

Contextualizing the developmental university in India¹

Dr C Shambu Prasad, Professor, Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar
Joseph Satish V, Research Associate, Knowledge in Civil Society
Dr K V G Krishnamurty, Independent Consultant

The university as a seat of learning has had a rich and long history in both oriental and occidental societies. Some of the oldest universities have originated from a plethora of culturally rich civilizations such as the Buddhist traditions of Nalanda University in 5th century India, the Islamic Al-Azhar University of Cairo of the 10th century and the Church assisted “places of teaching universal knowledge” of 19th Century England expounded by Cardinal Newman (Newman, 1852). The modern university as a secular place of learning is often traced to the medieval European university of the 12th Century and the notion of a *research university* birthed from the Humboldtian perspective of 19th century Prussia (Altbach, 2011). Universities then went on to symbolize institutions which contribute to a nation’s socio-cultural progress, scientific and technological advancement, and economic development while simultaneously engaging with academic institutions across the globe. Universities were also seen as important sites of interconnectivity where different cultures, traditions and origins of knowledge could blend harmoniously and contribute to a knowledge society (Delanty, 2000).

Evolving roles from research and teaching to development

The university acts as an avenue for creating and bringing about advances in knowledge and culture, through the main pillars of teaching and research. The role of the university in a nation’s development is well recognised. They are seen as integral part of national innovation systems as sources of new knowledge. Recent research on the university however looks at the institution in transition and newer ideas of the ‘entrepreneurial university’ (Clark 1998) or ‘developmental university’ (Sutz 2005) or the ‘civic university’ (Goddard 2009) have been suggested even as the University responds to the crises of autonomy in a neo-liberal context, made more severe by the recent financial crises worldwide.

In addition to the traditional roles of generating knowledge (research) and dissemination (teaching), there has been a recent focus on the contribution of universities to regional or national development in developing countries. The developmental role is seen as an important third mission for universities in transition (Göransson, Brundenius, 2012: 347-350). Dialogue within and outside universities have led to the call for these institutions to engage directly with society and contribute to social welfare. These “developmental universities... will take knowledge to deprived communities... [With] local needs [being] included in research agendas... [Where] good research into problems of local relevance must be rewarded, irrespective of whether it achieves international acceptance or impact... [And] support must be provided for students and university staff to identify and commit to solving social and productive problems...” (Sutz, 2005). The idea of the developmental university was earlier articulated by Coleman in the African context as strongly linked to nationalism and was concerned with resolving the problems of societal development. Development, as currently (mis)understood, embodies westernization and economic growth. Coleman however understands development to be an

¹ This paper combines two discussion papers on ‘Contextualising the Developmental University in India: A Preliminary Mapping Exercise’ (Shambu Prasad, Joseph Satish V and KVG Krishnamurty 2012) and ‘Discussions on Higher Education in India’ (Joseph Satish and Shambu Prasad 2012) into one. The detailed appendices from the original papers are available on the website <http://uniid2012.tk/>.

“amelioration of poverty, unemployment and inequality under the rubric of human personality” while promoting “interdependence based on symmetry and mutual accountability” (Coleman, 1994).

Much of these discussions on a changed role of universities have however escaped discussions in the Indian or South Asian context. This preliminary research seeks to contextualize the developmental university in India. We seek to explore answers to the following questions:

- What is the nature of discussion and areas of concern in the higher education discourse in India today? How do current India universities (& higher education institutes in general) look at their relation to development, if at all and how has this been articulated?
- How does this associate with concepts and ideas of social inclusion (and exclusion) and / or inclusive innovation? What are the arguments and suggestions, if any, for social innovations in Indian higher education?
- Are concerns of development and social justice being articulated in spaces other than formal universities? If so what are they and how is inclusive innovation and development understood by non-formal spaces?
- Can formal universities learn from the ideas and experiments in the non-formal educational space, especially in their engagement with the informal sector? What are the perspectives on collaborations with civil society and non-formal education spaces, if any?
- How can these initiatives in the non-formal spaces add to the imagination of the idea of the universities?

This paper opens up the idea of the developmental or civic university in India. It is meant to take forward recent discussions on universities and inclusive innovation in the South Asian context, and present a case for further empirical studies on universities in the South Asian region in general and India in particular. We begin by examining the historical evolution of higher education in India. We provide a bird's eye view of the university landscape in India highlighting both the growth and institutional diversity of the educational space in the twenty-first century. We then proceed to look briefly at some recent discussions on concerns regarding higher education including those put forward by committees and commissions constituted by the Indian Government in its attempts to reform the university space.

How do universities perceive their role in the development of the nation? We explore this in the following section by examining the developmental role of some Indian universities and higher education institutions through an analysis of their vision or mission statements. The preliminary analysis indicates an inadequate articulation, if not complete silence, on the developmental role of the university. We then proceed to extend some of these discussions on the developmental role of the university and other higher education institutions in India through a look at one of India's most popular social science journals, the Economic and Political Weekly (EPW)². We conclude the analysis of the developmental role by exploring alternative visions of development and knowledge outside the formal space. These experiments need closer scrutiny if we need to rethink the idea of the university and its role in inclusive innovation and development has been attempted by other discussion papers in this volume (see Rajni Bakshi on the Adivasi Academy or A R Vasavi on alternative experiments in education). In this paper we suggest that the expansion of new universities in India and their

² EPW is widely read among academicians, practitioners and policy makers in India, South Asia as well as abroad. While other journals (see end note) do carry nuanced discussions on higher education in India and elsewhere, this study is limited in scope and focused on exploring the nature of questions on higher education in a popular and widely read journal.

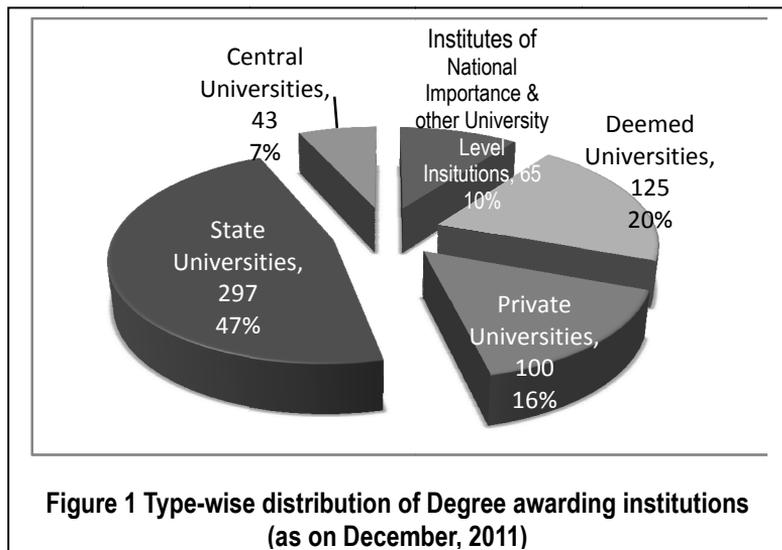
articulation of their roles make a strong case for rethinking the Indian University from a developmental perspective.

Evolution and Spread of Higher Education in India: Issues of Access and Social Exclusion

Higher education in India, as we understand it today, has its origins in Mountstuart Elphinstone's minutes of 1823 that emphasised the need for imparting European education to the "natives" in Bombay (Elphinstone, 1884). Later, Thomas Macaulay strongly advocated education in English through his minute on Indian Education of 1835 (Macaulay, 1965). However, it was Sir Charles Wood's Dispatch of 1854 which articulated the need for a coherent policy on education. The dispatch came to be known as the 'Magna Carta of English Education in India', and led to the establishment of the universities of Calcutta, Bombay (now Mumbai) and Madras in 1857 (UGC, 2012). Post independence, attempts were made to formulate a national system of higher education and a full-fledged Ministry of Education was established in Independent India in 1947. Later, the University Grants Commission (UGC) was set up in 1956 by an Act of Parliament. The UGC was vested with the responsibility of providing funds to institutions of higher education and also the coordination, determination and maintenance of standards in institutions of higher education (NPI, 2011).

In addition to the UGC, the higher education scene in India is governed by a number of statutory professional councils. These councils are responsible for the recognition of courses and promotion of professional institutions under specific streams of education such as technical and management education (All India Council of Technical Education or AICTE), medical education (Medical Council of India or MCI), teacher education (National Council for Teacher Education or NCTE), agricultural education (Indian Council for Agricultural Research or ICAR) and legal education (Bar Council of India or BCI). Powered by the UGC and the statutory councils, higher education in India is delivered through the constituents of the either universities or through university level institutions. (DHE, 2012):

These include **Central Universities** and **State Universities** which are established or incorporated by Acts by the Centre and State respectively, **Private Universities** which are recognised as such by a central or state body run by societies, trusts or section 25 companies like the Azim Premji University. There is also a provision under the UGC Act, which enables the central government



to declare a high performing institution, as a **Deemed-to-be University**. In addition to the Universities, Institution like the Indian Institutes of Technology or the NIIT University are also given

degree awarding status as **Institution of National or State Importance** respectively through appropriate central or state law.

According to the UGC, there are 43 Central Universities, 297 State Universities, 100 Private Universities and 129 Deemed Universities in 2011. In addition, there are 65 Institutes of National Importance and other university level institutions. The number of degree awarding institutions in India is indicated in Figure 1

Rapid mushrooming of higher education institutions

A large part of the growth in numbers has been in the last decade, as is seen in the next graph. While increase in the number of universities bodes well for students and the nation in general, there is rising concern regarding the rapid mushrooming of private and deemed universities in India. The UGC recently putting the process of conferring deemed university status on hold and 44 universities were stripped of their “deemed” status (Chopra, 2011). There has been no policy or guidelines to measure the competence of the private and deemed universities. While the entry of private players is important for the growth of higher education, there is no clear understanding on the nature of their role. As Goswami (2013) has recently suggested the Indian higher education environment requires private investment but also better visioning of basic regulatory principles that can inform the debate and institutional exemplars that can demonstrate social and public good. While the provision for the entry of private players was made with the noble intent of providing quality education and promoting centres of excellence, issues of affordability and access at these institutions are not being addressed adequately. These universities in India should be encouraged in the background of access, regional balance, regulation, quality, credibility as well as the social concerns of inclusiveness.

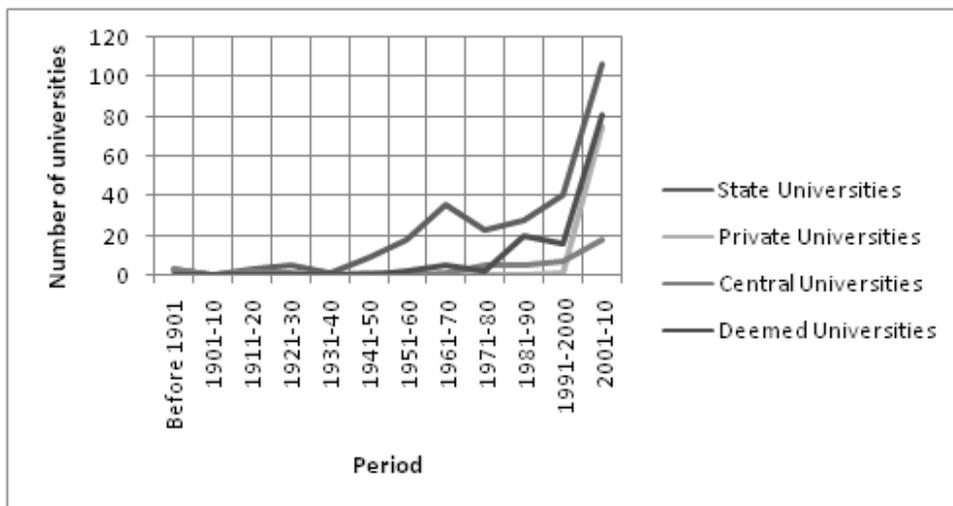
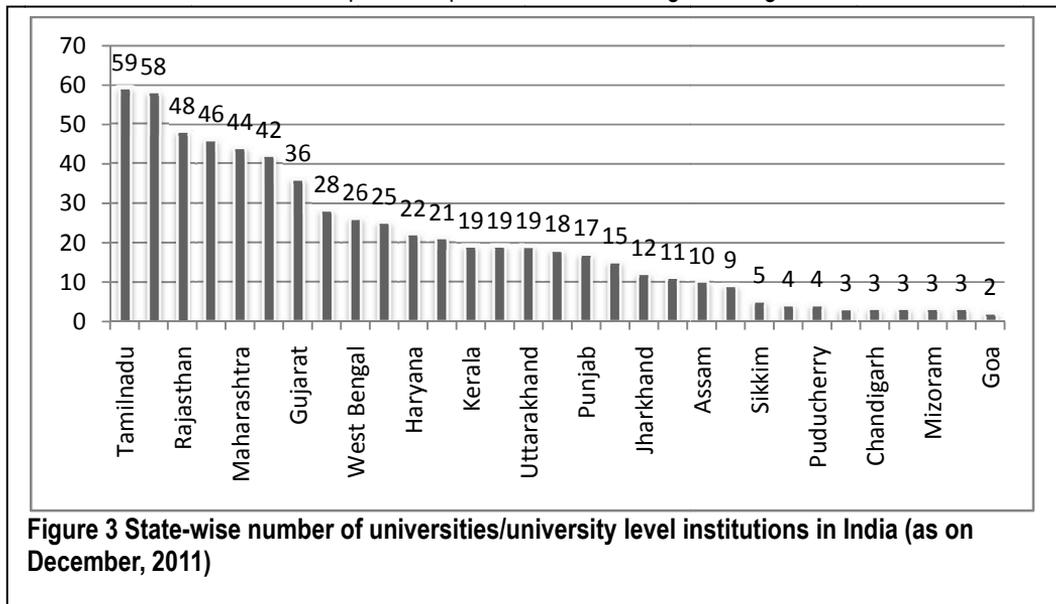


Figure 2 Growth in Number of universities from 1857 to 2012

Issues of access to higher education

In spite of the enormous growth in the number of educational institutions, the Gross Enrolment Ratio³ (GER) for higher education in India is remarkably low. The GER based on the Selected Education Statistics (SES) for 2006-07 stands at 11%, compared to the world's average GER of 23% and a GER of 55% for developed countries respectively. Regional disparities are also wide. The figures of the state-wise number of universities and university level institutions (figure 3) indicate that some of the least developed regions in India (Chattisgarh, Odisha, Jammu and Kashmir, and regions in the North East) have very few institutions providing tertiary education. Disparities are further exacerbated by other divides like the rural-urban, poor-non poor, caste, tribe, religion and gender.



Inaccessibility for the geographically and linguistically challenged

Of the 350+ universities/university level institutions in India, only about 10 are located in non-urban. The recent tussle over the Central Government wanting to set up a Central University at Gaya (due to its proximity to Patna, the state capital of Bihar) in opposition to the State Government's interest in setting up the university at Motihari (on the urban periphery) is only a small indicator of the growing rural-urban divide in higher education (Dhar, 2012). A student coming from a rural setup has to span multiple borders of region, language and culture if s/he has to attempt at getting quality higher education. Among several trials faced by such student, s/he has to learn two languages (English and Hindi) in addition to his/her mother tongue; it is worse for an Adivasi student who will may have to learn one more (the language of the state) since s/he may know only the tribal dialects. As Prof. Ganesh Devy points out, "Cutting across lines of caste, tribe, and religion or gender a person born in Indian village is likely to be deprived of any reasonably decent education." (Devy, 2010)

A university system cannot claim to be inclusive if the disadvantaged student continues to be accorded low priority. An introspection of such exclusionary factors calls for a new engagement by universities to embrace the people on the margins of society and engage them in societal development. If larger sections of population have to participate in the growth of the nation, the

³ Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for higher education is the ratio of persons enrolled in higher education institutions to the total population of the persons in age group of 18 to 23 years

Shambu Prasad, Joseph Satish & Others

interaction between universities, local communities and civil society has to be given equal, if not more, importance as university-industry partnerships.

Quality

The exclusionary trend at the core of the Indian higher education policy is further intensified by lack of quality education for even those already enrolled in the many institutes of higher education. The general response to these shortcomings have been to improve infrastructural facilities, recruit adequate number of quality faculty, and introduce academic reforms with respect to admissions, teaching and examinations. However, such simplistic solutions may not bode well for the reformation of higher education. The crucial question is to ruminate on what exactly has gone wrong in spite of the fact that we have so many universities and higher educational institutions spread across the nation.

Reforming Higher Education: Concerns and Initiatives

The evolving character of higher education in India is in line with the changing nature of thrust pursued by the Planning Commission. The initial Five Year Plans were largely focused on setting up infrastructure, regulation and governance mechanisms. With the developing economy, research, skill development and expansion became central to later plans. The changing Plan strategies indicate that the situation is such that the challenges to Indian higher education have not only increased but have become more complex as well.

Since the Ninth Five Year Plan (that is, post liberalization) there has been a focus on increasing the relevance of higher education improving quality and quantity of the information technology era in a globalized economy.⁴ This is being planned through alternative financing models, public-private partnerships. There is also talk of socially inclusive policies, demographic dividend etc.

Recent initiatives by the Government of India

In 2005, the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) was constituted to prepare a blueprint for reforming India's educational system for transforming India into a global knowledge hub. In its 2006 note, the NKC listed outdated curriculum, rote learning, lack of applied or inter-disciplinary teaching, erosion of research and lack of accountability as some of the recurring causes for concern. (NKC, 2006).

To reform higher education, NKC suggested the creation of more universities, the establishment of an Independent Regulatory Authority for Higher Education (IRAHE) and diversification of sources of funding. To promote excellence, the NKC called for an overhaul of the curriculum and evaluation, as well as undergraduate education. It emphasised reformulation of existing policies to enable entry of foreign institutions, among others. On inclusion, the NKC suggested the development of a "comprehensive framework" to address all kinds of differences and deprivation which are not currently addressed by the reservation policy in vogue (NKC, 2007).

In 2008, a 'Committee to Advise on Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher Education' was constituted by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) under the leadership of Prof. Yashpal (former Chairman of the UGC). The Committee was to review the UGC and various other statutory councils and suggest ways of progressing higher education towards a more creative and active form. The committee submitted its report in early 2010. The primary concern of the Committee was the fragmentation of educational disciplines into independent entities. New knowledge and

⁴ http://planningcommission.nic.in/aboutus/committee/wrkgrp11/wg11_hgedu.pdf

insights, it says, are born at the “boundaries of disciplines” – which have been eroded by the current university system with its emphasis on storing information rather than creating knowledge. It also expresses concern over the mushrooming of institutions which have become mere business enterprises dispensing sub-standard education.

While encouraging a holistic curriculum which will create interfaces between different disciplines, the Yashpal Committee stresses the need to relate to the outside world. It suggests the revision of curriculum and pedagogy to induct the student into a “community of participant citizens”. The syllabi should equip the student with thinking in and for the real world rather than a lopsided emphasis for scoring in examinations. Importantly, it remarks that the Indian higher education system should start listening to “the worker, the artisan and the peasant” and learn from the profound local knowledge existing in the world outside the classroom.

The recommendations of NKC are overtly focused on addressing the manpower requirements of a rapidly growing economy. While creating a skilled workforce is an indispensable necessity, it appears that the social dimension of a nation mired in disparities is not addressed. This is evident in the NKC’s emphasis on “sustaining economic development”, which it considers the third area of far reaching impact after “realizing demographic dividend” and “reducing social disparities”. The NKC also favours privatisation and internationalisation of higher education, towards fulfilling the requirements of an industrialised economy. The Yashpal Committee on the other hand encourages joint and cross disciplinary research and learning between/among students, teachers and the community.

Finally, the draft National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER) bill introduced in the Parliament and touted as elixir to all the evils haunting higher education in India, appears to be more concerned with bureaucratic procedures than with the “renovation and rejuvenation” of higher education, thus falling short of expectations (Tilak, 2010).

Eurocentric and industry dictated focus on higher education

Most universities in India have their origins in the European traditions rising out of the colonial roots of English rule. After independence, universities took on a national character under policies for developing Indian identity, but they still appeared to follow a “euro-american” academic framework (Alvares, 2011). Socio-economic factors, and more particularly demands of industry, dictated the choice of courses offered. With this linear understanding of a university, students take up only what is offered to them. Higher education is simply seen as an act of transferring information from teacher to student, making it a mere “information management problem”. Teachers are expected to gather information, organise it and re-package it for students’ consumption with little or no relevance to the world around them.

More recently, the increasing influence of corporate in globalised context also constructed in “euro-american” terms, have thwarted whatever marginal efforts there was to address local realities or interact with local knowledge producers. Thus universities tend to adopt an elitist flavour and pedagogy, curriculum and theoretical frameworks do not reflect all the needs of classes and sections of society. As a result, given the complex of problems faced by India today, the university is not able to provide adequate tools and methods to tackle these problems. The restrictive nature of university education is also evident in the fact that it does not attach importance to inherited knowledge systems nor aspects of local culture. For instance, the FAO has officially recognized the traditional agricultural system of Koraput in Odisha, which has been practiced by tribal farmers. In spite of being recognized as a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System (GIAHS) site (FAO, 2012) such agricultural

Shambu Prasad, Joseph Satish & Others

systems are seldom included in the curriculum in agricultural institutes. (See Joseph Thomas and Ramasubramaniam's paper on Knowledge Gaps in Agricultural Universities in this volume).

Efforts to re-imagine the developmental role of the university have not received a suitable impetus. While one initiative (the NKC) was purely industry driven, the other (Yashpal Committee) has not received sufficient support from the policy makers. It is therefore seen that the traditionally understood functions of the university (teaching and research) are not adequate to tackle the problems of society, mainly because efforts to reform them from a social perspective are not receiving the attention they deserve.

Are there space and a mandate for evolving a “developmental university” within the current set-up? The next section explores the vision/mission statements of universities, to understand if their mission also embodies developmental goals.

Whither Development? Universities and their Societal Connect beyond Access

The overview of university and higher educational institutes in India above has pointed to the challenges of university education in a diverse and unequal society. Despite policies of affirmative reservation for increasing social inclusion, questions remain whether universities as institutions treat themselves as open spaces for greater interaction with society. The higher education landscape consists of elite institutions with several internal conflicts on inclusion. There is also no clear mandate to engage with societal issues at large. Effective inclusion will require going, beyond issues of access, deeper into the sociology of knowledge -- on how universities create knowledge, on how they would themselves engage with actors beyond academia particularly with social movements and civil society organisations. It requires going into the knowledge, perspectives and language of people at the margins who are, to paraphrase Anil Gupta, “knowledge rich but economically poor”. To do this, we also need to ask about the ways in universities have engaged, if at all, with the regions around them? How successful have they been in taking up local issues of development or managing natural resources of the region in a sustainable manner? Do Indian universities see for themselves a role beyond teaching and research?

But is the University envisioned such that it is able to address this issue. The purpose of a university is often reflected in its vision, mission and objective statements. As a preliminary inquiry, we examined the vision/mission statements⁵ of representative sample from Central, Deemed and Private Universities and Institutions of National Importance across different geographical regions. Has the vision changed over the years?

The three oldest State Universities in India (Madras, Mumbai and Calcutta) do not seem to have explicit vision statements. This perhaps is because they were part of the State Acts legislated during the British era (in 1857). The vision and mission statements of some public educational institutions do talk about “socially responsible behaviour”. Some of them, drafted more than five decades ago, contain archaic visions of social and cultural enhancement. They assume that the educational and research activities of the institution will indirectly contribute to societal development. The University Of Hyderabad (UOH), for example talks from a research-centric focus in its mission on creation and dissemination of knowledge while the developmental role is not overtly articulated.

⁵ The list of these institutions and their vision statements have been listed in a separate appendix available at <http://uniid2012.tk/>.

It is interesting to note that two of the leading medical educational institutions in India, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) and Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Post-Graduate Medical Education and Research (JIPMER), talk only about the educational aspects of medicine and healthcare, without any reference to society. The National Institutes of Technology (NITs) and Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) seem to have a varied perspective with some of them (like IIT-Bombay and IIT-Kharagpur) focusing only on the educational aspects of science and technology, while others such as NIT-Trichy, IIT-Madras and IIT-Delhi making explicit reference to their role in society and industry.

Very few universities have focused community interaction or local outreach programs. The Central Universities like Benares Hindu University (BHU) and Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) talk about their social responsibilities from a religio-centric perspective. The Visva Bharati University makes explicit visionary statements for its two campuses about enhancing human values and fellowship of mankind. The Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) talks about enhancing access to education, while the North Eastern Hill University (NEHU) talks about the socio-economic needs of the North East while fulfilling its academic responsibilities.

Some of the newer universities appear to have a more focused take on societal development. The Central University of Orissa talks about providing “economically relevant education” through “an extensive network of partnerships” while providing “a diverse and inclusive campus” and remaining committed to addressing “tribal society’s educational, economic, and cultural challenges”. The Sikkim University aspires to become a “centre of academic excellence and research” while building “an all inclusive institutional character with a strong commitment towards regional development and cross-border integration”.

Among the deemed universities, the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) explicitly mentions its aspiration “To be an institution of excellence...that continually responds to the changing social realities through the development and application of knowledge, towards creating a people-centered and ecologically sustainable society...with special emphasis on marginalized and vulnerable groups”. Some private universities offer a glimmer of hope with some of them being guided by principles of societal development. The Azim Premji University says that its work is guided by the values of “social justice, equity, humane values and sustainability” within the framework of a “secular and democratic Indian polity”. Accordingly, its research programs are led by three initiatives – law governance and development, mind and society, people and ideas. The hope is that the university, through its research programs, will create a multiplier effect at the national, state, district and sub-district levels. The Centurion University through its *Gram Tarang* initiative has three programs to impact rural communities through Employability Training Services to improve employability of young Indians from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds, empowerment of communities by adding value to agricultural produce, and financial services to provide capital and promote entrepreneurship and to extend financial services to marginalized groups. Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT) has a Centre for Sustainable Rural Development & Research Studies to promote sustainable rural development through participative planning, capacity building, effective networking, research and innovative efforts.

The relative importance of mission/vision statements in determining the active orientation of an institution is a recent phenomenon brought in by newer management sciences, and is therefore not completely adequate to conclude any aspiration towards the developmental university, a broad analysis of these statements indicate that a developmental perspective is at best inadequately articulated, if not absent. This is borne by the fact that conventional studies of the universities

Shambu Prasad, Joseph Satish & Others

(Krishna, 2012) look at paper and patent publications and citation indices as *the* main output of universities and do not look into the broader roles of universities in local, regional or national systems of innovation. The recent literature on the developmental university suggests the case for a shift. Indian universities, given the lack of a definitive objective to do so, are less likely to play leading roles in development despite having the potential. One is aware though, that a socially conscious vision statement does not necessarily indicate the makings of a “developmental university”. But it does indicate that the newer universities may be better sites for experimentation and engagement for ideas of inclusive innovation and development, even as the older universities and the institutes of national importance can provide expertise to rethink the role of universities.

The reasons for this apparent disconnect of universities with their developmental role and other development actors requires closer attention and more deliberation. But this does not seem to be part of the agenda on higher education reform. In the Indian context though there have been several experiments in educational reform outside the formal university space, often by products of Indian universities and centres of excellence. They have sought to use the liberal education of the university to engage more pro-actively with societal concerns. There have also been several instances of university academics working with activists and actionists involved in constructive work with marginalised people. There has also been a long tradition of creative dissent among Indian intellectuals and scientists. A recent example of such an initiative is the work by the Knowledge In Civil Society (KICS), a network of academics and activists working together to produce a manifesto on science and technology. The manifesto focuses on the three principles of sustainability, plurality and justice while advocating a closer engagement with civil society organisations for a *Knowledge Swaraj*⁶. The manifesto suggests the need for a closer look at the knowledge question⁷ and the need to engage with educational innovations outside formal spaces. It is therefore a useful reference point for looking at the role of universities in inclusive innovation and development.

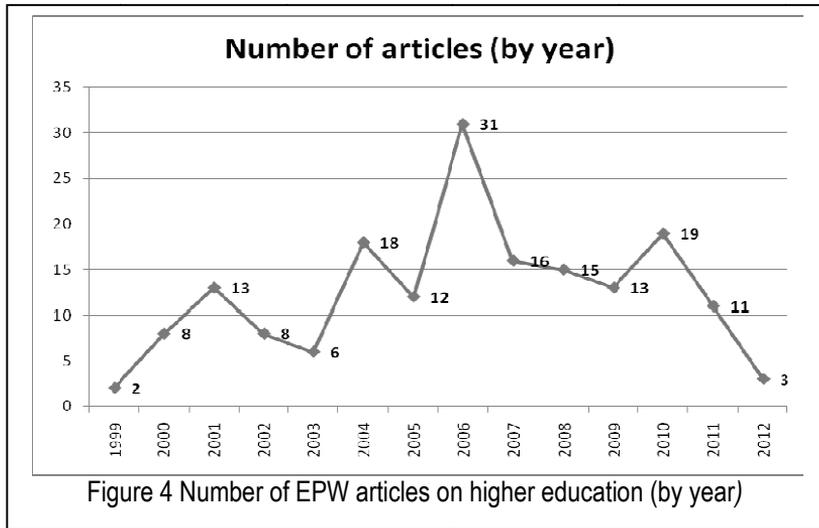
But before we look further into this aspect, we need to take into account the nature of discourse and the issues in the predominant critical intellectual circuit. We do this by analysing the discussions on higher education in one of India’s leading scholarly magazines, the Economic and Political Weekly, which is considered representative of the critical progressive discourses in the country.

⁶ *Knowledge Swaraj, an Indian Manifesto for Science and Technology*, Knowledge in Civil Society (KICS). 2011

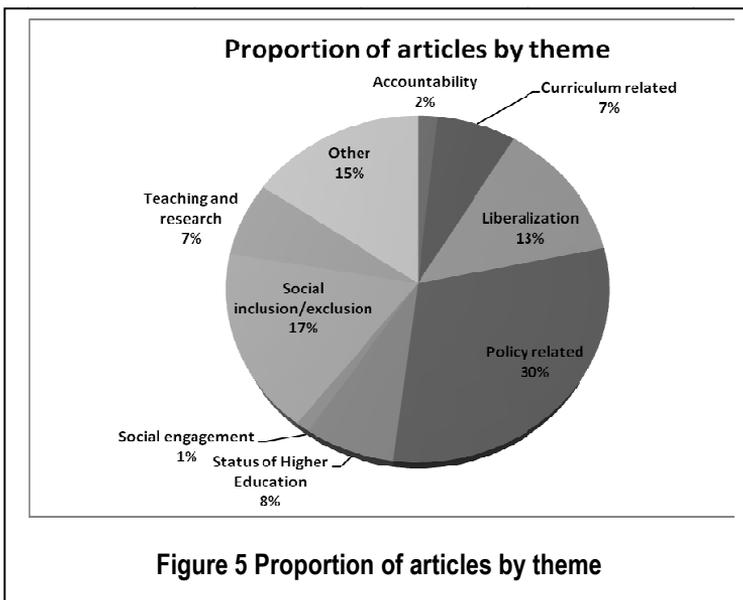
⁷ Seminar Issue# 597 “Knowledge in Question”, <http://www.india-seminar.com/2009/597.htm>

Exploring discussions on Indian higher education

There have been close to 140 different authors who have contributed to the 175 articles in the EPW over the period 1999-2012) with keywords⁸: “higher education”, “universities”, “colleges”, “university” or “college”. Eminent scholars such as Jandhyala Tilak, Amrit Singh and Philip Altbach were the among the top contributors. Their contribution was predominantly in eight broad themes namely



accountability of the higher education system, curriculum design and reform, liberalization of higher education, governance and regulation of the system, status of higher education, social engagement focus, social inclusion/exclusion, concerns with teaching and research.



As indicated in Figure 4, the highest number of articles was recorded in 2006 apparently triggered by the debate on reservations for Other Backward Castes in centrally funded institutions. However policy related issues dominated the discourse.

Issues related to governance and regulation
A sense of discomfort over the nature of governance in Indian higher education is often expressed in many of the articles in the sample.

Much of this appears to stem from concerns over autonomy and affiliation. They suggest a rethink on the structure of affiliation to universities in India, which is fraught with bureaucratic hurdles and

⁸ Using the web based search facility provided by the EPW online archives we searched for the following keywords: “higher education”, “universities”, “colleges”, “university” and “college” among the article abstracts and article titles only.

Shambu Prasad, Joseph Satish & Others

inefficiencies. The entire system, it appears, is more concerned with the processes and paperwork rather than improving the quality of education. As a result, strong opinions with regard to effective leadership and discerning academics have been expressed in many articles, calling for decisive interventions (Singh, 2003).

Specifically, it is felt that the perpetuation of this system of affiliation has resulted in deterioration in quality of education and denial of social justice (to faculty and students alike). However the increasing stake of the private sector in recent times appears to have limited the focus to creating a work force for the growing economy. This has led to career oriented disciplines (like engineering) getting more impetus albeit not with the expected rise in manufacturing output in the economy. Secondly, the affiliation model appears to benefit only those with a reasonable english-based school education, pushing the disadvantaged students away from the university system (Singh, 2006). Alternatives have been suggested in refining the existing structure to infuse greater accountability on the part of the colleges, including one which recommends the usage of business control systems to measure output and evaluate results to guide future decisions for improving quality and delivery (Gupta, 2005).

One of the key alternatives to affiliation as can be inferred from the nature of discussions in EPW is autonomy. It is said that it will increase accountability and help accomplish excellence in academic quality and also relate to societal concerns sufficiently. However, it is also argued that institutions which oppose bureaucratic interferences should first enhance their accountability if they have to earn autonomy status (Prakash, 2011). Some of the authors allege that vested interests and arm-twisting, have resulted in legislation, allowing exploitation thus setting bad precedents for the future of Indian higher education (Chousalkar, 2000) (Assadi, 2001) (Deshpande, 2000). The dialogue between academics and bureaucrats seem to be more about who has more power and rather than who can do more for the students and how.

Issues on societal relevance of curriculum

Many articles in EPW discuss the need for collaboration between academics and practitioners primarily to reform curriculum and ensure better synergy between theory and practice. The concern however is that many disciplines which were introduced to aid practice have possibly been reduced to intellectual exercises. Some authors have quoted the example of women's studies in this light. Feminist scholars suggest that women's studies have not done enough to strengthen women's rights (Poonacha, 2003) (Anandhi & Swaminathan, 2006).

There also appears to be a call for a socio-political and economic contextualization of the curriculum while framing the syllabus. Apart from being job oriented, higher education curriculum should promote interdisciplinary learning and analytical skills by working with voluntary groups, government institutions as well as industry (EPW editorial, 2001). This also requires an emphasis on inter-disciplinary nature of courses to challenge the conventional paradigms and rethink the links between actors in society, both in the past and in the present (Roy, 2004). The stress should be on promoting a "plurality of ideas and approaches"; this will help to blend different disciplines "wider interest in the idea of holistic development" and make it more rooted in the needs of society today (Varma, 2008).

Interferences in curriculum which have a direct impact on farming traditions and farmers' rights have however not received as much attention by the authorities (Raina, 2006). Hence, curricular interferences in the form of propaganda, industrialization and denial of rights appear to be more than innovations to improve the quality of higher education as evidenced by these concerns in the EPW articles.

Issues in teaching and research

While some academics have been expressing their concerns about regulation and restrictions on their freedom in imparting education to students as well as in carrying out their research activities, others have been discussing about the lack of creativity among academics leading to deterioration in their own standards, and even integrity (Katju, 2011). Discussions in EPW have highlighted how teachers' unions and bodies are more concerned about protecting their professional interests rather than thinking critically about how such moves can affect the future of higher education itself (Pinto, 2001). Because of existing structures of perceiving higher education as a 'consumer good', it is alleged that the teacher has become a mere provider of educational services and a conductor of examinations. Subsequently, a lot depends on the teacher's personal efforts and calling.(Choudhury & Mahajan, 2004).

Innovative approaches to improving teacher engagement have been discussed in the EPW articles. One framework suggests that student assessment of teachers can contribute to better results albeit in a phased manner (Singh, 2003). Others suggest that teachers should not be rewarded only on the basis of the number of publications but on the quality of their teaching (D' Souza, 2004). Others opine that the contractual nature of teaching enrolments needs to be rethought so as to encourage teachers to teach better (EPW Commentary, 2002).

It is suggested that inspiring teachers to engage better will also lead to improvement in indigenous research (Nair, 2002). Some have suggested that if the different research councils and universities work together in promoting various academic disciplines it would lead to a more productive higher education scenario (Mehta, 2008). There is also a need to look at out-of-the-box solutions to seek high quality faculty like tapping those who have studied abroad and are interesting in teaching and research in India (Finegold, B, Kumar, Winkler, & Argod, 2011). Such measures will also inspire more students to take up research careers (Shah, 2005) leading to greater innovations not just in engineering but also social sciences and the humanities.

Issues in financing higher education

The debates on liberalising higher education has had mixed responses in EPW. Some see this as beneficial to developing nations subject to their being able to negotiate their terms effectively. However, others have expressed their reservations regarding the impact it will have on curtailing diversity of disciplines (Sahni & Shankar, 2005) (Sahni & Kale, 2004). Calls for guarded liberalization of the national educational system have been rendered (Bhushan, 2004) (Paul, 2009) while others say that it will only result in education becoming profit oriented and catering to the job market, thus blurring boundaries between institutions providing public goods and private enterprises selling commodities rejecting all possibilities of a socially inclusive higher education system (Gillan, Damachis, & Mcguire, 2003) (Gandhi, 2005) (Chattopadhyay, 2009) (Chattopadhyay, 2010) (Tilak, 2012) (Engineer et al, 2011).

The authorities appear to be open to the liberalization agenda because it is claimed that India is not in a position to afford inclusive education on a large scale. The government has predominantly focused on elementary or primary education. Higher education expenditure has steadily declined ever since neo-liberal reforms had their way in the early 1990s. Private philanthropists who used to support public education efforts earlier have given way to for-profit entrepreneurs. Public expenditure on improving university education has reduced considerably leading to privatization of higher education and erosion in the public nature of universities (Tilak, 2012) (Chakrabarti & Joglekar, 2006).

Shambu Prasad, Joseph Satish & Others

Debates on who should and how to fund higher education have featured regularly in the EPW (Tilak, 2004) (Mishra, 2004) (Vrijendra, 2005). Existing systems of financing higher education do not seem to benefit the people who need them the most (Upadhyay, 2007). Alternative interventions to finance higher education have been proposed to ensure access at all levels and to all peoples (Prakash, 2007) (Hatekar, 2009) (Chattopadhyay, 2007) (Shah K. R., 2008). Others have pointed out that it is important to realize that increased expenditure on higher education will alone not solve all the problems and reform the system (Balakrishnan, 2007). Other issues such as the problem of equal and inclusive access have dominated the discourse for quite some time especially in the context of reservations.

Issues around affirmative action and social inclusion

In spite of seemingly progressive policies, the disconnect between policy and practice continues to exist especially in inclusion of all socio-economic groups in higher education. Women continue to play a secondary role in science and research (Poonacha, 2005) and caste based reservations without adequate socially relevant policies elsewhere have not helped as the elite continue to be leveraged in the job market (Fuller & Narasimhan, 2006) (Somanathan, 2006).

While some argue that reservation based admission policies, though not the best option, is the most workable (Ghosh, 2006), others have drafted alternative frameworks for affirmative action, taking into consideration multiple criteria (Deshpande & Yadav, 2006). It may be a challenging task to take an objective view of what academics say since there have been empirical studies supporting (Mohanty, 2006) and negating (Morris, 2006) reservations as a constructive method for the nation's progress.

From the brief qualitative exploration of EPW articles in the last decade or so, it appears that there has not been much discussion on educational innovations and the challenges inherent in innovative experiments. Academicians on higher education need to focus more on cases of innovations and explore bottom up initiatives which can lead to institutional change. The institutional diversity in higher education in India has allowed for isolated efforts, but these have been in silos. Perspectives on the role of civil society and non-formal educational spaces do not also feature much in current discussions on higher education. While it is generally acknowledged that it is important for students and teachers to interact and embed themselves with civil society (Singh, 2004), there has not been sufficient discussion on the how's and why's of this critical suggestion. It is therefore our submission that there is a need for academics and researchers to look more closely at the existing social innovations in higher education in India, to explore their strengths and weaknesses and to examine their role in strengthening higher education in India. Efforts towards inclusive innovation can be attempted from two ends. One within the university and the current spaces within these currently seem rather limited. A more fruitful exploration for ideas and innovations might require a closer engagement with initiatives outside formal spaces.

Educational Innovations outside Formal Spaces

Recognising the theory and practice divide which has pervaded the societal development space in the Indian university, some institutions have created new opportunities for learning by engaging with people working in the field. Chaitanya, a capacity building organization in Maharashtra has successfully collaborated with TISS to launch courses on NGO Management and Resource Mobilisation. These courses have attempted to bridge the gap between development academics and practice. On the other hand SPJIMR (SP Jain Institute of Management and Research) has joined hands with BAIF (Bharatiya Agro Industries Foundation) to create a cadre of professionals who will potentially combine best practices of experience in the field and relevant management practices for systemic improvement of their spheres of work. Similarly, the Ambedkar University (Delhi) has collaborated with PRADAN (Professional Assistance for Development Action) to offer a “rich understanding” of the theory and equip students with the “skills to address challenges in sustainable development” through its Masters programme in Development Studies. Another recent initiative involving higher educational institutes and civil society organizations is Livelihoods MANTHAN (Management institutes Network for Transforming Human resources through Action and Knowledge) which brings forth a harmonious blend of management practices and field insights to the rural livelihood missions in India⁹.

Universities should also explore working with institutions rethinking education outside formal spaces. The Multiversity initiative seeks to question the underlying assumptions of higher education and create indigenous spaces of knowledge creation. Shikshantar promotes a mode of lifelong societal learning “which grow from a larger understanding of and respect for human potential and human dignity, dynamic learning processes and relationships, pluralistic identities and cultural contexts, the human spirit and its connection to the web of life.” Vidyā Ashram originated from the belief that only a knowledge born out of the people can create an equitable society. Through its engagement with farmers, artisans, women and adivasis, the ashram campaigns for equal respect to all streams of knowledge. The Adivasi Academy at Tejgadh is an institute involved in the study of tribal history, folklore, cultural geography, social dynamics, economy, development studies, medicine, music, arts and theatre.

For universities to understand social realities and work towards creating spaces for dialogue and development of society, it is imperative that there should be a joint exploration of research and learning from such radical experiments. The interaction between university and the informal sector is at a nadir in India. This needs to be changed and universities need to reform their curriculum to include activities that encourage the involvement in the affairs of the community and informal sector. The university should further design programs to integrate the excluded people in a participatory ‘knowledge economy’.

If universities are to transform into developmental universities they have to take innovative approaches. These innovative approaches may be in the shape of expanding the curriculum, multi disciplinary research and introducing inclusive degrees, diplomas, and other certification programs. These programs should be based on skill development of the population, improving the processes of local economic activity and innovative programs leading to local enterprises.

⁹ See <http://livelihoods-manthan.tk/>

Towards Innovation for Inclusive Development

Conventionally, state support to universities has been aimed at increasing the supply of qualified human resource to further economic growth in the region. The role of universities in contributing to knowledge through teaching and research has been appreciated (Altbach, 2011); however their link to development, especially in South Asia, has been less understood or researched.

The continued absence, or diminishing, engagement by universities with a large percentage of society, often referred to as the informal sector (Portes & Haller, 2005) (Losby, et al., 2009) remains an important concern. Most citizens of the informal sector lack access to universities or its products. While access to education is an important challenge, the role of universities as engaged centres of learning with society requires closer attention to the content of university education. The archaic view of universities being the sole custodians of knowledge in society is being challenged by the developmental university which recognizes the contributions of artisans, craftsmen, farmers and others along with industries in the generation of knowledge. It is therefore a call for today's universities to interact with them for sharing and improving the knowledge. This is in sharp contrast to the interaction of university with only industry, where the focus is producing knowledge, which can be patented and subsequently commercialized. The transfer of university resources to industry in its entirety is myopic and undesirable. It is important to realize that knowledge is not only university generated but also tacit or experiential. Hence, there is a need to look beyond current teaching and research roles of the universities to examine its developmental role more closely. There has been a rich discussion on the role of 'developmental universities' (Arocena & Sutz, 2011) as well as the need for universities to respond to changing contexts.

There is a need to build on the current discussions on the role of universities. Recognising the role of science and technology institutions in the production of knowledge, we need to shift to a more engaged discussion on the role of universities in the systems of innovation in developing countries with normative objectives of just, inclusive and sustainable development. Higher education institutes of the region are increasingly challenged, and in the process better connected and integrated, to contribute to global knowledge. Universities have engaged with western universities to become competitive. This has however meant that they have increasingly got separated from and contributing much less, to the development needs of citizens in the region. The reward structures in universities do not necessarily encourage innovative programmes, pedagogy, partnerships that could serve the region better. Despite reasonable capacities within the countries, there has been little emphasis on collaboration within the region and across the hierarchy of colleges, universities, higher education institutes. If knowledge generation and dissemination are to adequately address the developmental challenges of the nation, the university needs to be geared not to merely responding to the preferences of the industry, but, "at the level of integration of purpose, all those activities which can help develop the competencies of all its citizens (peasants, artisans, rural labour, small businesses, patients and ordinary people)" (Abrol, 2011).

Hence, it is imperative that we start exploring the role of universities in socially inclusive innovations and examining the nature of experiments in India on making universities as engaged centres of learning closely linked to social groups, broadly the 'informal sector'. There should be an exploration of current spaces in higher educational institutions that are opening up to socially relevant and economically productive innovations, specifically, the role of intermediary organisations in linking universities with objectives of inclusive innovation and development. Insights should be drawn from experiments and pilots in the region by universities and intermediary organisations for programmes for research and capacity building through possible research networks. This can then be used to inform

and influence the government so as to enable policies that encourage and support innovation for inclusive development.

Bibliography

- Abrol, D. (2011). *An alternative framework*. Retrieved May 12, 2012, from Seminar: http://www.india-seminar.com/2011/624/624_dinesh_abrol.htm
- Altbach, P. G. (2011, April 16). The Past, Present, and Future of the Research University. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Alvares, C. (2011, May 28). A Critique of Eurocentric Social Science and the Question of Alternatives. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Anandhi, S., & Swaminathan, P. (2006, October 21). Making It Relevant-Mapping the Meaning of Women's Studies in Tamil Nadu. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Arocena, R., & Sutz, J. (2011, January 27). *Knowledge demands must drive developmental universities*. Retrieved May 12, 2012, from SciDev.net: <http://www.scidev.net/en/opinions/knowledge-demands-must-drive-developmental-universities.html>
- Assadi, M. (2001, March 31). Karnataka - Universities Bill: Academic Freedom on the Way Out? *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Balakrishnan, P. (2007, September 29). Higher Education in India: Will 'Six Per Cent' Do It? *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Bhushan, S. (2004, June 5). Trade in Education Services under GATS. *Economic and political Weekly* .
- Chakrabarti, A., & Joglekar, R. (2006, April 15). Determinants of Expenditure on Education. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Chattopadhyay, S. (2007, October 20). Exploring Alternative Sources of Financing Higher Education. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Chattopadhyay, S. (2009, July 18). The Market in Higher Education: Concern for Equity and Quality. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Chattopadhyay, S. (2010, May 1). An Elitist and Flawed Approach towards Higher Education. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Choudhury, S. R., & Mahajan, S. (2004, May 1). Why Subsidise Higher Education? *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Chousalkar, A. (2000, September 23). Maharashtra: Threat to Autonomy of Universities. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Clark, B. R. 1998. *Creating entrepreneurial universities: Organisational pathways of transformation*. Oxford: Elsevier.
- Coleman, J. S. (1994). The Idea of the Developmental University. In J. S. Coleman, *Nationalism and Development in Africa: Selected Essays* (pp. 334-365). University of California.
- D' Souza, E. (2004, May 22). Contractual Arrangements in Academia. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Delanty, G. (2000). *Challenging Knowledge: The University in the Knowledge Society*. UK: Open University Press.
- Deshpande, J. V. (2000, December 7). AICTE as Politicians' Handmaiden. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Deshpande, S., & Yadav, Y. (2006, June 17). Redesigning Affirmative Action. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Devy, G. N. (2010, September 26). *Inclusive Education: A view of higher education in India*. Retrieved May 12, 2012, from National Institute of Advanced Studies Website: http://www.nias.res.in/docs/NIAS_LectureBookProfGaneshNDevy.pdf
- Dhar, A. (2012, April 3). *Amid impasse, people join row over Bihar Central varsity*. Retrieved May 12, 2012, from The Hindu: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article3278161.ece>

- DHE. (2012). *Department of Higher Education: Overview*. Retrieved May 12, 2012, from Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India: http://mhrd.gov.in/overview_uni_higher_english
- Elphinstone, M. (1884). Minute by the Hon. Mountstuart Elphinstone on Education. In M. Elphinstone, & G. W. Forrest, *Selections from the Minutes and Other Official Writings of the Honourable Mountstuart Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay: With an Introductory Memoir* (pp. 77-116). Cambridge University Press.
- Engineer, M., & al, e. (2011, September 11). Higher Education. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- EPW Commentary. (2002, November 23). Contract Appointments and Standards in Higher Education. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- EPW Editorial. (2001, April 28). Sociology Curriculum: Old Problems, New Approaches. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- FAO. (2012, January 2). *FAO officially recognized the Traditional Agricultural System of Koraput as a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System (GIAHS)*. Retrieved May 12, 2012, from Food and Agricultural Organization: http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/giahs/PDF/2Koraput_s_recognition_as_GIAHS.pdf
- Finegold, B. D., Kumar, V., Winkler, A.-L., & Argod, V. (2011, May 21). Will They Return? Indian Students in the United States. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Fuller, C. J., & Narasimhan, H. (2006, January 21). Engineering Colleges, 'Exposure' and Information Technology. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Gandhi, A. (2005, April 30). Failure of the 'Global University'. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Ghosh, J. (2006, June 17). Case for Caste-based Quotas in Higher Education. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Gillan, M., Damachis, B., & Mcguire, J. (2003, April 5). Australia in India. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Goddard, J. (2009) *Re-inventing the Civic University*. London: NESTA.
- Göransson, B., Brundenius, C., eds. 2011. *Universities in Transition: The Changing Role and Challenges for Academic Institutions*. Ottawa: Springer, IDRC
- Goswami, Amlanjyoti. (2013). "Higher Education Law and Privately-Funded University Education in India Towards a Vision?". In *India Infrastructure Report 2012*. New Delhi: IDFC. <http://www.idfc.com/pdf/report/IIR-2012.pdf> (retrieved on Feb 12, 2013)
- Gupta, D. K. (2005, November 19). Ensuring Accountability and Survival of Universities. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Hatekar, N. (2009, September 19). Changing Higher Education Scenario in India. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Joseph Satish & Shambu Prasad (2012). *Discussions on Higher Education in India. UNIID Discussion Paper*
- Katju, M. (2011, February 26). Plagiarism and Social Sciences. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Krishna, V. V. (2012). Universities in India's National System of Innovation: An Overview. *Asian Journal of Innovation and Policy* , 1, 1-30.
- Losby, J., Else, J., Kingslow, M., Edgcomb, E., Malm, E. L.-A., K.J., J., et al. (2009). *Handbook of innovation and Developing Countries: Building domestic capabilities in a global setting*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Macaulay, T. B. (1965). *Minute by the Hon'ble T. B. Macaulay, dated the 2nd February 1835*. Retrieved May 12, 2012, from Columbia University: Prof. Frances Pritchett - Macaulay Index: http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00generallinks/macaulay/txt_minute_education_1835.html
- Mehta, A. (2008, October 11). Science Research in India: Universities, Research Institutes and Everything In-between. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Mishra, B. (2004, July 17). Breaking B-School Barriers. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Mohanty, M. (2006, September 2). Social Inequality, Labour Market Dynamics and Reservation. *Economic and Political Weekly* .

- Morris, S. (2006, June 30). OBC Reservations in Higher Education. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Nair, M. K. (2002, September 28). Social Science Research in Universities. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Newman, J. H. (1852, November 21). *The Idea of a University*. Retrieved May 13, 2012, from Newman Reader: <http://www.newmanreader.org/works/idea/>
- NKC. (2006, November 29). *Note on Higher Education*. Retrieved May 12, 2012, from National Knowledge Commission: <http://www.knowledgecommission.gov.in/downloads/recommendations/HigherEducationNote.pdf>
- NKC. (2007). *Compilation of recommendations on education*. Retrieved May 12, 2012, from National Knowledge Commission: http://www.knowledgecommission.gov.in/downloads/documents/NKC_Education.pdf
- NPI. (2011). *Higher Education in India*. Retrieved May 12, 2012, from National Portal of India: <http://india.gov.in/citizen/education.php?id=3>
- Paul, S. (2009, February 28). Internationalisation of Higher Education: Strategic Implications. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Pinto, A. (2001, August 25). Karnataka University Act 2000. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Poonacha, V. (2003, June 28). Women's Studies in Indian Universities. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Poonacha, V. (2005, January 15). Uncovering the Gender Politics of Science Policies and Education. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Portes, A., & Haller, W. (2005). The Informal Economy. In N. Smelser, & R. Swedberg, *The handbook of economic sociology* (pp. 403-425).
- Prakash, V. (2007, August 4). Trends in Growth and Financing of Higher Education in India. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Prakash, V. (2011, April 16). Concerns about Autonomy and Academic Freedom in Higher Education Institutions. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Raina, R. S. (2006, April 29). Indo-US Knowledge Initiative. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Roy, T. (2004, July 17). Economic History: An Endangered Discipline. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Sahni, R., & Kale, S. (2004, May 22). GATS and Higher Education-Some Reflections. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Sahni, R., & Shankar, V. K. (2005, November 19). GATS and Higher Education: Revealing Comparative Advantage. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Shambu Prasad, Joseph Satish V & KVG Krishnamurthy (2012). Contextualising the Developmental University in India: A Preliminary Mapping Exercise. *UNIID Discussion Paper*
- Shah, A. M. (2005, May 28). Higher Education and Research: Roots of Mediocrity. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Shah, K. R. (2008, February 16). Traditional Sources of Financing Higher Education. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Singh, A. (2003, July 26). Academic Standards in Indian Universities. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Singh, A. (2003, November 22). Student Assessment of Teachers. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Singh, A. (2004, May 22). Challenges in Higher Education. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Singh, A. (2006, June 17). Undergraduate versus Postgraduate Education. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Somanathan, R. (2006, June 17). Assumptions and Arithmetic of Caste-Based Reservations. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Sutz, J. (2005, April 1). *The role of universities in knowledge production*. Retrieved May 12, 2012, from SciDev.net: <http://www.scidev.net/en/policy-briefs/the-role-of-universities-in-knowledge-production-.html>
- Tilak, J. B. (2004, January 24). Public Subsidies in Education in India. *Economic and Political Weekly* .

Shambu Prasad, Joseph Satish & Others

- Tilak, J. B. (2004, May 22). Absence of Policy and Perspective in Higher Education. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Tilak, J. B. (2010, May 1). The Proposed NCHER: A Solution worse than the Disease? *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Tilak, J. B. (2012, March 31). Higher Education Policy in India in Transition. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- UGC. (2008). *Higher Education in India: Issues related to Expansion, Inclusiveness, Quality and Finance*. Retrieved May 12, 2012, from University Grants Commission Website: <http://www.ugc.ac.in/pub/report/12.pdf>
- UGC. (2012). *Genesis of UGC*. Retrieved May 12, 2012, from University Grants Commission Website: <http://www.ugc.ac.in/about/genesis.html>
- Upadhyay, S. (2007, January 13). Wastage in Indian Higher Education. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Varma, G. V. (2008, July 12). Nurksian Contributions and Development Economics Curriculum. *Economic and Political Weekly* .
- Vrijendra. (2005, July 19). Malaise of Higher Education. *Economic and Political Weekly*

End Notes:

There are several Indian journals on education published by institutions like National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) (<http://www.ncert.nic.in/publication/journals/journals.html>), National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA) (<http://nuepa.org/Journals.html>), Indian Institute of Education (IIE) (<http://www.iiepune.org/html/publication.htm>) and Association of Indian Universities (AIU) (<http://www.aiuweb.org/university/universitynews.asp>),

Discussion

Questioning Vision Statements

Ram: We should examine when and in what political context the vision statements of Universities emerged from. Why did such statements come into vogue? Is there any pattern there? .

Dhruv: The task of the university is multifarious and the agenda of the university could be developmental without an explicit developmental statement in the vision statement.

Amalan: There is indeed a symbolic significance to the rhetoric of a vision statement. There is also the power of rhetoric. But we have to explore how the vision statements get translated in the governance structures, in representation etc., which is only the first step forward. Are there any studies on this?

Naveen: Local and environmental factors influence the translation of vision statements and so a mere inclusion of developmental vision does not say much.

Shambu: Vision statement/mission statements do come up within certain contexts, and there would be all kind of questions on who does the vision statements? Was it a participatory exercise? Or is it just something that came up suddenly for them to get some rating or fulfill some ISO type norm or some international quality standard etc.? These questions have to be answered, and therefore while they may not be a good proxy, let us look at it and ask whether there is a conception of the role of universities beyond teaching and research.

Development Role

Dhruv: Classifying the University as developmental might commit you to a particular kind of development and not necessarily cater to the larger framework of the development of a community or region.

Shambu: It is for the universities to take a call on whether they want to have development, what form of development role they support etc. The Universities may say they are already doing it, but the

demands from society are much higher on the university, and the answers aren't enough. We are just trying to re-focus on the questions that are being asked. In a sense, that demand is getting reflected in some of the newer universities. Perhaps they are not doing a good job vis-a-vis their potential. Perhaps the bigger institutes like the institutes of national importance have an important role in shaping that agenda.

There is no tradition of a social watch on universities in India as we may have on other sectors. We are coming from a civil society perspective. We don't want to take a vigilante role and prescribe what the University should be doing. The primary question of the developmental university is not to say that there is a notion of a developmental university, which we want to evaluate our Universities against. There is one idea of a developmental university that has developed in some other context. Does it make sense in India? We say that it cannot make sense unless it looks at certain questions. For example you can't speak of innovation without speaking of inclusion and exclusion.

Gopal: The vision statements seem to revolve around needs of partners like industry, NGOs, civil society etc. What about political parties, trade unions etc. Why is it left out? Are we moving to another trajectory altogether? Is there a concept of social change or social transformation in the statements? In the preambles, there are terms like disseminate, advance, relevant, excellence, guide, help etc. Is this valid in the 20th century, where we talk of outcomes, outputs etc particularly in today's neoliberal paradigm.

Tirthankar: Around 2006, three important policies -- the Reservation Policy, National Innovation Policy and the Higher Education Bill set the role of Universities and research networks. How have these policies affected inclusion and development and how has it affected funding for research on inclusion and innovation.

Geetha: The current framework for exploring inclusion is mainly in terms of access. If it is about access what happens afterwards? What would be the framework of inclusion that we should look at? What is the experience of the universities in terms of knowledges which have been marginalized. We have to also talk about issues of power, struggles and contestation. For example dalit studies and gender studies have come about because of the social movements and not because the universities are open to it. What are the dynamics within the University, in terms of structure, power, authority, turf that come up when new knowledge areas like these are sought to be included?

Shambu: Can some of the questions which are being asked from outside, be part of the discourse on educational research. Can concerns of civil society get reflected in this dialogue and how can universities can engage with them? This will help us understand how tacit knowledge gets translated into university knowledge traditions. Our original question was, with regard to the IDRC question on whether it is vocationalisation from a purely economists' perspective or skill development, where is this knowledge of artisans, craftsmen farmers etc and how is it getting incorporated in the curriculum?

Most of the questions that we have raised today are before us, and we as a group, have to decide which of these issues we would like to be engaged in the next six months or so, Some of the questions require much more serious investigation if we want this to be part of the educational studies discourse in India.