

# Higher education: Indian perspectives

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The recognition and importance of Indian perspectives in higher education have grown significantly in recent time. It would be wrong to assume that the Indian perspectives in higher education didn't find a place in the educational system. The limitation in the past was the absence of an integrated approach. Globalization distracted our approach for a considerable period with a blurred view of the identity and values we have been pursuing as Indians. It is also true that globalization has many features to adopt for good. Amartya Sen said, "To see globalization as merely western imperialism of ideas and beliefs will be a serious and costly error." Isolation in the name of the Indian perspective will prevent multiple adaptations necessary in new and emerging areas. It is not necessary to dilute the basic features of Indian values, while we are choosing the multiple adaptation strategies.

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) came out with the publication 'Pursuit of Quality in Higher Education: An Indian Perspective' in 2020. The articles dealt with diverse emerging areas indicating the need for adaptation and adoption. The origin of an idea is based on a particular context. Our education also needs to be contextualized. During the initial years of globalization, the adoption of abstract principles originated elsewhere somehow became a common practice. To make a better society, hybridization of ideas to develop a robust structure on an Indian platform is necessary.

Upholding of human values is an Indian perspective. Tolerance, sensitivity, and respect for diversity are

three important components of the Indian value system which contribute to inclusivity and integration the society. These values develop mutual respect to ensure the prevalence of individual rights. The concept of human rights education in India under influence of globalization is a way to unfold Indian values under a different name. Cultural invasion is a slow, subtle and natural process. It is like air attaining equilibrium by flowing from high to low pressure. When equilibrium is attained, it becomes a new normal. The harmonious relationship amongst communities is a form of equilibrium and should come as a way of life. Discrimination resulting from ignorance is easy to eradicate through education but discrimination with a purpose is difficult to eradicate. This requires enforcement which again may bring imbalance elsewhere. Eradication of poverty through effective policies, ignorance through effective education and prejudices through social engineering would bring a new social structure. This new structure under the present context may not appear traditional Indian. This will be a new India with different perspectives.

The Indian Gurukul system had active learning, flexible learning, participatory learning, and social learning as integral parts of the learning process without assigning specific names to the units of the diverse learning process. All these are now emerging as new educational processes under specific names. In the

adoption of the new process, there is all possibility of intrusion of new experience originated elsewhere. We can't ignore this having a subtle mix to have a new Indian perspective.

India has a long tradition of scientific pursuit which set the foundation for much modern research. It is important to maintain scientific inquiry for the sustainable growth of the nation. Science teaches us to be open in our thinking process to accept new ideas. Science has no boundary and

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knows the fact which is relevant only to a specific time and space with a knowledge network spreading across the world. Thus knowledge production and dissemination have to be universal to establish truth in a higher education institution. To take the benefit of science, we need to internationalize higher education, which will encourage research to remain competitive. Motivation from tough demanding scientific careers will help to bring Indian perspectives into a higher education setting aside ideological needs and beliefs. It is no doubt that a cultural & social envi-

ronment is necessary which the Indian value system can provide for the intellectual endeavour. Enabling scientific temper is the key to interpreting Indian perspectives of higher education.

Regimentation of society with ideological fervour may resist preparedness to challenge aggressive cultural invasion. The holistic development of individuals to function with an open mind was the objective of the Gurukul system. This basic approach to the Indian system can only dominate the negative impact of globalization. This will expose an individual to the realities of different walks of life to confront challenges. We have been insisting on excellence in higher educational institutions. Excellence is possible only through social concerns, an open mind, scientific temperament and the ability to appreciate human values. The quality of students eligible for a degree in higher education can't be judged in

quantitative terms alone. Few institutions are innovative enough to establish an integrated evaluation process combining qualitative and quantitative parameters. We have been quite often speaking on the creation of job-giver rather than job-seekers. These inherent characters need to be oriented by establishing an enabling environment. When the platter is full, we can think of a choice as per our liking.

The diversity of Indian culture has provided scope for a multifaceted perception of an event. This is a strength that would enable multicul-

tural education to be successfully implemented. Exploration and understanding of different cultures would enable us to be more inclusive and holistic in our imagination. There is an attempt to include texts & lessons about people who have traditionally been excluded. Some were privileged to be in the limelight at the cost of others. This does not justify their exclusion at this point as a synthesis of scholarship can only upgrade a community and help it to sustain itself in a market-driven society. This motivates and prepares people to live in a diverse community and maintain social harmony. India is synonymous with multiculturalism. In a multicultural society, the appreciation of diversity would always be concerning a dominant culture. This requires special skills to make students think and understand the nuances.

Technology intervention had come much earlier in advanced countries, which had helped to understand the concepts better in many areas. It is not appropriate to believe that technology would suitably fit into all areas of study. Illustration through the technology of the invisible would definitely help to augment the concept better. Social conflicts, contradictions are not always possible to perceive through technology. Social engagements in such issues would lead to better understanding. In such engagements, certain dedication and passion would be necessary. Problem-solving ability in society comes through reasoning and thinking. This is possible only through the active engagement of students of higher education in society. Indian values have a strong foundation that is difficult to be dislodged. The strength of those values can be made best use in higher education provided we perceive them in the right spirit.