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**EDITORIAL
FORMULATING A NEW NATIONAL POLICY ON
EDUCATION - A FEW STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING
HIGHER EDUCATION**

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INTRODUCTION

Formulating a national policy is a difficult task for a nation with many variations in structures and resources among States. For instance, today, one finds approved student strength in a higher secondary class as 128, which is more than three times of the approved student strength in other States. The first Indian national policy on education was formulated in 1968 (Ministry of Education 1968). Eleven years later, in 1979, the government brought out a Draft Policy document (Ministry of Education 1979) which could not be passed. Seven years later, the second national policy on education was formulated in 1986 (MHRD 1986). Four years later, a committee (Acharya Ramamurti 1990), set up by the central government reviewed it. Before recommendations of this committee were utilised in revising the Policy document, there was a change in the Central government. Two years later, the CBE set up a Committee (Reddy 1992) to get this Acharya Ramamurti report reviewed. Basing on the report of this committee, the Central Government modified NPE 1986 (MHRD 1992). This modified policy document stated that various parameters of the policy need to be reviewed every five years, in addition to appraisals at short intervals, as per requirement from time to time. (MHRD 1992, Art. 11.5). After twenty four years of 1992 modification of the policy document, the process of reviewing the existing policy and developing a new policy document has started. The process of formulating NPE 1986 had its foundation laid on the deliberations initiated by a discussion document (Ministry of Education 1985) that listed various points of view and

pointed out possible impacts of various suggestions. Present paper attempts to highlight certain issues related to higher education on which debates may be held to make the policy document more effective.

Policy makers generally depend on quantitative evidences as basis for policy formulation. Wu (2014), analysing Australian situation, suggested the need to go beyond quantitative evidence. Out of various aspects of a national policy, higher education occupies a significant position (MHRD 1992, Art. 5. 24). During last three decades, a number of international documents have highlighted importance of higher education. International Commission on Education for the Twenty First Century (Delors 1996, p. 130) stated that

“Higher education is at one and the same time one of the driving forces of economic development and the focal point of learning in a society. It is both repository and creator of knowledge. Moreover, it is the principal instrument for passing on the accumulated experience, cultural and scientific, of humanity”.

UN Recommendation Concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel highlighting various contributions of higher education hoped that the nations would treat public funds appropriated for higher education “as a public investment, subject to effective public accountability” (UN (1997 Art. 10). In order to draw the attention of the nations, in 1998, UNESCO came out with a World Declaration on Higher Education (UNESCO 1998), which highlighted the need for radical change and renewal to enable the society “transcend mere economic considerations and incorporate deeper dimensions of morality and spirituality.” Higher education plays vital role “in knowledge societies, based on radical changes in the traditional patterns of knowledge production, diffusion and application” (UNESCO 2005, p. 87). A few strategic actions suggested for improving higher education are: (a) addressing simultaneously demand and supply, (b) successful graduation and career development, (c) lifelong learning and on-the-job training, (d) encouraging private funding of higher education, (e) supporting financially constrained groups and income-

contingent loans and supporting services to socio-economic constrained constituencies (Veugeler 2011, p. 15). There is growing realisation of importance of higher education among nations (Altbach 2014, p. 11). Areas in which challenges are being faced by higher education are : (a) expanding access, (b) promoting equity, (c) improving learning achievement, (d) strengthening knowledge generation, (e) technology transfer, and (f) encouraging desired values, behaviours, and attitudes among students (Systems Approach for Better Education Results 2016, p.1).

ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education, throughout the world, continues to avoid the principle of equal opportunity in education for all. Students from rich families continue to harvest better benefits from higher education by paying more. This issue is also reported in case of a developed and rich country like US. “It is difficult to engage in higher education policy without encountering alarm over the affordability crisis and its consequences for federal and state budgets, students and their parents, and institutions (Holcombe 2016, p. 3). “ The insidious and growing gaps in educational opportunity and attainment between those with financial means and those without is one of the most serious issues facing higher education” (Finney, Perna and Callan 2014, p.10). According to Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (2015), the state aspires to have at least 60 per cent of its 25- to 34-year-olds hold a certificate or degree by 2030. In US, Lumina Foundation (2015, p. ii) mentioned its goal to “To increase the proportion of working-age Americans with postsecondary degrees, certificates, and other credentials to 60% by the year 2025.” Number wise 25-64 year olds having received tertiary education, in case of OECD countries was highest in US (74,147,000), followed by Japan (31, 340, 000) and UK (14, 595,000) and in case of non OECD countries was highest in China (74,086,000), followed by Russia (45,262,000)(OECD 2016, p. 42). Dropout and completion in higher education is an important issue, as higher education programmes require huge investment. Nations have not given much attention to this important aspect of investment

in education. Europe is facing issues concerning tackling dropout and completion in higher education (Vossensteyn et al. 2015, pp. 9-11).

As the world advances, nations have been making efforts to make their higher education system more accessible to their citizens, so that they may be able to have increased contribution to their economy, not only by working inside the nation, but also by working outside the nation. These efforts have resulted in improved governance systems.

GOVERNANCE REFORMS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Reforms in higher education governance are carried out in varieties of areas such as such as (a) increased autonomy to universities, (b) increased freedom in institutional funding strategies, (c) external quality monitoring, (d) ensuring accountability as per national norms, etc.(Fielden 2008, p. 43). Advanced nations are also not free from governance issues. There are issues related to tightening surveillance and monitoring of activity of universities in Russian higher education(Chaschin 2014, p. 244). Eight policy goals for tertiary education governance listed by World Bank (2012, p. 4) are: 1. Clear Vision for Tertiary Education; 2. Appropriate Regulatory Framework; 3. Capacity of the Tertiary Education Authority (TEA); 4. Leadership, Management and Organisational Autonomy; 5. Sufficient Institutional Autonomy; 6. Presence of performance-based and equity focused funding; 7. Checks on Quality and Relevance; and 8. Standards of Accountability. Although autonomy is the modern strategy, it “should not be considered as an aim in itself, but as a means to an end (Varghese & Martin 2014, p. 47).

Funding of higher education is an important issue. Owing to reduction in state funding, “the higher education system in many countries of Africa moved from a ‘state-controlled’ to a ‘state-supervised’ mode of governance in higher education” (Varghese (2016, p. 31). This is the reality in most part of the world. This change has given more opportunities to the rich to become more educated and get more income. This has also adversely affected health care facilities for

poor. In many nations, inability of the government to have its own medical education institution have led to establishment of high fee charging institutions. There is a common notion that doctors produced from high fee charging medical institutions speed up the process of getting back the amount invested in education that adversely affects health care facilities for poor, who are subjected to many unnecessary tests, as the doctors get their share from these testing labs. This is an important government governance issue.

QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Nations have been trying their best to improve the quality of their higher education. High level quality assurance processes need to take note of risks taken by the institutions (European University Association 2009, p. 7). High quality higher education institutions “define their teaching and learning objectives in relation to their study programmes and how they should be delivered and assessed”(McAleese 2013, p. 23). There is huge gap in quality of quantity and quality of appropriate human and material resources found among institutions of higher education in least developed, developing and developed countries. Today, higher education institutions in developed nations are struggling with various consequences of developments in technology having impact on student-centred learning (Hutchings and Quinney 2015, p. 106). In order to improve quality advanced nations have developed codes and standards. The UK Quality Code for Higher Education in following three parts: Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards covered (a) Qualifications and Frameworks, (b) Characteristics of statements, (c) Code frameworks and (d) Subject benchmark statements. Part B: Assuring and Enhancing Academic Quality covered (a) Programme Design, Development and Approval; (b) Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education; (c) Learning and Teaching; (d) Enabling Student Development and Achievement; (e) Student Engagement; (f) Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning; (g) External Examining; (h) Programme Monitoring and Review; (i) Academic Appeals and Student Complaints;

(j) Managing Higher Education Provision with Others; and (k) Research Degrees; and Part C: Information about Higher Education Provision (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, UK 2014). In Australia, Standards for Higher Education mentioned in The Higher Education Standards Framework covered following seven areas: 1. Student Participation and Attainment; 2. Learning Environment; 3. Teaching; 4. Research and Research Training; 5. Institutional Quality Assurance; 6 . Governance and Accountability and Representation, Information and Information Management (Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency 2015). In United States, domains of student learning and development outcomes covered in General Standards developed by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (2014, p. 3) are: (a) knowledge acquisition, construction, integration, and application; (b) cognitive complexity; (c) intrapersonal development; (d) interpersonal competence; (e) humanitarianism and civic engagement; and (f) practical competence. While developed nations are having issues related to improving already high level of learning supported by technology, under developed nations are having issues related to lack of technology supported learning, which deter quality of learning.

ASSESSMENT OF QUALITY

Nations have been making efforts to improve their strategies for assessment of quality of higher education institutions. Quality higher education necessitates appropriate monitoring mechanism for higher education institutions. “Across higher education, it is time for a significant reappraisal of assessment strategy”(HEA, UK 2012, p. 4). High level quality assurance agencies go for more and more student involvement in their monitoring process (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, UK 2015, p. 1). Nations rank their higher education institutions so as to enable them ascertain their position. Varieties of ranking are in vogue. U-Multirank is an addition to existing systems of ranking. “The development and publication of U-Multirank has changed the world of rankings by introducing a radically different

approach: multi-dimensional and user-driven”(European Union 2015, p. 5). U-Multirank results are given indicator wise and indicate strengths and weaknesses of institutions.

INTERNATIONALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Internationalization Leaders Network (ILN) (2014) defined internationalisation of education as “process of integrating international, intercultural, and global dimensions and perspectives into the purpose, functions and delivery of education.” According to Hénard, Diamond and Roseveare (2012, p. 7) home based internationalisation of education covers “incorporating intercultural and international dimensions into the curriculum, teaching, research and extracurricular activities and hence helps students develop international and intercultural skills without ever leaving their country.” McBurnie and Ziguras (2009, pp. 106-107) expected that transnational education not only would lead to multi-dimensional delivery strategies, but also would lead to improvements in quality assurance mechanisms and refinement of guidelines. Vincent-Lancrin (2009, pp. 69- 73) reported increasingly emergence of new forms of cross-border higher education such as following a higher education or post-secondary course provided by a foreign university without leaving their own country, distance education – which includes Internet training (or e-learning), university partnerships (exclusively based on the principle of non-profit collaboration), cross-border education of a commercial nature in the form of franchising and twinning, opening of campuses abroad by universities, and of training centres abroad by other educational service providers, grouping of offshore campuses in regional clusters, changes in the financing models of campuses abroad and offering of master and doctorate programmes by top class universities on invitation from national governments. There has been rise in number of national students going abroad for higher education. According to Institute of International Education, US (2016 a), during 2014/15 number of international scholars in US was 124,861. Percentage of students from various countries were: China (32.2%), India (8.8%), South Korea (5.9%), Germany (4.3%), Canada (3.7%), Japan (3.6%),

Brazil (3.5%), France (3.4%), Italy (3.1%), Spain (2.3%), United Kingdom (2.1%), Turkey (1.8%), Taiwan (1.5%), Mexico (1.3%), Israel (1.2%), Iran (1.2%), etc. According to Institute of International Education, US (2016 b), during 2014/15, total of number of international students in US was 974, 926. Country wise highest numbers of students were from China-304,040, followed by India-132,888, South Korea-63,710, Saudi Arabia- 59,945, Canada- 27,240, Taiwan-20,993, Japan-19,064, Vietnam-18,722, Mexico - 17,052, Iran- 11,338, United Kingdom-10,743, Turkey 10,724, Germany-10,193,etc. Analysis of country wise data indicate that even in poor countries, there are rich people, who send their children to US and other developed nations to have better quality education. According to UK Council for International Student Affairs (2015) in 2014-15, in case of non UK students, largest numbers of students were from China (89,540). Other nations / national regions having more than ten thousand students were: India (18,320), Nigeria (17,920), Malaysia (17,060), USA (16,865), China-Hong Kong (16,215), Germany (13,675), France (11,955), Republic of Ireland (10,905), Italy (10,525), Greece (10,130). Percentages of students in various subject areas in UK higher education institutions in 2014-15, were: Business & administrative studies (38.4%), Engineering and technology (33.1%), Law (26.3%), Architecture, building and planning (25.4%), Mass communications and documentation (23%), Mathematical sciences(21.6%), Computer science (20.4%), Social studies (19.8%), Veterinary science (18.9%), Languages(17.7%), Creative arts and design (16.2%), Medicine and dentistry (16.0%), Physical sciences (15.8%), Agriculture and related subjects (12.4%), Historical and philosophical studies (10.9%), Biological sciences (10.8%), Subjects allied to medicine (7.7%), Education (6.1%), Combined (6%) and TOTAL (8.9%). According to Al-Sindi et al. (2016, pp.12,13 and 15), main provider of cross border higher education (CBHE) in the gulf region was United States, the main providers in Asia Pacific Region were Australia, United Kingdom and the United States, and in European region were France, Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom. Generating income from international student tuition fees is one of

the goals of internationalisation of higher education, This has motivated many universities in developed and also in developing countries to continuously innovate.

Internationalisation of higher education has also contributed to development of cultural awareness among students (Helms 2015, p. 23). Institutional internationalisation has become “diverse and multi layered, with potentially competing and contradicting rationales” (European University Association 2013, p. 11). State needs to play its quality ensuring role, especially in situations having large numbers of private providers and foreign campuses (UNESCO 2013, p. 5). A few issues identified in the fourth global survey of internationalisation of higher education conducted by International Association of Universities (Egron-Polak and Hudson 2014, p. 7) were: commodification / commercialisation, brain drain, difficulty in assessing quality of foreign programmes, risk of growing gaps in quality and/or prestige among institutions in a given country. More and more nations are having students of other nations in their higher education institutions, with the intention to raise their financial standing. This necessitates that national governments ensure delivery of programmes of appropriate quality so that foreign students are not exploited. Internationalisation of higher education in sub-Saharan Africa has brought issues like “brain drain, cultural values, the commodification of higher education, the persistence of inequality between global north-south universities, and so on” (Alemu 2014, p. 71). Appreciation of “mobility programmes and of involving foreign lecturers in either teaching or research collaboration, were reported by academics in Slovenia” (Flander and Klemenèè 2014, p. 44). Developing countries may not benefit from internationalisation, especially, in the form of programmes of universities of developed countries. In African situation, faculty-led short programmes of the universities coming in from the North can be labelled as academic tourism that potentially compromises academic values and principles (Jooste 2015, p. 11). Uncontrolled international education industry can destroy academic values and principles

(Directorate-General for Internal Policies of European Union 2015, p. 286). A few values and principles suggested by International Association of Universities (2012, pp. 4-5) are: academic freedom, institutional autonomy, social responsibility, equity in access and success, non-discrimination, scientific integrity and research ethics, engagement with the community, internationalisation of the curriculum, appropriate treatment of international students and scholars ethically and respectfully in all aspects of their relationship with the institution, innovative forms of collaboration, and safeguarding and promoting cultural and linguistic diversity among students, study of impacts of internationalisation. According to European Commission/EACEA/Eurydic 2015, p. 264), poor quality of internationalisation of higher education is marked by factors such as (a) Lack of a national internationalisation strategy or guidance to the various stakeholders involved in the internationalisation process; (b) inadequate stress on promotion of economic, social, and cultural well-being of communities; and (c) Inadequate opportunity for talented, but poor students. As nations vary in their demography and culture, effect of internationalisation of higher education will vary from nation to nation. Krechetnikov, Pestereva and Rajoviæ (2016, p. 229) reported that Asia Pacific Region countries, especially, were increasingly active in the process of internationalisation of their higher education. Nations make efforts to make foreign students accept new cultural scenario in the country of their study. In late seventies, when the author reached Edinburgh as a British Council Scholar to pursue Diploma in Community Education, the university had arranged a group of local students to receive the foreign students at the railway station. It was late September. The first business of volunteer attached to the author, after formal welcome, was to make the author buy a duffle coat to save him from Scottish cold weather. The university host team had arranged afternoon tea in many houses for many days. Acar (2016) in a study of faculty perception of international students in Turkey reported challenges such as education system different from their own country, difficulty due to variation in spoken accent and separation from family and isolation. Surtees and Balyasnikova (2016) reported

about effective role played by the culture clubs in Canadian universities. Student exchange programme is the most important contribution of internationalisation of higher education to improve the standard of higher education, especially improving the level of learner experience and expertise. Alvarez, Kilbourn, and Olson (2016), in a study of the experience in three nations, reported that the collaborative learning environment made the students overcome their language differences, and gave them knowledge about another culture and experience alternative ways of teaching. Chuah and Singh (2016, p. 140), in their study of international students in four universities of Malaysia, recommended a more conducive support network for international students that may enable them enjoy a more favourable, all-encompassing curriculum.

Cross border higher education is a growing aspect of internationalisation of education. Some of the principles of cross border higher education, according to the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (2015) are : (a) Striving to contribute to the broader economic, social, and cultural well-being of communities; (b) Strengthening higher education capacity of developing countries; (c) Striving to instil in learners the critical thinking skills; (d) making higher education accessible to disadvantaged; (e) meeting the same high standards of academic and organizational quality no matter where it is delivered; (f) making oneself accountable to the public, students, and governments; (g) Expanding the opportunities for international mobility of faculty, researchers, and students; and (h) Providing clear and full information to students and external stakeholders about the education they provide. In the report of 4th survey conducted by European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), Grifoll et al. (2015, p.5) stated that “Overall, the diversity of activities undertaken by agencies suggests that there is not yet a single, shared definition or profile for the internationalisation of quality assurance.” Al-Sindi et al. (2016, p.41) stated that nations should (a) support higher education institutions in fully harnessing the opportunities and benefits associated with CBHE, for both sending and receiving countries; (b) support QA agencies in

facilitating and supporting the development of the required national capacities for the quality assurance of CBHE and inter-agency cooperation; (c) facilitate the development of regular and reliable data collection systems for inbound and outbound CBHE at the national level; (d) engage in a dialogue with QA agencies in order to identify and review any unnecessary policies or regulatory restrictions and initiate any required reforms which would facilitate the quality assurance of CBHE and cross-border cooperation in the spirit of the QACHE Toolkit; and (e) develop, together with all relevant stakeholders, clear policy frameworks. As recommended in the QACHE Toolkit, QA agencies should “have clear and accessible policies for the quality assurance of inbound and outbound CBHE.

TEACHING LEARNING QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Geographical, historical, cultural and linguistic context in which students live plays significant role in learning (UNESCO 2016, p. 11). Generally, professional development programmes for higher education teachers do not cover above aspect of teaching - learning. IMHE (2009, p. 5) reviewing status of teaching quality in higher education in OECD nations stated that “Encouraging bottom-up initiatives from the faculty members, setting them in a propitious learning and teaching environment, providing effective support and stimulating reflection on the role of teaching in the learning process all contribute to quality teaching.” The process of improving instructional quality of academic staff of higher education institutions can be hastened through programmes delivered by appropriately staffed campus-based professional development centers (Asian Development Bank 2011, p. 31). The process of improving teaching learning quality is witnessing situations marked by (a) inadequate programmes for professional development for HE teaching, (b) poor quality of programmes, (c) Confusion between teaching -learning excellence and research excellence, and (d) inadequate initiatives to scale up good teaching learning practices (European Union 2016 a). Learning communities concept could be beneficial for the “neglected half” of university

teachers' competencies (Po•arnik and Lavriè 2015, p. 91). Not only lethargy, but also ignorance plays vital role in poor performance of teachers, especially in case of institutions giving in adequate salary and not providing adequate material resources including appropriate library and computer and internet facilities.

OPEN LEARNING AND PART-TIME EDUCATION

Formal open learning systems in higher education were initiated in 1963, when in UK, the Labour Party proposed "University of the Air". This term was changed in 1967 to "Open University". Essential characteristics of open learning systems listed by the National Association of Educational Broadcasters of the US are: 1. Guiding a student by eliciting, interpreting and analysing goals at the beginning point and throughout the student's contact with the programme of instruction; 2. Formulating learning objectives in such a way that they serve as the basis for making decisions in instructional design, including evaluation, and in such a way that they will be fully known to, accepted by or capable of modification by students; 3. Facilitating the participation of learners without imposing traditional academic entry requirements, without the pursuit of an academic degree or other certification as the exclusive reward.; 4. Providing the flexibility required satisfying a variety of individual needs, the system should make it operationally possible to employ sound, television, film and print as options for mediating learning experiences.; and 5. Using testing and evaluation principally to diagnose and analyse the extent to which specified learning objectives have been accomplished. In other words, the system should be competence-based; and 6. Being able to accommodate distance between the instructional staff resources and the learner, employing the distance as a positive element in the development of independence in learning (MacKenzie et al. 1975, pp.16-17). Growth in online resources and also interest to continuously update oneself has led to growth in part time education. In UK, flexibility aspect is the s key attraction for part-time study (Pollard, Newton and Hillage (2012. p. 268)Growth in online resources and also interest to continuously update oneself has led to growth in part time education.

PRIVATISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Privatisation of higher education, in its early phases, was a philanthropic activity. Individuals established institutions in the name of their late father or mother or beloved and continued to financially support so that this institution could be treated as an alternative to similar institution run by the State. In course of time, philanthropy got replaced by industry for profit. In US, most top-ranked universities are private (European Union 2016 b, p. 54). Many international reports place private institutions as inferior ones. Even the quality monitoring agencies are found penalising private institutions, although they do not do so for government institutions for the same handicap.

For improving quality of private higher education in Asia, it is necessary to strengthen quality assurance and accreditation procedures for private higher education institutions, explore alternative funding models and promote a system that brokers international partnership opportunities (Asian Development Bank 2012, pp. 27-29). In Asia, nations witnessing massive privatisation of higher education need a high quality regulatory system to manage massification (Varghese 2015, p. 27). In Africa, increase in access to higher expansion “ is on a capacity-to-pay principle (Varghese 2016, p. 32). In India, privatisation has been flourishing in the absence of appropriate provision for government owned higher education institutions (Yash Pal 2009, p. 32). Privatisation of higher education and its accompanied ills are harmful for nations supposed to ensure equal opportunity for its citizens, as privatisation benefits the rich. There are philanthropists, who have created good private institutions. However, there are also many profit makers, who have created private institutions. Now in many nations, setting up a private institution is more profitable than setting up an industry. When demand for a particular course is very low, the organisation goes for another course or for utilising the material resources for having a residential school or starting other profit making courses. Institutions maintained by the governments also have been going for indirect privatisation by having self-financed courses, which

often have the same evils as found in case of programmes / courses offered by private higher education institutions in spite of existence of regulatory authorities.

REGULATORY BODIES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Nations are making efforts to improve their regulatory strategies so that institutions are motivated to perform better. “A good governance structure and favorable regulatory conditions can promote innovative behavior among tertiary education institutions...” (Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) (2012, p. 1). Unfortunately, there are instances of government institutions and universities taking advantage of their position and not sticking to the norms of the regulatory bodies and the authorities working for regulatory bodies also avoiding their responsibility to enforce norms on government institutions or universities (Mohanty 2016 a & b). Sixteen years ago, a Committee had been appointed by the Central Government of India to review higher education and suggest strategies for improvement. This Committee (Yash Pal 2009, p.63) had recommended replacement of the regulatory bodies by an all-encompassing constitutional body - National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER). Successive governments have not been able to accept this recommendation, although there have been many studies that point out inappropriate functioning of these regulatory bodies. In order to improve efficiency of regulatory bodies for higher education, in a review of quality of higher education in England, UK, the University Alliance (2014, p. 4) recommended a single regulatory body for all higher education providers in England. According to Altbach (2009, p. 199) China and India would play a major role in global higher education, as these two countries will be dominant nations sending students overseas, but also a future hub of Asian students (India as a hub for South Asian students). Marginson and van der Wende (2009, p. 44), commenting on situation in India, reported that “Despite India’s concentrations of technology-intensive industry and its global role as supplier of ICT labour, government dependent basic research has been slower to develop than in East Asia and Singapore.”

A FEW UNFULFILLED STRATEGIES OF NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION 1986 (WITH MODIFICATIONS UNDERTAKEN IN 1992)

A few strategies mentioned NPE 1986 (with modifications undertaken in 1992), which have not been touched or inadequately covered are:

1. Setting up Indian Education Service (Art. 10.3);
2. Increasing investment on Education (Art. 11.4);
3. Setting up State Advisory Boards of Education (Art. 10.4);
4. De-linking of Degrees from Jobs (Art. 5.38 , 5.39 & 5.40);
5. Providing Training for Educational Planners, Administrators and Heads of Institutions (Art 10.5);
6. Improving Network Arrangements (Art. 3. 9);
7. Improving Evaluation Process and Examination Reform (Art. 8.23, 8.24 & 8.25);
8. Having a Common Educational Structure (Art. 3.3);
9. Having State Councils of Higher Education (Art. 5.30);
10. Making the System Work (Art. 7.1, 7.2 & 7.3);
11. Improving Teacher Quality (Art. 9.1, 9.2 & 9.3);
12. Consolidating and Expanding Facilities in Existing Institutions (Art. 5.26);
13. Checking Degradation of Higher Education (Art. 5.27);
14. Undertaking Performance Appraisals of Institutions (Art. 7.3);
15. Giving Stress on Autonomous Departments (Art. 5.28)
16. Ensuring Flexibility in Curricula (Art. 5. 29)
17. Improving Material Resources (Art. 5. 31)
18. Having Rural Universities (Art. 5.42)
19. Improving Assessment of Performance of Students (Art. 5.41)
20. Improving Students' Services (Art. 7.3)
21. Providing Yoga Education (Art. 8. 2)
22. Ensuring High Quality Instructional Materials (Art. 8.24)
23. Providing Opportunity for Continuing Education for Products of Vocational Courses (Art. 5.20 & 5.22)

A FEW STRATEGIES SUGGESTED FOR IMPROVING HIGHER EDUCATION

A few strategies related to certain areas of higher education are being

given below for deliberation in various forums.

GENERAL

- * Conducting surveys of participation of regular students in shadow education (Private coaching of regular students);
- *Developing mechanisms to integrate learning through shadow education with learning in formal classrooms;
- *Deciding a target year for covering at least 60 per cent of population aged 25-34 with a certificate or a degree in higher education;
- * Conducting annual survey of completion and drop-out in higher education;
- *Establishing central and state level Centres for Educational Policy Studies; and
- *Giving autonomy to states to have their own education structure.

PROMOTING OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING AND ONLINE COURSES AND PART TIME EDUCATION

Making open universities have their own faculty instead of utilising the services and expertise of the regular faculty of face to face mode universities and institutions;

- *Reviving the old system of allowing a person with a Higher Secondary pass certificate to appear at degree examinations as private candidates and a degree holder to appear at university post graduate examinations as private candidates;
- * Promoting lifelong learning initiatives in its citizens by promoting part time education opportunities;
- *Allowing an individual, without any qualification, to appear at university degree examinations as private candidate and making necessary modifications in acts of central and state universities and organisations conducting such examinations.

TRANSFORMING SOCIETY

- * Bringing all educational programmes for SC & ST under one ministry - MHRD- Department of Higher Education;
- * Making reservation for students from SC and ST communities in

general hostels instead of establishing separate hostels for SCs and STs, which according to some may accelerate the process of integration of SC and ST community with others;

* Reservation for students from SC and ST communities in general colleges and universities instead of establishing separate colleges and universities for SCs and STs, which according to some may accelerate the process of integration of SC and ST community with others;

* Making all programmes / courses operating in university departments and centres and colleges of central and state governments charge no fee from students from parents not having specified annual income;

* Banning collection of seminar fee from post graduate students.

DEVELOPING THE BEST TEACHERS

* Making working in coaching centres or giving private coaching on payment a punishable offence for teachers getting regular salary;

* Empowering institution heads to engage teachers in appropriate institution related activities during the period in which they do not have to teach;

* Making evaluation of teaching skills get better weightage than evaluation of research publications, in case of evaluation of a higher education teacher;

* Making Teacher Eligibility test include assessment of skill in teaching and assessment of attitude towards teaching profession;

* Introducing a system of professional development of new teachers through mentors;

* Orienting higher education teachers in new forms of assessment of student learning;

* Introducing a system of peer observation and peer feedback for all higher education teachers;

* Having institution level professional development units to improve the quality of teaching faculty;

* Modifying scheme of Academic Staff colleges to make each university responsible for carrying out appropriate improvement in capabilities of its academic staff through its own Centre for Teaching and Learning;

* Making it part of duty of every higher education teacher to develop

a list of reading resources including internet resources for topics to be taught by him / her and getting the list updated at the beginning of every academic session and copies of the list to be made available in the library for use by the students;

*Making it part of duty of every higher education teacher to develop an annotated bibliography of books and other resources, available in the institution library, related to topics to be taught by him/her and getting that bibliography updated at the beginning of every academic session, and copies of the bibliography to be made available in the library for use by the students;

*Making provision for a cubicle with a computer and internet facilities for each higher education teacher;

Making libraries of higher education institution remain open throughout the year, at least for 12 hours a day, from morning 7 to evening 7.

*Making it part of duty of all higher education teachers including principals and professors teaching B.Ed./M.Ed./ M.A.(Education) or other types of courses related to Education subject, teach every year one unit of a school subject in a school.

*Making provision for two additional increments in salary for a lecturer in Education, who is required to have a M.Ed. degree (B.Ed. 1yr and M.Ed.1 yr) and another PG degree in a content subject, as recommended by Education Commission 1966 (Kothari 1966 Art. 4.41, p. 141).

Making provision for four additional increments in salary for a lecturer in Education, who is required to have a M.Ed. degree (2 yrs duration after B.Ed. of 2yrs duration) and another PG degree in a content subject, as per the above principle recommended by Kothari Commission.

MEANINGFUL PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR

*Encouraging and recognising private initiatives for assessing institutions and their programmes;

* Making statutory bodies ensure equal stress on application of norms and standards on courses and programmes offered by private and government colleges and departments and colleges of private and

government universities;

*Empowering heads of institutions to allow private individuals, with or without any formal qualification, for taking part in academic activities including teaching;

*Empowering institution heads to get funds from individuals and families for building rooms/ laboratories, gymnasias etc.

*Empowering institution heads to get material resources utilised by community, on payment basis.

INTERNATIONALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

* Specifying minimum level of academic excellence for entry to a course, applicable for all communities including SC and ST and foreign students;

* Formulating principles for cross border higher education by foreign institutions in India and also by Indian institutions going abroad.

*Formulating criteria for self-assessment by these institutions.

* Having nation wise culture clubs in colleges and universities providing cross border higher education.

*Universities and colleges, admitting foreign students, organising one week orientation programme on Indian culture and laws for foreign students and another week of orientation programme for community leaders in culture of countries from which students are admitted.

IMPROVING GOVERNANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

*Transferring responsibility of giving funds to higher education institutions in states and UTs from UGC to state and UT governments and central government giving block grants to states and UTs and making appropriate modification in UGC act;

* Having posts of vice-chancellors filled up on rotation basis for a period of three years, from among professors of the concerned university;

*Making medical education free and taking over all private medical colleges by the government;

*Making initial teacher training courses offered in government institutions free.

*Giving responsibility to States to have their own accreditation bodies

and central acts related to national level accreditation bodies get modified accordingly.

*Introducing registration system for shadow education (private coaching centres run at homes of teachers or in other establishments, on payment basis).

*Empowering universities and higher education institutions to raise funds by giving on rent their buildings and other material resources including playgrounds.

*Modifying autonomous scheme to give authority to affiliating universities and concerned state governments, instead of UGC to confer autonomy;

Not granting autonomy to colleges under managements (government and private) having more than one college under their control, if their teachers are transferable from one college to another;

*Making M. Ed. (Master of Education) Course open to any graduate.

*Having one year B.Ed. course of 230 days as suggested by Education Commission 1966 (Kothari 1966, p. 132), endorsed by Verma Commission 2012 (Verma 2012, p. 95);

Continuing two-year B.Ed. course in RIEs of NCERT, geared to initial teacher training for teaching in Navodaya Vidyalayas, with one year internship in Navodaya Vidyalayas and with appropriate higher salary scale of pay for such products;

*Having a model school teacher training institution run by the central government, in each state, for each level of school education;

*Making it mandatory for every university / college department and teacher training college running initial teacher training course for teaching at a stage of school education to have a model school in its campus by 2020, having classes of concerned stage of school education;

*Upgrading initial teacher training courses (Diploma, Certificate courses) for school teachers to higher education stage (Degree courses);

*Having uniform pattern of working days in all types of institutions including departments of Education in universities and colleges, offering initial teacher training courses have no vacations as found in case of Regional Institutes of Education of the NCERT. and making appropriate changes in service conditions of such types of teachers;

*Making B. Ed. (Yoga) / M.Ed.(Yoga) / M.A. (Education) Yoga courses introduced in all Departments of Education of Central Universities and in all Colleges of Teacher Education and Institutes of Advanced Study in Education, covered under central govt. scheme.

*Making District Institutes of Education and Training and Block Institutes of Teacher Education receiving financial assistance from the Central Government elevated to higher education stage and making appropriate changes in funding pattern of the Central Government.

IMPROVING QUALITY OF ASSESSMENT OF INSTITUTIONS AND UNIVERSITIES

*Giving freedom to institutions to get them assessed, by NAAC or not;

*Allowing States to have their own accreditation and assessment agencies and NAAC getting restricted to central government universities and institutions;

*Modifying accreditation system to have course and subject specific accreditation of colleges and universities;

*Making accreditation process take into consideration skills of teaching of faculty;

*Making follow up study of products of institutions part of the process of evaluation of programmes of the institutions;

*Making it mandatory for every college and every university department to have its annual performance reports.

IMPROVING HIGHER EDUCATION CURRICULA

* Ensuring flexibility in curricula including single subject Bachelor degree;

*Making it mandatory for national / state level statutory bodies for accreditation carry out, at intervals, comparative studies of syllabi for various courses offered by universities in India and also compare syllabi offered in Indian universities with universities in developed nations;

*Making provision for year round facilities for training in yoga and yoga practice in its institutions, as an optional activity;

*Making it mandatory for national / state level agencies involved in

accreditation of various categories of education undertake development and dissemination of annotated bibliographies of printed publications and printed resources related to each topic in the curricular areas covered by them;

Making universities specify number of teaching days in an academic session and cancelling holidays, in case of loss of working days due to strike and natural calamity and in such cases, having appropriate increase in personal leave of the teachers and other employees or extending the length of the academic year.

CONCLUSION

Initially, structures of education varied from one state to another. Although four decades have passed since education subject was brought to concurrent list of the Constitution, there are variations among States. For instance, NCTE act is not applicable for Jammu and Kashmir state. Most of the higher secondary classes in Odisha state are part of junior colleges and the students are taught by junior lecturers, who need not have any teacher training qualification. Odisha state has an act that prohibits teacher training through private agencies and there is only one private teacher training institution, which is run by a Christian group (minority group). Mizoram also does not have any private teacher training institution, Whereas private institutions dominate in other States. Certain states are forced to adopt undesirable strategies to cope with the requirements of the national level statutory bodies. These bodies also are forced to have differentiated approaches for private and government institutions. Nation, while formulating national policy, may need to have flexibility, noting existing variations among States and UTs, so that there may not be a situation, where States and UTs are forced to ignore the policy directives.

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