

H. M. Patel Memorial Lecture

**Transforming Higher Education in India
From Blind Alley to Knowledge Highway**

by

Prof. V. S. Vyas

Professor Emeritus,

Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur



**PG Department of Economics &
Agro-Economic Research Centre**

H. M. Patel Institute of Rural Development

SARDAR PATEL UNIVERSITY

Vallabh Vidyanagar 388120, Anand, Gujarat, India



H. M. Patel Memorial Lecture 2015

About the Institute and Lecture:

As the Post-Graduate Department of Economics and the Agro-Economic Research Centre have been working in close collaboration for several decades, the Sardar Patel University has put them under the common umbrella of the H. M. Patel Institute of Rural Development in order to help them to work together which will be mutually beneficial to both of them. The H.M. Patel Memorial Lecture is instituted by the H. M. Patel Institute of Rural Development with the help of generous endowment grant given by Dr. Mahesh Pathak (Hon. Adviser, AERC).

About the PG Department of Economics:

The Sardar Patel University was established with a view to serve the cause of rural transformation. Hence, ever since its establishment in 1958, the PG Department of Economics has given rural bias to its teaching and research programmes. Recognizing the past record, the UGC also identified agriculture and rural development as thrust areas for the Department and awarded its Special Assistance Programmes for three consecutive phases of five years each. The Department also received Rs. 40 lakhs from the UGC under its ASIHS (Assistance for strengthening Infrastructure in Humanities and Social Sciences) programme. During its long journey of more than five decades, apart from providing rigorous teaching at the Post Graduate level, the Department has prepared more than 100 project reports and guided 43 M. Phil and 50 Ph. D. students. Recently, UGC has recognized this Department as Centre of Advanced Studies (CAS) in Economics.

About the Agro-Economic Research Centre:

The Agro-Economic Research Centre (AERC) for the states of Gujarat and Rajasthan was established in July 1961 at the Sardar Patel University, Vallabh Vidyanagar by the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India, New Delhi. The Centre has completed 53 glorious years (1961-2014) of its journey marked by both achievements and challenges. During these years, the Centre has emerged as a strong policy feedback centre of the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India due to hard work and strong commitment of the staff in the Centre. The Centre has by now completed 154 problem-oriented studies, 21 village surveys and 4 village resurveys. The studies have come out with useful findings and policy implications for agricultural and rural development of the states of Gujarat and Rajasthan.

Printed by Agro-Economic Research Centre, Vallabh Vidyanagar.

H. M. Patel Memorial Lecture

**Transforming Higher Education in India
From Blind Alley to Knowledge Highway**

by
Prof. V.S.Vyas
Professor Emeritus,
Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur



**PG Department of Economics &
Agro-Economic Research Centre
H. M. Patel Institute of Rural Development
SARDAR PATEL UNIVERSITY
Vallabh Vidyanagar 388120, Anand, Gujarat, India**

Transforming Higher Education in India From Blind Alley to Knowledge Highway

Prof. V.S.Vyas¹

I am grateful to the Department of Economics of the Sardar Patel University, the Agro-Economic Research Centre, and particularly to my esteemed friend Dr. Mahesh Pathak for inviting me to deliver H. M. Patel Memorial Lecture. This has provided me an opportunity to pay tribute to someone whom I hold in the highest esteem. Patel Saheb was more than an extra-ordinary administrator. He had keen understanding of the pivotal social issues and determination to bring changes in the required direction. I had the privilege to work under his guidance for nearly a decade in one of his favored institutions. i.e., Agro Economic Research Centre of the Sardar Patel University. He was responsible for the establishment of this Centre in Vidyanagar and took keen interest in its development.

1 The 2nd H.M. Patel Memorial Lecture delivered at H.M. Patel Institute of Rural Development, Sardar Patel University, Vallabh Vidyanagar, on February 7, 2014.

This lecture was organized jointly by the Post Graduate Department of Economics and Agro-Economic Research Centre (AERC) of Sardar Patel University, Vallabh Vidyanagar.

Throughout the period of my stay in Vallabh Vidyanagar, which lasted nearly a decade, he was my guide and mentor. I owe a lot to him for my acquiring an understanding of the issues of societal importance. Higher education was one of the major concerns of Patel Saheb. He spent his time, energy and thought to improve the status of higher education in this part of our country through the Charutar Vidya Mandal and the Sardar Patel University. I have decided to speak today on this subject, which is undoubtedly of critical importance to our country.

The Knowledge Society: Ours is a knowledge era. Only those societies progress that have the capacity to generate and assimilate knowledge. This is a precondition for developing countries aspiring for faster economic growth, more so for a country such as India, which has set high hopes on development of knowledge intensive service sector. A knowledge-based economy has to fulfill several conditions. These include : incentives for acquisition and use of knowledge; institutions, such as universities, research centers and enterprises that can generate or adapt knowledge; an efficient information infrastructure to disseminate knowledge. Thus, institutions imparting Higher Education should be viewed as important

contributors to the process of knowledge generation and adaptation. However, it will be a narrow view if we have to consider knowledge acquired at the stage of higher education essential only for economic growth, more specifically for development of 'Human Capital'; knowledge is equally essential for self-development. It is a moot question whether higher education in our country is contributing to these goals. Are the students passing out from the portals of the institutions of higher learning better workers, better entrepreneurs, and better persons? The answer in a large number of cases is a resounding NO. Of course there are a few institutions of excellence that meet these objectives, but they are the exceptions, and as is said, exceptions prove the rule.

Higher Education Infrastructure: India has an impressive institutional infrastructure for higher education. In numerical terms it is one of the largest in the world. Only U.S.A. and China have a higher number of educational institutions for tertiary education. There are 712 Universities in the country. Of these 201 Universities are privately managed. There are 42 Central University, 1 Central and 13 State Open Universities, 68 Institutes

of National Importance, 310 State Public Universities, 5 Institutes under State Legislature Act, and 127 Deemed Universities. There are more than 36000 colleges and nearly 11000 Stand Alone Institutions in the country.²

Total enrolment in higher education is estimated to be 29.6 million with 16.3 million boys and 13.3 million girls. Girls constitute 45% of the total enrolment. Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in Higher education, (which is calculated for 18 to 23 years of age group) is 21.1 in our country. GER for male population is 22.3 and for females it is 19.8. By any standards these are impressive figures. In addition, the number of the institutions of higher education and the number of students enrolled is increasing every year. The target is to raise the gross enrolment ratio to 30 by 2020, and there are all the indications that this target will be achieved.

Despite such large numbers of institutions and students, India is far behind some of the countries with fewer educational institutions, e.g. Japan or South Korea.

² All the data cited in this paper are from **Educational Statistics at a Glance**, Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development New Delhi 2014.

Similarly, GER is much higher even in the other BRICK countries, i.e., China, Brazil, Russia and South Africa. In many developing countries the amount spent on education is of a larger proportion to their GDP compared to what we spend in India.

The main cause of concern is that the outcome of massive expansion of the institutions of Higher Education is hardly encouraging. In the first place, expansion of this infrastructure is lopsided. There are some regions where the facilities are scant, while there are other regions where there is a surfeit of such institutions. Similar imbalance is seen in the GER by gender, and more glaringly by social classes. The proportion of students from the scheduled class and scheduled tribes, compared to their population is much below that from other sections of the society. However, the rate at which the expansion of the institutions of Higher Education is taking place and the number students from all sections of society are enrolling for Higher Education, such anomalies may get corrected over a period of time.

The Quality Question: The real issue is that of the quality of education. There are several ways to judge the quality of the educational institutions. A most quoted criterion is the place of the institution in the international ranking. There are 2 or 3 better-known rankings of educational institutions. In none of these are any Indian institutions placed in the top hundred! Only one or two universities and a couple of IITs figure in the top 200 institutions. China is way ahead in such listings. Even the institutions from several smaller countries such as South Korea and Singapore occupy much higher ranks.

However, one need not place undue emphasis on the international ranking – as the criteria adopted by them may not be of much relevance for us - but there are other ways to judge the qualitative strength of the institutions. Recognition by the peers is one such criterion; employability of the students is another. The institutions can be judged by the contributions they make by way of research towards the advancement of knowledge frontiers. Most importantly, the quality of the students passing out from the institution reflects the standard of the given institutions. Are they better citizens, better

workers or better entrepreneurs ? Have they mastered the subjects taught to them ? Are they better equipped to perform the role assigned to them? Admittedly, many of these norms are difficult to measure accurately, but all these can be approximated. There is near unanimous view in our country that judged from the narrow criterion of mastery of the subjects learnt, or broader criterion of acceptance of the ethical values and social responsibilities, products of our institutions are not able to measure up to the professional, ethical and, social norms.

Unanimity of the views on the low quality of Higher Education has not resulted in a coherent strategy to correct the lacunae. If we have to evolve a strategy to strengthen Higher Education we should, of course, look into the content of the subjects taught and the pedagogy of teaching. On these aspects there are very many erudite contributions by knowledgeable persons. In fact these are the staples of most of the discussions on Higher Education! The aspects that are not discussed fully are the institutional and human dimension. I will discuss, though very briefly, some of these aspects. I will address the issues and problems pertaining to two major constituents

of our Higher Education system, the students and the teachers; and, will dwell on two major factors impacting on Higher Education, namely academic environment, and the regulatory mechanism. A brief presentation on these four issues follows.

Students, the cornerstone of the system: Much of the blame for low standards is placed on the large number of students, who do not have motivation or capacity to attain high standards. One of the known economists, late Prof. Raj Krishna, who was known for his pithy one-liners, put it succinctly. He said, “The real problem of Higher Education is that students do not want to learn and teachers do not want to teach”. This is only partly true, and needs further probe.

As far as the number of student goes, as I have mentioned earlier, we are behind many developing countries, i.e., if you take the number of students pursuing higher education in relation to their population. Average numbers of students per institution or even per teacher are not unmanageable. There are of course, regional imbalances,

but they can be easily corrected. The question then hinges on the motivation and capability of the students. Our views on these aspects are largely based on the preconceived notions rather than carefully collected facts. Ignorance about the characteristics of the student population is a major gap in our understanding of the issues of Higher Education. We are playing Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark!

Most of the entrants to the Institutions of Higher Education are first generation learners in their family to go to a college. Proportion of the students from under privileged social groups such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and minorities is progressively increasing; they come from government secondary schools with weak background in most of the subjects, more particularly in English and Mathematics. With this background they are supposed to cope with advanced studies in subjects in which they may not have any real interest.

We blame them that their motivation is basically to get a degree rather than the knowledge of the subject. This is

understandable. In a study carried out by a management institution for the State Planning Board of Rajasthan, randomly selected students from the rural and the urban areas, were asked the reasons for their pursuing higher studies.³ The answer was that if they get a degree they will be able to help their families. This is very revealing. First, they feel the responsibility to help their, presumably, poor families. Also, they think that a degree would help them to get a job. As long as the employers in public as well as in private sectors insist on a university degree for even unskilled jobs, the students from the poor family will prefer to come to a college basically to get a degree.

On their lack of motivation to gain knowledge in the chosen subject, difficulties lie right at the stage of the selection of the subject; they have hardly any relevant information, and our system is such that once they opt for a subject, they are 'locked' in it with hardly any possibility to change the subject, what to say of the faculty.

If we wish to remedy the situation we should initiate some long-term measures and also take some immediate steps.

3 Perceptions of the Youth Regarding Higher Education in Rajasthan: Evidence from Survey Data, by Jaipuria Institute of Management, Jaipur, 2013.

As long-term measures, the most important one is to strengthen our secondary education, which is a neglected segment of the education system. We should also avoid the 'degree mania' for all types of jobs and should specify other attributes, which are more relevant for the job. The beginning can be made by the public sector.

As an immediate measure, we should organize remedial classes in English and Mathematics before the beginning of the term. We tried this in IIM Ahmadabad when we were asked to take the Scheduled Caste and the Scheduled Tribe students as per the Reservation Policy of the government. Results were most satisfying. We should offer large number of foundation courses and electives in the first year and allow the student to choose from them for advanced study. This is a worthwhile initiative but needs a lot of preparation; otherwise, it meets with insurmountable resistance as the recent experience in Delhi University has shown.

Teachers – the Kingpin of the System: Much of the blame for the falling standards is placed on the teachers. They are

considered to be either incompetent, or unwilling, or both. This is not entirely correct. There are exceptionally good teachers who make a lasting impression on the students. Unfortunately, though, we cannot say this of a majority of the teachers. There are approximately 1.4 million teachers in the higher education institutions.⁴ They are paid reasonably well. The pupil teacher ratio is 23, which cannot be considered very unfair. Teaching workload is not unbearable. However, the average figures are misleading.

In the institutions located in the urban area, there is no dearth of the teachers, while in the moffusil places there are vacancies galore. As in the location of the institutions, there is serious imbalance in the availability of the teachers in the rural and the urban areas. One will have to use the 'stick and carrot' approach to remove this imbalance. There are more serious academic shortcomings which demand greater attention. Let me point out three of such challenges: Teachers' training, continuous up gradation of their competence, and balance between teaching and research.

4 See, All India Survey of Higher Education (2012-13), Ministry of Human Development, Government of India.

Despite a plethora of teachers' training institutions, supplemented by different entry tests, such as NET, the new recruits are ill equipped to handle the class, in delivering the subject matter or in making it exciting.

A common practice is to take recourse to 'notes' written years ago, and read them in a broadcasting mode, rather than engage the class in a discussion mode. It is necessary to have Induction Training before one can handle the class. During this training, there should be equal emphasis on the subject a teacher is going to teach, and the pedagogy suited for the given context. Such training has to be imparted by experienced and renowned teachers, active or retired. A few universities in a region can pool their resources to organize these Induction Training to the new entrants.

By all accounts, knowledge is changing at an accelerated pace. Even the most erudite scholars would become outdated if they do not keep in touch with the development in their respective disciplines. We do not have systemic arrangements to upgrade the knowledge of the teachers. There are Academic Staff Colleges in many universities,

but they do not provide retraining and up gradation in different disciplines in a systemic way. We should make it compulsory for every teacher in an institution of higher education to attend a retraining program every three years or so. Corollary to this is to have facilities in the few Advance Centers, which are established in practically every subject and in every region. It should be made obligatory on the part of the advanced centers to regularly host the new lecturers. These Centers should be provided additional faculty and resources to equip them for the task.

A major deficiency in our Higher Education system is the inadequate attention paid to research. It is evident from the fact that compared to the number of post-graduate students, the number of the candidates for Ph.D. in every faculty is very small. And much of the Ph.D. research is spurious. Apathy towards research is also common among the teachers. The teachers' contribution to research is even less in number and not necessarily superior in quality. There are very few publishable research papers coming out of our universities, especially when compared with, say, a country like China. We need not subscribe to the creed of 'publish or perish', but those who publish in

good journals should be rewarded. For teaching a subject in a satisfactory manner the teacher has to have research capability as well.

Sometimes it is maintained that good teaching should in itself be considered enough, and that not everyone needs to do research. This can be true for exceptionally good teachers; however, most of the time it is an alibi for not exerting to extend the knowledge pool in one's subject. It is true, good libraries and good laboratories, which most of our institutions of Higher Education lack, strengthen an environment of research. But in this age of Internet, every teacher can refer to and benefit from the pool of knowledge from all over the world. We should have a system of recognizing and rewarding good researchers in every institution of Higher Education.

Academic Ethos: The primary condition for quality Higher Education is an environment conducive to academic pursuits. This should be reflected in pervasive spirit of enquiry, quest for learning, camaraderie among the teachers and pride in the institution. It can be ensured

with proper selection of the teachers, promotion of peer culture and a fair system of incentives and deterrents.

Only the teachers who are academically well qualified, and have chosen the profession as their first preference, can help in transformation of the Higher Education. With the large pool of graduates and post-graduates available in the country, it should not be difficult to select the right people provided political, regional, caste related and other narrow considerations do not overwhelm the selectors. The selection process has to be thorough and should look into the academic as well as personal attributes of the candidates. One of the qualities needed is a positive attitude. A cynical teacher is worse than an inefficient teacher. There should be clear norms of selection, with no discretion to the selectors. The short-listed teachers should be asked to familiarize themselves with the institution, and the institution should also get an opportunity to see their performance in a seminar or a lecture. The persons who are selected on merit and after thorough screening, are more likely to contribute to the growth of the institutions, in comparison to those who have entered from the back door.

Generally, the institutions where faculty are recognized as the major stakeholders and are deeply involved in organizing and supervising the academic activities, perform better. The peer culture ensures that aberrations in the classroom or outside are censured not only by the authorities but also by the colleagues. The head of the institution has the major responsibility in promoting the peer culture. The selection of the head is therefore of utmost importance. In an academic institution, the head should have the reputation of a leader in his profession. He should not feel threatened if a younger colleague gets recognition; in fact he should take pride in it. Unfortunately, this does not happen in many of our institutions, where an authoritarian culture dominates, which suspects any innovation and results in thwarting the initiative of some bold teachers. If one reform in Higher education should get priority, it is the proper selection of the Heads of the institutions. With good leaders at the helm, half the battle is won.

One of the major lacunae in our education system is the absence of a proper incentive structure, while deterrent measures are conspicuous by their absence. The good teachers are not rewarded and the bad teachers are not

punished. In the present environment, to take punitive measure against negligent or incompetent teachers is very difficult. The incentive route can be taken to amend the situation to some extent. Recognizing and rewarding meritorious teachers will set an example for others to follow. The real difficulty is in measuring the merit. It is relatively easier when it comes to good research; publication in a good journal in itself suggests the standard of the researcher and the worth of his contribution. It is much more difficult to identify a good classroom teacher.

A yardstick for judging the teaching standards could be the opinion of the students. One is hesitant to advocate this measure as it is felt that the students at the college level are an impressionable lot and could be swayed by considerations other than good teaching; the oratory, personality, or even leniency in assessment can influence young and adolescent students. While the risk is to be noted, the experience in the institutions where students' opinion for a course is taken seriously, their judgment comes out as fairly accurate. We should make it compulsory for every course to be assessed by the students at the end of the term. Such assessment can be made more rigorous

if the aspects to be assessed are spelled out. A healthy assessment by the students will not only contribute to the identification of good teachers, it will also help in improving the teaching material.

In the prevailing environment, it may not be possible to give different emoluments to the teachers in the same category. One way to incentivise good teachers even within the present framework of salary and allowances is to give the normal increment to all but have a small kitty from which additional emoluments may be paid to the really deserving teachers for their contribution as researchers or classroom teachers. Many private firms and international organizations including the World Bank follow this practice. There is no reason why we cannot do it in our educational system. To be more objective, the committee that decides additional reward may include one or two known experts from outside. A fairly administered reward system will enthuse good teachers, and encourage others to follow better standards of research and teaching. And it will not place a huge burden on the finances of an institution.

Regulatory Regime: There are several overlapping agencies regulating the establishment and conduct of the institutions of Higher Education. At the apex is the Ministry of Human Resource Development of the Central Government. It has a direct supervisory role vis a vis Central Universities, IITs, IIMs, and other institutions of national importance. It wields considerable power over the most important regulatory agency for Higher Education i.e., the Universities Grants Commission, as the principal funding source. Several other Central Government Ministries also exercise similar power due to their funding of the agencies falling in their domain. These agencies in turn exercise control over the universities, technical institutions, medical institutions, agricultural institutions, etc. Then there is the state bureaucracy, who according to our Constitution, should be playing the principal role in the area of Higher Education, as Education is a subject in the States List. In reality the states play a second fiddle to the central government and central agencies, as they largely depend on funding from the Center. Most of these agencies, at central as well as state level, play an auditing role rather than a promotional role. Their contribution in enhancing the quality of Higher Education is practically non-existent. If the quality of Higher Education in our

country is grossly unsatisfactory, these agencies have to take major responsibility.

The states' departments of Higher Education influence day-to-day operation the institutions in their jurisdiction. The universities and institutions of Higher Education in practically all the states are unhappy with the role played by the state bureaucracy. People manning the Education Departments are seldom experts in education; they are trained to be good administrators, while in Education you need intellectual leaders. But because they hold the purse strings, they have undue influence. The main thrust of the states' education departments is on micro-management, rather than quality enhancement or visioning of future directions. To correct the situation, some states have constituted the State Council for Higher Education and have included some educationists in the Council. This is definitely a better arrangement. But in most of the cases the Councils are preoccupied with building requisite infrastructure, with scant thought on improving the human material or the course contents.

The regulators have a critical role in transforming Higher

Education system. Their role is akin to the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahesh. The regulatory Council should promote good institutions and help in building the needed infrastructure and recruitment and development of the manpower. It should sustain these institutions with the necessary funds, and protect them from politicians or other detractors. Its role as Mahesh should be to ruthlessly weed out institutions, which despite all the initial support are not fulfilling their mandate. These are difficult tasks, and if taken seriously, will not attract the sort of people who are attracted only by the clout such councils wield. Such Councils should be constituted by the people who have a good track record as institution builders, have reputation for probity and are not hankering after favors from the powers to be. There is no reason to believe that they are a rare species. In every state we have a few of such people, the problem is to induct them in positions where their contribution can become meaningful. We have to be careful lest it becomes a parking place for retired bureaucrats.

Apart from careful selection of members, the Council should have assured financial resources. It should not

be beholden to the Education Department to get funds on project-to-project basis. The funds for the Council of Higher Education should be provided as a budget line in the state's budget. Once the funds are allocated, the Council should have financial autonomy, subject to the law of the land.

Summing Up: Reforms in Higher Education that I have pointed out are all essential as well as practical. To sum up, my suggestions are as follows. Recognizing the fact that a large majority of the students are 'first generation learners', we have to provide remedial classes for them. There should be large number of electives in the first year, and inter faculty migration should not only be permitted but should be encouraged. The teachers should have training in pedagogy before they are entrusted with the class. There should be systematic retraining at regular intervals. There should be compulsory evaluation of the courses and the teachers, by the students. The bright teachers should be rewarded for their contribution in raising standard of teaching and or for peer approved research. Heads of institutions should be selected carefully on the basis of exacting norms of scholarship as well as

leadership qualities. They should strive to create a peer culture. The regulatory institutions should have the trinity role, of creator, preserver and destroyer. The regulation and monitoring of the institutions should be entrusted to a Council composed of leading educationists of the state who are also known for their probity and intellectual integrity.

Many people will agree with these suggestions, but may put a caveat that to do all this needs 'political will'. I do not agree with it. What is needed is the combined and strong voice of the stakeholders: the students, teachers and the community leaders. Once there is an insistence on these or similar reforms by the stakeholders, politicians and their 'political will' will have to follow! Transforming Higher Education is a responsibility that all of us have to share.

Thank you.

11th February 2015
Vallabh Vidyanagar

V. S. Vyas

For more copies of this lecture, please contact:

Dr. S.S. Kalamkar
Director and Professor
Agro-Economic Research Centre
(Ministry of Agriculture, Govt. of India)
H.M. Patel Institute of Rural Development,
Opp. Nanadalaya Temple, PB No. 24,
Sardar Patel University,
Vallabh Vidyanagar 388120, Anand, Gujarat.
Ph. No. +91-2692-230106, 230799; Fax- +91-2692-233106
Email: director.aerc@gmail.com; directoraercgujarat@gmail.com
Website: www.aercspu.ac.in

H M Patel Memorial Lecture 2015





Prof. Vijay Shankar Vyas,

Professor Emeritus,
Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur &
Former Member, Economic Advisory Council of Prime Minister of India
(Email vsvyas@mac.com)

Prof. Vijay Shankar Vyas has a Ph.D degree in Economics from the University of Bombay. He has taught in Bombay University, Sardar Patel University and Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad. He was a Senior Fellow of the IDRC, Canada, and a Visiting Scholar at the South Asia Centre of the Boston University, U.S.A.

Prof. Vyas served as Director of the Agro-Economic Research Centre, Vallabh Vidyanagar and Professor of Economics of the Sardar Patel University, VVN; as a Member, Agricultural Prices Commission of the Government of India; Director, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad; Senior Advisor in the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development of the World Bank, Washington, D.C. and Director Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur.

Prof. Vyas has served as Chairman/Member of several Boards, Committees and Commissions at the International, National and State Level. He was a member of the Board of Trustees of the International Food Policy Research Institute [Washington D.C. U.S.A.]; Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the International Centre for Tropical Agriculture, [Cali, Columbia]; member of the Governing Board of the Institute of Development Studies of Sussex University [U.K.] and Chairman, Governing Board, IDS, Jaipur. He has consulted with United Nations Agencies, Bilateral and Multilateral Aid Agencies, National and the State Governments. Prof. Vyas has served as a member of the Central Board of the Reserve Bank of India; Deputy Chairman of the State Planning Board, Rajasthan and member of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister of India. Prof. Vyas is the Chairman of the Ajit Foundation, an NGO working with the objective of empowering youth in the framework of social justice.

Prof. Vyas has written extensively on key issues of agricultural policies and rural development. He was awarded Elmhurst Memorial Gold Medal by the International Association of Agricultural Economists (IAAE) and has been elected as an honorary Life member of IAAE. Prof. Vyas is the past president of the Asian Society of Agricultural Economists, the Indian Society of Agricultural Economics, the Indian Society of Agricultural Marketing and Indian Labour Economics Conference. He has been honoured by the award of **Padam Bhushan** by the President of India on Republic Day 2006.