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On Implementing Choice Based Credit System: Some Issues

Suresh Garg*

It is universally agreed that education is the most potent tool to transform a society from stagnation and poverty to dynamism and prosperity, from marginalization and deprivation to empowerment and recognition, from ignorance and delusion to enlightenment and liberation and from conflict and intolerance to non-violence and peaceful co-existence. In present day globalised world, geographical boundaries have become porous, cultural barriers have narrowed down and currencies, banking, trade, etc have integrated. In such a scenario, it is important for every nation state to create competent human capital by providing quality higher education so that they can compete in international job market and contribute to drive the engine of knowledge economy.

In India, we have treasured glorious traditions of higher education, research and self-learning through the ages. These kept us 'intellectually alive' even in difficult times. It is well known that our ancient universities such as Taxila and Nalanda enjoyed undisputed supremacy for their excellence in various fields of contemporary human knowledge. (These were analogous to present day Harvard, Oxford, Stanford, MIT, and Cambridge in the West.) As a result, our country was a major source of wisdom, philosophy and values; moral, spiritual and social. People from other parts of the then known world visited these institutions for getting education in different fields. Unfortunately, these institutions of eminence slowly got extinguished following successive foreign invasions, internal disorder and poor governance. Moreover, new institutions/universities of the same level could not be recreated due to sharp decline in quality of support, governance and resources.

When we became independent in 1947, we inherited an education system devised by Macaulay and driven by the objective of producing a clerical work force for the British empire. The privileged few in our country went abroad to countries like England, France and Germany for liberal education. It was a happenstance that many of them led our freedom struggle and were convinced that education could be the only potent vehicle for socio-political-economic empowerment of individuals and consequently the society. Accordingly with the objective to democratize higher education, new institutions were created and existing centres were strengthened by the Central and State governments. Over time, national priorities changed to accommodate newer realities – changing learner profiles, their numbers, aspirations and expectations, international practices, etc. These led to emergence of newer models. However, existing higher education institutions were advised to proactively revisit their mechanisms to re-engineer their processes and reposition themselves so as to remain relevant. As a result, while continuing to practice adherence to national ethos and coherence with cultural values, inclusion and pluralism were added as guiding principles to give definite shape to positive affirmative

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