



Indian Vision 2020 for Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

Education is one of the most important factors in achieving the developmental goals of the country. It is the key to the national development. There are three futures that we have to contend with the 1. Contemporary future, 2. Visible and the predictable future and 3. Distant and unpredictable future. The great Nobel Literature and writer Rabindranath Tagore was one of the earliest educators to think in term of global education village and his educational model has a unique sensitivity and aptness for education within multi-racial, multi-lingual and multi-cultural situations. UNESCO in its policy paper on 'Change and development of higher education' emphasized that 'State and Society must perceive higher education, not as a burden on federal budgets but as a long term domestic investment in order to increase economic competitiveness, cultural development and social cohesion.' India is one of the fastest developing countries of the world and in order to script a truly sustainable growth pattern in the 21st century, what India needs to do is build up its human capital base. Indian Planning Commission constituted a Committee on vision 2020 for India in June, 2000 under the chairmanship of Dr. S. P. Gupta, Member, Planning Commission. This initiative brought together over 30 experts from different fields. Their deliberations, extending over a period of more than two years, has helped to know up a range of interesting possibilities, critical issues and decision-points for government and private bodies for future action.

Introduction

Education is one of the most important factors in achieving the developmental goals of the country. It is the key to the national development. It is an investment in the human resources. In the present age of science and technology, it has been increasingly realized that one needs to be educated not only to become a better social being, human should also be a better creative and productive being. Education has come to be recognized as the main instrument of socio-economic change, hence it has been rightly said that the destiny of a

nation is shaped by quantity and quality of students coming out of schools, colleges and universities. Education has been accepted as an instrument and for strengthening the values of democracy.

There are three futures that we have to contend with the 1. Contemporary future, 2. Visible and the predictable future and 3. Distant and unpredictable future. For a crucial component of human development like education, one must be constantly alert to the ubiquitous phenomenon of change – change that is evolutionary as well as revolutionary, and then prepare ourselves not only to respond to the inevitable and imperative change but also to engineer change that would be instrumental in achieving the multi-faceted growth of a social order. The world of higher education in the 21st century can truly be a borderless world of knowledge and ideas, which will yield reciprocal benefits for all nations.

India Vision 2020 for Higher Education

The great Nobel Literature and writer Rabindranath Tagore was one of the earliest educators to think in term of global education village and his educational model has a unique sensitivity and aptness for education within multi-racial, multi-lingual and multi-cultural situations. He saw education as a vehicle for appreciating the richest aspects of other cultures, while maintaining one's own cultural specificity.

A. Change and Development of Higher Education

UNESCO in its policy paper on 'Change and development of higher education' emphasized that 'State and Society must perceive higher education, not as a burden on federal budgets but as a long term domestic investment in order to increase economic competitiveness, cultural development and social cohesion.' India is one of the fastest developing countries of the world and in order to script a truly sustainable growth pattern in the 21st century, what India needs to do is build up its human capital base.

Education should provide the skills for 'learning to know, learning to live together, learning to do and learning to be.' Thus education is the primary agent of transformation towards sustainable development and increasing people's capacities to transform their visions for society into reality. education for sustainable development has come to be seen as a process of learning how to make decision that consider the long-term future of the economy, ecology and equity of all communities. Building the capacity for such futures-oriented thinking is a key task of education. This represents a new vision of education, which emphasizes a holistic, interdisciplinary approach to developing the knowledge and skills needed for a sustainable future as well as changes in values, behavior and life-style.

B. India vision 2020 for Higher Education According to the Committee Constituted by Indian Planning Commission

Every country needs a vision statement which stirs the imagination and motivates all segments of society to greater effort. Indian Planning Commission constituted a Committee on vision 2020 for India in June, 2000 under the chairmanship of Dr. S. P. Gupta, Member, and Planning Commission. This initiative brought together over 30 experts from different fields. Their deliberations, extending over a period of more than two years, has helped to know up a range of interesting possibilities, critical issues and decision-points for government and private bodies for future action.

1. Protecting the Brand Image of Higher Education

The nation's vision of developed India requires greater thrust to scientific and technological advancements. All our IITs, IIMs have graduated as world class brand institutions in addition to the century old premier institution – Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. These characteristics must be preserved and nurtured. We should also encourage universities to become cradles of higher learning and research, contributing generation of high skilled global human resource force.

2. Employment and Higher Education

The vision document identifies a number of high employment potential sectors, including commercial agriculture, agro-business, forestation for pulp, fuel and power, retail and wholesale trade, education and financial services. The report of the Committee examines many important issues, but the ones that stand out most powerfully are employment and education.

3. Greater Coverage and Better Quality Education

Education is the second main thrust area of this document. Greater coverage and better quality education at all levels from basic literacy to hi-tech science and technology is the essential prerequisite for raising agricultural productivity and industrial quality, spurring growth of India's building and nutrition, achieve 100 per cent enrolment at primary and secondary levels and broaden access to higher education and vocational training through both traditional and non-traditional delivery system.

4. To Improve the Linkage between Technology Development and Technology Application

Literacy and general education form the base of the knowledge pyramid which is essential for a rapid and sustained development of the society in the 21st century. The continuous advancement of science and the application of improved technology constitute the middle rung. Social ideas and values form the apex. Technical education, both vocational and professional, provides the foundation for development of science and technology. A large number of the country's engineering colleges need to be upgraded to quality standards nearer to those of India's world-class IITs. Another essential requirement is to improve the linkage between technology development and Technology application by fostering close ties between basic research and business.

5. Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Rapid flow of information is a catalyst for social development. Vision 2020 conceives of India evolving into an information society and knowledge economy built on the edifice of information and communication technology (ICT) of which telecommunications is the springboard. Rapid expansion and extension of the country's fixed and mobile telecom infrastructure is essential for stimulating growth of both the ICT sector and the economy as a whole. Mobile telecommunications and the internet will set the contours of technological progress over the next two decades. The third generation mobile devices with access to mobile data and voice should be within reach of wide sections of the population by 2020. This situation will be useful for the students and the teaching-staff at higher education level.

6. To Provide Knowledge and Job-oriented Skills

India in 2020 must be a nation in which all those who aspire for higher education have access to college and university level courses. A national network of community colleges, similar to the highly successful American system, is needed to provide knowledge and job-oriented skills to millions of young people who lack interest in or capacity for more stringent academic studies. The advent of computer and the internet –based educational methods offer an exciting new learning medium that can literally transform our concept of college and classroom from physical into virtual realities.

7. Personal Attention and Assistance for the Students

Studies in the USA project a radical reshaping of higher education over the next two decades as a result of the digital revolution. Many traditional colleges will close as more course works are delivered at a distance through alternative channels. The traditional boundaries between education and other sectors will fade, as publishers, for profit and non-profit organizations, offer accredited, multimedia-enhanced courses directly to students, by passing the university. The traditional classroom type of education, which is most useful for students that require personal attention and assistance and for subjects that involve hands-on experimentation, will no longer, be the predominant model of education. For all other purposes, it is very costly and not very efficient in the way it uses the time of both teachers and students.

8. Computer-based Educational Methods

Experience shows that computer-based educational methods can lead to much faster rates and higher quality of learning, which is more inter-active and motivating for students at the higher education level. It is extremely effective for enhancing reading and language skills and general knowledge among the very young and even for some sophisticated professional courses such as medical and engineering.

Given the huge number of young students that will quest for all levels of higher education in the coming 2020 and the severe shortage of qualified instructors, and the light of India's outstanding expertise in the IT industry, the country needs to embark on a massive programme to convert the entire higher educational curriculum into a multi-media, web-based format and to establish accreditation standards for recognition of distance education so imparted.

Vision of India in 2020 is predicated on the belief that human resources are the most important determinants of overall development. As India's IT revolution has been fuelled by the availability of a very large reservoir of well-trained engineers, its future development in many different spheres will depend on communicate development of sufficient and surplus capabilities.

9. Inclusive Education for Special Needs Students

By 2020 attempts will be made to integration education on comprehensive base for physically and mentally handicapped students. Inclusive education for special needs students has a wider connotation than merely providing education. It includes combating discriminatory attitudes of students and teachers and creating a community that welcomes

inclusive education. One of the most important features of inclusive education would be to set up a resource rooms for supporting special needs students at higher education level.

10. Special Programmes for Countries which have Indian-origin Population

Countries like USA, Canada, South Africa, UK, and Australia have large population of India origin. These people still keep up the Indian tradition and want to maintain their cultural roots. The younger generation in these countries, is keen to know about the culture of India and also their provincial language like Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu etc. It would be most appropriate if suitable programmes are launched for teaching these languages to the willing people as well as exposing them to common feature of Indian culture. Income generation should be one of the objectives of knowledge society. International markets may be explored where Indian textbooks or other materials like computer programmes can find access. Educational links through University grants commission, National council of Educational research and training, Indira Gandhi National Open University and National Council for Teacher Education will be developed and programmes will be designed to keep Indian origin persons on close touch with Indian culture and Indian languages.

11. Providing and Promoting Indigenous Knowledge

In the knowledge society communities will assess education in quality and utility as per their own norms. The Report of UNESCO Commission on Education for 21st Century entitled: 'Learning – The Treasure Within' pleads for an education which is 'rooted to culture and committed to progress.' Mahatma Gandhi wanted education to be so rooted that there would be continuity in the social, cultural and economic environment of life. A sound education according to him would prepare the present generation to take up activities which relate to the previous generation and ensure continuity for the next generation. A sense of pride in the achievements of the predecessors and in the culture of the country is a prerequisite for dynamic and forward-looking society.

12. Curriculum

Review, Revision and Development: Curriculum will emphasize value education, meditation and importance of silence. It will gradually build in students higher levels of awareness to humanity to rationality to civility and to divinity. Curriculum should make students aware of positive and critical thinking and the harms of negativity and negative thinking. Curriculum will stress on joyful learning. A mechanism will be evolved to ensure that college and university curriculum as well as the curriculum of teacher education gets reviewed, revised and updated every five years. It may also be stressed that distance education and open learning systems are optimally used. Multimedia packages, CD ROMS and hyper texts need to be developed and made available in the library and students.

13. Teacher Education

Teacher education programmes by 2020 will be drastically revised. The focus of teacher training will become more school based. All teacher education programmes pre-service as well as in-service will have substantial input of information and communication technology. The thrust area of teacher education programmes go to developing thinking capabilities in student teachers. Teacher education programmes will develop in teachers a new

insight about plurality of perspectives. It is necessary that institution like UGC, NCERT, NUEPA, NCTE, SCERT and DIET and others have more collaborative.

14. Educational Management

Educational management must become effective doing the right things rather than being more efficient. All administrative units will be electronically connected and will have strong component of Educational Management Information system (EMIS). It should have more decentralization, less bureaucracy and more converging governance. In each state there will be a State Educational Council which would look into the total gamut of activities relating to school from pre-primary to university level. There will also be District Education councils with appropriate authority and responsibilities. The planning unit will become district and then subsequently block. There will be more convergence of funding.

Universities will give more attention to under graduate teaching. By 2020 at least 50% of university age learners will receive higher education. Each university will have some special programmes suited to the genius of that locality. University Education Department will undertake more programmes relating to extension and research in school education. Links will be developed between school education and higher education.

15. Examination Reforms

Often, we have witnessed that many important national examinations have been the target of attack by a select group of corrupt individuals who undermine the very fabric of secrecy and transparency of the conduct of these examinations. While we should deal with such individuals with sternness to protect the image of our national selection system and the quality, we should also find technological solution that can ensure tamperproof examination system.

C. Vision of Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam

His Excellency Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, President of India, in *The Tribune* dated July 8, 2003 in his article, “Creative leaders can change India’ stated that a knowledge society can be a one of the foundations for the vision of a developed India. Knowledge has always been the prime mover of prosperity and power. The acquisition of knowledge has, therefore, been the thrust are throughout the world and sharing the experience of knowledge is a unique culture of our country. In the 21st century a new society is emerging where knowledge is the primary production resource instead of capital and labor. The ability to create and maintain knowledge infrastructure, develop knowledge of workers and enhance their productivity will be the key factors in deciding the prosperity of the knowledge society,” Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam also observed – ‘Spirit of inquiry, creativity, entrepreneurial and moral leadership are the capabilities central to nation building in a democracy. Educators should develop in our students these capacities and make them autonomous learner who are self-directed and self-controlled.

3. Conclusion

This vision statement of India 2020 may not fulfill all these criteria to our full satisfaction but it can serve as a useful starting point and foundation for contemplating future possibilities and our destiny as a nation. It can serve to indicate the broad lines of policy and

strategy by which India can emerge as a far stronger, more prosperous and more equitable nation in the coming years. By 2020, the people of India will be more numerous, better educated, healthier and more prosperous than at any time in our long history.

Rising level of education employment and incomes will help stabilize India's internal security and social environment. A more prosperous India 2020 will be characterized by better-educated electorate and more transparent, accountable, efficient and decentralized government. The students will move from a closed world of learning to an open world of learning and become a learning individual at higher education level. India's progress over the next 20 years will be intimately linked to events within the region and around the world. The World Bank estimates that India will become the fourth largest economy in the world by 2020 because of Education.

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