

Establishing Innovative Collaboration in Higher Education in Asia

Abstract:

The paper explores the establishment of collaboration focusing innovation in the arena of higher education, especially in Asian region. It has been observed recently that economic growth in rapidly developing Asian economies is pertinently linked to knowledge production, skills, and the rising demand for higher education and many countries have scope to transform their population into the human capital. It also stress on the critical role of higher education plays in driving Asia forward and suggests for working on innovation in higher education collaboration amongst Asian countries. In establishing innovative collaboration, the paper also addresses the issue of regional cooperation in education within the framework of BIMSTEC, BCIM, ASEAN, SAARC through introducing regional ranking system, accreditation body, journal indexing etc. The paper also discusses the innovative tools of teaching learning methods like Google class room, Global Access Asia, Moodle which facilitate the internationalization process of the university. To fit into the innovative collaboration in higher education, this research paper also shares the experience of Daffodil International University (DIU) with its initiatives in innovative collaboration in outcome based teaching learning, industry-academia alliances, business incubation model, entrepreneurship drive. The mission of any university is to pursue quality education and research of international distinction for the benefit of human society. In the delivery of educational programs on campus and beyond, the university draws heavily upon the new instructional and outreach technologies available in the present information age. With a view to focusing digitized learning, the paper shows the development of innovation, cultural harmony, information technology, ethics and quality education as well as international flavor focusing inbound and outbound student and faculty exchange programs in higher education and introducing the blended education.

***Key words:** Asian economies, regional cooperation, BIMSTEC, BCIM, ASEAN, SAARC, regional ranking system, accreditation body, journal indexing, innovative tools, Daffodil International University (DIU), innovative collaboration, exchange programs, blended education.*

1.0 Introduction

In this glocalization (globalization and localization), technology and innovation are creating increasingly attractive alternatives to existing systems in higher education. As days are growing, innovations in every sphere of higher education are denting its position. In both higher education and the world of business, constant striving for improvement and excellence in one's products and services—be they computers, cameras, curricula, teaching, or research—is widely accepted as an appropriate and fruitful strategy. Clayton Christensen, professor of business administration at Harvard Business School, explains how this gulf is often filled by disruptive technologies, which trigger important changes in the basis of competition in their field.

With a view of rapid technological advancement, we found many innovative initiatives are taking place like besides the traditional learning system like Google class room; Moodle at the eLearning Center; Flipped Class Room; Graphics Novel; 2+2 Programs; E-learning; Blended mode of education; Online courses in the Moodle etc.

A higher education innovation system can be seen as a set of functions, components and relationships, which allow us to disaggregate the various levels of interactions among the elements of the system and analyze the unfolding of innovation in higher education.¹

Higher Education Innovation System (HEIS)		
Functions	Components	Relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct and Indirect actors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration/conflict moderation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional and individual actors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substitution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network

2.0 Literature Review

Alexandra Ryan, Daniella Tilbury, Peter Blaze Corcoran, Osamu Abe, Ko Nomura, (2010) showed in "Sustainability in higher education in the Asia-Pacific: developments, challenges, and prospects" that Asia-Pacific region offers many creative initiatives and considerable progress in Education for Sustainable Development ESD and in understanding the learning dimensions of sustainability.

Shin, J.C. & Harman, G (2009) discussed the five main topic areas which provide the basis for the theoretical framework: massification, privatization, accountability and governance, internationalization, and ranking and world-class universities.

3.0 Innovation in higher education in Asian countries

Asia is well known for the innovativeness of its peoples. Universities have a critical role to play in instilling other important cultural components. We must embrace innovation in our own activities. In teaching and learning, recent years have seen the growing use of digital techniques, such as flipped classrooms and online learning. At the same time, there is a global push by fund providers for their investment to yield greater social and economic impact through research.

4.0 Innovation in Higher Education

The traditional system of higher education was giving lecture to students in a classroom, but there has been a drastic change in the styles of teaching over the period of time and more are also coming through. These innovative and interactive teaching-learning method methods are moving away the conventional style of teaching-learning towards a significant focus on active learning, where students freely act together with other students and take part in the outcome based teaching and learning (OBTL).

1. Google class room
2. Moodle at the e-Learning Center
3. Flipped Class Room
4. Graphics Novel
5. 2+2 Programs
6. E-learning
7. Blended mode of education
8. Online courses in the Moodle

5.0 Some Innovative tools of teaching learning methods

Google Class Room:

Google Classroom is a blended learning platform for academic institutions that aspire to simplify making, dispensing and grading coursework in a paperless way. It was introduced as a feature of Google Apps for simplified Education system. Its plan is to make the education system as paperless. Google Classroom is trouble-free to use and easily accessible from all types of devices. On June 29, 2015, Google announced a Classroom API and a share button for websites, permitting administrators of educational institutions to further strap up Google Classroom.

Global Access Asia:

Global Access Asia (GAA), the online platform for courseware of the Asian University Presidents Forum (AUPF). AUPF has met every year since 2002 with the mission to “increase communication through exchanging necessary information, hunt for common development and experience sharing of higher education institutions in Asia. GAA aspires to enhance international learning prospects for the students of AUPF member universities. Each participating university may like to offer one or two of its top-quality courses online through using a collaborative online platform. Students of other participating universities may take those courses with free of cost to earn academic credits. Participating universities may also upload non-credit educational contents here. GAA is unique among courseware systems in its focus on the diversity and global role of Asia.

Moodle:

Moodle is a learning platform intended to provide educators, learners and administrators with a single vigorous, safe and integrated system to generate a congenial learning environment.

The Institute of the Future has identified 10 work skills, proficiencies and abilities required for future jobs and work settings.

- Sense-making: Capability to settle on the significance of what is being articulated
- Social intelligence: the ability to unite with others in a deep and direct way to encourage reactions and preferred interactions
- Novel and adaptive thinking: proficiency at thinking and coming up with resolution and responses
- Cross-cultural competency: the ability to function in various cultural settings
- Computational thinking: the ability to interpret huge amounts of data into conceptual findings and to realize data-based analysis
- New-media literacy
- Transdisciplinarity
- Design mindset
- Cognitive load management
- Virtual collaboration

5.1 Disruptive Innovation in Higher Education

There is a tendency for policy makers and institutional leaders to take any kind of technological advancement which is called a 'disruptive innovation' and cram it into the classroom experience and then expect that by hook or by crook efficiencies are going to appear. Constant striving for improvement and excellence in one's products and services is widely accepted as an appropriate and fruitful strategy in both higher education and the business world. Clayton Christensen, a professor of business administration at Harvard Business School, is the proponent of this system.

6.0 Sustaining versus Disruptive Technologies

Most new technologies or improvements in services generally enhance the performance of established products along with the lines that majority of the clients have traditionally appreciated. These sorts of innovations (whether incremental or breakthrough) are sustaining technologies that move a product up the technological progress trajectories. Research has shown that the pace of technological progress in almost every market outstrips the ability of customers to use that progress.

7.0 New Dimension of Regional Cooperation in Innovation in Higher Education: Regional Accreditation, Ranking of Universities, Journal Indexation, Research

More extensive regional cooperation is required, in the field of education especially higher education. Investment in higher education leads to social welfare. Participatory teaching-learning system at higher educational institute is very important for the teachers to create congenial class room atmosphere for the sake of transforming students to employability plus.

Regional cooperation will give us better market access and improvement of standardization in the regional perspective so that it will work as catalyst to attain competitive advantage and long run sustainability. Regional cooperation is very important to have a win-win situation for which one should use the platform of BIMSTEC, BCIM, and ASEAN with special attention in the field of higher education. Investment in building human capital has a positive impact on the economy of Bangladesh which needs regional cooperation. To develop a perfect model in the educational arena we can use PPF which means Public-Private-Foreign collaboration.

7.1 Accreditation

Accreditation increases the quality of education through improving the effectiveness of institutions and making sure that institutions meet the established standards. It matches the shared values and practices among different institutions. Hence, accreditation relies on integrity, considerate judgment, meticulous application of requirements, and confidence. It provides an evaluation of an institution's effectiveness in the implementation of its mission, its conformity with the necessities of its accrediting body, and its continuing efforts to enhance the quality of student learning.

7.2 Necessity of Accreditation

The objective of the accreditation process is to identify and recognize the value-addition in converting a student admitted to a program/institution into a graduate with superior knowledge and a tolerable level of professional and personal proficiency.

7.3 Bangladesh Initiative

The government approved in principle the draft rules of Accreditation Council Act-2016 to ensure quality and standard of higher education in Bangladesh. A chairman will be recruited by the government who lead the 11-member council. No university will be able to tender certificates of higher education without the prior-approval of the council.

7.4 Regional Accreditation: Examples of some South Asian Countries

Bhutan

Bhutan Accreditation Council (BAC) is the national accrediting agency, which shall accredit institutions of higher learning in Bhutan.

India

A set of professional councils established by statute and other autonomous coordinative or regulatory bodies established or recognized by the University Grants Commission of India.

Nepal

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has launched the Quality Assurance and Accreditation (QAA) program as an important aspect of reform in higher education in Nepal. Accordingly, a Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee (QAAC) has been formed for the development and implementation of QAA activities in higher education in Nepal in 2007

Sri Lanka

The University Grants Commission of Sri Lanka empowered by Section 4(2) of the Universities Act No. 16 of 1978, as and when required appoints Standing Committees for specific purposes,. As such Sri Lanka formed Standing Committee on Quality Assurance and Accreditation which functions as the advisory body to UGC - QAAC and vigorously pursue/promote QA programmes according to universities.

A unique platform can be established for all Accreditation Councils of Asian countries.

7.5 Ranking of Universities

University ranking basically focuses on determining definitive list of the world's best universities, evaluates across teaching, international outlook, research, reputation etc. Data are trusted by governments and universities and are a fundamental resource for students which help them to choose where they should study. During recent years, university rankings have gained a substantial significance not only among the academia but also amongst students, parents and businesses. Common stakeholders may not be conscious of the ins and outs of ranking processes and criteria of rankings but they are certainly eager to know the position of the University of their interest in the ranking lists. A regional rankings naming 'Asian Higher Education Institutions Ranking' may be established. Some ranking systems of the universities are:

- QS World University Ranking
- Times Higher Education World University Ranking
- Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU)
- CWTS Leiden Ranking
- Webometrics Ranking

7.6 Journal Indexing

Indexation of a journal is judged as an indication of quality. Indexed journals are believed to be of superior scientific quality in comparison with non-indexed journals. Many other popular indexation services have been developed over the years which include EBSCO, MedLine, SCOPUS, PubMed, EMBASE and SCIRUS among others.

7.7 Research

One of the significant roles of universities has been to make positive changes where possible. They have done this by cultivating an ever larger proportion of the population and lengthening its perspectives by performing research that generates new understanding, new technologies and the prospective for action and by providing a store of knowledge and aptitudes that society all together has been able to draw upon. A noteworthy proportion of our better health, wealth and general wellbeing was made achievable by the research conducted by universities and through the measures of people who were drawing on the benefits of their university education. Research

collaboration need to be greater than before amongst the Asian countries with the support and networking of BCIM, BIMSTEC, ASEAN, SAARC.

8.0 Asian University Presidents Forum, ASEAN University Network and AMDISA: Model for regional Collaboration in Higher Education

8.1 Asian University Presidents Forum

The Asian University Presidents Forum was established from a friendly cooperation beginning in December 1999 between higher education institutions in China and Thailand. In order to create a mechanism through which university presidents both public and private from China and Thailand could recurrently exchange information and management experience. Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, Srinakharinwirot University Siamese, Univeristy of Thailand and Chaoshan College jointly put forward a proposal to establish a Sino-Thai conference for higher education institutions. AUPF works as channel in developing the quality of higher education in Asian region.

8.2 ASEAN University Network (AUN)

The ASEAN University Network (AUN) is an Asian university association which was founded in November 1995 by 13 universities of ASEAN member countries. After the extension of ASEAN twice in 1997 and 1999 (by ASEAN Charter), the AUN membership has been experiencing an increasing trend.

8.3 Activities of AUN

The AUN-QA network: This network comprises of all partaking Universities, a Secretariat, a Quality Assurance Council and a pool of assessors, governed by the Board of Trustees of the AUN.

Roles of the Participating Universities

The Participating Universities will support and participate in AUN-QA programs and activities, propose suitable nominees to be trained, appoint CQOs for their universities and perform as assessors of AUN.

Academic Collaboration:

ASEAN Cyber University: An idea of establishing an ASEAN-ROK Cyber University was initiated to promote education cooperation and people-to-people exchange.

Youth Platform:

- AUN and ASEAN+3 Educational Forum and Young Speakers Contest
- ASEAN Youth Cultural Forum
- AUN Internship Programme
- Study and visit programme
- University Leaders Dialogue

8.4 Association of Management Development Institutions in South Asia (AMDISA)

Association of Management Development Institutions in South Asia (AMDISA) is a body recognized by SAARC. It is a network of Management Education and Management Development Institutions in South Asia. It has 243 members from the SAARC region. Its

mission is to promote management development activities and management education in South Asia, considering the economic, cultural and social context of the region.

AMDISA is the only Association which networks management development institutions across the eight South Asian nations through exchanging information, facilitating inter-country research initiatives, conducting regional conferences, workshops, colloquia and programs, and thereby providing a forum for interaction among academics and business leaders.

9.0 DIU Initiatives in Innovation in Higher Education

9.1 Outcome Based Teaching Learning (OBTL)

Outcome-based education is an educational model where curriculum, pedagogy and assessment are focused on student learning. OBE emphasizes student learning and success. Daffodil International University has taken the initiative to start OBTL in its teaching process; already five departments have started the method.

9.2 Daffodil Business Incubator

Business incubation program is one of the most dynamic programs aimed at developing and supporting new commercial businesses. Incubators have the ability of nurturing young firms by helping them to survive during their startup stages and maintain a sustainable growth thereafter. Helping new firms to survive during their startup stages is the most crucial function of business incubators as most new firms are vulnerable to failure and collapse at this particular period. Besides, business incubators are significant in providing provision of the necessary resources, hands-on management practices, coordinated exposure to business strategies on decisive thinking and provision of the most important technical support for business success. Furthermore, business incubators are also very helpful in providing startup firms with the facilities to share office services, easy access to business equipment and expandable space.

Daffodil Business Incubation Model which are characterized as:

- Business incubators are private-sector, profit-driven with the pay-back coming from investment in companies rather than from rental income.
- They tend to focus mainly on high-tech and internet-related activities and unlike ‘traditional’ incubators, do not have job creation as their principal.
- New economy incubators often have an essentially virtual presence with financial and business services at the core of the offering unlike their traditional counterparts that usually center on the provision of physical workspace.

9.3 DIU Short Term Mobility Programs in Asia

With the experiences of the general student exposure of Bangladesh, DIU has started its Summer Camp Program where DIU students actively participated. Some of them are as follows:

- Asia Summer Program-2013 in Dongseo University, South Korea
In 2013, eleven students and one faculty member of Daffodil International University (DIU) attended 3 weeks long Asia Summer Program-2013 in Dongseo University, South Korea. Total of 350 students from 25 universities in 10 different countries attended the program.

- Asia Summer Program-2014 in University Malaysia Parlis, Malaysia
33 students 5 faculty members and 2 officials from Daffodil International University attended Asia Summer Program 2014 dating 5-25 August, 2014 at University Malaysia Parlis (UniMAP), Malaysia. More than 250 students of over 23 countries attended this summer program.
- Asia Summer Program-2015 in Josai International University, Japan
17 students of Daffodil International University attended Asia Summer Program-2015 (ASP) at Josai International University (JIU), Japan. Students and teachers from all around Asia from 13 universities of 10 countries including Bangladesh attended the summer program.
- Petra Summer Program-2015 at the Petra Christian University, Indonesia
Students of Daffodil International University attended Petra Summer Program (PSP) at the Petra Christian University, Indonesia. The Program started during 2 August - 23 August 2015.

9.4 Asian University Students Forum

Three DIU students of Department of Software Engineering along with student of Department of Multimedia & Creative Technology represented DIU and Bangladesh in the 2015 Asian University Students Forum from 5 November to 7 November 2015, hosted by Guangdong University of Foreign Studies in China. They attended with other Asian university students in a round table discussion on 'The Internet and University Student Entrepreneurship'. Besides, it was a great experience for students to take part in the "Observation of Asian University Presidents Forum 2015" and met the presidents of different universities who participated in the AUPF-2015.

9.5 4-year 'Bachelor of Entrepreneurship' program

In order to achieve the target of creating employment, poverty alleviation and GDP growth as per vision of the government, Daffodil group has been striving to shape the entrepreneurship development initiative in the country in a positive way. To support the initiative, Daffodil International University has recently started a 4-year 'Bachelor of Entrepreneurship Development' program to develop real and innovative entrepreneurs through training, consulting practical activities supported by respective research.

Conclusion

Regional and cross-border collaboration and cooperation in higher education is a growing trend. Opportunities and prospects for such collaborative cultures are enhancing in a rapid pace. A number of countries, especially across Asia, are initiating and participating in regional collaboration and cross-border cooperation as a strategy for intensifying and modernizing their higher education systems. This cooperation and collaboration in higher education among Asian countries could benefit from more transparency, easily accessible information about program designs, and frankness about how these programs work, and wider regional appreciation of academic degrees and programs.

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