Globalization and Education in India: The Issue of Higher Education

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Abstract: Anthony Giddens, a British sociologist, who is known for his holistic view of modern societies, held, “Globalization refers to the fact that we all live in one world, so that individuals, groups and nations become interdependent.” It is generally associated with neo-liberalism ideology which advocates the primacy of the market and opening up of the economy of all nations to free trade, privatization and withdrawal of the state from regulation of economic activities. India inherited globalization in early eighties when she took a massive loan of 5 billion SDRs from the IMF. But after one decade when India took another massive loan of $2.5 billion in 1991 to cope with the balance of payments crisis that globalization in India actually started. With the adoption of neo-liberal philosophy, economic reforms started and besides withdrawing from economic activities, disinvesting some PSUs, India for a liberalized trade regime, threw open country’s resources to foreign business conglomerates making it easy for them to exploit and have easy access. This paper discusses one the major issues, that is, Globalization & Higher Education.

Keywords: Globalization, Neo-liberalism, Nehruvianism, Tradition, Culture, Liberalization, Privatization.

I. Introduction

The term ‘globalization’ has been debated, discussed and practiced by social scientists, policy makers and administrators, educationists, political leaders etc., for more than two and a half decades now. It is characterised by the fact that it is a product of late capitalism. Desai (1987:67) mentioned the term ‘Late Capitalism’ is used to describe capitalism after the Second World War [1].

Defining Globalization

To understand meaning of term ‘globalization, continues to be elusive due to lack of consensus among social scientists. Hurrel(2003:223) has observed in The Oxford Concise Dictionary of Politics, Globalization resists any single or simple definition. It has multiple meanings. He has defined the term as follows; “Globalization is about the universal processes or set of processes which generate a multiplicity of linkages and interconnections which transcend the states and societies which make up the modern world system.” [2] Gordon et.al. (1998:258) offered a more comprehensive definition by saying, “Contemporary globalization theory argues that globalization comprises two entirely contradictory processes of homogenization and differentiation; that there is a complex interaction between localism and globalization; and that there are powerful movements of resistance against globalization process.” [3]

Anthony Giddens (2006: 50), a British sociologist and Director London School of Economics,“Globalization refers to the fact that we all live in one world, so that individuals, groups and nations become interdependent” [4]. Giddens points out some factors leading to globalization.

These are:
1) Internet computer technology
2) Integration of the world’s economy.
3) The weightless economy coupled with information technology.
4) The breakdown of the USSR and growth of mechanism of international and regional mechanisms of government.

To Sen (2009:2–6) there has been multiple consequences of globalisation [5]. These are:
1. Emergence of a three tiered structure in society.-the elites, the well to do middle class, and the marginalized. The growing discontent of the marginalized with globalization cannot be wished away.
2. Formal institutional structure designed to maintain hegemony over the third world countries.
3. The globalised market ignores the need for a decent level of living.
4. Only the rich and well to do can afford the costly technology.
5. The technology is being used against labour.
6. The domination of finance over manufacturing with consequent adverse effects on employment.
7. The domination of the US dollar in the world market.
8. Increasing inequality, both within and across nations.

II. Why Globalisation in India?
This question remains rhetoric among minds of scholars. The answer is rooted in the Indian economy. The decline of Indian economy and Third World countries as a whole in eighties created a serious balance of payments problem. The IMF loan in 1981 came as a solace to solve this problem and marked the beginning of liberalization. Adding to this, India's balance of payments crisis compelled her to seek a loan of \$2.5 billion in 1991 from the IMF.

III. Liberalization and after
India entered into globalization under compelling circumstances of spill over of balance payments. The liberalization became very preferred term in India. India witnessed many radical changes under the impact of liberalization. ‘Nehruvianism’ which imbibed socialistic changes of Soviet Russia dominated restructuring of Indian society till 1990. It was characterised by faith in democratic values and mixed economy, removal of poverty, reduction of economic inequalities, and equal opportunities for all, heavy industrialization, dominant role of public sector, check on monopolistic restrictions through MRTP ACT, import substitution through indigenization in crucial sectors, non-alignment and peaceful coexistence. Soon these were over shadowed by ‘liberalization’. Under its umbrella, emphasis came to be laid on number of philosophical aspects, such as, faith in democratic values, privatization, encouraging MNCs to enter the country, removing tariff barriers on imports, dependence on the IMF-World Bank model of stabilization and structural adjustment, heavy industrialization, privatization, abolition of ceiling of assets under MRTP ACT, encouragement to FDI and indiscriminate imports, dilution of Non-alignment and peaceful co-existence and subordination of India vis-à-vis USA. Pt. Nehru era India saw movement towards the massive development and heavy industrial base on the pattern of Russian Development Model and making India a self-sufficient economy, dream became blurred as India did not make much progress in solving development issues like equitable distribution of resources among the people. Excessive bureaucratization and politicization led to emergence of problems like corruption and patronage. The problems of inequality, illiteracy, poverty, hunger etc., persisted. Under the terms and conditions of IMF Loan Umbrella, India has to follow diktats of USA by pushing her philosophy of self-sufficiency and independent foreign policy backward.

Amidst radical changes taking place in India under the blanket forces of globalization, liberalization and privatization a few issues have emerged and deserve special attention. For instance, a few are: Employment scenario in India, Higher Education in India , Students unrest in India, Industrial unrest in India , FDI in retail in India, Corruption and scams in India, Ethnic and cultural conflicts in India, Political conflicts in India, and Economic disparities in India

IV. Globalization and higher education
Inherent in Globalization is continued stress on privatization, cutbacks in social welfare on part of government, and faith in the free market as a solution to the problems of employment, equitable distribution, and human happiness. Here, this paper will discuss the role of globalization in higher education in India. It does not mean that other issues are not significant in India’s development in global era. But the education and most particularly higher education is considered involved directly or indirectly with other issues because it is vital for development of human resource which in turn is responsible for technological and economic development.

India is a country with one of the second largest institutional higher education system in the world.

Choudha (2013) while talking on strategies in international higher education has attempted to dwell on some of the frequently asked questions. These are:
What are the different types of degree-granting institutions (universities/colleges) in India?
What is the enrolment of Indian students by level of education?
What are the top fields of study for Indian Students?

With 700 universities and 35,539 colleges having more than 20 million students, Indian higher education system presents a large and complex system. The organization and structure of degree granting institution is cumbersome primarily due to ‘affiliation’ mechanism and funding sources. More than 85 per cent of students are enrolled in graduate degree programs with majority converging in three year B.A., B.Com, or B.Sc. degrees.
In contemporary neo-liberal set up, India presents a lucrative and accessible market for the foreign players. There are number of foreign universities which have set up their campus in India independently or have collaboration with Indian universities and colleges of higher education. In such a scenario, it becomes vital to understand a very pertinent question i.e. Has globalization in higher education benefited India?

Table 1: Higher Education Institutions in India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Institution</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>E.g.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Universities (Public)</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>University of Delhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Universities (Public)</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>University of Mumbai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Universities (Private)</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>Amity University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deemed Universities (Private or Public)</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>Tata Institute of Social Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution of National Importance (Public)</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Indian Institute of Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Degree-granting Institutions</td>
<td>700</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affiliated Colleges (Public or Private)</td>
<td>35,539</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Enrollment of Indian Students by Level of Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Number ('000)</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduate (Bachelor's)</td>
<td>17,456</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Graduate (Master's)</td>
<td>2,492</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research (Doctoral)</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma/Certificate</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20,327</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Enrollment of Indian Students by fields of study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Number ('000)</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>7,539</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>3,790</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce &amp; Management</td>
<td>3,571</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering &amp; Technology</td>
<td>3,262</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>733</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>716</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary Science</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20,327</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Before we ponder over and discuss this question, let us first examine the General Agreement on Trade and Tariff (GATT) regulations regarding higher education. Under GATT regulations, all countries have to submit their educational schedules under five sub-sectors of education and four modes of supply of education.

- The five sub-sectors of education are: Primary Education; Secondary Education; Higher Education; Adult Education and Other Education.
- The four modes of supply of education are Cross-Border Supply; Consumption Abroad; Commercial Presence/Franchisee and Twining Programmes.

As Mithilesh Kumar Singh aptly pointed out, “The idea behind this is the creation of an open, global marketplace where services, like education, can be traded to the highest bidder.” [7]. How far will globalization benefit a country’s education system? What will be the role of our universities in the global education system? But there is lack of consensus on this either among Western educationists or Third world educationists.

American university leaders according to Van R.Wood University leaders interviewed tended to express a common vision that institutions of higher education have two central responsibilities in society today, including...
1) enlightening and preparing, not just their students, but their respective communities as a whole for the challenges and opportunities brought on by globalization; and 2) being the major supplier of the intellectual capital (knowledge workers) that communities need to survive and prosper in the era of globalization[8]. From Wood’s research, we find that American university leaders’ perceptions of the role of the university are a combination of idealism and pragmatism. In an earlier paper, Altbach (1989) explored the relation between colonialism and local political forces in developing countries. He argued that even those countries which were not colonized have been influenced by western education systems [9].

Indian intellectuals differ from their American counterparts. Das (2007) argues that access to higher education in India is severely restricted. He is critical of the World Bank view that higher education is a non-merit good and traces the consequences of such an approach to funding, finance and access. With regard to Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Higher Education the question, whether it is desirable deserves special attention? According to Samuel Paul, former director of IIM, Ahmedabad, “The entry of foreign education providers may also help stimulate our existing educational system to rethink its ways of working. Competition rather than fiat is the best way to accomplish this much needed transformation. The downside of the new policy is that access to the foreign providers’ programmes will be dominated by the elite segment of the population, as fees and other conditions of entry will tend to favour them”. He, however, did not expect highly reputed institutions opening shops in India. However, M S Narasimhan, Professor of Finance and Chairperson of Executive Education at IIM, Bangalore, holds since public funding is difficult to sustain in the long run, private players may be admitted. But, he is in favour of some kind of broad control over them including foreign players [10]. Mithilesh Kumar Singh, Senior Research Fellow of Apeejay-Stya Education Research Foundation, raises several uncomfortable sociological issues about the role of globalization in Indian higher education, questions that should be urgently resolved before FDI in higher education is allowed.

- Benefits of globalization to the different sections of the society – it is believed to be “far uneven”.
- Its role in creating greater social stratification and inequality – widening the gaps between the “haves” and “have nots”
- Its role in destabilizing and distorting the indigenous culture, tradition and values.
- Its role in alienating the youth from its own place by uprooting and at the same time not sure of providing a landing space. And
- More than these, its role in facilitating the rich countries to grow richer by drawing the resources from the poor.

The perspectives educationists amongst us realise that globalization in higher education is not a pure and rosy blessings. It is rather a mixture of number of related issues. While Americans may find higher education intellectually sound, enlightening and a source of intellectual capital, but in India there is a genuine apprehension that opening the floodgates to FDI in higher education may pave the way for second or third rung education providers swamping the education market, leading to greater social stratification in India, alienating our youth from their roots and making handsome profits in the process of providing education, which they will repatriate to their home country. This may also apply to local players in higher education sector. Only stringent governmental controls over all private players, including foreign players, making them accountable to the country in terms of the quality of education they provide, the fees they charge, the salaries they pay to their staff and the profits they repatriate to their head offices etc. will ensure that FDI in higher education benefits Indians. Despite the fact that Indian government has geared up up its regulatory bodies such as UGC, NAAC, AICTE, NBA, State Regulatory Bodies, the apprehension is more or less coming true. It is too early to point out categorically, but the time will tell which way the wind blows.

V. Discussion

There cannot be any denial in our psyche that the recent globalization has its roots in the neo-liberal philosophy. Fidel Castro (2003) in his address in the Fifth Meeting on Globalization and Development held in Havana, Cuba, has categorically pointed out: “Neo-liberal globalization constitutes the most blatant recolonization of the Third World”. [11]. As a result of pressure from the USA and western countries, India apparently began ‘reforms’ from 1991 onward[12]. Former Indian President, K.R. Narayana, in his address to the concluding function of the Asian Social Forum on 7th January, 2003 observed.”Reforms are necessary but for whom and for what?” He rightly said that reforms should benefit the people, and provide them employment [13]. But it can be observed that that our elected successive governments did not toe this line of advocacy. On the contrary, Indian government during this decade has more and more opened up its economy to western finance capital, ostensibly to encourage economic development and employment. Recently, the opening of higher education sector to foreign finance capital in tune with the retail sector, I agree with those who say that second rate or third rate foreign universities may open shop in India. They have started becoming foreign pseudo-islands in the sea.
of Indian higher education. They will produce graduates who will be schooled in foreign culture, either in India or abroad. One should not forget that already western education is producing youth who are alienated from their own culture and society. In the times that follow, the gap between masses and these educated youths will widen. Moreover, with the market dominating higher education, only those who can afford to spend massively on education will benefit. Poor but meritorious students will be shown the door. Amidst private players (foreign and local) dominating higher education, no doubt, huge the “state of art” infrastructures are emerging in India. But these player’s with their sole motive of profit making, may compromise with the quality of education and the faculty. Such practices get encouragement from inadequate regulatory mechanism in contemporary India. Globalization may be held responsible for this menace in higher education. It is may be observed that the Choice Based Credit System has come as handy with private institutions to push back quality of education and allure students through tempting advertisements to their huge physical infrastructure which is beyond reach of a common man. Further research is needed to understand these contradictions in Indian higher education.

VI. Concluding Observation

The prime concern of this paper has been on the Globalization & Higher Education. Globalization is likely to have any differential impact on Higher Education in Indian society. It is now amply evident that globalization, and its attendant features like privatization, withdrawal of government from public services including education and emergence of FDI in higher education have opened the floodgates to alienation of youth from Indian Education System their native culture which is still admired world over. Given the inherent structural inequalities in Indian society, in future inequalities are likely to increase with consequent strengthening of social stratification and intensification of social unrest. It is not possible to dismiss at this juncture that India may move towards Marxist and Engelsian prophecy of two classes i.e. ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’. Further, it leads us to think, Indian society to develop for the all round benefit of the people, needs an alternative model of development, having consonance with our tradition and indigenous cultural milieu.

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