

Dr. A.K. Enamul Haque
Professor of Economics
School of Business and Economics
United International University

Director (Academic Affairs)
Insight School of Learning

Director
Asian Center for Development
Economic Research Group

BANGLADESH

Advisor, SANDEE www.sandeeonline.org

akehaque@gmail.com
akehaque@eco.uiu.ac.bd
enamul.haque@insight-school.com
Twitter: @akehaque

HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH ASIA AND THE NEW NORMAL

Case of re-thinking the structure of higher education



Introduction



- Higher education begins at the end of school education (often Grade XII)
- Includes undergraduate, graduate, post-graduate, and professional education
- Purpose of higher education has been under constant revision
 - Creation of new knowledge
 - Application of knowledge for humankind
 - Devoted to improve welfare of human being for today and for the future



Seeking Knowledge : why and how



- To know good and evil – eventually converts into ‘commonsense’ (‘nonsense’ is that of without knowledge).
- Pursuit of knowledge continues from cradle to grave
- How to pursue knowledge acquisition?
 - From Guru
 - From God/Allah
 - From Religious sources
 - From informal/formal institution
 - From Society/community
 - From books
 - From hearsay/stories



Seeking knowledge ...



- **Knowledge** includes facts, information, description(s), and / or skills acquired through ‘experience’ or ‘education’.
- Quest for knowledge began to grow for two main reasons
 - ▣ Knowledge increases ability of a person to give to society – they are respected and honored by all.
 - ▣ Knowledge became the source of prosperity
- How to acquire knowledge?



Early knowledge



□ Growth of academic disciplines

□ Used to be no separation

- Based on individuals to individuals
- Early innovations were all guided by ingenuity of individuals and were often protected by communities using a cobweb of rules guiding trade practices to wedding rules.
- Knowledge remained confined to communities and nations
- Transfer was only through indoctrination into faiths/communities



Disciplines of Knowledge



- Guru model (early approach)
- Religious schools
- By the 13th century knowledge became classified:
 - Knowledge was divided into disciplines
 - Theology, medicine, law (religious) and arts
- 19th Century – secularization of knowledge began
 - New faculties of knowledge were recognized
 - Social science, language, science, humanities/liberal arts, technology, medicine



Disciplines of knowledge



- 20th Century – further extension of disciplines
 - Education, music, psychology, media studies, business studies, crafts, physiotherapy, military strategies, etc. entered as new disciplines of studies.
 - Acquisition of knowledge began more multi-disciplinary



Demand for Knowledge



- Demand comes from several sources
 - ▣ Individuals
 - Want to specialize
 - Benefit the humankind
 - Spiritual needs
 - Secure jobs
 - ▣ Communities / nations
 - Maintain peace
 - Support community needs
 - Develop a spirit for the community
 - Ensure prosperity
 - Accomplish tasks



Changing nature of educational needs



- Comes from the job market
 - Has expanded from communities → nations → regions → globe
 - Nature of a work became more integrated rather than separated by disciplines
 - Globalization and increasing mobility of people across the boundaries
 - Future job markets – will be more global in nature.



Crafting a new educational supply mix



- As demand for education has completely changed from that of 19th and 20th century – the new education needs to be re-crafted.
- Education systems in South Asia are driven by
 - National aspirations
 - History, culture, science and technology
 - Very few discoveries/innovations – can check the patent history of the world
 - More to do reach a target – little push to expand the boundaries
 - Little research and mostly based on lectures and exams.



Current structure of Education



- National goals
 - Harmonization between center and periphery
 - Reduce poverty – through universal access
 - Integrate national identities – through knowledge of culture and history
- How was it done?
 - Through creation of ‘national’ standards – reduces innovation and diversity.
 - ‘Degree’ became a ‘tick box’ and often curriculum is drafted based on vested needs.



Result of “National” standards



- Education might have become a means for achieving national integration but
 - ‘Standards’ allows minimum changes while the nature of problems and the demand are changing fast.
 - Deviated from the global race
 - Lack of research led to zero innovation and changes
 - Lack of homegrown materials (due to absence of research) led education to become a vehicle for entering into the job market only
 - Educational institutions become ‘degree mills’ and students want to secure a ‘recognized’ certificate only.



Continued....



- ❑ Righteousness, problem solving are no longer the goal of education
- ❑ Education fails to improve the society
 - Statistics would show more crimes, hatred, and dishonesty are now embedded among our educated youths!
- ❑ Moreover, as demand for educated /skilled labour increases globally
 - National curriculum in higher education fails to guarantee the professional quality needed
 - National demand also changes as global investments flows in every country
 - Unfortunately even within a country domestic MBAs are less worthy than an MBA from USA



New Demand for education



- People demand education for various reasons
 - ▣ Become high achievers using knowledge
 - ▣ Build individual dignity and honour
 - ▣ Join global job markets
 - ▣ Social recognition/family prestige
 - ▣ Contribute to knowledge creation / creating human value
 - ▣ Solve difficult problems of earth / humankind
 - ▣ Guarantee professional ethics
 - ▣ Very high degree of specialization
 - ▣ Allow innovation and discoveries
 - ▣ Life long education / limit free education
 - ▣ Allow quest for excellence



Rapid expansion of demand



- Literacy rate increasing in South Asia
- Structural shift in supply of students will be felt within the next decades
- Demand for higher education will grow
 - Due to increased enrolment rate
 - Due to higher completion rate at the school level
 - Job markets will be come more unstable with rapid changes in the nature of service sectors
 - Expansion of education into other soft areas previously unknown, for example,
 - Degree in leadership, degree in counter terrorism, degree in corporate security, degree in surveillance
 - Degree in music, instrumental music, media, graphic designs, aid disbursement, aid strategy, international negotiations, compliance of standards, creation of global standards
 - Degree in humanitarian aid, degree in hospital management, airport management, office record keeping



New demand ...



- Demand for education will further grow
 - More re-training is needed due to retrenchment and job changes
 - Need for flexible timing of education
 - Need for less structured education
 - Need for less integrated but more multi-disciplinary and step-wise education
 - Need for flexible courseware to study
 - Need for flexible length of study
 - Need for global recognition of educational certificates



Reforming the supply side



- Given these complex needs it is important to realize that educational industry must accept changes
 - ▣ Changes in designing curriculum – discipline and their mixes
 - ▣ Changes in delivery of education – time, place, and assessment
 - ▣ Changes in quality assurance – flexible standards
 - ▣ Changes in delivery mechanism – cross-country, global, national
 - ▣ Changes in recognition and quality assurances – international certification, global degrees, regional degrees
- New education must be innovative, must facilitate new experiments, must solve problems, must be integrated with the global world.
- New education cannot based on ‘all size fits all’ formula
- Strictly regulated education system cannot deliver all of these.



The New Normal



□ Background

- WTO negotiation on movement of natural persons (mode 4) will allow skill individuals to move across the boundaries along with global flow of investments (in the service sector).
- Requires a rapid measures to ‘internationalize’ national higher education system in South Asia
- Requires cross-border recognition of higher education



New Normal in HE in South Asia



- Focus of global/regional needs
- Focus on cross-recognition
- Focus on flexible standards
- Example
 - definition of 'Levels' in UK Higher Education
 - Credit hours and their distribution without assigning courses like Core credit, GED credit, Open Credit etc.
 - Create knowledge 'building blocks' through certificates, diplomas and degrees to ensure access to education for the mass.



New Normal...



- Allow learning for life as the principle for delivery of education. Facilitate cross-border education to integrate regions and the globe and to fill-in the gap for skilled individuals
- Move to voluntary standards using professional, private and public entities
- Integrate professional experience into the knowledge domain to recognize 'experiences' into knowledge.

A Metaphor – river of knowledge



Current Structure of HE



The New Normal of HE