

STRATEGY TO IMPROVE HIGHER EDUCATION IN BORDER AREA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO INDO MYANMAR, MOREH

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Abstract

Education guides the society in promoting cultural values of an area, helps in shaping the behavior of its people and gives meaning to the existing traditions for its betterment, on the right direction. It helps in meeting national goals and aspirations of the country and its people. With education, we can preserve, protect and optimally utilize the resources of a particular area God has laden it with. It is an important aspect of human life since it uplifts a society and makes the people a vital tool in development of any country or state. The meaning of Development will find it difficult to be complete without the base provided by education. Good education policy can help promote awareness with regard to the potential offered by trade and commerce in a region, especially in a border town like Moreh where large volume of foreign trade is being carried out everyday. It becomes imperative for us to make the advantages offered by this trade by making it well-organized and to function in a systematic way. Enhancing and maintaining quality in delivery of this service becomes important for improving the state of economy and prosperity in the region, and for Manipur and India at large. With Moreh as a trading center in the international boundary line between India and Myanmar, and considering the huge yet to be fully tapped potential for trade in the offering with the South-East Asian nations, the existence of limited number of higher education courses in the border town necessitates a rethink and, therefore, there lies the importance for improving the system of education in the border area.

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The paper focuses on the requirement of education in promoting economic growth and improving sustainable development in the country by making available adequate manpower and with human resource management. Exploratory type of research was conducted with secondary data. The paper hopes to highlight the immense potential offered by higher education system in border area.

Keywords: Education, preserve, trade , commerce, border , development

Introduction

The term 'Higher education' refers to the Education beyond the high school level which helps in promoting intellectual solidarity of humankind. It is changing rapidly in this age of accelerating globalization with the increase in interdependence, growing competition and communication network. Need for commercialization of higher education system is indeed very much for attracting educational opportunities. Higher education is perceived as important means of developing for economic alliances (Jane Knight, Higher Education Crossing Borders: A guide to the implications of General Agreement on Trade in Services for Cross Border Education, 2006). Mainly universities, colleges and other institutions offer higher education which include vocational and technical school. It helps individuals to expand their knowledge and skills, and increases their understanding of the world, business and community.

Main focus of the study here is to analyze the importance of higher education services with regarding to trading in border area, to raise awareness of the public in border area regarding various policies, and the opportunities available if higher education services are being enhanced and increased in border areas. The data for the present study have been mainly generated through secondary sources. The sources of secondary data include Central Government Publications, State Government Publications, various journals, research papers, articles, books, various case studies, working papers, etc.

According to Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan, the whole population of America should receive education as it will result in success and more significant in information driven global economy. Higher Education helps to equip individuals with knowledge, skills and

core competences. Every higher education institution should have a rigorous system of internal quality assurance, assessed by quality assurance agencies which will make sure that every function is performed as per norms. Higher education providers should associate with modernization of education programs to provide graduates with high level employment skills. There should be flexibility, innovative learning approaches and updated delivery methods to improve quality in delivering services of education. Money and time that is put in to obtaining higher education can guarantee to produce high dividends. The world is always changing and, in order to be ahead of these changes, people with higher education makes it possible.

With higher education, trade becomes less complicated to deal with. Performing effective trade is important in border area where maximum of exchange of goods are taking place between different nations. Education helps in bringing good for public and it is public responsibility for improving higher education relating with trade. For engaging in trade, it is desirable to have knowledge and awareness of policy making and practitioners. Border education entails a careful review of what national policies and regulations are required to provide greater access to a high quality education. Higher education should be commercialized with private service providers for speeding in development process with quality assurance.

A National advance by investing in higher education results in effective human resource development, strengthening of institution and scholarship program. Privatization of higher education helps to improve standard of education as they try to maintain quality for increasing profit. Quality will be developed if academic and administrative audits are conducted on regular interval of time including external expert who will be ensuring quality in all academic activities. Higher education services can also be provided in border area in the form of distance education. E-learning is also important in improving education. Students can travel abroad to study the culture, traditions or values of neighboring nations. People can set up campuses or can partner with foreign companies for setting up educational institutions in border area. Nation can exchange human resource like lecturers/ researchers, travelling temporarily abroad to teach or to conduct research.(source WTO, 1998). People in and around border area should able to understand different tariff, rules and regulations necessary for conducting trade between two different nations. Like Border Pact is an affiliated organization focused on building a US –

Maxico border network of higher education institutions committed for effecting social change in the borderland. AMPEI (Mexican Association for International Education) whose main mission is to “contribute to strengthening the academic quality of Mexican Higher Educational institutions and community groups along the US-Mexican border.

Importance of Higher Education in India in relation to international border area

Highly educated people are needed to drive economy forward for a developed nation. Higher education system in India is third in the world as per the number of students. But overall scenario of India does not match with global quality standards. (Dr. J.D Singh: Higher Education in India- Issues , Challenges and Suggestions). At present (2015), there are 213 Central Universities, government recognized universities and 194 state universities in India. 206 number of private universities are operating various courses including professional courses in India. Distance learning is also one of the important types of higher education in India as many people prefer to work and pursue further studies. Higher Education gives India an edge in the world economy for availability of skilled manpower. According to Ministry of Human Resource Development (2015), 22 new higher education institutions will be established and National Ranking Framework will be used for higher educational institutions set up by the government which will help in generating healthy competition. In 4th Annual Convocation of IIM, Raipur, Chattisgarh, 2015, President of India Mr. Pranab Mukherjee mentioned that institutions of higher education have to promote a culture of excellence and develop core competencies. It enriches individuals and society at large. According to former Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh ,highlighted that there is need for second wave of creating institution building and also improving in area of education, research and capacity building (Dr. J D Singh, Higher Education in India- Issues , Challenges and Suggestions). Quality of providing education has to be checked on regular basis because of rapidly globalizing world and to face any type of competition.

Cross border education also becomes important to meet needs of other countries and to improve trade and business. Globally, Phoenix University (Now Apollo), US, has become the largest private university which is capable of delivering courses in various countries of Puerto Rico, Netherlands, Mexico and Canada. Even Harvard has opened branch in Cyprus and UAE. Operating internationally, it requires non-traditional way with innovations in information and

communication technologies for delivering the quality services for professionally related courses.

India shares its boundary with nine countries i.e., Afghanistan, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Bangladesh, China, Myanmar, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Economy becomes a crucial variable in dynamics of international politics. Economic integration with neighbours becomes important to develop trade relations between them. Increasing the importance of North East India (NEI) with economic reforms in 1991, followed by Look East Policy, trade has become an essential element for a developing nation. Higher education in India has been a primary area for advancement and transmission of knowledge as the world is transforming into global village. Understanding cross culture programmes is important when business is to be conducted on international basis. Connecting South East Asia through North East of India has become important for improving trade relationships with them. Myanmar is the only ASEAN country that shares a border with India. It is India's gateway to Southeast Asia which improves India's connectivity and relationship with them.

Value in US Dollar

Year	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2012-2012	2012-2013
India's Export to Myanmar	221.64	207.97	320.62	545.38	544.66
India's Import from Myanmar	928.97	1289.8	1017.67	1381.15	1412.69

Source: Ministry of Commerce, India

There has been major economic and trade agreement in infrastructure and other areas by many Indian companies. Some of the major projects in Myanmar are the Kaladan Multi Modal Transit Transport Project, Tata Motors Heavy Turbo Truck Assembly Plant, GAIL & OVL gas pipeline project, ADSL project for high speed, M/s RITES railway transport system, India Myanmar Training centre. Hence, developing the border area will help in promotion of commercial trade. Improving border education system helps in expanding the scope scale and quality of learning by promoting policies, building models, creating materials, enhancing capacity and nurturing network in support of development goals. North-east India can reap benefits of Look East Policy by increasing share of trade in Southeast Asian market which can be achieved only when Moreh is systematically developed along with development of border area.

Manipur in connection with Southeast Asia

Moreh town, in Chandel district of Manipur, acts as a gateway to the East which has great potential to influence economically for development of North Eastern India. In 2001-02, Chandel district had 207 pre-primary and primary schools, 52 middle schools, 23 High/Higher secondary schools, 7 professional and other educational schools and 3 colleges for general education. Moreh's literacy rate is 71.47 % (2011) where the total population is 16,847. It is the only feasible land route for trade between India and Myanmar and other South East Asian Countries. It was declared 'Free Trade Zone' by Government of India in 1995. There is no reliable official estimate of volume of the trade that passes through the Moreh town. It has only one Government aided college and few numbers of schools. Number of private institutions is also very less. Presence of less number of institutions providing professional courses makes it become difficult to educate the public regarding the information relating with trading as trade is the main occupation of people residing in and around the area. People with higher education are needed, with requisite skills, and who can drive the economy forward. With low literacy rate prevailing in international border area, there arises the need for strengthening the Moreh College as full fledged government college.

Year	1999	2001	2011
Moreh	9673	14,962	16,847

Released by Census Operations, Moreh (Population Myanmar)

Out of the total population 6789 engaged in work or business activity (According to 2011 census) and it becomes huge commercial hub. Economists have also predicted that Moreh town could transform into another bustling city in next couple of decades and it can also play key role in the development of economy of the state. In 2007, according to economists, Moreh is to gain a branch of railway via Imphal. So there will be flow of developmental process.

Advantages of investing in Myanmar

1. It is only ASEAN membership which offers regional trade benefits.
2. It is strategically located between India and China.
3. It has rich supply of natural resources, including forests, minerals, natural gas, gems, etc.
4. It has abundant agricultural resources as well as marine resources.
5. It has attractive demographic profile of labour force, providing one of Asia's lowest labour cost.

Understanding about people, culture, arts, literature, religions, technological development and progress of human society is necessary in conducting trade with different nations. Government has put less effort for development of education in the area of Moreh. Public will be less educated or have little knowledge in performing functions related with trade. There lies the need for spreading awareness of understanding strategy to improve trade with help of higher education for smooth functioning of business. Like Indian Government had set up Indian Schools of Mines in Dhandbad where great number of mining resources are located (which has been given the rank of IIT in budget 2015).

Professional courses relating with tourism should be introduced in curriculum of various education levels making them capable of putting sustainable tourism plan in the country. It will help in creating adequate manpower and effective human resource management. Introducing various media relevant courses will help in attracting many students across the country and also from across the border. Publishing various articles and news in newspapers, magazines, journals, textbooks will help in educating the people residing in border area and country as such. Conducting seminars, workshops, conferences on regular basis will help in gathering various knowledge from many experts relating to the subject. Introducing of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) will make international trade in higher education more easy and more comfortable by accessing to better educational opportunities. This also depends on budget limitation, changing of government and increased emphasis on market economy.

Problems

Indo-Myanmar border trade through Moreh is marked more by overregulation seeing trade only as exchange of commodities instead of seeing it as a means for flow of ideas and opportunity for raising per capita income as well. (Yamnam 2005). Namphalong market in Myanmar is growing faster as compared to Moreh in India. (N.M Singh and H.K Luwangcha, 2002). Manipur is facing problems of poor infrastructure, like poor transport and communication system, poor power and water supply, poor knowledge on trading, etc. Such problems have caused major disturbances to trading activities. Items worth more than Rs. 1 crore are transacted everyday through Gate No. 2 where, due to lack of knowledge and awareness, many middlemen collect taxes in presence of custom and police personnel. (Thiyam Bharat Singh, 2007) Many illegal

businesses of exporting different items to Moreh from India are being performed on regular basis. Many people doing trading in Indo-Myanmar are unwilling to continue their business in regular trade and letter of credit as exchange rate that is operating in current market prefer Indian traders. So, very limited legal trade is being carried on. Moreover, many places in Manipur are selling variety of products from Myanmar ranging from agricultural products to industrial goods. A large volume of illegal trade is carried out in presence of custom officials. Border trade are disturbed by a number of restrictions in trade, law and order situations above that a number of multiple check point on highway obstructing the growth of border trade.

A three-tier system of trade has to be carried out for cross border trade at Moreh

1. With maximum value of US dollar 1000 would be traded in exchange of locally produced items that was traditionally exchange between people on either side of border trade covering area of 40 km .
2. Barter Trade of 62 items agreed upon exchangeable items up to a maximum value of US \$ 20,000. These items are mainly of agricultural and forest products which are produced locally.
3. Normalisation of Regular Trade under the Letter of Credit System as per Export-Import Policy guidelines.

Study conducted by Mero (2005) stated that third country goods and non-specified barter trade items are entering in unspecified quantity from Gate No. 2 without levying any duty which indicates certain flaws in the border trade agreement. Illegal trade is rupees 3 crore per day according to study conducted by Th. Bharat which shows that valuable items are found trading illegally through the porous border. It was estimated at Rupees 8,365 crore in 2000-01.

Opportunities exists if promotion is given to education services where one will become aware about international intercultural and global issues. Various courses relating with international trade on border area can be advantageous for the nation as well as for public in making aware of different polices prevailing in conducting business. The following suggestions can be different number courses available for improving trading between nations:

1. Courses on Custom and Border protection
2. Bachelor of Border Management
3. Customs and International Trade Courses
4. Cross Border Trade courses

5. Border health related courses
6. Different media related courses
7. Hospitality related courses
8. Tourism Management related courses
9. Courses relating to financing and banking and many more

Hence, we would be able to develop quality, skilled and standardized human resources that will be playing major role in the development of trade between the nations.

Findings and recommendations

Lack of awareness of the benefits and possibilities of normal trade and emergence of vested interest gradually pushed towards illegal trade in border area of Myanmar. The duty structure is not fixed and charges custom duty and imposes commercial tax on very Indian goods from Myanmar. Law and order problem in both the nation becomes difficult to trade and perform various other economic activities. Making location of trade licensing in Guwahati makes it difficult for the traders as they have to undergo lengthy process of taking permission. Food testing takes much time to produce result where many people missed good opportunities. Legal trade involved lots of paper works which should be made easier.

Trading between the nations should increase which will help in creating employment opportunities in both the side. Updated technology should be use for purchasing bulky items through internet which will help in reducing cost of transportation. Public should be aware of Export- Import Policy (EXIM) amended by Government of India from time to time. Higher education leaders and policy makers should work in close consultation for improving the quality of education and introducing various courses relating with border trade. Certain restrictions and difficulties involved in border trade should be simplified to facilitate the trade. State government should formulate strategic industrial and economic policies for smooth functioning of business between the nations. Security force posted should be sincere and honest in performing duty and should not try to take advantage in the best interest of the common good.

Conclusion

Modern education system is required to adapt to changing needs of a changing society, a changing economy and a changing world. Co-operation among higher education, government and private business will help in improving the standard of education being provided. Formulation of action plan will help in improving quality in higher education institutions. Generation of new ideas and new knowledge will help in increasing the efficiency in conducting business. Human resource development will help in promoting quality of people involving in trading and for enhancing their income. Improvement of academic quality with help of higher education will result in overall development of nation. Increase in business activities and increased improvement of higher education leads to employment generation. Government and private institutions should set up Internal Quality Assurance Cell for improving quality in educational services. With rail connectivity with Myanmar, it will help significantly in improving trade between countries. There is also need for proper financial institution between borders to activate normal trade through banking process which will be more convenient. Harassment faced by traders at check post on regular basis should be controlled as it may decrease the number of business on traders. All these can be possible if we improve the higher education system in the border area.

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