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GENDER DISPARITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Gender disparity in education is one of the root causes that push the women section back towards a lower socio-economic status. Male favoring gender disparity in education deprives the women section in achieving equal opportunities in the society. India has been experiencing recordable expansion in higher education in terms of coverage of large numbers of students and increase in the number of institutions and growth of public funds for this sector. But, question arises whether this type of unprecedented expansion is supportive to resolve the problem of male-female disparity in higher education in the country.

Higher education in a changing society looks at aspects of the relationships that bind higher education to wider society, and at how higher education needs to change over the coming decades to meet new economic, social and cultural challenges. It describes the environment within which the higher education system operates and the challenges to which it must respond. In building a strong, well-resourced and renewed higher education system, we need to leverage the strengths that have brought us this far, and build new strengths that can serve Irish society over the coming years.

Engagement with wider society, examines the third of the three core roles – engagement – how the higher education system addresses the full range of its responsibilities towards society, including business, local communities, the wider education sector and the wider international world. It also deals with the education sector's role in providing intellectual leadership and acting as a source of authoritative opinion.

In this paper, with the help of relevant secondary information, an attempt has been made to examine the present state of gender disparity in the country and to explore probable factors responsible for this issue. Here, six socio-economic variables have been selected to deal with the problem of gender disparity in higher education. Out of these, only four variables, and viz.: per capita NSDP, level of poverty, drop out ratio for girls and women's age at marriage have statistically significant correlation with the women enrolment in higher education.

KEYWORDS: Drop-out Ratio, Enrolment, Per Capita NSDP, Primary Enrolment, Gender Disparity, Empowerment, Gender Equality,

INTRODUCTION

Education in its general sense is a form of learning in which the knowledge, skills, and habits of a group of people are transferred from one generation to the next through teaching, training, or research. Education frequently takes place under the guidance of others, but may also be autodidactic. Any experience that has a formative effect on the way one thinks, feels, or acts may be considered educational.

India has emerged as a global leader and a strong nation. Education is the key to the task of nation building as well as to provide requisite knowledge and skills required for sustained growth of the economy and to ensure overall progress. According to the Census Data 2011, India is overpopulated with a population of 121,01,93,422 which means India today is a powerhouse of talent of 121,01,93,422 plus. In order to convert the population from a challenge to an opportunity, the area that requires immediate attention is education and training. 25% of Indian population is still illiterate and out of the total population of 1.21 billion in India, 220 million children go to school. India's GER (Gross Enrolment Ratio) is 12.4 percent. The GER in developed countries is between 50 percent to 70 percent. Our current education system selectively discards talented students with inquisitiveness, ability to ask questions and dream to do something challenging, something better for the society. This paper is an attempt to evaluate India's efforts at reforming educational sector, analyses the growth of education in India during last two decades and suggests ways to ensure that education remains both affordable and accessible to all.

Empowerment is the process of obtaining basic opportunities for marginalized people through the help of non- marginalized others by actively removing those barriers to access opportunities. In developing countries women to a large extent are often marginalized since culturally their place is supposed to be in the home. Their chances of getting higher education are very limited. The advent of virtual education opened doors to enable individuals to advance themselves educationally at any place and any time (Col, 2005; Rowntree, 1994). Such a platform enables individuals to study from the comfort of their homes. Thus, the woman can study while engaged in the cultural expected roles such as household chores. The existence of virtual regions has enabled to move centers of education from residential institutions to roving institutions.

Distance is no more a barrier to education. Education is being brought to people's doorsteps. Individuals are being empowered in the comfort of their homes using the distance education mode. Needless to say the virtual education platform encourages students to develop skills for self – sufficiency. Individuals have to find educational means to face real world problems for self-sustenance. In this instance constructivist teaching has a role to play since it strives to apply to real world problems relevant in people's daily lives. Students use of the interpretation of their experience helps in knowledge formulation that is indeed relevant.

Empowering women and girls is not only the right and fair thing to do, it also makes economic sense. Countries that invest in promoting the social and economic status of women tend to have lower poverty rates. For example, an extra year of secondary schooling for girls can increase their future wages by 10 to 20 %. And evidence shows that resources in women's hands results in household expenditures that benefit children. By 2012, 83% of new lending and grants included gender in project operations. Gender equality is also a key priority for IDA, the World Bank's fund for the poorest, which enabled more than 194 million pregnant women to receive prenatal care from a health provider.

Women have a much lower literacy rate than men. Far fewer girls are enrolled in the schools, and many of them drop out. According to a 1998 report by U.S. Department of Commerce, the chief barrier to female education in India are inadequate school facilities (such as sanitary facilities), shortage of female teachers and gender bias in curriculum (majority of the female characters being depicted as weak and helpless). A survey that was conducted in India showed results which support the fact that infant mortality rate was inversely related to female literacy rate and educational level. The survey also suggests a correlation between education and economic growth.

BACKGROUND

Learning is associated with personal change and empowerment. In literature and development measures we read of how girls compared to boys have difficulties in accessing education and this has the downstream results of disadvantaging them on the job market. This wide gap between women's access to education and women's empowerment in a patriarchal society

has been on the agenda of development policies including gender policy.

Linkages have been made between household structures and social relations and those of the broader society. In other words the problems of women's unequal access to power and resources, causing women's oppression is deemed to start in the household. Studies by Boserup (1970), Sen and Grown, (1985) have demonstrated that if there is an opportunity for self improvement, the woman will be the last to be considered. Resource allocation in the household is not equal. On the other hand, women felt that if only they could get educated then they would be economically independent and would break out of this vicious circle where they continue to be dependent on men.

Policies that targeted women only were not receiving the best results in changing the circumstances of women. New thinking was along the lines that change should not only be the way women work, live and care for other members of the household, but also in men's roles in the family and community. From women in Development (WID) to Gender and Development (GAD) and the issues were that men and women are different but it is important to have their views equally heard and recognized in society, in economic and political planning as well as decision making. Internationally, women's organizations and networks that promote women's cooperation and participation in politics increased at global level in an effort to change the position of women in society.

Lack of education and training has been blamed for making women to accept their secondary status as the natural order of things (Nzomo, 1997). There are other barriers (implicit and explicit) that make it difficult to attain equity even after policy and legal frameworks have been put in place. Open and Distance learning is opening many doors although it had been hoped that in higher education things would change faster as universities are viewed as centers of free thought, change and human development. Leadership in higher education is still a man's world and universities are male dominated institutions (Gumbi, 2006).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study attempts to document how in spite of challenges faced by the women in accessing higher education, four women managed and succeeded in improving their education and are successfully leading institutions where women have not been considered before.

In developing feminist research we believe that we need to engage in critical reflection that surfaces the challenges of this kind of research in Africa. Feminist have argued that it is necessary to make the researcher visible in order to understand the epistemological process of how and why knowledge is produced, Hartstock, (1983). We aim to bring those at the margins into the centre through the creation and variety of voices of oppressed women as they reflect on their experiences.

The objectives of the study of women empowerment through education are stated precisely as follows:

1. To know the need of education in women empowerment.
2. To assess the present scenario of women empowerment in India.
3. To know the need of women in the gender disparity.
4. To identify the importance of achieving women education.
5. To offer suggestions for women empowerment through education.

Education is important for everyone, but it is especially significant for girls and women. This is true not only because education is an entry point to other opportunities, but also because the educational achievements of women can have ripple effects within the family and across generations. Investing in girls' education is one of the most effective ways to reduce poverty. An investment in secondary school education for girls yields especially high dividends.

Girls who have been educated are likely to marry later and to have smaller and healthier families. Educated women can recognize the importance of health care and know how to seek it for themselves and their children. Education helps girls and women to know their rights and to gain confidence to claim them. However, women's literacy rates are significantly lower than men's in most developing countries.

India is a Nation of young people - out of a population of above 1.2 billion, 0.672 billion people are in the age-group of 15-64 years, which is usually treated as the "working age population". It is predicted that India will see a sharp decline in the dependency ratio over the next 30 years, which will constitute a major demographic dividend for India. This large population should be considered as an invaluable human resource and should be provided the necessary skills so as to empower them to lead a purposeful life and contribute to our national economy.

Education has been identified as a critical input for economic development and for human resource development. India's education system is divided into different levels such as preprimary level, primary level, elementary education, secondary education, undergraduate level and postgraduate level.

The efficacy of education in human development can never be understated. Education is fundamental to every constituent of the society irrespective of gender, physical, racial, economic, geographical, cultural, or linguistic differences. Education is a Nation's Strength. A developed nation is inevitably an educated nation.

India as a developing nation has been systematically progressing on the educational front since its independence and has seen an appreciable surge in reaching out to all the classes of its society. The improvement on the country's economic front, the up scaling of communication technology and the advent of the internet, have vastly leveraged the promotion of education across all verticals. The accelerated growth of the educational sector in last decade is a sparkling testimony to this fact, with facts and figures showing an unprecedented improvement of education in India.

India's higher education system is the third largest in the world, after China and the United States. The main governing body at the tertiary level is the University Grants Commission (UGC), which enforces its standards, advises the government, and helps coordinate between the centre and the state. The other important policy initiatives in higher education are programmes for general development of universities and colleges; special grants for the construction of hostels for women; scholarships to students, scheme to provide interest subsidy on educational loans for professional courses to ensure that nobody is denied professional education because he or she is poor and making interventions to attract and retain talent in the teaching profession in the higher and technical education.

As per Report of the Higher education in India, Issues related to Expansion, Inclusiveness, Quality and Finance, the access to higher education measured in term of gross enrolment ratio increased from 0.7% in 1950/51 to 1.4% in 1960-61. By 2006-07 the GER increased to 12 percent. By 2012, (the end of 11th plan objective) is to increase it to 15%.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

How women can change their situations by getting an education against all odds. There is consensus among different stakeholders

that education sector was the one area where girls were not given access. Families would support a boy child through their education and withdraw a girl child from school if resources were not adequate. In households parents were being asked to pay more for extra lessons for their children and to supplement teacher's salaries and therefore there was not enough money to support the education of women. This is summed up by the UN Secretary General's remarks at the 58th session conference of the Commission of the Status of Women AWID in which he admitted that inequality remains.

"We've come a long way, but there is much to do and little time to do it." While there has been progress, deep inequality still remains; women still earn less than men, there is still a need for more women in decision-making positions. He raised particular concern about that state of sanitation, highlighting that more than 2.5 billion people lack the benefits of proper sanitation, which affects women and girls in particular ways. He made a call for quality sexual reproductive health and services and for ensuring women's reproductive rights. While maternal health is improving and child mortality is dropping significantly, too many women and girls continue to die every day because of pregnancy related causes; almost all of them are from developing countries, which die from preventable causes. He made the crucial link between VAW and HIV and AIDS, highlighting that more young women are infected with HIV than men; that too few young women have knowledge about HIV or are able to negotiate condom use. With less than two years remaining on the MDG deadline, he emphasised the importance of championing the rights of women in the post 2015 development agenda saying that "We cannot achieve dignity for all without gender equality. I count on you to champion the human rights of women and girls. We need to end gender inequality in all forms."

This is a clear indication that as we approach 2015 the MDGs may not be achieved and something has to be done. The debate may continue but practical ways and best practices should be adapted.

Over the past century, OECD countries have made significant progress in narrowing or closing long-standing gender gaps in many areas of education and employment, including educational attainment, pay and labour market participation. This one fact implies another: that aptitude knows no gender. Given equal opportunities, boys and girls, men and women have equal chances of fulfilling their potential.

But new gender gaps are opening. Young men are significantly more likely than young women to have low levels of skills and poor academic achievement, and are more likely to leave school early, often with no qualifications. Meanwhile, in higher education and beyond, young women are under-represented in the fields of mathematics, physical science and computing, but dominate the fields of biology, medicine, agriculture and humanities (Osborne et al., 2003; Charles and Grusky, 2004).

Equality of opportunity for men and women is first and foremost a moral imperative; but it is also key to economic growth and well-being. Investments in education improve economic and social opportunities, helping to reduce poverty and foster technological progress. The overall increase in educational attainment in OECD countries over the past 50 years accounted for about 50% of the economic growth in those countries during that period; and more than half of that growth can be attributed to higher educational attainment among women. In addition, education – especially education for girls and women – reduces child mortality rates, improves individual health and, in doing so, promotes investment in the education and health of future generations (OECD, 2012).

Progress in addressing gender segregation in occupations has been far slower (Sikora and Pokropek, 2011). Yet reducing occupation segregation could pay off in a couple of important ways. First, segregation suggests that there are impediments to choosing an occupation that are related to gender. Identifying and removing such impediments may improve efficiency in the transition from school to work, since then all students will feel encouraged to pursue studies in the field that interests them and in which they can fully express their potential. As a result, participation in the labour market will grow. Dismantling such barriers can also help the economy to respond to rapid changes in the demand for skills stemming from technological change. In addition, greater occupation equality may help to eliminate gender stereotypes that have a negative impact on the status of women (Anker, 1997).

To tackle the double disadvantage of having too many boys who drop out of school or leave school with low skills and/or skills that are not well matched with labour market requirements, and not having enough students, particularly female students, enrolled in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields of study, countries need first to understand why there are gender gaps

in academic achievement. Knowing how boys and girls develop their skills while at school and what factors – including such intangibles as behaviour and self-confidence – influence their decisions about their future education and career pathways is critical. Only then will educators and policy makers be able to ensure that each individual has the opportunity to realise his or her potential. Only then will countries be able to develop strong, dynamic and inclusive economies, particularly as they confront the economic, demographic and fiscal challenges that are sure to arise in the years ahead.

Parents can give their sons and daughter's equal support and encouragement for all of their school work and aspirations for their future. PISA results show that this doesn't always happen. In all countries and economies that surveyed the parents of students who sat the PISA test, parents were more likely to expect their sons, rather than their daughters, to work in a science, technology, engineering or mathematics field – even when their 15-year-old boys and girls perform at the same level in mathematics.

Teachers can help by becoming more aware of their own gender biases that may affect how they award marks to students. They could also receive additional training in how to provide extra support to socio-economically disadvantaged students, since PISA finds that boys are more likely to underachieve when they attend schools with a large proportion of disadvantaged students. In addition, teachers can use teaching strategies that demand more of their students.

In a society full of diversity, ideologies and opinions, higher education means different things to different people. The pluralism of views is quite inevitable and some would opine it should be like that only. However, as we intend to discuss and learn more about quality in higher education, we should ask ourselves, what is *higher* in higher education? You, as a teacher/stakeholder of higher education, will agree that it is not just about the higher level of educational structure in the country. There is more to it. In terms of the level, higher education includes college and university teaching-learning towards which students' progress to attain higher educational qualification. Higher education imparts in-depth knowledge and understanding so as to advance the students to new frontiers of knowledge in different walks of life (subject domains). It is about knowing *more and more* about *less and less*. It develops the student's ability to question and seek truth and makes him/her competent to critique on contemporary

issues. It broadens the intellectual powers of the individual within a narrow specialization, but also gives him/her a wider perspective of the world around. According to Ronald Barnett (1994) there are four predominant concepts of higher education:

Higher Education as the Production of Qualified Human Resources. In this view, higher education is seen as a process in which the students are counted as “products” absorbed in the labour market. Thus, higher education becomes input to the growth and development of business and industry.

Higher Education as Training for a Research Career. In this view, higher education is preparation for qualified scientists and researchers who would continuously develop the frontiers of knowledge. Quality within this viewpoint is more about research publications and transmission of the academic rigor to do quality research.

Higher Education as the Efficient Management of Teaching Provision. Many strongly believe that teaching is the core of educational institutions. Thus, higher education institutions focus on efficient management of teaching-learning provisions by improving the quality of teaching, enabling a higher completion rate among the students.

Higher Education as a Matter of Extending Life Chances. In this view, higher education is seen as an opportunity to participate in the development process of the individual through a flexible, continuing education mode.

Over the past century, OECD countries have made significant progress in narrowing or closing long-standing gender gaps in many areas of education and employment, including educational attainment, pay and labour market participation. This one fact implies another: that aptitude knows no gender. Given equal opportunities, boys and girls, men and women have equal chances of achieving at the highest levels.

But new gender gaps in education are opening. Young men are significantly more likely than young women to be less engaged with school and have low skills and poor academic achievement. They are also more likely to leave school early, often with no qualifications. Boys in OECD countries, for example, are eight percentage points more likely than girls to report that school is a waste of time. Meanwhile, in higher education and beyond, young women are under-represented in the fields

of mathematics, physical science and computing. In 2012, only 14% of young women who entered university for the first time chose science-related fields of study, including engineering, manufacturing and construction. By contrast, 39% of young men who entered university that year chose to pursue one of those fields of study.

Achieve Gender Equality By

- Educating girls;
- Increasing literacy rates among women;
- Increasing early childhood development interventions;
- Increasing women’s labor force participation and strengthening labor policies affecting women;
- Improving women’s access to credit, land and other resources;
- Promoting women’s political rights and participation;
- Expanding reproductive health programs and family support policies.

Gender Equality

Two-thirds of the Bank’s partner countries have now reached gender parity in primary education, and girls significantly outnumber boys in secondary education in more than one-third of those countries. IDA investments and collaboration with governments have enabled women to access land and secure tenure rights.

Gender Equality Strategy

- ❖ Strengthen nutrition, disease prevention, and maternal health programs;
- ❖ Improve women’s and girls’ education and life skills;
- ❖ Expand women’s access to credit and economic opportunity.

The MDG 3 indicators track key elements of women’s social, economic and political participation and guide the building of gender-equitable societies. All the MDGs influence health, and health influences all the MDGs. The MDGs are inter-dependent. For example, better health enables children to learn and adults to earn. Gender equality is essential to the achievement of better health.

Girls’ education is critically linked to self-determination, improved health, social and economic status as well as positive health outcomes for the mother and the child. Yet, girls still account for 55% of the out-of-school population.

Maternal deaths and pregnancy-related conditions cannot be eliminated without the empowerment of women. Maternal mortality is the number one cause of death for adolescents

15–19 years old and in many countries, sexual and reproductive health services tend to focus exclusively on married women and ignore the needs of adolescents and unmarried women.

Empowerment of women, including ensuring access to health information and control of resources such as money, is important for achieving gender equality and health equity. However, the ratio of female-to-male earned income is well below parity in all countries for which data are available. Up to one in three women worldwide will experience violence at some point in her life, which can lead to unwanted pregnancy and abortion, among other things.

- Furthers the empowerment of women, especially as it contributes to health;
- Supports the prevention of and response to gender-based violence;
- Promotes women's participation and leadership, especially in the health sector;
- Defines ways in which men can be engaged to promote gender equality and to contribute more to their own health and that of their families and communities;
- Builds the capacity of WHO and its Member States to identify gender equality-related gaps;
- Provides support for gender-responsive policies and programmes.

Higher education is increasingly recognised as being critical to social and economic prosperity. It is also a policy area where the Commonwealth could significantly increase its impact. This could be achieved without major cost, by working through activities already in place, and persuading member governments to make stronger use of these brands and mechanisms.

Emerging Issues

- Unequal Access by Income and groups;
- Diversity in Caste/Ethnic, Cultural, Religious, Gender;
- Discrimination – caste, ethnic;
- Gender- Sexual Violence and Harassment;
- Disparities in academic background/standing.

Unequal Access

- Low access for low income, ST, SC and Muslim;
- Low access rural, girls;

- Private sector in higher Education reduced access for poor –Financial assistance policy;
- Expansion of public Institutions, and private philanthropy.

Diversity in Caste/ethnic, Cultural, Religious

- Multicultural Campus;
- How to deal with multi culture , respecting differences but at the same time promoting common goals and value;
- Groups around identity – promote mix groups;
- Shared life ,togetherness – present divided;
- How to shade differences.

Discrimination – Caste, Ethnic, Religion

- Issues;
- Discrimination ,particularly caste;
- Between students , student-teachers;
- Inside class;
- Outside class campus;
- Regulation, positive education –courses.

Gender Harassment

- Gender harassment;
- How to make campus and class room fair to girl's students;
- Courses and other activities on campus.

Disparities in academic background/standing

- Academic assistance program for catching up;
- Making the Campus open for every language background;
- Making Syllabus inclusive in nature.

Way Forward

- There is policy for groups to improve access;
- Limited program of financial assistance in case private institutions;
- Remedial coaching is used, but need improvement and reform;
- What is lacking? Near absent of policy and program to deal with diversity –inter –group divide, and discrimination, and gender.

DISCUSSION

Statistics on women's work is misleading as women's unpaid labour in the household has not been recognized. The exclusion or invisibility of women's contribution to the economy is therefore distorted. The education gap between boys and girls continued into this decade due to this undervaluing of domestic work. Women who are involved on trading do it informally and as a result it is not recognized.

Women have realized that the odds against them are high. The State as mentioned earlier on has put in legislation and policies to improve the situation for women. However patriarchy gets in the way both at state level and household level. This is how the women in my study viewed their situation and planned to change their position without antagonizing anyone.

In addressing marginalization of women, education plays a big role and for the majority of women access to education is limited. Getting a second chance to complete their education is a privilege for the few. However the sprouting of Distance education has been seen as a window of opportunity to improve the positions of many. New technologies are making an impact in education, offering better educational and social opportunities than ever before for women. This is the time that E-learning has allowed people to share and manage knowledge and skills as well as get the right information to the right people whenever they need it. Education is one area where there has been an impact. It is possible for regions to enhance communication with other countries and offer better educational and social opportunities without them leaving their homes.

The National Policy for the Empowerment of Women, 2001 stated, "Equal access to education for women and girls will be ensured, special measures will be taken to eliminate discrimination, universalize education, eradicate illiteracy and create gender sensitive educational system, increase enrolment and retention rates of girls and improve the quality of education to facilitate life-long learning as well as development of vocational or technical skills of women." Hence some practical steps should be taken as follows:

- ❖ Different types of educational institutions should be established exclusively for women in the state.
- ❖ Traditional evil norms and practices, such as child marriage child labour, dowry system, child prostitution, polygamy and female feticides should be strictly banned by enforcing laws and creating public awareness.
- ❖ The government should provide a package of educational grants, such as "Kanyashri" of women and concessions in the form of providing free books, uniform, mid-day meals, scholarships, cycles and so on for enrolment for more girls and reducing the drop out students, especially from marginalized families of BPL.

- ❖ Adult and continuing education, social education, home schooling etc can be used as a tool of basic change in the status of women. It would help to develop in women entrepreneurial skills and job opportunities. In rural areas mobile library, distance education through the media, non-formal schools should be provided for the life-long education and empowerment of women.
- ❖ Technical and vocational education should be provided particularly to the rural women, such as tailoring and weaving, mushroom farming, bee keeping, fruit pulping etc, for improving their vocational efficiency so that they can be self-appointed and self-supportive. The government will have to offer financial support and teach them how they can earn money by starting business activities.
- ❖ The efforts of Govt. and N.G.O.'s will be co-ordinate in respect of implementation of schemes and programmes for empowerment of women. Better facilities of health care, sanitation and medication should be provided to women. The judiciary should look after the molestation cases with special care and transparency.

CONCLUSION

It is widely recognized that the women empowerment is central to development and the concern has been to advance the rights of women. Our past recent history has shown that women do contribute a lot to the household and development can be speeded up when there is recognition of every one's efforts.

Issues of equality, social access, and quality of education have been pushed into the background at a time when only seven percent of the relevant age group has managed to enter the system. The government must have a vision that encompasses the governance of the public and private sectors and keep in focus the gender concerns. The present ad hoc approach without a conceptual framework is fraught with negative implications for women's access to higher education.

India has historically been a nation divided on social, ethnic and economic fronts. Successive governments have attempted to analyse and overcome the divide but have not made much headway chiefly owing to political compulsions. With the onset of higher technology, easier access to communication and

information technology, the divide has shown definitive signs of narrowing down even though only to a marginal extent. The government and the private sector will continue to play a key role in improving the reach of good quality education to all the corners of the country.

All the positive steps taken till now are welcome. However, implementation of the initiatives is a key to success. These are some points that the nation will have to consider upon. And the path ahead isn't that easy. Walls, windows, doors and teachers will not make a school, till we have hungry children wanting to be in the fields and factories, to earn their meals. The Vision and Mission of Education for all will have to inculcate and imbibe in one and all, leaders and followers that for every child born poor and needy, there will have to be a well-drawn plan, to ensure that s/he doesn't remain so – for if we fail in providing the basic needs of food and shelter to a child, she/he will never see the light of the day, through education – at least. A healthy mind comes in a healthy body. The nation should strive towards total health of children, education will follow. Education for the masses is a massive task. It would need a single minded focus of the State, to implement this programme in a country, which is the 7th largest in the world in terms of size and the 2nd most populated of all. Reform in education is a cultural, political, financial and administrative challenge. The children of today are to be the citizens of tomorrow. We as a citizen of today will be able to provide a slate to every child and a pen to write his/her own future. And we will achieve this at least in the coming decade.

According to Former Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh 'The time has come to create a second wave of institution building and of excellence in the fields of education, research and capability building'. We need an educational system that is modern, liberal and can adapt to the changing needs of a changing society, a changing economy and a changing world. The thrust of public policy for higher education in India has to be to address these challenges. However, one university can't make much difference. If the government welcomes more such initiatives, the future will be ours. We will be able to match and compete with other countries and the dream to be the world's greatest economy won't be difficult to achieve.

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