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## ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES IN INDIA IN INFLUENCING ACADEMIC CULTURE OF A COUNTRY

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### ABSTRACT

*Culture is a broad term that is not only used to define how human being live and interact with each other but it also includes shared attitudes and values. If we see academic culture in specific then it can be said that it involves ways of behaving and consists of those attitudes and values which are shared by people working or studying within the educational institutions. Academic culture of educational institutions largely involves academic viewpoints, morals, integrities and environments. Higher education plays an important role in shaping the academic culture of the country so the role of universities becomes very important in this regard. This paper aims to study the role of universities in India in shaping the academic culture of a country. It is based on secondary sources like government websites, United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) reports, journals (national and international), books, articles etc.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Academic Culture, Universities, Culture, Higher Education, India*

### INTRODUCTION

Culture is indeed an intermediate through which individuals express their skills. It is a source of uniqueness, innovation and creativeness. Culture is a broad term that is not only used to define how human being live and interact with each other but it also includes shared attitudes and values (UNESCO, 2010). Knowledge is also one of the important part of the culture. If we see academic culture in specific then it can be said that it is acquired through the process of cultivation and improvement of the individual especially by means of education. It involves ways of behaving and consists of those attitudes and values which are shared by people working or studying within the educational institutions. Academic culture of educational institutions largely

involves academic viewpoints, morals, integrities and environments. It has gained its meaning from the interaction between the educational and academic groups at the university level (Sarmadi, Nouri, Zandi, & Lavasani, 2017) as the higher education plays an important role in shaping the academic culture of the country. Academic Culture is responsible for augmenting campus culture (Shen & Tian, 2012). To successfully lead academic community such as students, teachers, professors and researchers, it is necessary to understand the factors that are likely to have impact on academic culture. Some of the factors are academic factors like classroom arrangement and activities, types of assessment tools, mix-gender classes, lecturer's role in classroom and student's role etc. or social factors like unfamiliar customs, discrimination, food, climate and mixing with others from different cultures etc. (Alsaifi & Shin, 2017). These factors are to be carefully looked into in by the universities so as to shape the academic culture of the country. Various countries universities have their own academic culture. Malaysia's academic culture is totally different from the academic culture of Australia. Malaysia's academic culture is more teacher centric whereas Australia's academic culture is more student centric (Wan, et al., 2015). If we take the example of India which is a diverse nation then the first and foremost thing which comes into the mind is that having an inclusive academic culture (Prabhu, 2012). Good academic culture will allow the opportunity to the academic community to move forward and contribute in good research work which will ultimately be beneficial for the country.

This paper aims to study the role of universities in India in shaping the academic culture of a country. It is based on secondary sources like government websites, United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) reports, United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolutions, journals (national and international), books, articles, reports etc.

## MAIN BODY

### Factors Responsible For Shaping The Academic Culture Of The Country

There are various factors that are responsible in shaping the academic culture of the country. Some of them are:

- **Availability of resources and facilities:** This is the most important factor in shaping the academic culture of any country. Any university should have the adequate resources such as libraries, labs, professors or administrative staff and facilities such as infrastructural facilities to run the university successfully. Better resources and facilities will help students in increasing their interest in the academics.
- **Lecturer role in classroom:** Lecturer role in the classroom is to teach the students. His/her main purpose should be to teach the students so that the students are able to understand the subject in an easy manner.
- **Classroom Arrangements and Activities:** Classrooms within the universities should be arrange in such a manner that it should make comfortable environment of study. Various activities should be carried out within the classroom so that it indulge students belonging different cultures and background.
- **Relationship with Lecturers:** The lecturers must not only teach students but also they should become friends of the students some times. So that the students are able to share their

problems with the lecturers easily. They must encourage the students to break the ice of silence and speak for the problems.

- **Language Factors:** Language is considered as one of the most important element of communication. It is one of the main component which can directly affect the academic culture of the country as use of different languages within the university can help in creating an inclusive academic environment. It will also help the students in better understanding of their academic subjects comfortably.
- **Adjustment Barriers:** Various students have to face adjustment barriers especially in the higher education as they have to move out from their native place to enrol themselves in universities. Universities should make environment conducive for all the students so that they can adjust themselves easily (Eze & Inegbedion, 2015).
- **Student's role:** Students responsibility increases as soon as he/she enters into the higher education system. Now he/she have to seriously take notes, write assignments, reports, test and understand lectures well. As the students after completing his higher education will enter into the world of job or has to enter into professional life so students must indulge themselves fully in the studies
- **Mix-Gender classes:** There are boys' colleges or girls colleges or co-educational colleges where boys and girls study together. The classes where boys and girls study together are known as mix-gender classes. In a mix-gender class there is an opportunity for the students to learn how they have to interact with the opposite gender. It helps in increasing the confidence of the students and also improves the communication skills of the students.
- **Proper utilization of available resources:** It is the responsibility of the universities to provide adequate resources and facilities to the students which are necessary for their studies. But proper utilization of available resources and facilities depends upon students. If the students are properly using the resources than they will be able to contribute to the growth of the organization as well as the country.
- **Participating in different activities:** Universities should provide various opportunities to the students to participate in different activities such as cultural activities, sports activities, NCC, NSS and various other talent hunt competitions so that students can find out their hidden potential.
- **Adjusting with different culture students:** Whenever a student joins any university he or she come across with students belonging to different cultures. Positive academic culture encourages the students to mix up with different culture students and this activity increases the confidence of the student in interacting with other students easily. This ultimately in-built the character of accepting change easily within the students that helps the student in their professional life in future (Alsahafi & Shin, 2017).
- **Openness:** Openness is another important factor that affects the academic culture of the country. Universities academic culture must be open to accept change and new ideas as they are the place from where the transformation starts (Jean, 2016).

- **Time Management:** Students of the universities must be taught the value of the time. They should be involved in time management activities where they can learn the importance of time. As time is money and it will help in building the professional qualities within the students.
- **Speaking in tutorials and seminars:** Universities are a place where it provides different and all kind of exposure to the students. It creates an environment where the students can increase their confidence. Speaking in tutorials and seminars helps in building the overall personality of the students.

All these factors directly affect the academic culture of the universities. If universities are able to handle these factors carefully then the students can become the assets for the country. Focusing on these factors will contribute in building a good academic culture of the country.

### **ROLE OF UNIVERITIES IN INDIA IN SHAPING ACADEMIC CULTURE**

The primary function of the university is that they act as an incubators of knowledge. They are the important institution that play an eminent role in the construction of the society culture. Universities are therefore regarded as one of the pillars of development, change that drive society (Dziminska, Fijalkowska, & Sulkowski, 2020). The role of the universities can be considered from both social as well as legal point of view. They are the one that are responsible for bringing up the social change and development. It is the responsibility of the higher education to develop a good human resource who will ultimately contribute to the society. People having knowledge and moral values become assets for the nation and will be responsible for influencing the future of the country (Gonda, 2014). The most important role of the universities is that they have been allocated with the activity of generating highly skilled manpower and research output that ultimately meet the apparent targets. They are responsible for developing up new cultural values and contribute into training and socialization of people in new social era. They are the key contributors in the process of social change and development. Following are some points that clearly shows that why universities play an important role in shaping the academic culture of the country.

- **Universities are a global institutions:** Universities are a place where we create passionate, creative and great minds. These are global institutions as they represent the academic environment of the country. Creating a positive academic culture becomes a necessity for these institutions. Good academic culture will help the students to solely focus on their studies and they will lead to the country with their talents. They will develop problem-solving skill that can be applied in advancing societal and economic well-being.
- **Universities are an institution of innovation and change:** These are a place where change can take place. If we want to bring certain changes within the society then it should start from here. Universities can create an academic culture where it can combine the traditional and contemporary knowledge resulting in various innovations that will work for the welfare of the society.
- **Focussing on individual:** Universities allows each student to develop his/her skills. It provides wide range of exposure to its students. Student-Centric universities are capable of creating academic culture that provides an exclusive environment for the students to become

‘master thinkers’. These students while studying in a positive academic culture are able to grasp wide array of skills and will become the most adaptable workforce that the world has ever known.

- **Universities are an institution of valuable idea generators:** Universities are not a factory of producing workforce. In fact it is a place where students or future workforce contribute their valuable ideas for the growth of the country. For example these ideas can be given by the engineering students to manufacture certain machines that will contribute to clean environment or the ideas can be given by the social science student where he/she can suggest various things that can help in the upliftment of poor section of the society. But all this can happen when the students are provided with good academic culture where they are free to share their ideas without any restrictions (Crow, 2014).

The above points make it clear that the universities play an important role in shaping the academic culture of the country. But if we talk about India so we can say that India is also not way behind the other world class institutions as the Indian Universities are also providing a good academic culture to not only the students belonging to the country itself but also to the international students who come here to complete their higher studies.

Going back to the history of India we can see that there were various world famous universities that was situated within India. The world’s first university was established at Takshila in 700 B.C. From all over the world more than 10,000 students were studying in this university. Due to its good academic culture and the knowledge of the teachers, the influence of Indian Universities went abroad. Nalanda, Vikramshila Universities were another great universities of India which contributed in the field of education (Singhania, 2018). At present also if we see Indian Universities then we can say that these have been successful in providing good academic culture to the students of the country as well as abroad. India, according to the World Bank has the third largest higher education system in the world. The Indian Universities are trying to integrate multidisciplinary subjects which will allow the students to take up job in different fields.

With coming up of the New Education Policy (NEP) the Indian Universities has to focus at shaping the academic culture of the country. Universities should not only focus on providing different courses to the students but also to provide them opportunities to increase their leadership, communication or coordination skills that will ultimately help them to reach at the top of their jobs. In the case of a diverse country such as India, there are lot of opportunities where we can encourage the students to know about or to gather information with regard to different cultures of the nation. They can be motivated to develop a research culture that will help in the development of the country (Felix, 2020). Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu has also said that there is need to stress upon the development of the culture of innovation within India and to bring it in reality he called upon various Indian Universities to focus on creating good academic culture where the students can focus on enhancing their research skills. “As we know that students are the inheritors of India’s long tradition of excellence in literature, in art, in architecture and others and they have to take it forward”. Students must learn and welcome new ideas from across the world but they should focus on developing their new ideas by looking at the local conditions and should not be carried away in the copied idea (Naidu, 2020). From the point of view of India, creating a positive academic culture will focus on building good relationship between lecturers and students, constructing an environment that indulge all the



students belonging to different cultures, providing necessary resources and facilities and removing language and adjustment barriers etc.

## CONCLUSION

Country as diverse as India needs to create positive academic culture within her universities. Positive academic culture can be created when it provides equal academic opportunities to each and every student. There are various factors that influence the academic culture of the country consequently a careful evaluation is needed so that the universities accordingly can make their policies to promote good academic culture. Careful incorporation all the factors that have direct impact on the academic culture of the university will enhance the working of the universities. Students have immense potential to contribute to the country if they are provided with the good academic culture environment. They are the inheritors of country's tradition and academic excellence. Since universities are a global institution so it focusses on generating valuable ideas and are responsible for creating human resource. Hence they play an important role in shaping the academic culture of the country.

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