

HIGHER EDUCATION AT CROSS ROADS - NURSING AND PARAMEDICAL EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT:

Education especially Higher Education builds capacity in our people. It enables people not merely to subsist, but also provides the basis for a high quality of life. It is an important underpinning of the Millennium Development Goals. The vision of the Government in the realm of Higher Education is to make institutions of higher education emerge as centres of innovation, excellence and development. The major focus is on Quality. Ensuring "access" to higher is to ensure that the doors of higher education remain open to all. One of the most significant pathways to keeping these doors open is through effective articulation. Strong "articulation" between systems, campuses, and the workplace will ensure that our students are graduating with the skills necessary to thrive in the workplace. There is a Big Gap between theory and practice. Educational theory and practice of teaching as something that is complex and ambiguous rather than clear and distinct. All states need to adopt a transformative and innovative approach across all levers of higher education: from curricula and pedagogy to the use of technology to partnerships, governance and funding, to become globally relevant and competitive to achieve the vision for India "Higher Education in India: Vision 2030".

Key Words: Education, crossroad, reform of higher education

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Introduction: Education especially Higher Education builds capacity in our people. It enables people not merely to subsist, but also provides the basis for a high quality of life. It is an important underpinning of the Millennium Development Goals. The vision of the Government in the realm of Higher Education is to make institutions of higher education emerge as centres of innovation, excellence and development. The major focus is on Quality. The mission is to provide world class quality education, while opening the portals of higher education to students from rural and backward areas and marginalised families. The aim is to develop, recognise and enhance talent and skills in our youth, to equip and enable them to meet the emerging challenges and demands of the century. The emphasis is also on inclusion in higher education.

MISSION

- Provide greater opportunities of access to Higher Education with equity to all the eligible persons and in particular to the vulnerable sections.

ARTICLES

- Expand access by supporting existing institutions, establishing new institutions, supporting State Governments and Non-Government Organisations/ civil society to supplement public efforts aimed at removing regional or other imbalances that exist at present.
- Initiate policies and programmes for strengthening research and innovations and encourage institutions - public or private to engage in stretching the frontiers of knowledge.
- Promote the quality of Higher Education by investing in infrastructure and faculty, promoting academic reforms, improving governance and institutional restructuring.

BASIC NEED OF EDUCATION: Education Requires —

Access, Equality, Justice,
Articulation, Employability, Inclusiveness
Affordability,
Quality and
Create a Knowledge Society/ Economy

Ensuring “access” to higher education is to ensure that the doors of higher education remain open to all. One of the most significant pathways to keeping these doors open is through effective articulation. Strong “articulation” between systems, campuses, and the workplace will ensure that our students are graduating with the skills necessary to thrive in the workplace. The “affordability” component of higher education is fundamentally important to both “access” and “articulation.” Simply put, students need to be able to afford going to school. Students need access to financial aid, work-study opportunities and other important resources to help ease the burden of paying for an education that continues to increase in price. Expanding these opportunities not only makes it easier for students to attend class, but also ensures they will be able to fully complete their degree programmes. And when higher education fees do increase, it is our duty to make them as predictable as possible and well known to the public in advance of any increase taking effect. Of course, good access, articulation, and affordability mean nothing without quality. There is tremendous quantitative expansion of higher educational institutions since independence. However the quality is deteriorating. There are many quality gaps with respect to curriculum design and development, teaching, learning, evaluation, research consultancy, extension, infrastructure, learning resources, student support and progression, governance, management and leadership. Research and Development is the weakest link in the higher education system. An innovation in higher education system is very insignificant. The educational system of the country needs to produce knowledge workers who are competitive and innovative. Most of the current higher education institutions which focus on the attainment of a discrete body of specialist knowledge are no longer relevant. Employers now want their workforce to be flexible and innovative, demanding them to be capable of learning new skills and acquire relevant knowledge as the need arises.

CHALLENGES

- The acts and statutes that govern universities are outdated.
- The system of teachers, syllabi, learning methodologies and curriculum focusses on creating theory experts. There is no focus on practical learning and field awareness. Also, teachers are selected based only on the marks secured in masters and PhD programmes. There is no test of skills in pedagogy
- The quality of faculty and PhDs should be improved. There should be more smart classrooms and smart laboratories and the syllabi should be revised.
- University physiology is now staff centric. It should move to a more student centric philosophy.
- There should be continuous evaluation in colleges and teacher evaluation needs to be looked at more seriously. There should be a focus on skills, values and spirituality in the classes. Thrust on experiential learning will be of major help too.

Nursing and Paramedical Education- There is a Big Gap between theory and practice. Educational theory and practice of teaching are things that are complex and ambiguous rather than clear and distinct. Over the past 15 to 20 years, nursing and paramedical education has been pulled out of the hospital almost completely. It has been noted that the

progress made in the nursing service has been uneven in relation to progress made in the nursing education, and there exists a continuing gap between nursing service and education.

Need for Collaboration of Theory and practice - Collaboration refers to a process by which, health personnel act with complementary skills, working together to explore ways of linking theory, practice, research and education together to pursue a goal of excellence in practice in support of health for all.

Rationale for collaboration

- To work together to promote the best possible quality of care.
- To enhance the learning climate for students and staff.
- To promote a spirit of inquiry and research in the field.
- To close the gap between service and education.
- To ensure that students are adequately and appropriately prepared to meet the complex and changing health care needs.
- The interdependence of schools and organised services is essential for mutual exchange and mutual benefit.

Factors for the success of the collaboration

- Commitment
- Mutual trust & Respect
- Good communication
- Effective negotiation
- Gaining recognition
- Administrative support
- Flexible use of resources
- Concept for improving quality care and education
- Quality assurance
- Total quality management
- Clinical teaching skill
- In-service training
- Concept for enhancing collaboration
- Group interpersonal reactions
- Institutional policies
- Professional ethics

Actions for collaboration

- Preparing
- Planning
- Implementing
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Revising action plan

Collaboration of Education and Service in India

As the gap between education and practice has widened, there is now significant difference between what is taught in the class room and what is practised in the service setting. Two institutions are practising dual role: education and practice - NIMHANS and CMC Vellore. Dual role model in NIMHANS is Integrative of service and education. Govt. of India conducted a pilot study on bridging the gap between education and service in a selected institution like one word in AIIMS. The project was successful, medical personnel and patient appreciated the move. It requires replication in other places too.

Issues of practice

- Widening gap between the rhetoric of policy and the reality in practice
- Deficit policies and often contradictory policies can lead to confusion about priorities and perpetuation of status quo
- Lack of awareness and understanding about what we mean by inclusion and that inclusion is a problematic and controversial issue
- Teachers feel that they are not adequately equipped to deal with the changes; empowerment is inadequate and overwhelmed with responsibility. This can lead to resistive attitude to change.
- Multi-professional approach- lack of genuine communication and vested interests etc.
- Making excuses- e.g size of class, lack of time, resourcing etc.

The need to reform

- Our higher education system needs reforms in many aspects:
- The enrolment rates have to be significantly improved to reach the status of a developed nation (30-50%).
- Financial resources have to be enhanced for the large number of state establishments.
- Teacher quality needs to be enhanced through multiple training options.
- Appropriate vocational education programmes relevant to the needs of the society have to be identified and implemented to enhance employability of graduates.
- Utilise resources optimally for academic growth and excellence.
- Fortify existing institutions to make them more productive enterprises with reference to a student's academic growth and career advancement.
- Better utilisation of ICT (information and communications technology) infrastructure in academics and administration.
- Curriculum to meet the global challenges through the competencies and skills developed amongst the students
- In order to improve the areas of research, it is necessary to upgrade laboratories, motivate researchers and provide research funding.
- International collaboration of research must be promoted and the researchers must be released from undue restrictions on international travel.

CONCLUSION

Education is the prime mover of the society. It determines the role and approach for the modernisation of society and the nation at large. Higher education has to be assessed from a broader perspective in the context of various types of changes in the micro and macro environment. Higher education institutions should undergo a continuous need for assessment. They should assess the major requirements of stakeholders of the higher education system, in order to sense their changing needs, expectations and perceptions of the forces driving the change. Students are encouraged to be active participants in the learning process. The adoption of information technology both in academics and administration is a must. The role of the teacher will change to a facilitator. Only a facilitator would be able to improve a student's receptivity to knowledge, by influencing their perception of nature, limits, certainty and utility of knowledge.

The need for collaboration between education (theory) and service (practice) has been identified as a concern of increasing importance in the past few years. It is predicted that new collaboration models will be developed and tested in future. These endeavours will prove to be beneficial to the advancement of knowledge, education, providing patient care, conducting health care research too.

All states need to adopt a transformative and innovative approach across all levers of higher education: from curricula and pedagogy to the use of technology to partnerships, governance and funding, to become globally relevant and competitive to achieve the vision for India - "Higher Education in India: Vision 2030"

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