

A Study of Existing Management Education Models across South Asian Region and Its Development by Focussing On Partnerships

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Abstract: The South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC), consisting of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Srilanka, was established in 1985 with the objective of raising the standards of living in the region through greater economic co-operation among member countries. The growing recognition of social indicators and their direct relationship with country's human development lead greater emphasis on nations to seek not only economic but social cooperation. The areas of cooperation should also cover human development that current discourse on the subject emphasizes. In today's scenario a nation's/bloc's visibility on international discourse is evaluated on the basis of whether a country or a bloc (economic or non economic) has been able to deliver on internationally accepted goals and objectives. In this direction the MDG (millennium development goals) placed human well-being and universal education at the centre of global development objectives-an approach advocated by development perspective emerging from human development theorists and supporters. Today's society is primarily a knowledge based society and a nations visibility on international arena is depicted by how well a country perform in knowledge related variables. The discourse on development in a knowledge-based society has changed enormously. In this discourse the shift of focus from capital to human resource development has prime importance. In the context of knowledge based economy, education is one of the critical variable to be evaluated and researched upon by knowledge workers i.e academicians, scholars, industry and international bodies. The South Asian region, being rich in human resource, has tremendous opportunities in a knowledge-based society to support its own development and turn the axis of global development in its favour. It requires certain strategies of development within respective countries and active co-operation among the SAARC, notwithstanding the initiatives taken so far, as well as among countries of Asia and Pacific continent. Strong institutional networking and sharing with countries and institutions of the world in a way that supports the SAARC to reap its comparative advantage is the strategy that policy makers in this region must take into consideration. The objective of the paper is to elucidate the changing global context, review the progress through important indicators of human development primarily education and to pinpoint the differences in educational institutions across South Asian Region, strategies of development, including the aspects of co-operation in human development. The objective of the paper is to work on the backdrop of the literature that reveals the need for institutional networking, resource mobilization, partnerships and developing tailored pedagogy for educational institutes to meet current and future market needs.

Keywords: Human development, institutional networking, knowledge, education, resource mobilization.

I. Introduction

The character of literacy in 21st century has undergone changes. Dating back from prehistoric times till now the education across the globe has gained specialized definitions and in this context specialized research needs to be catered to. The inequitable growth of contemporary world societies has made a sound and deep impact on the institution of education. This can be linked or associated to adoption curve of marketing wherein some countries earned the status of innovators, early adopters, early majority (western community) and some earned the status of late majority and laggards (Asian, African community) in terms of education. Behind the scenes there was a contradictory gigantic phenomenon, Asian subcontinent arising as hub for cross national resource transfer. It included primarily technology transfer, human capital transfer, capital transfer etc. The recognition of education as one of the critical social indicator for evaluating a countries social health became dominant. Education in 21st century is no longer a national entity but a regional and global entity. This changing face of education can be attributed to the rise in no. of regional blocs (economic/non-economic), associations, communities, hubs, collaborations and partnerships. Knowledge creation led the way for knowledge sharing and building up of global education models with localized goals and objectives because the context in which model has to work should have absorptive capacity for institutionalization.

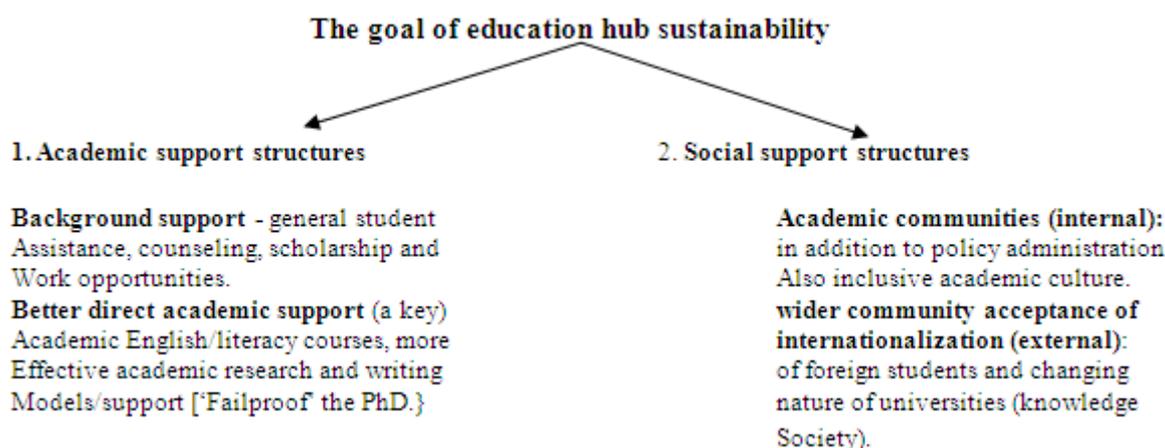
Need Of The Study

The introductory part revealed the importance of Asian subcontinent in terms of education and resource mobilization. Asian subcontinent if evaluated as a wholesome region (political, economical, social, and technological) would sum up to some unbalanced results. South east Asia outperformed other regional countries in terms of education, technology and the keyword to describe the region was Quality. In terms of technological expertise and quality production system south East Asia dominated the world market. Central Asia on other hand was marked with unstable geopolitical environment and thus its picture on the world stage remained dubious. The region that remained unexplored was south Asia (excluding china). The south Asian economies were characterized as labor intensive economies and the region was experiencing a shift from centralized to liberalized economic systems. The newness of market structures made south Asia to benchmark some of the industrial practices of west in order to emerge on a global economic scene. To benchmark western economic systems south Asia needed to adopt institutional capacities and ultimately institutionalize them. Our social system on the other hand was sensitive to these models. In this scenario it was needed to bridge the gap between our indigenous social system and economic systems. Education was the driving force for western economies but with the advancement of industrialization the corporate sector emerged across globe. The need of professional education arose exponentially, the western education hubs were pioneer in delivering professional education especially management education. In order to compete with the western subcontinent it was necessary for south Asian region to organize the fragmented regions and work as a single unit. This led to evolution of SAARC and its first formal summit was held at Dhaka, Dec 7-8- 1985. In this context the study is aimed at evaluating and presenting integration models for management education across south asia.

II. Literature

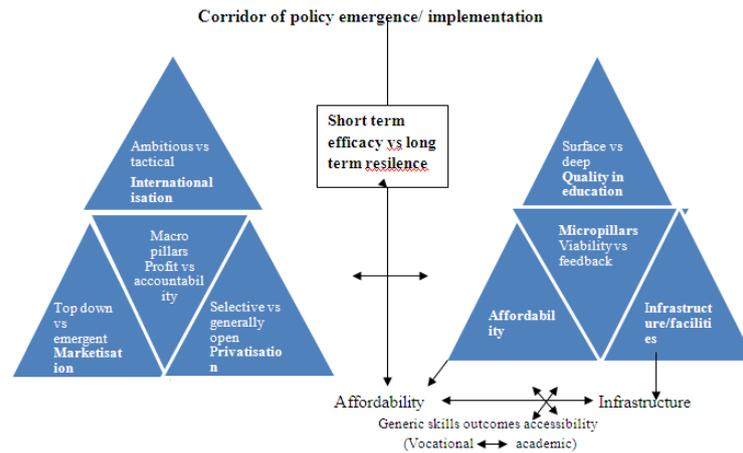
Cheng (2010) explained Asian education hub model whereby the role of investment in higher education was considered as an important factor for Asia to emerge as a global education hub. Cheng focussed on the importance of transfer system i.e. a system of “importing’ education services from stronger systems and then “exporting” to weaker systems. Higher education when being transferred from one system to another should be looked upon by country as a business, capacity building and investment entity so that it doesn’t get frozen in curriculum only but flows in a market as its dynamic in character. The stronger systems in this context are the south east Asia’s education hubs that can be evaluates on various parameters.

To exemplify this south east Asian model has been taken under study: the key missing links macro-micro pillars of education hub/internationalization sustainability



Deep and sustainable rather than superficial notions and ad hoc measures of educational ‘**quality**’ – – i.e. ‘**active**’ **learning and knowledge building** (critical thinking, problem-solving, collaborative project development, innovation etc.) vs. **exam-based curriculum/ information recapitulation/descriptive research/ credentialism**. Ultimately the crucial indicator of this is the ability to attract, harness and integrate **international academic staff** (i.e. develop an **authentic academic culture** based around the enduring values of open-ended inquiry, transferable innovation, and social relevance)

Malaysian vs. Singaporean configurations of the ‘three macro pillars’ of Education Hub policy (marketization, privatization and internationalization)

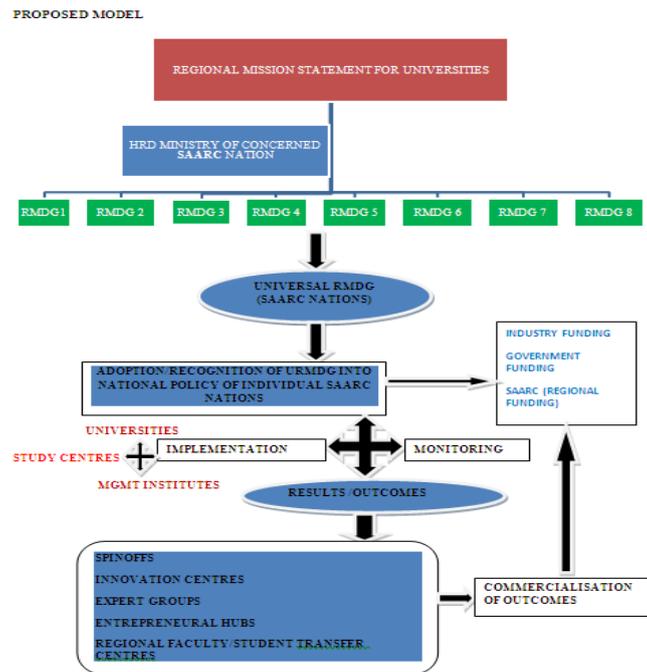


L.R Irala's (2006) study of management education in India can be understood by an equation i.e growth in management education is directly proportional to degree of financial autonomy and academic autonomy. The left hand side variable that is management education is a process and a not a commodity. Financial rationalization of commodity is easy to materialize but it being a process need flexible and dynamic financial consideration. Management institutions vary from each other to a larger extent in terms of curricula, pedagogy, human resource profile, and infrastructure. These elements form a concrete configuration for academic institutes but the ranking of these elements in this concrete pyramid varies across institutions. Thus there should be a greater financial autonomy for institutions so that they according to their needs can tailor their financial budgets by giving due considerations to priority areas such as research funding, international collaborations, student scholarships, industry interface, student exchange programs domestically as well as internationally. Academic autonomy on the other hand is one of the intrinsic elements that has to be designed by academic institutes taking every possible step to first forecast the market need and then design the academic programmes with market oriented specializations. Benchmarking academic curricula against well established foreign management models can be critical but this exercise should incorporate future market scanning. Thus it seems evident that educational institutions and supplementary providers of management education have no choice but to rise to the challenge of global competition.

Chua (2004) emphasized upon the difference of perception held by different stakeholders i.e. faculty, students, employers and parents. Regarding the quality of education and classified these perceived qualities into an Input-Process-Output (IPO) framework. Input refers to the entry requirements, process to the teaching and learning process, and output to the employability and academic standings. On the employer side the quality of management education refers to the employability skills of students, in south Asia especially in India, Pakistan, Maldives the syllabi remains stagnant for a long period of time. On the other hand market trends change at an accelerating pace thus posing challenge for management education institutes to deliver market oriented outcomes (students). The stagnant syllabi over the years create void and imbalances the notion of coping with market dynamism.

In this backdrop of management institutes failing to respond to market requirements the need of hour is to create a regional accreditation system to evaluate management institutes across region on the basis of research outcomes, performance of the universities in international rankings based on professional and scientific achievements, their alumni presence in knowledge-based economy, new technical and industrial paradigms and their coherence with the new human resource management practices being included in their curriculum. The problem is deep rooted into the policy framework for management education amongst SAARC nations i.e. strategic mission of universities is not clearly defined and something that is not clearly defined cannot be clearly communicated and that to, across regions that are diverse, multilingual, and multicultural. This further creates an unfavorable environment for regions to develop the regional model for education transfer and participation. Lack of entrepreneurial culture is again a deterrent for the universities definition of innovation hubs. Entrepreneurial university outcomes in the form of spin-offs can act as a critical linkage between management institutes and industry across south asian region. Thus to create this linkage financial regional cooperation system should be formed wherein the creators of spin offs could get an alternative funding support and the rewards of spin-offs in the form of technological breakthroughs could be shared mutually by the member countries. In order to maintain the discipline and transparency in this system the independent regulatory framework needs to be developed upon wherein the critical decisions regarding the ownership of innovation, licensing, funding modules should be taken into consideration. The role of partnerships between the management institutes across SAARC countries needs to be catalyzed by increasing cross national mobility of researchers, management students, faculty transfer programmes etc. Corporate have to come forward and extend

their support to B schools in the areas of finance, training and research. B-schools efforts must be to produce global manager of proper knowledge, attitude, skill, insight and foresight to meet the global challenges of 21st century.



The proposed model above is presented in the light of this topic to make SAARC regional management education hub. The regional mission statement encompasses a universal mission that has to be created adopted and followed by the member nations. The need for the mission statement is to guide the actions of the hub, spell out its overall goal, provide a path, and guide decision-making. It provides the framework or context within which the strategies are formulated. Mission statement will reveal the key stakeholders of the model and in turn will evaluate their role in building up key strategies. The universal regional mission statement will make these regions to act as a unitary system and create a synergetic impact on the whole management education system. It will continuously remind the member countries to align their goals and policies with the universal mission statement. An environment of competition as well as cooperation will evolve wherein the countries in the bloc will evaluate the other member countries in terms of materializing the mission established and this will result in the evolution of unique set of practices, strategies, and methodologies. A cooperative spirit because of having a single mission statement will further reinforce the sharing behavior in terms of other countries benchmarking the best strategies and practices. A mission has to flow down to member countries via proper channel i.e. through the concerned regulatory bodies. In order to make mission statement realizable in character it has to be broken down into regional goals i.e. RMDG (regional management development goals). The eight SAARC countries will develop their regional management development goals. The need of having RMDG is to provide individual autonomy to member country to develop goals taking into consideration the resource constraints of the region. Thus all the SAARC nations will come up with the set of RMDG's. These RMDG's needs to be consolidated in the next stage so that replication of goals will be minimized and thus the cost of generating funds for achievement of goals will be controlled. Consolidation will lead to formulation of RMDG for the SAARC bloc as a whole. This RMDG would be given due recognition by the different regional governments by incorporating it into their national policies. This will in turn crystallize the essence of SAARC bloc as a entity which is not having a rubber stamp identity or a advisory character with merely any potential to realize objectives but a strong unified bloc with common objectives. These goals have to be adopted by the universities, study centers, management institutes that are running management courses so that the urgency of implementation is realized. The international monitoring agencies as well the indigenous cross regional rating agencies can evaluate the results against established goals. The academic fraternity will in turn become more market oriented and this would result in formulation of market driven pedagogy. The key outcomes of this model are spin-offs, entrepreneurial hubs, innovation centers, social mobility and expert groups. The spin offs and entrepreneurial outcomes can be commercialized and the capital can be further transferred to the regional funding agencies. In this manner two way motives will be achieved, firstly the spin off's product will get a market to commercialize and secondly the financial capital will emerge. This model being theoretical has got future scope for research so

that new paradigms will be evaluated and sworced upon by SAARC community, researchers, academicians as a whole.

The international community's responsibility also comes to fore for example, global accrediting organizations such as the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) and the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD), the founders of the GFME, must be more proactive in their efforts to include schools from developing countries; to provide transparent, valid, reliable information about quality; and to calibrate against the future needs of global business. More regionally-focused organizations such as the Association of African Business Schools (AABS), Association of Asia Pacific Business Schools (AAPBS), Association of Indian Management Schools (AIMS), Association of Management Development Institutions in South Asia (AMDISA), Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC), Canadian Federation of Business School Deans (CFBSD), Central and East European Management Development Association (CEEMAN), Latin American Council of Management Schools (CLADEA), and Russian Association of Business Education (RABE) should come to a common platform via conferences, seminars and collaborations to better understand how global issues and challenges are differentially experienced by schools in across different regional territories.

In today's dynamic environment, the recognition of quality management education on international arena has increased manifold. For example, the Global Competitiveness Index, created annually by the World Economic Forum, includes as a variable the quality of a nation's management schools. The World Bank also uses nations' scores on this variable as a part of its Knowledge Assessment Methodology (KAM), which helps nations identify means to transition to a knowledge-based economy. Leading international bodies have introduced efforts to improve management education. For example, the Global Business School Network, which operates through an arm of the World Bank, encourages leading business schools from around the world to work in emerging markets to improve "future leaders' access to high-quality management education helping to build the foundation for economic growth and poverty reduction in developing countries" (GBSN Web site). There are many examples of countries or regions that have recently invested in high-quality business schools, including Qatar, Russia, India, China, and North Korea. In 2003, to reinvigorate its competitiveness in the context of deregulation, Japan initiated the creation of 29 new business schools in just four years (Sanchanta, 2007, p. 11). This makes us to deduct that whether national, regional, or international association, the work done by us is exposed to multiple evaluators. But in this process the missing linkage is the conversion of these multiple evaluators into future collaborators, so that proper mentoring can be gained and used by developing economies in their management education models.

III. Conclusion

"One region, eight countries, complex challenges"

Despite diversity in their geographical, linguistic, and political structures, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka face common management education challenges. Most bear a triple burden of continuing existing management curricula, increasing student intake, and a growing recognition of institutes. The inefficient collaborative modes, disintegration, massive unplanned student intake and a host of issues like mushrooming of low quality academic centers has fuelled the problem of creating quality driven institutes in south Asian bloc. On the HR front malfunctions with regard to the motivational Package for the Members of the Academic Community needs to be considered. Both the legal framework and the universities own regulations do not sufficiently stimulate differential payment based on individual professional and scientific performance. There are several malfunctions with regard to the teaching and research workloads which affect the resources and their distribution and cause continuous discontent in the academic community. The current mechanisms for motivation neither attract new entrants in the higher management education system, nor do they succeed to maintain the existing staff. This situation has median and long term negative effects and discourages the predictability and the strategic dimension of training programmes. The salary related drawbacks and malfunctions regarding the quality of academic management hinder the implementation of continuous training programmes. Management education across the globe is facing a unique crisis of relevance in the contemporary scenario. All the aspects of Business education such as quality of MBA aspirants, curriculum, business research, quality of research publications, industry-institute interface, management development programmes, faculty development programmes, placements, compensation packages of B-school graduates, career development trajectory of alumni, diversity among faculty as well as students, governance and accountability, etc. are under critical scanner. Indian B-schools are not untouched by the contextual compulsions of the Management education in the international arena. B-schools in India need to revitalize Management education in the country in order to meet the expectations of all the key stakeholders such as students, faculty, society, industry, government and global community at large. Hence it is imperative that the ever-growing crisis of relevance vis-à-vis Management education is addressed collectively, enabling key-stakeholders to contribute their mite in the process and system improvements. A broad-based consultation

with the key stakeholders might help in developing a holistic approach for effective Management education while tackling fundamental issues of faculty shortage, lack of governance and accountability, absence of an effective regulatory body, poor quality of research and publications, lack of pedagogical innovations, lesser industry- institute interface, lower employability of B-school graduates among others. It is time to collectively reflect and take stock so that we as an academic fraternity are ready for next wave in Management education not only in our Asian subcontinent but across the globe.

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