Policy innovation through community campus engagement: India's case

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Educational, Scientific and
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Engagement Agenda in India goes 'LIVE'

- Pioneering initiatives by policy actors such as Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD), Planning Commission (PC), University Grants Commission (UGC)

- MHRD improvised a new national ranking system of Indian Universities, focus on social responsibility

- Planning Commission set up sub-committee on 'Strengthening Community Engagement in Higher Education Institutions'

- MHRD took up the recommendations with UGC for operationalization

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Brief Background

- The 12th Five Year Plan document focused on Social Responsibility in Higher Education

"*In the face of growing isolation of HEIs from society, there is a need for renewed effort for HEIs for genuinely engaging with community, conduct socially relevant research and education and foster social responsibility amongst students as part of their core mission*"

- In 2011, Planning Commission set up a Sub-Committee on 'Strengthening Community Engagement in Higher Education'

- Recommendations included curricula flexibility, crediting community engagement in HEIs, creation of ACE etc.

Advocacy with UGC

UGC constituted an expert committee for framing guidelines on social responsibility in Higher Education

Dr Rajesh Tandon, provided inputs to the committee in light of the 5th GUNi Report

UNESCO Chair stepped up its advocacy role with Dr Pankaj Mittal, Joint Secretary, UGC

Finally, the UGC operationalized the recommendations of the sub-committee/expert group in the form of the new scheme

UGC Scheme

Highlights

- Establishment of Centre for Fostering Social Responsibility & Community Engagement (CFSRCE)

- Funding to the tune of half of a million dollars

Broad objectives

- Providing roadmap for CUE plans of the university

- Promoting practical learning among students

- Creation of platform for sharing innovative practices

Salient features

- Applicable to all NAAC accredited central universities

- Focus on certain 'key' essentials of engagement; ranges from joint research to devising new courses etc.

CUE/CURP focus

Integration of Service/experiential learning into curricular programmes

Provision for capacity building of faculty/students on CBPR

Modalities to provide credit to students for engagement in such work.

Designing pedagogy, relevant to the learning needs of the community

Working in alliance with CBOs for joint execution of projects

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Operationalization

- Funding for three years, includes infrastructure, procuring equipment
- Committees to oversee proposals & implementation of programmes
- Detailed annual progress reports to be submitted to UGC every year
- Outcome and impact study reports to be submitted for continuation
- Centre's activities to feature in annual reports of the university, website

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Role of the UNESCO Chair

- Consultation on the UGC Scheme held in January'2015, for brainstorming, providing universities with ways forward

- Continuous mentoring provided to Universities for building project proposals under UGC Scheme

- Efforts underway to scale up the initiatives and open the scheme to more universities (private/unaided)

- Renewed focus on community engagement by policy actors such as NAAC, AIU, including the Government of India

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Conclusion

"Engagement is a core value for the University. It is fundamentally a mutually educative practice. Engagement promotes academic citizenship, central to which is the idea that a university is a collective entity rather than a collection of individuals, asserting the compact between the university and the society'" UGC Scheme on Establishing of Centre for Fostering Social Responsibility and Community Engagement, 2014

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Thank You