CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

1. Summary

In retrospect it may be observed that the study was an attempt to look at the process of educational innovation and its multidimensional aspects in the context of tertiary education. The objectives of the study were : (i) to examine the conceptual basis and objectives of selected innovations in colleges; (ii) to find out by whom and how they were developed and diffused; (iii) to find out how they were adopted and implemented: (iv) to identify the factors which facilitated or constrained them ; and (v) to study related aspects such as the evaluation, personnel, cost, consequences, change agentry and dissemination of innovations. These objectives were imparted greater specificity and elucidation by means of 15 points of enquiry enumerated below: (i) What were the rationale, conceptual basis and objectives of the innovation? (ii) What was the need/problem to be met/solved by the innovation? (iii) What were the sources of awareness of the innovative ideas? (iv) How was the innovation developed and diffused? (v) How and by whom was the decision for adoption taken? (vi) How was it planned and shaped? (vii) what was its personnel and cost structure? (viii) What were the activities involved in the

implementation process? (ix) What strategies of change were employed by the adopter group? (x) What were its consequences, both functional and dysfunctional? (xi) Was the innovation evaluated? (xii) Which factors helped or hindered its passage from concept to reality? (xiii) Did the adopters help other colleges in replicating it? (xiv) How were the outcomes of the innovation communicated to other systems and official agencies? (xv) What model of change did the innovation represent?

The above mentioned questions were grounded in a set assumptions regarding the innovation process. They were: (1) Innovations come to life and grow in a climate of academic freedom in the colleges. (2) Innovations become effective in open, communicative and interactive college communities. (3) The clarity and focus of problem-sensing, problem-definiton and retrieval of solutions enhance the effectiveness of innovations. (4) The compatibility of the institutional aims and the objectives of the innovation promotes the latter's success. (5) Academic excellence, social relevance and the integrated development of the students' personality are goals that inspire innovative initiatives in colleges. (6) Promotion of social justice and service to the poor and the marginalised, are dominant concerns for some educators.

(7) Innovators are a minority and may not always be popular; decisions relating to innovation cannot be dependent on the support of the majority. (8) All innovations face some resistance. (9) Resistance can be handled by appropriate strategies for behavioural change. (10) When other strategies fail, leaders of innovations resort to the authority strategy. (11) Systematic planning with division of labour, time schedules and mechanisms of accountability and authority, helps the implementation process. (12) Sustained programmes staff development acclimatise and prepare the faculty of for accepting, and collaborating in, change efforts. (13) Formative evaluation of the innovation process and corrective action taken on the basis of feedback, nurture innovations. (14) Some of the wholesome or harmful consequences of innovations may be intangible and may become visible after a long time. Therefore hasty judgements of success and failure of innovative efforts may be refrained from; (15) Successful innovators disseminate their insights and example to other institutions and cooperate in the replication of innovations. (16) Funds are critical inputs in the innovation process; however modest resources are sufficient to implement successful change efforts, provided staff motivation and competence attain high levels. (17) The Principal's leadership behaviour, educational philosophy

and proneness to innovations affect staff attitudes and commitment towards educational change.

The scheme of the study consisted of five stages: (1) Identification of innovative ideas and practices proposed for the renewal and relevance of higher education. (2) Selection of some significant and effectively institutionalised innovations in their actual college setting. (3) In-depth study of the selected innovations. (4) Preparation of case studies. (5) Analysis of Data.

The case study method was adjudged efficacious enough to fulfil the objectives of the study. Purposive samples of innovations and adopter colleges were selected. The investigator collected data from the colleges which were the locale of the change efforts by means of personal observation, interviews, administration of questionnaire and the examination of the records, documents and publications. The gathered data was used to construct the eight case studies which had a uniform design with the dimensions mentioned below: (1) Characteristics of the Adopter Institution (2) Starting Point (3) Innovators (4) Need/Problem (5) Search for solutions (6) Choice of the Innovation and Its sources. (7) Planning/Shaping/Preparation. (8) Decision-making. (9) Rationale, Conceptual basis and Objectives.

(10) Contents/Activities; (11) Personnel; (12) Financial Aspects;(13) Acceptance/Resistance; (14) Evaluation; (15) Continuance and Future Plans; (16) Change Agents; (17) Consequences/Impact ; (18) Dissemination; (19) Factors that Facilitated/Constrained the Innovation; (20) Model of change and (21) Strategies for change.

2. Conclusions

The investigator arrived at some conclusions which represented the results of the study and the answers to the points of enquiry. The conclusions of the study embody the commonalties and relationships discovered among the characteristics of the eight innovations described in the cases and some distinctive features of their process. They may have wider applications and relevance, for those who plan and implement similar change efforts in colleges. What was true of eight successful and continuing innovations may be true of similar other enterprises in similar colleges. What facilitated them can be activated or generated in other contexts, What constrained them can be encountered with greater fore-knowledge and preparedness.

The conclusions drawn by the investigator are given below, in relation to each of the objectives of the study.

(i) Examination of the Conceptual basis and Objectives of the Innovations:

Innovative colleges have re-emphasised, revised or

reframed their objectives in the light of the Education Commission (1964-66)'s vision of education as an instrument of national and human development. The new elements assimilated by them included contribution to national development; promotion of social justice; service to the poor; academic excellence; social relevance; inculcation of moral, social and spiritual values; and employability of the students. The compatibility of the objectives of the institution with those of the innovation contributes to the effectiveness of change efforts. Clarity and focus of objectives facilitate the process of innovation. Academic excellence and social relevance need not be antithetical; they can be symbiotic.

(ii) By whom and how were they developed and diffused?

The personnel involved in change efforts included students, teachers, non-teaching staff, additional project staff, Departmental Heads, Principal, Governing Body, Guest Lecturers, change agents, teachers of other colleges, university officials, Vice-Chancellors, staff of the University Grants Commission, idealogues, writers, journalists and the local community. The success of innovations was affected by the change-oriented skills, knowledge, values and attitudes of such personnel. Effective human relations and personnel management enhance the productivity of innovations. Continuing professional development of the involved personnel is a must, before and during the innovation process.

The quality of the Principal's linkages with resource systems, influenced the success of innovations, Local communities participated in the innovation process not only as beneficiaries but also as helpers in field work, surveys and work experience activities.

The Principals and teachers who played key roles in change efforts were characterised by high academic standing; orientation to goals and their attainment; concern for students; participative approach; cosmopoliteness; sense of social justice; linkage with resource systems;and effective managerial skills, including ability for resource-mobilisation.

The major sources of innovative ideas and awareness about new experiments were : social interaction through visits, travels, seminars, conferences etc.; resource systems such as the University Grants Commission; books and journals and change agents. Besides, individual educators and groups invented problem-solving approaches and programmes by the exercise of their sensitivity to the needs/problems of the students and local community ; and by their reflection and creativity.

As books and journals are carriers of new ideas, the quality of the library resources and services in colleges

need to be upgraded and updated. It was found that colleges which had installed successful innovations had well-endowed libraries and flexible working hours. Behind every successful innovation there is a resourceful library and its adequate use by the staff, especially the use of new books and journals.

It was found that the major agency engaged in the development and diffusion of innovations in higher education was the University Grants Commission. The Commission functioned with the help of expert committees and task forces which clarified new concepts; tailored them to suit the needs of colleges and Universities; proposed them to client systems; and facilitated their implementation with funds and guidance. The universities functioned as purveyers of the innovations diffused by the Commission and also developed their own programmes aimed at innovative change. The extent to which a university is prone to innovations has a direct bearing on the fate of new experiments in the colleges under the former's jurisdiction. The linkages and communication channels between the colleges on the one hand, and the resource systems on the other, need to be strengthened for smoother flow of new ideas.

It was found that the dissemination of new ideas on the college campuses was facilitated by open communication channels, regular staff meetings, informal meetings between staff and students, field visits and

institutional self-evaluation programmes.

(iii) How were the Innovations adopted and Implemented?

It was noted that new educational concepts experienced a time-lag between the proposal and implementation stages. The major reasons for such delay were lack of legitimisation/approval by competent governmental/University bodies; long period of planning and preparation, resistance to the proposal from critics, sceptics or certain vested interests; lack of initiative on the part of the college; laggardly realisation of the significance of the new ideas; slow diffusion; and absence of autonomy for colleges.

The adoption decision in most cases was both consultative and authority-based. The teaching staff were frequently consulted and involved in decisions relating to adoption, but student participation was weak. It was found that innovations adopted on the basis of participative decisions had greater persistence. In the autonomous colleges the Academic Council, Board of Studies and Boards of Examiners had the freedom and authority to adopt new curricula, teaching materials and evaluation procedures.

The path of implementation was strewn with constraints and the major helping factors in the long and arduous trek

towards the objectives were; clarity of objectives, autonomous status of the college; planned staff preparation; high staff motivation; deft handling of resistance; systematic planning and execution of designed activities with provision for delegation and accountability; mechanisms for evaluation, feedback and correction; and financial inputs.

The leaders of innovations used mostly rational, value, psychological and training strategies. Economic rewards were not given in most cases but positive feedback and appreciation for effective performance were given to reinforce hard workers. Change agents cooperated in the implementation process by solving problems, training staff, and monitoring the validity of the change efforts. The freedom enjoyed by the autonomous colleges helped them in working out their change programmes independently.

(iv) Facilitative and Inhibitive Factors:

The study identified 41 factors which were facilitative and 21 which were inhibitive of the innovation process. The common features of the facilitative factors were; the clarity and relevance of institutional goals; staff motivation; college-resource system linkages; human and material resources; leadership behaviour of the Principal, democratic ethos of the institution; help from change agents; review and feedback mechanisms for improvement of performance; and the usefulness of innovations in meeting/resolving student needs and societal problems. College autonomy generated

and sheltered a host of innovations; The constraining factors were related to the lack of freedom for colleges to experiment, financial shortages, heavy work load of the staff; resistance from some staff and students; and the feelings of inadequacy on the part of some staff members.

It was concluded that any attempt to change the prevalent practices on the campuses would be met with varying degrees of acceptance or resistance and that it was the adopter group's responsibility to use appropriate strategies to deal with them. This is the challenge facing the managers of change; the governing Body and the college administration have a crucial rule in helping them face the challenge.

(v) Related Aspects:

(a) Evaluation

Formative and summative evaluation, if built into the process of implementation, facilitates in-process corrections. Evaluation of programmes by external teams enhances the objectivity and rigour of self- examination. Trained analysts and evaluators can make the evaluation process more reliable and amenable to follow-up action.

(b) Financial Aspects

Financially self-supportive innovations have greater staying power. Some colleges were embarking on innovative activities without external aid and by mobilising internal resources and local inputs such as contributions from the college management, time and labour donated free of cost by the staff; and by using the creativity of the adopter group. The extra work that the faculty invariably do to operate innovations is an unquantified but critical investment in educational change. Home-grown innovations inspire stable loyalties. However innovations that require structural changes and official concurrence, get implemented in colleges only with guidance, approval and funds from superordinate bodies in higher education such as the universities and the University Grants Commission.

(c) Consequences

The chief beneficiaries of the change efforts were the students, teachers, local community, the adopter college organisation and other colleges. The majority of the student beneficiaries and the local community belonged to the under-privileged sections of society, those from the lower income group, those who were constrained by linguistic disabilities, those who lacked study habits, under-achievers, the rural poor and the unemployed.

This orientation towards service to the poor and the marginalised was linked to the priority assigned to that particular concern in the colleges' objectives. Simultaneously other sections of the student population also benefitted in terms of academic improvement and social awareness. The dysfunctional consequences were the heavy work load borne by the teachers; the 'stress' experienced by some of the students; student protest against 'compulsory' changes; and opposition to one of the innovations by the teachers' union. An indirect result of the innovations was that the concerned staff acquired a variety of new skills, new knowledge and attitudinal modifications through professional development programmes. In one case an institutional structure to continue the dissemination work was established. It was concluded by the investigator, that the effectiveness of innovations was reflected in the functionality of their consequences, in terms of fulfilling the needs and problems of the target groups; and that the wholesome consequences reinforced their persistence in the respective college systems,

(d) Change Agents

Colleges were relying on the staff of neighbouring colleges, academic organisations, voluntary organisations, and management/research centres for help in the process of change; they functioned as trainers, knowledge - builders, process helpers, solution-givers, resource-linkers and evaluators. There is need to train change agents from among the college Principals and teachers.

(e) Dissemination

It was found that the colleges which adopted the innovations and integrated them were disseminating them through various channels and helping other colleges in replication. Such networks or 'innovation chains' need sustained support from agencies like the University Grants Commission, the National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration and the Universities.

3. Implications for Resource Systems and Colleges

The findings of the present study have certain implications for educational planning and action, with respect to the resource systems and the colleges. They are presented below in the form of suggestions for consideration by the respective agencies.

At the Level of Resource Systems

The resource systems such as the University Grants Commission, Universities and the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration may consider the following steps to promote innovation and change; (1) The conceptual framework of innovation and change may be accepted and integrated in the process of educational planning and the implementation of programmes for development of Universities and Colleges. (2) Training programmes may be organised, for educational administrators at the national and university levels, in the skills of

change agentry, with the help of experts from institutes of management. (3) Streamlining and strengthening of linkages and communication channels with colleges may be ensured, especially because ; (a) funds delayed are, in a sense, funds denied; and (b) projects that are attractive on the paper fade out due to blocks in the transmission of messages. (4) Courses in 'Innovation and Change' may be introduced in the Departments of Education and in colleges of education, so that the prospective teachers grow into effective change agents. (5) Greater visibility and prominence may be secured for educational innovations in the print and electronic media, so as to promote the dissemination of new ideas and practices. (6) Suitable recognition may be given to innovative institutions and individuals at the university and national levels. (7) The financial allocations for faculty development and new educational programmes may be enhanced and an 'academic audit' of the success of such programmes may be built into the conditions for disbursement, as a parallel to the financial audit so scrupulously insisted upon. (8) 'Thinking Cells on Innovation and Change' may be constituted at the national, university and college levels, to facilitate free-wheeling reflection and intellectual probes into new and unexplored areas of educational development and to evolve non-traditional and creative solutions to problems. Such Cells may include original , creative and independent thinkers from various disciplines, regions, age-groups and ideological orientations. Not less than half of them may be women so as to ensure just and equitable

representation to their needs, problems and aspirations. The output of such Cells, may form the raw materials out of which innovations can be shaped.

At the College Level

The colleges may consider the following steps to promote innovation and change:

(1) Conduct of institutional self study to assess strengths and weaknesses and plan for the future. A college which does not examine itself and change, regresses.

(2) Rethinking on and updating of institutional aims and objectives, may be done, with reference to the national educational objectives; need for academic excellence with social relevance; integrated development of the students' personality; and service to the local community. A college which is maintenance-oriented cannot induce renewal in its sub-systems.

(3) Planning and implementation of staff development programmes on a continuous basis may be undertaken. Learning professors are more effective than learned professors.

(4) Strengthening the resources and services of the library may be attended to , with emphasis on new books and new journals in diverse disciplines. The staff and students may be encouraged to use them. Those who do not read have no more advantage than those who cannot read.

(5) Staff meetings with provision for freedom of expression, rational debate and participative decision-making may be regularly conducted. Collective and consultative decisions are qualitatively better than ad-hoc or authority decisions.

(6) Openness to new ideas and practices may be developed and encouraged in individual teachers and Departments and incentives may be given to new experiments and projects. Innovations grow when they are nurtured.

(7) Provision may be made in the annual budget of the college for activities related to innovation and change.

(8) The annual report of the Principal may give due credit to new initiatives undertaken during the year.

(9) Recognition and honour may be given to innovative teachers and students. Positive reinforcement adds fuel to motivation.

(10) It has been widely recognised that college autonomy is a step in the right direction and the National Policy on Education (1986) has reaffirmed the Government's intention to confer autonomous status on more colleges in the near future. However this offer has not met with corresponding eagerness on the part of colleges to assume the new institutional role. In fact it would appear to independent observers that there is an unarticulated consensus among the majority of colleges in favour of the non-proliferation of autonomy. This may be due to the heavy responsibilities involved in the framing of courses and curricula and conducting the examinations; as well as the stiff resistance of teachers' organisations. However, as was seen from case study No. 8 in

Chapter V of this study, autonomy offers the congenial climate for, not only isolated innovations, but a package of innovations in all areas of college life. Therefore colleges may start systematic planning for autonomous status through staff development and institutional preparation, with the help of experts from autonomous colleges. While the universities may take more time to wean away the colleges under their jurisdiction to an independent and self-reliant status, nothing prevents individual colleges from planning for change. The insights and theories drawn from the conceptual framework of innovation and change will be a source of guidance to colleges in such preparation for autonomous status. The'freedom to learn' is worth the sacrifices that it demands.

4. Suggestions for Further Study

To make innovations grow to the status of accomplished changes in the system, coordinated research will be needed. Some questions with a bearing on this subject, have emerged from the present study and they are indicated below, to be considered as points of enquiry in further research.

(i) One hundred and ten collegiate innovations were identified (Appendix 5), of which eight only could be included in the present study. In-depth studies of the remaining 102 innovations will shed light on their conceptual basis, life cycle, programme structure, results etc.

(ii) The present study could take into account the colleges in three States and a Union Territory. The innovations introduced in colleges located in other regions of the country constitute another area for future research.

(iii) The creative and highly consequential role of the University Grants Commission as the major agency responsible for the development, diffusion and funding of the innovation process, needs detailed study.

(iv)The scarcity of competent and motivated resource persons, experts and trainers in various areas of the change process, was referred to in the case studies in Chapter V. An enquiry into the present state of 'change agentry' in Indian education; and possible action plans and curricula for the training of change agents, would be worth undertaking.

(v) The comprehensive innovation 'college autonomy' will be completing its first decade of implementation in 1988 and is slated to attain the status of integration in the higher educational system of the country. A study of the functioning of the autonomous colleges at this stage would be, of relevance and advantage to educational practice.

Effective innovations have an eloquent message and it needs to get transmitted far and wide, penetrating the defensive shells of self-contained and self-complacent institutional systems. This process can be expedited by

agencies and organisations that have an interventionist and enabling role. But such external help can reach only upto a point. Beyond that is the region of human motivation, creativity and the organisational dynamics of the campus.

The vision, goals, resources and work ethic of the community on the campus can make or mar the success of innovations. Equally important is the direction of the desired change. For a long time to come, against the backdrop of the abject deprivation, illiteracy and misery of large sections of the population, educational change can ill afford to deflect from or disregard, the orientations that it has set for itself-contribution to national and human development; academic excellence oriented to social relevance [illegible]; formation in the youth, of a value system rooted in the country's culture; and an allround commitment to the liberation of the masses from poverty, illiteracy and other dehumanising forces. This is the challange and the opportunity that face educational innovations and innovators.

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