Review of: "Empowering Minds: The Evolution of Higher Education in Tamil Nadu towards Innovation and Excellence"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

I found it very Interesting to read about Indian government initiatives for HE and learn that the Tamil Nadu has been working very hard to become a center of academic excellence. At the same time it has become a highly sought-after destination for students promoting quality education and research opportunities for academics. It is encouraging to see that the need to change has been recognised by key stakeholders involved in policy-making in Tamil Nadu. Important ingredients such as internationalization and globalization of higher education are part and parc el of this journey aiming to create competence, cooperation, collaboration, and creativity in research, teaching, and service amongst HEIs. Clearly these goals are very ambitious but great progress has been made to work with the different stakeholders to achieve a joint vision.

What is important in this context is that Tamil Nadu is a leader in social empowerment and social justice, promoting the holistic development of students from marginalized sections of society. There is a significant need for such activities.

One of the buzzwords of the article is the concept of self-sustainability in the workforce. This requires more definition. It seems that technology plays a key role in this but the article leaves a lot of questions open in this respect.

Should educators receive proper training in psychology to enable them to provide effective counseling services? Maybe. Some HEIs world-wide offer training to be recognised as Coaches and Mentors, there is always an element of psychology in such training. Clearly we need to increase the awareness programs as pointed out in the article, but awareness of what? The article talks about avoiding bad habits and the need to encourage young people to come out of them or avoid them altogether. We as readers need more specific instructions in this context. What are the bad habits about ? and what are the practical solutions? Are we talking for instance about increased consciousness through mindfulness training or kundalini yoga which offers an interesting mix of moving meditations, resilience training and chanting?

The author/s point out quite rightly the need to transform HE and HEIs more specifically and Tamil Nadu is on its way of becoming a beacon for India but maybe also for the international arena. This requires the involvement of many stakeholders but as the authors comment a strong foundation, an engaged and motivated academic community, and a focus on holistic development can bring about educational excellence in line with the globally changing landscape. Here again a question that needs consideration: what does holistic means in this context?

In particular the introduction of a need-based curriculum to create employable graduates and inspire the youth to become entrepreneurs are important elements in this journey. Focus on skill-oriented education for employability, choice-based

education at the higher level, personalized learning and mentor-mentee systems are essential and the reader would like to know more about how this is going to be achieved. Ditto for universal human values-based learning. This needs definition, and more information about how it will be achieved and in collaboration with whom. Many very interesting ideas in this article and more can be said in a follow-up version.