

CONCURRENT ADMISSION OF STUDENTS : THE BEST ALTERNATIVE TO VACATIONALISATION

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In India, our educational system was evolved by the Britishers mainly to produce clerks for running Government Offices. Since independence several commissions have suggested a number of changes to revamp Indian higher education to be socially relevant : but a very little progress in this direction was achieved. The efforts to vocationalise the higher education have resulted in a mixed response. Our society has, by and large, been highly conservative, taking changes towards newer direction with only bitterness. With the attractions offered by the professional courses, students in the top stratum prefer to go into medical or technical courses. Rest of the students drift into the Arts and Science Colleges, invariably with a view to acquire a degree and without any clear direction, such students ultimately end up with a degree which renders very little scope for the employability.

In a vast developing country like India, there is no dearth of job opportunities. The economic development and prosperity of the country depends on the input from the human resource. However, there is very little input in the real sense. The graduates get contented with a white-collared job, which in their opinion ensures a livelihood. Once such job is earned the salary becomes a right, with hardly any duty consciousness or work culture.

With the quantitative expansion of higher education, even such a white-collared job have become scanty, and hardly 5%-10% of the graduates end up with such jobs. It means that 90%-95% of graduates do not even end up as clerks, leave alone any other higher placement, and become a frustrated lot. These graduates, in spite of all the education, are practically not employable in the present context. The difficulty is that these graduates do not fit into such arenas.

In the Indian context acquiring a degree has become a prestige issue, and in the present context any attempt to discourage the students towards graduation is likely to fail. Therefore, it is necessary that the policy-makers and educationists have to think of a system of higher education which parallelly caters to providing for graduation and at the same time renders the students employable. This is exactly what is expected in the vocationalization of higher education, but the latter never did really take off in view of the rigid frame work of specialisation during graduation.

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The alternative to achieve the goal :

The best alternative to vacationalization is "concurrent admission" of the students into two or more courses. The primary course shall be the collegiate education which caters to the clamour of the students for the "enviable" degree. This could be either through the formal stream, which could be availed by those who are privileged or who can afford to, or through Distance/Correspondence/Open University stream. This would fulfill the dream for acquiring a degree. In both the streams there can be job-oriented courses (para-professional courses) which can render the students employable. A student taking to the graduate programme in one of the streams shall be permitted to take a job oriented course in the other stream. This is called "concurrent admission".

Feasibilities concurrent Admission :

In India, Several States including Tamil Nadu practice the system of five working days a week. There are vacations and holidays on religious, social and political grounds. A casual assessment will show that hardly 50% of the days in a year are really working days in the case of formal education. The resultant holidays can be fruitfully utilised towards training the students towards a job.

Issue of over-burden to the students :

There is an apprehension that undergoing an additional course will be a distraction from the main stream. This could be answered from two different angles. One is that the average brain capacity of an Indian is such that it is not adequately put to during the years of learning, and therefore an additional course is not really burden. From another angle, as long as the very degree does not earn a job, why so much emphasis and clamour towards it ? A part of the effort can be spared towards training for a job.

Issue of Transfer Certificate :

The major problem is with regard to the transfer Certificate (T.C.). We are so much used to the T.C that we ascribe enormous importance to it. Does the T.C really deserve this importance ? What if the student is admitted into a course without a T.C. ? In other words, what damage is caused if the T.C is dispensed with. While undergoing the concurrent courses, why not one of the streams be gone through with a T.C., and another without it ? It is gratifying to know that Indira Gandhi National Open University, the most prestigious centre of Distance Learning in our country, does not insist upon production of T.C. and Migration certificate. It is paradox that in several Universities Open University System is practiced without requiring a basic qualification or a T.C., while the correspondence stream the same is insisted upon. Why this double standard ? The second problem, very often blown out of proportion, is about the timings of the end exams. We are so rigidly used to one or two exam seasons in a year that we fail to move our from these seasons in terms of examinations. Why not the Examinations for the graduate programme and for the job oriented course are scheduled in such a way that they don't clash with each other ?

Advantages of Concurrent Admission :

The important advantages are given below :

- * The dream desire for qualifying for a degree is fulfilled.
- * Training in job oriented course will render the candidates immediately employable.
- * Whereas the graduate programmes do not really often cater to the real liking or taste of the students, the job oriented training will be to his liking.
- * 80% of Indian population is in the villages and the students from villages have to come to the urban for collegiate education. The resources spent towards the commutations can be further made worthwhile if in a same trip a twin purpose is served.
- * No additional year(s) will be spent towards training in the job-oriented avenues.

Experience of the Centre for Distance Education, Bharathiasan University :

The Bharathiasan University has taken a bold decision to permit the students to take concurrent admissions. A student taking a graduate programme in the regular stream within University Area is permitted to take a job-oriented certificate/diploma course. Further, the students in the graduate programme in a day college is even permitted to take such job oriented course in the evening colleges or vice versa. Also, the students in the post graduate programme can taken concurrently a post graduate diploma in the evening college or in the Centre for Distance Education or vice versa. Under concurrent admission a student is allowed to produce T.C. for one course and **course certificate** for another course.

CONCLUSION

The scenario of higher education, the world around is undergoing metamorphic change. Universities in Australia have introduced concurrent courses, one attended in Australia and another in the country of origin. Both the degree/diploma are combined by the Australian Universities. Why not in India ?

