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Globalization and Higher Education: A Critical Analysis

* Dr. J D Singh, Associate Professor
G V (PG) College of Education (CTE) Sangaria-335063, Raj.
Email: drjdsingh@gmail.com: 91 9414577875 (M)

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Abstract

Education in India is seen as one of the ways to upward social mobility. The higher education system in India has grown in a remarkable way after independence, to become one of the largest systems of its kind in the world. At present, we are living in an increasingly diverse, globalized, and complex, media-saturated society. The change in educational practices and tools over the last 15 years has been truly remarkable. Despite of that, the system has many issues of concern at present, like financing and management, inadequate infrastructure, poor access and equity, inadequate technology and research, no serious safeguarding of national academic standards, ethical relevance and improvement of quality of higher education together with the assessment of institutions and their accreditation. Under-investment in libraries, information technology, laboratories, and ill equipped classrooms make it very difficult to provide top-quality instruction. These issues are important for the country, as it is now engaged in the use of higher education as a powerful tool to build knowledge based information society in the 21st Century. Research in the field of the human social sciences plays a fundamental role in understanding and managing the many ways in which society is currently changing. Knowledge societies are commonly characterized with the ability to create, share upon the general wellbeing of the people as well as making it possible for them to prosper. It becomes very clear that the modern day classroom needs are very different from the conventional classroom needs. The increasing extent of services in the pace of technological changes, the advanced level of information and knowledge, as well as the size of the industrial and social re-organizations, all give good arguments in favor of the knowledge based society. This paper describes the shortcomings of the entire process of converting youth into educated and well-groomed citizens and the importance of higher education for creating the knowledge and wisdom based society for making India a powerful country.

Introduction

India's higher education system is the world's third largest, next to China and the United States in terms of students. We need higher educated people who are skilled and who can drive our economy forward. Global perspective means sharing and cooperation with others

allowing them to use whatever resources are available to attain individual as well as common goals. The purpose of globalization and global education is to develop a 'global perspective' and sensitize the youth for understanding the multicultural world and maintaining peace and harmony. The ability of a nation to use and create knowledge capital determines its capacity to empower and enable its citizens by increasing human capabilities. In the words of our Prime Minister, "The time has come to create a second wave of institution building and of excellence in the field of education, research and capability building so that we are better prepared for the 21st century." A successful advanced society is founded on a strong scientific base that has the ability to convert scientific research and knowledge into products and services. With this broad task in mind, the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) was constituted on 13th June 2005 with a time-frame of three years. One of its three objectives was to make India a knowledge-based society. Easy access to knowledge, creation and preservation of knowledge systems, dissemination of knowledge and better knowledge services are core concerns of the commission. A number of studies have been done in the area of knowledge societies. UNESCO (2005) report describes a knowledge society as one which is nurtured by its diversity and its capacities. This is because, every society in one way or the other has its own knowledge assets and it is only necessary to work towards connecting these assets which are already in the society. This could be blended with the new methods of developments, spread of knowledge and acquisition. Another important feature proposed by UNDP is that knowledge societies must foster knowledge sharing. This is due to the recognition given to knowledge as public incentives and must be made available to every individual of the society.

Every day we combine, generate, protect, create, transfer, codify and save knowledge. Knowledge is the most powerful engine of production. This time it is knowledge that will from now on forward function as the bases of society and the economy. It means that buying of wealth and power is no longer linked to land possession, agricultural production, or industrial output. Increasingly more manual labor is now being performed by machines and robots. Power and wealth has become linked to the possession and production of data, information, scientific discovery and knowledge. The old saying: "Knowledge is Power", hasn't been more valid today. When we buy one kilogram of steel, 90% of it is material, while if we buy a copy of Windows10 from Microsoft, more than 90% of it is knowledge. Knowledge society is a society where creating, sharing and using knowledge are key factors in the prosperity and well-being of its people. Better society requires best knowledge management practices and use of latest tools and technologies. The globalized markets, the

technical and technological revolutions are transforming the modern economy into a “knowledge based society” in which new ways of organizing the work are governing the world, demanding a perpetual build-up of competences, solid knowledge and increasing responsibilities. The countries, companies or individuals offering more knowledge, would be the most influential in the society in future.

Thus, knowledge has become a vital commodity to countries, businesses and individuals in the 21st century, which is age of the knowledge based society. Knowledge based society is a society whose processes and practices are based on the production, distribution, and use of knowledge. The National Knowledge Commission's (NKC) recommendations have been crafted to achieve the objective of tapping into India's enormous reservoir of knowledge, to mobilize national talent and create an empowered generation with access to tremendous possibilities. Robust research findings suggest that knowledge as a factor of production explains a substantial proportion of economic growth internationally.

In the knowledge based society, technology, especially the informational one, continues to have an important role even if the paradigm is changing in favour of awareness and consciousness, marking the economy and society transition to a higher level of evolution.

Characteristics of a Knowledge based Society

In a new knowledge-based society, all citizens must have access to an inexpensive, world-class communications infrastructure and a wide range of services. Every citizen must be equipped with the skills needed to live. Knowledge Societies and their economies have a range of characteristics. The characteristics of a knowledge society are followings:

- Advanced high-speed broadband – domestic and enterprise;
- High level of electronic transactions in public, private and government services;
- World ranking Universities with high level of international connectivity;
- Technology industry producing innovative products and services for export;
- Well defined national ICT research programmes which focus on documented strategic national needs;
- Strength in ICT, Biotechnology and Pharmaceuticals with high added-value indigenous manufacturing sectors;
- High level of international business connectivity with strong export revenues from products and internationally traded services;
- Have a higher average standard of education in comparison to other societies and a growing proportion of its labour force are employed as knowledge workers i.e.

researchers, scientists, information specialists, knowledge managers and related workers;

- Increased organized knowledge in the form of digitized expertise, stored in data banks, expert systems, organizational plans, and other media; and
- A distinct epistemic culture of knowledge production and knowledge utilization.

Major Challenges in making Knowledge Society in Global Perspective

As India strives to compete in a globalized economy in areas that require highly trained professionals. So far, India's large, educated population base and its reservoir of at least moderately well-trained university graduates have aided the country in moving ahead, but the competition is fierce; from China in particular. When a society becomes knowledge-based, it faces challenges on a variety of levels. How and why knowledge is produced and shared, where it is produced, how knowledge spillovers affect new knowledge creation and parameters of use, changes in strategic decision making in knowledge-based environments and how public policy can and should adapt all are crucial issues. Research in the field of the human social sciences plays a fundamental role in understanding and managing many ways in which society is currently changing. Yet there is a great need for further development of educational research strategies and capacities, to address and make best use of the inherent complexity of research based knowledge. It would be possible to justify increased investment in relevant and high-quality research. The challenges are due to weak institutions and limited awareness. The challenges for society are formidable and will require substantial information, knowledge, wisdom, and above all collaboration between the scientific community, policy makers and the public.

Role of Higher Education in Helping India a Knowledge Based Society

Education has played and is still playing an important role in forming and training individuals. In these days, society however, enforces some specific traits of the whole educational process. Those traits are anchored into the reality of the present. Education, as an essential activity in the development of society, has seen major transformations from which the new methods and models of the modern educational systems have evolved. The relationship between the individual and society becomes more harmonious as well as complex via education as individuals gain the capability to make their contribution that would balance the benefits of living among other individuals. Students, universities, colleges and Indian young community are really the knowledge seekers. They want to acquire new knowledge, work with innovations in each and every field. In this situation,

globalization of higher education can raise a new ray of hope in developing quality of education.

On a global level, education is regarded as a phenomenon, one of those activities that can favor communication through its very specific functions, as well as establishing close communication links between various countries and across various cultures. The revolutions in India, green and white, are examples that demonstrate the benefits of the application of technology to boost up grain and milk production. A knowledge based society implies a large demand of overly-qualified workforce, forcing the population to learn how to operate with information and knowledge. Therefore, the development of the knowledge based society is dependent on the creation of knowledge, on its spreading via education and tuition and on its dissemination via communication and on its involvement in technological innovations. The link between the knowledge-based society and society itself is made by combining four interlaced elements: the build-up of knowledge, its transmission via education and training, its dissemination as information via media and its utilization in technological innovation. Reforming education policies and regulations, particularly those designed to increase supply and quality, should be an urgent priority.

The 21st century knowledge based society tends to expand to a global proportion. Acknowledging the rapid moral depreciation of knowledge and abilities, the modern society prepares to adopt a new approach to education in order for it to function as a life-long institution of learning. The current globalisation of higher education creates both challenges and opportunities. The Future Internet, which will see the full integration of infrastructure and user services, is now a key driver of the Smart Economy. At the beginning of the 21st century, society has passed over the informational stage and is characterized by knowledge, which, in its turn, offers access to a plurality of technical, technological, innovative and informational elements, of quantitative and qualitative nature of knowledge. In such a situation technological and informational progress is an integral part of it. The World Bank also places emphasis on the GDP of a country as one of the criteria for measuring a knowledge society in the knowledge assessment methodology. In order to achieve this high growth, growth auxiliary factors need to be promoted in the country.

Knowledge has always been an essential and distinguishing characteristic of human society, for human beings are unique among all species in their extended capacity to formulate, systematize, preserve and consciously transmit organized bodies of knowledge from one individual, community, generation and location to another. There should be regular monitoring and evaluation of teaching and cutting-edge research in the universities and

other institutions of higher education. The need of the hour is to create a conducive environment and provide incentives to attract and retain high quality faculty, meritorious students, and high level of teaching- learning environment. Indian higher education institutions and regulators should restore coherence, transparency and confidence in the higher education system both at home and abroad. The role of higher education for making the knowledge-based society in global perspective follows-

- To improve working conditions and ensure dignity of worker.
- Transferring knowledge through quality education and professional training.
- Creating values and enhancing efficiency through the above global sharing and mutual support to serving local needs and growth.
- Continuous efforts to match the teaching styles and learning styles of the students.
- Disseminating the knowledge by publishing top class study material.
- Utilizing knowledge in the society's best interest, especially through innovations.
- Promoting international understanding, collaboration, harmony, and acceptance to cultural diversity across countries and regions.
- Building the motivation to learn and adapt to the perpetual learning process in all.
- Global sharing of knowledge, skills, and intellectual assets that are necessary to multiple developments at different levels.
- Producing new knowledge through research activity and foster increased collaboration among the R&D institutes, Universities and private sector enterprises and implementing various innovation programs.
- Create new interface structures to forge partnerships between academia and industry.
- Reducing the transaction cost and improving the reach and quality of public services.
- Adopt more active approach towards increasing the visibility of the library and its services to the society through various social marketing strategies.
- Providing the information and know-how, both as a substance and as a process is a priority generated by the new technologies.
- Public libraries offer a public space where, people from all strata of society come to read, to learn, to research and to entertain themselves. To be attractive, libraries need to be modern, computerized, well maintained, and conveniently located. Facilities available on the premises should include comfortable sitting areas, web-browsing cafeterias and multimedia centers etc.

In order to integrate into the world economy, people must not only acquire the knowledge and tools of traditional knowledge, but above all, they must be capable of acquiring new skills in the context of globalization.

Conclusion

On account of rapid changes in technology, continuous updating of knowledge is necessary for teachers. Knowledge can be considered as the only resource, which can be reproduced infinitely. Higher education can play an instrumental role in the achievement of these outcomes through the creation of knowledge networks, research and innovation centers, corporate-backed institutions, and support for faculty development. Today's policy makers must extend our country's existing strengths through careful investments in education, helping institutional quality, and use of relevant technology. They must create enterprises that are knowledgeable enough to recognize new competitive opportunities and be skillful enough to convert those opportunities into wealth. Knowledge based society opens new perspectives such as: chance to decrease the gap between developed and developing societies; more chances for individual development; respect for individuals; freedom of self-organization. In order to create a world class knowledge society, every one of us has to be a knowledge worker and for this, higher education institutions can play an important role in conservation, preservation and extension of knowledge. Therefore, the development of the knowledge based society through higher education is dependent on the creation of knowledge, on its spreading via education and on its dissemination via communication and on its involvement in technological innovation. In order to create a world class knowledge society, every one of us has to be a knowledge worker for making India a knowledge super power.

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*** Corresponding Author:**

Dr. J D Singh, Associate Professor
G V (PG) College of Education (CTE) Sangaria-335063, Rajasthan
Email: drjdsingh@gmail.com: 91 9414577875 (M)