

Chapter 15

Higher Education Concerns for Natives in the Post- Crisis Period: Canada vs. India – A Case Approach

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ABSTRACT

The higher education and academic research sectors of the Canadian education sector were victims of the 2008 global crisis. Those institutions that were relying on private funding suffered from crashing values of their endowments amidst a declining market. With shrinking government budget and the universities finding tough time in the higher education and research sector, the aboriginals of Canada would be at the most disadvantageous position with respect to their economic development, since education is a central pillar to what Amartya Sen calls “entitlements and capabilities” of a community, particularly when colonialism left aboriginal peoples among the poorest of Canadians. The higher education sector of India is cited as a similar case here. This chapter examines the impact of declining funding both from private and government sources and other adversaries to the access of the aboriginals to education and thus attempts to bring to light how many educational opportunities are available to the natives in the post-crisis period in a comparative tone with India.

INTRODUCTION

*MAHOARNAHA SARASWATI PRA CHETAYATI
KETUNA | DHIYO VISHWA VI RAJATI* (Only
education can help one know the ocean-like

universe. Enlightenment of soul emanates from
education.) Rig Veda

Higher education or PSE plays the role of
supporting self sustaining growth in a knowledge
driven market economy, where nature and distri-
bution of knowledge are deemed to be central to

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economic analysis and the problems cropped out of these are deemed to be solved by the market mechanism because knowledge provides and freedom leads to capability to lead a better standard of life by lifting one much above the poverty line to a height that falling back on the same is a remote possibility as a result of higher earning or ability to generate so. The PSE and academic research sectors of the Canadian education sector were victims of the 2008 global crisis. Those institutions that were relying on private funding suffered from crashing values of their endowments amidst a declining market. Universities in this country lost an average of 18.5 per cent in their endowment funds in 2008, or about \$2-billion (Canadian) in total, which resulted in cuts to some program spending. The then economic slowdown affected adversely many private donors. Side by side regulatory restriction on pricing of PSE is posing a challenge to the survival of these institutions. This is motivating them to raise fund via issuing debts. Record low interest rates and strong demand from investors for top-quality offerings have provided another incentive. In USA the similar activities were followed by default of a reasonable number of Universities. This rate looked up during the above crisis period. At the same time the government budget for PSE is shrinking in Canada.

In Canada as per standard sources the constitutional responsibility for PSE rests with the provinces of Canada. The decision to assign responsibility for universities to the local legislatures, cemented in the British North America Act, 1867, which was renamed the Constitution Act in 1982, was contentious from its inception. The Act states that “in and for each Province, the Legislature may exclusively make laws in relation to Education”. As a result of this constitutional arrangement, a distinctive system of education, including PSE, has evolved in each province. However, as the constitutional responsibility for Aboriginal Peoples with Treaty Status rests with the federal government of Canada under the

Constitution Act of 1982, it is the federal government that is largely responsible for funding PSE opportunities for Aboriginal learners.

So it is clear that with shrinking government budget and the Universities finding tough time in the PSE and research sector, the aboriginals of Canada would be at the most disadvantageous position with respect to their economic development since education is a central pillar to what Amartya Sen terms as “entitlements and capabilities” of a community, particularly when colonialism left Aboriginal peoples among the poorest of Canadians. The PSE sector of India is cited as a similar case in a study by Deloitte, one of Canada’s leading professional services firms. In the mission to bring to limelight how much opportunities of PSE are available to the natives in the post crisis period, this chapter aims to examine the impact of declining funding both from private and government sources on the access of the aboriginals to PSE.

The Case of India

On the other hand in India as per standard sources the state-run traditional universities offering subsidized higher education programmes via chalk-board classroom mode failed to deliver the right skill in conformity with the industry-need while the elite rush to the technologically advanced private and self-funding institutions for securing lucrative placements. The firms recruiting the students passing out of above public universities cannot develop core competence such as to have a foot in global leadership in businesses.

BACKGROUND

An education system sustaining and nurturing indigenous knowledge and culture may be built up when the natives rule themselves. The issues discussed in this chapter have been emerging because the natives are not ruled by themselves.

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