

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN GLOBALIZATION

***Dr. V. Suresh and *Dr. K. Ramesh**

*Department of Public Administration, Valluvar College of Science & Management, Tamilnad, India

*Department of Politics and International Studies, Pondicherry University, Puducherry, India

Abstract

Education exercises a decisive influence on social and economic development. It not only enhances the productive capacity the individual but also plays a crucial role in ensuring a fair and equitable distribution of wealth generated in the country. By offering opportunities for vertical and horizontal mobility, it enables individual to attain the optimum development of his or her personality. It also helps in producing an enlightened citizenry, so vital for the success of democratic polity that this country has adopted for her. The new economic policy launched in early nineties is based on a regime of liberalization, decontrol, decentralization and foreign equity participation. It has led to serious thinking almost the role of government in firming and administration of education as well as higher education. The key discussion of this paper is that higher education in India is being de facto privatized on a massive scale. But this privatization is not a result of changing ideological commitments of the key actors; the state, the judiciary or India's propertied classes. Rather, this privatization has resulted from a breakdown of the state system. As a result, it is a form of privatization has whose ideological and institutional underpinnings remain very weak. Instead of being part of comprehensive program of education reform, much of the private initiative remains hostage to the discretionary actions of the state.

Keywords: Growth, Development, Marketization, Higher Education, Globalization

Corresponding Email: ramesh.svac@gmail.com

Introduction

The Internationalization of higher education is one of the ways in which a country responds to the demands of globalization. Globalization is the cause and internationalization is the effect in response. Globalization is primarily a perceived set of changes that include the shaping of new, global forms in culture, the media and technologies of communication that nations have to accept and follow in order to be able to embrace global competition and respond positively.

As it is known, globalization, no doubt, promises dramatic and rewarding change to the higher education systems of the developed countries whereas, for the developing and the underdeveloped countries where the system is facing the scarcity of resources, it threatens the stability needed to build the well performing system. The thrust of globalization is expected to push Higher Education to face far-reaching challenges and opportunities. This has created moves to reform higher education in order to produce the necessary technocrats. As a result, the education system remains suspended between over regulation by the state on the one hand, and a discretionary privatization that is unable to mobilize private capital in productive ways. The result is a sub-optimal structuring of higher education.

At the higher education stage, the disparities in enrolment among the rural and urban areas have continued to exist. The predominantly liberal character of higher education has been mainly responsible for producing unemployed and often unemployable youth. The quality of education in university institutions barring a few honorable exceptions continues to be one of the weakest spots in higher education. The continuing resource crisis facing the University system has the wanted progress of needed reforms in the University sector. While it is difficult to under-value the important role that private bodies have played in furthering the courses of education in India, the recent incursions of private enterprise in higher education, particularly in the field of professional education, are far from reassuring.

In fact, we are a mute witnesses to the mushrooming of privately run professional institutions in the form of Frankenstein's capitation fee charging colleges, in which the admission are determined mainly on the basis of the paying capacity of students. These colleges, barring exceptions, have made serious inroads into citadel of meritocracy, which should be the hallmark of the educational system of the country. It has also been genuinely felt that privatization of higher education would lead to the neglect of subject areas like Languages

and Literature, Musicology and Archeology and Fine Arts, etc. which have not much commercial value. Further, there is likely to be considerable less emphasis on research, particularly, in basic sciences because it has no immediate economic quid-pro-quo.

Another strategy that has been suggested is the marketization of higher education which is considered to be better than complete privatization. This involves allowing market forces to determine the need for setting up of institutions, the hiring of Faculty, the choice of courses of study, the methods of teaching, etc. The introduction of marketization is based on three main propositions:

1. That efficiency is increased when government buys academic services from producers or subsidies students to buy them rather than supplying them directly or indirectly through subsidy;
2. That as enrolments rise, the private sector must relieve government of some of its cost burden, if acceptable quality of education is to be maintained;
3. That the benefits of higher education may accrue to private individuals, thereby the criteria of both efficiency and equity are served if students or their families make some contribution towards the cost of obtaining the benefits.

While one would agree that the education system should have relevance to social needs and that it should equip the students for entry into job market, it would be difficult to leave the system to the play of market forces. Education is a basic human investment and it is expected to produce various kinds of educated persons and professionals such as, Economists, Archaeologists, Historians, men of literature and Artists, who have mastered in fine arts, music etc..

For quite a few, education is mere consumption good in that they want to enjoy literature, music etc. for their own sake. Weighing everything in the scale of marketability would result in the weakening of the creative potentialities of individuals and retard their natural development. It is also not certain whether the system will become more efficient if the government transforms itself into a facilitator for making education available to an individual rather than organizing the system under its own management. Its efficiency is measured strictly in terms of input-output ratios, then perhaps, the system may appear to be more efficient under market economy.

The idea of cost sharing by the beneficiaries is, however, universally accepted. The large in-built subsidy that is indiscriminately given to students regardless of their capacity to pay, needs to be curtailed and the system of adequate cost recovery should be introduced so that the government is to a certain extent, relieved of the financial burden that it has to bear. There can be no single solution to the present *impasse* in the system of higher education. There has to be a multi- dimensional approach to resolve the present crisis.

Role of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO)

It has been emphasized that complete privatization of higher education is a remedy worse than the disease. It will open up a Pandora's Box of problems and may result in the system of higher education getting out of hand. Higher education is too serious a business to be left to the whims and caprices of private investment agencies. While we reject complete privatization of higher education we feel that in a country of India's dimension, the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) have an important role to play in the financing and administration of higher education. It has been experienced that while the private bodies are keen to establish educational private institutions, they are reluctant to provide adequate finances for their maintenance and development. It is, therefore essential that they should be encouraged to participate in the administration and regular funding of institutions. The government and the academic bodies should, however, keep a watchful eye on the development of higher education under the auspices of private bodies.

The Universities should also give considerable emphasis to the generation of internal resources. In this connection, a number of suggestions have been made by the various committees appointed by the UGC and AICTE. Without repeating those recommendations, it is considered necessary to point out that there is need to argument cost recoveries from the students though tuition fee and other charges. It would also be useful to introduce a comprehensive scheme of loan assistance so as to eventually develop a self- generating and self- sustaining fund. There is also need for the Universities to have more than a nodding acquaintance with the industrial and commercial bosses so that they may contribute to University finances in return for some professional consultancy/research support to be made available by the Universities.

Regulating Inflows

No university system in the world can sustain itself if there is an unrestricted inflow of students aspiring to enter its portals. For various socio-economic reasons, there has been an unabated rush of students to acquire University degrees. Quite a few of these aspirants have little adjudged potentiality to benefit from higher education. The result is that a large majority of them fail to make the grade. In creating a good University system, it would be necessary to check this mad rush of students to the University. Some sort of regulatory mechanism, particularly in the case of students taking up humanities and Social Science courses will have to be adopted. It is of almost importance that University curricula be made responsive to the needs of the society and also be in conformity with the aptitudes and abilities of students. The experience in this direction so far has not been very encouraging.

Accountability

It would also be necessary that the Universities should be accountable to the public, which are responsible for spending their hard earned money on their maintenance and development. The accountability of the Universities would extend equally to their financial, as well as, academic performance. The University system is a part of the larger social configuration, whose needs should be looked after with utmost urgency. If the universities fail to perform their duty to the society with a fair degree of competence and efficiency, it would be unrealistic for them to take shelter under the plea of autonomy. Autonomy and accountability are two sides to the same coin and one cannot exist without the other.

Conclusion

Education has to play a vital role in developing a sustainable learning society. For this purpose, it would be necessary to have an achievable targets of development of various stages of education and to take concrete steps to achieve them within a well-defined time-frame. The government cannot and should not abdicate its responsibility of prodding adequate resources for institutions of higher education. Learning the filed solely to the private sector would lead to distortion in the development of higher education, with disastrous consequences for the country.

The private bodies should, however be encouraged to contribute to higher education in terms of financial and managerial input. The Universities will have to be responsive to the changing needs of the society of which they are a part. They should introduce courses, which enable

the students to enter the worlds of work rather than be a burden on the society. There is need for regulating the admissions to Universities. The present policy of an unrestricted inflow of all kinds of students to Universities will have to be curbed. There will also be need for resisting the instinct of institutional proliferation, particularly on the part of politicians. While autonomy for University is nonnegotiable, the Universities have also to be accountable to the community at large, which provides the much needed finances for their maintenance and development. This autonomy is not the close preserve of the Universities only but should percolate down to the Colleges also, which account for about 86 percent of enrolment at the higher education stage.

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