

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN 21ST CENTURY.

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ABSTRACT:

This paper analyzes about a world that is strikingly different from what it was just a decade ago. Paper explores challenges and opportunities of higher education in 21st century. Purpose of education is to make the individual a complete person. Traditional courses like social sciences and some physical sciences have lost their positions, now it is the only business education getting momentum at the worldwide. This paper explore the role of WTO in higher education services, also impact of WTO on higher education/also some features of 21st century.

This paper enlighten on SWOT analysis and finds some future challenges for higher educations. This paper conclude that The task force on Higher Education and Society has realized that higher education is no longer, a luxury, it is essential for survival. Indian education system shall have to accept the challenges of entering into world market, so that quality is sustained up to the mark. Human values should be the soul of every education system whether public, private or both.

Introduction

Purpose of education is to make the individual a complete person. Hence, holistically speaking the need of the hour is to create an environment, which is highly conducive to learning.

The present era marked as an era of Globalization Liberalisation and privatisation. At this Juncture Higher education is considered as not a priority sector and opened for privatisation. The days of subsidised education have gone, Traditional courses like social sciences and some physical sciences have lost their positions. It is the only Business education getting momentum at the worldwide.

Globalisation can be explained as the growing interdependent and interconnectedness of the Modern world through increased flows of goods, services, capital and information. Higher education on the other hand, is characterised of provision of higher level knowledge, skills and capacities for research. Therefore, in globalisation higher education has an important role to play.

Background

Higher education is one of the major commodities which takes a country into globalisation especially for countries like India with very little of other resources to offer in the international market. Higher education provides high-level human resources, which can interpret world issue and can provide catalyst for other internal processes to fit into globalisation.

GATT:

GATT or the General Agreement on Trade and Tariff came in to effect on January 1st 1948. GATT is a vehicle of International Trade in the united Nation Family carrying the concept of one world one market, by reducing or removing tariff and non-tariff barriers on trade.

WTO:

WTO or the world trade organization has replaced GATT from 1st January 1995. As a result of GATT discussions in 1994. WTO has now completely replaced GATT. Thus GATT-1994 has given place to WTO-1995.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the paper are as below:

- ♦ To know the opportunities of higher education in 21st century.
- ♦ To highlight the Challenges of higher education in Indian Universities.
- ♦ To explore the strength of higher education in India.
- ♦ To elucidate the impact of WTO on higher education.

IDEOLOGY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education occupies a prestigious place even in the modern context of contemporary society. It is expected to play a significant role in overall material and spiritual development of mankind and their surroundings. It is fundamental to our overall harmonious development towards adequate preparation for life. In the light of new changes caused by the policy of economic liberalization, globalization and privatization, the policy on higher education is being rethought and revamped for creating competitive human resources of international standards.

WTO in Education Services:

World Trade organisation came in to existence in 1st January-1995 and the next round of negotiation in 1996 led to comprehensive agreement on International Trade in services. The objective of this agreement is progressive liberalisation of trade in services, It is to provide secure open market in services in similar manner as GATT has done for trade in goods.

This agreement In general covers all the services including educational services. This is a first multilateral agreement which provides " Legally enforceable right to trade in all services".

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF THIS MILLENNIUM :

Unipolar Global economy world

1. Political World
2. Explosion of population
3. Depletion of Natural Resources
4. Pollution of Environment
5. Convergence of Technology
6. Division of Society
7. Marriage of Life & Technology
8. Divorce of work & ethics

Impact of WTO on Indian Higher education :

- ❖ **Presence of foreign universities in India:** Many foreign universities from Australia, United Kingdom and USA have been successful in India. There is a real danger of Indian Universities being swamped by cross Border universities.
- ❖ **International Exposure :** WTO enables Indian Teachers and students to have an access to International on going issues. Teachers & students can compare the syllabus of one institute to another and also all other pedagogy followed by others.
- ❖ **Quality Aspect:** Quality becomes a basic yardstick, which determines the survival of the institutes.
- ❖ **Trading on Indian Universities:** It is the exercise made on Indian universities but ultimate benefit goes to foreign universities.
- ❖ **Competition :** WTO witnesses the existence of stiff competition among the various institutes specially business schools.
- ❖ **Pedagogy Techniques:** In addition to the existing techniques like lecture and discussion method, case study method, seminars, conferences, panel discussions, Role playing, Business games, summer project work etc. It becomes inevitable to go for new pedagogy techniques.

❖ **Entrance tests:** As each institute try to establish its supremacy they give more importance to the entrance tests to admit the students. Every institute speaks high about themselves finally adding cost on students.

❖ **Window Dressing :** WTO witnesses the window dressing, each institution will try to fly high, and they try to manipulate the things to beautify themselves.

SWOT ANALYSIS

After discussing the privatization of higher education under WTO regime we can analyze the strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats of our Indian universities or higher education as follows:

STRENGTHS

- (1) huge infrastructure of the Indian universities;
- (2) cost effective education offered by them, and wide and deep rooted network.

WEAKNESS

- 1) Lack of Market orientation in designing curriculum
- 2) Low quality education
- 3) Bureaucracy and redtapism in the administration of universities, and
- 4) Laxity and inefficiency.

OPPORTUNITIES

- 1) Huge inflow of foreign students resulting in huge revenues;
- 2) Opportunity to expand the universities beyond boundaries of the country; and
- 3) Competition resulting in improved efficiency of the universities efficiency of the universities as happened for example in the case of LIC and BSNL.

THREATS TO THE INDIAN UNIVERSITIES

- 1) Competition with foreign universities would enhance the cost of higher education making it beyond the reach of the meritorious but poor students.
- 2) Foreign universities through their innovative marketing techniques would sell courses that have become irrelevant in their countries to the Indian students;
- 3) Marketisation of higher education would adversely affect the culture of the Indian universities;
- 4) There will be mushroom growth of both foreign and domestic private universities with the sole objective of profiteering;
- 5) The gap between the urban and the rural areas and the developed and the backward regions in terms of the spread of higher education would get widened; and
- 6) The private universities may not be bothered about the social considerations in providing the education.

FUTURE CHALLENGES

While admitting the inevitability of internationalization of higher education, made suggestions for gearing up the present system to face the future challenges, they are as follows:

- 1) Strengthening of regulatory framework to direct the growth of the higher education in the desirable direction for the benefit of the society;
- 2) Corporatization of education to enhance the accountability of the institutions to the stakeholders;
- 3) Making the privatization a gradual process instead of a sudden blow;
- 4) Making the courses offered market relevant;
- 5) Taking Uncompromised stand as far as imparting to the students the moral values and Indian culture;

- 6) Promoting public-private cooperation in expanding higher education;
- 7) Entering of MOUs by the Indian Universities with foreign universities for improving the quality of the courses;
- 8) Faculty and student exchange programmes on a large-scale between the domestic and the foreign universities;
- 9) Introduction of job-oriented courses by the Indian Universities to benefit our students;
- 10) Expansion of distance education on a large-scale particularly in social sciences;
- 11) Establishment of linkages between the industry and the educational institutions;
- 12) improving the quality of the faculty by making them not only the effective imparters of the existing knowledge but also the creators of the knowledge through quality research; and
- 13) Providing a level playing field between the public and private universities.

CONCLUSION

It is recognized 2nd~5th century is 'Century of Knowledge.' The task force on Higher Education and Society [World Bank, 2000] has realized that higher education is no longer, a luxury, it is essential for survival. India has abundant scope and potential market for development as well as dissemination of higher education. Global competitors in this field will have access anywhere under GATS of WTO. Indian education system shall have to accept the challenges of entering into world market, so that quality is sustained up to the mark. Overall and equitable development is must and seem to be an inevitable policy. Human values should be the soul of every education system whether public, private or both.

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