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## GLOBALIZATION CHALLENGES IN INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

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### Abstract

*Higher education sector contributes significantly for economic growth and development of a nation. Higher education ensures appropriate knowledge and skills to be gainfully employed. Higher education in India has witnessed an impressive growth over the years. The representation of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) in enrolments in the Indian higher education have remained low over the years. Low enrolment rates, Regional disparities, Shortage of Faculty, Concerns over quality of HEIs, Ambiguity over regulations, Conflict of authority, Lack of autonomy, Lack of clear-cut policies for private sector participation, Entry of Foreign Universities are the major issues related to the Higher Education sector in India. Cross-border mobility is a means of globalizing higher education. FDI in higher education will ensure access and excellence in higher education but may not bring equity. Globalisation will transform Indian higher education with respect to service providers (many actors in the market namely Public Universities, Private Universities, Foreign Universities and Virtual Institutions) consumers (access to higher education irrespective of their locality and time availability), resources (quality books, reference), pedagogy (innovative and student centric) faculty (competent and global citizens) and quality of education (industry friendly and with transferable skills). The government should evolve strategy to protect the underprivileged and marginalized segment of our people.*

**Key Words:** Higher education, FDI, Access, Excellence, Equity

### Prologue

Higher education sector contributes significantly for economic growth and development of a nation. Higher education ensures appropriate knowledge and skills to be gainfully employed. India has one of the largest systems of higher education in the

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world offering facility of education and training in almost all aspects of human creativity and intellectual endeavour.

Higher education in India has witnessed an impressive growth over the years. The number of higher educational institutions (HEIs) has increased from about 30 universities and 695 colleges in 1950-51 to about 700 universities (as of 2012-13) and 35,000 colleges (as of 2011-12) as per the recent UGC report. With an annual enrolment of above 25 million (including enrolment under Open and Distance Learning system), India is today ranked as the third largest higher education system in the world after US and China. The break-up of number of HEIs in the country shows that the share of state universities is the highest (44%) followed by private universities (22%), deemed universities (18%), institutes of national importance (10%) and central universities (6%). The increase in number of private HEIs has also resulted in an increased private sector share in the total enrolment. (Deloitte)

The representation of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) in enrolments in the Indian higher education have remained low over the years. Availability of good quality faculty is a critical input in the functioning of a sound higher education system. While there has been a consistent growth in the faculty strength in higher education, it has not matched the growth in student enrolment numbers. Research is an essential component of a higher education system to ensure vibrant and quick to response to and anticipate changes arising in the contextual conditions. One of the input parameters to ascertain progress in research is the quantum of spending on research and development activities. However, India's share in R&D spending to the total global R&D spending stands at 2.1% while the share of China is 12.5%.(Deloitte)

Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India is the apex body with regards to policy formulation in the field of higher education in the country. The government spends only 1 percent of GDP for Higher education in India. University Grants Commission, All India Council for Technical Education, National Board of Accreditation (NBA), National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), Association of Indian Universities, Distance Education Council, All India Medical Council, Indian Veterinary Council, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Indian Council of Forestry Research and other agencies are regulating the higher education in India. The government spends only 1 percent of GDP for Higher education in India.



Low enrolment rates, Regional disparities, Shortage of Faculty, Concerns over quality of HEIs, Ambiguity over regulations, Conflict of authority, Lack of autonomy, Lack of clear-cut policies for private sector participation, Entry of Foreign Universities are the major issues related to the Higher Education sector in India. In this juncture the government of India approved a plan called Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) on 3rd October 2013. RUSA aims to improve *access, equity and quality* in higher education through planned development of higher education at the state level. Through RUSA, it is proposed to improve the GER from 19% at present to 32% by 2022, while incentivizing states to increase Plan investments in higher education. (RUSA)

The growing demand for quality higher education needs to be addressed immediately. Globalization may help us to fulfill the requirements. However, will it affect the existing Higher Education System in India? In order to find answer for this question, I tried to identify the pros and cons of globalization in Indian Higher Education. This review of relevant literature may through some light to find appropriate solution for the ill effects of globalization if any.

### Globalisation of Higher Education

Emergence of the knowledge economy and the resultant demand for skills have necessitated an expansion of higher education in all countries, encouraged skill migration from developing to developed countries, and promoted cross-border education (i.e. the mobility of students, institutions, and programmes). These changes also saw an end to an era when national public institutions alone provided higher education. The private sector and cross-border institutions are expanding fast and increasing their share in enrolment in higher education. In the process, the burden of financing higher education has shifted from the public to the household domain. (N.V. Varghese)

Cross-border mobility is a means of globalizing higher education. Cross-border mobility takes place in four ways (GATS).

1. Cross-border supply: where the education services crosses the border but not the service provider (Higher Education Institutions) and the consumer (Students). For example Virtual mode of education by many Indian Universities.
2. Consumption Abroad: The consumer (Students) travels to the country where the services are provided. For example an Indian student visiting England for higher studies.



3. Commercial Presence: Where the service provider establishes their branches in other countries. For example the presence of many American Universities in the Arab world.
4. Movement of Natural Persons: The provider of service (Professors) moving temporarily to other country for providing education. For example the Netherland Professor visiting National Academy for Agricultural Research Management, Hyderabad for training the trainees).

Cross border mobility is not new to our nation. Even before Indian's Independence, including our father our nation visited United Kingdom to obtain his Barrister degree. Since Independence, India's cooperation with foreign countries in education sector used to be part of the Cultural Agreements. India has cultural agreements with 118 countries. About 75 Cultural Exchange Programmes (CEP) were signed and most of them are periodically being renewed. Education component forms a part of most of the CEPs. Department of Culture, the nodal Ministry for CEPs was also part of Ministry of HRD till recently. Since 2002, the Ministry has entered into exclusive Educational Exchange Programmes (in some cases called MOUs) with many countries. These include Mongolia, Armenia, Tanzania, Guyana, Israel, Australia, Myanmar, Hungary, Syria, Uzbekistan, New Zealand, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Mexico, Brazil, Afghanistan, Croatia, Ecuador, Rwanda, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, China, Portugal, France, Ethiopia, Vietnam, Oman, Norway and Chile signed earlier. EEPs/MOUs with Kuwait, Botswana and Malaysia were signed during 2009-10. In addition MOUs for mutual recognition and equivalence of degrees, diplomas and other educational qualifications with many countries are also under consideration. (MHRD)

In a major development, the MHRD issued a press release dated 10th September 2013 apprising that the Government is in the process of notifying rules which will pave the way for entry and operation of foreign universities in India. This proposal has also been supported by DIPP (nodal agency for facilitating FDI) and DEA (Nodal agency administration of exchange control regulations). The proposed rules require the Foreign Educational Institutions (FEIs) to fulfill certain eligibility conditions such as: (a) The FEI should be ranked amongst the top 400 universities of the world as per the rankings published by the prescribed agencies; (b) The FEI should form a not-for-profit legal entity in India, registered under section 25 of the Companies Act for setting up the campus; (c) The FEI has been registered as a not-for-profit legal entity in the host country, and should



be in existence for at least twenty years; (d) It should be accredited by an accrediting agency of the host country. In absence of its accreditation in that country, it should be accredited by an internationally accepted system of accreditation; (e) It will offer programmes of study or courses to be of quality comparable to those offered to students in its main campus overseas; (f) It is required to maintain a corpus of not less than Rs. 250 million with respect to its Indian campus. (Deloitte)

### Merits of Globalization in Higher Education

1. Globalization drove us to the information era. Web links transformed the world as a global village where space and time compressed significantly. Quality distance education and virtual institutions become a reality in India. Educational Institutions of international repute are offering online courses. For example Universities across the globe, such as Harvard, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, IIT Bombay and Kyotou University have joined hands to offer over 200 courses online through *Edx* (<https://www.edx.org>) to enthusiastic students completely free of cost.<sup>1</sup> Availability and flow of academic materials is providing input for teachers and students. Such efforts facilitate Life Long learning and Indian society will eventually become a learning society. Regional imbalances in higher education can also be brought down through the virtual World. IGNOU is the best example in this regard.
2. Those IIT, IIM aspirants failed to secure admission, can go abroad to fulfill their aspirations.
3. After liberalization many Indian Universities particularly private universities such as Amrita , Manipal , Vellore Institute of Technology have joined hands with foreign premier institutions for the purpose of :
  - Curriculum development
  - Teaching Material preparation
  - Academic exchanges of staff and students
  - Conduct of research
  - Accreditation of degrees
  - Award of dual degrees

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<sup>1</sup> Arvind Jayaram, A Harvard Degree from Home, Business line, 11<sup>th</sup> August, 2014 P.3



4. Academic feudalism and intellectual arrogance will fade away when globalization of higher education becomes a reality.
5. As far as the research is concerned duplication will come down and the fund can be used for unexplored areas.
6. Foreign universities will establish their campuses here and our Indian students could experience the world class education without crossing the border at an affordable cost.
7. English is an essential skill of globalised economy like India, whether we like it or not. English is the only genuine link language in our polyglot country. More over it has entrenched itself as the language of higher administration, the judiciary, the corporate sector and profession ranging from medicine to accountancy. We often either ignore or underplay the advantages it gives our human resource pool over competitors from their region of the non -English speaking world. Better numeracy and English skills of our workforce enabled our IT sector gain an advantage in the global market place.<sup>2</sup>Therefore Globalisation of higher education through English will be an added advantage to Indian youths.

Thus the Globalisation will transform Indian higher education with respect to service providers (many actors in the market namely Public Universities, Private Universities, Foreign Universities and Virtual Institutions) consumers (access to higher education irrespective of their locality and time availability), resources (quality books, reference), pedagogy (innovative and student centric) faculty (competent and global citizens) and quality of education(industry friendly and with transferable skills).

#### Apprehension about Globalisation in Higher Education

1. India is Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic. The constitution reminds equal opportunity to all Indian citizens. Privatization and Globalisation of higher education may not bring equality. Poor man cannot afford to global choices may be the victim of commercialization.
2. The present state of Indian universities may take more time and needs huge investment to be competitive in the world market.
3. It may take long years to attain advantage position as far as higher education trade is concerned. For which more foreign students should enroll in Indian Universities

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<sup>2</sup> Editorial, Business line, 11<sup>th</sup> August 2014.



than the students visiting abroad for study purpose. More than that, export earnings should be (Payment to Indian Universities) more than that of import payment by (payment of Indian students to the foreign universities).

4. Invasion of foreign higher education system may ruin the values, cultures and traditional practices of our nation and nationalities.

All these apprehensions are in relation to inclusive growth of Indians. Already the fellowships and financial assistance are there for the poor but brilliant students. However the Government should take appropriate steps to ensure affirmative action.

### Epilogue

International Trade Barriers are slowly withering away from the business world. The phenomenon is equally applicable to trade in services particularly on Higher Education. Though commodification of educational services is still a debatable issue between the left and right wing economists, it's a reality. Access, Equity and Excellence in Higher Education are the vision of our government. FDI in higher education will ensure access and excellence in higher education but may not bring equity. Hence, the government should evolve strategy to protect the underprivileged and marginalized segment of our people. The already available reservation in the educational institution for Other Backward Class, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes should also be extended to new generation Higher Education Institutions whether it is promoted by Indians or foreign companies.

India should adopt a clearly articulated strategy for internationalization of higher education, which will include faculty and students' exchange programs, institutional collaboration for teaching and research, induction of diverse teaching learning models and enhanced use of technology, a globally compatible academic credit system and internationally recognized curricula and processes. The India International Education Centre should come in to effective operation to govern and regulate the globalised Higher Education System in India.

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