An Analysis Of The Challenges Faced By The Academic Leaders To Promote Cross Border Higher Education In India

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Abstract
The present paper is an attempt to focus upon the challenges faced by the academic leaders and the importance of academic leadership in bringing about the required changes in the arena of India’s higher education as the imperative of its process of globalization that initiated since early 1990’s, with special reference to the cross border higher education in India.

Keywords: Higher Education, Academic Leader, Cross Border Higher Education, Autonomy

Introduction
With the opening up of Indian economy in early 1990’s by the adoption of liberalized policy to attract global players in industry and service sectors, since then new products and services are being introduced continuously with high quality features and based on customers’ specification and demand. The secret behind to the success of this globally acknowledged of customer centric industries and service units are a group of highly educated, skilled, motivated and industry equipped and trained human resources. The knowledge and technical skills of this work force require to be updated constantly. The graduates coming out of our higher education institution must be capable of meeting the challenges of the modern industry. They must have a deep sense of quality, work ethics, motivation, leadership skills and also to be creative and innovative.

Globalization and technological advancements are delivering and increasing access to the world and subsequently higher education system of the nation needs to reflect this global outlook. The matter of the fact is that the world is moving rapidly in technological advancement and subsequently there is a need of much expansion and reforms in teaching methodology, curriculum and educational research. Indian higher education system needs to introspect where it stands and how it will bring the requirements the world is demanding. Education as a service industry is a part of the globalization process under the umbrella of General Agreement on Trade in Services [GATS]. It is needless to mention here that Indian education system has mostly focused on raising the aptitude of the students in the concerned subject but unfortunately there is lack of creativity or innovation. Not only that, Globalization is now being observed as the most important contextual factor for shaping up of the internationalization of higher education. Cross-border education has been evident since the colonization and more specifically from the 1990s, when India opened up its economy. Although, it is needed to be mentioned here that the Government of India has not made any offers in education services in the GATS 2000 round.

According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), the number of internationally mobile students globally has increased to 4.0 million in 2012 with a 135 percentage increment from 1.7 million in 1995 and India became the second largest contributor since 2005. In 2012, over 189 thousand Indian students were enrolled in higher education institutions abroad. This population accounts for 4.7% of the total internationally mobile students worldwide and is the second largest source of foreign students after China (17.3%). India is gradually emerging as a preferred destination for foreign students, particularly from the South Asian region. The growth in the number of foreign students in India has been impressive with the total number of foreign students enrolled in year 2012 in Indian higher education system is 31,632. India received 5625 more students, an increase of almost 20.43% from 2011; these foreign students come from 153 different countries from all across the globe. Highest share of students come from the neighboring countries, of which Nepal is 17%, followed by Bhutan and Iran (7%), Malaysia and Afghanistan (5%)\(^{(10)}\). India is slowly but gradually expanding not only in terms of the number of students but also the number countries from which these students come\(^{(10)}\). This rapid mobility of students across the world for quality education has given several new challenges to the Indian higher education academia such as autonomy of the academia, accreditation, quality of teaching and learning and uneven growth and access to opportunity. There is no denying the fact, to respond to such challenges there is an urgent need of a cadet of academic leaders who will translate the vision into reality.

Thus the present paper is an attempt to focus upon the role and importance of leadership in bringing about the required changes in the arena of India’s higher education as the imperative of its process of globalization that initiated since early 1990’s.

2. Challenges faced by the Academic Leaders
Historically India had an ancient heritage of internationally acclaimed system of higher education. In ancient
times, there was a strong system of education in India, popularly known as ‘Gurukul’ system where, scholars and the sages orally imparting education by staying at Guru’s or teachers residence. There were famous institutions like Nalanda and Vikramashila in East, Takshashila in North, Kanchi in South and few others in rest of India are the true symbols of educational and cultural achievements of ancient India. In the year 1835, few colleges were established by the British regime under the guidance of Lord Macaulay. In this connection it may be mentioned here that, in the year of Sepoy mutiny, i.e. in the year 1857, the modern higher education system in India was established by setting the first three universities in the colonial India in Madras, Bombay and Calcutta (Sengupta & Haldar, 2014). The Higher Education sector of India has seen a remarkable escalation in the number of Universities/University level Institutions & Colleges since its Independence. India has significant advantages in building a large, high quality higher education system. It has a large higher education sector – the third largest in the world in student numbers after China and the United States (Arunachalam, 2010).

2.1. Expansion and disparities
The number of Universities in India has increased many folds from 20 universities in 1950 to 677 universities and University level institutions in 2014. There are 45 Central Universities of which 40 are under the purview of Ministry of Human Resource Development, 318 State Universities, 185 State Private universities, 129 Deemed to be Universities, 51 Institutions of National Importance (established under Acts of Parliament) under MHRD (IITs - 16, NITs – 30 and IISERs – 5) and four Institutions (established under various State legislations). The growth in the number of colleges has also registered manifold increase of 74 times with just 500 in 1950 growing to 37,204, as on 31st March, 2013.

Table-1: Number of Universities/University level institutions and Colleges as on 31-3-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Type of Institutions</th>
<th>Number of Institutions (As on 31.03.2014)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Central Universities</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>State Universities</td>
<td>313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>State Private Universities</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Institutions established through State legislation</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Institutions Deemed to be Universities</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Colleges</strong></td>
<td>Provisonal</td>
<td>39,671*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UGC Annual Report 2013-14

To expand the higher education sector in all its modes of delivery to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education to 15% by 2011- 12 and to 21% by XII Plan and 30% by the year 2020. But despite this, our institutional capacity is still low as against the National Knowledge Commission recommendation of 1,500 Universities during the 11th five year plan as the existing capacity to absorb the growing numbers coming out of the high school system into the higher education system is inadequate and cause substantial disparity between demand and supply frontiers. The former HRM Minister, Sri Kapil Sibal said “we will need 800 new universities and 40,000 new colleges to meet the aim of 30% GER by 2020…”

Chart-1: Yearwise growth of student enrolment: Universities and Colleges 1984-85 till 2013-14
One of the major challenges that confront the leaders of higher learning in India is in the disparities in access to higher education, especially in terms of economic class, gender, caste and ethnic and religious belonging to the different states of the country. In 2008, as against an all-India enrolment rate of 17 per cent, the break-up for these categories was 47% for higher castes, 11% for Scheduled Castes (SC), 7% for Scheduled Tribes (ST) and 28% for Other Backward Classes (OBC). “In a comparison of disparities between the poor and the affluent and in terms of income levels, it was 6 per cent for the bottom 20 per cent of society as against 37 per cent for the top 20 per cent. The expansion of the private, self-financing education sector, with its aim of commercial intent, has been another reason for the propagation of disparities.”

2.2 Uneven growth and access to opportunity

While India has made noteworthy development in ensuring access to primary education, the percentage of students who strive for higher education is considerably less. The Eleventh five year plan have recognized and responded to the rising demand for higher education. The ever increased enrolment during the Eleventh five year plan has enabled Indian higher education to cross the threshold of 15 per cent Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER). Despite this massive growth, the unmet demand for access to higher education remains significant, demonstrating the urgent requirement of further expansion.

2.3 The low quality of teaching and learning

Competence, skills, aptitude of teachers and their motivation is crucial to improve and ensure the quality of education in the county. Therefore, there is a need to take a more comprehensive view by the government for building a strong system which will focus upon teacher capacity, improving academic leadership/ management and to strengthen the academic support system. It is required to ‘enhance the status of teaching as a profession and improving teachers’ motivation to teach well and their accountability for ensuring learning outcomes”.

According to Philip Hallinger and Ronald Heck (1998), academic leaders “exercise a measurable, though indirect, effect on the success of the academia” and Leadership appears to have a predominant impact on the quality of teaching and governance (Schiff, 2002).

2.4 Autonomy of Higher Education

The Education Commission (1964-66) pointed out that the implementation of academic freedom by teachers is a prerequisite for the growth and expansion of the intellectual climate of our country. Unless such a climate prevails, it is very difficult if not impossible to achieve excellence in our higher education system. Recognizing the importance of the above, in the year 2004 under the Chairmanship of Shri Kanti Biswas a Committee of the CABE on the subject of “Autonomy of Higher Education Institutions” was formed to advocate measures for enhancing the autonomy of higher education institutions in India, especially for those institutions with potential for...
excellence and also to institutionalize regulatory provisions for promoting and encouraging autonomy and accountability of academia.

The core idea of autonomy as mentioned in the CABE report is a structural solution intended mainly to provide an enabling environment to improve and strengthen the teaching and learning process with decentralized management culture. The report clearly narrated that the key to high quality education is the attitudes of students towards learning, the competence and also the commitment of faculty members towards educational processes, without which autonomy alone cannot ensure quality education. The autonomy of academia will deliver better framework for fostering delegation of responsibility with accountability. There is no denying the fact, for implementation of autonomy, visionary leaderships is essential, and there lies the need of academic leaders who can translate the vision into reality.

Conclusion

Indian Higher Education System in the last few years has witnessed a positive academic mobility among students from all regions of the world. Despite the rapid expansion of Indian Higher Education that has occurred, it is quite evident that the system is under immense stress to offer a sufficient volume of skilled human resource equipped with the required knowledge and technical skills to cater to the demands of the global economy. It is essential for the academia to recognize and prepare themselves to attract talented students from abroad who will bring financial contribution to the country along with their socio-cultural values which will eventually help to create harmony between India and other countries. The level of attractiveness to mobile students depends largely on the quality of education that universities provide. Speaking at the 90th Annual Convocation of the Benaras Hindu University (BHU), the then Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh stated that “What is even more serious is that two-thirds of India’s universities are providing sub-standard education while 90 per cent colleges are below average”. A strategy for higher education internationalization is needed to be developed which would include faculty and student exchange programmes, institutional collaborations for teaching and research, exposure to diverse teaching–learning models. The 11th five year plan lays the “long-term goal is to set India as a nation in which all those who aspire good quality higher education can access it, irrespective of their paying capacity”. The quality of education and the success of an academia depend largely on the cooperation and interaction between these relationships at the helm (Yarger & Lee, 1994, p. 229). The ability to establish trusting and collaborative relationships has been identified as one of the predominant characteristic of academic leaders and that indeed becomes the primary means of exerting influence to govern the academia. Autonomy of an academia requires an effective leadership to successfully implement governance by encouraging cooperation. Implementation autonomy and accountability may be recognized as the key for the success of an academia and effective leadership in higher education institutions is the essence for such implementation.

Reference:


Endnotes:


[ii] GOI, Status of international students in India for higher education, 2014.


[vi] Former HRD Minister, Sri Kapil Sibal, while addressing a higher education summit organized by Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).

[v] Sukhadeo Thorat, Professor Emeritus, Jawaharlal Nehru University, and former Chairman, UGC.

(http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/a-blueprint-for-higher-education/article7522994.ece accessed on 05-09-2015)

