



Role Of Social Engineering In Higher Education Fostering A Future Of Inclusion

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Abstract: Higher education in India has achieved remarkable progress in terms of institutions, teachers' enrolment and teaching-learning infrastructure including disciplines. The gross enrolment ratio has increased from less than 1 % in 1950 to about 10-11 % presently. It is strongly recommended that there are enormous challenges that need to be addressed immediately. The foremost priority, at this juncture appears to be enhancing access to higher education by developing a regulatory mechanism to manage the credibility of online education providers like MOOCs (massive open online courses) such that the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) is raised to a minimum threshold level for sustained economic development.

Key words: Higher education, MOOCs, GER, economic development

Introduction: India's Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education stood at 21.1 % as of 2012-13 compared with the world average of 27 %. This means that we not only lag developed countries such as the US (95 %) and the UK (58 %), but also developing peers such as China (26 %), Brazil (36 %), Malaysia (40 %), Indonesia (24 %) and the Philippines (30 %). In India, according to latest All India Higher Education Survey (AIHES) reports given by HRD Ministry, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education has increased from 24.5% (2015-16) to 25.2% (2016-17). A Vision Plan of 5 years titled as Education Quality Upgradation and Inclusion Programme (EQUIP) is finalized and released by the Higher Education Department of



the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development. EQUIP report with 10 focus areas has been prepared after a detailed exercise done by Experts covering following ten areas:

1. Strategies for expanding access
2. Towards global best teaching/learning process
3. Promoting Excellence
4. Governance reforms
5. Assessment, Accreditation & Ranking systems
6. Promotion of research & innovation
7. Employability & entrepreneurship
8. Using Technology for better reach
9. Internationalisation
10. Financing higher education

For above mentioned 10 focus areas, 10 Expert Group (one for each) drawn from senior academicians, administrators and industrialists suggested over 50 initiatives that would transform country's higher education sector completely. Following goals are set for Higher Education Sector by Expert Groups:

1. Doubling Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) and resolving geographically and socially skewed access to higher education institutions in India.
2. Promoting India as a global study destination.
3. Upgrade Quality of Education to global standards.
4. Positioning minimum 50 Indian institutions among Top-1000 Global Universities.
5. Promote Research & Innovation ecosystems for positioning India in Top-3 countries globally in matters of knowledge creation
6. Introducing governance reforms in higher education for well-administered campuses.
7. For assurance of quality, accreditation of all institutions.
8. Double the employability for students qualifying in higher education.
9. Harness education technology for growing reach and improving teaching method.
10. Achieving a enormous increase in investments in higher education.



Way Forward

For the above mentioned initiatives, the Expert Groups recommended modalities for investments, implementation and timelines. Through EFC (Expenditure Finance Committee) mechanism this proposal may now be forwarded to inter-departmental consultations and appraisal before taking it to Cabinet for approval.

Only expansion of infrastructure of institutions and intake capacity shall not necessarily make higher education inclusive. Expansion in higher education should be made in such a manner that it offers equitable access to all. There is need to have conscious effort to ensure that the higher educational avenues and opportunities are made available to all and that the system does not suffer on account of disparities across region, gender, social groups.(such as scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, other backward castes, minorities, physically challenged and poor). India would soon have the largest youth population in the world but it would be unskilled. Thus there is need to develop more effective lifelong learning. GOI started initiatives for skill development and has a number of skill training programmes but these still need to scale up. GOI alone could not have adequate resources for scaling it up. It needs to look at a fundamental restructuring of educational delivery system and opportunity for skill development. Delores Report (1996) a holistic education includes

- Learning to live together;
- Learning to know;
- Learning to do;
- Learning to be; and
- Learning to transform oneself and society

Educational framework should facilitate link between education for living and education for making a living. This vision strengthens the new notion of citizenship where notions of skill development, capacity enhancement and training are reformulated in terms of rights-based approach. Thus education should reach beyond theory. A shift towards new integrated education system is needed to introduce key competencies which are essential for successfully shaping one's own life and creating a functional society.



Understanding Inclusive Approach

In developing countries particularly in south East Asia, social and economic exclusion and inclusion have recently become the focus of attention among those who are concerned about equality and justice, and also for the inclusive growth. This is an approach to improve our vision. It also provides a new way to look at the root causes of old problems, like discrimination, disadvantage, and disability. It should be noted that inclusive approach is a better tool for analyzing policies, programs, legislation and practices to determine whether they promote the economic and social inclusion of individuals, families, and communities. It opens door to innovative thinking and opens up minds to new solutions for old problems. Ultimately, it provides a new way to encourage change that will transform society towards equality and justice. The Inclusive approach helps stakeholders (policy makers, program managers, and community leaders) who work in the context of social and economic exclusion. It provides a method for analyzing both the conditions of exclusion and solutions that promote inclusion. Moreover, it provides an approach of beginning to plan for inclusion.

Pathways and Inclusive Approach

A pathway is a programme of capacity/skill building for the excluded group of students and is based on the philosophy of inclusion. Masterminds of pathways have evolved programme to create such innovative activities that are inclusive in the sphere of education and career and hence towards capacity building of excluded. These interventions help them translate the concepts of social and economic exclusion and inclusion into concrete terms that can then be fed into the future policy development process. This programme has provided a way to begin the dialogue with excluded groups, raise awareness about how exclusion works, and identify steps to move toward policies, programs, and practices that will be inclusive.

Dimensions of Exclusion and Inclusion

There are enormous elements to inclusion and exclusion that should be considered in analyzing a policy, program, or practice. It should be noted that economic and social inclusion and exclusion can be observed along several dimensions like economic, functional, cultural, participatory, political, structural, physical and relational. It is not intended to be a complete list,



but to stimulate to think about which of these may apply to a particular situations. Few of the elements may relate to more than one dimension.

Guiding Principles of Pathways

- Focus on the Underprivileged
- Holistic Development
- Linking individual with the society
- Implementation in partnership
- Building assets for society
- Inclusive Growth

Soft Skills and Value Added Programme (SVAP): Highly talented students, particularly from disadvantaged group, used to miss out many opportunities because their English language proficiency does not match the expected standard. This challenge has been met with most successfully by Pathways. The exceptional result of the students, year after year, bears testimony to this fact. We are constantly looking for new ways to help students to develop their communication skill.

Soft Skills -a key to better Career

Reports of the well documented studies conducted by Harvard University and Stanford Research Institute shows that technical skills and knowledge contribute to a limit of 15 per cent of one's success whereas soft skills make up the remaining 85 per cent. Soft skills include Self Development Skills, Interaction Skills Organization Skills and Communication Skills. Soft Skills and Personal Qualities (Innate Skills) with personal values shows a person's ability to fit into a given situation. Soft skills are beneficial for creating and taking advantage of opportunities, it may be a fresh job or making a long-term career or becoming a professional or businessman. Interestingly, achieving soft skills also empowers anyone to build flexibility into future. In today's scenario, in order to make a successful career and to lead a quality life soft skills have proved to be prerequisite. Demand driven, simple well designed and structured syllabi of SVAP includes basic dimensions of personal enhancement like Emotional Intelligence, Transactional Styles, Motivation, Time Management, interview skills, team work etc. It is



designed with intense consultations with all stakeholders, primarily to cater the perceived needs of “BACKWARD” students in order to ensure their access to excellence. Curriculum is beyond theory and transforms their mental attitudes, habits and frame of thought and makes them ready for industry. This proved as a facilitating link between education for living and education for making living. It helps them to respect diversity and cultural heritage sensitizing towards social concerns like environment, gender, human rights, RTI etc. This is an ever-evolving phenomenon for lifelong learning and SVAP under Pathways keep abreast with the latest methodology thus ensuring that the best in each student can be bring out. SVAP are felt as Graduation++ , Ensuring sustainable source of supplementary education in many of the partners as regular up to six month long term module. It has gained popularity simply by word of mouth. Off-campus learners also shows interest to join. Enabling the so called developmental Laggards to strengthen themselves to achieve excellence in their performance and succeed in their chosen field of work. At least it raises their confidence level with exposure to these ideas. It provides a unique opportunity for the students on to how to develop their personality and upgrade their soft skills thus enhancing their career prospects. Participants get abundant scope to interact with each other and experience a wide variety of issues, topics, and situations that they are likely to encounter in future.

Conclusion

The success of the experience inspires one to share the experience and have introspection for developing better strategies and vision for future plan of action. Affirmative action should always be preferred with the inclusion of all the dimensions of personal skill building. Partnership and networking is always better option to provide excellent inputs for SVAP. SVAP should always be paid programme even if you can afford to provide it free. Update technologies and interactive teaching methodologies are more effective in transferring skill. National events provide wide exposure to learn and get encouragement for upward movement.

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