GLOBALIZATION AND INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

Higher, post-secondary, or third level education refers to the stage of learning that occurs at academies, universities, colleges, seminaries and institutes of technology. Higher education also includes certain collegiate-level institutions, such as vocational schools, trade schools, and career colleges, that award degrees, diplomas and certificates. Globalization is an umbrella term that refers to increasing global connectivity, integration and interdependence in the economic, social, technological, cultural, political, and ecological spheres. It is a unitary process inclusive of many such sub-processes, perhaps as best understood as enhanced economic interdependence, increased cultural influence, rapid advances of information technology, and novel governance and geopolitical challenges. In this paper, a systematic attempt has been made to describe academic qualification framework, institutional framework and regulatory framework regarding higher education in this era of globalization.

Key Words: Higher Education, Globalization, Academic framework, Institutional framework.

INTRODUCTION

Globalization is an umbrella term that refers to increasing global connectivity, integration and interdependence in the economic, social, technological, cultural, political, and ecological spheres. It is a unitary process inclusive of many such sub-processes, perhaps as best underststood as enhanced economic interdependence, increased cultural influence, rapid advances of information technology, and novel governance and geopolitical challenges. Globalization has redefined the constituents and drivers of economic progress over last two decades. The traditional contributors of economic development and economic power such as material resources and production capabilities have been replaced by knowledge and information. Globalization has resulted in significant changes in the knowledge economy and ushered new conditions for the provision of higher education to cater the skill requirement all across the globe. Higher educational services have emerged over the last few years as a major economic sector for trade worth several billion dollars. The key elements of globalization include the knowledge society, information and communication technologies, the market economy, trade liberalization and changes in governance structures. These elements of globalization have impacted significantly the education sector in general and higher education in particular. The present study critically analyzes the growth of higher education sector in India and identifies the major concerns. It also evaluates the preparedness of the country for the opening up its border for foreign institutions.

Higher, post-secondary, or third level education refers to the stage of learning that occurs at academies, universities, colleges, seminaries and institutes of technology. Higher education also includes certain collegiate-level institutions, such as vocational schools, trade schools, and career colleges, that award degrees, diplomas and certificates.Over the last two decades globalization has impacted operations of various institutions including academic institutions all over the world. Higher education institutions have been both the agent and objects of globalization (Scott, 1998). International mobility, global comparison, bench marking etc. has gained lot of importance in policy making. Teichler (2004), note with surprise the amount of debate on global phenomena in higher education focusing on marketization, competition and management in higher education. Some of the countries adopted institutional devolution, quasi-market competition in the system and performance managed staffing to address the global competition (Valimaa, 2004a). The other countries have responded differently to the changes in global environment. In the English-speaking world,

international operations have become the primary mode of development. In Europe, the negotiation of the common higher education area and European Research Area has been the major development leading to the emergence of global higher education environment. Global research circuits have been wired into the rapidly developing higher education systems of China, Singapore and Korea. India has not yet opened up the direct entry of foreign institutions in education sector.

Globalization is described as, flow of technology, economy, knowledge, people, values and ideas across borders as, it affects each country in a different way due to a nation's individual history, traditions, culture and priorities (Knight and De Wit, 1999). Thus, globalization is a multi-faceted process and can affect countries in vastly different ways - economically, culturally and politically, but it does not take an ideological stance or a position as to whether this impact has positive and/or negative consequences. There are a number of factors which are closely related to this worldwide flow, which are seen as key elements of globalization. These include the knowledge society, information and communication technologies, the market economy, trade liberalization and changes in governance structures. These elements of globalization have significant impact on the education sector (Knight, 2004).Technology have made it possible for parent companies to operate satellite enterprises and give directions and instruction from the home base with minimum requirement for physical presence. This, however, has called for new skills and specialized knowledge, the absorption of which requires the availability of a well-trained and highly educated cadre of workers in the host economies (Gibbs, 1989). Gibbs (1989) has also observed that the demand for such know-how is becoming acute while it remains a key to improve productivity and competitiveness. But data and information processing are major services being outsourced to service providers in developing countries. In addition, many companies are divesting themselves of expensive operations and transferring them to low cost economies or simply closing them and relying on cheaper service suppliers from developing and transition countries. On the other hand, in these host economies, there is growing demand for high-level skills required to tap these emerging opportunities. As a result, education and for that matter higher education, have become attractive avenues for investment. The interest in higher education as an area of investment seems to be somehow mutual. For some developing countries, it opens up possibilities for capacity building in core skills that are likely to enhance the opportunities for linkages with firms in advanced countries. Some of the developing countries such as India, Singapore and Malaysia see a niche in establishing themselves as key and reliable exporters of services. Developed countries such as the US on the other hand, see investment in education abroad as a strategy to strengthen the competitive position of it's corporations in host countries (Gibbs, 1989). Another factor that is shaping the new global skill structure is the imperative to use education to standardize skills. The current expansion in agriculture, manufacturing and services has created a global need for harmonious standardization of skills and qualifications. As international economic advantage becomes increasingly linked to knowledge-based sectors, tertiary education, which generates much of this knowledge, is being rapidly reconceptualized in tradable terms (Bennell and Pearce, 1998). This had led to the proliferation of new modes particularly those concerning distance education and commercial presence. The use of information technology is prolific in the west, however, it acts only as main stream education. On campus is and will remain the dominant learning setting (Collis and Wende, 2002).

A BRIEF HISTORY OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

India has an age old heritage of education but it was largely based on caste and social status rather than being equally available to all. Traditional Hindu education served the needs of the Brahmin families. Brahmin teachers would teach boys to read and write. Under the Mughals, education was similarly elitist, favouring the rich rather than those from high-caste backgrounds. These pre-existing elitist tendencies were reinforced under British rule. British colonial rule brought with it, the concept of a modern state, a modern economy and a modern education system. By linking entrance and advancement in government service to academic education, colonial rule contributed to the legacy of an education system while preserving the position and prerogatives of the more privileged. In the early 1900s, for the first time demand for technical and vocational training in education was raised by the Indian National Congress. Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru (the first prime minister of Independent India) envisaged India as a secular democracy with a state-led command economy. Education for all and industrial development were seen as crucial tools to achieve economic prosperity and social equity. Following independence, school curricula were, thus, imbued with the twin themes of inclusiveness and

national pride. It is through the first five year plan in 1950-51, India began its programme for providing free and compulsory education to all children by transforming the elite oriented system of school education inherited from the colonial rulers to a mass education programme. The Indian Constitution resolves to provide quality education to all. In the effort to fulfill educational needs of the country, specifically for the diverse societies and cultures of the country the government has chalked out different educational categories namely, Elementary Education, Secondary Education, Higher Education, Adult Education, Technical and Vocational Education. Institutions of excellence in higher education were formed with a view to provide subsidized quality higher education to build a self reliant and modern India. Even at present these institutions are recognized among the best in the world.

HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

India has been a major seat of learning for thousands of years. The present format of Higher education in India was started in 1857 with the inception of universities in the three presidency towns. At present, India possesses a highly developed higher education system which offers facility of education and training in almost all aspects of human's creative and intellectual endeavors such as arts and humanities, natural, mathematical and social sciences, engineering; medicine, dentistry, agriculture, education, law, commerce and management, music and performing arts, national and foreign languages, culture, communications etc.

Academic Qualification Framework

There are three principle levels of qualifications within the higher education system in the country which are as under:

Bachelor/ Undergraduate level: Bachelor's degree is offered after 12 years of school education. Generally it is offered in two streams: liberal and professional field of studies. The liberal studies are generally three years programme offered in arts, commerce and sciences. Some institutions offer bachelor courses with honours in liberal studies which are not necessarily longer in duration but indicate greater depth of study. Bachelor degree in professional studies is generally a four years programme offered in agriculture, dentistry, engineering, medicine, pharmacy, technology, and veterinary. The bachelors in architecture and medicine take five and five and a half years respectively. There are other bachelor programme which are offered only after completion of first bachelor degree. These include one year bachelors in education, journalism and library and information science. Similarly a Bachelor's degree in law can be pursued only after completion of first bachelor degree but is of three years bachelor programme. The bachelor degree in law is also offered as an integrated degree lasting five years.

Master's / Post-graduate level: Master's degree is normally of two-year duration in both the liberal and professional fields of study. It could be coursework based with or without thesis or research. Now a days to match the skill requirement, fast track programmes in professional streams such as Executive MBA are also available to those having 3 to 5 years of experience at managerial level. Some Master's degree such as in Library and Information Science lasts for one year while in Computer Science lasts for three years.

Pre-Doctoral / Doctoral level: A pre-doctoral programme - Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) is taken after completion of the Master's Degree. This can either be completely research based or can include course work as well which is generally of one and half year duration. Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) is pursued after masters or pre-doctoral programme and generally takes two to five years to be awarded. Students are expected to write a substantial thesis based on original research with or without course work.

Diploma: Diploma Courses are also available at the undergraduate and postgraduate level. At the undergraduate level, it varies between one to three years in length while postgraduate diplomas are normally awarded after one year's study.

Distance Learning Programmes: At all the levels, programmes in both liberal and professional field are offered through distance learning mode which normally takes longer duration than their equivalent regular programme.

Institutional framework

The degree / diploma awarding institutions consist of the following:

Central Universities: A Central University in India is established by the Government of India, by Act of Parliament.

State Universities: A State University in India is established by the State Government, by State Legislature.

Deemed Universities: Institutions which have been accorded the status of a university with authority to award their own degrees through central government notification.

Open University: Open University can be a central or state University imparting education exclusively through distance mode in any branch or branches of knowledge.

Institutes of National Importance: Some of the higher education institutions are awarded the said status of Institutes of National Importance by the act of Parliament.

Other Institutions: Include the Institutions established by State Legislative Act and colleges affiliated to the University, both government-aided and –unaided.

The Universities are of various kinds, with a single faculty, or multi-faculties; teaching or affiliating, or teaching cum affiliating, single campus or multiple campuses. Most of the Universities are affiliating universities, which prescribe to the affiliated colleges the course of study, hold examinations and award degrees, while undergraduate and to some extent postgraduate colleges affiliated to them impart graduate instruction. Many of the universities along with their affiliated colleges have grown rapidly to the extent of becoming unmanageable. Therefore, as per National Policy on Education, 1986, a scheme of autonomous colleges was promoted. In the autonomous colleges, whereas the degree continues to be awarded by the University, the name of the college is also included. The colleges develop and propose new courses of study to the university for approval. They are also fully responsible for conduct of examination.

Regulatory Framework

The institutions imparting higher education at different levels are regulated by the following bodies:

University Grants Commission (UGC) set up under UGC Act 1956 is responsible for coordination, determination, and maintenance of standards and release of grants to universities and research organizations. It provides recognition for universities in India, and provides funds for government-recognised universities and colleges. Its headquarters are in New Delhi, and six regional centres in Pune, Bhopal, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Guwahati and Bangalore.

All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) has been established under the AICTE Act, 1987. The council is authorized to take all steps that are considered appropriate for ensuring coordinated and integrated development of technical education and for maintenance of standards.

Medical Council of India (MCI) was set up by the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956, amended in 1993. The council is empowered to prescribe minimum standards for medical education required for granting recognized medical qualifications by universities or medical institutions in India. The Council is also responsible to give its recommendations to the Central Government for establishing new medical colleges, opening of new or higher courses of study and increase in admission capacity in any courses of study or training.

Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR) has established various research centres in order to meet the agricultural research and education needs of the country. It is actively pursuing human resource development in the field of agricultural sciences by setting up numerous agricultural universities spanning the entire country.

National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) is a statutory body set up under the National Council for Teacher Education Act, 1993 to facilitate planned and coordinated development of the teacher education system in the country, and for regulation and proper maintenance of norms and standards in the teacher education system. The Council is empowered to grant recognition of institutions offering courses or training in teacher education.

Dentists Council of India (DCI) constituted under the Dentists Act, 1948, is a statutory body incorporated under an Act of Parliament to regulate the dental education and the profession of dentistry throughout India. The council is responsible for according recognition to dental degree awarded by various universities and also for maintaining uniform standards of dental education in India.

Pharmacy Council of India (PCI) also known as central council was constituted under Section 3 of the Pharmacy Act, 1948. The PCI controls pharmacy education and profession in India up to graduate level. The council prescribes the minimum standard of education for qualification as pharmacist.

Indian Nursing Council (INC) is a statutory body constituted under the Indian Nursing Council Act, 1947. The council is responsible for regulation and maintenance of a uniform standard of training for nurses, midwives, auxiliary nurse-midwives and health visitors.

Bar Council of India (BCI) is empowered to make rules to discharge its functions under the Advocates Act 1961. An important rule-making power is with reference to laying down guidelines for the standards of professional conduct and etiquette to be observed by advocates. The Bar Council of India rules may prescribe for a class or category of person entitled to be enrolled as advocate. The Bar Council of India can also specify the conditions subject to which an advocate must have the right to practice and the circumstances under which a person must be deemed to practice as an advocate in a court.

Central Council of Homeopathy (CCH) was established under the Homoeopathy Central Council Act, 1973. The council prescribes and recognizes all homeopathic medicine qualifications. Any university or medical institutions that desires to grant a medical qualification in homeopathy is required to apply to the council. The council is responsible for constitution and maintenance of a Central Register of Homoeopathy and for matters connected therewith. All universities and board of medical institutions in India are required to furnish all information regarding courses of study and examination.

Central Council for Indian Medicine (CCIM) is the statutory body constituted under the Indian Medicine Central Council Act, 1970. This council prescribes minimum standards of education in Indian Systems of Medicine viz. Ayurved, Siddha, Unani Tibb. The council is responsible to maintain a Central Register on Indian Medicine and prescribes standards of professional conduct, etiquette and code of ethics to be observed by the practitioners.

Council of Architecture (COA) was constituted under the provisions of the Architects Act, 1972, enacted by the Parliament of India. The Act provides for registration of Architects, standards of education, recognized qualifications and standards of practice to be complied with by the practicing architects. The Council of Architecture is responsible to regulate the education and practice of profession throughout India besides maintaining the register of architects. Any person desirous of carrying on the profession of "Architect" must register himself with Council of Architecture.

Distance Education Council (DEC) was constituted under statute 28 arising from Section 25 of the Indira Gandhi National Open University Act, 1985. The Distance Education Council (DEC) is responsible for the promotion and coordination of the open university and distance education system and for determination of its standards. The Council provides academic guidelines to promote excellence, encourage use of innovative technologies and approaches, enable convergence of all systems and sharing of resources through collaborative networking for access to sustainable education, skill upgradation and training to all.

Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) The Parliament enacted Rehabilitation Council of India Act in 1992. It prescribes that any one delivering services to people with disability, who does not possess qualifications recognized by RCI, could be prosecuted. Thus the Council has the twin responsibility of standardizing and regulating the training of personnel and professional in the field of Rehabilitation and Special Education.

National Council for Rural Institutes (NCRI) is an autonomous society fully funded by the Ministry of Human Resources Development, Government of India. It was established with a main objective of promoting Rural Higher Education for advancing rural livelihoods with the instrument of education based on the values proposed by Gandhiji.

State Councils of Higher Education (SCHE) Following the National Policy on Education, respective state governments have established State Councils of Higher Education (SCHE). These councils prepare coordinated programs of development of higher education in each state. Thus, they seek to consolidate the efforts and investments of institutions of higher education with the state.

CONCLUSION

In India, higher education was traditionally looked after by the government, but in view of lack of resources to meet the increasing demand, private sector has been allowed to share the responsibility. The country has a well developed educational set up in terms of range of programs and their acceptability in local industry, but it lacks in terms of international quality standards. Higher education institutions managed by private sector emphasize more on commercial aspect than creation of knowledge which leads to deterioration of quality of education. The councils and government bodies responsible for quality assurance do not have internationally matchable quality norms on one hand and an effective system to monitor and control violation of the existing norms by the institutions on the other. Further, the political parties manipulate the issues of access and equity in higher education for their vested political interest rather than taking the right steps to enhance the quality of higher education. As a result those who can afford the high cost of higher education look forward for the opportunities abroad while the others have to compromise with sub-standard education. If India has to emerge as preferred location for higher education in the globalizing world it will have to develop a national policy to address the challenges of sub-standard quality, ineffective systems of monitoring and control, red-tapism in growth and development and political interference.

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