

EXPENDING DOMAINS IN INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

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The Higher Education System in India has shown a remarkable growth during the past few decades. It has been able to expand its horizon in terms of approach as well as use of technology. This expansion requires recapitulation of the journey the Education System has traversed with a clear perspective for the developments that have occurred and are still taking place. The current Volume by K B Powar tries to highlight the expanding domains in Higher Education System in India focusing on topics of contemporary relevance.

The Volume, spread over 12 Chapters, is divided into 3 parts and each of the parts covers a whole gamut of the developments which have taken place in the broader domain. The first section 'The Background' has four chapters dealing with status of higher education in the country ranging from role, concerns and changing scenario of higher education, economic and employment perspectives, providers of higher education to professional education and statutory councils regulating the relevant areas of education.

The second section 'The In-demand Sectors of Education' focuses on engineering, medical and management education in the country. The last section 'The Expanding Domains' presents a snapshot on private higher education, distance education, online education, internationalization of higher education and cross-border higher education.

The Higher Education in India has travelled through different phases and has assumed different roles in different times. Chapter-1 attempts to study the different aspects of this change through different eras. This chapter instills the very purpose of higher education in the Indian context. The economy of the nation is influenced by a well developed higher education system which in turn leads to generation of more and more employment opportunities. Chapter 2 visualises a relationship among the higher education, employment scenario and Indian Economy. To the author, the former two components are showing a pressing state while the last one is following a positive trend.

Chapter 3 delineates the journey of Indian higher education in the hands of traditional institutions to utilitarian institutions depending upon alternative modes of imparting education. The consortia and networks of institutions seem relevant to the author in this globalised world since they will be capable of addressing cross-border and cross-cultural issues appropriately.

Chapter 4 revisits the definition of 'professional education' in the Indian context and presents the role of statutory bodies regulating the professional education programmes and their contradicting policies forcing the universities to compromise on autonomy and other functional areas.

Chapter 5 provides an overview of engineering education which is 'most important sector of professional education in India' while presenting its historical perspective. The author is seized of the issues arising out of the rapid expansion and unprecedented growth of engineering institutions in the country leading to unemployability of engineering graduates.

Chapter 6 presents a critique on the state of medical education in India. The scope of the chapter is restricted to 'teaching, learning and research processes associated with the modern system of medicine'. The author through his discussion justifies a need to revisit the role of Medical Council of India in the light of different issues raised by him.

Chapter 7 reviews the implementation of American System of Management Education in India and proposes that India should develop her own mode of management education best suited to her context and value system. Chapter 8 highlights the role of private institutions in Indian higher education system. To the author, some crucial factors have necessitated the growth of private institutions in the area of higher education in India. The demand of higher education has made the education sector growing and dynamic one.

Chapter 9 traces the history of evolution of distance education world over as an alternative and viable mode of universalisation of education. It provides a chronology of development of distance education in India and reaches to the development of open educational resources (OER). It highlights the role of National Knowledge Commission in this endeavour. The issue of quality of distance education programmes catches the attention of the author.

Chapter 10 introduces the concept of online education with special reference to design, development and delivery of online programmes across different disciplines. The author touches OER movement also during the discussion. He raises certain issues that need serious consideration by the online education practitioners.

Chapter 11 deals with different aspects of globalization of higher education and its manifestation vis-à-vis the role of higher education. The author focuses on different measures needed to be taken by the educational institutions in order to internationalise the higher education. He feels that if appropriately taken up, it can contribute substantially towards widening access to education addressing quality issues across cultures while preserving the element of diversity and promoting capacity building initiatives.

Chapter 12 takes the theme of 'Globalisation of Higher Education' further and refers it as cross-border higher education. It discusses the schema of General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) and bases on it the argument in favour of cross-border higher education.

He emphasizes that India can play a lead role as provider of higher education keeping in view a 'strong Indian Diaspora spread over 131 countries of the world'.

The book provides a comprehensive view of the different components of higher education in India. It gives a broad as well as focused perspective of the developments in the system at the same time. From historical analysis to current practices, different facets of the system have been reasonably covered by the author.

While discussing the emerging trends in Indian Higher Education, the author does not lose sight of the crucial issues which need to be sorted out and resolved favorably in order to help the process of globalisation.

He highlights the strengths of the system which can play a constructive role in addressing cross-border and cross-cultural issues which may arise during the course of internationalization of Indian Higher Education System.

The book would be useful to the new entrants to the system and will surely retain interest of the educational planners, policy makers and practitioners. In fact, it is not only a 'must read' for all stakeholders of Indian Higher Education System but also would equally be of interest to the international readers.

BIODATA and CONTACT ADDRESSES of the REVIEWER



Dr. S. K. PULIST is currently serving Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi, INDIA as Deputy Director. He is involved with the activities pertaining to distance education for the last 19 years. He has his Master's Degree in Sociology, English Literature, Management and Distance Education. He has acquired his Doctoral Degree in Education Technology. His areas of interest are e-Learning, distance education and student support services. He has co-edited a book entitled "Education in the Digital World" and has written many book chapters which have reserved place in the books of the renowned authors. He has published over 40 articles in national and international journals of repute. He has also presented many papers in national and international conferences.

His work has been widely referred and cited by the scholars not only in India but also at the international level. He is Associate Editor for Journal of World Association for Online Learning <http://www.waoe.org/directors.html> and a member of the Editorial Team of <http://journal.ignouonline.ac.in/iojp/index.php/IJOL/about/editorialTeam> Indian Journal of Open Learning.