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Globalization and educational challenges

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Abstract

Globalization refers to coming together of countries and people of the whole globe with an aim to integrate advancement of societies in terms of economy, polity, culture, education and technology etc. in order to achieve more equitable, fairer and livable world. Globalization in the field of education refers to integrate educational system of a particular nation with the world educational system. It is a distinct process by which decisions and activities in one part of the world has significant consequence for individual and communities in quit distant part of the world. The world is entered into a new century and a new millennium. In this context, India cannot ignore the changes that are occurring in the rest of the world. The Indian System of Education is facing today many Challenges arising out of globalization and liberalization. The inclusion of education as a tradable service within the GATS of WTO has given additional momentum to this process.

The age of globalization has brought in a sea change in the field of education in India. Globalization of education has to be spread broad mind that education is not meant only for and individual for a society. The process of globalization is affected the educational system of our country to meet the challenges of globalization.

Keywords: Globalization, education, educational system, challenges, society, technology, economy and world etc.

Introduction

"India is a Union of States based on the framework of cooperative federalism. Within the cooperative framework, there is also a requirement to develop competitive strengths for the States so that they can excel at the national level and the global level. Competitiveness helps in ensuring economic and managerial efficiency and to be creative to meet new challenges. These are essential to survive and prosper in a fast changing world of today. In addition, in order to strengthen democratic processes and institution, we should all truly strive for substantive decentralization".

From the speech by Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam on his assumption of office as President of India New Delhi, 25 July 2002.

The emergence and rise of civilizations, interaction and inter dependency among human societies have given birth to globalization. Globalization has interwoven the whole world in a single globe. In new era of the world revolutionary changes in communication system have increased trade and cultural change among different countries of the world. Due to rise of information technology the whole world has become united together. Today, different people of the world can establish closer ties in spite for their ethnic and cultural differences and the geographical distances that separate them in this new millennium.

Thus, Globalization is an umbrella term that refers to increasing global connectivity, integration and interdependence in the economic, societal, cultural, political, geographical and technological sphere. It is a process of integration of various economies of the world without creating any hindrance in the free flow of goods, services, technology, and capital even human capital. It is this construction of time-space compression that has given rise to popular notion of "One-World" "Global Village" etc.

Education is an essential tool for the unrestraint of human nature. It is becoming more invaluable to individuals. In today's environment, education provides individuals with a better chance of employment, which in turn leads to a better lifestyle, power and status. The major function of Education is the revolution of society's norms and values.

Education is becoming a lifelong learning and training process, developing transferable skills and knowledge that can be applied to competitive markets where knowledge and information

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is being traded as a commodity. The introduction of technology into the classroom is changing the nature of delivering education to students is gradually giving way to a new form of electronic literacy, more programs and education materials are made available in electronic form, teachers are preparing materials in electronic form; and students are generating papers, assignments and projects in electronic form. Video projection screens, books with storage device servers and CD ROMs as well as the emergence of on-line digital libraries are now replacing blackboards. Even exams and grades are gradually becoming available through electronic means and notebooks are starting to give way to laptops.

Education is the key to the task of nation building as well as to provide requisite knowledge and skills required for sustained growth of the economy and to ensure overall growth.

Globalization of education has amazing important to offer a country. It can enrich our national curriculum. This gives us as a clue to the future development of education because one of the predictable outcomes of globalization will be a search for an international aspect to national programs of education. The effects of globalization on education bring rapid developments in technology and communications are foreseeing changes within learning systems across the world as ideas, values and knowledge, changing the roles of students and teachers, and producing a shift in society from industrialization towards an information-based society. It reflects the effect on culture and brings about a new form of cultural imperialism.

Investment in education is an instrument to set up a just social order and liberating the society from the clutches of poverty has been declining incessantly. In a globalized world, education at all levels is more important than ever. By merging many national markets into one global market, globalization increase the competitive pressure faced by individuals, companies and societies.

According to the definition given by Jacques Hallak during the conference on “*Educational Reconstruction and Transformation of Education. Challenges for the 21st Century*”, globalization is a combination of much freer trade in goods and services combined with free capital movements. The phenomenon dates far back in history with the development of international trade. However, for the past few years, we have observed a high acceleration in this trend due to a political and ideological environment eminently favorable to its development and rapid advances in technological innovation, especially in the area of telecommunications. Educational planners – wherever they come from – must think seriously about the consequences of such a phenomenon, particularly in terms of shifts in the job market, in order to better adapt their country’s training system.

It is universal truth that ultimate objective of the economic development is to promote the wellbeing of all people of the society. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi (Father of nation), “it is an effort to wipe out tears from the eyes of everyone”.

Challenges of WTO and GATS

The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) came into existence in 1947 to manage international trade through multilateral trade agreements. India was one of the 23 founder members of the GATT. In the last round of discussions in 1994, the member countries decided to replace GATT by

World Trade Organization (WTO) and accordingly signed an agreement on 1st January 1995. With the increasing importance of service sector in the world economy, the member countries of WTO in 1996 agreed to sign a General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) which covered services of international trade at par with merchandise trade. This agreement in general covers all the services (presently specified 19 services) including education services. The WTO has identified four different modes of trade in education that received legal protection through GATS:

Mode 1: Cross-border supply focuses on the service crossing the border, which does not require the consumer or the service provider to physically move. Examples in higher education distance education and e-learning.

Mode 2: Consumption Abroad refers to the consumer moving to the country of the supplier which in education means students taking all or part of their education in another country.

Mode 3: Commercial Presence involves a service provider establishing a commercial facility in another country to provide a service. Examples in higher education include branch campuses or franchising arrangements.

Mode 4: Presence of Natural Persons means people travelling to another country on a temporary to provide a service, which in education would include professors or researchers.

The scope of GATS in education has been provided for across the following five sub sectors

1. **Primary education:** Primary education includes the normal notion of primary education and pre-school education services, but excludes child day care services and adult literacy programs.
2. **Secondary education:** Secondary education services include high school education, technical and vocational education, and school-type services for handicapped students.
3. **Higher education:** Higher education includes two distinct groups: one relates to the teaching of practical skills in post –secondary, sub-degree technical and vocational education institutions and the other deals with more theoretical educational services provided by universities, colleges and specialized professional schools.
4. **Adult education:** Adult education refers to all education services that are not in the regular school and university systems. This includes both general and vocational subjects, literacy programs, and any education services delivered by correspondence or broadcast. It excludes any programs delivered through the regular education system.
5. **Other education services:** Other education services include anything not mentioned elsewhere, with the exception of recreational matters⁴.

In this paper focus will be given only on higher education related problems and challenges of globalization.

There’s a widespread perception that from January 1, 2005, India is obliged under the WTO to open up its higher education sector to foreign providers and to end public subsidies, with adverse consequences for the quality and affordability of higher education. First and foremost, GATS

does not require India to do anything at present in education services.

The impact of opening up higher education services is shaped not by the WTO but by domestic factors, including the domestic regulatory framework and the state of the domestic education system in terms of quantity, quality, costs, infrastructure and finances.

The major problems before the Indian Higher education are

1. Commodification of Education: Higher education is becoming a marketing commodity. It is a multi-billion dollar business. Foreign universities are trying to have a share of Indian educational markets, and have prepared for this during the last decade or more. This shift from education as a social good to marketable commodity is against the Indian culture, and sufferers in these changes will be poor and disadvantaged people of India.

2. Global Competitiveness: The competition will essentially be for offering quality education recognized at the International level and relevant to the local needs. The major issue is how to raise the quality and standards of Indian education and make it globally competitive, locally relevant and enable it to offer marketing paradigm appropriate for developing societies.

3. Concerns of weaker institutions: High disparities in educational standards and quality of education offered by Indian universities and colleges are of great concern to all. National and global competition may create problems of survival of weaker universities and colleges.

4. Developmental disparities and unsolved Indian problems: Many colleges and universities were started in India for removing regional imbalances and for supporting education of weaker and disadvantaged classes, particularly of women. These institutions and other developmental programs for weaker classes are still facing resource constraints, which are further aggravated by ignorance, poverty and disadvantages of the people they serve. This is resulting in widening divides and in keeping many educated from weaker and disadvantaged sections outside the job and employment markets. The challenge of these marginalized and deprived to the system of education is enormous.

5. Weak linkage of education with developmental processes is creating frustration amongst graduates when they find that education is not so useful in employment and in work situations. A challenge is to transform the system from its present model of education to developmental education linking education to developments in society, industry and services sectors.

6. High cost of higher education: The unit cost of traditional education, particularly of professional education, is quite high and has gone out of reach of the Indian middle and lower classes. Many private entrepreneurs have started educational institutions for offering creamy courses with marketing approach; and have raised fees not affordable to majority. Subsidy to the education by the state is not the right solution in the present situation, when numbers aspiring for higher education is large and ever increasing. The deprived are already creating pressure on the state to make education

accessible; and have raised an issue of socioeconomic equity and justice.

India has emerged as a global leader/player and a strong nation in the world with biggest higher education system. The Internationalization of education has become one of the key themes of educational policy and planning in the 1990s and the integration of worldwide capital and labor markets; educators are being forced to respond to a new set of challenges.

Development and progress in Information Technology (IT) has created global communication networks and generated globalization. Forces responsible for globalization and liberalizations are:

- **Globalized markets** being made available due to various technology developments and high speed communications.
- **New ways of work and wealth generation** by creating new IT based appliances and applications and IT Enabled services, which are essentially dependent on knowledge and intellectual skills rather than physical and capital resources.
- **Intellectual property creation** is changing concepts of wealth and power of a society or nation.

All these factors have given education as the means for acquisition of knowledge a higher and center stage role in all processes of living, working and developing.

The nation has to face Challenges of globalization and pressures of liberalization while enduring its fight against poverty, illiteracy and disadvantages.

Contemporary Challenges

1. Internationalization of Higher Education: Globalization demands the integration of national economics with the free movement of goods, capital, labor and ideas. It has resulted in the perception of higher education as a commercial product governed by market forces and the principles of demand and supply. However, our higher education is totally unable to cope with international standards. Sub-standard higher education is creating problems of brain-drain as it fails to accommodate its talented students. Bearing in mind the consequences of globalization and the immigration of overseas students, it is essential to improve the standard of higher education in India.

2. Quantitative growth: Although there has been a noticeable increase in the number of universities, colleges, students and teachers in higher education since independence, it is very low in relation to the size of the population and compared to developed nations. There are 684 universities in Japan, 2364 in USA and 330 in Germany. There are also insufficient infrastructural facilities to accommodate the growing needs of students and teachers of higher education in India.

3. Quality Assurance: Qualitatively our higher education is very poor in respect to trained teachers, infrastructure, relevant programs, up-to-date inter-disciplinary curricula, research and evaluation.

4. Research Work: The quality of higher education depends on intensive and extensive research programs. Today's higher education suffers from inferior research, which has no significance or contributory value to the field of education but

is used instead of awarding degrees and certificates that lead to career promotion.

5. Accountability: Lack of proper accountability curtails the standard of higher education. From managing bodies to teachers, students and parents, no one is truly accountable for their duties and responsibilities. There is no proper channel of assessment of their job responsibilities.

6. Students Enrolment: Enrolment in higher education is still very low, accounting for only 7% of the total population compared to other developing nations like Indonesia, Brazil and Thailand where enrolment is 11%, 12% and 19% respectively. Moreover, the 7% pursuing higher education in India mostly belong to the higher and middle classes leaving the poor behind.

7. Privatization: The privatization of higher education is a recent intervention as a result of globalization and has paved the way for quantitative. But the real challenge is to have quality control measures.

8. Examination Reforms: The University Education Commission (1948-49) headed by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan stated that the single most important reform in higher education was the examination system. This system is now the home of blatant and widespread corruption, inefficiency, inaccuracy, rote learning, selective study, inflexibility and the active discouragement of innovative teaching, all of which impact upon the quality of higher education.

9. Inadequate Governance: Lack of openness and transparency in the governance of higher education from governmental level to university and college level is acting as a bottleneck in the quality improvement of higher education and creating additional problems of the promotion of staff and fairness in administrative work.

10. Curriculum: Higher education has failed to update its curriculum so that it can keep pace with globalization and techno-scientific developments. The outdated course content cannot and does not satisfy the needs of the present age but instead promotes unemployment, violence, superstition and fanaticism.

Globalization has exposed the economy to a greater worldwide competition. This requires a strategy geared towards upgrading the quality of human resource, including education for all through education in relative inequalities.

Conclusion

Globalization and technological advancements are delivering and increasing access to the world and subsequently subjects should reflect this global outlook. Globalization has had many obvious effects on educational technology and communication systems change the way of education is delivered as well as roles played by both teachers and students.

The spread of education internationally, as a result of globalization, has clearly had effects on cultures worldwide. In the 21st century, education systems face the dual challenge of equipping students with the new knowledge, skills and values needed to be competitive in a global market while at the same time producing graduates who are responsible adults, good citizens both of their country and of the world.

The wave of globalization and trends of internationalization of education further reinforce the need to develop a strong and vibrant education system in the country. Thus globalization challenges us to rethink not only how much education is needed but also its ultimate purposes. The challenge of globalization to education is to realize that the needs of the learners are the needs of the peoples.

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