Global Conclave of Young Scholars of Indian Education

A Concept Note

National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA), New Delhi, India proposes to organize a Global Concave of Young Scholars of Indian Education in February 2010. The conclave aims at bringing together young researchers (doctoral, post-doctoral students and early-career faculty) working on Indian education from universities and research institutes in India and abroad. The conclave would provide these researchers a forum to share and to showcase their research, to network and to publish across boundaries of nations and disciplines.

Research on Indian education carried out in universities and research institutes in India and abroad is highly diverse in terms of disciplines, theoretical and ideological orientations, methodologies adopted and issues addressed. Indeed, a wide range of issues – from Jiddu Krishnamurthy's philosophy, ethnographic studies of children in urban slums, econometric modeling of participation in schooling to politics of curricular content, privatization and external aid – are being examined by researchers studying Indian education. The sixth survey of educational research carried out by NCERT reports more than 2500 studies with the range of areas spreading from philosophy of education to health and sports between 1993 and 2000.

A number of universities have set up Asian, South Asian and even Indian centers to promote inter-disciplinary and comparative research on issues confronting India along with other South Asian/Asian countries. Several networks both of individual researchers and of institutions and centers working on these countries have been established to provide a platform for sharing of research and exchange of views. Prominent among these are International Institute of Asian Studies (IIAS) at Leiden and Amsterdam, Centre for South Asian Studies at Universities of Edinburgh, Sydney, Wisconsin-Madison and Toronto, German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA) at Hamburg, Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS) at Copenhagen. There are several networks of scholars and institutes such as Swedish South Asian Studies Network (SASNET), European

Association for South Asian Studies (EASAS), British Association for South Asian Studies (BASAS), and Association for Asian Studies (AAS). Several specialized and student networks also exist. Even a few Asian universities like National University of Singapore (NUS) have started departments in South Asian Studies. The areas, disciplines and approaches used to study Asian countries in general and India in particular are unbounded. One can find research programmes on mythologies of the unknown past to contemporary economic problems. Many of these centers also organize conferences and seminars periodically to provide opportunities to researchers to share their work and to network with each other. A few universities and research think thanks have also launched India-specific centers/ research programmes. For example, the University of Pennsylvania has established the Center for the Advanced Study of India. Likewise, the Stanford Center for International Development regularly organizes conferences to engage with contemporary problems of India.

However, the chasm between those researching Indian education in universities and research institutes in India and abroad is wide. Issues confronting Indian education figure only scarcely in the laudable initiatives mentioned above. Further, most of these initiatives are based in foreign countries and as a result are largely out of bounds for scholars based in India who neither have the personal means nor the institutional support to take part in these. Furthermore, the arrangements to affiliate with each other's institutes, sabbaticals, and other such opportunities are limited to mostly renowned scholars and a handful of young scholars.

Incidentally, NCERT's own surveys of education do not cover research on Indian education carried out in foreign universities and research institutes. This is a pity as researchers working on Indian education abroad have significant contributions to make. They belong to developed and developing countries, and bring with them a different cultural gaze to examine the problems of Indian education. Many Indian scholars and/or scholars of Indian origin working as faculty and pursuing doctoral, post-doctoral research outside India are also amongst those working on Indian education.

Hence, the majority of scholars researching Indian education in India and abroad work largely independent of each other, and rarely get an opportunity to exchange their views, methodologies, and research findings with each other even though they may be working on similar issues. Bridging this chasm necessitates the creation of a platform whereby researchers, particularly doctoral scholars nearing completion, post-doctoral scholars and early/mid career faculty can interact with each other and also have the benefit of critique and advice from senior, renowned scholars. It is with this objective that NUEPA proposes to organize a Global Concave of Young Scholars on Indian Education.

Given the diversity of research on Indian education, no specific theme is suggested for the conclave. The conclave shall deliberate on the current status of research and identify priority areas for future research. Papers are invited from doctoral scholars who are nearing completion, post-doctoral scholars and early/mid career faculty from all parts of the world. Ideally, the papers should be drawn from their current research. All papers shall be peer-reviewed before they are accepted. A few renowned scholars shall also be invited to give special lectures, to comment on the current status research, and to discuss the selected papers.