

Contemporary Concerns and Challenges in Higher Education: Some Reflection on Humanities

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Abstract

Education is plays a huge role in our life. Education is also considered as a very essential basic element like food, shelter and cloth. Modern welfare states through its functionaries it give more importance to provide education to peoples of the country. Education is the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits. It should be transformed to the needs of the time and changing scenario of the world. It provides an opportunity to critically reflect upon the social, economic, cultural, moral and spiritual issues facing humanity. Especially some of the researches try to highlighted that Humanities education and research has been a critical foundation of our society for centuries. Disciplines such as history, literature, and philosophy have shaped institutions and policy debates and attracted generations of students seeking to understand more about how societies function and change. However, changing frameworks for understanding social value and the expansion of tertiary education disciplines over time have affected perceptions of the importance of the Humanities. In this background, this paper is mainly focused on the some of issues and challenges which are affected on trend in higher education particularly in humanities disciplines. And try to emphasis on collaborative study and researches which helps to all multidisciplinary subjects in humanities.

Keywords: Higher Education, Humanities, Multidisciplinary, Issues, Research

Introduction

Education is one of the significant factors instrumental to the development of an individual and also a nation. It is the social institution through which society provides its members with important knowledge, including basic facts, job skill, socio - cultural norms and values etc. All the nation states as well as welfare states takes its own primary priority to educational sector. Because by providing education, obstacles of the development can be removed as well as its very necessary to an individuals personnel development, where effective human resource is absolute matter. Means an educated person is more likely to develop better moral and ethical values as compared to an uneducated person. Education brings equal opportunity for both men and women will be able to create a better society. Therefore we considered education is an integral part of human society and it essential to construct the future of our country.

Now it should be transformed to the needs of the time and changing scenario of the world.

In the era of knowledge explosion, Higher education is considered as a major stone in the process of educating of peoples. And it is connect with human development of the country. Because through a way our country is witness for produced scientists, engineers, technologists, doctors, teachers, administrators, servicemen, managers and academic researches who are in great demand all over the world. Moreover Higher Education provides opportunities to the people to reflect on the critical social, cultural, moral, economic and spiritual issues facing humanity. Higher education provides specialized knowledge and skilled persons for national development. In our context of the country, while the correlation between people and higher education is not up to the mark. The increasing youth population can be a great asset if potential employ ability is brought to fruition. Conversely, if we fail to provide education and employment then it will open a downside gate for nations economy. Therefore we can identify the contemporary role of education in achieving sustainability of the nation.

Objectives of the Study

- To study the complex variables responsible for lower level enrollment ratio in higher education.
- To review the effectiveness of different educational programs and their impact on higher education.
- To assess the educational gaps and suggest suitable remedial measures for improvement of higher education.

Hypothesis

- The correlation between humanities and trend in higher education is interrelated.
- Higher education in our country should be adopt some new educational techniques and models
- Some aspects of New Educational Policy reflects the curriculum, hence higher education institutions need to respond to demand for new skills, ethical values.

‘A man without education is like a building without foundation’. Which mean education is simply doesn’t mean a person to be able to read and write. It emphasis on what is right and wrong. All the social science disciplines teaches these normative elements to us it may from primary education, secondary education or from higher education. On the basis of the characteristics of Social Science here we can try to define the scope and significance of the subject of the study. There is a long ago historical debates about the origin and development Science. And its classification into social sciences and natural sciences. In natural science it focus on physical science and natural phenomena where possibility of the application of experiment, observation and verification. Likewise in Social science we occurred the knowledge from empirical sciences. And it includes all the social, political, economic activities of man based on traditions and reasoning. It may Sociology, History, Economics, Political Science, Law, Psychology, Anthropology, Jurisprudence, Linguistics, Archaeology, Geography, Criminology, Development Studies, Cultural Studies and many others.

Every generation faces some kind of challenges in time to time, to engage with the past and to cope with the present, while building its future. However, the questions and problems inherent in human life remain the same. This thing applying on higher education also. If we observed from couple of years, the enrollment ratio in higher education and particularly in humanities branches are decreases. It is an important threat to survival of this disciplines. Scholar Justin Stover one of his article in ‘American Affairs’ he stated that ‘The Humanities are not just dying- they are almost dead’. It shows the crucial status of our discipline. But scholars have divergent opinion regarding the inclusion of disciplines in the family of Social Sciences. Some of them favour a

threefold classification of Social Sciences these being a) Pure Social Science b) Semi Social Science c) Sciences with Social Implications. That means there is no subject which is not related with Social Science in some form or other. It has already been pointed out that social science is the scientific study of man in the social context. In this sense everything that happened till date has got some kind of denotations or connotations with some branch of social sciences. And humanities disciplines are interrelated with one to another.

The humanities subjects help us to understand others through their languages, histories, cultures and many other things. And it encourages us to think creatively. It teaches us to reason about being human and to ask questions about our world / surrounding on the other hand these subjects keep us very lively, with update and critical citizens. There are some reasons and aims why we are taught Humanities at our primary education:

As mentioned Aristotle, 'Man is social animal', hence it is important to the child to explore and understand his social and cultural environment. Firstly, the study of humanities plays a vital role to develop in the child a sense of belonging to the society through a gradual widening of his mental observation from his immediate home to the wider world.

Secondly, the study of humanities encourages to adopt morals, values, ethics in our life which can lead our life with better.

Thirdly, it helps to understand about rich and composite cultural heritage and to explore our mind into different identities which are existing in our society like sex, creed, language, region, religion, nation etc.

Fourthly, the study of humanities helps to understand the existed and to learn solve our own problems from social experiences.

Fifthly, the study is about philosophical values like truth, coordination, cooperation, simplicity, trust, non violence, liberty, equality, fraternity and justice etc. these normative values shape our personality and existence in present world.

Gradually all these above aspects will be definitely help to extending our knowledge about the significance of social, political and economic institutions of the country. And motivate about our civic consciousness, importance of duties when we are getting so many by enjoying our rights.

The Humanities have historically formed the foundation for the model of learning used in higher education, where transferable skills such as reasoning, logic, problem solving, critical thinking and communication are a recognized public good. These skills and the public values they provide—such as the capacity for evaluating evidence and argument, making informed choices, creative thinking and problem solving—have immense utilitarian benefit. However, the need to demonstrate the impact and value of Humanities higher education to society and the economy has intensified. Changes in public funding arrangements and fiscal constraint have necessitated a case to build greater awareness and understanding of the value of the Humanities to students as employees, to businesses as employers, and to the broader community. Therefore we must understand there is future to humanities subjects like other natural sciences.

Aristotle quoted that, 'Those persons who are making in depth study on governance have understood that the future destiny of any country is dependent on the education of youths'. That statement proves the significance of Humanities and its studies. Even though there are huge arguments and illusions affected jointly on the survival and decline of the humanities subjects i.e.

First of all, the overall enrolment ratio in humanities is quite low as compared to the other disciplines of natural sciences. Students wrongly receive that, Humanities subjects teach humanity, values, morals, ethics etc. those normative things not work out entire our life.

Secondly, the notion of youths are the irrelevance of the subjects and syllabus in this contemporary and competitive era. Also thought that humanities subjects are more concentrated on theories and

rather than practical knowledge so, it may affect on job opportunities /not job security in social sciences.

Thirdly, some prejudice about the applicability of social sciences, research and option about further study, its productivity is very less to compare with natural sciences.

Fourthly, some series of comments like traditional method of teaching, inadequate facilities and infrastructure and not update with new ICT or technological development, the nature of Curriculum (Course Design) is not effective and relevant, these things are already vanishing by some new policies but its need to be highlight in some main stream discourses.

In some context misconception about the selection of the disciplines before entering into higher studies in particular subject our root work should start from undergraduate level as well as primary and secondary education level. Because if a teacher/parents/society not motivate to the child to know about our surrounding, gradually if effects on some other level.

Fifthly, each subjects have its own importance and strength, hence comparism is without knowledge is ruin a significance and scope of the subject. Therefore from academicians ,higher educational departments and government take some initiatives about mainstream academic discussions and provide financial support, scholarships, learning exchange opportunities to students.

If academicians and researchers ignored these arguments and put some effort to make social science disciplines relevant on this contemporary world. Their first effort make erase some blind notions from the society. Of course, get a job is a part of educational life, though we never forget the knowledge what we are gaining from all those subjects. So, widening our knowledge is should be our primary importance or concern of the studies. Therefore the present study highlights or came with some alternative suggestions as the follows,

At the very beginning from the responsible departments or stakeholders should campaign about the significance of higher education among youths and their parents. Because parents are conscious about quality of infrastructure, residential facilities, communication skills, fees, stipends, scholarships these issues including employment opportunities .

Educational institutions at the very beginning highlights job opportunities in various field and set up the students mindset to job oriented through its publications, news letter, magazines, official websites etc. So, it gradually reduces wrong notion towards job opportunities in humanities, those student circle may spread this awareness beyond their circle. It helps to reach objectives of higher education in society. Also given importance to implementation of educational policy's choice based, credit based opportunities to students which helps for development of skills.

Methods of higher education also have to be appropriate to the needs of learning to learn, learning to do, learning to be and learning to become. Student-centred education and employment of dynamic methods of education will require from teachers new attitudes and new skills. Methods of teaching through lectures will have to subordinate to the methods that will lay stress on self-study, personal consultation between teachers and pupils and dynamic sessions of seminars and workshops. Methods of distance education will have to be employed on a vast scale.

We notices that ,there is some gender bias in selection to a subjects in higher education level. For example the study of History more focused on Male chauvinistic ideas like expansion, attacks, struggle, disputes, war, reforms in administration, revenue system, social and economic system etc. or Home Science, Hospitality and Management Science are better to women than men. Because in future she only engage that kind of issues in family structure. But these are all make barriers to woman as well as that particular subject. Because there is no that kind of illusionist laws in it. Knowledge of the subject should flow freely. Then only we understand real mean of that. Higher education should enlighten about social security and removal of social bias in education sector also. Therefore should take some initiatives and special attention for women education.

ICT or application of all new technologies are possibilities in social sciences also. That's a reason why humanities gradually moving towards drastic changes. We may keep our subject more lively with using of technology, computer applications, programme, animation, entertainment mode etc.

Examination reforms, gradually shifting from the terminal, annual and semester examinations to regular and continuous assessment of student's performance in learning must be implemented. Universities take some initiatives to re-design of course plan, pattern of the examination and evaluation mode. Because there is serious comment on humanities subject to ask for long details/ notes in short time schedule. Anyhow academician concern is might different, but assume that its a 'punishment of mug up'. Therefore its necessary to realize among themselves , widening knowledge about particular subject is our interest rather than testing memory power and other things.

While we hear argument like humanities are more concentrated on theories and rather than practical knowledge, its responsibility of Notable scholars, academicians, researchers, teachers should take some initiatives about keep liveliness of subjects. Update with whats newly happening in our subject and let me know about students also through discussion. Therefore can take initiatives to a deep integration of multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and trans disciplinary exercises.

And one of the most problem in humanities is multilingual crisis. We know the mother tongue crisis in our country. Though we understand that language itself is not knowledge; its a way to getting knowledge. So, it shouldn't be obstacle of our study. English is global language hence educational institutions gives little priority to that. But at the same time we must know about alternative way to how we get it into easier. Like linguistics centre, regional language institutions, transition center, upcoming computer soft-wares, mobile applications definitely gives little relax mind to us. Also to take care about to access relevant study materials in local languages.

Furthermost Government should take interest on improve basic facilities, infrastructure, e-sources, teaching staff, technological improvement of the humanities colleges. Encourages enrolment in this stream, timely appointment and provide facilities to teaching tutors, scholarship, financial support, hostel facilities etc.

The nature of the government is in the hands of youths. Therefore create awareness about voting, political activities, rights and duties etc. through that uphold the democratic principles like liberty, equality, justice etc. Generation trend can gradually change from logically and critically dealing the subjects. Encourages questioning attitude, logical reasoning and intellectual sense of the world.

Our university libraries have a very good collection of books, but they are all in mess. Give importance to a library must be online and conducive for serious study.

The above efforts are we can be make for the survival of the subject. The problems facing higher education are coming at the sector fast and furious from different angles. Ultimately we need for our rich diverse ecosystem of higher educational institutions, public policy makers and the organizations that support and stake holder partner in their work, to be positioned to defend, protect and sustain higher education extremely important role as a trusted source of knowledge, education and freedom of inquiry which are essential part of our contemporary life. Given importance to health, physical fitness and eradicate epidemics.

Conclusion

After end of the colonial era, we are witness for tremendous changes in all over the fields of the society. So, new in this global era, we need an educational system that is modern/advanced, liberal and can adapt to the changing demands of a changing society, a changing economy and a changing global world. Our higher education system and regulatory bodies must identify the key issues and quickly make policies to remove those hurdles. Only one or two universities can't make much

difference. If the government welcomes such initiatives which drive our education system forward, then future will be ours. Also its very essential of researchers and academicians put effective effort to prove humanities, its teaching are still relevant. From the collective effort of all the stakeholders in higher education can make new transformations in this field.

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