

A STUDY ON UNIVERSITIES' INVOLVEMENT IN CREATING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL EQUITY

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Abstract

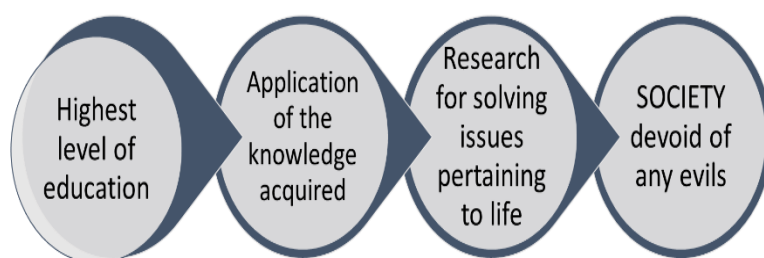
The crux of higher education has always been to develop elites for the society to become more elite, newer, more changed and definitely transformed. What comes across today is a society which has more educational illiterates than educational elites. There is more violent demand instead of the patient hearing, there is vast fanaticism and hooliganism instead of peace and equity. As we take charge of becoming the second largest democracy in the world it dooms to us that we are making ourselves more autocratic, more rigid not only in our actions but also in our perspectives. So, then how do we visualize the new generation to look and act like? What happens as the leadership goes into the hands of those for whom social transformation is mere worship of their existence?

Introduction

“A survey of the epoch has begun early in this century, and an analysis of its latest manifestations: an economic order in which knowledge, not labor or raw material or capital, is the key resource: a social order in which inequality based on knowledge is a major challenge; and a polity in which government cannot be looked to for solving social and economic problems.” -----The age of social transformation by Peter F. Drucker

Conceptual framework

What is our understanding of University Education? As it is understood that university education is the highest form of education where an individual has acquired all basic as well as academic information and goes to university to understand the application of the same. Not only application but research to solve academic problem as well as local and personal problem. This all is anticipated that after being in the university education should lead to a building of a society that is devoid of the evils. But then again, what are we seeing in our society? A big question looms here. Even after 150 years of independence and initiations of higher education the society is hanging in dark. The daily news when we come across is shouting at us and making us realize that the more educated we have become the inequalities have seeped



in. Rather it would not be wrong to say that we are now more organized in creating problems and inventing new ways of evils. Everywhere we see is some or the other form of discrimination which is leading to hatred and a very violent action being played. The freedom as seen in

constitution has become more of conditioned freedom where everything seems to have a clause to it. Then if university is supposed to make students understand the politics of society, democracy, economics of society. What is our expectation of Social transformation?

Idea of Social Transformation for all of us is that there should be a political stability in the nation, equality and equity in the educational arena, any individual should be capable enough to contribute to the economy of the society, removal of the cultural taboos that exist in our country which probably dates to centuries and last but not the least a safe environment where we live. The culmination of all these components in its true sense will lead us to harmony – social harmony, environmental harmony, political harmony, economical harmony with our own selves and the society.

Aim of the study

- To study the social transformation in the University environment

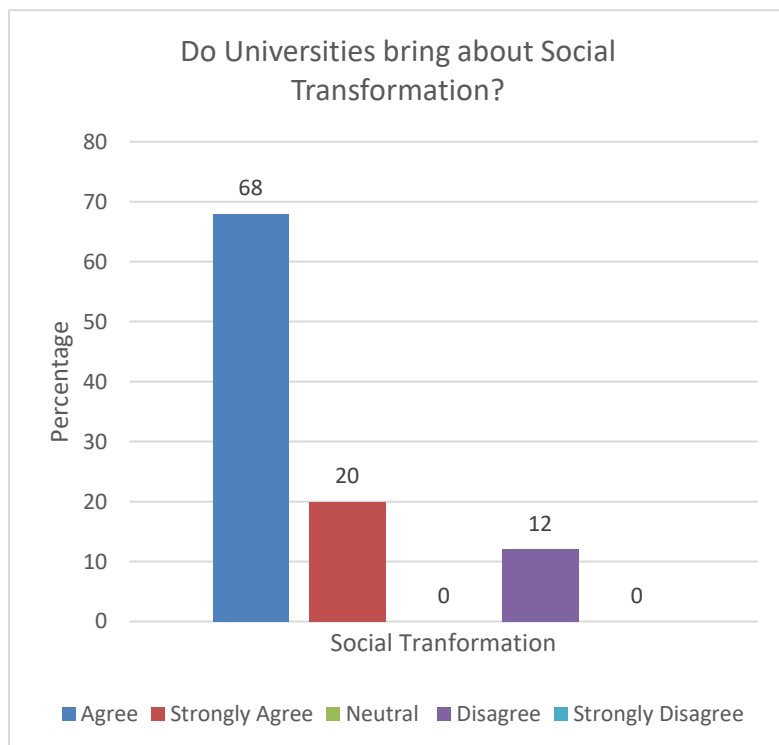
Objective of the study:

- To find out the kind of social transformation in society
- To find out How do the universities create social and economic equity
- To find the role played by University in maintaining the social and economic equity

Findings and Analysis of the survey conducted amongst student teachers

The researcher conducted a survey on 50 student teachers studying in B.Ed. college and being graduates or postgraduates there is some amount of acquaintance of the students with the universities.

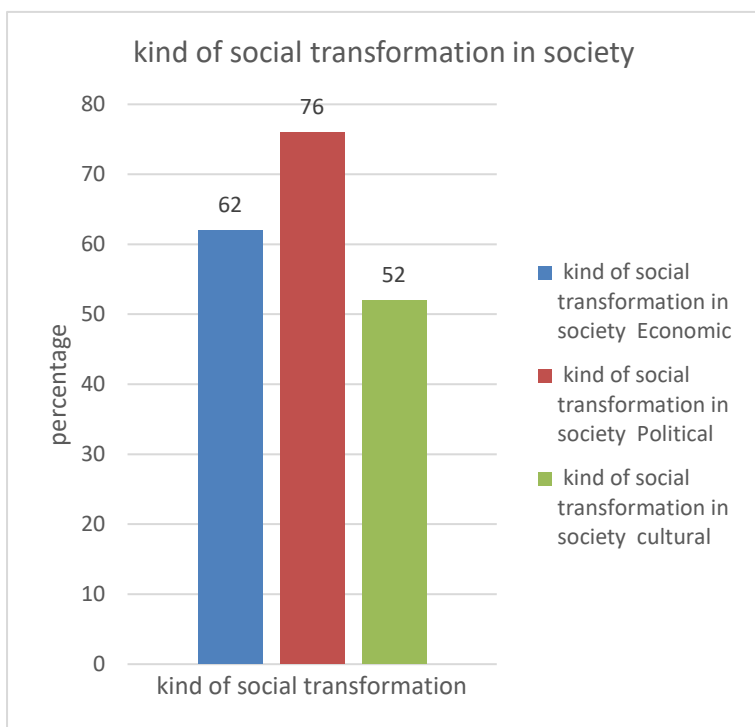
Figure 1



Finding: Figure 1 shows that 68% of student teachers agree that universities do bring about social transformation. Whereas 20% strongly agree regarding universities bringing about social transformation and only 12% disagree.

Analysis: The above finding show that majority of people even though not strongly agreeing yet they agree that Universities do have a play role to bring about social transformation. Definitely the reason would be type of work culture created in the universities as well as the effect of higher education can be taken into consideration.

Figure 2

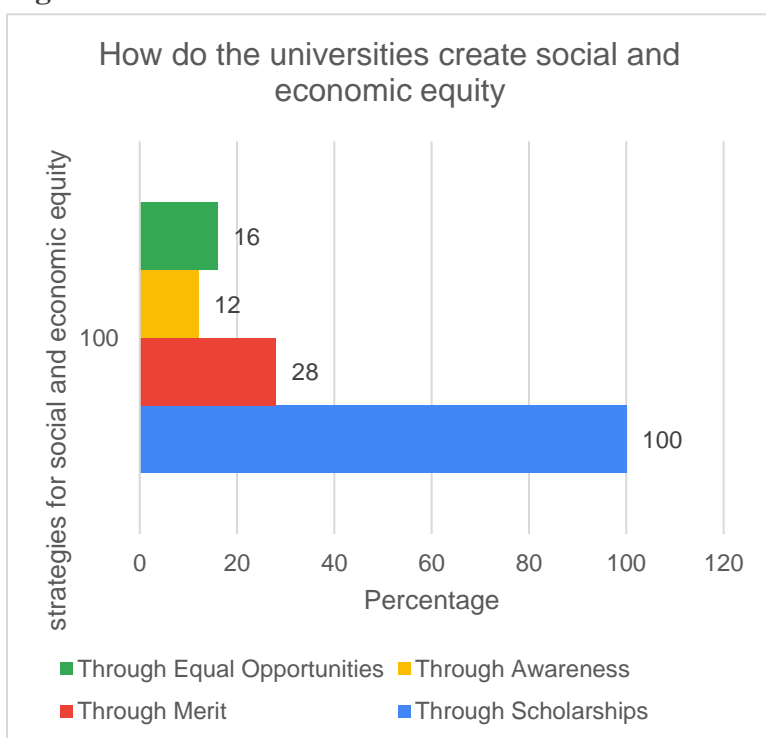


Finding: The result in figure 2 shows that amongst the 3 types of social transformation in society 62% of the respondents are of the opinion that economic transformation has taken place , 52% feel that cultural transformation has happened , whereas 76% feel there has been political transformation.

Analysis: The result of the finding show that majority of people feel that there has been lot of transformation in the political arena, even though the other two types i.e. cultural and economic has seen a change but as compared to political transformation they are less likely to have been transformed.

The reason why respondents feel that political transformation has happened may be probably due to the change in political scene in the present context , addition of people in politics from the disadvantaged groups and the idea of inclusion seeping in even though only at the periphery is much advertised and talked about. Media and university also play a major role there in promoting the youth to join the politics, be a part of the system through various bodies like student council, youth groups etc.

Figure 3

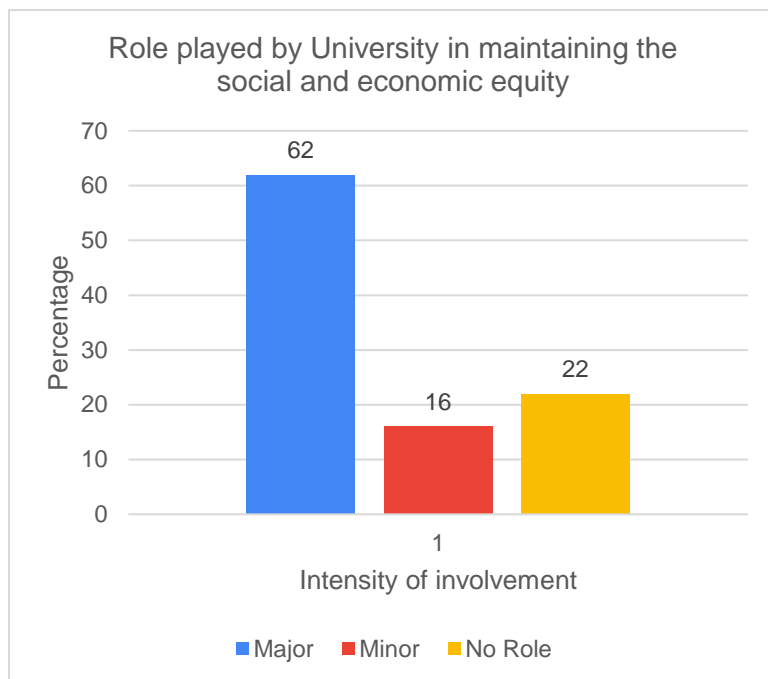


Findings: the findings in figure 3 show that 100% of the respondents are of opinion that university creates social and economic equity through scholarships , 28% say through merit, 16% say through equal opportunities whereas 12% say through awareness creation

Analysis: The findings show that respondents are having proper information on the variety of scholarships that are provided by the universities, whereas very few believe that other awareness programmes are not conducted by the universities. This shows that universities need to make their

stakeholders aware of the facility that is offered and probably make the access also easier and smoother.

Figure 4



Findings: Figure no 4 shows that 62% of the respondents feel that universities are intensely involved in the maintenance of social and economic equity, whereas others have divided opinion but still the involvement is less intense.

Analysis: thus, the findings show the overall involvement of universities in maintenance of social and economic equity is not very great. There could be variety of reasons and it also depends on whether there is any specialized programme and human resource involved in such kind of work. The result also suggests that students do expect the

university to take up a prominent role in the maintenance of such equality amongst the students

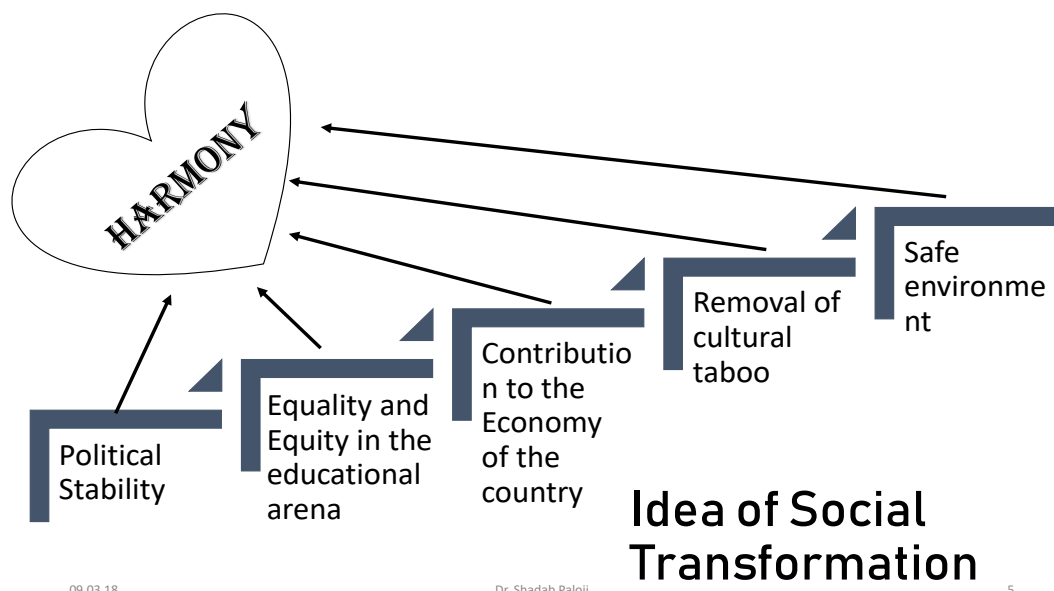
What kind of social transformation do we see? Where is the equality if we really did make it possible to have some equality where the equity is? What about the safe environment? Now people are more scared of venturing out in odd hours, may be in places where there is more violence, more pollution. The society is moving more downwards rather than upwards.

HOW DO UNIVERSITIES CREATE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL EQUITY?

So, in such a situation the mind keeps on asking one question what role university is going to play in our lives to create an economic and social equity. Seeing the data, it leads to the understanding where the discourse is on the following

- There must be a radical change of spirit in everyone.
- Higher education needs to train intellectual pioneers who can take forward the work of our reformers.
- One should be able to develop the qualities of synthesizing the knowledge----a ‘Samanavaya’ of the different items of the knowledge.
- The individuals should awaken in themselves, an innate ability to live the life of the soul.
- Develop a concept of the social order in the students. They must also develop value of democracy, justice and liberty, equality and fraternity.
- There should be the courage to bring about new changes.
- We are now in dearth of real leaders who could lead the youth of our nation today without being biased. Thus, preparing leaders.
- The insight to see that the quality of the worship does not depends on the material, equipment or the political machinery but on the character.

- Prepare personnel to meet increased demand for every type of the activity, i.e., Administration, commerce, industry, politics.
- Develop scientists and technological personnel.
- Coming out of the “personal culture” and start the development of the world culture.



HAS THE UNIVERSITY BEEN ABLE TO PLAY THE ROLE WELL? THE PRESENT DATA:

"It is a fantastic achievement that India now has 42 universities in the Asia rankings and that the country has improved on 12 of the 13-metrics underlying the rankings," said Phil Baty, editorial director of global rankings at 'Times Higher Education'. ---- Indian Universities

In the Asia-Pacific region, organizations like the Asia-Pacific University Community Engagement Network (APUCEN) and AsiaEngage are trying to build universities' capacity to engage with local communities and develop relationships that help communities over the long term.

Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), which is working with residents of Air Papan, Mersing, to reduce poverty by increasing employment and study opportunities.

Seeing the above example, it can be constituted that we have failed in defining the specific objectives of our universities and attaining them. We love to use the jargons and more complicated terminologies and ideas but can work on the simplification of it

THE RESULT OF STUDIES DONE IN THE AREA OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

There has been data collected from a large national sample survey of over 100,000 households for each of the four survey years—1983, 1987–1988, 1993–1994, and 1999–2000—and focus on the educational attainment of children and young adults aged 6–29. Results show a declining gap between Dalits, Adivasis, and others in the odds of completing primary school. Such improvement is not seen for Muslims, a minority group that does not benefit from affirmative action. There is little or no improvement in inequality at the college level. Further, there is no evidence that upper-income groups, the so-called creamy layer of Dalits and Adivasis, disproportionately benefit from the affirmative action programs at the expense of their lower-income counterparts.

Widening socioeconomic differences are particularly evident at upper levels of education. Perhaps the most ironic finding in this line of research is that in communist societies, too, cultural capital reflected in father's educational level increased children's chances of gaining higher education (Treiman, Ganzeboom, and Rijken 2003), and even as access to education became universal in primary school, ethnic inequalities widened in high school (Hannum 2002). The literature on why these inequalities persist or even widen in spite of the increases in overall educational levels remains poorly developed.

The results indicate the following:

First, the educational gap between Hindus and Muslims continued and sometimes expanded. This is a noteworthy finding in the context of current debates around Muslim deprivation in India following the publication of the Sachar Committee Report on Indian Muslims (Government of India 2006). The hypothesis of maximally maintained inequality (Raftery and Hout 1993) suggests that until the dominant group attains educational saturation at any given educational level (estimated at around 95% completion level), educational inequalities will continue to persist even in an era of educational expansion at about the same level. Our results are consistent with this.

Second, the gap between upper caste Hindu/other religious groups and Dalits/adivasis diminished. This decline in inequality accelerated during the 1990s, a period of intensified affirmative action directed at Dalits and adivasis.

Third, the educational gap declined at the primary school level rather than at the college level. Quotas in college admission have caused great public resistance. However, our results show no improvement and even mild deterioration in college graduation rates for Dalits, casting doubt on the effectiveness of these policies. The decline in inequality at the primary level may be associated with affirmative action in employment. For low-skill jobs, there are vast differences in income between those who have a regular year-round job and those who are self-employed or work as casual laborers. About two-thirds of formal sector jobs are controlled by the government either in the public sector or in direct government employment. About 80% of the jobs in public sector enterprises in 1999 were categorized as Group C (driver, technician, typist, mechanic, and the like, often requiring education up to 8 or 10 grades) or Group D (food service worker, peon, sanitary worker, watchman, and the like, often requiring basic literacy). In 1999, nearly 29% of the public-sector employees in Groups C and D were from Dalit or Adivasi background, while only 13% at the higher level fell in this category in spite of the mandated quota of 22.5% (Indiastat 2006).

Fourth, with controls for income and residence, Dalits experienced a greater disadvantage in college graduation than did adivasis. These results need to be treated with caution because the literature on this issue is scant, and we can only conjecture the causes underlying this observation. Further, the results may also be skewed due to small sample sizes. Social exclusion patterns for Dalits and adivasis may be quite different. Although there is some prejudice against the adivasis, adivasis tend to live in concentrated localities in mountainous regions. Thus, a majority of the Indian population has little contact with adivasis and little religious basis for discrimination. As a result, when adivasis move into urban areas and gain better income, they may be less likely to face the prejudice that is built into Hindu society, which sees Dalits as being polluted and socially unacceptable. Some of the Adivasi communities

have gained considerable power in recent years after gaining mainstream jobs; the power of the *Meenas*, a tribal group in Rajasthan is legendary. In contrast, a Dalit is always a Dalit and, regardless of his or her income, continues to suffer from social exclusion and discrimination. Thus, even upper-income Dalits may face far greater difficulties in school than other groups, including adivasis, reducing their educational attainment. This is an important finding in the context of current Indian discourse. One of the alternatives to the current positive discrimination policies is to reserve quotas for economically disadvantaged groups—that is, affirmative action based on class rather than caste. However, our results suggest that even upper-class Dalits fail to achieve their educational potential, and hence class-based affirmative action may not remedy all of the caste-based inequalities.

While this analysis indicates narrowing of educational inequalities between Dalits and Adivasis on one hand and upper caste Hindus and Sikhs, Christians, and Jains on the other during the 1980s and 1990s, it cannot positively attribute these changes to affirmative action policies, although these are the years during which affirmative action policies intensified. Educational inequalities are a function of many different factors: availability and quality of schools, returns to education, parental demand for schooling, and teachers' attitudes. Within the context of our analysis, it is not possible to show unambiguously that the changes we observed are the results of positive discrimination or affirmative action. The declining educational disadvantage of Dalits/Adivasis, the two groups benefiting from affirmative action, and the lack of improvement in the relative status of Muslims, who do not benefit from positive discrimination, suggest that affirmative action policies may have had some impact. However, this is at best a tentative conclusion and worthy of future research examining the impact of specific policies. Moreover, while educational inequalities declined in the context of Indian affirmative action policies, the size of this achievement was modest. Although the situation is improving, at each educational level, Dalits and adivasis continue to lag behind upper caste Hindus, Christians, and Sikhs, and these disadvantages seem to accumulate at higher levels of education.

- This analysis indicates narrowing of educational inequalities between Dalits and adivasis on one hand and upper caste Hindus and Sikhs
- The educational gap declined at the primary school level rather than at the college level.
- The educational gap between Hindus and Muslims continued and sometimes expanded.
- Widening socioeconomic differences are particularly evident at upper levels of education.
- In communist societies, too, cultural capital reflected in father's educational level increased children's chances of gaining higher education.

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