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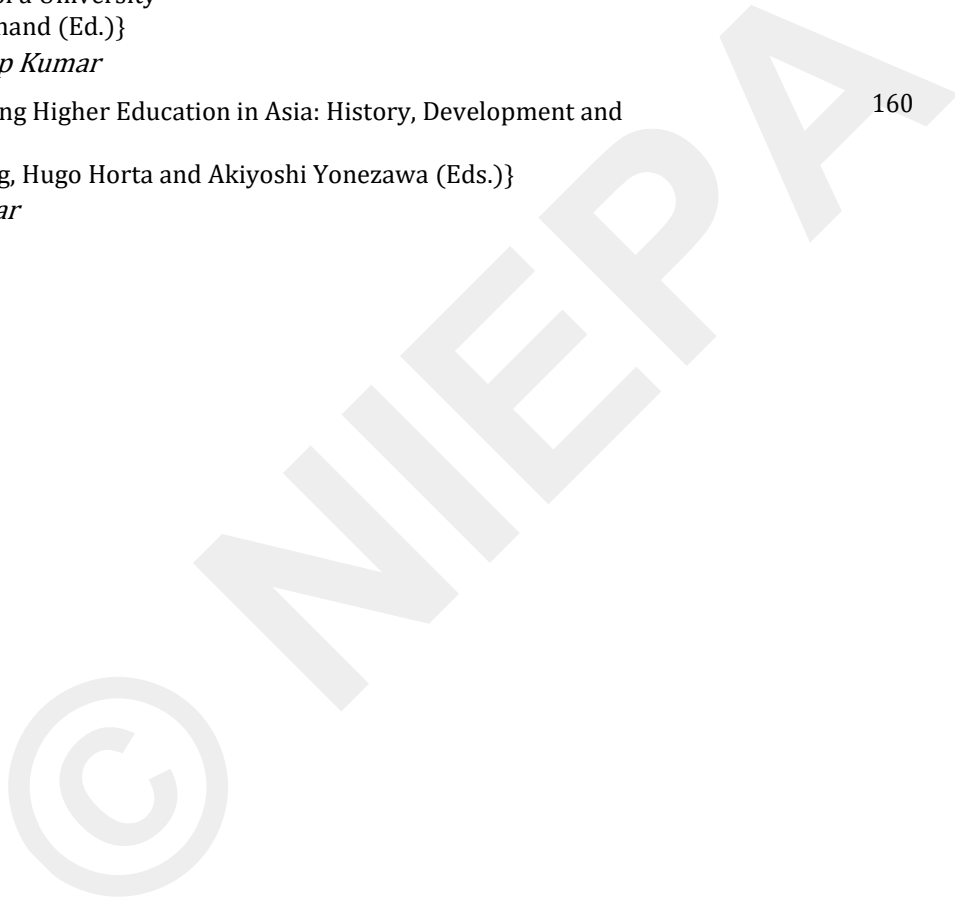
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Effects of Internal Quality Assurance on the Learning Outcomes of Autonomous Colleges in Kerala[#]

Sabu P. J.*

Abstract

Internal Quality Assurance Cells (IQACs) in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) were initially established as a post-accreditation quality sustenance activity. For 2007 onwards, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) recommended to create IQACs prior to the accreditation to establish quality culture in HEIs. The present paper analyses the effects of IQACs on developing the Learning Outcomes (LOs) in autonomous colleges in Kerala. The study has adopted a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods for collection and analysis of data. The analysis indicates that the IQACs have made nominal positive effects on developing and measuring the LOs during the initial phases of academic autonomy. However, the nature and degree of impact of IQAC in each institution on the development of LOs is distinct and unique. The nominal positive impact of IQACs on the LOs during the initial phases of academic autonomy can be attributed to various constraints. This study classifies constraints into seven inter-related domains: (1) governance and leadership (2) dynamics of incentive mechanisms and innovations (3) student diversity and equity (4) structures of learning and teaching (5) administrative practices and legal systems (6) quality of infrastructure and learning and (7) sources of finance and learning growth. It provides a framework for analysing the nature and extent of constraints. Based on the analysis, the paper argues that IQACs need to be innovative and adaptable to the ever-changing nature and trends of quality to survive and surmount in higher education.

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* Department of Economics, St. Thomas College (Autonomous), Thrissur - 680001, Kerala, India. E-mail: sabustc9@gmail.com

Introduction

Higher education is one of the key determinants to accomplish comprehensive growth and sustainable development of a nation. Investment in the quality of higher education is crucial for an enhancement of the quality of human capital. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) act as a catalyst to determine the direction of investment in education. HEIs involve in this process mainly through the production of knowledge and impart training to the learners. The nature of production of knowledge and training depends on the policies of HEIs in quality. Furthermore, the main challenge of HEIs seems to be the distribution of knowledge in an equitable manner. Generally, challenges and opportunities of HEIs depend on the level of educational development of a region. Magnitude and composition of Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education is one of the indicators of this development. In India, GER in Higher Education (HE) has significantly increased by the turn of this decade (Varghese, 2015). At this stage, it is viable to upgrade the quality of education in HEIs in an equitable manner. Optimisation of Learning Outcomes (LOs) of HEIs is one of the primary means to enhance the quality accompanied by equity. Enhancement of quality would be the result of interactions between external and internal agencies. In India, University Grants Commission (UGC) has envisaged a number of structural changes to address quality and equity of Under-Graduate (UG) and Post-Graduate (PG) education. UGC executes this vision through several initiatives such as 'conferment of autonomy' and the status of 'Centre with Potential for Excellence (CPE)' to HEIs. 'National Assessment and Accreditation Council' (NAAC) is primarily responsible to assess and accredit HEIs in India. HEIs could participate in the accreditation process where quality culture can be improved and raise themselves to global standards. HEIs are evaluated with a scale of seven benchmarks and accreditation is done based on the performance. The seven yardsticks are based on the Quality Indicator Framework (QIF) (UGC, 2012; NAAC, 2013; NAAC, 2017).

It has been realised that the major challenge of HEIs in India is to maintain a global standard of quality in educational expansion. In order to improve the quality of HEIs, different Committees have been initiated and they have stressed the significance of autonomy in higher education sector. One of the committees recommended the functioning of 'Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC)' in each institution of higher education. For 2007 onwards, the NAAC recommended to create the IQACs prior to the accreditation to establish quality culture in the HEIs. It becomes a major landmark in the higher educational system. This becomes a major step towards the internalisation of initiatives to enhance quality. In this context, NAAC has stipulated to constitute IQACs in colleges and Universities to ensure the enhancement of quality (see Table 1). IQACs are supposed to continuously innovate and improve the performance of HEIs (UGC, 1971; MHRD, 2005; MHRD, 2009). Therefore, the primary goal of IQACs in HEIs is the enhancement of quality along with equity (Varghese, 2015). NAAC visualises that IQACs would develop a system for conscious, consistent and catalytic improvement in the overall performance of the HEIs. IQACs are supposed to be specifically focussed on the attainment of holistic academic excellence. Accomplishment of IQACs in the area of quality depends on its capacity to inculcate a sense of belongingness and participation among stakeholders. It should be a facilitative and voluntary unit of an organisation. Enhancement of quality is considered as one of the foremost missions of IQACs and a mandatory requirement for reaccreditation. Among the several quality measures of NAAC, LOs seem to be one of the indisputable indicators of

quality combined with social justice. NAAC modified the existing assessment framework and established a Revised Assessment and Accreditation Framework (RAAF) in 2017.

TABLE 1
Guidelines for Composition of IQAC

| <i>Sl. No</i> | <i>NAAC</i> | <i>Sl. No</i> | <i>UGC</i> |
|---------------|---|---------------|--|
| 1. | Chairperson: Head of the institution | 1. | Vicechancellor of the university: Chairperson |
| 2. | A few senior administrative officers | 2. | Eight senior teachers and one senior administrative official-members |
| 3. | Three to eight teachers | 3. | Three external experts on quality-management/industry/local community- members |
| 4. | One member from the management | 4. | Director of IQAC: Member secretary |
| 5. | One/two nominees from local society, students and alumni | | |
| 6. | One/two nominees from employers/industrialists/stakeholders | | |
| 7. | One of the senior teachers as the coordinator/ director of the IQAC | | |

Sources: NAAC (2013); UGC (2012).

Along with the Accreditation process, ranking of HEIs also can accelerate the efforts to enhance quality. National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) of Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) is responsible for ranking of HEIs in India. Both the agencies plan to enhance the quality mainly through the concept of self-rule (autonomy). Government plans to inculcate quality culture through the conferment of autonomy to affiliated colleges at the grass root level. Autonomous colleges have an academic freedom to formulate and implement their own academic vision and execution plan. It seems that quality of UG and PG education would enhance by incorporating the regional needs of students and labour market in curricula and syllabi (MHRD, Various years; NAAC, 2017; UGC, 2018).

Among the major states in India, it is observed that quality of HE is comparatively poor in Kerala with respect to school education. In order to enhance the quality in HE sector, from 2014-15 onwards, Government has conferred the status of academic autonomy to 19 affiliated colleges in Kerala (see Table 2). Autonomous colleges have an edge of freedom to enhance the quality when compared to affiliated colleges. This freedom would reflect in the systems of IQACs of autonomous colleges. In this backdrop, the primary goal of the paper is to analyse the effects of IQACs on the LOs. More specifically, it is an effort to evaluate the extent of impact of academic autonomy on the LOs through the system of IQACs. Further, it will explore the motivation and methodology of IQACs to analyse the concept of quality. Further, it attempts to identify the major constraints of IQACs in the path of LOs. The findings of this paper would support to redesign the nature and extent of initiatives during the forthcoming phases of IQACs in autonomy.

TABLE 2

Status List of Autonomous Colleges in India (2017)

| <i>Sl. No.</i> | <i>State/ Union Territory</i> | <i>No. of Autonomous Colleges</i> | <i>Sl. No.</i> | <i>State/Union Territory</i> | <i>No. of Autonomous Colleges</i> |
|----------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. | Andhra Pradesh | 84 | 13. | Maharashtra | 47 |
| 2. | Assam | 02 | 14. | Manipur | 01 |
| 3. | Chhattisgarh | 11 | 15. | Nagaland | 02 |
| 4. | Goa | 01 | 16. | Odisha | 44 |
| 5. | Gujarat | 04 | 17. | Pondicherry | 03 |
| 6. | Haryana | 01 | 18. | Punjab | 09 |
| 7. | Himachal Pradesh | 05 | 19. | Rajasthan | 05 |
| 8. | Jammu & Kashmir | 03 | 20. | Tamil Nadu | 181 |
| 9. | Jharkhand | 05 | 21. | Telangana | 57 |
| 10. | Karnataka | 70 | 22. | Uttar Pradesh | 11 |
| 11. | Kerala | 19 | 23. | Uttarakhand | 04 |
| 12. | Madhya Pradesh | 39 | 24. | West Bengal | 13 |
| | | | 25. | Total | 621 |

Source: UGC (2017).

This paper is divided into twelve sections. The first section imparts a background of initiatives on quality in higher education. The second section analyses the rationale of considering LOs as a proxy of quality and equity. The third section portrays the concept and dimensions of LOs. The fourth section investigates the evolving role of state in higher education. The fifth section examines the goals of Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) in HEIs. The sixth section narrates the commencement of NAAC and the initiation of IQACs in HEIs. The seventh section exhibits an overview of autonomous colleges in Kerala. The eighth section focuses on the methodology of study. The ninth section attempts to evaluate the effects of IQACs on LOs. The tenth section assesses the major domains of constraints faced by IQACs to optimise the LOs. The eleventh section attempts to examine the influence of organisational structure on LOs. The final section concludes with the major conceptual arguments and policy implications.

Approaches to Quality in Higher Education

Definition of the concept of academic quality in HE is an elusive and complex mission (Martin & Stella, 2007). The definitions of quality may be categorised into five distinctive, but inter-related ideas. These categories of definitions are: (1) exceptional notion of quality (2) perfection or consistency approach (3) fitness for purpose to judge quality (4) accountability and value for money and (5) academic transformation.

The *exceptional* notion of quality considers that quality is something special which meets a set of criteria. The *perfection or consistency* route to quality that which focuses on processes and certain specifications in HE. *Fitness of purpose* attempts to judge the quality in terms of the extent and degree to which the product or service fits into the stated purposes. The *value for money* method highlights on some of the specifications of minimisation of cost combined with accountability. Finally, quality is a means which enhances the value of learners through their academic *transformation* (Harvey & Knight, 1996; Van Kemenade *et al*, 2008).

Quality is a relative concept and the perception on it would be extremely different among various stakeholders such as governments, students, employers and society (Harvey & Green, 1993). Therefore, there is rarely any generally accepted indicator (s) to measure quality. It mainly depends on the system or person who judges it. However, identification of the indicator (s) and assessment of quality of HE are essential. It would support to fix some types of yardsticks to improve the quality along with accountability, compliance and control (Harvey & Newton, 2004; Harvey, 2005; Mishra, 2007). The concept of quality may be analysed by using the following three major theoretical approaches: (1) human capital approach (2) human rights approach and (3) social justice approach. Social justice approach defines the quality in terms of attainment of LOs. It considers that attainment of LOs is equivalent to the attainment of quality along with social justice (Spring, 2000; UNESCO, 2000; Walker, 2006; Unterhalter, 2007; Vegas & Petrow, 2008; Tikly, 2011).

Social justice approach aims to student-centric development. Generally, students in HE intends to improve the stock and quality of their human capital. Hence, it is impossible to evaluate the level of quality in HE without considering value-addition in student-learning. Furthermore, concern of equity in the production of human capital and academic capital are necessary to maximize social welfare. Therefore, the present study considers that LOs as one of the best proxies to measure the concept of quality along with social justice (Srikanthan & Darlyemple, 2007; Scott, 2008; Tam, 2014).

Quality of Higher Education and Learning Outcomes

Otter (1992) defined 'learning outcome' (LO) as "what a learner knows or can do as a result of learning." LOs are something that can be observed, demonstrated and measured in terms of aptitude and accomplishments. Although it is relatively easy to define the meaning of LOs, there is a little consensus with respect to the scope, indicators, measurement and content of LOs (Ewell, 1991). Generally, literature on HE significantly considers the following dimensions of LOs: (1) knowledge (2) skills (3) competencies (4) psychological development (5) attitudes (6) behaviour and (7) values. There should be a clear distinction between what is achieved and what is intended. The comparison between Achieved Learning Outcomes (ALOs) and Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs) would help to assess the level of quality in HE. Assessment of LOs should evaluate the gap between ALOs and ILOs (Allan, 1996; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). One of the major dimensions of learning crisis is poor LOs and that might be the result of immediate reasons and deeper causes in the system of HE. An outcome-based education system would organise the curricula in such a way that the ILOs are explicit (Maeroff, 2006). In addition, student-centred pedagogy is a necessary ingredient to enhance the impact of Outcome Based Education (OBE). Fixation of benchmarks and evidence-based actions are necessary to enhance the LOs

(World Development Report, 2018). The benchmark of LO would vary with respect to stages of development and ideologies in HE.

In India, National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF) defines LOs as “what a learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process, which would be expressed in terms of knowledge, skills and competence.” NSQF intends to organise various qualifications according to a series of levels of knowledge, skills and aptitude. These levels are defined in terms of LOs in which the learner must possess regardless of whether they were acquired through formal or informal learning (Mandal, 2018).

As a major landmark in the field of higher education, Government has accepted a proposal for the launching of Higher Education Commission of India (HECI). It has been prepared by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and placed it in the public domain for comments and suggestions. The focus of HECI is to improve academic standards and quality. The thrust areas of the proposed Commission are: (1) autonomy of HEIs (2) maintenance of academic standards in teaching and research (3) specification of LOs for courses of study in HE (4) accreditation system and (5) regulating mechanisms (MHRD, 2018).

Undoubtedly, the nature and focus of the governance and management of HEIs significantly determines the degree of quality. State has been the main agency which formulates the principles of governance and management. But for the last three decades, involvement of state in HE sector has undergone drastic changes. State has been transforming its own roles such as manager, controller, regulator, financier, supervisor, facilitator or an assessor. At present, External Quality Assurance (EQA) and Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) function as the major machineries through which the state intervene in the initiatives to enhance the quality in HEIs. The role of state is crucial in terms of expansion, equality, excellence and equity. Undoubtedly, the state functions as the central agency which determines the criteria of good governance and management in India.

Role of State in Quality of Higher Education

It is a complex task to define and identify a set of criteria to execute ‘governance and management’ in a qualitative manner. Components of quality of governance and management framework involve various attributes such as effectiveness, transparency and accountability (World Bank, 1992). Besides this, it should provide a quality environment which is capable of formulating unbiased policies based on statutory framework. The major factors to identify and supplement the institutional values are effective governance and management along with principles of inclusion. It should impart several attributes such as collective-vision, values and trust. It is essential to assure the support and cooperation of the stakeholders in strategies of quality (Bollaert, 2014; Madhukar, 2018). Authorities should cultivate values such as individual identity, voluntarism, tolerance and trust rather than fear and greed. Equilibrium among various traits such as rights, dignity and freedom are the foundations of belongingness and participation.

Primarily, enhancement of quality is the joint responsibility of state, HEIs, academicians, parents and students. However, state has been retreating and ‘market’ has been getting a prominent role in HEIs. Concerning the governance and management, neo-liberal policies have remarkably reduced the role of academicians in the decision making processes of HEIs (Malik, 2017). There is a structural transformation in the relationship between HEIs and

state. Similarly, governance within the HEIs has changed remarkably (Lapworth, 2004). With the emergence of 'neo-liberalism', most of the HEIs have shifted from the phase of 'direct state control' to the phase of 'state supervision'. However, the nature of state supervision is spatial and it varies from one region to another. Conferment of academic autonomy is the initial phase which indicates the retreat of state from the HE sector. The state allows HEIs to explore various avenues of finance with respect to the conferment of financial autonomy. At the same time, percolation of autonomy into the various organs of HEIs is negligible. Some of the evidences show that autonomy is centralised in Principal's or Vice-Chancellor's office. Autonomy rarely witnesses the decentralisation of power into the entire mechanisms of HEIs (Clark, 1998).

Based on these circumstances, academicians in publicly funded universities survive in competitive environment by using their 'academic capital' (Malik, 2017). Globally, 'academic capitalism' has emerged as one of the key characteristics of HE. Neo-liberalism paves the way for state intervention on quality through several mechanisms such as EQA and IQA. Generally, EQA focuses on the A&A of HEIs for the enhancement of quality. IQA concentrates on the enhancement of quality through the innovation of systems in HEIs.

Internal Quality Assurance and Enhancement of Quality

Quality Assurance Mechanism (QAM) in HE is an initiative to establish stakeholder confidence and transforming their expectations into global standards. The QAMs have changed dramatically over the last three decades. Presently, both developed and developing countries have been following distinct structures of QAMs. The emergence of QAM is the product of various structural transformations in HE. They are: (1) emergence of several private players (2) uncertainty regarding the quality of HEIs (3) massive and continuous reduction in HE budget and (4) globalisation and the consequent student and occupational mobility (Lemaitre & Susanna, 2018). Globally, most of the countries have their own QAMs to assess and improve the level of quality. Initially, the focus of QAMs was to assess the programme or curriculum. Later the focus shifted to accreditation of HEIs.

Although exogenous policies influence on institutional systems and governance dynamics, HEIs are essentially responsible for the enhancement of quality. The goals, purposes and designs of IQA systems depend on the encouragement and priorities of the management to a large extent. These strategic priorities depend on the various phases of development of quality and that would exist within an organisation itself. The phases of organisation and management are deeply correlated with the effectiveness of IQA on quality. Conceptually speaking, organisation and management would experience the following phases of development: (1) quality is the result of purely individual commitment (2) there is a beginning of thinking in process (3) the organisation is managed professionally (4) the organisation as well as its management is systematically renewed and (5) the organisation is outward-oriented and strives for excellence at the global level. Ultimately, each phase of development would influence the design of an organisation in the measures to improve quality and vice versa (Bollaert, 2014; Madhukar, 2018).

The explicit and positive impact of these phases would depend on the nature and enforcement of organisational policies through systems of IQA. Furthermore, transparency and participation are effective tools to enhance the quality in teaching and learning. Although HE has been forced to accept IQA, there is a gap between what the systems of IQA

have prepared and what actually society expects from the HEIs (Massaro, 2010). Seemingly, the impact of IQA on LOs is negligible in terms of the selected skills (Ottara, 2015). However, the measures of IQA have enhanced the employability of the graduates by creating a positive impact on the quality of education. Furthermore, the link between IQA and employability of graduates is evident in HE. It led to a closer relationship between academics and labour market. Moreover, systems of IQA and EQA have made significant impact in diverse areas. They are: (1) curricular reforms (2) revision of syllabi (3) feedback from students (4) employment prospects of graduates and (5) reported publications of faculty (Martin, 2017). At the same time, it is argued that initiatives of IQACs have made nominal positive impact on the organisational behaviour of HEIs in India. However, it has improved the accreditation scores over the last 10 years (Pachauri, 2018).

Internal Quality Assurance in India

Globally, most of the countries have constituted accreditation agencies and internal quality assurance mechanisms to enhance quality in HE. India has joined in this trend by constituting an accreditation agency. From 1st April 2007 onwards, NAAC has been propagating the idea that IQACs should be created prior to the reaccreditation in all HEIs as it would create a 'quality culture.' All universities and colleges which are under Section 2(f) and 12B of the UGC Act are eligible to receive the financial support for the establishment and strengthening of IQACs. During the XI plan, UGC has provided seed money of Rs5 lakh to each university and Rs3 lakh to each college. It is a grant to meet the establishment and strengthening of IQACs (see Table 3).

TABLE 3
IQAC Funding from UGC (For the Period 2007-2012)

| <i>Sl. No.</i> | <i>Purpose of Grant</i> | <i>Amount (Rs)</i> |
|----------------|---|--------------------|
| 1. | Honorarium to the Director/Coordinator, (IQAC @ Rs.1000×12×5) | 60,000 |
| 2. | Office equipment | 60,000 |
| 3. | Hiring services for secretarial and technical services | 60,000 |
| 4. | ICTs communication expenses | 70,000 |
| 5. | Contingencies | 50,000 |
| 6. | Total | 3,00,000 |

Source: UGC (2012).

The NAAC has assigned various guidelines to IQACs as part of initiating a culture of quality in HEIs. These guidelines are: (1) fixation of quality benchmarks and parameters (2) providing a learner-centric environment through knowledge and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) based participatory learning process (3) collection and analysis of feedback from quality related institutional activities (4) dissemination of information regarding the parameters of quality (5) organisation of multi-disciplinary

workshops and seminars on quality issues and creation of networking in quality (6) documentation for improvement in quality (7) coordinating quality related activities (8) creation of a sound data base for enhancement of quality (9) development of a culture of quality and (10) preparation and submission of various reports to NAAC (NAAC, 2013).

It appears that some of these guidelines have an implicit link with the parameters of the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF). The NIRF was launched in 2015 to rank HEIs across the country. It aims to promote competitive excellence in HEIs. The methodology of NIRF to rank HEIs is on the basis of performance in the following parameters: (1) teaching learning and resources (2) research and professional practice (3) graduation outcomes (4) outreach and inclusivity and (5) public perception.

It implies that NAAC and NIRF aim to enhance both quality and equity in HEIs through the systems of IQACs. Conferment of academic autonomy is a major opportunity to enhance academic freedom to incorporate regional demands. Although initiatives of quality are operational for years in India, investigations on the marginal impact of IQACs on LOs through academic autonomy is extremely scanty. In this context, the present study attempts to examine the level of acceleration of IQACs on LOs through academic autonomy.

Autonomous Colleges in Kerala

In Kerala, academic autonomy was introduced as a quality initiative during the period 2014-15. In spite of lower economic growth, Kerala has commendable achievements in human development. Parameters such as high literacy rate, low dropout in school education, high life expectancy and low infant mortality are few among them. When compared to other states in India, the primary and secondary education sectors of Kerala have higher educational achievements. But it seems that, this is at the cost of neglecting the quality of HE sector (Tilak, 2001). However, Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in HE has increased phenomenally over the period from 2010-11 to 2017-18. GER of the HE in Kerala was 21.9 percent in 2010-11 and it has increased to 37.0 percent in 2018-19 (MHRD, Various years). It is evident that access of HE is comparatively high amidst of poor quality. Therefore, Government has taken up enhancement of quality as one of the primary goals in higher education.

In this context, Kerala State Higher Education Council (KSHEC) has appointed Professor N. R. Madhava Menon Committee on 'Autonomy of Colleges in Kerala' during the period 2013. The major aim of this committee was to review the progress of quality in HE. The committee gives a wide range of recommendations to improve the quality in HE. Based on these recommendations, Government of Kerala has conferred 'autonomy' to 19 colleges (KSHEC, 2013; UGC, 2017). Furthermore, KSHEC conducted workshops on awareness on Outcome Based Education (OBE) in colleges to enhance quality.

In the context of HE in Kerala, it seems that existence of autonomous colleges is essential. Conferment of academic autonomy was one of the primary steps to enhance quality (Mathew & Patrick, 2016). As per the 'Report of the Committee on Autonomous Colleges in Kerala' of KSHEC, academic autonomy has not made any remarkable qualitative changes in the curricula or pedagogy and the changes seem to be meagre. In addition, the present 'Autonomous Colleges Act' does not incorporate the provisions to ensure equity, transparency and social justice in the functioning of autonomous colleges in the state. Based on these goals, the committee has recommended few modifications on

'university laws' to ensure social justice and academic excellence in autonomous colleges (KSHEC, 2018).

Methodology

The study attempts to evaluate the impact of IQACs on the development and measurement of LOs of autonomous colleges in Kerala. The influence of organisational structures other than IQACs on LOs is also considered. The present study was an exploratory one using mixed methods. The study has adopted a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to collect and analyse data. Firstly, the study collected secondary data on the higher education in India and in Kerala. For this purpose, secondary data was collected from the sources such as publications of MHRD, reports of UGC, publications of KSHEC, publications of NAAC and publications of several Universities. Secondly, secondary data was collected from various autonomous colleges in India. Thirdly, data was collected from Self-Study Reports (SSRs), Annual Quality Assurance Reports (AQARs) and various published documents of autonomous colleges and IQACs in Kerala.

The sampling design and analytical framework of this study is as follows. The 'population' of this study belongs to nineteen autonomous colleges in Kerala. However, opinions from various stakeholders and experts in higher education were taken during the primary survey. After the fixation of population, SSRs and AQARs of nineteen autonomous colleges were scrutinised. Subsequently, sampling instruments were prepared for the survey. Further, a pilot study was conducted among the stakeholders of selected autonomous colleges as well as in IQACs. Reflections of the respondents on IQACs and LOs have been collected and based on the pilot study the sample size has been fixed. In addition, sampling instruments were revised with respect to the reflections during the pilot study. Based on the insights, eight sample colleges were taken randomly from nineteen autonomous colleges. The primary data collected from respondents through various methods such as unstructured interviews, focus-group discussions and narratives. Subsequently, the study has further examined verbal responses and categorised it. The data was analysed primarily through the content analysis. Through this process, the study has identified major responses that support or contradict the arguments.

The study has the following limitations. One of the major limitations of this approach is that majority of the respondents are not aware about the indicators and tools to measure the LOs. Therefore, there may be plenty of subjectivity regarding the responses of stakeholders. Thirdly, it seems that there is only limited information in majority of SSRs and AQARs with respect to the contributions of the IQACs and other organisational structures to optimise the LOs. Most importantly, the definition and dimensions of LOs are diverse from one IQAC to another. Therefore, a common yardstick is essential to compare the contributions of IQACs on LOs and it results as a challenge. Ultimately, the study examines the impact of IQAC on LOs of each college. In order to overcome these limitations, the present study has attempted to provide the basic knowledge on LOs to the respondents before the commencement of discussion.

Effects of IQACs on Learning Outcomes in Academic Autonomy

Evaluating the effects of IQACs on developing the LOs is a complex task. One of the major challenges is to objectively analyse and decomposes the effects of IQACs after controlling both internal and external non-IQAC forces that would influence the LOs (Brennan, 1997; Barrow, 1999; Harvey & Newton, 2004; Pachauri, 2018). As a result, it is a complex affair to delineate a 'benchmark' to evaluate the impact of IQACs on the LOs. Firstly, the study scrutinises the motivation and methodology of IQACs to analyse the 'concept of quality.' The responses indicate that IQACs are in the initial phases in the area of exploration on 'diverse approaches to analyse the concept of quality. Most of the IQACs choose the route of social justice approach to analyse the concept of quality rather than human capital approach or human rights approach (Spring, 2000; UNESCO, 2000; Walker, 2006; Unterhalter, 2007; Vegas & Petrow, 2008; Tikly, 2011; Bollaert, 2014; Madhukar, 2018). The choice of methodology of social justice would be due to various reasons such as accreditation criteria of NAAC and parameters of NIRF. One of the criteria of NAAC has an implicit relationship with LOs. Further, the performance of colleges in graduate outcomes has to be mentioned while applying for NIRF India ranking. More specifically, it is difficult to isolate the origin of initiatives on LOs. It may be the result of direct influence of IQACs alone based on the priorities in academic autonomy. On the contrary, it may be the due to the indirect impact of external mechanisms like NAAC and NIRF. Another possibility would be that of a combined impact of initiatives of IQACs along with external factors. In this context, it may be argued that each IQAC can develop an innovative methodology to enhance the quality.

Apart from these complexities, one might argue that it is too early to measure the effects of academic autonomy on the LOs through IQACs. But, academic autonomy has completed a reasonable period in Kerala. In addition, IQACs have functioned a long period in the HE sector of India as well as in Kerala. Moreover, IQACs are supposed to be the pioneers in the area of LOs with respect to the global standards. Therefore, an evaluation on the impact of IQACs on quality is rational.

The findings indicate that most of the IQACs have made nominal positive effects to optimise the LOs during the initial stages of academic autonomy. However, the nature and degree of impact of IQAC in each institution on the development of LOs is distinct and unique. Few of the IQACs have initiated various activities in relation to the LOs during the pre-autonomy period itself. From the Self-Study Reports (SSRs), it is evident that some IQACs have made remarkable attempts like identification of indicators and dimensions of LOs during the initial stages of autonomy itself. However, these indicators are less likely to be the LOs with respect to the global standards. Some IQACs have internalised the fixation and measurement of LOs mainly based on the initial levels of four domains of 'Bloom's Taxonomy and Pierce-Gray Taxonomy.' They are: (1) cognitive (2) affective (3) psychometer and (4) spiritual. However, IQAC in each institution can consider the possibility of internalising the LOs by innovating institutional-taxonomy (Bloom & Krathwohl, 1956; David et al, 1964; Anita, 1972; David, 1972; Walter *et al*, 1979; Edward, 1981; Anderson *et al*, 2001; Pachauri, 2018).

It is evident that IQACs have developed various systems to enhance the LOs. It could be due to the interplay of some exogenous factors and initiatives of IQACs. For instance, the contribution of colleges in the area of LOs has to be specified in Self Study Reports (SSRs) while applying for NAAC reaccreditation. Further, one of the parameters of NIRF India

ranking is 'graduate outcomes'. Some IQACs consider that graduate outcomes have an implicit relationship with LOs. Rashtriya Uchcharat Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) and 'quality mandate' of UGC also might have influenced the IQACs. Further, 'quality mandate' of UGC and 'NSQF' highlights the role of LOs in quality. Moreover, KSHEC has initiated various systems such as State Assessment and Accreditation Council (SAAC) and workshops on Outcome Based Education (OBE). It would have influenced the IQACs. These observations indicate the crucial role of following factors on the development of LOs through IQACs: (1) NAAC (2) NIRF (3) UGC (4) NSQF (5) RUSA (6) KSHEC (7) SAAC and (8) OBE.

Based on this discussion, it is assumed that academic autonomy is in the infant phases and therefore transitional problems are at play. The gradual stride of IQACs to develop the LOs is chiefly due to internal and external constraints. The study classifies them into the following interrelated domains: (1) governance and leadership (2) dynamics of incentive mechanisms and innovations (3) student diversity and equity (4) structures of learning and teaching (5) administrative practices and legal systems (6) quality of infrastructure and learning and (7) sources of finance and learning growth. Domain one primarily deals with the style of governance and leadership and its impact on IQACs. Domain two is concerned with the nature of monetary and non-monetary incentive mechanisms in connection with the IQACs. Domain three examines the level of academic integration and institutional dynamics to address student diversity and equity. Domain four analyses the role of IQACs in framing various structures of learning and teaching. The role of administrative practices and legal systems is examined in the fifth domain. The nature and quality of infrastructure is closely interwoven with sources of finance. The nature and depth of these two constraints are scrutinized in the last two realms of classification. These seven domains will provide a framework to empirically analyse the nature and degree of constraints in the diverse regional and institutional contexts. For policy makers and IQAC coordinators, the classification of constraints will help to understand and identify the challenges in each domain. Further, it will support to develop various methodologies to formulate problem-specific strategies to address the unique obstacles of IQAC in each institution. The nature and extent of each domain of constraint is elaborately discussed in the following sub-sections.

Constraints of IQACs to Optimise Learning Outcomes

Governance and Leadership

Effective leadership has a crucial role to enhance quality in higher education. Therefore, the study examines the role of Principals who hold the ex-officio position as chairpersons of the IQACs. Some of the respondents acknowledge the creativity of Principals in formulating the initiatives to enhance the LOs. At the same time, it is reported that some of the members of faculty and administrative staff are not always adaptable to the systems of IQACs. It may be due to the presumption that IQACs are only advisory bodies that lacks statutory status. Furthermore, the pace of acquisition of adaptability of some of the faculty and/or administrative staff is gradual with respect to the systems of IQACs. However, timely implementation of effective incentive mechanisms would accelerate the cooperation of administrative staff and faculty simultaneously. IQACs are envisaged to be at the core of initiatives to enhance quality. Many respondents believe that IQACs are not always the main force of activities in relation to the LOs. Colleges have not always objectively incorporated

the activities of the IQACs with a special focus on LOs during the initial stages of autonomy. For instance, colleges/IQACs have identified few of the dimensions of LOs. However, the initial pace with respect to the LOs is not always the product of strategies and innovations of IQACs alone.

Coordinators of IQACs have played a central role in quality initiatives of autonomy. At present, coordinators of the IQACs are ex-officio members in different statutory and non-statutory bodies in colleges. However, a few of the coordinators tend to be under-trained to identify the cultural dynamics of the institution and incentive mechanisms of the academic community in short run. There is mixed response from the respondents on the support of coordinators to initiate and maintain the innovative systems to enhance LOs. Effective training sessions and workshops will enhance the productivity of coordinators. Colleges could appoint external joint co-ordinators to enhance the productivity of coordinators of IQACs. It is interesting to evaluate the incremental changes in LOs with respect to additional systems of IQACs. 'Impact-evaluation studies' would be helpful to formulate the strategies of growth and estimate the 'opportunity costs' of action plans of IQACs. In addition, it would enhance the accountability and transparency. It appears that few of the IQACs have conducted 'diagnoses' and published the findings in connection with the impact of their own systems on the LOs.

NAAC has given a mandatory framework for the composition of IQACs in colleges. Some of the IQACs tend to follow mandatory requirements rather than incorporating maximum number of professionals into the team. It is critical to churn out innovative ideas and realistic strategies of implementation. Further, by and large, IQACs organise mandatory number of meetings. Outcomes of meetings of IQACs will be increased by the incorporation of representation from the following groups: (1) governing council (2) academic council (3) board of studies (4) controller of examinations (5) librarians (6) external faculty (7) alumni (8) educationists (9) international experts on LOs (10) coordinators of IQACs of autonomous colleges (11) employers (12) industrial experts (13) eminent industrialists (14) career experts (15) representatives from universities and affiliated colleges (16) experts on student equity (17) legal professionals (18) external administrative staff (19) retired staff (20) ICT experts (21) parents and (22) students. Apart from the representation of these groups, documentation of 'dissent notes' in discussions is also necessary. Internalisation of 'critical thinking' is supposed to be the principal step towards the internalisation of outcome based education.

Dynamics of Incentive Mechanisms and Innovations

IQACs can act as a catalyst in the professional development of faculty and administrative staff. IQACs initiate some innovative steps to augment the potential and performance of faculty. Research outcome of faculty is very essential to optimise the LOs. Appointment of faculty and administrative staff on the basis of academic merit and reservation norms is a pre-requisite to augment LOs. During the post-recruitment stages, accumulation of human capital may vary among the members of faculty. However, support of systems is not always satisfactory to instigate the creativity of faculty. Academic capital formation of faculty will be improved through the establishment of effective monetary and non-monetary incentives and grievance-rectifying mechanisms. Monetary incentives could be in the form of seed money to research, small projects and prize money to outstanding performers in research.

An inter-departmental competition on patents and citation index and launching of a best researcher award will accelerate this trend. Formation of groups of researchers will be helpful to enhance the stock of academic-social capital. It would reflect in the LOs through the enhancement of creativity quotient. Additionally, it is desirable to generate a data base on 'time-use pattern' of both academic and non-academic works of faculty.

Student Diversity and Equity

One of the pre-conditions to optimise the LOs are the well-equipped and empowered learners. Some of the constraints of IQACs are likely to be related to the nature of school education obtained by the student community. It is observed that genuine attempts have been made by IQACs to overcome the hindrances faced by the students. It mainly focuses on alleviating the multiplicity and intensity of problems of 'academically under-prepared' learners. Some of the colleges have implemented various mechanisms to admit competent students during the phase of admission itself. At the post-entry level, most of the IQACs have various apparatuses such as bridge courses and induction programmes to identify slow, weak and advanced learners. Apart from UG and PG students, some of the colleges have mechanisms to incorporate the research scholars into the realms of quality.

Marginalised students face numerous entry barriers to get into the spheres of LOs due to the deprived level of academic preparedness and poor class identity. At the same time, members of faculty are constrained in some of the areas to resolve their 'learning deficits'. Probably, constraints of faculty are sub-optimum level of faculty-student ratio and identity based peer group formation (Gael, 2013; Sonalker, 2016). There would be a positive relationship between the level of LOs and the ideal number of students in a class. It would work through the level of availability of per student institutional resource and per student state resource. Hence, some urgent measures should be taken from the part of policy makers to optimise the faculty-student ratio at least in autonomous colleges.

Mostly, disadvantaged students are concerned on 'pass mark' in the programmes rather than LOs. In this context, IQACs can instigate various initiatives on the learning deficits of students. It will increase the impact of initiatives of IQACs on LOs. Furthermore, IQACs can commence different initiatives such as inclusive-curricula, critical pedagogies, learning plans and innovative teaching-learning relationships. IQACs can commence 'learning laboratories' for small groups of students based on the concept of active and collaborative learning. These learning laboratories can work as being part of Learning Communities (LCs) in colleges (Sabharwal and Malish, 2018).

Apart from learning communities, participation of students in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities will enhance the social networking and team spirit. For this purpose, equity and diversity concerns shall commence while constituting the systems like Department Quality Assurance Cells (DQACs) and Student Quality Assurance Cells (SQACs). It is desirable to seek an international expertise on LOs to address the constraints on student diversity and equity.

The medium of instruction requires an urgent consideration. Use of 'English language' in the delivery of curricula is very essential to improve the linguistic skills of learners. Faculty could give assistance to first-generation higher education learners to lessen their apprehensions regarding the use of English language. That would subsequently accelerate the efforts to enhance LOs. In addition, short term courses in foreign languages would give

the learners a broader perspective in various cultures. First-generation higher education learners remarked that the English empowerment cell and language laboratories are inevitable.

In general, colleges/IQACs have commenced various initiatives like bridge courses and induction programmes to support the marginalised students. At this juncture, it is observed that majority of the first-generation higher education learners and slow learners are reluctant and/or academically under-prepared to actively participate in 'cost-free' bridge courses and skill-enhancement initiatives. IQACs may seriously consider these 'signalling' modes of slow learners especially in the context of on-line learning. IQACs can initiate 'student-counselling' sessions and 'awareness camps' to improve the participation of slow learners in these ventures. In addition, colleges/departments/libraries have launched various supplementary modes like internships, certificate courses, audit courses, BVoc courses and add-on courses to enrich the UG and PG programmes.

Structures of Learning and Teaching

Autonomous colleges can restructure curricula and revise syllabi after getting approval from the concerned authorities (UGC, 2013). Colleges and/or IQACs have attempted to modify and revise curricula and syllabi. However, colleges and/or IQACs face several internal and external constraints. Some of the colleges/IQACs have faced procedural delays during the initial phases of autonomy in relation to the revision of curricula/syllabi.

IQACs initiate 'result analyses' in each semester. Seemingly, it intends to enhance the 'pass percentages' and 'placement ratios'. IQACs have launched various initiatives to enhance the student progression and performance of students in various competitive examinations. Some of the respondents mentioned that IQACs/colleges tend to focus on the expansion of placement outputs rather than learning outcomes at the global levels. Few of the academicians shared that 'academic autonomy' is not supposed to be a 'rapid track travel' to expand quantity of graduates and post-graduates but instead it is an opportunity to enter into the global standards of quality. Identifying the indicators and dimensions are supposed to be the preliminary steps in this journey. IQACs in association with departments encompass some of the recent trends across the disciplines on the programme outcomes.

Evidences indicate that some IQACs synchronise 'need analyses' after obtaining feedback and/or suggestions from diverse groups. They are: (1) faculty (present and retired) (2) students (3) academic councils (universities and colleges) (4) board of studies (universities and colleges) (5) experts on LOs (6) industrial experts (7) administrative staff (present and retired) (8) parents (9) research scholars (10) librarians (11) controllers of examinations (universities and colleges) (12) reputed employers (13) experts on student equity (14) members of LSGs (15) educationists and (16) alumni. Publication of results of these analyses would help to identify the LOs and its unique dimensions.

Specification of optimum level of Programme Outcomes (POs), Programme Specific Outcomes (PSOs) and Course Outcomes (COs) are the major steps to enrich curricula and syllabi. In addition, skill-mapping and intelligence-mapping of enrolled students are also advisable. IQACs examine different modes of educational technologies, evaluation methods and pedagogies to cultivate a culture of equity. Formulation of following strategies in accordance with above-mentioned efforts would be sensible: (1) feedback from industries (2) graduate-tracer studies (3) analysis on employer-satisfaction (4) employer's

involvement in the revision of syllabi (5) labour market analysis and (6) assessment of competencies of students (Martin, 2017). Results from these strategies will reflect in teaching and evaluation process. The innovations in teaching systems of IQACs are mainly based on the ICT enabled alternative learning systems. Further, the number of internships in UG and PG courses has increased substantially in autonomous colleges.

Along with the effective teaching methods, prudent evaluation system has a vital role in the development of LOs. Timely distribution of UG and PG degree certificates and mark lists are also essential. Few of the respondents from alumni shared that they have encountered hindrances and delay in the issuing of UG and PG degree certificates through autonomous colleges in some instances. In this context, controllers of examinations could attempt to make inventions in the evaluation systems and process of publication of results along with the support of IQACs in the following areas: (1) conducting theory and practical examinations (2) setting of question papers (3) designing of schemes and answer keys for evaluation (4) stipulations in the examination hall (5) nature of valuation of answer scripts (6) optimisation of infrastructures in the controller's office (7) specialized staff in marks tabulation division (8) timely and scientific incorporation of grace marks (9) applications of ICT in evaluation process. A few of the IQACs in association with controller's office initiate a 'question bank system' based on 'Bloom's Taxonomy.' Bloom's taxonomy is a set of hierarchical models which are used to classify learning objectives into the level of complexity and specificity. It consists of the following levels: (1) knowledge (remembering) (2) comprehension (understanding) (3) application (transferring) (4) analysis (relating) (5) synthesis (creating) and (6) evaluation (judging) (Bloom & Krathwohl, 1956; Edward, 1981; Anderson *et al*, 2001).

A few of the controller's offices have given the directions to question paper setters to prepare questions based on these benchmarks of Bloom's Taxonomy. Some of the initiatives to assess the production of LOs through the support of tools of ICT are obvious. Fruits of these actions would be optimised through the support of following measures: (1) proper incentive mechanisms (2) optimum faculty-student ratio (3) revisions in curricula, syllabi and pedagogies and (4) optimisation of infrastructure.

Administrative Practices and Legal Systems

The quality of administrative staff is seldom discussed in the literature on quality in HE (Pachauri, 2018). It is evident that the administrative machinery is highly cooperative with respect to various systems of IQACs. But professional development and evidence-based training tend to enhance the competency quotient of administrative machinery.

Legal expertise of administrative staff as well as faculty will be an additional advantage to IQACs. Hence, IQACs can enhance the legal expertise and information of the stakeholders both in academics and administration. Expertise of faculty and administrative staff in various areas such as University regulations, Kerala service rules, Kerala education rules, accreditation criteria, UGC guidelines and recent developments in laws in higher education will help the IQACs to enhance LOs. In order to execute a proper legal framework and initiatives in IQACs, optimisation of institutional infrastructure and academic practices are pivotal.

Quality of Infrastructure and Learning

IQACs have been organising several types of activities which are stated in the directions of NAAC reaccreditation. In order to fulfil these mandatory activities, colleges have established offices for IQACs. During the initial phases, most of these offices were relatively deficient in terms of ideal infrastructure and exclusive regular staff. This may imply that faculty and administrative staff are forced to fulfil hectic-administrative and clerical duties. It is argued that IQACs ended up as structures of data collection and processing units rather than academic entities for invention and innovation in some occasions. Inadequacy of clerical staff at the department level and decentralisation of several activities and academic responsibilities to faculty would negatively affect the quality in the long run (Madhukar, 2018; Pachauri, 2018). It is reported that teachers have been entrusted with additional clerical responsibilities and duties related to examinations in some instances in autonomous colleges in Kerala (Mathew & Patrick, 2016). At the same time, it is reported that a handful of colleges have appointed clerical staff for assistance in each department.

Disseminating information and findings with respect to the activities of IQACs on LOs are vital. It may be carried out through the following channels: (1) notice boards (2) newsletters (3) journals (4) books (5) reports and (6) different forms of ICT. Some IQACs regularly collect and publish objective and receptive feedback. In other words, IQACs have a track record of various mechanisms to publish their information.

Nature and maintenance of infrastructure in affiliated colleges would not be sufficient to support the initiatives to enhance the LOs in academic autonomy. It is advisable to develop and maintain institutional infrastructure in accordance with the ever-changing models and goals of learning. Apart from optimum infrastructure, various types of supplementary practices are necessary. For instance, various curricula enriching measures such as internship, apprenticeship, active internal workshops and grooming division would enhance the opportunities of students for 'learning by doing.' Some of the colleges have already initiated these activities. However, it is supposed to be strongly integrated with the IQACs, reputed industrial organisations and international research institutions.

Library is an important learning infrastructure which requires an exceptional focus. IQACs have initiated different measures to incorporate the LOs in the systems of library. Few of the libraries and IQAC offices are equipped and integrated with adequate number of journals, books and reports focusing on the global developments in LOs. Regular library audit is one of the indicators of academic accountability. Few of the colleges/IQACs have initiated an effective library-audit as part of the initiatives to enhance the LOs.

Sources of Finance and Learning Growth

The results of the study hint that most of the colleges are reluctant and/or incapable to contribute exclusive, timely and sufficient funds to develop IQACs into global standards. Apart from this, unavailability and/or untimely flow of funds from external machineries would have accelerated the intensity of this constraint. In this context, the study recommends that colleges can resolve this problem by pooling a share of available profit from self-financing courses. But, some of the colleges are averse and/or unable to channelise a major slice of the available profit from self-financing courses. The findings of the study

suggest that external financial audit along with the publication of outcome-budget and audit-reports would enhance the transparency and accountability.

At the same time, IQACs/colleges explore funds from India and abroad. The following potential financial sources would enhance the ambit of IQACs: (1) international collaborations (2) patenting knowledge (3) selling of research outcomes (4) consultancy services (5) technical assistance to industries (6) collaboration with industries (7) corporate social responsibility (8) government and semi-governmental sources (9) primary and secondary sources of financial markets and (10) alumni. In this context, IQACs should carry out an action plan to optimise the cost benefit ratios without infusing extra-pressure on the existing systems. For this purpose, IQACs and organisational structures should go hand in hand to accomplish the intended level of quality.

Organisational Structure and Learning Outcomes

Autonomous colleges have various organisational structures other than IQACs. Generally, academic autonomy functions mainly through the following structures: (1) management committee (2) executive committee (3) governing council (4) academic council (5) board of studies (6) college council (7) department (8) Principal (9) controller of examinations (10) vice principals (11) head of the department (12) library (13) guest faculty (14) regular faculty (15) administrative staff (16) Parent Teacher Association (PTA) (17) Old student Association (OSA) (18) cells (19) clubs and (20) association of retired staff. These organisational structures operate chiefly through following mechanisms: (1) meetings (2) schemes (3) programmes (4) research projects (5) seminars (6) workshops (7) trainings (8) audits (9) documentations (10) incentive systems (11) statutory stipulations (12) curricular activities and (13) co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. IQACs require support from various structures and systems to enhance the LOs. In other words, joint efforts of these structures and mechanisms are essential to hasten the initiatives of IQACs.

These organisational structures other than IQACs play a crucial role in decision making processes. It appears that the structures have made indisputable efforts to optimise the LOs during the initial phases of autonomy. The analysis results indicate that the LOs have gained significance in the activities of organisational structures with respect to the influence of the following external factors: (1) NAAC (2) NIRF (3) UGC (4) NSQF (5) RUSA (6) KSHEC (7) SAAC and (8) OBE. The likelihood of interrelationship between these forces and internal initiatives on LOs is presented elaborately in the ninth section.

The reflections from respondents signal that organisational structures face few constraints. Generally, most of these constraints might be interconnected to the relative stock and quality of physical capital, financial capital and academic capital. This would depend on the priorities and incentive systems of leadership and phases of growth of autonomy. However, borders of these constraints may be lessened through the large scale investments in Research and Development (R & D).

Conclusion and Policy Implications

The Government of Kerala has conferred academic autonomy to selected affiliated colleges in Kerala. Autonomous colleges have an edge of academic freedom over affiliated

colleges to enhance quality. In order to analyse the impact of autonomy on quality through IQACs, this paper uses Learning Outcomes (LOs) as the proxy of quality in higher education. It is argued that autonomous colleges in Kerala have successfully conducted examinations and published the results in a time-bound manner. In this context, the aim of this research is to analyse the functioning of IQACs and their effects on the development of LOs of autonomous colleges in Kerala.

The evidences from the study make it clear that the IQACs have considerably improved the 'accreditation scores of colleges in NAAC' and ranks of colleges in 'NIRF India ranking.' However, IQACs are in the initial phases of developing the LOs at the global standards. This research indicates that the IQACs have made nominal positive impact to develop and measure the LOs during the initial stages of academic autonomy. However, the nature and degree of impact of IQAC in each institution on the development of LOs is distinct and unique. IQACs have developed various systems to enhance the LOs. It could be due to the interplay of some exogenous forces as well as initiatives of IQACs. Organisational structures as well as IQACs would have been influenced by the following exogenous factors: (1) NAAC (2) NIRF (3) UGC (4) NSQF (5) RUSA (6) KSHEC (7) SAAC and (8) OBE. It would be through the indirect influence of external factors on LOs through IQACs. For instance, the contribution of autonomous colleges in the area of LOs has to be specified in Self-Study Reports (SSRs) while applying for NAAC reaccreditation. Further, one of the parameters of NIRF is 'graduate outcomes.' It seems that graduate outcomes have an implicit relationship with LOs. Similarly, 'quality mandate' of UGC and 'NSQF' highlights the role of LOs to enhance the quality in higher education. Moreover, KSHEC has initiated various systems such as State Assessment and Accreditation Council (SAAC) and workshops on Outcome Based Education (OBE).

The interplay of external forces and internal initiatives has made less impact on the LOs through IQACs during the initial phases of academic autonomy. The analysis indicates that the nominal positive impact of IQACs on LOs is chiefly due to the constraints especially in the early stages of IQACs in academic autonomy. The paper puts forward a framework of seven distinct but interconnected domains: (1) governance and leadership (2) dynamics of incentive mechanisms and innovations (3) student diversity and equity (4) structures of learning and teaching (5) administrative practices and legal systems (6) quality of infrastructure and learning and (7) sources of finance and learning growth. The findings on constraints place IQACs at a challenging situation, which, in turn necessitates more innovative practices to address their constraints and vulnerabilities, and to facilitate their smooth functioning to enhance quality. Strong integration of specific-policies of IQACs and strategies of colleges is a potential policy to disintegrate each constraint.

The ambit of first constraint will be lessened through outcome-based measures such as awareness camps and training sessions to Principals and coordinators of IQACs. Leadership should promote the 'critical thinking' to enhance quality. Seeds of quality lie in the critical thinking of participants in discussions. There is a strong need to document the 'dissent notes' of discussions in several bodies such as college-council, staff-council, department-council and meetings of IQACs. It will act as a major incentive mechanism to develop job-satisfaction and creativity. There would be positive relationship between job satisfaction and degree of autonomy enjoyed by each stakeholder in autonomous colleges.

Secondly, evidence-based strategies and incentive mechanisms will work more effectively in an environment where entry barriers are transparent. Hence, appointment of

faculty and administrative staff should be based on academic merit and reservation norms. Further, faculty diversity will positively affect the quality of academic capital and measures to enhance the student equity. But the specialisation is inevitable to utilise the academic capital. Appointment of clerical staff for assistance in each department will enhance the degree of specialisation and productivity. Further, there is a need for systematic and comprehensive attempts to create and update the academic capital. This may be executed through various measures such as 'inter-departmental competitions,' 'seed money to research' and 'grievance-rectifying mechanisms'. The findings indicate that the documentation on 'time-use pattern' of academic and administrative works of faculty will enhance accountability and productivity. It will make a positive impact on the structure of learning and teaching in autonomy.

The initiatives of IQACs to evolve and construct an effective learning structure should start from the pre-admission phase itself. Some IQACs have attempted to assess and publish the LOs of students during the phases of UG and PG admission. Skill-mapping and intelligence-mapping on enrolled students are also advisable. In addition, specification and measurement of Optimum Learning Outcomes (OLOs) is supposed to be the primary step to identify the determinants and deterrents to accomplish diverse learning goals such as Course Outcomes (COs), Programme Specific Outcomes (PSOs) and Programme Outcomes (POs). Further, it is necessary to prioritise various components of pre-determined LOs. Assessment and tracking of Achieved Learning Outcomes (ALOs) in comparison with Optimum Learning Outcomes (OLOs) is vital to enhance and assure quality. Measurement of Per-Student Learning Outcome (PSLO) is rational to address student diversity. IQACs should assess, compare and track the ALOs with respect to OLOs in each semester.

There is urgency for institutional-level planning to address the constraints on 'student diversity and equity'. This domain should be the central focus of every initiative of IQACs. For this purpose, IQACs should incorporate 'first-generation higher education learners from socially and economically under-represented groups' in Department Quality Assurance Cells (DQACs) and Student Quality Assurance Cells (SQACs). Furthermore, IQACs should restructure curricula and syllabi by incorporating measures to enhance equity such as academic-inclusion, flexible pedagogy and social cohesion. In order to make an inclusive curricula and syllabi, IQACs should take innovative measures like institutional taxonomy and inclusive pedagogy. Learning laboratories based on the concept of 'active and collaborative learning' will accelerate the impact of unique taxonomy.

Support of optimum infrastructure is also necessary to amplify the impact of innovative taxonomy. The learning growth and infrastructure quality are closely interconnected. Quality and quantity of infrastructure mainly depends on sources of finance and priority of expenditure. This necessitates a strategy to ensure an adequate and timely flow of finance. Colleges may resolve this constraint by pooling a share of available profit from self-financing courses. Prudent accountability and transparency systems are necessary to develop a strong financial foundation. It will be executed through several measures such as outcome-budget and external financial audit in self-financing section. Further, colleges can explore funds from India and abroad through various sources such as financial markets and industrial-collaboration.

The discussion comes to a conclusion that the constraints could be narrowed through innovations of IQACs alone. Nevertheless, state policies, advisory systems, regulatory frameworks, accreditation criteria and university regulations have auxiliary roles to

facilitate a suitable environment to IQACs. For instance, academic and social audits on LOs through the support of various stakeholders such as parents, elected bodies and experts will enhance the competency quotient of IQACs. It would enhance the intensity of specialisation of IQACs on LOs. Specialisation of IQACs and optimisation of LOs will move hand in hand. Effectiveness of state policies predominantly depends on the receptiveness of IQACs to enhance the LOs. Therefore, it is argued that IQACs need to be innovative and adaptable to the ever-changing nature and trends of quality to survive and surmount in higher education.

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An Analysis of the UGC Recruitment Regulations and Their Probable Impact on the Higher Educational Institutions of India

Thomas Mathew*

Abstract

A university or institution has two arms, viz, teaching and administration. In order to make a mark in the field of education, it is imperative that the university or institution has a policy, whereby both its arms are nurtured equally by having a similar policy of attracting the best talents to serve it, in their respective domains. If the policies are not similar, then the wing which is less beneficial will attract lesser talented people and may not be able to keep itself upright with the other wing, in turn, resulting in to hampering the expected growth of the university or institution.

* A-24, Chandlodia Kailashnagar CHsg. Soc. Ltd., Jagatpur Road, Nr. Shilpa Bhuvan, Chandlodia, Ahmedabad-382481, Gujarat, India, Email: thomas_mathew_tm@yahoo.com

Education System in India

The Constitution of India (The Constitution of India, 1950), in view of the separate governments at the level of the centre and the states, spells out in detail, the legislative, administrative and financial relations between them apart from demarcating their jurisdictions, powers and functions, reflected in three separate lists, viz, List I (Union List); List II (State List) and List III (Concurrent List). List I consists of 99 items that are in the exclusive jurisdiction of the national Parliament, as they are subjects of national importance or items dealing with inter-state matters, like inter-state trade and commerce, regulation and development of inter-state rivers and river valleys, and inter-state migration. List II includes 61 items exclusively under the jurisdiction of the State Legislatures, and they are subjects of local importance. Its justification is that a single law in the country as a whole may not be able to take into consideration variations that exist between different states, like public health, police, etc. List III, called the Concurrent List, contained in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution, consists of 52 subjects like electricity, factories etc, which can be legislated by both the national Parliament and the State Legislatures. In the event of a conflict between the state law and the central law, the latter always prevails (Hardgrave and Kochanek, 1986).

The education in India, at both school and higher education level, is predominantly a state subject as per the Constitution. However, certain major functions are included in the Union List and a few aspects in the Concurrent List (Tilak, 2017).

The limited role of the Union Government is to extend to the states, cooperation and support of various kinds including financial resources. The need for planned development of higher education authorised the Union Government to coordinate and determine the standards in universities and scientific, technical, or research institutions (Entry 66 of List I); in turn giving the Union Government considerable power over all aspects of higher education.

Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD)

The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) was created on 26 September 1985, through the 174th amendment to the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961, in pursuance to the mission to achieve an all-round development of the citizens of India by building strong foundations in education. The MHRD works through two Departments, viz, the Department of School Education and Literacy (the department responsible for development of school education and literacy in the country) and the Department of Higher Education (the department taking care of the higher education system in India and engaged in bringing world class opportunities of higher education and research to the country, so that Indian students are not finding lacking while facing an international platform).

University Grants Commission (UGC)

In 1952, the Union Government of India decided that all cases pertaining to the allocation of grants-in-aid from public funds to the eligible universities and institutions of higher learning, might be referred to the University Grants Commission (UGC); and

consequently it was formally inaugurated on 28 December 1953 by late Shri Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the then Minister of Education, Natural Resources and Scientific Research, Government of India. The UGC, however, was formally established as a statutory body of the Government of India through an Act of Parliament only in November 1956; for the coordination, determination and maintenance of standards of university education in India (the University Grants Commission Act, 1956). The UGC, currently with its head office located in New Delhi along with two additional bureaus and six regional centres across India, ensures effective coverage throughout the country.

The UGC, from time to time, has been publishing regulations governing the recruitment of teaching staff and officers at higher levels in a University, under various categories with varied years of experience and different pay-scales. The latest regulations were issued by the UGC in the year 2018 and it is these regulations that have been used up as the base for this paper. The individual universities or institutions are required to frame up their individual regulations in-line with the UGC regulations suiting to their requirements. The UGC, over the years, has been trying to ensure that the Indian higher educational institutions are able to make a mark in the field of education across the globe and the recruitment policies framed by it, is contributing to the fullest in its noble objective by getting the best talents opting for various positions in the Indian universities. This paper focuses on the measures that can further act as boosters in this noble objective.

Similarity between a Human Body and University or Institution

A normal healthy human body has two arms that can be used to perform different or same function(s), either independently or jointly by coordinating with each other. If due to any reasons, the nutrition does not reach to or is not provided to both the arms in the same proportion, then down the line in years to come, the impact will be that the health or fitness of the arm receiving lesser nutrition will deteriorate. This may also lead to a stage, where it will not be able to perform a function, even if different, effectively in comparison to the arm that has been receiving the nutrients and is otherwise fully fit. The human body which was otherwise normal and healthy will then no longer remain normal and healthy, in turn acting as a detrimental factor for the body and its existence.

Similarly, any university or institution has mainly two wings, viz, Teaching Staff and Administrative Staff. In order to have a university or institution that can perform or contribute to its fullest in the field of education sector, it's both the wings shall be nurtured similarly, in terms of opportunities or pay or any other factor that can satisfy an individual professionally. If these two wings are not nurtured similarly and only one is provided with favourable conditions, then the university or institution, like the human body, will turn into something not being fully fit, in turn resulting in not being able to match up to the expectations of its stakeholders, nor even able to compete in an effective manner with its counterparts, to make its mark in the educational field.

Analysis of the Recruitment Regulations of the UGC Governing the Teaching and Administrative Positions

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has come out with the recruitment regulations from time to time, covering various positions that are required for a healthy university. The latest of these are the “UGC Regulations on Minimum Qualifications for Appointment of Teachers and Other Academic Staff in Universities and Colleges and Measures for the Maintenance of Standards in Higher Education, 2018,” dated 18 July, 2018; applicable for the teaching staff. According to these regulations, the positions in the Teaching Cadre are Assistant Professor (Entry Level, Senior Grade and Selection Grade), Associate Professor, Professor and Senior Professor with the pay scale in six categories, starting from the Pay Level 10 to Pay Level 15.

The Notification No. 1-7/2015-U.II (2), dated 2 November, 2017 of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, on the subject “Scheme of Revision of Pay for the Posts of Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Assistant Registrar, Controller of Examination, Deputy Controller of Examination, Assistant Controller of Examination, Finance Officer, Deputy Finance Officer and Assistant Finance Officer Following the Revision of Pay Scales of Central Government employees on the recommendations of the 7th Central Pay Commission (CPC),” lays down the regulations applicable for the administrative staff or officers of the university at higher levels. According to these regulations, the posts are Assistant Registrar or Assistant Finance Officer or Assistant Controller of Examination, Deputy Registrar or Deputy Finance Officer or Deputy Controller of Examination and Registrar or Finance Officer or Controller of Examination, with the pay scale in five categories, starting from the Pay Level 10 to Pay Level 14.

Both the above-mentioned regulations prescribe the minimum educational qualifications, conditions, pay scale or pay level and the minimum experience which one shall possess in order to become eligible for a particular teaching and/or administrative position in a university or institutional setup. This paper specifically analyses the recruitment regulations issued out by the UGC, in terms of the educational qualification and the number of years of experience required to become eligible for getting appointed at various teaching and/or administrative position(s) in a university or institution.

TABLE 1

Minimum Number of Years of Experience Required so as to Become Eligible for the Various Teaching Position(s) in Indian Universities or Institutions according to the UGC Regulations

| <i>Sr.</i> | <i>Teaching Position & Pay Level</i> | <i>Mode of Appointment</i> | <i>Required Minimum Experience (In Terms of Years)</i> |
|------------|--|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. | Assistant Professor (Entry Level) & Pay Level 10 | Direct Recruitment | 0 Years |
| 2. | Assistant Professor (Senior Scale) & Pay Level 11 | Promotion | * Individual in Pay Level 10 with Ph.D. Degree : 4 Years * Individual in Pay Level 10 with M.Phil. or Professional Degree : 5 Years * Individual in Pay Level 10 with Master Degree : 6 Years |
| 3. | Assistant Professor (Selection Grade) & Pay Level 12 | Promotion | * Individual in Pay Level 10 with Ph.D. Degree : 4 + 5 = 9 Years * Individual in Pay Level 10 with M.Phil. or Professional Degree : 5 + 5 = 10 Years * Individual in Pay Level 10 with Master Degree : 6 + 5 = 11 Years |
| 4. | Associate Professor & Pay Level 13A | Direct Recruitment or Promotion | ➤ <u>Direct:</u> * Individual in a position equivalent to that of Assistant Professor : 8 Years ➤ <u>Promotion:</u> * Individual in Pay Level 10 with Ph.D. Degree : 4 + 5 + 3 = 12 Years * Individual in Pay Level 10 with M.Phil. or Professional Degree : 5 + 5 + 3 = 13 Years * Individual in Pay Level 10 with Master Degree : 6 + 5 + 3 = 14 Years |

An Analysis of the UGC Recruitment Regulations and Their Probable Impact

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| 5. | Professor & Pay Level 14 | Direct Recruitment or Promotion | <p>➤ <u>Direct:</u></p> <p>* Individual in a position equivalent to that of Assistant Professor/ Associate Professor/ Professor : 10 Years</p> <p>➤ <u>Promotion:</u></p> <p>* Individual in Pay Level 10 with Ph.D. Degree : 4 + 5 + 3 + 3 = 15 Years</p> <p>* Individual in Pay Level 10 with M.Phil. or Professional Degree : 5 + 5 + 3 + 3 = 16 Years</p> <p>* Individual in Pay Level 10 with Master Degree : 6 + 5 + 3 + 3 = 17 Years</p> <p>* Associate Professor Direct : 11 Years</p> |
| 6. | Senior Professor & Pay Level 15 (Applicable only at University Level) | <p>Direct Recruitment or Promotion</p> <p>{No difference in the minimum years of experience on the basis of Direct Recruitment or Promotion}</p> | <p>* Individual in Pay Level 10 with Ph.D. Degree : 4 + 5 + 3 + 3 + 10 = 25 Years</p> <p>* Individual in Pay Level 10 with M.Phil. or Professional Degree : 5 + 5 + 3 + 3 + 10 = 26 Years</p> <p>* Individual in Pay Level 10 with Master Degree : 6 + 5 + 3 + 3 + 10 = 27 Years</p> <p>* Associate Professor Direct : 11 + 10 = 21 Years</p> <p>* Professor Direct : 10 + 10 = 20 Years</p> |

Prepared by the author

An individual can become eligible to be considered for a teaching and/or administrative position, either through direct recruitment or through promotion or a combination of both. The regulation clearly specifies the mode by which one can become eligible to be considered for a certain position. The minimum number of years of experience that is required for an individual to become eligible for the various teaching position(s) are as mentioned in Table 1. The minimum number of years of experience that is required for an individual to become eligible for the various administrative position(s) are as detailed in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Minimum Number of Y of Experience Required so as to Become Eligible for the Various Administrative Position(s) in Indian Universities or Institutions according to the UGC Regulations

| <i>Sr.</i> | <i>Nomenclature of the Non - Teaching Position & Pay Level</i> | <i>Mode of Appointment</i> | <i>Required Experience (In Terms of Years)</i> |
|------------|--|---------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Assistant Registrar or Assistant Finance Officer or Assistant Controller of Examination & Pay Level 10 | Direct Recruitment or Promotion | ➤ <u>Direct</u> : 0 Years ➤ <u>Promotion</u> : As per the rules of the individual University |
| 2 | Assistant Registrar or Assistant Finance Officer or Assistant Controller of Examination & Pay Level 11 | Promotion | ➤ <u>Direct</u> : Not Applicable ➤ <u>Promotion</u> * Assistant Registrar or Assistant Finance Officer or Assistant Controller of Examination in Pay Level 10 : 8 Years |
| 3 | Deputy Registrar or Deputy Finance Officer or Deputy Controller of Examination & Pay Level 12 | Direct Recruitment or Promotion | ➤ <u>Direct</u> * Assistant Professor in Pay Level 10 : 9 Years * Assistant Registrar or Assistant Finance Officer or Assistant Controller of Examination in Pay Level 10 : 5 Years ➤ <u>Promotion</u> * Assistant Professor in Pay Level 10 : 9 Years * Assistant Registrar or Assistant Finance Officer or Assistant Controller of Examination in Pay Level 10 : 5 Years |

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|---|---|--------------------|--|
| 4 | Deputy Registrar or Deputy Finance Officer or Deputy Controller of Examination & Pay Level 13 | Promotion | <p>➤ <u>Direct</u> : Not Applicable</p> <p>➤ <u>Promotion</u></p> <p>* Assistant Professor in Pay Level 10 : $9 + 5 = 14$ Years</p> <p>* Assistant Registrar or Assistant Finance Officer or Assistant Controller of Examination in Pay Level 10 : $5 + 5 = 10$ Years</p> |
| 5 | Registrar or Finance Officer or Controller of Examination & Pay Level 14 | Direct Recruitment | <p>➤ <u>Direct</u></p> <p>* <u>Assistant Professor in Pay Level 11:</u></p> <p>✓ Individual in Pay Level 10 with Ph.D. Degree : $4 + 15 = 19$ Years</p> <p>✓ Individual in Pay Level 10 with M.Phil. or Professional Degree : $5 + 15 = 20$ Years</p> <p>✓ Individual in Pay Level 10 with Master Degree : $6 + 15 = 21$ Years</p> <p>* <u>Assistant Professor in Pay Level 12:</u></p> <p>✓ Individual in Pay Level 10 with Ph.D. Degree : $9 + 8 = 17$ Years</p> <p>✓ Individual in Pay Level 10 with M.Phil. or Professional Degree : $10 + 8 = 18$ Years</p> <p>✓ Individual in Pay Level 10 with Master Degree : $11 + 8 = 19$ Years</p> <p>* <u>Deputy Registrar:</u></p> <p>✓ Assistant Professor in Pay Level 10 : $9 + 8 = 17$ Years</p> <p>✓ Assistant Registrar in Pay Level 10 : $5 + 8 = 13 + 2 = 15$ Years</p> |

Prepared by the author

Analysis of the Regulations Regarding Appointment of the Vice-Chancellor

According to the UGC regulations, in order to become eligible for the position of Vice Chancellor of a university or institution, the minimum number of years of experience that an individual shall possess, keeping in view the Table 1 and Table 2, are as follows:

- Individual serving as Professor through direct recruitment and in Pay Level 14: $10 + 10 = 20$ Years
- Individual becoming Professor through promotion after becoming Associate Professor through direct recruitment in the Pay Level 13 A: $11 + 10 = 21$ Years
- Individual becoming Professor through promotion after joining as Assistant Professor (Entry Level) in the Pay Level 10 and is possessing a PhD degree: $4 + 5 + 3 + 3 + 10 = 25$ Years
- Individual becoming Professor through promotion after joining as Assistant Professor (Entry Level) in the Pay Level 10 and is possessing MPhil or Professional Degree: $5 + 5 + 3 + 3 + 10 = 26$ Years
- Individual becoming Professor through promotion after joining as Assistant Professor (Entry Level) in the Pay Level 10 and is possessing Master Degree: $6 + 5 + 3 + 3 + 10 = 27$ Years

The UGC regulations puts a restriction that, an individual with the academic leadership can only be considered for the position of the Vice Chancellor and hence an individual with pure administrative experience becomes ineligible for the position of the Vice Chancellor.

Influencing Factors on Comparing the Recruitment Regulations of the Teaching and Administrative Positions

- i) *Minimum educational qualification to be eligible for various positions:* The minimum educational qualification for all the positions in the teaching and administrative field is a Master Degree with a minimum of 55 per cent marks or equivalent; except for three teaching positions, viz, Associate Professor, Professor and Senior Professor, wherein the minimum PhD degree is required.

This means that a person on a higher Pay Level in the administrative wing is not mandatorily required to be a highly qualified individual, which will act as a detrimental or demotivating factor to an individual, if one is inclined to be there associated with the administrative section of the university or institution, to acquire any higher qualification as it is in no way going to help in the career development. In turn, this in a way will limit or act detrimental to the horizon of thinking of the individual, that is acquired through educational qualification.

In the larger interest of the university or institution, the administrative section is also required to have officials with a broad vision acquired through higher educational qualification, like that has been envisaged for the teaching cadre. Hence, the regulation shall be modified appropriately giving due weightage to the higher educational qualification while being recruited or promoted for any administrative positions in line with, that is seen in case of teaching cadre. This will only motivate one with higher

educational qualification to get attracted towards the administrative positions or if one is already there in service then to acquire higher educational qualification.

- ii) *Minimum number of years of experience in view of the educational qualification to be eligible for various positions:* In the teaching cadre, depending upon the educational qualification, the required minimum number of years of experience varies. Like, for a candidate with PhD or MPhil or professional degree, the minimum number of years of experience required is lesser in comparison to the one having only the Masters degree to become eligible for being considered for a higher pay level position as evident from Table 1. On the contrary, on the administrative side, there is no such relaxation based on the educational qualification, in the required minimum number of years of experience being seen, except for the position of the Registrar (Pay Level 14) and in this case too, the advantage of possession of higher educational qualification that is visible is applicable only when an individual is switching the side from the teaching to administration as evident from Table 2.

This can act as a detrimental factor by limiting the higher qualified individuals to consider the administrative positions lower than Pay Level 14 as a lucrative career option. However, looking into the requirement of greater number of years of experience by an individual coming from the teaching cadre in comparison to an individual already there in the administrative cadre to become eligible, this may again act as a deterring factor in making higher qualified individual to think of shifting cadres.

If there is no appropriate consideration given in the regulations to the minimum number of years of experience required in view of the educational qualification to become eligible for various positions in the administrative cadre, in case of those already in the administrative cadre; then acquiring higher educational qualification will in no way appear advantageous to them, in turn, resulting in to non-acquiring of any higher degree.

- iii) *Mode of recruitment (direct recruitment or promotion) and the required minimum number of years of experience to be eligible for various positions:* For the teaching positions, the minimum number of years of experience that is required to become eligible for a position varies depending on whether it is to be filled through direct recruitment or through promotion mode. The direct recruitment to a position higher in terms of Pay Level requires lesser minimum number of years of experience than that is required through promotion as is evident from Table 1, for the positions of Associate Professor, Professor and Senior Professor.

In the administrative cadre also, the positions are filled through direct recruitment and/or promotion, however there is no substantial difference in the required minimum number of years of experience on the basis of the direct recruitment or promotion, to become eligible for being considered to a position higher in terms of pay level as reflected in the Table 2.

This contrasting difference on the scope of getting to a position of higher pay level in a lesser duration in the administrative wing in comparison to the teaching wing, can act as a detrimental factor to attract pool of talents to join the administrative wing, in turn, making the teaching cadre more lucrative.

- iv) *Quantum of minimum years of experience for similarly placed positions in teaching and administrative cadre:* In order to reach a particular position of a definite pay level, the quantum of minimum years of experience required in an administrative cadre is in

general more than that required in a similarly placed position in a teaching cadre. Hence the individuals having an option of joining in either of the cadres, keeping in view the lesser quantum of minimum number of years of experience required in the teaching cadre and the long-term benefits, may opt for the teaching cadre instead of the administrative cadre.

- v) *Minimum number of years of experience required on switching side from teaching cadre to administrative cadre:* It is very evident from Table 2 that switching over to the administrative side from the Teaching field is possible for the Pay Levels 12, 13 and 14. However, the minimum number of years of experience that is required by the individuals in the teaching cadre is more in comparison to those individuals who are already there in the administrative cadres, that too, in the similarly placed pay levels, to become eligible for being considered for the positions with higher pay levels like that of Deputy Registrar or Registrar. This may act as a detrimental factor for a staff in the teaching wing to even think to switch over to the administrative wing, as is lesser beneficial.
- vi) *Pay scale or pay level:* In the Teaching Cadre, the number of positions available at various pay scales or pay levels is more than that available in the administrative cadre. In the Teaching Cadre, as seen in Table 1, there are six positions available with pay scale or pay level ranging from Level 10 to Level 15, whereas in the administrative cadre as evident from Table 2, there are five positions available with pay scale or pay level ranging from Level 10 to Level 14.

This, in a way, will act as a hindrance to a university or institution to get the services of an individual in the teaching cadre serving at Pay Level 15 for the administrative position(s) like Registrar or Finance Officer or Controller of Examination as the pay level of these positions is 14, lower than the serving one.

Moreover, a good educationally qualified individual with both the options available would prefer joining a Teaching position in comparison to the Administrative position, keeping in view the long-term benefits.

Conclusion

Any university or institution situated in India or anywhere in the world intends to make a mark for itself in the educational sector and, in order to do so, the university or institution shall ensure that its academic and administrative activities are functioning to its best and caters to the requirement of its stakeholders in an effective manner. If there is a flaw in either of the activities, the desired result will not be achieved. In order to ensure that the academic (teaching, research and other) activities and the administrative activities are being carried out with the same good quality and rigour, it is important that the candidates with good potential and intellect are attracted to both the teaching and/or administrative positions.

All the positions in the teaching and the administrative cadre are regular positions except that of the Vice Chancellor which is a contractual or termed appointment of 5 years. This might have been done by the UGC with a view to attract the talents to serve the teaching and administrative positions, according to their interest, with no fear of job loss and in turn, the University reaping the benefits of their experience, expertise gathered and continuous

services. However, certain universities fill these positions in either of the categories on either contract or deputation, sometimes due to their regulation alternatively due to certain constraints, like no suitable candidates being found for the position, financial constraint, etc, without realising that such measures will benefit the university or institution only for a short term. Any individual joining afresh on contractual positions or on deputation, will require certain time to understand the setup and then start functioning, which means that there is a hindrance being faced by the university in its objective and may affect its competitiveness in the educational sector. Apart from the time-factor in understanding the setup, there is a greater possibility that the individuals will be having the mindset of changing the jobs frequently. The Vice Chancellors may face difficulty to implement their goals for the university, if are provided with hands in either or both the administration and the teaching wings, who themselves are new to the system being on contract or deputation; and with lesser dedication as any goal can be achieved only on the strong foundations of the existing setup, else there will be a greater possibility of a collapse. The continuous service of the administrative or the academic cadres helps in giving the desired momentum to a Vice Chancellor to take the university further ahead, on being appointed for a term.

The nature of appointment, viz, regular/permanent or contract/deputation also acts as a deciding factor in enabling either of the wings of the university to get able intellects in various positions for performing the respective tasks. Any individual with good educational background would prefer those positions that are being filled on a regular or permanent manner in comparison to those positions that are to be filled on contract or deputation, in turn, deterring the talents to opt for the positions that are to be filled on contract or deputation both at the initial positions being afresh or in between leaving a regular or permanent position. This is the very reason that the academic and administrative positions reflected in the UGC Regulations are permanent/regular positions except that of Vice Chancellor which is a tenured appointment.

This in no way mean that talents may not be joining or cannot join the positions that are being filled on contract or deputation in the teaching or administrative cadre from the beginning or in between, but it is to highlight that it is always beneficial and in the overall larger interest of the university to maintain either of the positions lucrative, to keep attracting talents throughout on either side.

The Vice Chancellor of any university or institution is considered as the principal executive and academic officer of the university exercising general supervision and control over the affairs of the university and giving effect to the decisions of all the authorities of the university. In view of this it will be in the larger interest of the university to have such individuals being considered for the position of Vice Chancellor who have the experience of both the teaching and administration, so that on being appointed in this position can blend the academics and administration of the university in the best possible manner for its growth in the educational sector.

The minimum number of years of experience that will be required for an individual to become eligible for the position of Vice Chancellor of a university or institution varies from 20 to 27 years, depending on the mode of appointments and the acquiring of the educational qualification. However, the number of years is applicable when one has remained in the Teaching Cadre for all the mentioned years. The UGC Regulations applicable for the various Teaching and Administrative positions in the present form are such that if an individual

intends to gain an experience of both the teaching and the administration, then it will take a greater number of years than the above-mentioned number of years.

The Registrar is the Chief Administrative Officer of any university and works directly under the supervision of the Vice Chancellor. If a candidate intending to be a Vice Chancellor has an experience of handling the position of the Registrar then that can act as the best suitable combination. An individual will require a minimum of 15 to 21 years of experience to become eligible for the position of Registrar. However, the minimum number of 15 years is applicable to those individuals, who have been there in the pure administrative side and so will never be eligible for the position of Vice Chancellor. The minimum number of years that an individual with a teaching blend shall possess, so as to become the Registrar is from 17 to 21 years, however at this juncture one has not served as Professor and so if a minimum term of 5 years is considered as the Registrar for experience, then one can be eligible for the position of Vice Chancellor only after a service of 32 to 36 years. If the experience as the Registrar is reduced to one year then too the minimum number of years of experience that will be required is from 28 to 32 years.

In view of the abovementioned points of analysis in the preceding section of this paper, it is evident that in general, for a highly qualified individual, the administrative wing of the university will not appear to be a lucrative career option in comparison to the Teaching position for no or lesser benefits being received. Secondly, it is disadvantageous for an individual in a teaching cadre to shift to an administrative cadre in between the service.

The paper intends to highlight that it is imperative that both the arms of an institution or university, viz, teaching and administrative wings, are getting the best talents of equivalent calibre, so that both the arms of the university are performing their respective tasks in the best effective manner and contribute in taking the university or institution to greater heights and facilitate in achieving its goal in the educational sector. The regulations shall evolve a mechanism to attract equal number of talents to opt for both the teaching and administrative positions in an Indian university and the best way to achieve the same is by having the regulations of recruitment for the Teaching and Administrative cadre of similar nature. This, in turn, will generate a pool of intellectuals with experience of both the teaching and administration, for the position of Vice Chancellor too. Any university or institution can grow and make a mark, when it caters to the requirements of its stakeholders, for which both the arms of the university needs to be strong and equally effective and the leader of the university, the Vice Chancellor, shall have the experience of both the arms to understand their individual requirements and blend it in the interest of the university.

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A Critical Analysis of the Human Capital Approach to Education and Success[#]

Ehsanul Haq*

Abstract

The theory of human capital is an individualistic approach to education and success. It claims that regardless of the circumstance of birth, it is the inborn cognitive power which makes people unequal. It creates social division among them. The decisive force of the social division is not the social class but the inherited cognitive power or ability. The theory claims that the life prospects of the people are determined by this ability and not by their social status. It is not the society but the nature which dictates our place in the world. The social division in the society closely follows the cognitive division. The richer is the cognitive ability, higher is the access to opportunities, particularly the educational and job opportunities and better is the life prospects. The people are poor, not because of resource-inequality but because they are deficient and poor in cognitive ability and educational attainments as compared to those who are efficient and rich in their cognitive ability and access to educational opportunity. The efficient (rich) cognitive ability (merit and competence) and quality education (knowledge, understanding, comprehension, productive skills and experience) together promote efficient human capital. The deficient (poor) cognitive ability and poor quality of education together promote deficient human capital. The cognitive ability and education together is the force behind the access to opportunities and success in life. According to this theory, efficient is the human capital, higher is the access to opportunities, better is the life prospects and greater is the possibility of success in life. Contrary to this, deficient is the human capital, limited is the access to opportunities, poor is the life prospects and greater is the possibility of failure in life. Thus, the quality of human capital is the key to success or failure in life. The cognitive ability facilitates access to quality education and they together become the basic power of access to opportunities and success in life prospects according to the theory of human capital. The paper offers a critique of the central premise of this approach to education and success.

[#] The writing of this paper is inspired by the work done by Prof. Edward Royce in this regard. He is Professor Emeritus of Sociology. In addition to *Poverty and Inequality and Poverty and Power*, he is also the author of *The Origins of Southern Sharecropping (1993)* and *Classical Social Theory and Modern Society: Marx, Durkheim and Weber (2015)*.

* Former JNU Faculty, Email: haqjnu@yahoo.com

Introduction

The human body is endowed with two inborn powers: mental and physical. These powers are natural capitals or the assets embedded in human body. These powers are the cognitive power (power of mind or intellect) and the non-cognitive physical power (power of physical body & its organs), although both are the integral parts of the organic system of human mind and body. The physical power functions in an integrated form as an apparatus being regulated by the innate cognitive power of the organic system. Both the powers are important and interdependent but the cognitive power is superior because it is always valued even if physical structure becomes dysfunctional, provided the cognitive power continues to function well but if the cognitive structure fails the entire organic system collapses. In a normal situation, in spite of the difference, these powers function in a coordinated and interdependent fashion and they cannot exist without the other. The success of human beings depends on how effectively these cognitive and physical powers are utilised by them but the success, the growth of these powers and their utility are conditioned by the environmental factors which are external to the internal powers of mind and body of the organic system of an individual. There are several such factors like the family, an institution of informal learning, the neighbourhood, another source of informal leaning through the interactions among the young peer groups around the family, the institutions of formal learning through the interaction with teachers and the materials of learning at various stages, the media of informal leaning through its exposure, the place of work of informal learning through the interaction with adult peer groups of workers at the work place and the larger society. They exert effects on the mental and physical structures of human body through their cultural and structural constituents. They externally affect the success of human beings, the growth of the twin-powers of mind and body and their utility. They construct and reconstruct, shape and reshape the twin-powers and the manner in which they construct them, affects in turn all the factors which externally construct those natural human capitals or powers. Once these powers come in contact with the external factors, they slowly grow and develop along with them. All the factors which exert effects on the innate powers at various stages are the constituent elements of the society. The society is a larger social system and those factors function in an interdependent manner as the constituent integral parts or the sub-systems of the larger system. They generally function in tune with each other and in accordance with the requirements of their larger social system.

Processes of learning

Our central focus in this paper is only on the natural power of mind, being referred here as the cognitive power or the ability and competence which is an integral part of the organic system or the personality structure. The cognitive structure grows in contact with the environmental factors which externally exert effects on that structure. They construct it, reshape it and convert it into social capital or workable human capital. The most important among the environmental factors is the formal process of learning taking place in a formal institutional setting. Although, a child or an adult may informally learn the art of living, thinking, behaving and working through seeing, imbibing and interacting. In this way, the innate powers of thinking, seeing and behaving are loaded with desirable ideas which are layered over the raw materials of innate powers in stages during the life span of an

individual. It is this layering of desirable areas over the mental and the physical powers that makes an individual a social or human being. For example, a child's innate cognitive and physical capabilities are shaped informally in the family and the child learns the basic patterns of how to think and behave in a desired manner. Similarly, an adult, even if the individual is not formally educated, learns informally through the interaction with peers how to think, behave and undertake necessary work activities at the work place and then becomes an effective worker. In this way the innate capabilities are affected through contacts with external environmental factors. Thus, the original inborn powers are changed into human or social capitals or assets to be utilised in thinking, working and behaving well from the early stages of childhood to the adulthood and thereafter. When the individual comes in contact with the formal processes of learning, the inborn capabilities undergo change again and they are reshaped through the exposure to formal education, formal learning experiences, knowledge, training and skills. Thus, the formal experiences are imposed on those capabilities which then take social forms and become the social products or the human capital. The inborn capabilities are nurtured through formal and informal processes of education but the power of those capabilities to shine, depends on the quality of the processes of nurturing. Therefore, everyone should to be furnished with quality or good education, both formal and informal.

Theoretical presupposition

The theory of human capital contradicts the above statements because it presupposes that the inborn cognitive ability is natural and immutable power which remains unaffected by the environmental factors and by the processes of nurturing it. The theory assumes that the natural cognitive power of mind or intellect is the superior power and everybody is not endowed with it uniformly. One is born with efficient, creative, innovative, logical, rational and analytical mind, and impressive qualities or abilities than those who are born deficient in such qualities. These are the operational and observable norms of superior (efficient) and inferior (deficient) forms of cognitive power. These forms are the underlying powers which condition educational achievements and the mobility of persons from one to another educational ladder. They also condition the selection, allocation of job in the sphere of work, quality of work experiences gained at the work place and the upward occupational mobility. According to the human capital approach, education is the key to success and the lack of education is the main cause of failure but educational success and failure are conditioned by the cognitive power. The poor are poor because they are deficient in the qualities of cognitive ability and the corresponding lack of access to educational and job opportunities, earnings, productivity and prospects. Contrary to this, the bright and competent persons who are efficient in the qualities of cognitive ability get correspondingly the higher access to quality educational and job opportunities. The less competent persons, if somehow get the employment, they are channelled to low status job, low earnings and limited access to opportunities. Such differences are attributed to high and low qualities of cognitive ability with corresponding quality of achievements in education, knowledge, understanding, comprehension, skills and experience. The primary underlying force of educational achievement (good or poor, high or low) is the cognitive power as per the human capital approach to education. The difference in educational achievements would exist even if everyone is furnished with good or quality education (Royce, 2016, Bradley,

2004 & Becker, 1975). This is because the quality of human capital of the individuals varies by the cognitive ability possessed, by their perception of education, by their families' perception of education, by how much time, efforts, energy and personal resources they can invest in education and by how they are going to lead their lives. In other words, how much they are going to invest in education to enrich their human capital, depends on their own perception of education and personal decision of investment in education as per the power of their constructive thinking. Their perceptions, preferences, choices, tastes, values, attitude, desires, motivations and dedication are important factors which determine the decision of investment in education. These factors internal to the individual are directly or indirectly conditioned by the cognitive power. The richer is the human capital, greater is the possibility of getting access to opportunities, to be upwardly mobile to achieve the positions of status and power, to higher earnings and profits, to greater economic productivity and to more command over the resources. More specifically, the human capital approach to education focuses more on the cognitive power of the individual and the individual perception of educational attainment. The efficient (rich) is the cognitive power, higher is the perception for education, greater is the educational achievement, richer is the human capital, greater is the possibility of access to opportunities, more is the success in life and greater is the possibility of enriching the human capital further. There is the circular effect of human capital. This focus of the theory is like Weber's emphasis on the role of value parameters in economic development (Weber, 1968). One of the basic differences in Weber and Marx is in their emphasis respectively on the roles of non-economic and economic factors of change and development. The decision to invest in education to achieve higher educational status for enriching the human capital is affected by the non-economic factors internal to the individual perception, values, ideas, attitude, motives, desires, preferences and choices but the decision is also affected by the factors external to the individual like the manner in which the system of production functions, relations of production, work opportunities, economic status, earnings, savings, expenditure, consumption, investment, etc.

Central claim of the theory and other theoretical viewpoints

As pointed out by Royce (2015), the human capital theory is an important strand of mainstream or neoclassical economics. Its central claim is that 'the people are poor because they are deficient in their cognitive power and in their educational achievements. They lack ability to take initiatives and make efforts to invest their time, energy and personal resources in education'. This is the classic statement of the theory, although it is subjected to controversies (Becker 1975) but the theory remains influential because it considers cognitive ability and education to be the key factors of success in life. The deficiency in the ability and in inverting in education is considered to be the cause of failure. Although, the success and the failure may be conditioned, not only by the ability and education but also by the factors other than them. The theory offers that good education should be provided to everyone (Bradley, 2004) but that is also conditional. The central focus of the theory is on the individual ability and investment of efforts in educational attainments. The efforts include the investment making behaviour in terms time, energy, personal resources, motive, desire, interest, perception of education and the initiatives. The theory of human capital gives primacy to the role of internal, native, inborn, natural factors and the efforts in success

or failure in education. The inborn cognitive ability is considered to have the most profound effect on the life prospects of an individual. Contrary to this stand, the sociological approach to education broadens the scope of the theory of human capital by highlighting the roles of the factors external to the internal factor of cognitive ability. Although, the sociological view point is counteracted on the ground that it is ultimately the power of mind which defines the place of someone in the world. It is not defined by societal or the environmental factors. The theory reiterates that the fate of the individuals is in their genes, cognitive ability, merit or intelligence. It is the inherent cognitive difference which causes educational and occupational differences. Irrespective of the environmental or the circumstances of birth, it is the cognitive ability, being a matter of genes, is the key to success. The social class-division in fact is the cognitive-division because students, faculty members and workers are sorted out on the basis of their innate cognitive ability which manifests in their academic credentials. The success and the failure are conditioned by the genes which an individual inherits. According to the biogenetic theory, the success and the failure are governed by the efficient and the deficient cognitive ability or human mental power which is the core of success or failure. The individuals are blessed with many kinds of cognitive powers. The genetic bases of cognitive abilities are heritable and immutable. The biogenetic and the human capital approaches to education and success overestimate the role of cognitive ability and undermine the role of environmental factors. Similarly, the cultural approach to education and success focuses mainly on the cultural characteristics like the values, ideas, beliefs, attitudes, motives, mentality and their roles in educational achievement (Oscar Lewis, 1968). According to this approach, the culture of the rich and the culture of the poor vary by their class positions. There is the class-culture scale in which the lower-class culture and the upper-class culture exist on the two ends of the continuum, opposed to each other (Royce, 2016. Also see, Edward C. Banfield, 1974). There is a vast cultural divide, separating the poor from the non-poor and the educational divide follows the cultural divide. The basic difference in the genetic, cultural and human capital approaches to education is that educational and occupational differences are based on the variables pertaining to genetic, cognitive, culture and human capital. The common point in these approaches is that the main underlying factor of the differences is the internal, native and the inborn power of mind. They focus mainly on the roles of these factors in success or failure in getting access to educational and work opportunities. These approaches complement each other and reinforce a common point that success or failure is internal to the individual. It is like the *Karma* theory of cycle of rebirth in which success and failure, heaven and hell, birth and rebirth and the ultimate goal of salvation (*mauksha*) is determined by the internal act of deed performance. The reward would be finalised in this world or in the next in accordance with the *karm*/deed/work/duty performed in this existential world. The success and failure would be governed by the 'good' (*achchai/neki*) or the 'bad' (*burai/badi*) deeds/*karms* performed. According to the *Karma* theory, the fate is not in the hands of genes but in the hands of good or bad deeds/*karms* performed. This theory also like other theories focuses on the human act itself which determines his/her entire life cycle and their place in this world or in the next world, if any.

Cardinal points of the theory

In the theory of human capital, there are three points being focused. Firstly, it gives greater emphasis on the inborn inheritable cognitive ability of the individual. Secondly, the individuals alone through their initiatives and efforts can convert this ability into a good or bad human capital. Thirdly, education is the best way of conversion and the individuals should make efforts to take decision to invest in education in order to enrich their human capital. Their decision to invest is affected by their perception of education, interest, attitude, choice, efforts and initiatives. The quality of human capital varies by the initiatives, the efforts and the investment made by the individuals in education to enrich their human capital which determines the prospect, the value and the quality of an individual in the world of work. The human capital approach to education claims that the poor quality of human capital (deficient in ability and education) is generally associated with poor quality of job, poor earnings and poor job performance. The qualitative achievement of human capital depends on the efforts, dedication, hard work, amount of investment made in education, willingness, desires, and preferences. The weakness in the human capital may be overcome only by the efforts of the individuals themselves. It may also be due to the initiatives taken by the governmental and the non-governmental bodies but the theory focuses mainly on the role of individual's own efforts and initiatives. The initiatives taken by the family and the family's resources to invest for the improvements in human capital are the supportive factors. However, the theory overlooks the role of external structural factors, availability of opportunities and their fair distribution in the society. The theory does not specify how much efforts one would make to overcome the deficiency in human capital and how to convert the human capital into employability and good earnings. The process of conversion into employability is not only governed by the ability and the quality of education but also by the forces of production, relations of production, productive powers of the sectors of economy, growth of work opportunities, their fair distribution in the society and the power of absorption of the work force by the economy. These are some of the factors external to the human capital which exert their effect relatively more on the life prospects. They have not been taken into account in the human capital approach to education and success.

Internal and external determinants of education and success

The human capital approach focuses mainly on the factors internal to the individual. It takes only the individualistic and not the broader view of education because the level and the quality of educational achievements as the indicators of the level and the quality of human capital are externally constrained. Durkheim (1956) in his work on education and society says that education is the 'subservient to the society', although this position has been contested by Karl Mannheim (1970) who says that education is relatively autonomous institution of change in the society but both of them agree that the function of education is governed by the nature of the society and the manner in which society deals with education. Education can fairly function only if the society is fair. We cannot expect education to be fair and democratic in an unfair and undemocratic society (Haq, 1989). The society all over the world is a mix of both fair and unfair games. In the society where still social particularities are dominant, education would remain externally constrained and cannot function in a fair and autonomous fashion as view by Mannheim. The theory of human capital claims that if

someone is deficient in ability and education, that deficiency is independent of its larger social context but this argument does not seem to be logical because that deficiency may be due to inadequate resources to invest in good education but not due to inadequate individual efforts to invest in education. The resource-inequality is more important than the personal efforts of investment in human capital but the theory gives priority to factors internal to the individual and overlooks the role of the factors external to the individual like the resource-inequality, social location of the learners, availability of work opportunities and the discriminatory practices. The individuals these days are more materialistic. They want to invest efforts not to achieve education in real sense but to get certification of education with no necessary knowledge, understanding, comprehension, training, productive skills and experience, although this type of investment affects their employability and the quality of the workforce but there is also the institutional support to that kind of efforts and initiatives taken by the present day youth. There are evidences to show that getting mark sheets with higher marks and first class certificates and degrees dependent on how much educational investment in term of bribe is going to be made. Sometime, individual efforts are made to get fake educational qualifications with the help of money and muscle powers. The educational institution is party to this kind of fake certification and inflated marks awarded to the individual learners irrespective of cognitive ability, efforts, initiative, comprehension and understanding. The fake human capital is phenomenal and the persons with fake or inflated higher marks and good certificate/degree can qualify and become employable but only on paper. The high marks awarded, although fake and inflated, becomes an indicator of quality academic credentials and quality human capital but beneath this, deficiency in competence and comprehension, inefficiency and in articulation, and deficient human capital are hidden. When the person equipped with the certification of knowledge is invited for interview for the selection to any post, the candidates may not be able to demonstrate their power of human capital because it is qualitatively fake but the fake human capital facilitates selection. There are points to be noted here. Firstly, it is difficult legally to disprove fake human capital even if the candidate is unable to justify his/her human capital well in the selection. Secondly, in such a situation where various subjective forces of money and network start operating to get the candidate selected because the selection committee cannot easily reject the candidates on the basis of subjective unstructured verbal performance because of the strong academic credentials, although fake and subjective which cannot easily be disproved. Thirdly, the candidates can make strong legal case against the selection on the subjective ground of the interview conducted. Thus, the priority given by the human capital approach to education on the ability, efforts of investment in education to enrich human capital looks convincing but it does not take into account the subjective considerations in the efforts to invest in education and educational achievements. The quality education to show that the human capital is efficient and employable may be acquired in many ways. Even if the human capital is deficient, the placement in the occupational structure can also be obtained in many ways, making the deserving and genuine human capital excluded. In general, all the parents of the children of the middle, the lower middle and the lower classes feel interested in investment in education to get superior schooling of their children but ultimately they are forced to send their children to the inferior school. The desire for the quality schooling in order to make human capital efficient in fact is not merely the product of their own investment behaviour towards education but the product of their financial resources and the availability of opportunity of better schooling. The non-availability of better schooling and

better institutions of higher learning limits the formation of quality human capital and its potential of employability in the market. The better education is a source of better jobs and earnings but it is not sure that the investment in good education to produce efficient human capital would actually open the door for employment and equal employment opportunity because that depends on the market forces and the availability of work opportunities.

Role of the factors other than ability and education in success

The human capital approach to education goes by the idea of corresponding relationship among the factors of ability, education, employment, productivity and earnings but this correlation differs not only between better educated and poorly educated persons but also within the equally educated persons because of the factors other than ability and education. The factors of social background, the social connectivity, cultural and personality traits and the type of job, the nature of work and the work status assigned at the workplace promote inequality within equally educated persons. What is more important in both the public and private sectors of employment is no doubt the person's cognitive ability, education, knowledge, comprehension, training, productive skills and experience but what is equally important are the person's social backgrounds, person's social network, person's cultural dispositions acquired, person's non-cognitive personality traits like articulation, good expression, good look, manner and style of life. The persons with lower caste, class, ethnic (tribal) and minority backgrounds, women and the elderly persons are more vulnerable and may encounter many disadvantages. The employment and wage disparities exist by these factors even if the academic credentials are uniform among them. The women are invariably paid relatively less due to gender-based considerations. The merit is important but not so important because who gets shortlisted and selected, who gets what status and pay scale or wages, who gets what assignment, who gets hired, fired, retained and promoted, all depend not only on the objective and achieved qualities of the human capital but also on the subjective and ascribed qualities of human capital. The human capital theorists do not see how the subjective and ascribed qualities of human capital are at work. The process of socialization differentiates learners, not only in terms of education, aspirations, perceptions and choices but also in terms of cultural capital, knowledge and experience of cultural resources, dispositions, competencies and preferences acquired and the style and the manner of articulation and expression of learned behaviour (Bourdieu, 1986). In this way, the upbringing process creates the cultural divide and promotes cultural hierarchy. Those who represent and embody superior and dominant culture find themselves in advantageous position in matters of education and selection for job opportunities than the disadvantaged who embody the inferior culture. The cultural traits matter a lot, particularly in business where the right look and style, right sound and expression, right dress and linguistic style, customer-friendly relationship and the right representation of business 'brand' are needed. The theory of human capital gives greater emphasis on education, training, skill and experience but it does not take into account the question of how the process of upbringing affects, not only the formation of human capital but also how it turns human capital into divided cultural groups, differentiated into advantaged and disadvantaged status groups in the job market.

Relative values of cognitive and physical abilities as personality traits in success

Along with cultural traits, the personality traits also matter a lot in the field of education, selection for job and the allocation of work. As we have said earlier, there are cognitive and physical abilities. They exist in superior and inferior order. The interest in physical activities like games and sports is the demonstration of strong physical ability. This may be taken as the manifestation of weak cognitive ability. The physical ability is the soft option but it may have greater general appeal and popularity like the games, athletics, films and recreational activities. Generally, people take more interest in physical than cognitive abilities because physical is the soft and the easy option than the cognitive which is the hard and the tough option. Thus, there is the soft core option of progress and the hard core option of progress. The hard core option of progress is not a popular option because it is tough and it requires creative ability and long term process of reading and learning to acquire knowledge of theory & theorem, facts & figures but in the soft option, learning takes place mostly by doing, practice, trial & error. The cognitive ability is also needed in the activities of the soft core option but only the minimum cognitive ability may serve the purpose because the specialization in physical activities need learning by doing and physical practices. The demarcation between the cognitive ability and the physical or the non-cognitive ability is very difficult and it is equally difficult to divide them into superior and inferior abilities but there is the justification in this division because the cognitive ability has relatively much stronger power to enter into various professional categories, including science and technology, medicine, creative reading, writing and learning where the entry of weak cognitive ability is rare or not at all possible but there is the possibility of the other way round. The cognitive ability has the edge over the physical ability, although the later may have greater public appeal and popularity because of the public liking for it. A body builder (with weak cognitive ability, lower educational achievements and poor human capital but strong in physical ability, body building and muscle power) as compared with a professional (with strong cognitive ability, high educational achievements and rich human capital but weak in physical ability and muscle power) may have relatively greater public attraction and public appeal even if the body builder is an academically low achiever. A super star may say openly he/she is a school/college drop out because of public popularity and relatively higher confidence in the status of being a super star. This is not because of any high academic achievement but because of the personal qualities of acting well and playing well, looking well and dressing well, speaking well and expressing well, and because of the specific style of life and mannerism. These are the manifestations of physical abilities. If the physical abilities are represented and embodied well, the person may be picked up by business houses to serve as the 'brand' of their companies or brand ambassador of business but that is not the case with the cognitive abilities even if represented and embodied well because of its relatively much superior power which is exclusive in character to be demonstrated only among the intelligentsia. It is not for the general public consumption. The hard core discoveries are based on this ability of the superior order. The point being raised here is that the personality traits or qualities are very important and the access to opportunities cannot be reduced only to cognitive abilities, quality education and educational achievements. The person may have high cognitive ability, well educated and

knowledgeable, well trained and experienced, better conscious, objective and responsible, but from the view point of access to opportunities, employment, earnings and productivity, the person with specific type of thinking and behaviour may be preferred who is willing to be mentally predisposed to obey those in the system, comply with authority, does not violate rules and regulations and mentally is prepared to conform and adopt the pattern of functioning of the public and the private systems of governance. The left-oriented critical thinking (Freire, 1972) is not appreciated because it promotes critical analysis and exposes contradictions in the capitalist tendencies of both the public and the private systems. The critical thinking or the critical dimension of the cognitive power is dynamic but may not be needed because it may be a problem in the system's natural tendency to hide the contradictions and not to get them exposed. When the system is critically examined and exposed, the system may either become more dynamic and tolerant or more static and intolerant. The later tendencies are rampant, not only at the individual and the institutional levels but also at the level of the larger system. If a person becomes critical to the parents and the elder members of the family, to the school teacher and school authority and to the employer at the work places even if the contradictions exist at all the levels, the critical view of the person would neither be acceptable nor appreciated. A kind of psychological predisposition is needed to obey the parents, the teacher and the employer as if a willing subservient, obedient, dutiful, submissive, uncritical subscribers of rules, regulations and orders are needed who are not demanding, assertive and critical. Such predispositions are needed in every culture, particularly in the authoritarian culture, although in every culture authority exists. Thus, specific personality traits are desirable for access to opportunities in addition to cognitive ability and education as viewed by the human capital theorists.

Role of value parameters in success

The premise of the human capital approach to education is that educational institutions enhance human capabilities, knowledge, understanding, comprehension, training, productive skills and experience among the learners, and thus, increase their workability, employability, earning potentials, recognition and prospects in the society but the human capital approach ignores that the educational institutions also enhance, promote and transmit adjustable values, attitude and behaviour among them to be successful in the world of work and opportunities, so that, they become good and valuable workers at the workforce and can easily be disciplined and controlled. The achievement of quality education as the indicator of rich human capital is important but what is equally and more important is the identity of the educated and skilled persons as a 'good and valuable person' in addition to merit and achievement. Many educated and skilled graduates may remain unemployed and underemployed, not only because of the deficit in human capital or the lack of quality education but also because of the attitudinal problems of being radical, assertive, demanding, aggressive, coercive, unimpressive and degenerated in values with lack of hard work and respect for others or co-workers at the work place and outside the work place. Thus, the personality traits, cultural capital and the cultural dispositions matter a lot. Although, education is empowered to reconstruct those traits and dispositions, provided education works well. There are millions of graduates but only a fraction of them are employed. In addition to the productive skill-gap and the lack of knowledge and comprehension among them as the factors of increasing unemployment or

underemployment, the value-degeneration among them is also a crucial factor for their exclusion from access to opportunities. Along with the skill and knowledge based upgradation among them, construction of appropriate psychological dispositions is a necessary condition for better life prospects for them. With the help of the new forms of education like the technology-based professionalised education and the grooming of different kind of skills like the software, technical, communicative and managerial skills, the efforts are being made to link skills with employability among the graduates but serious problem is, not that much of the gap between the skill and employability but of the gap between their values and employability. The missing link in this gap is the necessary requirement of productive and adjustable values of educated and skilled graduates and it is this requirement which they lack. The human capital approach focuses more on the initiatives and efforts to invest in education to make the human capital richer but even if the human capital becomes richer, the persons may remain unemployable because they may lack richness of the values of quality, sincerity, commitment, dedication and productivity, lack of psychological dispositions, conformity to rules and regulation and the lack of respect for seniors at the work place, and because of the attitude of worklessness, lethargy, laziness, questioning and demanding mentality, etc. The theory ignores the role of such value parameters, not only in having access to educational and work opportunities but also in maintaining the identity of a good and successful person at the work place. In maintaining this identity to attain success, the cognitive ability, quality education, investment efforts in getting quality education are important factors as claimed by the theory of human capital but in addition to these factors, the value parameters are also important as the contributory factors in employability and access to opportunities.

Role of social network in success

Another factor which the human capital approach to education and success ignores is the social connectivity of the person. This connectivity generates relevant information to be used for progress in various fields. It also generates influence to be utilized to have access to opportunities but the difference in the degree of social connectivity between the persons produces differential impact, not only on the access to opportunities but also on the level and the quality of information and influence to be used in the access and the success even if the two persons have the same type and level of human capital. The social network and the influential contacts within and outside the family circle and the neighbourhood make a lot of difference in having access to opportunities. The social network is helpful on objective grounds in pushing up the educated and the skilled graduates into the world of work and opportunities but on subjective ground, it might pull down the qualified and push up the less qualified persons. This happens, particularly in the traditional and transitional societies which are not largely meritocratic, open and objective and fair in the distribution of opportunities. The social connectivity may generally be referred to as the push and the pull factors of social mobility. It may be discriminatory when the personal contact and network is based on the social particularities of kinship, caste & class, gender, region and religion, party, politics and ideology. The factors of motivation, self-interest, like-mindedness and friendliness, cutting across the social particularities are also the bases of network formation. Very often, from among the friendly or known circles of persons with power and position, the resumes of the candidates are solicited, certifying who is the right person for the job.

Invariably, in all applications for the job, references are needed and the candidates provide them to the employers from among the most trusted and acknowledged persons of their known circles of contacts in order to get forwarded the testimonials only with positive remarks about the candidates to the employers. Such testimonials from the known circles of contacts may or may not be objective and effective but in a situation of doubt in the interview performance and the quality of human capital possessed by the candidates, the additional pressures, particularly the political pressure from various known circles of contacts are exerted on the top of the employing agencies and the selection committee. In this process, the rich human capital is very often excluded and the weak human capital is included. The role of social network matters but this factor and its objective role in having access to opportunities have been ignored in the theory of human capital and education. The theory maintains that the ability and education of the candidates are the main considerations in their success to opportunities but it seems that their fortune is conditioned by the extent and the quality of the social connectivity of the candidates in question and how the selection committee perceives the quality of human capital. The social connectivity operates through the selection committee. In the selection process itself a number of biases, prejudices and subjective factors are at work. It is not the business purely based on objective grounds of cognitive ability, merit and quality of education. The success to a great extent is conditioned by the social connectivity with the resourceful persons the candidates know, the resourceful persons who know the candidates well, how closely they know each other and the quality and the extent of social contact. The significance of this factor is left out of the purview of the theory of human capital.

According to the theory, the human capital, if it is rich, it becomes a valuable resource to get access to facilitates, to promote social mobility and to make it easier to convert human capital into good jobs and earnings. It also makes social life better and opens the door for better life prospects. But the quality of human capital as a valuable resource of the person is conditioned not only by the factors within the individual but also by the factors external to the individual. The resource-inequality or the inequality of socio-economic status of the persons, being the resource-rich and the resource-poor are the most important external factors which affect, not only the quality of human capital as a valuable resource but also the life prospects. The pattern of social connectivity follows the pattern of resource-inequality with relative difference in the quality of social networks and the quality of human capital. The extensive social connectivity through numerous friendly circles and influential networks across social categories yield extensive quality information about the employment and other opportunities. The necessary quality information received facilitates faster conversion of human capital into jobs. The resource-rich human capital is in advantageous position than the resource-poor human capital. The parental resources and their human capital provide a rich, as well as, a poor resource-base to the generation next where one can easily gain and the other can easily lose the ground in the competition for job opportunities. This is because of the family resources, parental human capital, candidates own human capital and the social networks developed through the family resources and through the own efforts made by the candidates themselves. There is an integrated role of the class position, human capital and the social network in the process of inclusion and exclusion of persons of different, as well as, similar human capital, depending on efficient and deficient resource background, human capital and social connectivity. The resource-rich social network is very common in the upper class, in the richer sections and in the rich human capital whereas the

resource-poor network is very common in the lower classes, in the weaker sections and in the poor human capital. They are respectively associated with higher-status and lower-status job opportunities and associated advantages and disadvantages. In spite of the requisite cognitive ability and education, the upper class rich-resources and the rich social network provide valuable networking support to the advantaged persons in succeeding in the competitive world as compared with the disadvantaged persons of the lower class with poor-resources and the poor social network. It is the social connectivity in addition to human capital which places persons significantly different in advantaged and disadvantaged positions in the world of education, work and opportunities. It is important to be rich in human capital as pointed out in the human capital approach to education but it is equally important to be rich in social connectivity to survive well in this competitive world.

Role of situational factors, generating positive and negative effects on workability

The human capital approach to education focuses exclusively on the ability and the quality of education but it does not take into account the fact that the success of those who are already employed depends not only on the ability and quality education but also on the place of employment, nature of job and the facilities provided by the employers. The people seek and get employment in diversified occupational categories in public, private and tertiary sectors and also in unorganised sector of self-employment. Some of the areas of employment in these sectors are big and some are small, some jobs are regular and some temporary and contractual, some are more paying and profitable and some are less advantageous, some are secure and some are insecure, some are more developed and some are less developed, some are more cooperative and less exploitative and some are less cooperative and more exploitative, some provide multiple facilities to their employees and some provide limited facilities, some are more employees-friendly and some are more authoritative, etc. The persons with human capital are selected to be placed in the diversified work categories and working conditions. Generally, there is no choice in the hand of the job seekers, leading mostly to a mismatch between the type of human capital on the one hand and the type of job desired in specific sector of employment, the type of job obtained, the nature of work assigned and the type of work place allotted where the work assigned is to be carried. The success or the failure of the candidates selected for the job depends not only on what the candidates know and what is their merit and qualification but also on what type of work is assigned to them, what workplace is given to them, how the work assigned is to be executed, what facilities are provided to them at the workplace, how the workplace is being managed and how the managers/authorities/officials at the workplace behave with the employees and on the dynamics of the relationship between the employers and the employees. In a situation where opportunities are limited and the job seekers are more, the possibility of the mismatch exists between the quality of human capital, quality of work assigned and the quality of workplace allotted. In an unfair situation, a good and qualified person or worker may be assigned bad work or undesirable work and placed in a bad or at an undesirable workplace or in the least conducive working condition. Similarly, a bad and less qualified person may be assigned good work or desirable work and placed in a good or at a desirable workplace or in the most conducive working condition. Such a situation also

determines the success or the failure in the career as against the premise of the quality of human capital, what the person knows and what the academic credentials of the person are. There are categories of employees or workers like good and bad, more efficient and less efficient, more motivated and less motivated, careful and careless, well placed and poorly placed, better paid and poorly paid, more work oriented and less work oriented human capital, etc. Such categories of human capital exists, not just because of the quality of human capital or the efficiency and deficiency in human capital as viewed by the theorists but because the people are confined or trapped into good or bad jobs, into more paying or less paying jobs, into good or bad working conditions. There is no choice open to them. This confinement generates negative effects, not only on their motivation, efforts, morale and the desire to work effectively to produce better work but also on their savings, consumption and further investment in human capital. Thus, it becomes a perpetual phenomenon of job entrapment and the lack of access to opportunities. The human capital approach to education assumes that better educated and skilled persons and poorly educated and less skilled persons end up in job accordingly but it is also true that good or bad jobs or better paid jobs and poorly paid jobs with associated advantages and disadvantages, respectively open opportunities to better educated and skilled persons, and close the opportunities for poorly educated and less skilled persons. Since, the poorly skilled are trapped into low-paying jobs with closed options to have access to high-paying jobs and related advantages, they are unable to make efforts to invest more to improve their human capital and increase their education, training and productive skills. According to human capital approach to education, they suffer due to lack of education, skills and training and the lack of sufficient efforts made by those who are trapped into the low-paying jobs to come out of such jobs but it is also true that they suffer from the lack of better options or access to better job opportunities.

Concluding remarks

In summing up, we can say that the human capital approach to education assumes that the poor persons perform poorly at the workplace because of their poor human capital and poor education. Since, they are poorly skilled by ability and education they are poorly employed. They cannot easily be absorbed in the available job opportunities because of their own deficient human capital. The theory further assumes that the problem of job opportunities is not a serious problem. The serious problem is the abundance of deficient human capital in terms of ability and quality education. It is due to this, there is the gap between education and job. Education is growing much faster with the increasing number of educated graduates than the corresponding increase in the work opportunities. The production of educated graduates is qualitatively efficient (good), as well as, deficient (bad) in their human capital. It becomes difficult to convert the deficient human capital into a good career but it is not so difficult for the efficient human capital, provided the job opportunity is available. Therefore, the gap between education and job persist not because of the abundance of deficient human capital but because of the lack of job opportunity. The educational institutions are free to admit, process and produce human capital, depending on internal and external pressures but whether their products are well educated or poorly educated, those institutions do not guarantee job and success. Various sectors of economy are required to generate sufficient job opportunities to absorb the human capital

produced but the process of absorption is always selective. In this selective process, well educated, well trained and skilled quality human capital is absorbed and the deficient human capital is left out. According to the theory of human capital, there is neither lack nor shortage of job opportunity but it looks there is the problem of the shortage job opportunity, the problem of scarcity of efficient employable human capital and the abundance of deficient and unemployable human capital which cannot easily be absorbed. The problem of abundance of poor quality of unemployable human capital produced by the institutions of education is a serious problem. However, if there is no problem of job opportunities as viewed by the theory, then why many efficient, educated, qualified and skilled persons are forced to take up ordinary and low-paying jobs and many poorly or less educated and less skilled persons are forced to choose between the poor job and no job. The human capital approach to education maintains that the persons are unable to have access to opportunities because of deficient cognitive ability and unwise investment decision in education, training and job related skills. This is the main cause of failure in life chances but it looks more reasonable that the valid cause of the failure is the problem of resource-inequality. As compared with resourceful families, the poor families do not have sufficient resources and opportunities to make investment in education for themselves and for their children. The human capital approach assumes that more skilled and professionally qualified persons are relatively more in demand because of their efficiency and productive power. They are paid well as incentive to make them more productive but the productive skills cannot easily be converted into employment and earnings unless the conversion of productive capital is not supported by adequate resources and opportunities, the cultural capital, social connectivity, personality traits, ideological and particularistic factors. According to the human capital approach to education, educationally regressive sections of the society can be uplifted only by changing their behaviour of investment in education but it ignores the problems of resource-inequality, social inequality and discrimination. The problems of resource-deficit and job-deficit are more serious than the problem of deficit in cognitive ability and quality education. The scarcity of efficient and quality human resource and the abundance of deficient and unemployable human resource are also externally conditioned by the stratified systems of human processing.

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Madrasa Education System: What Ails It?#

Lakshmi Pandey*

Introduction

Five religious communities, viz. Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Zoroastrians (Parsis), have been notified as minorities in India, as per the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) Act 1992. The data on population by religious minorities in Census 2011 show that the percentage of religious minorities in the country was nearly 18.64 per cent of the total population (GoI, 2011). The Indian Constitution explicitly recognises Muslims as a minority group, with rights including the entitlement to establish their own educational institutions. Article 29 and Article 30 of the Constitution of India defend the rights of minorities to conserve the language, script and culture and to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice whether based on religion or language (GoI, 2019).

According to the Census 2011, Muslims constitute a little more than 14 per cent of India's population and 72.92 per cent of the minorities population of the country are reported to be one of the most marginalised and deprived communities in India in terms of literacy, economic and health indices (Table 1). In some instances the relative share of Muslims in education is lower than even the SCs who are victims of a long standing caste system (Ali, 2012). Besides, a small *Naibedya* percentage (3-4 per cent) of Muslim students get education at madrasas or Islamic religious schools (Sachar Committee Report, 2006). The recent U-DISE 2015-16 reports indicate that aided and unaided madrasas had a total enrolment of 25.5 lakh students which constitute 7.7 per cent of the total Muslim enrolment (NEUPA, 2016). These institutes primarily teach Urdu, Persian and Arabic literature, and Islamic theology. They are known to impart literary and philosophical education. Some of the mainstream or modern madrasas have started to include modern subjects like science, computers, mathematics and social study. However, the medium of instruction is Urdu and these are very few in numbers (Pandey, 2017, 2019). This has been welcomed by some, but others urge that in this way the religious content of the syllabus has been considerably watered down and that, burdened with the need to learn both religious as well as modern subjects, the students do well in neither. Therefore, there is a need to conduct a comprehensive study to explore the quality of education imparted in such madrasas.

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* University Department of Psychology, TM Bhagalpur University, Bhagalpur, Bihar - 812007, India, Email: lakshmiPandey72@gmail.com

TABLE 1

Population Distribution (Percentage) by Religious Communities in India

| <i>Religious group</i> | <i>Population (2011)</i> | <i>Literacy (2011)</i> | <i>LFPR (2017-18)</i> | <i>Employed on regular wage (2017-18)</i> | <i>IMR (2015-16)</i> | <i>CMR (2015-16)</i> |
|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|---|----------------------|----------------------|
| Hindu | 79.80 | 63.7 | 37.7 | 22.7 | 41.6 | 9.3 |
| Muslim | 14.23 | 57.3 | 31.2 | 20.9 | 40.0 | 10.3 |
| Christian | 2.30 | 74.3 | 39.2 | 36.6 | 25.0 | 7.4 |
| Sikh | 1.72 | 67.5 | 36.2 | 27.6 | 29.7 | 5.4 |
| Buddhist | 0.70 | 71.8 | - | - | 30.0 | 4.5 |
| Jain | 0.37 | 84.7 | - | - | | |
| Other religion | 0.66 | 50.38 | - | - | 41.0 | 16.8 |
| Religion not stated | 0.24 | | - | - | - | - |
| Total | 100 | 63.1 | | 22.8 | 40.7 | 9.4 |

Source: Census, 2011; religious data table; NFHS 4 & Annual Report 2017-18 PLFS

Note: LFPR= Labour Force Participation Rate; IMR= Infant Mortality Rate; CMR= Child Mortality Rate

The word “madrasa” is an Arabic term for any type of educational institution, whether secular or religious. The word is variously transliterated as *madrasah*, *madarasaa*, *medresa*, *madrassa*, *madraza*, *medrese*, etc. Madrasa is an institution of learning where Islamic sciences including literary and philosophical ones are taught (*Encyclopaedia of Islam*). The avowed aim of madrasa education is to inculcate the belief and practice of Islam among its followers and guide them to follow the Quran and traditions of the Prophet. The foundation of madrasa education is therefore basically standing on two pillars of Quran (collections of God’s revelations to Prophet Mohammad) and Sunna (tradition of Prophet Mohammad). Madrasas, apart from free education, provide the students with free food, free lodge and other facilities like clothes, medicine, shoes and so on, if they need. The students in madrasas are commonly from poor and middle class families. Still there are many students whose parents manage to pay for their food and lodge, but this amount is very low in comparison to the one in modern institutions. Teaching in the madrasas is divided levels-wise, which are:

- Tahtania - equivalent to primary (class 1 to 5)
- Wastania - upper primary (class 6 to 8)
- Fauqania - equivalent to secondary (class 9 to 10)
- Maulvi - higher secondary (class 11 to 12)
- Alim - equivalent to graduate (Bachelor degree)
- Fazil - equivalent to post-graduate (Master degree)
- Hafiz - Quran only (traditional madrasas have been offering this degree)

Madrasa Modernisation Scheme

In recent years, the Government of India as well as some state governments have launched some small schemes ostensibly to assist some madrasas, such as the Scheme for Providing Quality Education for Madrasas (SPQEM), Infrastructure Development of Minority Institutions (IDMI), extension of the Mid-Day Meal (MDM) scheme, and have been providing them paid teachers to teach modern subjects (MHRD, 2014). These efforts have, however, failed to make much of an impact, and only a few smaller madrasas have taken advantage of these schemes. This is mainly for fear of government interference and control, which they see as aimed at weakening their Islamic identity by introducing the teaching of government-prescribed books.

The centrally sponsored programme for Madrasa Modernisation and Area Intensive Programme was recast in 2008 as two schemes, namely, the SPQEM and IDMI for elementary, secondary and senior secondary schools. SPQEM is a demand-driven scheme. The objective of this scheme is to encourage traditional institutions like madrasas and maktabas by giving them financial assistance to introduce science, mathematics, social studies, Hindi and English in their curriculum, so that academic proficiency for classes I-XII is attainable for children studying in these institutions. However, the process of modernisation of traditional madrasas and maktabas are voluntary. The components of the SPQEM are as follows:

1. Infrastructure development of the maktabas and madrasas,
2. Placement of trained teachers at state expense,
3. Provision of training, mentoring of teachers through existing institutions like, CRC, DIET etc.
4. Facilitating teachers to acquire professional qualification,
5. Provision of TLM/grant,
6. Provision of children's entitlements.
7. Monitoring and evaluation.

Review of Literature

The studies conducted in India reveal that the reason for Muslims opting for madrasas was lack of access to other educational facilities nearby (Akhtar and Narula, 2010; Islam, 2014). Saxena (1993), in his study on Moradabad town, observed that most of the regular schools were located in the non-Muslim localities. According to Jeffery & Jeffery (2000), the situation is not better in rural areas. In addition, Muslim children are joining madrasas because of their low socio-economic status, as madrasas are providing free education and often residential facilities too. The Sachar Committee Report (2006) mentioned in detail the social, economic and educational status of the Muslim community of India. The report found that Muslim parents are not averse to modern or mainstream education and to sending their children to the affordable schools. They do not want to send their children only to madrasas if other schools are accessible and affordable. A section of Muslims prefer education through English as the language of instruction, whilst some prefer Urdu. On the other hand, a good number of studies revealed that the madrasas are indigenous schools which form an integral

part of Muslim cultural tradition and play an important role in the enculturation process of their child in responsible manner (Anzar and Carter, 2006). Kamaluddin (2006) conducted a study in Bihar and found that rural students are more likely to opt for madrasa education as compared to urban students. Recently, study reveals that the madrasas are struggling hard to compete with regular secular educational institutions (Akhtar and Narula, 2010). Ishtiyaque and Abuhurera (2014) found in their study that about 78 per cent madrasa passed-out students were employed in various madrasas where they getting poor salaries, about 20 per cent were engaged in agricultural work and the remaining 2.2 per cent were looking for job.

Modernising madrasas by the government has been a very contentious issue with many differing viewpoints amongst the community. While there is general acceptance of an urgent need for the modernisation of madrasas (Quasmi, 2005; Nadwi, 2008; Ahmad, 2010), the modernisation schemes of the government have not really provided much relief to the community as far as quality education is concerned (Akhtar and Narula, 2010; Pandey, 2017, 2019). Also, madrasa education is not job or carrier oriented and there was a gap between what exists in madrasas and what is to be needed in terms of quality improvement of teaching in modern perspectives (Pandey, 2017, 2019).

The Muslims and Madrasa Education in Bihar

The Muslim population in Bihar was 175.5 lakh or 16.86 per cent of the total population (Census, 2011). A majority of the Muslim population (86.55 per cent) in this state lives in rural areas. The literacy rate of Muslims of Bihar is well below the national average at 44.94 per cent. A special feature of the educational practices among the Muslims in Bihar is their tendency to go in for Madrasa-based education, the traditional educational system of the Muslims. In the rural areas, 24 per cent of the students opt for madrasa based-education, for many of whom at least the inexpensive government school could have been an alternative choice. Even in urban areas 9 per cent of the students opt for Madrasa-based education where availability of other types of institutions is obviously wider (Kamaluddin, 2006). In Bihar, about 1145 recognised and 36 unrecognised madrasas accommodate 3.67 lakh students covering Fauqania level (I-X) which constitute 7 per cent of total Muslim population and 2 per cent of the total population of the 5-14 age group in the state (U-DISE, 2014-15). As per the recent U-DISE 2015-16 report, 4.22 per cent students of total enrolment attend Madrasas in Bihar (NUEPA, 2016). The Government of Bihar (GoB) has setup a Board of Madrasa Education, under the Bihar State Madrasa Education Board Act 1981, that frames in accordance with the SCERT and NCERT curricula, the syllabus of madrasas from class 1 to 12 affiliated with them. These consist of both traditional Islamic as well as modern subjects. The certificate of this board is recognised by the Government of Bihar and COBSE Delhi (BSMEB, Patna, 2020). As per the MHRD notification, five boards have been recognised by the GoI, namely, the Bihar School Education Board, Patna, Bihar Sanskrit Shiksha Board, Patna, Bihar Madrasa Board, Patna, Bihar Board of Open Schooling and Examination, Patna, and Bihar Intermediate Council, Patna (GoI, 2018). However, a large proportion of the children who go to makhtabs to learn to read and recite the Quran are also enrolled full time in regular mainstream schools. By and large, studies on madrasa education are very few, and the need of the hour is to have a thorough study on madrasas, especially

about their obstacles and challenges. Therefore, an effort has been made to conduct a comprehensive study on madrasa education system and its problems and prospects.

Objectives of the Study

- To identify problems of the Madrasa education system.
- To study the prospects, if any, of such a system of education.
- To suggest some ways of improvement.

Methodology

Sample: A Multistage Sample Design (MSD) was employed to cover the units at different levels. On the basis of U-DISE (2014-15) report as well as minority population and availability of madrasas, six blocks in a district of Bihar were randomly selected for the study at the first stage. Madrasas were categorised as either recognised (aided) or affiliated (unaided). At the second stage, 22 madrasas (12 aided and 10 unaided) were selected. At the third stage, 220 students were randomly selected with replacement technique. At the final stage, Principals/Head Teachers from the selected madrasas were also included in the sample. Altogether, 220 students, 22 Principals from 22 madrasas across six blocks were included in the MSD sampling.

TABLE 2

Multistage Sample Design

| Stage | Unit | Number | Total | Mode |
|-------|--------------------|--------|-------|-----------|
| I | Block | 6 | 6 | Random |
| II | Madrasas: | | | |
| | • Aided Madrasas | 12 | 22 | |
| | • Unaided Madrasas | 10 | | |
| III | Students | 22x10 | 220 | Random |
| IV | Head Teacher | 22x1 | 22 | Purposive |

Tools used: Tools were developed after pilot study and items were selected after pre-testing. Following tools were used in this study:

1. **Madrasa Management Schedule:** It was a multidimensional schedule covering various aspects of facilities available at madrasas such as infrastructure teaching-learning materials, ancillary facilities and qualification of teachers. It also covers problem area in madrasas through questions that is filled by Head Teacher.
2. **Student Schedule:** The Student Schedule contained questions pertaining to the teaching-learning process at madrasas, family background and resources available at madrasas.

Results

With regard to Muslim education, the data clearly indicates that the quality of madrasa education is a matter of great concern. The researcher observed that madrasa education system faces many challenges, most of which were internally generated and some externally caused. These challenges impinge on the prospects of survival of the madrasa system and the security environment of the nation. Some of these problem areas are spelt out below:

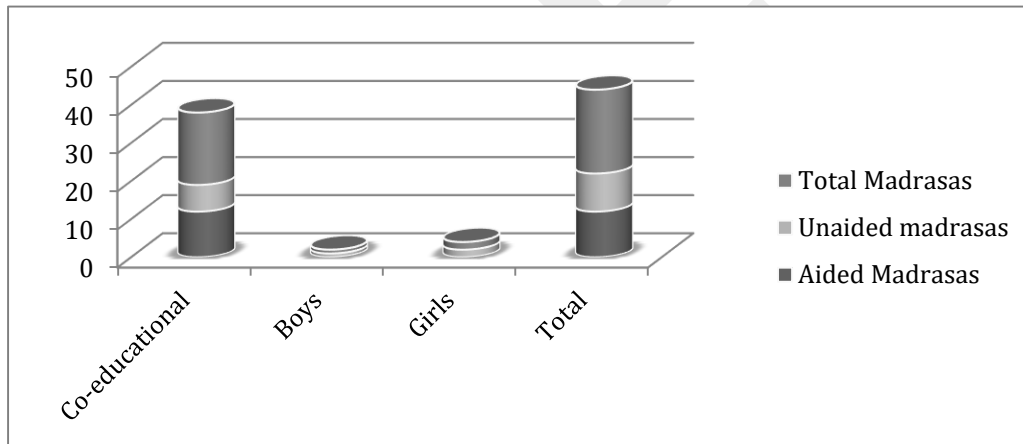
The Madrasas

Distribution of Sampled Madrasas

Figure 1 shows that the out of surveyed madrasas, 12 were recognised and aided by the GoB, whereas 10 madrasas were affiliated and unaided. Besides, of the sampled madrasas, 19 were co-educational, 01 exclusively for boys and 02 were exclusively for girls.

FIGURE 1

Distribution of Sampled Madrasas



Source: Collected from field work

Poor Infrastructure Facilities

A perusal of Table 3 revealed that the madrasas were found lacking in basic infrastructure such as proper school boundary, classroom, chair and table, and playground. Out of the surveyed aided madrasas, 17 per cent do not had electricity connections and over 33 per cent do not even have common toilets. While a large number of unaided madrasas (90 percent) were being run from single room tenements on in the verandah of mosques and had very poor infrastructure. In the absence of benches, children were compelled to sit on floors. Overall, the infrastructure facilities and standard of education in madrasas are far less satisfactory in comparison to government institutions. Besides, true to their charitable

concern and mandate, some of the aided madrasas (16.67 per cent) had established hostel facilities for poor students.

TABLE 3
Infrastructure at Madrasas (Percentage)

| <i>Sl. No.</i> | <i>Facilities available</i> | <i>Recognized (aided)</i> | <i>Affiliated (unaided)</i> |
|----------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. | Pucca Building | 100 | 90 |
| 3. | Attached With Mosque | 8.33 | 50 |
| 3. | Boundary wall | 58.33 | 10 |
| 4. | Hostel Facility | 16.67 | na |
| 5. | Drinking Water | 75 | 30 |
| 6. | Common Toilet | 66.67 | 20 |
| 7. | Toilet for Girls | 66.67 | 10 |
| 8. | Electricity | 83.33 | 20 |
| 9. | Desk & Chair | 41.67 | 30 |
| 10. | Playground | 16.67 | na |
| 11. | More than 2 Classrooms | 91.67 | 10 |

Source: Collected from field work

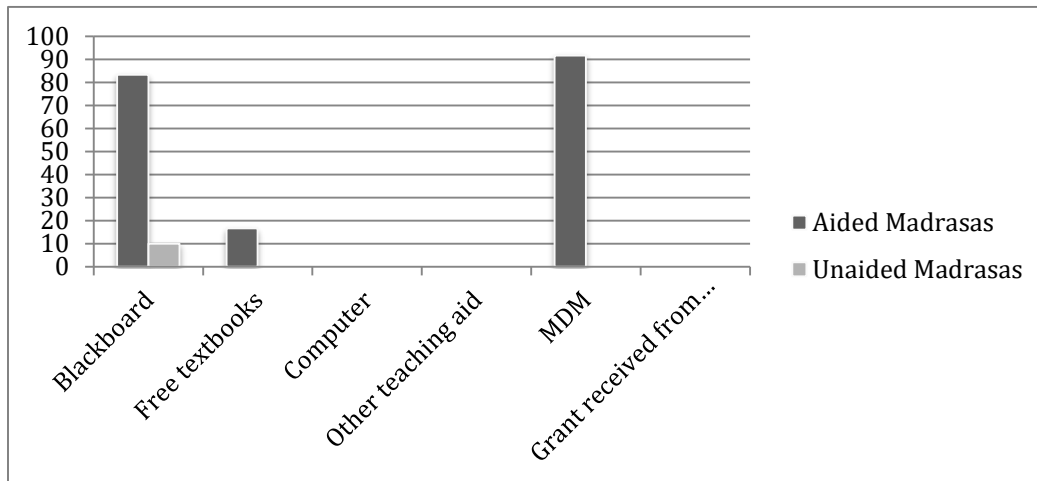
Note: na= not available

Lack of Teaching-Learning Resources

Over the last few decades, teaching-learning process has been undergoing drastic changes. Today, new experiments are being carried out in the classroom; these include project based learning, computer education, development of thinking skills, and discovery learning approaches. But these methods of teaching were not implemented in madrasas. A perusal of Figure 2 reveals that both types of madrasas were lacking the basic teaching-learning facilities. Only blackboards and MDMs were available in the aided madrasas.

FIGURE 2

Facilities Available at Madrasas



Source: Collected from field work

Poor Financial Condition

As reported by the madrasa heads and Madrasa Management Committees (MMC), generally, there are two types of funding sources available to them: *charity* (Zakat, Sadqat and Fitra) and *government grants*. Further, Principals from the aided madrasas admitted that they receive aid from the government only for the teachers' salaries. They hardly get any other kind of finances which are essential for the teaching-learning process and for the quality improvement of madrasa education (Figure 2). Therefore, because of lack of quality improvement funds, madrasas are struggling hard to compete with other schools. The unaided madrasas, on the other hand, are charitable institutions and almost all of them depend on the lone support of charity. Most madrasas have their charity collectors, generally known as '*Safeers*,' who go door to door to the Muslim masses to collect money. These madrasa heads also reported that poor financial condition was a serious problem.

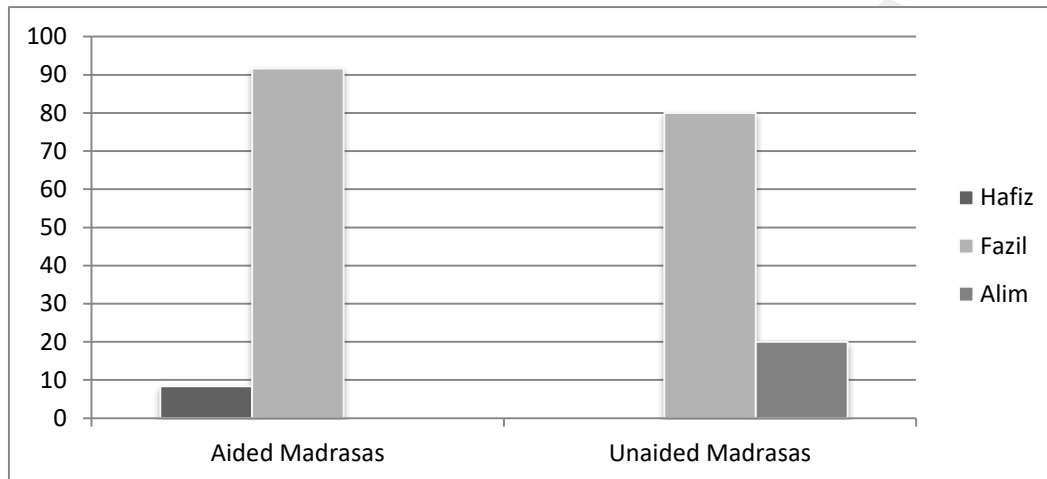
The Teachers

Head Teacher

In the sampled aided madrasas, a little more than 8 per cent Head Teachers were *Hafiz* (Quran teacher) degree holders and about 92 per cent Head Teachers were *Fazil* degree holders, which is equivalent to post-graduate degrees. In the case of unaided madrasas 80 per cent Head Teachers were *Fazil* degree holders and 20 per cent were *Alim* degree holders. However, as per the Indian School Education System guidelines, the Principal/Head Teacher must possess a post-graduate academic degree and a recognised teacher education degree with five years teaching experience in a recognised school even then; almost all principals were untrained. The data on sampled madrasas showed that only one aided madrasa had

female Head Teachers. While most of the sampled madrasas were co-educational, the data primarily indicated that madrasas were headed by males even in girl's madrasas also (Figure 3).

FIGURE 3
Qualifications of Head Teacher



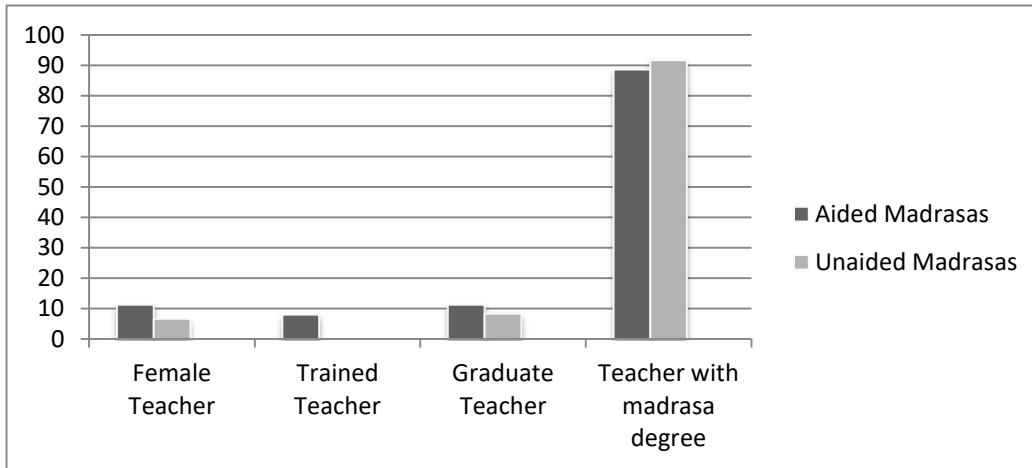
Source: Collected from field work

Lack of Subject Specific Teacher

Figure 4 shows that out of the surveyed madrasas, only 11.29 per cent teachers from aided madrasas were holding graduate degrees, while only 8.33 per cent teachers from unaided madrasas had these degrees. Appointment of science, English, social science and mathematics graduate teachers under the modernisation scheme has not been done in reality. Besides, the salaries fixed for them are too low. However, the modernisation schemes of the government have not really provided much relief to the community --- as far as quality education in madrasas is concerned.

FIGURE 4

Distribution of Teachers at Madrasas



Source: Collected from field work

Lack of Female Teachers

Moreover, Figure 4 also shows that the madrasa administration does not give enough representation to women and is tilted towards male dominance. Only 11.29 per cent female teachers in aided madrasas and 6.67 per cent female teachers in unaided madrasas are too few for an education system where almost half of the students are girls. However, in order to increase the enrolment of Muslim girls in the state, it is urgently needed to recruit more women heads and more women teachers in the madrasas. The number of female teachers in madrasas has almost septupled since madrasa reforms were initiated by the state in the 1980s. However, Madrasas being traditionally male-dominated, the presence of female teachers is even more important for girls.

No Qualified and Trained Teachers

Currently, teacher training is not prioritised in madrasas. The data of the study also reveal that only 8.06 per cent teachers from aided madrasas were trained and there was no provision of proper training --- either pre-service or in-service (Figure 4). It should not be forgotten that the quality of school teacher depends on the training he/she receives from the training institutions. Therefore, madrasa teachers are unaware of the pedagogy and modern techniques of teaching.

The Students

The gender distribution of surveyed students has been presented in Table 4. Overall, the sample comprised 55 per cent boys and 45 per cent girls. About 32 per cent of the surveyed students belonged to the general category and 68 per cent were OBCs. Also, in case of the sampled students, 60 per cent fathers and 65 per cent mothers were illiterate. Besides,

in case of the sampled students, 36 per cent fathers and 22 per cent mothers were agricultural labourers (Table 5). Overall, only poor Muslims, who belong to the lower socio-economic categories, were studying in madrasas.

TABLE 4
Distribution of Surveyed Students

| <i>Gender</i> | | <i>Category</i> | |
|---------------|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| <i>Boys</i> | <i>Girls</i> | <i>Gen</i> | <i>OBC</i> |
| 55 | 45 | 32 | 68 |

Source: Collected from field data

TABLE 5
Family Background

| <i>Indicators</i> | <i>Education</i> | | | | <i>Occupation</i> | | | | <i>Total</i> |
|-------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| | <i>Literate from Madrasa</i> | <i>Literate from Regular school</i> | <i>Illiterate</i> | <i>Don't Know</i> | <i>Agriculture</i> | <i>Skilled labour</i> | <i>Daily Labour</i> | <i>Unemployed</i> | |
| Mother | 5 | 0 | 65 | 30 | 22 | 16 | 12 +20 (Maid Servant) | 30 (Housewife) | 100 |
| Father | 15 | 0 | 60 | 25 | 36 | 21 | 18 | 25 | 100 |

Source: Collected from field work

Suggestions for Improvements

- There is an urgent need for building a climate of mutual trust and confidence between madrasas and the GoB.
- Some model madrasas should be established in the educationally backward minority blocks (EBBs) of the entire state on the same line on which the KGBVs were established.
- Accreditation of madrasas, based on madrasa environment, inclusive education, extra-curricular activities and quality of learning, should be made.
- Recognised (aided) madrasas should be funded for repair and maintenance to improve the physical environment in their premises.
- Provision should be made for vocational training of madrasa students.
- Emphasis should be given to writing skills rather than to rote learning.

- A minimum qualification should be set while recruiting the teaching staff in madrasas.
- The number of teachers should be increased in proportion to the number of students enrolled in each madrasa.

Conclusion

In the light of the above discussion, it can be concluded that the madrasa education in Bihar needs reorientation. The format of the education imparted to the students of madrasas ought to be modified keeping in view the shifting demands of the employers --- a concern which can no longer be underplayed. This is perfectly possible without an erosion of cultural and religious identity. Madrasas need to recognise that the world has undergone a transformation. Employers have specialised needs which the current madrasa education is unable to meet. Global and private competition, not to mention financial constraints, is not likely to disappear in the foreseeable future. Forwarding more of what they are currently doing is not the solution to these problems. To survive the present and future challenges, madrasas must find new ways to extend contemporary education to their students in the globalised India. The teachers are recruited in madrasas on the basis of recommendations by the local Madrasa Management Committee (MMC), which is completely an internal affair. The SPQEM scheme is implemented in 18 states, covering over 21000 madrasas in the country and giving them financial assistance of Rs 1,138 crore (NIEPA, 2018). Almost all the surveyed aided madrasas could not avail themselves of SPQEM because they were not aware of the centrally sponsored schemes. Even the GoB could not initiate any drive to gather a substantive plan of SPQEM from madrasas. Previous studies (Pandey, 1917, 2019) also confirm that madrasas are not at par with the modern education. Studies reflect that there exists gaps at different aspects (Anzar and Carter, 2006; Akhtar and Narula, 2010).

It is clear from the study that the madrasa education system faces many challenges, most of which are internally generated and some externally caused. Finally, it is concluded that the indigenous system of Muslim education in madrasas affects the students' ability to learn. This is firstly because little research has been conducted on the educational issues in madrasas; secondly, this is because madrasas receive less attention from the national and local governments. Needless to say, very little fruitful education is possible under such conditions.

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Book Reviews

GANDHI, Malli (2017): *Educating Ex-Criminal Tribes: Issues and Concerns*. Delhi: Rawat Publications, ISBN: 9788131607886, Price: ₹ 995

The present study, *Educating Ex-Criminal Tribes*, is a timely and significant contribution to the literature on the challenges and concerns related to the education of ex-criminal tribes in general and those of Andhra Pradesh in particular, the latter being the abode of 59 'denotified tribal communities.' It is an outcome of serious and sustained research by Malli Gandhi, a professor at the Regional Institute of NCERT, Mysore. The author highlights the challenges faced by the denotified tribal communities from the colonial past till this day for being castigated as 'criminal tribes' and stigmatised. He emphasises on the special educational needs of the children of denotified tribal communities (DNTs) due to their distinct socio-economic, cultural and nomadic conditions. Instead of bringing such children to the mainstream, he suggests that we lay more stress on reaching out to them through reformative education, vocational education, residential schools, better teachers' training, providing more resources, etc.

Of late, we notice greater visibility of the DNTs in India, comprising about 10 per cent of population in 2020. They have been playing an important role in local politics by being habitual offenders and asserting their political and cultural identity. Despite their large number, they are not uniformly listed under any of the three lists--- the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Class. The author prefers to call them 'Scheduled Denotified and Nomadic Tribes' and insists on their being listed independently in the Ninth Schedule of the Indian Constitution in order to provide protection to these vulnerable tribes who are still facing acute social discrimination, alienation and stigma due to their poor living conditions. It was in 1871 when the British rulers for the first time officially declared certain nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes, scattered all over India, as 'born criminals' in an act known as the Criminal Tribes Act.

Even after independence, this act was not nullified. Rather it was replaced with another act in 1952, known as the Habitual Offender's Act. As such, as always, the DNTs continued to face isolation, social stigma and neglect. By treating the whole community as born criminals, the DNTs were deprived of power, freedom and rights as full citizens. They continued to remain backward. Some of them were forced to earn their living by begging, rag-picking, doing acrobatics at street crossings, astrology, selling petty goods, etc. They possessed little or no land and wandered from place to place, leading very dismal and vulnerable lives. With the stigma of criminality attached to their identity, most of them could not take the advantage of education in free India and their literacy rate remained very low. Nor did their children reap any advantage of modern education despite the supportive government policies.

According to the author, the educational level of the DNTs, living in settlement colonies, is much below than those of other tribal and non-tribal people. Even today, the DNT children face manifold problems due to extreme poverty, child labour, lack of early child care and education facilities, consistent migration, illiteracy of parents, child marriage, community loyalties, lack of awareness, etc. They show poor educational attainment due to added problems, such as, lack of access to schools, absenteeism among teachers, poor quality of teaching, irrelevant or boring curriculum, unsuitable working hours, delays in supplies of textbooks, lack of incentives, administrative lapses, lack of innovative policies, etc.

The author deserves credit for emphasising the need for bridging the gap between knowledge and livelihood in the case of DNTs at a time when there is adequate focus on inclusive education and economic growth. Though the DNT children are entitled to easy access and equal opportunity to quality education under Articles 15(4), 45 and 46 of the Indian Constitution, much remains to be done. The educational standards among the DNTs remain much lower in comparison to other tribes/communities and the dropout rates are also very high. Moreover, we find educational disparities prevailing within the various DNTs. Absenteeism remains very high in grade one to five. Even in higher classes, students are less likely to attend school as they are expected to help their parents inside and outside the households. Most of them are forced to work as child labour.

The author deserves credit also for drawing attention to certain rare qualities of the DNTs which make them different from other normal students from urban areas. Usually these children do not like restrictions and enjoy complete freedom. They like to work independently, are quite disciplined, simple, self-respecting and daring. They are also supposed to be very clean, articulate, honest, united and good sportspersons with no lower IQs than other children. Yet, these children are seen as laggards because they face many psychological problems when they see their parents being taken to police or kept in remand or jail due to the social stigma for having a 'criminal past.' Some of them may be found involved in 'nefarious activities.' Since most of them lack parental motivation, the schools are usually at far off places, have poor infrastructure and inadequate resources. Often, the teachers are found discriminating, demotivating and demoralising the DNT students by dubbing them as slow learners instead of catering to their specific needs.

In fact, as the author has suggested, these children need an altogether different and innovative concept of education based upon story-telling, dances, puppetry, pop songs, music and community gatherings at which these children excel. For this radio, television and ICTs can be used effectively. It is important to show these children how knowledge and vocational skills can help them in leading better, happy and fulfilling lives. Many of these children can be exceptional sportspersons, musicians, painters, dancers and acrobats. For this, it would be necessary to arrange more residential schools to enable them to pursue their cherished goals without any hindrances – socio-cultural, financial and psychological. The teachers should also be well educated, well equipped and well trained to be able to assimilate these children into the mainstream. The state should also provide liberal grants to such children under the New Education Policy (2020).

The education of the DNTs should be used by the state and social reformers as an opportunity to impart the feeling of common fraternity by using community approach, providing congenial atmosphere and moral dynamics of socio-cultural behaviour to take them out of the grip of stigma associated with the term 'ex-criminal.'

This is a must-read book for the anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, educationists, political scientists, especially those associated with policymaking, and social reformers.

'Suvasit', BQ-2, Shalimar Bagh
Delhi-110088

Asha Gupta
ashagupta3452@gmail.com

Apoorvanand (ed.) (2018): *The Idea of a University*, Chennai: Context, pp. 276,
Price: ₹ 699

Since the publication of John H C Newman's classic book on *Idea of University*' in 1852, a number of scholars across the countries have discussed and written about the character of a university. The volume under review, titled *The Idea of University*, edited by Apoorvanand, is the most recent addition and analyses the idea of a university in the Indian context. The editor brings together the scholars of various disciplines to contribute to the discussion on the issues of academic freedom and crisis in universities. The volume covers considerable ground in terms of the history and philosophy of academic freedom, impact of neoliberal policies on academic freedom, practices of academic freedom in Indian universities and constitutional commitment to protect the freedom of speech.

The book has 17 chapters. In his introductory chapter, Apoorvanand outlines how an institution of higher education forms a meeting ground for people who would not have been interacting together in the given social hierarchy. His illustration of how a tribal boy and a Brahmin girl are brought together for purposes of learning in a higher education institution is revealing. It shows us the critical engagement of the university as transformative space, and sheltering new ideas and narratives which may not be widely persisting in the outside world.

The chapters written by Shiv Vishwanathan, Mary E John, Payel Chattopadhyay, Pankaj Chandra, Kalpana Kannabiran and Ram Ramaswamy dwell on the importance of academic freedom for giving an intrinsic meaning to university as an extension of the idea of democracy. Mary E John tries to understand the idea of academic freedom from the perspective of Kant and observes that academic freedom is entrenched in the idea of university, while Payel Chattopadhyay Mukherjee analyses the academic freedom through the writings of Newman, Humboldt and Tagore.

Shiv Vishwanathan values academic freedom as the very soul of the university life and emphasises that universities are civilisational institutions and have a much larger role to play for the commune. He further elaborates why and how instrumentalisation of knowledge, ideologisation of knowledge, economisation of knowledge and bowdlerisation of knowledge should be protested. Pankaj Chandra also emphasises that universities are symbols of progress of the concerned countries and sites of nation-building, and this makes a university unique and worthy of its exceptional freedom. Ram Ramaswamy maintains that university as a place in which society can invest for its future and train next generations of students to think, discover, innovate and invent. For him, universities face multiple challenges at various levels --- from regulatory bodies to funding bodies --- with regard to

their leadership, size of the universities, and also the changing compositions of the universities in terms of students. Kalpana Kannabiran, in her chapter, describes how both academic freedom and free speech are matters of life, death and liberty, and how it will take time to overcome the damage done to academic freedom in the field of higher education in recent years.

Saumen Chattopadhyay, Quentin Thompson, Irfanullah Farooqi and Francesca Orsini, in their respective chapters, discuss the impact of neoliberal policies in the form of privatisation and commercialisation of higher education. Saumen Chattopadhyay elaborates the impact of neoliberal policies on higher education through the example of Academic Performance Indicator (API), National Accreditation and Assessment Council (NAAC) and National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF). He provides an example of Performance-Based Assessment (PBAS)-API and elucidates how the system seeks to standardise the measures for the output and quality in higher education. The argument is that the basic purpose of higher education such as knowledge generation, social transformation and critical thinking should not be compromised by the economic logic and neoliberal framework. The author poses the question in his concluding remarks by saying that if academic freedom is supreme and a hallmark of the university system, how would the accountability mechanism be designed in the best interest of the society.

Quentin Thompson observes that uses of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and introduction of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) have changed the way of understanding the idea of academic freedom and autonomy across the world. Irfanullah Farooqi, in his chapter, observes that commercialisation of higher education --- through privatisation, digitalisation and distance education --- has further aggravated the idea of academic freedom and autonomy in Indian universities. Francesca Orsini also discusses that students and faculties are treated as customers and managers respectively in universities under the neoliberal regime. For Orsini, academic freedom fosters spirit of inquiry, collective effort and cooperation, constructive criticism, mutual encouragement and correction, and inclusion and valorisation of diversity. Irfanullah discusses the newer challenges being faced by the university because of differentiation and conflicts on the basis of caste, sex, religion and race. The idea advanced here is that the issue of representation in university goes beyond the institution of state and market.

Niraja Gopal Jayal and J Devika, in their chapters, discuss the threat to academic freedom in current time. In the post-war world and populist politics, knowledge has been devalued. They argue that pursuit of knowledge is not possible in the absence of freedom of enquiry. J Devika is concerned with the recent attack on premier institutions of learning and how it has generated deep insecurity among the community of researchers and intellectuals as well as alumni of such institutions. Similarly, Alok Rai argues that it is not an attack on a few individuals and disciplines, rather the very university as a space of free enquiry is at stake. Debaditya Bhattacharya also discusses the current crisis in Indian universities and the capability of a university to reimagine itself under the crisis and respond to it.

Nandini Sundar, in her chapter, illustrates the academic freedom in Indian universities through various committees and commissions. Over a period of several years, various committees have noted that academic freedom is central to the idea of university in its various spheres. Shobhit Mahajan, in his chapter, presents a case study of the University of

Delhi and elaborates how non-scientific ideas and claims made by the a section of the faculty have been promoted across the time without being questioned.

Mohammad Sajjad and Vinay Kantha show deep commitment in constitutional mechanism to diagnose the crisis in universities. Mohammad Sajjad discusses the phenomena of casteism, communalism and other short-term interests and also their role in destruction of prestigious provincial colleges and universities in India. In India, in recent times, students and academics have been subjected to witch-hunting because of their independent opinions. There is the need to look self-critically to academics and diagnose the problem honestly. Vinay Kantha looks into the issue of freedom philosophically and constitutionally and its necessity in the university spaces. Vinay Kantha connects freedom to the conscience of the human. Mohammad Sajjad and Vinay Kantha have expressed the hope that Indian constitution will function as guiding lights of freedom in academics and outside and that various stakeholders of society have to take positions in defending the protection of free spaces for universities.

The book highlights the role of academic freedom in university and its importance in democracy. The book begins with the idea of transformatory character of university and deeply engages on the issue of the need for academic freedom in universities. Academic freedom has been always in question in the highly stratified hierarchical social system in Indian sub-continent. A majority of untouchable groups have been denied the rights, opportunities and freedom to participate effectively in the social, economic and political processes. In this context it is important to ask whether or not Indian universities function as democratic institutions promoting social justice. Are the curriculum and pedagogic processes democratic, just and emancipatory in Indian universities? Do universities impart critical consciousness among the students for larger conscientisation? Do the universities understand, respect and celebrate the diversities of the opinions of students in terms of their caste, class, gender, region and ethnicity? These are some of the broader questions which we need to understand with regard to the issue of academic freedom in the universities. The existence of antagonism in the wider society ultimately affects the university as well. Without a fairer democratic practices and processes in the larger society, it is difficult to imagine the idea of academic freedom and its sustenance in the university campuses. Limiting the idea of university to academic freedom may have serious drawbacks which have been historically elitist and exclusive in nature, and it may also undermine the transformatory and emancipatory character of the universities.

However, the book limits itself to a discussion of academic freedom in public universities and has left out the private higher education institutions which form a majority of the Indian higher education system. But it does stress the need to be self-critical and revive the transformatory and emancipatory idea of universities which have become a space of reproduction of the existing unjust social realities. This book has succeeded in stimulating the debate on academic freedom and its importance in Indian universities. Thus it will remain a good academic contribution and reference document for students, scholars and the academicians engaged in the study and research in higher education in India.

Research scholar,
National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration
17-B, Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi -110016

Amardeep Kumar
amardeep@niepa.ac.in

JUNG, Jisun; HORTA, Hugo and YONEZAWA, Akiyoshi (Eds.) (2018): *Researching Higher Education in Asia: History, Development and Future*, Singapore: Springer Publications, Series ISSN: 2365-6352; ISBN: 978-981-10-4988-0 (Hard Bound).

Higher Education in Asia has been a much-coveted field of study. The book *Higher Education in Asia: History, Development and Future* traces the conceptual understanding of higher education research and the challenges facing the countries of East Asia, Southeast Asia and South/West Asia for building research capacity for higher education. Jung, Horta and Yonezawa introduce their book by describing higher education research as an emerging field of study in Asia. They focus on the need to fund and support research projects in higher education as well as the role and functions of higher education institutions towards social and economic development. The country cases explored in the book utilise an in-depth analysis to understand the trends of growth in higher education as well as the research community. A balanced mix of qualitative and quantitative methodologies has been undertaken to focus on the development of higher education research in a fast-growing region, i.e. Asia. Some common and varying challenges across national communities have also been discussed, and these not only provide direction to policymakers and researchers but also help in articulating the national contribution of higher education research to the globalised community.

The introductory section begins with Chapter 2 wherein the author, Hugo Horta, discusses the issues and risks associated with insufficient contribution to the international higher education research community. The author brings forward the lack of engagement between higher education and research, especially in Asia.

Thus, a collaborative praxis of research activities is crucial to solve the increasingly complex challenges being faced in Asian higher education research community.

Further on, Rui Yung delves into the development of higher education in East Asia, exploring the social, political and cultural perspectives as well as the frame of reference. The author finds a synonymity among the Hong Kong and Chinese societies in respect of shaping knowledge systems. However, varying categorizations and socio-cultural contexts are found within the East Asian region. In this way, the role of education as an experiential learning adapting to indigenous knowledge and beliefs, rather than simply adopting dominant western knowledge systems, has been highlighted. In the subsequent chapter, Jae Park explores knowledge production in post-colonial neo-liberal Asia. Knowledge production is understood by him as a three-fold mission including instruction, research and social protection. The author summarizes knowledge production in Asian context where it is intertwined between structural problems such as administrative issues, state norms and global needs as well as agential problems such as attracting international students as a favor to democratic development and not for global talent development.

The next chapter maps regionalism and regionalisation of higher education as well as higher education research. The author, Roger Y Chao Jr, tries to understand the themes in regionalisation of higher education in Asia and worldwide as being path dependent on global, regional, economic and political developments. The Asian research community is thereby found to be a hybrid of regionalisation of higher education based on Asian values, cultures and practices.

The next section discusses higher education research in East Asian countries. Akiyoshi Yonezawa explores higher education research in Japan. His findings reflect a significant growth of higher education research and an increase in the research collaborations with institutions within Japan and abroad. The higher education research in Hongkong reveals a growing number of publications as well as the influence of internationalization on research. Jisun Jung shows that higher education research is a relatively new but emerging field in the Republic of Korea and it has been driven by government rather than by the academic community, and thus it lacks the critical mass required to expand research interests globally. Zhidong discusses Macau's higher education research. He finds that research is not very limited in scope and whatever research is carried out is mainly by the researchers based in mainland China or Hong Kong. Sheng Ju Chan and Ting-May Huang argue that higher education research in Taiwan has evolved as an independent academic field, although university level degree programmes are yet to be developed. Further, the bleak graduate employment prospects pose challenges to its evolution as a serious programme of study. Nyamjav Sumberzul and Shagdarsuren Oyunbileg discuss the transition of the economy from a centralised state controlled to a market based system. They show that higher education has become very sensitive to the market demands, and they explore the possibilities of global connect to many sectors including management education with private and international joint universities.

Michael Lee traces the origin and development of higher education system in Singapore and the effects of globalisation on the transformation of the region as a global education hub in Asia. The corporatisation of the public state universities, policies towards internationalisation and the efforts towards making Singapore an international education hub in Asia are some ways to push away the problem of brain drain as well as attract non-local international students. Major themes of research are related to the issues of decentralisation, higher education expansion, quality and excellence, globalisation, marketisation, internationalisation and entrepreneurialisation. According to Norzaini Azman and Morshidi Sirat, research in higher education in Malaysia is in a nascent stage of development started after the establishment of the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) in 2004. Education research, even now, is developed as a part of education studies and research carried out by the teacher education faculties. In other words, Malaysian higher education research is yet to develop as an independent area of study, with well-established external accountability norms.

Nopraenu Sajjarax Dhirathiti points out that Thailand has teaching intensive institutes (Rajabhat universities) as well as research intensive institutes. While the former focusses mainly on primary education with limited research in higher education, the latter are involved in research on higher education including educational management, comparative studies, higher education policy etc. However, there is limited funding for research and the focus of funding is science and technology and this pattern acts as a major constraint to develop higher education research as a field of inquiry.

Christian Bryan S Bustamante shows that research in Philippines is seen as one of the integral missions after instruction and community extension that define a higher education institution. The government initiatives not only promote the development of research capacities among youth but also helps knowledge production and quality enhancement in classroom instruction. There is a need for the government to realise that the country can

develop into a globally important research destination only when sufficient policy support, funding and political will are extended.

The last and final section of the book delves into higher education research in the South and South West Asian region. N V Varghese points out that research in higher education in India is largely associated with teaching practices, and that the teacher development programmes comprise teacher training programmes with a focus on post-primary levels of school education. The university departments of education do not prioritise higher education research and they mostly focus on school education. The new scheme launched in the previous decade by the Ministry of Human Resource Development attempts to develop a national resource centre and a higher education academy to support teaching, pedagogical aspects of higher education and teaching-learning in higher education. However, higher education as an area of study and research is yet to develop in India.

Abbas Madandar Arani, Lida Kakia and Mohammad Jafari Malek examine the trends in higher education research in Iran. In the period after the 1970s, efforts were made to develop universities and institutes, expand educational facilities and recruit teachers. But the establishments led to an over-education crisis and the graduates crossed borders to pursue further degrees and gain employment in the global labor market. It is argued that the prospects for growth of higher education research in Iran depend heavily on the economic conditions of the region, the over-education crisis and issue of brain drain.

Abdulrahman M Abouammoh looks into the regeneration of higher education research in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. They show that higher education in Saudi Arabia has expanded fast but women lag far behind men in enrolment. Public financing and low investment in research continue to be an area of concern for furthering the scope of higher education research. Apart from these two key concerns, the issues of industry-academia collaboration and e-learning through technology enabled systems are the challenges that need to be addressed for Saudi higher education development.

The concluding section presents a summary of developments in the field of higher education research in Asia. The scale and visibility of higher education in Asia is rapid and evolving. The book presents a comparative perspective of higher education research between countries to sieve out the active, productive and skilled research base in Asian context. A fast evolution of higher education research is visible in most Asian countries, particularly East Asia, in terms of number of researchers, publications, diversity of themes and methodologies. South East Asia is still lagging behind. The major concern and constraint is the paucity of public resources and federal support to shape and develop higher education research in most countries in the region.

The book has covered a large number of countries at differing levels of development of higher education and with varying traditions of research in higher education. Each of the contributions is rich in information and analysis. The editors have taken special care and efforts to maintain quality in each chapter. It will thus remain a serious academic volume and a reference book for teachers and students engaged in research in higher education.

Doctoral Scholar,
National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration
17-B, Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi -110016

Kriti Dagar
kriti.dagar12@gmail.com

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