



05. Universities Social Responsibility: An Indian Knowledge Tradition

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Abstract

Being an educational institution, universities have played an important role in the development of the society at large. The role of university is most important in looking at cultural-spiritual thinking and concerns including social, political, economic activities based on the logic and research. It is important to take the practicality of theoretical knowledge to civil society and theorization of problems, needs and possibilities of civil society. The glorious history of ancient Indian universities like Takshashila, Nalanda, Vikramshila, Vallabhi has been based on social responsibility. The societies worked for the universities and the universities worked for the society throughout the world. The students admitted through tough entrance examinations in world famous universities like Takshashila, Nalanda were provided opportunities to become experts in various subjects including Vedas, Upanishads, Dharma, Yoga, Medicine, Grammar, Tatva Gyan, Crafts, Business and Politics. The education and other facilities of the students depended on social responsibilities. Knowledge based socio-economic and political development has been the most important element of social responsibility of universities. The universal aim of education lies in the all-round development of man. This is clearly reflected in the fundamental thinking of the Indian knowledge tradition. It becomes expedient in this context to comprehensively understand the social responsibility of universities.

Keywords- Takshashila, Universities, Social Responsibility, Indian Knowledge Tradition

Introduction

The concept of social responsibility of educational institutions is not only limited to the scope of charitable and voluntary activities. In its true sense, the social responsibility of universities includes the thinking of solutions to the problems related to the social, economic, political fields along with nature as well as environmental issues. Knowledge-based education system of ancient India, under which the future citizens of Indian society were educated and resolved to create a civilized society. The major role of universities is to benefit the area and its associated communities along with the major functions of teaching, research and monitoring of research. The benefits of the administrative, academic and research vision of the University are made possible by the joint efforts of the students and the teachers to the society. When this joint effort of teacher and learner are closely connects with the society, the true sense of basic element of education reflects. In order to achieve the objective of new India through higher education, the UGC prepared a guideline in 2019 for fostering Social responsibility & Community Engagement in Higher Education. Social responsibility is also a sense of morality.



The President of India said that universities should contribute to the USR in his speech on the occasion of 33rd Convocation of Jharkhand University, Ranchi. He said that at least five students from each university should visit nearby villages at intervals of two months and if possible stay there overnight and interact with the villagers.

Various activities are being conducted by the universities for community welfare under social responsibilities. Adoption of villages and work for their holistic development. University Social Responsibility plays an important role in enhancing educational development and facilitating the quality of life. Second UNESCO Conference, 2019 on Higher Education clearly mentioned the Community engagement very important for holistic approach of education. The declaration clearly states that "higher education is a public good" and it's a responsibility of all stakeholders (Occasional Paper;PRIA.2014). Global University Network for Innovations also focus on the community engagement of higher for betterment of human being. Universities academic and research based outcome directly benefited for community through USR. Global Alliance for Community Engaged Research, UNESCO Chair and Community University Research Alliance are work together for promoting the community engagement services of higher education. There are four main aspect of University social responsibility. Personality development, citizenship development, to development the sense of social engagement and intellectual understanding from local to global.

Historical Perspective

The educational institutions of ancient India made their special contribution to the vibrant form to this resolution, in which the universities of ancient India have also played an important role. The basic objective of Indian education system was to build the character of human being including overall development of personality, knowledge of his civic and social duties, increase of social happiness and skills, preservation and spread of culture as well as to communicate loyalty and righteousness in human beings. Education is considered essential to fulfill these objectives. Therefore, the social institutions had the core responsibility of the education system. Ancient education system based on Gurukul system. The responsibility of the proper functioning of the Gurukuls was the responsibility of the affluent sections of the society. They considered it their moral duty.

In ancient India the education was often free. Those who imparted education out of the greed of getting fees, the society looked at them with condemnation. Kalidas calls those scholars as "*Gyan ka Vyavsayi*". It was the duty of the disciple that he must provide some money as *DAKSHINA* to the teacher. Elite people are provide money and other things to teachers for their basic requirement. It is known from the Jataka Stories that *Shresthiputra* and Prince pay full fees in Takshashila but there was complete education system for poor children too. It was the duty of the state and society to make proper arrangements for the livelihood of the scholars. The rulers and nobles donate land and money etc for this purpose. The great Indian scholars and rulers like Panini, Kautilya,, Jivaka, Kaushalraj, Prasenjit educated at Takshashila. There are many references where village, property, food donation done by such affluent classes to educational institutions. *Agrahara Grama* were donated to Brahmin scholars during the



Gupta period. Scriptures like Gautam and Vishnu have told that the king should make arrangements for the maintenance of the teachers, it was the duty of the poorest of the poor family that he must make some contribution towards education. Generations of the Gupta rulers had donated the income of many villages for better education System of Nalanda. During the period of Pal rulers Vikramshila was an educational institution where education was given under social responsibility. The role of social responsibility of universities in India has existed since ancient time.

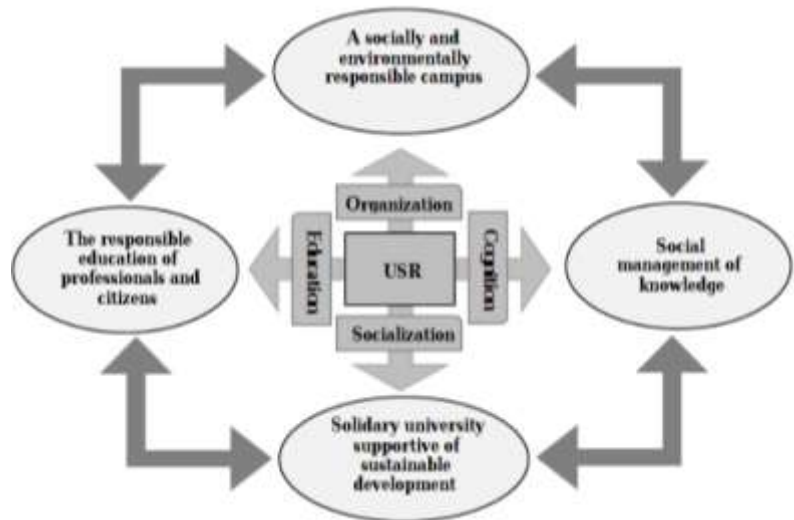
USR and Holistic Approach of Education

The concept of USR was developed by a group of Chilean university through the project “University build country” between 2001 and 2005¹. The Indian knowledge culture of Education is believe on the “*Vidya Dadati Vinayam*”, that is the holistic approach. Modesty makes the person sound harmony. Madhya Pradesh Education Minister suggested that all universities and colleges to adopt villages and work in them under social responsibility. Several Indian Universities organize awareness campaign and activities on issues like education, health, social harmony and environment with adopted villages. The question of education, health, social security and livelihood exist in developing rural India. In this situation the social affiliation of educational institutions becomes necessary. Keeping in these context the traditional method of study and research in higher education is being innovatively expanded in the form of community engagement. The holistic development of society as well as students which is associated with higher education can have practical knowledge and understanding along with bookish knowledge would be possible through inclusive approach. It is important for the larger society to get the benefits of education.

National Education Policy: 2020 clearly mentioned that innovative creation of knowledge must be based on Indian ethos. Rural oriented higher education is an interconnection of 'Global to Local'. The 5th Global Report of the Global University for Innovation (GUNI) and UNESCO (UNESCO) Conference on Higher Education, 2009 recommends multidimensional and holistic development through community engagement. Poverty, literacy, infant and maternal mortality, gender inequality, health and nutrition awareness are practical challenges are there in India. Social responsibility of universities will prove to be effective in ameliorating these challenges. Which is an essential process of nation building.

Sustainable Development through USR

One of the most important goals in 17 Sustainable development Goals is 17 of 2030 is "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for". United Nations mentioned the important role of universities for sustainable development. Sustainable development goal is not possible due to the limitation of education and educational institutions to the boundaries. UNESCO's higher education expert Mariana Patru said, "It has taken us 15 years for the world to see that why higher education should be part of a stand-alone goal. So this is modest, it is an achievement. It is very first time that the United Nations has so clearly stated that poverty is the driver for inequality in access to higher education.



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University are think tank of the society. The students get knowledge and aware about social/moral responsibility as well as duty which is most important thing for the sustainable development of the society and nation. Education has been an important element at the center of the global economy, political, social and technological change as well. We can see the history of the last several decades. The role of youth is important for the upliftment of any nation. Education is the only effective medium of this. National Education Policy 2020 is providing direction for innovative and sustainable change in Indian education system.

Socially Oriented Value System and Youth

It is necessary that maintain the national pride and self-confidence to acquaint the future generation and youth with the invaluable heritage of the nation's pride and culture. The cooperation of society and educational institutions is necessary in the efforts to make the youth aware of the dedication and self-pride of the nation. The disappearing morality in civil society, the feelings of human service give rise to social evils. There is a feeling of an ideal society that every citizen there should feel safe and proud in that society. But at present the feeling of fear and terror is growing in every society, people are afraid to help each other, due to which the frustrated feeling is growing in the mind. Education makes people fear free. The formation of ideal society is possible only through the social responsibility of universities. Higher education institutes do the work of making human beings a fearless, confident and courageous citizen. National Education Policy focus on science, literature, technology and employable subjects including moral and ethical.

Therefore, it is clear that by developing these moral values, student can understand of their social responsibilities only by the educational institution during their education period. It is the moral responsibility of the school to give them education as well as knowledge of their social rights and duties. Teaching discipline to the students and giving them the formula of success at different stages of their career is also done by the teachers of the educational



institution. This subject is important for the ongoing and future research and teaching learning activities in the field of social science. In the last few years, lessons of social participation and responsibility are being added to teaching learning and curriculum building. On the basis of which new direction is being given to the development of the society. Through new researches, progress has been visible not only in the socio-political, economic, cultural, commercial but also in the agricultural sector. The significance of a research is considered only when it has a successful role in advancing the society. When students studying in universities and colleges will understand their responsibility towards society then the purpose of social responsibility of universities will be fulfilled in true sense.

USR Management

Social responsibility needs to be particularly included in the strategic plans of the university. It is a time to need to check how have become inclusive our universities in last few years. It has been seen in India that a large number of students have taken admission for higher education in the last 2-3 decades. This increase in the number of students has exposed the inherent challenges for the students of marginalized society. Some of them have seen the face of the University for the first time. The most important element is how higher educational institutions are reflected in the social structure that exists outside the university boundary. It depends on the academic structure and strategic management of the university. According to the report *Inclusive Universities: Linking Diversity, Equity and Excellence for the 21st Century*, which is a joint Study Report by University of Pune and the University of Massachusetts Amherst On issues such as "social justice or controversial issues" "professors may not want to involve students in class discussions." Whereas this should be the first lesson of the social responsibility of universities. Different levels of inequality also exist in a diverse Indian society. It is the responsibility of the educational institutions to carry forward the Indian knowledge tradition by establishing coordination between these issues. This is the place where our prejudices and misconceptions are made clear. Enriching creative diversity is not possible without institutional foresight and leadership. The concept of Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah will be realized only from Indian Universities.

Conclusion

In Indian knowledge culture very respective role of Student, teachers and educational institutions also. At the same time, their responsibility towards the society has also been very massive. At present contexts, the adherence to the ideals of "liberty, equality and fraternity" also depends on the moral values of the student, teacher and educational institutions. University Social Responsibility is the way to achieve the holistic socio-economic development of society and nation also. Universities Social responsibility is the vision for achieving the national goal of excellence and academic standards in higher education. Ancient Indian universities are the examples for us. UGC has also instruct the universities for apply the curriculum to inculcate in the students a sense of responsibility towards the society in respect to NEP 2020. Student get credit on internal assessment basis for their social responsibility-based assignment. This innovation will be very useful in developing a social responsibility-based culture of the



universities system. If we can say in totality, the social commitment of universities is an important link in the revival of the Indian knowledge culture.

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