

The Internationalization of Higher Education in India: Problems and Solutions

Dr. Saima Siddiqi*

India has been a major seat of learning for centuries and higher education has had a long history in this country. The core mission of higher education is to educate, to train, to undertake research and to provide service to the community. The Indian higher education system has witnessed a significant expansion in the recent years, especially in terms of the number of institutions and the student enrollment. According to the report on FICCI Higher Education Summit (2009), India has more than 400 universities and 20,000 colleges and out of these about 63 percent are privately managed and unaided institutions.

India has heritage of internationalization of Indian Higher Education. Higher Education flourished in ancient Indian universities like Takshashila, Nalanda, Vikramshila, Vallabhi, Kanchi, Ujjain which were globally known and used to attract international scholars. Increasing competition in higher education and the commercialization and cross border delivery of higher education have challenged the value traditionally attached to exchanges and partnerships. The international dimensions and the position of higher education in the global arena are given greater emphasis in international, national and institutional documents than ever before. In the context of globalization, the scope and demand for higher education is increasing. The world of higher education and the world in which higher education plays a significant role are changing for many reasons. Key drivers include the development of advanced communication and technological services, increased international labour mobility, greater emphasis on the market economy and trade liberalization, focus on the knowledge society, increased private investment and decreased public support for education and the growing importance of lifelong learning. In spite of having more higher education institutions than any other country in the world, very few Indian higher education institutions feature in the list of leading institutions in the world. At the same time, new paradigms in higher education involve creation of intellects, training of skilled human power at mass level without compromising with quality. Globalization

has brought the world closer which has expanded the horizons of Indian students who are expecting a world class education from Indian higher education institutions.

World over, the higher education is passing through an interesting phase. The international activities of universities dramatically expanded in volume, scope and complexity during the past two decades. These activities range from traditional abroad study programs to change in its structure and curricula, allowing students to learn about other cultures, adapting itself to clever use of information and communication technologies, to providing access to higher education in countries where local institutions cannot meet the demand. Other activities stress upon upgrading the international perspectives and skills of students to meet diametrically opposite demands of education with quality and enhancement in number of students who desire to go for higher education, enhancing foreign language programs and providing cross cultural understanding.

Internationalization is often confused with globalization (Altbach, 2005). Internationalization at the national, sectoral and institutional level is "the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post secondary education". The term globalization represents the international system that is shaping most societies today. It is a process that is super charging the interaction and integration of cultures, politics, business and intellectual elements around world. Arum and Van de Water (1992) proposed definition of internationalization as "the multiple activities, programs and services that fall within international studies, international educational exchange and technical cooperation." Soderquist (2002) defines the internationalization of a higher educational institution as "a change process from a national higher education institution to an international higher education institution leading to the inclusion of an international dimension in all aspects of its holistic management in order to enhance the quality of teaching and learning and to achieve the desired competencies".

*Department of Education, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, U.P.

Driven by technology, information and finance a full spectrum of views exist, some praising, some disparaging, as to the value of globalization. However most observers believe that the ability to harness the good from globalization and avoid the bad lies in the cultivation of knowledge (Robertson 1992; Ali 2000; Friedman 2000; Newman, Couturier and Scurry, 2005).

Globalization is impacting the institutional framework in both developing and industrial countries. Global capital has for the first time, heavily invested in knowledge industries worldwide, including higher education and advanced training.

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2005)

According to globalization is “the complex of processes whose combined effect, whether planned or not is to enhance the institutional dimension of the experience of higher education in universities and similar educational institutions”.

The result of globalization include the integration of research. Publishing in English-language journals comes to dominate over almost everything, English is used as the lingua franca for all communication, it promotes new tools and techniques in the areas like E-learning, flexible learning, the growth of communication firms and of multinational and technology publishing, distance education programs and overseas training, the growing international labor market for scholars and scientists, emergence of knowledge as driving factor results in both challenges and opportunities, use of information technology, giving productivity dimension to education and emphasis on its research and development activities.

Problems on Internationalization of Higher Education

- **Low level of staff internationalization:** It is important that teachers should be sent abroad for training in order to improve the internationalization level of universities as well as to enlarge teacher's horizon, and secondly experts on long and short term should be invited to the country.
- **Relevance:** In the context of global skill requirements, the curricula need to be restructured to come up to the world standards. A detailed syllabi of various subjects based on world standards should be circulated to the universities for adoption. Research in the

universities also needs to be focused on creating new knowledge rather than passively receiving it.

- **Responsibility for internationalization:** Another issue is who is responsible for internationalization-all major and academic units or alternatively, only a few specialist individuals and departments.
- **Diversification of funding sources:** Funding and support for higher education represent key changes and challenges for internationalization. Several trends are converging and have a major impact. The growing demands for higher education are making it difficult for governments to meet demand. At the global level private investment in education is rising more rapidly than public funding. This has resulted in several important trends including the diversification, privatization, and commercialization of higher education and its funding sources. Research universities have always been expensive but new demands for international competition raise the costs of research to levels unimaginable a decade ago. Even in the most affluent countries, maintaining high quality programs in many disciplines is challenging. It is more and more common and necessary for institutions both public and private to search for alternative sources of income. These sources include funding from social foundations and the private corporate sector, income from the commercialization of research findings, income from fee based education and from importing and exporting of education programs.
- **Slow Progress in teachers' exchanges abroad:** In the global environment, higher education is open to external forces both nationally and internationally. At the same time, the university organization and the research enterprise have become more complicated. Inviting foreign experts is an important form to introduce foreign intelligence, to learn advanced foreign science and technology as well as their advanced culture and an important way to enhance disciplinary development, to improve staff quality and their abilities in research as well as to cultivate high level talents but these experts have low academic level, there is shortage of experts with higher academic level in science

and technology. In addition the transnational character of the work also demands people with experience in and sensitivity to many cultures.

- **Dissatisfying Enrollment of Overseas Students:** An increasing number of overseas students are one of the obvious characteristics of higher education internationalization. Terrorism may affect international higher education. Tightened visa requirements in the united states and other countries, security restrictions on the subjects that can be studied, and fear of terrorism expressed by potential international students may affect cross border student flows.
- **Small scale of international exchanges of information:** The amount of international conferences is still insufficient compared with those advanced countries.
- **Poor teaching quality and relevance:** the quality and relevance of human capital and knowledge generated by higher education institutions is critical to India's social and economic development. While high income countries are raising the stakes, India is dealing with long standing problems such as underdeveloped curricula, lack of teaching materials, under qualified faculty and labor market imbalances.
- **Increasing complexity of university organization:** The increasing mobility of the work force is resulting in more temporary and permanent migration. At the same time, growing number of students are moving for academic purposes the changing academic landscape contributes to the complexity of the internal organization of institutions, making campuses and classrooms more culturally and ethically diverse.

Solutions/ Recommendations:

- More international talents training bases should be built.
- Equal importance should be attached to the inflow and outflow of quality education resources.
- While quantity is important, quality is paramount. Higher education should continue to be subsidized by the government in an adequate manner. For improving the quality in education, the role of public sector should be enhanced.
- There should be uniformity as far as possible in the standards of the courses, academic calendars and examination systems of the universities.
- The domestic and international competition should be intensified.
- With the internationalization of higher education the profit generation in education will be more obvious.
- We need to provide adequate facilities (academic and residential) to attract foreign students. We also need flexibility in choosing subject combinations for different courses and international dimension in course content.
- Vocational and continuing education must be the priority.
- Credits and certificates should be mutually authenticated.
- Transfer of higher education from affiliated colleges to university campuses to increase the number of institutions of higher learning.
- The admission strength of existing institutions and the research faculties in these institutions should also be improved.
- Deputing teachers of Indian institutions to different universities abroad on contractual basis with the built in condition of introducing and operating the Indian higher education system there, is also a likely mode of entry into the foreign market.

In recognition of the urgency to take positive actions, the International Association of Universities recommends that:

- Higher education institutions seize the initiative in the process of internationalization rather than reacting to external globalization forces, such as the market in determining their actions.
- Higher education leaders, with active support of all levels of the academic community, develop clear institutional internationalization policies and programs that are seen as integral to the life of the institution and as such enjoy adequate internal and external funding;
- This support is facilitated by the creation of a Forum on Internationalization Policy by the IAU and its Member Organizations for the exchange of ideas and experience;
- The curriculum of the university reflect the preparation of international citizens, through

facilitating language competence; and understanding of global, international, and regional issues; preparation of experts in areas needed for such fields as information technology and science, peace and conflict resolution, and sustainable development, as well as the special curricular needs of international students;

- North-South cooperation in higher education, focusing as it does on human resource development, be recognized as a major instrument of the fight against inequality among nations, people adequate support and funding by national development agencies, intergovernmental organizations, and private foundations;
- The highly successful and valuable academic mobility programs developed within particular regions (Europe, Asia and North America) continue to serve as catalysts and models to expand such flows more widely to ever-growing numbers of individuals and institutions on the global level. Efforts should be made to promote the growth of academic mobility programs in the other regions of the world (Africa, Middle East, Latin America) as well as expanding inter-regional programs of inter-university cooperation;
- Institutions of higher education take pro-active measures to ensure the quality of the internationalization process by making use of existing quality review expertise developed by various organizations and that IAU make such projects known among its membership and contribute to the development of a roster of experts available to take part on peer review teams;
- The expansion of education export development be conducted within internationally ethical codes of good practice and be accompanied by research to evaluate its educational and economic impact and to sustain quality control;
- The expertise and experience of retired faculty members and scholars be mobilized and shared across the North-South divide in *Academics without Borders* volunteer programmed to be facilitated by IAU and UNESCO;
- UNESCO, national governments, and educational institutions each demonstrate their

commitment to international cooperation in higher education by implementing within their respective purview, policies that remove obstacles to mobility, such as stringent visa requirements, restrictive recognition practices, and other regulations which impede the flow of students and academics; and

- All internationalization programmers be founded on the principle of partnership among equals and promote intercultural competence and a culture of peace among global citizens

Conclusion

Internationalization, an inevitable and irreversible process, has significantly affected different aspects, and has posed both challenges and opportunities for the country's higher education system. Higher education today is a complex, demanding and competitive reality, in depth study of each university must be undertaken by some guidelines and the restructuring be done to suit the present day requirements. In efforts to optimize good performance in serving society in this age of globalization, university administrators and leaders need to recognize key changes and develop good strategies to manage changes. A university in the new millennium will only succeed if it is able to manage major changes effectively.

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