

Challenges To Higher Education And Role Of Open University

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Paper Received on: 10/07/2012

Paper Reviewed on: 14/07/2012

Paper Accepted on: 21/07/2012

Abstract

Higher Education is a powerful tool for social, political and economic change of any country. In a country like India with its large population, human resource development should be assigned a key role in the development strategy which has five energizers such as Health and Nutrition, Environment, Employment, Political and Economic freedom and the most important is Education. It contributes largely to the quality of the people through the country's Economic development.

Keywords : *Challenges To Higher Education, Role Of Open University*

DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

In India we have built a vast higher educational system. In 1950-51, there were 27 universities and 696 colleges with an enrolment of 3.68 lakh students and teaching faculties of 19,047. Within a span of 40 years the rate of growth has been very impressive. In 1990-91 there were 177 universities including deemed universities and 7,121 colleges, 44.25 lakh students and 2,13,125 teachers.

The system of Higher Education in our country is being put to test. In view of the emergence of an era of global consciousness, it is imperative to face the new challenges by the higher educational institutions by identifying the challenges and then respond correctly.

CHALLENGES TO HIGHER EDUCATION

(1) Supply of competent manpower with research and development support

In the regime of New Industrial Policy and Globalisation of Indian Economy, the level of skills is going to be high. Industries need to have a workforce having a scientific bent of mind, scientific temper and skill to maintain high quality of productivity. They need the help of higher educational institutions to respond effectively to meet the emerging challenges to train man and

women of caliber and competence of world standards and provide the needed research and development capability.

(2) **Making of provision to meet the deficit Resources**

Due to poor economic condition of the country, the Govt. of India is not in a position to meet the financial need of the educational sector particularly at the higher educational level. Therefore, it is necessary that the universities and other institutes of higher learning have to take up measures for resources generation to meet their financial deficit without govt. intervention.

(3) **Dissemination of Value Education**

At present there is a considerable fall in the moral, social, ethical and national values both in personal and public life. In this context higher education has the added responsibility to strengthen the value system in the society.

(4) **Undertaking of International Interaction, Collaboration and Consultancy Activities**

In the present day scenario due to globalisation, interaction and interdependence are the two major tools to be pronounced in the context of research crunch situation. The institutes of higher education and research must be or need to interact with the outside world for national development.

(5) **Building up Linkages**

It is the attention drawing challenge in the field of higher education. It is to build up strong linkages between universities, industries and other national research and development labs. Its sole aim is to share and maximum use of resources, development of indigenous technology, adoption imported technology to meet global competition, enriching teaching and research in universities and fund generation. If this linkage will be developed then the system of higher education will be more purposeful.

(6) **Quality vs. Quantity**

There is a general feeling in India that the quality of education imparted at the higher level of education is unsatisfactory and the standard is deteriorating day by day. Due to this there is a large gap between students of national and international standards. In order to eradicate these maladies the higher educational institutions need to be improved in terms of their neither quality nor quantity.

(7) **Cost Effectiveness**

A main constraint in the conventional system of education has been lack of flexibility and low productivity. It means whether university research resources are being used effectively? Practically not. For this while allocating funds for research, the students who have really made some contribution to knowledge can be taken care of. As a result a greater cost-effectiveness should be focused on.

To meet all these challenges, the higher educational system in India should be prepared to respond adequately to cope up with the changed situation. An open university can be of a great help to meet all these challenges of higher education if given a chance.

ROLE OF OPEN UNIVERSITY

From the above discussion we came to know that the conventional higher educational institutes have not been an effective means to equalize educational opportunities, are rigid and most of the time irrelevant to the needs of the learners. The need therefore arises that the closed educational system has to be made open. This is possible only through the open education with distance teaching. For this the Open University scheme is expected to meet the requirements of large section of people hunting for knowledge.

SIGNIFICANCE OF OPEN UNIVERSITY

In operational terms the essence of open learning lies in its being imparted and received in a non-institutional setting, making use of multi-media packages of distance education like print materials, audio and video cassettes, Radio and T.V. programmes, etc. and supplementing this packaged programme by contact programmes. So open learning system is distinct from the rigidly formal traditional institutional system in respect of age, educational background, curriculum instructional packages and evaluation methods.

The Open University system has been imitated in order to augment opportunities for higher education and as an instrument of democratising education.

The conventional attraction for degrees and the desire of many a secondary certificate holder to acquire further qualifications while in employment or working for employment led to the demand and provision of external degree course. The very idea of Open University may be reckoned to have its beginning with the establishment of the Open University in U.K. in the year 1969.

The first Open University in India was established in Andhra Pradesh in 1982 followed by IGNOU in 1985, Kota (1987), Nalanda (1987), YC Nagarastra and Nasik in 1989, Bhoj Open University, M.P. (1992).

OBJECTIVES

- (1) To facilitate by providing equal opportunities of education to citizen of India including the disadvantaged group.
- (2) To provide education and training as well as orientation of various segments of the population to achieve self-employment managerial skills.
- (3) To build up the capabilities of educational functionaries for achieving UEE and to make provision for substandard demand for Secondary education.
- (4) To provide diversified academic and vocational education or good quality at Secondary level and beyond to meet the emerging needs for personal, social and academic growth.

- (5) To provide wider access to higher education to a large population and maintain high quality of education on a part-time or own-time basis.

TARGET GROUPS

- (1) Those that could not go for higher education at an early stage but wish to do something about their higher education now.
- (2) Dropouts who want to have a second chance for higher Education.
- (3) Those who want to make their education a lifelong affair.
- (4) Housewives and other groups of people who want to pursue their studies without disturbing their normal life.

COURSE OFFERED

Diplomas and Degrees in Humanities, Commerce and Social Sciences.

- (a) **Humanities:** English language and literature, Regional languages.
- (b) **Social Science:** Political Science, History, Economics, Public Administration, Sociology, Library and Information Science.
- (c) **School of Sciences:** Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Life Sciences, Cell Biology, Ecology, Genetics, Physiology, Taxonomy and Evolution and Human Environment.
- (d) **School of Continuing Education:** Rural development and Women's Education (Childcare Services and Nutrition for the community).
- (e) **School of Computer and Information Sciences**
- (f) **School of Education:** Distance Education, Higher Education, Teacher Education.
- (g) **School of Management Studies:** Commerce and Management.

Apart from this some other courses like Irrigation and Water Resources , Diploma in Journalism and Mass Communication are being offered by different Open Universities.

MERITS OF OPEN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

- (1) **Supplement the efforts of traditional system:** The traditional system is partly unable to meet the needs of the growing number of students.
- (2) **Equality of Opportunity:** The Open University offers a sound chance of updating and acquiring higher education to all.
- (3) **Expand Geographical access to Education:** The Open University reaches every inaccessible areas through printed and electronic media.

- (4) **Expand the capacity for Education in new areas:** Traditional system provides education within the time frame. The Open University system meets the needs through fresh courses specially designed for the scientific and technological changes.
- (5) **Education in Natural Environment:** Through the Open Universities, the students can learn while working as well as living in home environment.
- (6) **Flexibility:** The Open University system meets the requirement of large no. of people in a manner to suit their need.
- (7) **High Potential for In-service Education:** Now with the advancement in the field of science and technology, to reap the benefit of new development, the govt. has set up training institutes to upgrade the skill and knowledge of personnel working in govt. sector. It can be done through Open University. It can increase the coverage in terms of contents and also nos. it can provide in-service training especially for technical personnel.
- (8) **New Methods of Instruction:** The much needed flexibility in the Open University offers the use of a variety of instructional methods in imparting quality education at a distance.
- (9) **Student Support Services:** Students support services consist of networking of study centers and Regional Centers where the Counselor/ Tutors act as the surrogates of teachers in classrooms and interact with the learners and are well equipped with audio-video cassettes, libraries and etc. In this case the learner can make the best use of what the learning package offers to him.
- (10) **Cost Effectiveness**

CONCLUSION

The Open University is not aimed at replacing the existing conventional university system. It aimed at providing an alternative form of education to widen educational opportunities to those who have been denied access to education for reasons of eco- or socio consideration or for family reasons by using modern technology. It caters to the need of every individual pupil.

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