

Enhancement of Quality in Higher Education for the Welfare of Mankind

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Indian Universities fall short in the World University rankings due to poor quality of education. We hardly ever find a rank among the top 200 universities of the world for our system of higher education does not meet the global performance criteria in which various aspects like teaching, research, caliber of the faculties as well as students and their international outlook are taken into consideration before adjudging them. It's a matter of grave concern for a nation like India, especially that had earned the distinction of being called the Vishwa Guru – the preceptor of the world. In fact, it is high time for all the stakeholders in the system of Higher Education in India for earnest and sincere introspection to get rid of this blot and strive hard once again to earn the revered distinction of Vishwa Guru. There has been erosion in the standard of higher education during last few decades. Baijayant Jay Panda regrets the decline in the quality of India's higher education: "Year after year, credible domestic and international stakeholders expose India's alarming scenario, Unesco's 2012 Education For All index ranks India 102 out of 120 countries." (Panda 14). The academicians should ponder over the issue to enhance the quality of higher education to restore it to its heydays once again. To cope with problems one has to go to the root of the same so as to eradicate them radically one by one. All the stakeholders like government, the management, the faculties and of course the students will have to ponder over their pious responsibility to bring about a change for betterment in this dismal scenario at the earliest.

In an ideal state it ought to be the utmost concern and responsibility of the government to impart education of best quality to its citizens to make them not only better citizens but also noble human beings. All the citizens from all walks of life should have an easy access to education from elementary level to the highest level, irrespective of their differences of caste, creed, or economic status that too only in state aided educational institutions. It is becoming a nightmare in the rapidly transforming scenario of academic world which is being highly commercialized for quite a few decades. The prime purpose of autonomous institutions, save a few really good, is to earn greater profits rather than educate the youth in the proper sense of the term. This apparently results into the

poor quality of education. Despite collecting exorbitant fees from the students they appoint teachers of substandard quality who can't do justice to their work. Hence, it is indispensable for the apex body framing educational policies to put a check on the indiscriminate commercialization of higher education. Here candidates with lower percentage in the qualifying degree also easily get admission by paying excessive fees. And ultimately they pass out with the degree that they do not deserve.

In fact, the expense incurred by the government on the education of citizens is not expense but it's a sort of long term invaluable investment. It can fetch the best returns for the nation and put her on the path of progress in the fast developing world for knowledge is power and power without knowledge can not last long or otherwise also it can prove to be destructive. In fact Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam too had availed of the same education system which was state aided and he proved himself to be the most precious asset for the nation as he fortified our defense power by his ingenious research in the realm of launching ingenious satellite and by making India self-reliant in rocketry. Therefore, the parochial perception of the expenditure incurred on education by the government as a monetary burden is not only baseless but also perilous to the best interests of the nation! On the contrary, Panda's view in this regard is worth mentioning. To quote him: "The big challenge remains to fund education adequately, yet keep it free of the red tape that is stifling it." (Panda 14). So, the earlier this truth is perceived by the authority, the better it is in the interest of the nation.

The Management of an institution is one of the most significant stakeholders which can take the ship in the right direction! The Management of any higher education should have more academicians in its committee who have the first hand experience of the pros and cons of the field. They must have the interest of the students in their heart. Since they are at the helm of affair in the institutions it is their pious accountability to select the faculties who are up to the mark so that they can put in their best efforts in helping the students excel in all respects. They are supposed to rise above the parochial consideration of caste, creed or religion. Since it is in their purview to utilize the financial assistance, it is their solemn duty to spend every penny of it for the highest possible uplift and betterment of the students – the direct beneficiary of the whole system and one of the most significant stakeholders. Thus, they can be truly instrumental in enhancing the quality of higher education by their bonafide intention. The Management is expected to have vision and foresight. It must be their incessant endeavour to encourage the faculties as well as the students to achieve excellence in teaching and learning respectively to carve their own niche in their areas of interest. They should aspire for excellence. They should be dynamic and bring about the innovative changes with the course of time and provide the best kind of infrastructure to the faculties as well as students. Above all they can be instrumental in creating the best conducive environment for excellent quality education.

The Faculties are like the crests of any institution of higher education. They are the role-models of the students. The students love and revere their teachers as much as their parents. Hence, it is the sacred and solemn accountability of teachers to uphold their faith in them. Since the students always envisage them as their role models, it is their sacred duty to teach them to their best contentment. Dr.Kalam also acknowledges the obligation of his teachers for shaping his thinking. He says: “In a course of my education at MIT, three teachers shaped my thinking. Their instruction formed the foundation on which I later built my professional career. Professors Sponder, KAV Pandalai and Narsingha Rao were distinct personalities, different in many ways but sharing a common trait – the capacity to feed their students intellectual hunger with brilliance and untiring zeal” (Kalam & Tiwari 12-13).

A lamp can ignite another lamp only if it is ignited itself. In the same way a teacher who keeps learning incessantly can teach very well. Teachers should adopt the learner-centred approach. In Ratkalle’s view: “In today’s classrooms the student is an active participant in the education process and the role of a professor is that of a facilitator as opposed to that of an instructor. The instruction is designed to engage students in learning experiences that not only enable them to learn content but also to develop greater passion for learning enabling them to learn to learn.” (Ratkalle 18).

A good teacher is always concerned about the quality of his/her teaching. He is supposed to put in hard work to prepare his topic in advance so as to explain it lucidly before the students. The best quality of teaching on the part of a faculty will naturally inspire the students for achieving excellence in their performance and achievement as the proverb goes that example is better than percept. Then they will not need exhortation in that regard.

A faculty in higher education is supposed to pursue research but of course ingenious. Research is a matter of self- interest and intuition and it arises out of instinct. So, true research is always far from plagiarism. In case it is tainted even slightly in this regard it is the darkest blot on a faculty’s career. Hence, it is the pious duty of a teacher to pursue research painstakingly and in a purely ingenious manner. This in turn will result in the betterment of quality in a faculty which will be reflected in his/her inter-action with the students. Research for a faculty is not a destination but an incessant journey on the path of learning. The students in higher education are matured and well-read. They should be encouraged for inter-action and not discouraged! As inter-action helps in their all-round development and broadens their thinking and develops their faculties of mind. It also broadens their outlook towards everything in life. Inter-action is the soul of higher education. So a faculty in higher education should prove his or her worth by inter-acting aptly with the students to the best of their contentment and should encourage them for the same. With the advancement in technology now

knowledge is at the tips of one's fingers. So the faculties are supposed to have computer literacy so that they can resort to various devices of advanced technologies for teaching in a better way in addition to the traditional method which is not inferior in any sense, though, and it should never be abandoned as conventional method is more inspirational and easy to comprehend for there was 'Smriti' and 'Shruti' 'parampara-tradition' in ancient days in the ancient 'Gurukuls'!

The most important thing in a faculty is his humanitarian approach which will help in making his/her students better human beings. The ultimate aim of education is the ennoblement of human soul, the betterment of human nature and the welfare and uplift of the underprivileged classes, so a faculty should strive hard to make the students better human beings. Thus, as one of the most important stakeholder the faculty is supposed to shoulder the sacred responsibility of enhancing the quality of education in the true sense of the term but it can be carried out only if the teacher considers it to be his ethical duty assigned by God which, fortunately, is also a means of his livelihood!

Moreover, apart from classroom teaching a teacher has the unfathomable potential to lead the whole society and the nation and the whole world for that matter on the path of truth and righteousness. The same potential was identified by the great Chanakya before thousands of years as he had said,

“शिक्षकभीसाधारणनहींहोता, प्रलयऔरनिर्माणउनकीगोदमेपलतेहैं।” He can set an exemplary model for the next thousands of years by his painstaking toil to enrich his/her knowledge of his/ her sphere incessantly. He should be an ardent learner for lifetime for the welfare of mankind as he is the apostle of God for carrying out His Commands for the alleviation of the miseries of the mankind ! He should never underestimate his God-gifted infinite latent potential of bringing about a positive transformation in the lot of the fellow human beings. The gamut of his knowledge should not remain restricted within the confined periphery of a classroom but the society at large should be benefited by his vast learning for a true teacher is always a teacher by choice and not by chance ! That is why despite being the diplomats of a lofty stature venerable Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan and revered Dr.A.P.J.Abdul Kalam always took mighty pride in being identified as teachers only. Dr. Radhakrishnan, a great philosopher, made the teachers of the whole world proud by making a very pious and humble suggestion of celebrating his birthday as the teacher's day on 5th September. In fact he was instrumental in restoring the dignity of teachers after thousands of years once again. In the same way when Dr. A.P.J.Abdul Kalam was asked once how he would like to be remembered after his demise by the posterity and his instant response was that it would be merely as a teacher ! Not as a great space scientist, nor even as the former President of India ! And he kept his word till his last

breath by imparting value based education in various institutions of India even after relinquishing his Presidentship.

Last but not the least; the students are the most important stakeholders of the system of higher education. Students are the hearts of any educational institution whose presence keeps it throbbing like human heart. The students are the ultimate beneficiaries of the whole system. Education plays the most significant role in moulding a man's personality and character. Man has been blessed by God with the faculty of thinking which can be developed to its maximum capacity only with the help of proper and purposeful education. In fact today unfortunately the very term education is taken for granted in the limited sense of enabling the youth for earning their bread and butter or for livelihood. In ancient India education was called 'Vidya' - which has very subtle deeper and noble connotations in comparison with the limited sense assigned to the term education nowadays.

But the students of a university are supposed to develop universal outlook. They should save themselves from the parochial perception that education only helps one earn one's bread and butter. Had it been so the great freedom fighters like Gandhiji, Sardar Patel, Subhas Chandra Bose to name a few, would never have sacrificed their honorable and successful professional career on the altar of Freedom struggle ! They should always aim at achieving the highest goal in their career as well as in their lives. Good and moral education inculcates the best humanitarian qualities like nobility, humility, integrity, tolerance, understanding, compassion, co-operation, fearlessness and patriotism. So it should be the aim of a good student to prove his worth in the best way by developing these qualities in him and then applying them in real life for the betterment and welfare of the society as service to humanity is service to God. It suffices to say that only proper value based education can save the mankind from the lurking peril of its extinction from the destructive forces of bigotry, fanaticism and its natural offspring terrorism. ! It has rightly been said that when we open a school, we close a prison.

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