



The Practice of HE Partnership between Ethiopia and India: A Case of a Partnership between Defense Engineering College (Ethiopia) and Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur

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Abstract

This study is intended to explore the practice of the institutional partnership between two HEIs (DEC and IITK) with regard to their motivation, benefits obtained, and power relation. An exploratory case study design was employed. Data were collected through semi-structured interview made with 14-participants selected purposefully; and document analysis. The data were organized and interpreted thematically. Accordingly, the motivations for the partnership and the benefits each partner gained are identified, and they are found closely matched with each other. The partnership was demand-driven and it was on the basis of strategic decisions by both partners to acquire resources from each other and build their capacities. It appears that mutual respect, consensus, and reciprocity have been manifested in the partnership. Thus, it seems unlikely that unbalance of power could negatively affect such partnerships. The study also identified financial constraints and weak evaluation and reporting mechanisms as factors challenging the partnership.

Keywords: Higher education; International HE partnership; Motivation for HE Partnership; Benefits from HE Partnership; Power Relation in HE Partnership.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the study

International higher education (HE) partnership has been perceived essential for building institutional capacity in teaching and research [1, 2, 3, 4]. It has become a popular approach to revitalize African HE (3, 5); and that many HEIs in Africa have engaged in the process of partnership, mostly with HEIs of the global North. Ethiopia is not an exception. In recent decades, HEIs in Ethiopia have established a number of international partnerships through the support from different nations and s of the global North (e.g. USAID, SIDA, JICA, VLIR-UOS, DfID, etc...).

Recently, emerging economic and political powers (China, India and Brazil) have developed interest to engage in capacity building effort and HE development support in Africa through partnership and cooperation [5]. Between Ethiopia and India, there have been collaborations in the form of short-term trainings for capacity building, educational exchange programs, scholarship, and university-to-university partnerships. The linkage established between Addis Ababa University and Indian Institutes of Technology in Tele-Education and Tele-Medicine projects; the Educational Exchange Program signed in 2007 which led to the establishment of a Joint Working Group; partnership established between Defense Engineering College (DEC) of Ethiopia and Indian Institutes of Technology, Kanpur (IITK) to develop and offer masters program in industrial management are instances showing the growth of educational partnerships practiced between the two countries.

This type of South-South partnership is assumed to be in equal basis, as it is positioned on the premises that developing countries share common problems and challenges [6]. Although India has been doing better and reached higher levels of development compared to Ethiopia, it could be assumed that they still share common experience and background, which can positively influence their relation. This study tries to explore the practices of international HE partnerships between these countries.

1.2. Statement of the problem

As the concept of partnership is connected to institutional capacity building of the poor through the financial and technical support, most of the international HEIs partnerships have been between the global North and the South. In principle, effective North-South institutional partnership is assumed to involve shared responsibility, shared ownership, reciprocity, joint decisions, respect and transparency between partners [7,1,8,4]. But, the practical reality in many North-South international HE partnerships is not as rosy and romantic as the rhetoric. North-South partnership has been criticized as it is a means of legitimatizing the role of development agencies of the North in development, and it is regarded as a more subtle form of power imposition [9, 10]. It is also claimed that the asymmetry of powers in North-South relations is yet maintained through aid partnership [11], albeit the term ‘partnership’ is used. It seems true that since the flow of capacity and resources for the HEIs partnership is one way- from North to South, power relation between partnering institutions would unlikely be in equal basis. Thus, unbalance of power relation is apparent in North-South partnerships, where the northern partner’s influence in decision making process is likely to be weightier.

The inherent power asymmetry in North-South partnership due to differences in resource capacity between the partners is assumed to be dismal in South-South partnership, as the south-south cooperation, based on the author [6], tends to be framed in a more “equal footing” approach. It is argued that equality can be achieved between institutions with similar core characteristics [12]. There is, however, lack of empirical studies which clearly discern how far HE partnerships amongst developing nations differ from the traditional North-South one.

Some HEIs in Ethiopia have already established partnerships with HEIs in India; and Ethiopia is still seeking Indian cooperation to revitalize its HE [13]. In spite of a growing interest to increase partnerships between HEIs in Ethiopia and India, there is no any study that discloses the practices of the already established partnerships. Thus, it is found necessary to explore the motivations and the degree of power relation between the partnering institutions, and how they influence the development of the partnership, by focusing on a case of the partnership between DEC and IITK. Accordingly, this study tries to answer the following basic research questions:

1. What are the motivations of DEC and IITK for forging the partnership?
 2. What are the perceived benefits from the partnership? Do they match with the expectation?
 3. Is the power relation between DEC and IITK in fairly equal basis?
- Is there shared sense of ownership and responsibility?
 - Is there equal participation in decision making?
 - Is there reciprocity between partners?

1.3. Objectives of the study

Generally, the study aimed at exploring the practice of international HE partnership between DEC of Ethiopia and IITK of India with regard to their motivation, benefits, and power relation in the partnership. Specifically, it is tried to explore the:

- motivations for the partnership and their impact on the partnership
- benefits obtained from the partnership and if they match with the motivations
- balance of power relation between partners and its influence on the partnership

1.4. Limitation of the study

As the study is an exploratory case study with small sample size, external validity or generalization cannot be claimed. Moreover, lack of previous studies concerning the issue under study in Ethiopian context has posed a challenge in the study process.

2. Conceptual and theoretical framework

2.1. Concept of international HE partnership

The idea of partnership has become central in the discourse of development cooperation during the last few decades in response to power asymmetry between North and South [4]. Subsequently, a shift in perspective

from the notion of external 'imposition' and 'prescription' to 'partnership' in development cooperation took place [4]. This perspective has been promised to pacify the external imposition and to strengthen the human and institutional capacity of the south. However, many scholars claimed that the dominance of the western models of development is still continuing to be reflected, as one-way flow of resources is practiced in the partnerships.

The concept of partnership, as to [14: 81], refers to "...shared interests, common understanding and long-term relationship." Partnership with shared interests and understandings helps the parties to complement each other and to achieve more than they can achieve if they are alone [14]. Another author [15] views partnerships as collaborative arrangements between actors to achieve some goals. A more comprehensive definition is given the author in [4], and thus it is taken for the purpose of this study. It stated as follows:

An effective educational partnership is a dynamic collaborative process between educational institutions that brings mutual though not necessarily symmetrical benefits to the parties engaged in the partnership. Partners share ownership of the projects. Their relationship is based on respect, trust, transparency and reciprocity. They understand each other's cultural and working environment. Decisions are taken jointly after real negotiations take place between the partners. Each partner is open and clear about what they are bringing to the partnership and what their expectations are from it. Successful partnerships tend to change and evolve over time (p.18).

2.2. Motivation for international HE partnership

Although, mutual interest is expected in partnering institutions, their motivation for the partnership may not necessarily be common. For example, [16] asserted that the Northern partner are pressurized to establish partnership with South to get funding and research permit to do research in Southern countries; while the Southern partners hope that they get benefit from the prestige and resources of HEIs in Northern partners, opportunity of capacity development, financial as well as technical support. Similarly, the author in [4] indicated the motivations of UK and Africa for UK -Africa partnership. From the UK perspective, they said that partnership is useful for staff development by providing staff with the opportunity to work abroad, conduct research, teach courses, and develop curricula, which could, in turn, help them develop specific skills and new experiences in different environments. From the African perspective, attracting funds which could not be easily attained by the institution individually, building capacity of teaching and research staff are important motivations to forge partnership with UK. Grant [1] has also identified the driving causes for partnership in HEIs from USA and African perspectives. As he indicated, preparing students for a globalized world, internationalizing the curriculum and improving quality, and enhancing international prestige were the top rationales of USA for making partnership; while knowledge production, resource acquisition (e.g. journals, periodicals, and databases), student development, and alliance formation are the major motivations from African side.

From both North and South perspectives, internationalization is identified as one of the most pressing drivers of partnerships in HEIs (1, 4), as it gives a competitive advantage in an increasing global market for HE. In support of this, [17] stated that most universities, including universities of North, are seeking partnerships in order to

raise their profile and become more competitive in the global market. Moreover, collaborative ventures give both parties the opportunity to solicit more and increase funding, and achieve research excellence.

To sum up, although the degree varies between HEIs of North and South, professional development of staff, student development, joint research and training opportunities, capacity building, curriculum development, internationalizing of the curricula, improving cultural understanding, gaining status, and access to financial and material resources are the major motivations most HEIs get involved in partnerships.

2.3. Power relation in HEIs partnership

The issue of power sharing is one of the most serious concerns in partnership. Partnership is conceptualized on the promise that the relationship is based on the principle of equity, mutual respect, and genuine balance of power relation between partners [18, 19]. But, as Gutierrez [11] claimed, the partnership ideology—the possibility of mitigating power asymmetries without first mitigating resource asymmetries—has failed to put in to practice. It is also stated that the presence of asymmetry between the North and the South partners is an unavoidable incident in spite of all the rhetoric about mutuality; and it exists not only in terms of resources and capabilities but also in terms of power [11, 4]. Asymmetries in resources and capabilities between partners will lead to unbalanced power relation between the two parties [19].

Power relation influences and shapes the functioning of the partnership [4]. In support of this, it is stated [2] that unequal power relation remains a challenge in international partnership in education institutions, and that the more powerful partner dominates the direction of the partnership. A study on the practice of North-South research partnership [11] also indicated the existence of unfair distribution of responsibilities between partners. As he indicated:

...research agenda setting, activity planning, fund management, data interpretation, results dissemination (through publications and conferences) and basic research components are taken on by Northern researchers, while their Southern counterparts are in charge of data gathering and more applied research components. (p.21)

This difference in the distribution of roles and responsibilities between the partnering institutions is shaped by asymmetries, favoring the more powerful partner. Such unbalance of power may also result in tension and frustration among members of the dominated partner [18], and hence affects the function of the partnership.

Thus, although there may be differences between partners in their contributions to and benefits from the partnership, it is important that equity among partners be ensured with mutual respect and recognition [7, 20]. International partnerships should be viewed as “alliances among equals”, with mutual trust and recognition, shared rights and responsibilities, commitment, joint decision making, collaborative determination of goals and projects [7]. Equality of decision-making and mutual influence are important features of genuine partnership [9, 6, 20]. Involving all parties in decision making in all activities (in designing, budgeting, implementation and reporting) of the program could result in the development of sense of ownership in both sides. Authors [4] recommend the need for both rights and responsibilities in partnership be shared among partners with

consensus, as it helps to develop a sense of shared ownership. It is further suggested that partners need to have mutual trust, and be transparent in the process of partnership [7, 4]. Trust can be developed through integrity, fairness and commitment rather than opportunistic activities; while transparency can be realized through open discussion and regular communications among the partners. Both the contribution and the benefit of each partner should be openly discussed and clarified in a way that addresses inequality of resources, rather than perpetuates it.

2.4. Resource Dependency Theory (RDT)

Resource Dependency Theory (RDT) is used to inform this study, as it helps to understand the links between organizations. This theory explains the ways in which organizations become dependent on their environment and the strategies they can employ to manage these dependencies. This theory argues that organizations are constrained by their external environment [21]. According to this theory, the resources which an organization needs to acquire and maintain in order to survive may be in the hands of other organization; and this requires that the organization adopt strategies (like establishment of partnership in this study) in order to access these resources [22]. The adopted strategy may lead the legally independent organizations to become dependent on each other, but with differing in magnitude based on the extent of the scarcity of resources. Thereby, organizations are forced to engage in frequent linkages with other organization to get the needed resources and to limit dependencies on other organizations. Since resources are the basis of power, an organization with scarce resource capacity would become dependent and less powerful, so that the relationship would be highly influenced by the more powerful organization.

RDT can be applied to HEIs, as HEIs are organizations in which their functions depend on external environments (resources) and that they are in need of either governments' or donor's support. In case the government's or donors' fund dries up, HEIs may establish institutional partnership as an alternative strategy in order to get the needed resources from their partner and limit their dependencies on government and donors funding. For example, interest to increasing funding opportunity is one of the major reasons HEIs in Ethiopia forge international partnership [23]. Here, RDT is important to see if such institutional partnership may or may not in turn, leads one of the partners to depend on another, and to examine to what extent the difference in their resource capacity influence their partnership.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research design

Qualitative approach was employed for this study to explore the motivation and the benefits of the partnership and to understand their influence on existing power relation in the partnership as constructed by participants being studied [24, 25]. The study took constructionist ontological stance, which considers social phenomena as the outcomes of individual interaction with their world. Then it is underpinned by interpretivist epistemological position, for it is appropriate to understand and interpret the social reality in terms of actors [25]. A case study was employed to build a holistic understanding [26] and to closely examine the partnership taking its unique context into account. Moreover, the study was an exploratory in nature for it is suitable to gain general insight

when there is lack of earlier studies about the issue under investigation.

Sampling technique: A total of 14 participants (a principal, a coordinator, 3-instructors and 4-students from DEC; and a coordinator and 4-instructors from IITK) who have participated in the partnership were selected purposefully.

Data collection: Semi-structured interview was used to get rich and in-depth data about the participants' viewpoint. Students were asked to get data, specifically regarding the benefits they obtained from the partnership. Moreover, **documents** (Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), curriculum document and websites) were analyzed to see the purposes of the partnership, the roles and responsibilities of each partner and other activities which the partners agreed upon.

Data analysis: The data were organized based on the research questions and were interpreted using thematic analysis, which involves constructing of an index of central themes and subthemes, identifying emerging themes through reading and rereading, and categorizing them accordingly [24]. Thus, interview notes and documents were carefully and repeatedly reviewed to dig up themes and subthemes.

3.2. Research setting

Defense Engineering College (DEC), which is under Defense University (DU), is one of a higher learning institution in Ethiopia which was established in 1996 to fulfill the demand of sufficiently trained manpower in the area of engineering and technology. Its major missions are the provision of quality education and training, conducting research, and provision of consultancy service in the area of engineering. Currently, it is comprised of eleven departments. More than 2,500 students are enrolled in its ten departments in both undergraduate and post-graduate programs.

Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur (IITK) is one of the premier institutions in India established in 1960. The aim of the Institute is to provide meaningful education, to conduct research of the highest standard and to provide leadership in technological innovation. It offers undergraduate and postgraduate programs in 20 departments in the areas of engineering, science and management. The institution has experience in international partnership with HEIs.

DEC and IITK had established a partnership for the development and implementation of a Master Program in Industrial Management, which was offered in DEC. The partnership stayed for a period of 3-years from 2013 to 2015. As it is stated in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and in their agreement, IITK has promised to develop curricula and course syllabi to be approved by DEC, deliver the course by assigning its academic staffs, provide students with access to electronic libraries of IITK and teaching materials such as textbooks, reference books and software that are relevant for the program. While DEC is supposed to provide the necessary facilities (classroom, lab, library, etc...) and accommodation for the IITK staff, facilitate and supervise the implementation of the programs in collaboration with the IITK coordinator, involve in the offering of courses by assigning available instructors. DEC has to pay fees for the services (curriculum and training) IITK provides, which is to be reimbursed by Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Metal and Engineering Corporation

(FDRE-METEC). METEC is a key stakeholder and employer of DEC graduates.

4. Result and discussion

4.1. Motivations of the partnership

From the interview and analysis of the documents, motivations of both parties for the forge of partnership are identified. As the staff members of DEC replied, the major intention of DEC was to get professional support in developing and offering a master's program in the area of industrial management. It is also expected that the faculties of DEC can get best experiences from expertise of IITK and that they can adapt the curricula and run the program independently, with less or no assistant from other institution. As one of the interviewee (A) replied:

METEC, our main stakeholder was in need of highly skilled professionals in the area of industrial management. But, our institution was not capable of producing such professionals due to lack of faculty in this area. Thus, we found forging partnership with international institution as an alternative to develop a curriculum and run a master's program in this area in order to meet the needs of our stakeholder. Then, we made contacts with Indian HEIs; and finally we end up with agreements with IITK, after consultative discussions. From the partnership, we expected to get not only the curriculum and training of professionals, but also we expect to get experiences/knowledge transfer, and technical and professional support to our local faculties from skilled professors of IITK through working together, seminars and lecture presentations (October 10, 2015)

All of the DEC respondents agreed that since IITK is a prestigious institution in the area of engineering education and research, working with such institution has of immense benefit in terms of the experience and professional support for DEC in its effort in accomplishing its mission in engineering education and research. Participants' interest in getting opportunity to learn from the IITK staffs and upgrade their capacity was also emerged as one of the reasons driving them for forging the partnership.

One of the respondents from IITK replied that his institution is interested in enhancing its international experience through institutional partnership. As he said, experience from such overseas partnership is important for both the institution (IITK) and its staffs, as it provides them with the opportunity to understand the culture other than their own which could help them to work and be competitive in a global world. The respondent also added: "My institution is very much interested in assisting institutions in sister countries like Ethiopia, where my country India has a longstanding relation, and IITK has taken this partnership as an opportune event".

Based on DEC staff participants and the documents, interest in financial resource and enhancing market opportunity were also among the derivers of IITK to establish institutional partnership. As per the agreement in the MOU, IITK gets payment for the curriculum development and the training it offers i.e., the institution is engaged in selling its services. It is also learned that IITK were interested to expand its market opportunity. As respondent 'C' said: "Faculties of IITK are also interested to extend and sell their services, as they have been trying to make contact and negotiate with other Ethiopian HEIs and organizations (e.g. Ethiopian Sugar Corporations)". All of the IITK participants also agreed with their institution's interest to engage in similar

activities with other HEIs and industries in Ethiopia.

To be brief, the motivations of DEC for the partnership were curriculum development, student training, professional support, and upgrading the capacities of staffs through working with highly experienced international faculties. While the major motivations of IITK were found to be interest in: international experience, financial resource, enhancing market opportunity, improving staff capacity through interaction and exposure to overseas culture, and providing assistance to institutions. Here, the establishment of the partnership between these institutions is not accidental but it is, as reflected in Resource Dependency Theory (RDT) [21], viewed as intentional decisions by both partners to acquire resources from each other in order to improve their respective staffs' and institutional capacity. The study also showed that DEC has clearly articulated its needs and expectations, implied that the partnership was demand-driven as recommended in the literature, rather than imposition by the foreign partner [7, 4].

To the question: "Why is the partnership terminated?" one of the respondents (K) from IITK replied: "Although there is an interest on the side IITK to continue and extend the agreement, there is no interest by DEC and the partnership couldn't be extended." But, as it is learned from staff members of DEC, the termination of the partnership is not due to lack of interest of DEC, but because of financial constraints. As respondent 'D' said:

In fact, we were interested to extend the agreement at least for one batch, and then we are about to take over it afterwards. But the financial source for the program was METEC, as all of the trainees were employees of METEC. Currently, METEC has fulfilled its needs in this area and that there is no reason for METEC to keep up the financial assistance. Thus, we are forced to end up the partnership (December 15, 2015).

Hence, financial constraint was the major obstacle that affected the sustainability of the partnership between DEC and IITK. This result is similar to what is stated in literature [6] that lack of finance is one among the common challenges of South-South cooperation.

4.2. Perceived benefits of the partnership

Regarding the benefits of the partnership obtained by DEC, responses from the staffs were similar, and they are summarized as follows:

With the support of skilled instructors of IITK, DEC has got the opportunity of producing high level professionals in industrial management, who can be able to address the needs of its main stakeholder, METEC. Important lecture presentations have been offered by IITK professors from which academic staffs of DEC have got better experiences. Some DEC academic staffs working with IITK professors have learned a lot and got better experiences in the practice of international partnership. The training cost paid is by far lower than it could have been, had the trainees been sent abroad to learn. Trainees have got better opportunities and experiences because of the partnership which they couldn't otherwise.

Student respondents have also agreed that they are benefited from the partnership. To summarize what they said:

We have got access to teaching-learning resources (e.g., books, e-library service) of IITK, which we cannot get here. We have visited IITK campus and many industries in India. From the visit, we have got important international and practical experiences that we can make use of in our practical work. (November 19, 2015).

The interview also indicated different benefits IITK has got from the partnership. The interviewees from IITK believed that there was a match between their institutions' expectation of the partnership and the benefits obtained by their institution from the partnership. International experience is emerged as one of the important benefits obtained by Indian institute. As one of the IITK participant stated, IITK instructors' exposure to new environment and new working situations/cultures, and their interaction with the staffs of DEC have contributed to enrich their understandings and skills to work in a globalized world.

Respondents of DEC believed that the partnership has helped IITK to further partnerships with other similar institutions in the host country so as to search for potential markets for exporting its education. In support of this, one of the interviewee from IITK said: "Our stay here has helped us to think and identify areas and activities which we can do by establishing links with other Ethiopian HEIs and industries."

To sum up, it is realized that both partners have got mutual benefits from the partnership, although the benefits each partner obtained are not exactly similar. Different benefits such as academic/teaching support for training and curriculum development with reasonable cost, professional support, and teaching material support were the major benefits DEC and its staffs and students obtained from the partnership. The partnering institution (IITK) and its staffs have also benefited from international experience, financial resource, and further partnership and market opportunity. Both partners believed that the partnership helped in upgrading the capacity of their respective staffs. This indicates that this partnership has resulted in benefits of reciprocal basis, which is one of the features of successful partnership [8, 4].

4.3. Power relation between the partners

All of the participants both DEC and IITK replied that the ownership of the partnership was fairly shared between the two partners. Participants also believed that the distribution of roles and responsibilities of each partner was fair; and as they clarified, although one partner may involve more than the other in a particular activity, that doesn't lead to imply unbalanced distribution of roles and responsibilities between the two parties. As indicated in the MOU, the main responsibilities of IITK were carrying out activities related to the curriculum and offering the course; while that of DEC were mainly focused on facilitating the training, provision of facilities and finance, and awarding the degree, and to some extent participating in the teaching and curriculum development. As one of DEC member (B) said:

The roles and responsibilities are shared between partnering institutions after dialogues and discussions among actors. It all happened based on mutual agreement, which is clearly confirmed in the MOU and in the contract. I feel that the responsibilities and duties assigned to be carried out by both parties are what they deserve to be assigned, as it considers the capabilities of each party. (December 10, 2015).

As it is learned from the documents and the participants, DEC contributes higher share of financial and material

resources; while IITK have contributed higher share of human resources for the implementation of the program in the partnership. Because of this, DEC participants feel that the partnership is in exchange basis, benefiting both parties; and they didn't have a sense of dependency on their partner. All of the participants believed that there is no unbalance power relation between the two parties due to differences in their capabilities.

Fostering genuine and mutually beneficial collaboration is stated in the MOU as an intention of the partnerships between DEC and IITK. In this regard, participants replied that there were mutual respect and trust between the partners in the partnership. As a respondent ('J') from IITK said: "Each party has been carrying out its duties with due respect to their partners." A respondent ('C') from DEC also appreciated that IITK members are very much open and willing to share everything they thought important.

Participants replied that both parties have participated in designing and implementing the program as well as in setting agenda and decision making. DEC respondents confirmed that they have participated through dialogue and discussions for the amendment of the draft curriculum document. To mention what a member of DEC said:

First, the committee established by IITK has produced the draft curriculum document. Then, the draft document has gone through a meticulous revisions and amendments so as to meet the needs of our stakeholders and the standards claimed by IITK. In the revision, our staff members and representatives of our stakeholders (i.e., METEC) have actively participated and incorporated their input into the curriculum. (December 15, 2015).

All participants of DEC believed that their participation in setting agenda and decision making was fair and in equal basis. As they said, decisions related to the curriculum content, time schedule, teaching load etc... are made with the involvement of both parties with mutual consent. They also stated that decisions related to academic issues are made in conformity with the academic policies and procedures of DEC, up on which the two parties have already agreed.

According to Resource Dependency Theory (RDT), difference in resource capability would lead to dependency of one partner with scarce resources, and results in an unbalance power relation that could affect the relation. But this study showed that both parties have contributed resources, which their partner sought after and let them to depend on each other and maintain their relationship, i.e., the possibility of dependency of one partner more than the other, as suggested in RDT, appears to be nonexistent. As the exchange of resources is in both directions, it didn't bring about dependencies and it has not been found a potential problem for the partnership between these institutions, unlike some traditional North-South relations. In fact, totally opposing the North-South relations could be considered as over simplistic [6], as there are possibilities that such relations be genuine and in equal basis.

Moreover, the roles and responsibilities were shared between partners based on consensus. Mutual influence, respect and trust, and joint decisions were manifested in the partnership; and these are the basis to ensure equity between partners [7, 9]. Consequently, the power relation is perceived to be fairly balanced and didn't found to negatively affect the partnership.

As it is learned from the interview, although there is a practice of evaluating the implementation process of the

program, it has not been carried out in a systematic and a written/documented form. No progress report has been written and made communicated to the concerned parties and stakeholders. As one of DEC member confessed: "In fact there have been practices of evaluating the progress of the program through open-discussions among actors, but it has not been done in a scientific and summative ways." This could have influenced communication and thereby transparency. Moreover, there were claims by instructors on students' absenteeism due to lack of communication regarding the class schedule. This is also confirmed by IITK participants. Here, if the partnership is to be based on learning from mutual sharing of experience, proper evaluation and monitoring of these experiences should take place to ensure that the right lessons are learnt [6].

5. Summary

This study is intended to shed light on the practice of the international institutional partnership between two HEIs (DEC in Ethiopia and IITK in India) with regard to their motivation for and benefits from the partnership, as well as the power relation between partners. Accordingly, the major findings are summarized below:

- Both parties were interested for the establishment of the partnership, although it was first initiated by DEC. Curriculum development, student training, professional support, and upgrading capacities of staffs were the major motivations of DEC; while that of IITK were international experience, financial resource, and improving staff capacity. However, although there was interest on both sides, the partnership couldn't be extended and it is terminated due to lack of funding.
- In this particular partnership, both partners have got mutual benefits; and they have satisfied with these benefits. The major benefits gained by DEC and its staffs and students from the partnership are curriculum development, training of students, professional support, staff development and material support. While IITK is benefited from international experience, staff development, financial resource and expanding market opportunity.
- The study showed that the roles and responsibilities are shared between partnering institutions after negotiations and based on mutual agreement among actors. Both parties believed that they have contributed for the partnership in exchange basis, benefiting both parties; and they felt that they have developed a shared sense of ownership. It is also realized that emphasis has been given to fostering genuine and mutually beneficial collaboration through mutual respect and trust, joint decision making, and through ensuring the participation of both parties in the development of the partnership.
- However, it is realized that evaluation of the program has not been carried out in a systematic and documented form. If the partnership is to be based on mutual learning, the progress of the program should be systematically evaluated and ensure that the right lessons are learnt.

6. Conclusion

- When the result is seen through the lens of Resource Dependency Theory (RDT), it can be concluded that the establishment of the partnership between these institutions is based on strategic decisions by both partners to acquire resources from each other in order to improve the capacities of their respective staffs and institutions. There has been a close match between the expectations and the perceived

benefits by the partnering institutions, implying that the partnership was demand-driven.

- Members from both parties have recognized and acknowledged the benefits of the partnership to their respective institutions, implying that the partnership is mutually beneficial. In this particular partnership, the possibility of dependency of one partner more than the other, as suggested by RDT, appears to be nonexistent; because the exchange of resources is in both directions. It seems that unidirectional flow of resource could not be a potential problem for balance of power in such institutional partnerships, unlike in some traditional North-South relations.
- Moreover, consensus and reciprocity—considered as the basis to ensure equity between partners—appears to have been manifested in the partnership. Thus, it seems unlikely that unbalance of power will negatively affect such partnerships.
- The result of the study also leads to conclude that financial constraints, and weak evaluation and reporting mechanisms are continuing to be challenging such south-south cooperation.

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