

THE REASON BEHIND DEGENERATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

Dr. Vineeta Tiwari*

Abstract

A recent evaluation of universities and research institutes all over the world unfortunately has found not a single Indian university in the world's top 300. Though India's manufacturing of professionals is phenomenal with over 600 universities and 45,000 colleges turn out 2.5 million graduates each year, in terms of the volume of production India trails behind only the US and recently China yet the Indian universities are increasingly moribund. Though India's higher education system is much-admired, each year India produces 350,000 engineers, twice the number produced by the US, the IIT's are indeed world-class training institutes, so are the IIMs; and in recent years new law schools have also begun to produce unequaled lawyers, yet in spite of all these this recent evaluation of universities and research institutes, conducted by a Shanghai university, declared not a single Indian university in the world's top 300 universities. China has six. The Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, comes in somewhere in the top 400 and IIT, Kharagpur, makes an appearance after that. This is not easy to shake our shoulders but really worrying. Let's see what are the reasons behind India's this faltering education system and how it can be reconstructed. Obviously, the need is to reinventing our universities.

Key words – Evaluation, faltering education system, reconstruct, reinventing

* **Computer Centre, R.D. University, Jabalpur M.P, INDIA**

"Our Universities are so engrossed today with the task of conducting examinations and with innumerable meetings of Boards and Faculties, Courts and Councils, Senates and Syndicates that they have no time to perform the highest function of a University which is to stimulate intellectual activity and advance knowledge. There is a danger today of its being forgotten that examinations and Faculty meetings are only a means to an end and not an end in themselves. There is a danger today of the production and advancement of knowledge receding into the background in the intellectual outlook of our Universities, of their being regarded as something beautiful and great, like the white snow in the top of the Himalayas, to be admired from a distance but not to be grasped or touched." —C. V. Raman Convocation Address, Benares Hindu University January 1927.

The Supreme Court has declared the Chattisgarh Private Universities Act, 2002, illegal, stripping an extraordinarily large number of 'universities' of their legal status. How did a small and young state like Chattisgarh suddenly sprout so many 'universities'? The answer is of course, apparent - i.e. Greed, camouflaged as populism worked as a prevailing instrument under corruption. The state government was definitely driven by the noble desire of making higher education available to all. The easiest way for this seemed to throw the higher education sector in the state open to private enterprise. This move failed to get the original motive and emerged as deformation which was clearly designed to make the peddling of 'university degrees' at financially attractive proposition, with every local tutorial college and teaching shop being elevated to the status of a university. With hundreds of thousands of susceptible students as customers for degrees, there is clearly a wonderful opportunity for free marketeers in higher education. Selling 'education' is undoubtedly an attractive commercial plan; the customers are gullible and easy, interested only in degrees, which they hope will be a passport to a better future. The expected nexus between politicians and profiteers has been quickly counterfeited in the higher education sector. The Chattisgarh episode is only an extreme example, because the state, suddenly sprouted dozens of universities. Luckily, Yash Pal, a former chairman of the University Grants Commission (UGC) petitioned the court, in public interest. The Chattisgarh case demonstrates the lack of control by central bodies like the UGC, over proceedings in the states.

The second most distressing feature of our university system is the insignificant importance given to academic performance of the faculty, who really are the backbone of the university. Intellect and scholarship are no longer pre-requisites for advancement through academic ranks. Universities now have professors, who don't have much interest in researches, have become lethargic and do little teaching. Research which is considered as an activity best left to national laboratories and all attempts to impart funds and facilities into university departments have met with only limited success. Research, both in science and in humanities, requires an ambience where academic pursuits are encouraged, scholarship is valued and inferiority is not consciously upraised. Such an environment is miserably lacking in almost majority of our universities. State universities, with a few notable exceptions, have been descending downward in their academic performance at a rate somewhat greater than their centrally funded counterparts. The fall in scholarly output is most evident in universities which were once India's pride. Output today is measured in terms of number of degrees awarded; research output is hardly demanded by university administrators.

C.V. Raman was perceptive when he said, at Mysore in 1929: 'In thus drawings attention to the relationship between national welfare and the work done in the Universities, I would wish to emphasize the danger of allowing such work to degenerate into a deadly routine of formal teaching and formal examination. The tendency of all formal schemes of education is to regard the human mind as a kind of soft metal to be squeezed into shape by intense pressure into the hard steel moulds of syllabuses and examinations. This kind of mechanization of education is, I believe, most deadly in its effects, and is responsible for not a little of the intellectual sterility of the finished products of our Universities... The ideal of University work is the provision of opportunities for special abilities, of teacher as well as students, to express themselves'. Raman was untiring in his efforts to propagate the idea that Universities must be centres of research. In his Mysore address he was eloquent '... This is the real value of research as an instrument of education in itself'. A few years later at Banaras, Raman was more vigorous when he says: 'You must be one of the seekers, or else you will get left behind... You cannot tell the depth of the river or learn to swim in it by standing on the bank and watching it flow by, but must pluck up courage and plunge into it. So long as our teachers and our students are not inspired in their daily work by such ideals, so long as it is not research but administration that dominates the outlook of

our Universities, we can hope for no great advance either in the intellectual output of India or the quality of the work done in our centers of learning'. Our universities are endangered today, both from within and without. The internal threat of degeneration can be met only if there is a union of interest between administrators and academicians. The bodies of the government charged with the responsibility of managing our university system need to act quickly and decisively in rejuvenating our system of higher education. Reinventing the Indian universities is not an easy task.

One more reason may be added to the cause that is lack of teachers' education system. Though it has been strengthened a lot during the past couple of years yet it has a big lacuna and non-compliance with the need. The NCTE Regulation 2007 were modified by the NCTE and notified in 2009. The efforts made by the NCTE are indeed appreciable. Teacher Education has been struggling to strengthen its identity. Struggle does not mean degeneration of values and degeneration of institutions. It is true that after persistent struggle there is evident improvement, but, still there is no end to perfection. Every organization has noise. There are certainly issues and resolves, problems and solutions, puzzles and pathways.

Education is just like a torch that enlightens the way of human beings by not only imparting knowledge in the relevant field but also inculcating moral values, spiritual outlook, and the righteousness in character, the eternal existence and treasure of goodness that can never be stolen, goodness and purity. The main motive of education should be all round development of an individual. But, today in our so called ultra modern & highly sophisticated society, education has lost its real existence somewhere. The modern & sophisticated youth of this society is totally materialistic. This high-tech society finds little interest in the education and has no time to this degeneration. People want to get degrees and certificates with high percentage of marks but are fail to achieve the primary goal of education. Students cram things theoretically but are not interested in doing practically. The major fault in the education field is caused by corruption that has lucratively stretched itself as an epidemic in India and resultant spread idleness among youth. Undoubtedly, we are enjoying luxuries these days but have lost our confidence, right attitude, mental peace and satisfaction.

Excellence in higher education is a multi-dimensional idea. It lies in effectiveness of transmitting knowledge and skill; the genuineness, content, coverage and strength of information; availability of study materials; help in removing obstacles in learning; applicability of knowledge in solving the real life problems; productivity of knowledge in personal and social domains; convergence of content and variety of knowledge in global perspective and for every sections of people; with cost-effectiveness and administrative efficiency. Advancement of Information technology is very fast. It has made search, gathering, dissemination, storing, retrieval, transmission and reception of knowledge easier, cheaper and faster. An effective utilization of these opportunities and recent advancement of information technology can create significant improvement in quality of higher education. This may require an effective governance too. Unless governance is apt, alert, vigilant, concerned and result-oriented, infrastructural development can never give the desired output.

At present most of the institutions of higher education in India use information technology nominal. As a matter of fact, many institutions do not have even their websites. Those having the same seldom post up-to-date information. The potential of websites to these institutions are unknown. Most of institutions do not have digital libraries. They do not have necessary infrastructure for improving quality of education. There is no plan to sensitize teachers and students to use the modern methods and technologies. The process of teaching/learning continues to be conceptual and ineffective. Courses of studies continue to be outdated to the varying needs of the society. Teachers in general do not have any will or commitment either to the subject they teach or to the problems of the society that need their attention as maker of society. This is very sad. Therefore, there is a need that the institutions of higher education should organize programs to train their teachers, the office staff and the students to make them aware with the modern advancements of technologies to improve the teaching/learning process. They have to make their students aware about our culture, moral values, social norms, and should provide them man-making education instead of education for education sake. This will not only improve the quality of education but will build nation's pride.

References –

1. P. Balaram, EDITORIAL, CURRENT SCIENCE, VOL. 88, NO. 4, 25 FEBRUARY 2005.
2. TEACHER EDUCATION SCENARIO IN INDIA: CURRENT PROBLEMS & CONCERNS D.R. Goel and Chhaya Goel.
3. Journal of Education and Practice www.iiste.org ISSN 2222-1735 (Paper) ISSN 2222-288X (Online) Vol 2, No 6, 2011 78 Challenges of Higher Education in 21st Century Bala Harish (Corresponding author) School of English, Bhai Gurdas Institute of Engg. & Tech.
4. Possibilities of Quality Enhancement in Higher Education by Intensive Use of Information Technology SK Mishra Dept. of Economics North-Eastern Hill University Shillong (India) – 793022).

