial support, and where the increasingly intensive efforts to bring Indian scholars back from abroad have so far met with only limited success.

Table 1 Enrolment ratios in Higher Education -Asian data:

Country	Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)	Students/ 100,000 population
Republic of Korea	85	6,562
Japan	49	3,107
Thailand	37	3,430
Philippine	31	3,084

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Indonesia	15	1,444
China	13	931
India	11	923

4. Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan

The Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) is expected to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) from 18per cent to 30per cent. The scheme estimated to cost Rs. 99,000 crore will include other existing schemes in the sector. The scheme that entails spending some Rs.98, 138 crore over the 12th Plan (2012-17) and 13th plan (2017-22) periods. It will be a “new flagship scheme of the government that will pave the way for far-reaching reforms at the state level”.

Moreover, the funding by the Centre will be upto 90per cent and it will be available to even private institutions based on certain norms. One of the goals of RUSA will be to ensure academic examination reforms in the higher education institutions and enable conversion of some of the universities into research universities at par with the best in the world. The main component of the programme is to set up new universities and upgrade the existing autonomous colleges to universities. The other attempt will be to convert colleges to cluster universities and set up new model colleges. The strategy will also include converting existing degree colleges to Model Colleges. It is focusing in expanding the institutional base by creating additional capacity in existing



institutions and establishing new institutions in order to achieve enrolment targets; correcting regional imbalances in access to higher education by facilitating access to high quality institutions in urban and semi-urban areas creating opportunities for students from rural areas to get better access to better quality institutions; and improving equity in higher education by providing adequate opportunities of higher education to SC/STs and socially and educationally backward classes.

5. University and Higher Education

Efforts to increase people's participation in education and to diversify educational programmes in order to promote knowledge and skills required for nation-building have characterised successive Five Year Plans. For example, the Ninth Five Year Plan has planned to expand the education mainly in the unserved areas and with a focus on improving the coverage of women and the disadvantaged groups, using financial assistance as a leverage to secure better performance of the system, updating of syllabi to enhance their relevance, improvement in internal resource generation and implementation of a model code of governance to reduce non-academic influence in the higher education system.

There has been a tremendous expansion of facilities at the higher education stage. At the dawn of independence, the number of universities and colleges of all types stood at 27 and 370 respectively. By 2007 the Indian

higher education system has grown to be the largest in the world with 378 universities, 8064 colleges, and faculty strength of 0.492 million and an estimated enrolment of 14 million students.

With a view to enhancing the relevance of higher education, the University Grants Commission initiated a scheme of career orientation for students at the first degree level by equipping them with competencies for moving into job markets and self-employment. The scheme has been introduced in 31 universities and about 1000 colleges covering about 40,000 students. Restructuring of courses was also taken up in order to relate the course content to the needs of society.

The schemes of Adult and Continuing Education and Women's Studies were initiated in order to promote greater involvement of institutions of higher education in socio-economic and cultural development. As many as 104 universities have set up departments of adult and continuing education. In addition, more than 2600 colleges have set up Adult Education Units, while 22 universities and 11 colleges have set up centres for women's studies.

In order to provide facilities for higher education, particularly to the deprived sections of the population and neglected regions of the country, several new universities and colleges were opened, particularly in the North-Eastern region. Special efforts were made to



provide facilities for specialized groups like SCs, STs and women. The new facilities include increased intake and greater utilization of distance education mode. Mobility of the faculty and students has been facilitated by expanding the schemes of staff quarters and student hostels.

6. Open University System

The Open University System is offering a broad-based curricular content in humanities, social sciences, physical and natural sciences as well as in professional disciplines like agriculture, computer applications, education, engineering, management, nursing, nutrition, etc. The institutes of correspondence education of the dual mode universities registered an enrolment of about 7 lakhs. In addition, the four open universities had an aggregate enrolment of over 8 lakhs. In order to provide support to the open universities in the States, the Distance Education Council has been set up under the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). The IGNOU has a state-of-the-art production facility in electronic media and a Staff Training and Research Institute in Distance Education (STRIDE), which constitutes a national resource for the Open Learning System.

7. Conclusion:

Several programmes were initiated to improve the quality of higher education. These included faculty development through Academic Staff Colleges, prescribing minimum qualifications for teachers, teacher

fellowships, travel grants and career awards. Special efforts were made to enhance the library facilities and network (INFLIBNET).

Non-formal Education centres for such categories of children as are unable to avail themselves of the formal system of schooling in hilly, desert and forest areas, or due to the migratory nature of the population will be expanded. The expansion will be based upon a 'cluster approach', so as to make the scheme cost-effective. It has been found by experience that NFE centres achieve more meaningful results when these are run by NGOs. Accordingly, the number of centres run by NGOs will be enhanced significantly. Where NGO participation is not forthcoming, State-run NFE centres will be established.

The scope of the National and State Open Schools will be expanded by bringing elementary education within their fold for the purpose of providing a lateral entry to NFE children as well as to neo-literates for certification. Private initiative will be tapped in industrial project sites to run "project schools". Incentives like allotment of land on a subsidised basis and other concessions under the Companies Act or the Income Tax Act will be provided.

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