

21st Century National Priorities and Practicing Geography in India: The Need to Think Outside the Box

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Abstract Academic disciplines have been serving societal needs since their inception, which stands particularly true for Geography. In India, geographers have been contributing in varied sub-fields with appalling reluctance to change in response to the changing world around. This paper aims to attempt a critical stocktaking of what has happened in Indian geography the past with special reference to the recent past (post-1990s) and what our response today and in the near future should be. Arguments made are based on a critical analysis of previous works and secondary data supplemented with the present author's direct experience in the Indian academia as a geography educator for approximately quarter a century. Accordingly, the discussions contained in this paper mainly dwell on Geography and its general response to societal needs, (Indian) national priorities, the response of Geography to these priorities, and what needs to be done to overcome the present limitations.

The analysis leads to the conclusion that provision of quality higher education and forging an effective linkage of higher education with national priorities are the most important. Indian geography's response has been poor both in terms of curriculum quality and research works which are generally non-rigorous and misguided. Consequently, they are neither problem-solving nor advancing the state of knowledge. Institutional practices in general thwart innovation and fail to fuel future changes. Thus, interventions are highly desirable by academic leaders, amongst the practising professional geographers, to ensure interaction between research (findings) and higher education curriculum which has a potential of mutual benefit.

Key words curriculum, applied geography, national priority, paradigm, public policy

I. Introduction

Though the Census of India 2011 data on literacy state that only about 8.15% of Indians are graduates (The Hindu 04.8.2015). The available data on higher education in India amply reflect the pressure of an increasing number of students and changing demographic trends (Singh, 2019), recent demands for accountability, (re) consideration of the socio-economic role of higher education, implications of the New Economic Policy (NEP) introduced in the 1990s, and the roles and impacts of new (computer-based) technologies on academic institutions and systems. It is true that while academic systems function in a national environment, the 'challenges play themselves out on a global scale' (Altbach and Davis, 1999: p. 4).

Commenting on higher education, Altbach et al. (1999: p. 1) observe that 'we are so often bound by the constraints of national thinking...the issues facing higher education around the world have many common characteristics'. One may disagree with the use of term 'constraints', but every nation indeed has its own ideals which shape the character of (higher) education. The present article aims to analyse emerging Indian national priorities and their

implications for Geography students and practitioners with reference to higher education. This introductory section is followed by a general discussion on Geography and its response to societal needs. The next section discusses the basic nature, changes in, and the current scenario of national priorities, following which desirable responses of Geography are discussed including curricular and research responses. Finally, the future course of action is briefly charted before providing the conclusion.

II. Geography and Its Response to Societal Needs

Like other branches of knowledge, Geography has been responding to societal needs throughout the world across different ages (Peet, 1979: p. 165). In India too, we find the same reflected to a great extent. The contribution of professional Indian geographers of the 1950s and '60s has been invaluable. However, whether the successive generations have responded similarly, and, if yes, how and in which direction(s), has not been fully examined. We cannot deny the fact that, in contemporary times, two simultaneous processes are visibly in operation; on the one hand, one may observe the growth of systematic

(super) specialised new (academic) disciplines and sub-disciplines, and on the other, the emergence of complex problems difficult to contain within a single discipline. Therefore, it poses a typical challenge requiring in-depth knowledge and a multi/interdisciplinary approach to address the challenges of our times.

Progression cannot be reverted; however, it can be 'directed' and 're-directed' with changing societal needs. Here, the role of (different) academic leaders and governments in setting the priorities becomes important. (I do not necessarily mean 'academic leaders' in terms of their positioning in the 'power network' rather their recognition by peer groups.) In India, for example, there have been clear shifts in terms of emphasis on programmes and projects in the 'interest' of the nation. Thus, a major question today is that when national interests go beyond territorial limits and often tend to merge with a 'boundary-less' world, should we limit ourselves and our disciplines to national territory or do we need to think beyond at both research and curricular levels? We cannot afford to neglect the changing nature of 'national priorities' with the changing governments, in particular, at the centre (Figure 1). These governments tend to appear in different moulds giving ample scope of accommodating 'global' elements. With the new government coming to the helm in May 2014, a major change has been seen in the form of newly laid emphasis on software technology centred development strategies. This will inevitably have consequences for disciplinary practices including Geography, which is already gripped by the fever of computer-based systems like Geographical Information System (GIS) and Remote Sensing (RS) since the 1990s. Similarly, renaming the Ministry of Water Resources as 'Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation' is an opportunity to be availed through river studies. The question is how prepared we, the body of professional

geographers, are to avail this opportunity and contribute to national priorities. Similar scope is presented by other major national initiatives such as National Sanitation Mission (linking with sanitation and health issues) and the 'Make in India' campaign and its impact on location and agglomeration of industries and emerging patterns of trade from the Indian point of view. In the same vein, we need to read through the Indian Prime Minister's recent address to the United Nations General Assembly, which is yet another instance of repositioning India in the contemporary global order. Indian geographers could also take a lesson from the ancient Indian wisdom (Buttimer, 2009) and assert through scientific interpretation of the Indian cultural heritage.

The conflict between the disciplinary and thematic approach, spearheading the academic agenda of Indian Geography, needs to be resolved in clear terms. The thematic approach is broader in scope and rewarding as well and should be promoted with the synthetic strength of Geography. For this purpose, rather than trivialising through simple generalisations, the approach should be to integrate the emerging state of knowledge, both quantitative and qualitative, through remote and intimate sensing.

III. National Priorities: Today and Tomorrow

In this section, issues such as national vs political priorities and contestations, changing nature of national priorities, national vs academic priorities, and academic responses to national priorities are briefly discussed.

In a democratic society where a multi-party electoral system exists, political priorities and contestations are not only inevitable but natural. Interestingly, one finds a greater degree of convergence as far as issues of national interest are concerned; however, approach and orientation as well as vocabulary do vary. Similarly, it is not surprising at all that national and political priorities keep on changing in view of the global as well as domestic realities. In recent years, as India grappled with agriculture issues and rural distress followed by industrial backwardness and emerging regional inequalities, the national priorities as reflected by policy documents and election manifestos of the majority of the (national) political parties centred around these issues. However, the world around us has changed and so have our concerns. Environment, (social) exclusion, inclusive policy, empowerment (of marginalised people), gender, governance, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), etc., top the agenda in the 21st century.

There has been steady concern over education and

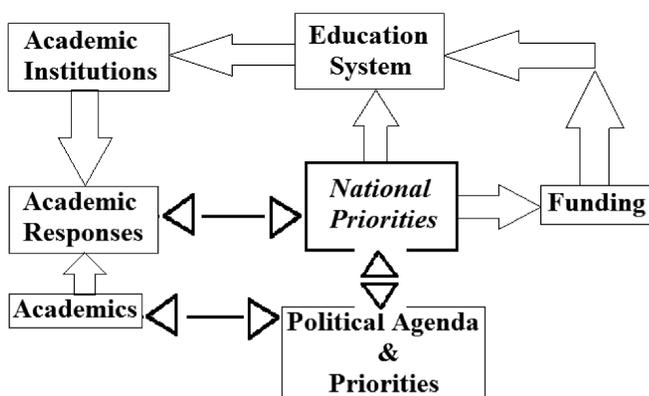


Figure 1. Interlinkage between national priorities, political agenda, and academic responses

Source: Designed by the author.

Table 1. Trends of change in Indian geography

Phase	Period	the way	Approach	Paradigm	Application
I	1920–50	colonial	descriptive	deterministic	gazetteers for administrators
II	1950–60	shifting	descriptive-narrative	prototypal	regional reports
III	1960–70	unifying	regional	statistical	regional surveys, development
IV	1970–80	copying the West	quantitative	speculative	numerical and scientific
V	1980–90	turning	behavioural	microscopic	environmental surveys
VI	1990–2000	-looking ahead	humanistic	ecopsychologic	human understanding & service
VII	2000–10	-re-looking ahead	diversified, technophilic	synthetic turning	transitory prescription to human development

Source: Adapted from Singh, R.P.B. (2009).

research in India, which can be traced back to at least the pre-independence period. Of course, education and research got a push after the attainment of independence in 1947. As the 21st century has heralded a new context altogether, issues and priorities too have acquired a new shape. Delivering the inaugural address at the 95th session of the Indian Science Congress in 2008, the then Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh identified food production and utilization, conservation of water, energy generation and utilization, manufacturing technologies, mass transport systems, and building and construction technology as major national challenges calling upon the scientific community to apply ‘frontier science and technology blended with traditional knowledge’. Almost in the same vein, the present Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasised, ‘...we need to put science, technology, and innovation at the top of national priorities’, in his address to the 102nd Indian Science Congress in Mumbai in 2015.¹⁾ More often than not, academia does not readily respond to political ideas as all disciplinary practitioners are deeply engrossed in issues internal to their respective disciplines and a few in cross/multi disciplinary issues. National priorities, however, percolate through power networks and channels (Peet, 1979).

Academic responses to national priorities have been vague. As far as Indian Geography is concerned, it has been evolving since the 1920s and struggling to develop a rapport with global, in particular, western developments. It is not difficult to trace elements of affinity with the global disciplinary trends (Table 1, Singh, R.P.B., 2009); though one may doubt the paradigm shift *per se*, there is no denying the fact that remarkable changes have occurred in terms of both content and practice. Geographers, like other academic practitioners, have undertaken studies of prevalent/persistent problems in India; however, there is no clear evidence of any connection between announced national policies and geography. Even Indian geographers appear neutral on the issue. Interestingly, Prof. Shiba Prasad Chatterjee’s presidential address

to the 21st International Geographical Congress (New Delhi, 1968) titled, ‘Towards global peace and harmony: Approachment between developing and developed countries’ was ‘timely’ in the sense that it was delivered during the peak of bipolarism in the world and a period well-attested by Cold War tension between Soviet Union and the United States and their respective allies (Chatterjee, 1968). In addition, it was considered a valuable contribution towards the understanding of global issues. Such rare coincidences can be found elsewhere as well but are not common. We are thus doomed to follow the beaten track!

To understand the changing trends in Indian Geography in the context of present discussion, we may consider the period after 1947, dividing it into 1947–1990 and post-1990s, taking the introduction of NEP as the dividing line.

1. 1947–1990

During this period, many Indian geographers wanted to increase both the relevance and visibility of geography by addressing India’s socio-economic and political issues. Application of geographical knowledge was at the forefront of their pursuit, which materialized mainly in three ways: mapping information, planning for development, and role in other government departments. Indian geographers’ tryst with national priorities came to the fore during the 1960s when in the 3rd Five Year Plan (1961–66) an entire chapter was devoted to (balanced) regional development wherein regional policies to reduce regional imbalances were spelt out. Consequently, during the mid-1970s, regional policies in India were at their zenith and were a favourite among geography practitioners (Kapur, 1998). The establishment of the Centre for Regional Development (later rechristened ‘Centre for the Study of Regional Development’) in 1971 at the newly founded (on 22.4.1969 vide notification No. S.O. 1525, dated 21.4.1969, Gazette of India) Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi is a proof of this.

A quick assessment of our engagement with national

public policy research reveals that it was not paid adequate attention when compared to other sister disciplines. In terms of research priorities and contributions, policy-oriented studies appeared to be of lesser importance (Sinha, 1986) as we were fully absorbed, and perhaps content too, with the analysis of events and consequences in the past and were not interested in the prognosis or anticipation of the future. One may find a good deal of research on policy impact analysis, but even this has been somewhat skewed towards Green Revolution, Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP), and assessment of regional planning as a policy (Singh, L.R., 2009). Moreover, a large number of research works were aimed at informing public policy. A common characteristic of these works was that they lacked motivation, were centred around themes of spatial disparities or identifying growth centres, and were hesitant to confirm the alliance between geography and public policy (Kapur, 1998). One does not find any noticeable change in the professed attitude and behaviour even in the 21st century.

2. Developments during the 1990

As stated earlier, the 1990s is considered a turning point in modern India. Economic liberalization was initiated with the introduction of the NEP in 1991, whose reverberations were soon felt in other spheres of a common man's life, including his education. Though this initiative faced criticism on academic and social grounds, in view of national interest and providing universal access (to higher education), better qualifications, and employability, the then government patronised privatization of (higher) education. Repercussions of the NEP for (higher) education in India are visible in the form of privatization (of education), emergence rather mushrooming of self-finance (educational) institutions, and the proliferation of self-financed courses (Chitnis, 1999: pp. 28–29). Considering the imbalance in supply and demand, the opening of the education sector to private players is welcomed as efforts of both the union and state governments proved insufficient. This has resulted in a luxuriant growth of self-financed private institutions (SFPIs). In quantitative terms, this 'mushrooming' may be considered a positive development as it has helped overcome the imbalance, but the concern now is whether the SFPIs are taking their toll on education. We know that both aided and un-aided/self-financed institutions are under government control. However, the current mechanism of control is not sufficient to bring the quality of education to minimum standards, forget improvement and matching international standards.

3. (Some) 21st century beginnings...

The country reports submitted every four years to the International Geographical Union is a very important document to observe the progress made by the country with respect to Geography and its various important sub-fields. Here, I would like to quote a few lines from an entry by Prof. Mohammad Shafi (1924–2007), one of the most senior geographers of his times, in *Progress in Indian Geography 2000–2004*, (Shafi, 2004) '...one significant quality of Indian geographers is that they carefully monitor the international trends in the development of Geography and also take care to examine the role of geographers in solving problems in his/her own country...There was realization among geographers that there was abject poverty in the country, in spite of abundant resources...Geography in India became more purposeful oriented. It was felt that along with the rising population, lopsided development of towns was taking place (p. 1). In the fifties and sixties, geographers turned their attention towards Applied Geography working on problems of land use and morphology of towns...Von Thunen's model was tested in India...this went on when euphoria on environment came in' (p. 2).

In a way, it reflects contentment whereas the world as well as national realities are changing fast and we need to question our efforts (and 'achievements'). On one hand, (global) integration, sustainability, environmental disasters and a growing number of refugees, deployable intercontinental ballistic missiles requiring a redefinition of national sovereignty and national security, geo-strategies, etc., have introduced new kinds of pressures on Indian geography; on the other, the emergence of informatics practices warrant the role of academic geographers (and also other practitioners in different fields), education system, and institutions to be re-examined. Furthermore, it cannot be ignored that higher education systems are transitioning from elite to mass to universal access (Altbach and Davis, 1999: p. 4). This transition is noticeable in India as well and has wider implications for it – a country of social and cultural diversity. Such a shift puts more demand and pressure on existing resources, and yet universal accessibility issues call for redressal from the ICT perspective. The recently launched 'Digital India' campaign provides an opportunity to assess this issue from different perspectives. Instead of waiting, the futuristic thinking should start from today: how do we address the contemporary reality of complex issues for which interdisciplinary skills and rapidly multiplying (micro) super-specialisations are required. The lesson for today is 'learn from others' experiences'. To this end, there are two options: *abandon and perish or adapt and move ahead*.

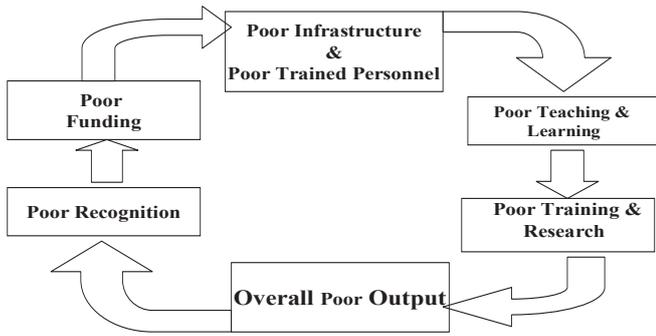


Figure 2. Cycle of academic sub-standardisation in higher education in India
Source: Singh, R.S. (2009a).

IV. What Needs to be Done?

Figure 2 summarizes the vicious cycle of academic sub-standardization in higher education in India with special reference to Geography. Hence, course correction is highly desirable. There are two fronts on which we need to work simultaneously: curriculum and guided research. In this section, these two issues are briefly discussed based on the author's personal experience in the academic world as a geography teacher in higher education.

1. Curricular responses

Curriculum is 'the prescribed content of knowledge, understanding, and skill that fulfils the aims of education' (Dhankar, 2012). Many formulations of curriculum are known today, for example, 'prescribed curriculum', 'intended curriculum', 'transacted curriculum', and 'hidden curriculum'. However, two facts cannot be ignored: first, all other forms emanate from the prescribed curriculum, and second, inculcation of knowledge is the central focus of any curriculum. 'The curriculum is where a particular story of the world is set up, either deliberately or inadvertently. However, it is only one part of the whole exercise of curriculum management that involves curriculum formulation, implementation, and revision (Figure 3) as per the changing state of knowledge and information. Schools show what is valued both by the subjects they make compulsory and the processes they emphasize and also by what they teach directly. But the world has been changing and globalizing. It holds new possibilities and also generates anxieties and fears. The difficulty of formulating a curriculum today is deciding which stories are to be told' (Yates, 2011).

Curriculum management provides space for accommodating young teachers' ideas in tandem with senior colleagues' experience and exposure. In India, curriculum management has been continually neglected despite poor

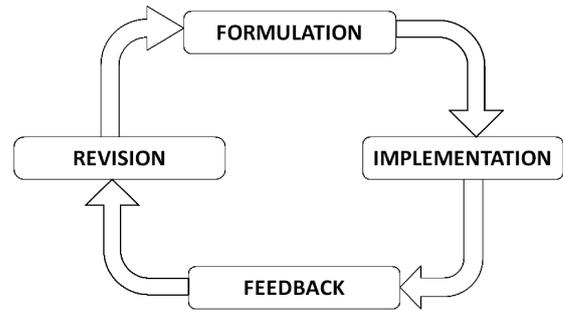


Figure 3. Stages in effective curriculum management
Source: Designed by the author.

education quality. Barring a few exceptions, almost as a rule, we tend to finish our job by framing the outline of syllabus. Here, again we face a problem typical to India that is still a traditional society in which 'age' is valued more than 'expertise and efficiency'. A proper management of curriculum requires the process to be more inclusive and participatory in approach providing equal opportunity to everyone involved. Formulation of curriculum in its true essence is a creative process having ample scope for creativity. However, it is difficult to find true democratic and participatory approaches in the functioning of Indian institutions and their constituent bodies. Generally, the youngsters' opinion is either not sought out at all or not taken seriously and labelled as 'immature' or 'childish'.

Higher education was introduced in India by the British to serve their own interest by infusing British rather than European values among Indians and creating a cadre of Indians to serve the British administration (Chitnis, 1999: p. 20). By the time India became independent, the weaknesses of the Indian education system were quite conspicuous, as observed by Kaul (1997):

Anyone who studies the story of universities in India since 1857 cannot escape the conclusion that the system of higher education inherited at independence from the British Raj was dangerously weak in three ways: (i) During the British rule we failed to set and maintain the quality of teaching and the standards of achievement essential to a university, (ii) We failed to devise, and to persuade Indians to accept, a content of higher education suited to India's social and economic needs and (iii) We failed to establish patterns of academic government and relations between universities and state, which would accord to university that degree of autonomy without which they cannot serve society properly.

As argued earlier, curricular responses are bound to change as society and nations do not remain the same forever. However, national identity and citizenship issues

are always there and the role of Geography education is vital in solving them. The incidents of racial abuse of people from northeast India in the national capital of New Delhi raise questions on the national spirit of integrity and multi-ethnicity, necessitating compulsory education on national identity and integrity. Indian citizens should know about their counterparts from different corners of India, particularly the marginal and peripheral territories, and should be able to treat them equally and not as the colonial 'others'.

Commenting on Australian education, Yates (2011) observes, 'Other countries have been using curriculum change to try to modify and even de-emphasise national identities compared with outwardly facing ones. China has moved to make science, mathematics, and competitive achievement the prominent agenda, drawing on "Western" progressive non-didactic teaching methods that are seen as more powerful. Recent analyses from the United States, Britain, Norway, and Singapore raise concerns about what is happening to the life of schools and to the development of future citizens as this emphasis has taken hold'. The lesson to be learnt is the way forward for our education system, which is grappling both with national identity issues and pressures of globalization. It is not easy to find a balance between the two, and it warrants a cautious approach. The three National Curriculum Frameworks 1988, 2000, and 2005, 'emphasise national integrity and building of strong national identity through education...a host of other values variously termed as ethical, moral, universal, social, spiritual, and environmental... Interestingly, scientific temper can be seen as a constitutional value in India as it is mentioned in the fundamental duties of an Indian citizen' (Dhankar, 2012: p. 3).

The curricular response(s) to changing priorities of a nation are partly academic and partly political (Figure 1). The latter is more pronounced and significant when it comes to deciding what or what not to teach. It is quite evident in the case of school education. However, the same cannot be said of tertiary/higher education, which appears 'neutral' to politics. It is true to a great extent in the case of Geography. However, this does not mean that there is no scope of framing and modifying curriculum in the existing university system. In the past, there reportedly had been problems with geography curriculum across the world (Singh, 1972), but later on, tremendous changes, particularly in Anglo-American geography, have taken place. A few Asian countries and their universities (e.g. National University of Singapore) have also gone ahead with appropriate revision and innovation in curriculums. However, the same is not true in the Indian case as 'we

have neither been able to gear the teaching of the subject to the needs of the country nor been able to introduce various disciplinary innovation...geography at all stages of education is inept and frustrating' (Ibid). Much time has passed since this observation was made; yet, we cannot say that there is any noticeable change in the situation (Singh, R.S., 2009b), which is alarming.

A quick introspective search reminds us that the Board of Studies (BoS) is mandatory in the university system; however, bar a few little known exceptions, the business and transactions in BoS meetings are frustrating because of great (dominant) resistance to change. No wonder we have been continuing with the same educational content for decades as if the world around us has not changed at all; there is no growth and development in pedagogy. The curriculum appears 'directionless' because generally the aim(s) and objective(s) of courses are not clear at all, even to the teachers who implement the curriculum. I remember a post-graduate student of mine complaining of a geography practical course where even after completing the exercise and finally becoming postgraduates, his class could never understand why they did that particular exercise. Students do not face this problem alone, even teachers teaching a particular course for years may face a similar problem if they are asked to list the aim(s) and objective(s) of that particular course. The fundamental problem is (poor) curriculum design, especially ill-planned practical exercises, which can be handled better as per the available resources and size of the class. Though I do not have any (empirical) evidence to prove it, on the basis of my personal experience of two decades in academia, I believe that the root cause of it lies to a great extent with the continuing 'gerontic grinding', with seniors dictating own terms and deterring any change. A big question thus remains unanswered: Is there any emphasis on higher education curriculums?

2. Curriculum innovations: Thematic optimizations

In view of the above discussion, a futuristic thinking convinces one of the need to develop global competence which may be achieved by providing global exposure to both teachers and students. To achieve this goal, teaching quality standards vis-à-vis performance need to be looked into genuinely and necessary changes for assessment are to be adopted. Furthermore, it is important to do away with horizontal (across different courses offered) and vertical (across different levels) overlaps. With reference to advancement in the general body of knowledge as well as the information revolution experienced by people across the world, downward percolation of 'specialized'

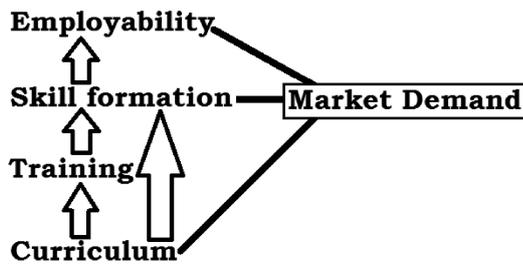


Figure 4. Connection between curriculum, employment, and market demand
Source: Designed by the author.

knowledge is the need of the hour. Rationalization of the practical component in a discipline is important, but it has not drawn enough attention. All this can be achieved only when we geography practitioners are prepared to let go of 'initiative fatigue' through self-realisation and self-motivation.

Our discussion has so far focused on important emerging issues such as quality, equality, employment opportunities, inclusiveness, and their associated challenges (Figure 4). One very important issue, stakeholders' perspective of higher education, has largely been ignored in India (Singh, 2019).

3. Research prioritization

The first condition of research is 'openness' to new ideas, which can be encouraged by promoting and patronising budding scholars' thoughts. Unfortunately, this has not been practised by us and therefore progress in innovative research is rather minuscule. Furthermore, issues related to training cannot be overlooked. Our quantitative fascination is yet to settle, and a new craze of computer based techniques and tools like GIS and RS has swept our geographical imagination since the 1990s. Amid this, qualitative methods have been overlooked. In view of the emerging complex social, cultural, economic, and political issues, these methods can be gainfully employed to address the poor research quality and rigour (Singh, 2012). The qualitative methods can also be used in mixed methodologies.

In view of the disciplinary strength of synthesising, research on thematic issues needs to be promoted. The call made by Stoddart (1986, 1987) – that Geography should address big issues – is a welcomed idea. Furthermore, reorienting research towards problem (solving) can better reveal the identity and status of the discipline and its practitioners. The non-existence of centre/department wise specializations is another factor responsible for trivialising Geography. In the majority of cases, a particular department states multiple current thrust areas, because of which it is neither taken seriously nor funded sufficiently.

Therefore, instead of succumbing to internal department politics demanding almost everything under the sun to be covered under thrust areas and boasting the same, it is better to limit to a particular sub-field so that in due course the centre concerned gets recognition nationally as well as internationally.

Here, the important point is whether we should avail the opportunities provided by stated governmental priorities? The most recent initiative of the union government emphasises on applications of ICT through Digital India campaign following which many ministries and departments have come up with their own programmes. In a field discipline like Geography, this has already been implemented through the adoption of GIS and RS technologies. It is again a noble initiative, but there is a concern that it would widen the digital gulf between those who have digital access and those who do not. It is an open secret that due to resource poverty, in many institutions, only the so-called theory of computer based practical exercises is imparted, costing the quality of training and skill formation. Similarly, we can avail the opportunity provided by the initiatives on river studies by the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, National Sanitation Mission by linking it with sanitation and health research, 'Make in India' campaign and its impact on location and agglomeration of industries and on emerging patterns of trade from the Indian point of view, and so on.

V. Conclusion

The available data indicates that only a small proportion of those completing schooling in India enter higher education institutions, and even then, there is a tremendous pressure on institutions which tend to grow continually. The consequent challenges are manifold; the most important being how to provide quality higher education to lakhs of youth seeking to enter universities (and colleges) and how to forge and ensure an effective linkage of higher education with national priorities. When such endeavours become successful, the nation is able to meet its general goal(s) of education and is benefitted by its educated citizens who in turn achieve the national priorities.

The discussion in preceding sections indicates that though Indian geography has been trying to respond to global disciplinary developments and emerging national challenges, all is not well, and a good deal of work is indeed yet to be done. Since the problem is twofold, it naturally calls for a two-pronged approach to tackle it efficiently. On both curricular and research fronts, geog-

raphy's response has been poor; curricular responses to changing realities are pretty slow and lack quality, and the research undertaken is often non-rigorous and misguided, neither directed towards problem-solving nor contributing to the advancement of the state of knowledge in the concerned sub-discipline. Institutional practices in general thwart innovation and change and create a frustrating atmosphere in which little sparks of change are made to die without igniting the chain of future changes.

Thus, interventions are the call of the hour. Reorienting geography in higher education—from classroom teaching to both funded/non-funded and doctoral research—is highly desirable in the spirit of the discipline which seeks synthesis and integration. Academic leaders amongst the practising professional geographers have the onus of creating a professional environment which facilitates openness. At the same time, teachers need to own their failures. It is worthwhile to mention that there is little interaction between research (findings) and higher education curriculum, if at all. Their regular and continuous interaction and exchange has a potential of mutual benefit and therefore needs to be promoted.

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Note

1. http://pmindia.gov.in/en/news_updates/pms-remarks-at-the-102nd-indian-science-congress/.

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