Globalisation and Indian Education System

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Abstract

Globalization is termed as the on-going process of economic, technological, social and political integration of the world. It is newly emerging phenomenon and started after Second World War. Education being a service industry is part of globalization process under General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). Globalisation is also impacting the educational framework in both developing and developed countries. It has far reaching implications for socio-economic development and educations systems of countries all over the world. And in India, a very few studies and researches are found to make connections between the economic, political and cultural dimensions of globalization and the policies and practices of education.

Keywords: Globalisation, GATS, Education

Introduction

Globalization is expected to be a process through which an increasingly free flow of ideas, people, goods, services and capital would lead to the integration of economies and societies. Since the decade of 90’s, the concept of globalization becomes a catch phrase in India. There is an accelerated flow of trade, capital, and information, as well as mobility of individuals, across geographical borders. Here, it integrates Indian economy, its ideas and culture with other countries of the world. The basic objective of education is the overall development of an individual. Education is undergoing constant changes under the effects of globalisation. The effects of globalisation on education bring rapid developments in technology and communications are foreseeing changes within learning systems across the world as ideas, values and knowledge, changing the roles of students and teachers, and producing a shift in society from industrialization towards an information-based society.

Globalization, no doubt, promises dramatic and rewarding change to the higher education systems of the developed countries. In spite of continued debated and discussions still it is not clear whether this new global policy would keep in view the interests of global capitalism or the needs of particular societies in general and disadvantaged groups in particular. The fear that the process of Globalization Policy may apparently shape the perspectives of educational reforms in favour of those who have already benefited from the system as they are in the position to influence the policy is haunting those who are not in a position to influence the policy. It is evident that due to globalization there is explosion of knowledge. India has no reason to discard globalisation because it has a large potential for natural resources, large national market, strong industrial base, a powerful R & D infrastructure and above all a highly knowledgeable and skilled manpower that can stand on its own in global competition and rise to any challenge. Employment based education was the most precious gift of globalisation.

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.”
Guy Neave and Frans Van Vught, however, 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.” Robert Cowen makes it clear 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.”

Globalization - Challenge or an Opportunity

Two of the strategic and long-term questions that Globalization poses to the higher education system are: (i) ‘Commoditization’ - 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.

It raises questions to the Universities regarding 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 be in the long run, and 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. 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".

Challenges of WTO and GATS

WTO was established on January 1, 1995 by replacing GATT at the Uruguay Round. According to European Commission “the GATS is first and foremost an instrument for the benefit of business”. The agreements, in general covers all the services including the education services. This is a first multilateral agreement, which provides “legally enforceable rights to trade in all services. Only the services provided entirely by the government do not fall within the GATS rule. Whereas the services provided either by the Government partially, or some prices are charged, as happens in Education or provided by the private providers shall fall under GATS rule. Some people argue that any institution that requires payment, like fees, should fall under GATS as it currently exists.

The general procedure of commitment under GATS is that “countries submit their schedules under five sub sectors of education and four modes of supply of education”. The five sub-sectors are: Primary Education; Secondary Education; Higher Education; Adult Education and Other Education. The four modes of supply of education are Cross-Boarder Supply; Consumption Abroad; Commercial Presence/ Franchisee and Twining Programmes.

GATS cover the educational services of all countries whose educational systems are not exclusively provided by the public sector, or those educational systems that have commercial purposes. Since total
public monopolies in education are extremely rare, almost all of the world's educational systems fall under the GATS umbrella. In India, we cannot get exemption in education from the application of GATS because education at all levels, particularly at higher education level, is not entirely free (i.e. some fees has to be paid).

**Impact of Globalization on Higher Education in India**

Our educational system is inadequate to provide quality education to all the aspiring millions. The National Knowledge Commission (2009) estimates that our country needs to build 1500 universities in the next 10 years to cope with the demand of higher education and to sustain growth. As on today we have more than 300 universities, institutions of higher learning and deemed universities. The 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. At the beginning of the academic year 2004, the total number of students enrolled in the formal system of education in universities and colleges was 99.53 lakh- 12.97 lakh (13.3 per cent) in university departments and 86.57 lakh (86.97 per cent) in affiliated colleges 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.

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 has made no reference to the operating of foreign universities in India or promotion of Indian Higher Education abroad. In this regard, UGC has already been taken the initiative to recommend 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.

Our government is still unable to invest the huge amount of money required by our education. A UNESCO12 report says that public spending on higher education (per student) in India is one of the lowest in the world.

Table-1 shows a comparative per student public expenditure by countries (in dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USA</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>Brazil</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>Malaysian</th>
<th>Indonesia</th>
<th>India</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9629</td>
<td>8502</td>
<td>3986</td>
<td>2728</td>
<td>11790</td>
<td>666</td>
<td>406</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Globalization will provide India, hopefully, the necessary foreign investment in higher education. It will not only solve the problem of enrolment to some extent but also encourage many students to seek higher education in India itself and thus save precious foreign exchange. Some foreign universities are already operating in India and more are expected in coming days. India should also invite top class foreign institutions to open their campuses here. With competition looming large, Indian universities will also strive to improve education quality, infra-structure and technology. Special financial schemes to make computers affordable to students and teachers were promised, along with a commitment that computers and the Internet would be made available in every school, polytechnic, college, university and public hospital by 2003. All universities, engineering colleges, medical colleges and other institutions of higher learning, as well as research and development organizations, would be networked for distance education programs to improve the quality of education. Virtual institutes would be set up in different parts of the country for distance education.
To protect the constitutional provisions with regard to access, equity and equality, suitable policies have been formulated in the education sector. The problem of ever-expanding demand for higher education in India can be solved to some extent by our open universities. India has one of the largest networks of open universities in the world, second only to China. Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) is India’s largest distance education provider. In 2009-10, more then sixteen lakh students were enrolled in open universities in India, with IGNOU topping the list with six lakh. The National knowledge Commission expects 400 million students in the next 10 years. Open Universities are the fastest growing system in our country and promises to meet the growing demand for higher education. Reservation in employment, both in teaching as well as in administrative posts, is also one of the major components of this policy.

Besides these, several other policy interventions have been made in various Five Year Plans of the country and by the UGC to improve access, retention and better performance of the disadvantaged groups. These include: Reduction in fee charged at the time of admission; Scholarships and Freeships; Book Banks and Book Loan Facility etc.; Boarding and Lodging Facilities. Reservation of seats for SC/ST in general hostels, in addition to the provision for separate hostels for SC/ST, etc. Boarding and Lodging facilities are also provided for women and Physically Challenged; Relaxation in admission criteria i.e. such as lowering of minimum marks and increasing of maximum age; and Exemption in respect of duration of course, papers, marks etc.

For improving performance of these groups in colleges and at competitive examinations, institutions of higher education also make provision for remedial teaching, preexamination coaching facilities, preparation for competitive examination, counselling facility and finally to monitor the implementation of various programmes and initiate action, there is provision for setting up Human Right Cell, SC/ST Cell, Women Cell in the universities and colleges.

Conclusion

Globalization of higher education is in full bloom all over the world. India cannot remain aloof and should exploit the opportunities. India should encourage reputed foreign universities to open their campuses in India. As the trade in higher education becomes more expensive, the government’s role becomes crucial. We cannot neglect the role of social and human sciences in this consumerist’s society. Education in moral science and ethics must find its due place. The educational administrators must expedite the process of reforms and encourage innovation in all aspects of education including curricular, teaching, learning and research. The top institutions of the west and USA should be allowed to collaborate in teaching and research, with Indian institutions. It can also encourage reform and improvement through example and competition. So, the conclusion is that opening Indian higher education to foreign competition will benefit us and boost our growth.

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