

CHALLENGES IN EXPANSION WITH EXCELLENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MANIPUR

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Abstract

The present paper tries to track down all existing education policies of the country and the efforts of GOI to bring expansion in higher education since post independence till date. The vision of joining Global Knowledge Society has the ultimate goal of both expansion and excellence inseparable as two faces of a coin. Many challenges are met midway and solutions regarding is the need of time.

Keywords: *challenges, expansion, excellence, excellence in higher education, higher education, Manipur*

In this fast and competent knowledge era, India is striving hard with all efforts to join Global Knowledge Society by 2020 with missions of Expansion and Excellence in higher education from its huge population of about 1.2 billion (Census 2011). We have limited resources except for human resource and due emphasis is given to convert human resource to knowledge economy to compete global race in all respects.

Tracking Higher Education Policies in India

The importance of higher education was felt as far back as 1948, just after India got independence and the first education commission was established as “University Education Commission”; popularly known as “Radhakrishnan Commission”. To streamline Higher Education(HE), the University Grants Commission (UGC) was established by an act of parliament in 1956 and since then UGC is actively working for the development of HE in the country.

We also witnessed the wholesome and perfect education commission of the country established in 1966 for the welfare of entire system of education from KG to PG, popularly known as “Kothari Commission” and is an epoch making education commission of India with so much geographical, cultural and religious diversifications. It has a far and wide spectrum suitable to Indian soil of “Unity in Diversity” giving importance to both quality and quantity. It also visualised that even the adequate infrastructure development may not be an end without that of human resources development. The importance of Education in using as an agent of socio-economic and cultural transformation to endeavour to relate to life, needs and aspirations of the people was set as the goal of this commission with four pillars - *Access, Equity, Quantity and Quality*.

The recent initiatives taken with regard to higher education under National Policy on Education, 1986 (NPE 1986) and its PoA 1992 is the outcome of the above two reports. The socio-economic and cultural transformation relating to life, needs and aspirations of the people through education in general and higher education in particular are visualised in five principal goals - *Greater Access, Equal Access, Quality, Excellence and Relevance & Promotion of Social values*.

It may be mentioned that the parameters “Excellence” and “Expansion” in Higher Education were given emphasis in NPE1986 and for fruitful expansion and greater access for rural and weaker section youths in HE Jawahar Narvodaya Schools were set up.

The Birla Ambani Report for reforms in Education 2000 under Prime Minister’s Council of Trade and Industries aiming to convert education to tradable commodity

to include in GATES, declaration of education as non-merit goods, withdrawal of all subsidies under Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) etc may count to be the first step to commercialise Higher Education; but protests from all sections made the report to stop right away from implementation.

The National Knowledge Commission (NKC), a report to the Nation came out of blue during 2007 aiming at the Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation (LPG) of higher education in the name of joining global knowledge society by 2020. It was constituted with the parameters Inclusion, Quality, Excellence and Expansion of higher education with the vision of reaching Gross Enrolment Ratio of youths to 25% by 2020 from nearly 7% only between the age group of 17-22 years. But the prescription of NKC does not match with the diagnosis of the deteriorating condition of higher education of the state. The proposal of NKC to establish one regulatory authority namely “Independent Regulatory Authority of Higher Education (IRAHE)” by subsuming all regulatory authorities like UGC, AICTE, MCI, NCTE etc (13 such bodies) may be counted as the most draconian and capitalist liberalisation. Many criticisms and oppositions from academicians, specially from All India Federation of University & College Teachers’ Organisation (AIFUCTO), under strong debates and awareness missions countrywide made the commission to block before implementation. However, another report, namely, Yash Pal Committee Report came up during 2008 to renovate and rejuvenate higher education and research (National Commission for Higher Education and Research, (NCHER) met the same protest as it aims at LPG. But the bill for NCHER is in the parliament waiting to pass an act. The report also recommends opening of foreign institutions through Foreign Education Providers (FED) and Foreign University Entry Bill is also waiting its turn to be passed by the parliament.

The last three reports have the market oriented approach under the prescription of World Bank to convert knowledge as tradable commodity and to include education in the GATES. The reports have the same parameters of **Excellence and Expansion** of higher education under PPP mode, which are not suitable to the Indian soil of huge population of geographical, cultural, religious and social diversities. Hence we need to rethink about these two parameters in another way round for the development of higher education in the country in a more people oriented technique and some suggestions regarding are tried in this paper.

Expansion of Higher Education

The country is now quite eager to join Global Knowledge Society by 2020 as visualised by our Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and many policies are taken up as mentioned earlier in this paper. The real emphasis is given in higher education and regarding this, we may quote our Prime Minister “the time has come to create a new wave of institution building and of excellence in the field of education, research and capacity building so that we are better prepared for the 21st century”. On the Independence Day, 2008 at Lal Quilla Prime Minister proudly declared XI plan as our National Plan Year of Education and the budget allocation was increased 19-fold for higher education (a quantum leap). Indeed, it gave a sharp increase of GER to 13.5% from 7% and the number of universities and colleges increased from 350 and 17,700 to 611 and 31,324 under XI plan respectively. (only 34 universities in the whole North East: attention regarding necessary)

The XII plan has the objective of expansion with confidence to double the present GER and targeted at 27% (ref: XII FYP of UGC, Nov 2011) at the end of plan year (2012-2017). The proposals may be highlighted as: To establish Model Degree Colleges in EBDs, To establish 20 Women Universities, To establish 800 Constituent colleges in the 43 Central Universities, To form 400 College Cluster Universities, To establish 20 new Faculty Development Centres, To establish Academic Staff Colleges to reach 100 from the present strength of 66, To establish 10 new Leadership Development Centres, etc

The budgetary proposed allocation for *expansion* from column 1 to 4 above in crore is Rs.1,44,350/- out of the whole Rs.1,84,740/- (Table-1). The XI FYP of UGC had also given due emphasis on inclusion, quality and excellence and the budgetary allocation during the plan was Rs. 84,943/- crores whereas that in the X plan was only Rs.9,600/- crores. The expansion during the period was almost double of that existed in the previous plan. The objective of expansion to double that in the XI plan is clearly reflected in the XII FYP of UGC with clear-cut allocations and proposals (Table-1 below)

Table 1 Area-wise Budgetary Provisions

Sl. No.	Sector/Scheme	Proposed Allocation (Rs in crore)
1.	Enhancing Aggregate Access	1,44,350
2.	Equity	16,260
3.	Quality & Excellence	11,140
4.	Research Projects	5,350
5.	Relevance and Value Based Education	1,240
6.	ICT integration	4,450
7.	Governance & efficiency improvement	1,950
	Total Projected Requirements	1,84,740

Source: XII FYP of UGC

Excellence in Higher Education

Excellence in higher education sector to compete in global context is the most important parameter in the present context. The introduction of API scores under PBAS in the new UGC Regulations, 2010 is the most prominent factor and the columns 5-7 above proposals of XII FYP of UGC are for implementing in the true sense and the proposed allocation regarding is Rs. 11,140/- crores. In other related branches the allocations are respectively Rs. 5,350/-, Rs. 1,240/-, and Rs. 4,450/- crores for research projects, relevance and value based education, and ICT integration (Table-1). The XI FYP of UGC had also given due emphasis on inclusion, quality and excellence and the budgetary allocation during the plan was Rs. 84,943/- crores whereas that in the X plan was only Rs.9,600/- crores. During this plan many actions were taken up including the establishment of 374 model degree colleges at the identified Educationally Backward Districts (EBD), identification and conferment of Autonomous Colleges and College for Potential of Excellence, enthusiastic efforts to grade colleges by NAAC, giving opportunities for faculty improvement programmes to the teachers in service, making academic and administrative reforms etc. The action plan of UGC for improving quality in higher education many administrative and academic reforms are recommended; namely Semester system, Choice-based credit system, Curriculum development, Admission procedures, and Examination reforms.

The Challenges

With all these initiatives by UGC and GOI, the institutions are facing many challenges in implementation and the reason may be counted as Lack of ICT facilities, Lack of infrastructures (both human and physical), Lack of requisite number of faculty members, Lack of proper administration, Lack of integrity and accountability, Appointment of teachers on part-time, contract or guest norms, Non-implementation of UGC norms by the state governments, Adjustment time for academic and administrative reforms, and Administrative oppositions in the higher learning and research etc.

The government and authority may take the responsibility to take up proper remedy on the above challenges to bring expansion with excellence in all higher educational institutions. In the meantime, the teachers should also be held the responsibility of discharging their duties with commitment.

Suggestions

1. The uneven distributions of universities must be checked for uniform expansion and excellence throughout the country.
2. Model degree colleges must be established in all districts of the country specially for the state of Manipur
3. To enhance the process of excellence, the central government must convert the affiliated government colleges into constituent colleges or at least 20 each state as suggested in the XII FYP of UGC for the states like Manipur.
4. One Women University must be establish in states like Manipur where women enrolment is almost double that of men and having the less number of universities; as of now only one Central University in general stream

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