

Chapter 11

Instilling Ideology of Professionalism in University Education: Assessment of Shifting Paradigms

M. M. Salunkhe

Central University of Rajasthan, India

N. V. Thakkar

Central University of Rajasthan, India

R. K. Kamat

Shivaji University, India

ABSTRACT

In recent times, the higher education in India has made tremendous progress in terms of increasing the access and thereby making it reachable to larger population of the country. However, post-globalization, internationalization, and marketization the higher education has been increasingly perceived as a professional service. This necessitates reworking on various facets pertaining to the higher education domain such as academics, administration, governance, teaching-learning process, consultancy, and grants earning initiatives. Therefore without any qualm, the paradigm shift is on the agenda of our universities and the process of reflection, reworking, self-critique, action, participation, improvement, collaboration, inclusion are now the buzzword inviting the renewed attention of our academicians and administrators. Easier said than done, in this chapter, the authors discuss some of the initiatives at state university and a newly commenced central university, wherein they could become the part of the reforms in reworking the model of the higher education. The same is put forth in front of the peers and stakeholders as a sort of action research towards inculcating professionalism in our universities.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The chapter is divided into different sections. At the outset, an overview of the growth of Higher Education in India is taken. This is followed by the presentation of issues and concerns pertaining to the Higher Education mainly the quality Vs Quantity paradox. Thereafter some of the initiatives taken up at a state University have been put in place as the same reap the reflections while forming the strategic framework of the Central University of Rajasthan. A brief overview of the initial efforts to seek the perceptions of the stakeholders by making use of ICT has also been described. This is then followed by the profile of the Central University of Rajasthan and the initiatives instilled therein. At the end through the reflections of the authors and their reminiscences and associations both with the state and central university in different capacities in academics and administration exemplifies that more than material resources the interest, desire and attitudinal change are the key factors in accomplishing the professional approach towards the higher education.

The modern university is not outside, but inside the general fabric of our era. It is not something apart, something historic, something that yields as little as possible to forces and influences that are more or less new. It is, on the contrary, ...an expression of the ages, as well as an influence operating upon both present and future. -Abraham Flexner, quoted in Clark Kerr's famous book The Uses of the University (Kerr, 2001, p.3)

In fact Clark Kerr in the above mentioned book talks essentially about the transformation of the University in Multiversity. Further notion of multiversity has been more precisely summarized in the following quote.

The Multiversity is an inconsistent institution. It is not one community but several...Its edges are fuzzy. Hutchins once described the modern

university as a series of separate schools and departments held together by a central heating system...I have sometimes thought of it as a series of individual faculty entrepreneurs held together by a common grievance over parking. -Clark Kerr, (Bender, 2008, p.50)

Above quotes in essence depicts the current state of affairs of our University system. The seeds of professionalism related to the institutes of higher learning seem to be sowed with the changing perception of the stakeholders which is seen never before in the life cycle of higher education. Though, the above notions ostensibly more valid for overseas scenario, the Indian Universities are also not an exception to this. Of late, especially in the first decade of the 21st century and specifically in the X and XI five year plans¹, the apex bodies, Ministry of Human Resource Development and Government of India are striving hard to inculcate professionalism in the spheres of Higher Education. In the X and XI five year plans, the main thrust was to increase the access to higher education besides to make it more relevant to our social and economic needs which could be done by starting new courses and by revising curriculum regularly. Now in the XII plan, the focus envisaged is inclusive and qualitative growth of higher education. As a part of new institution building as well as strengthening the existing state Universities, Government of India has implemented noteworthy measures. Some of them appearing on the scene are in the form of National Knowledge Network² (NKN), National Mission for Education using Information and Communication Technology (NMEICT), various consortiums for offering the e-journals and e-books, the newly launched 'Akash' tablet³ and so on. In the above context, the present paper reports some of the initiatives undertaken at Shivaji University, Kolhapur, a Maharashtra based state University and Central University of Rajasthan in the state of Rajasthan. These initiatives itself are indicative enough to exhibit that the infusion

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