

# **Impacts of Higher Education Institutions on an Information Society: The role of CS/IT curricula**

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During CS/IT curricula development and implementation, higher education institutions (HEIs) in developing countries have to take into consideration factors such as curricula content and disciplinary standards, as well as, contextualize the curricula to the needs of the local society with an overall goal of reaching an information society (IS) state.

An informed society is one where all members of society have unrestricted access to information. Allen and Thomas [1] further identify the roles of ICT within the IS by describing the scope of ICT to contain information, different types of technologies, people, groups and institutions such as HEIs.

Society views HEIs as service institutions that provide skilled human capital; however, they fail to see the curricula programs which form the foundation of the degree programs for different professions. Therefore, CS/IT degree curricula cater for the ICT needs of the society by their contribution to the overall role of HEIs in the IS. Using Webster's [2] definition of an IS (occupational, economical, technological, spatial and cultural approaches) we can identify the services that HEIs offer society. They contribute towards human resource capital development under the occupational approach. Under the economical approach, they create the best environments for research-orientations in new knowledge and application of ICT technologies. While in the technological approach, HEIs contain the latest state-of-the-art technologies to facilitate teaching, learning and conducting different research activities. In the spatial approach, they provide effective means of communication through the available technologies. Whereas in the cultural approach, HEIs are units representing the society containing people from different social and cultural backgrounds.

Both disciplinary standards and contextual needs of the societies are equally important aspects in CS/IT curricula development and implementation. They form the foundation on which HEIs are built and therefore HEIs in developing nations should take both these factors into consideration during CS/IT curricula development.

## **References**

- [1] Allen, T., A. Thomas, Poverty and Development: Into the 21st Century, Oxford University Press, 2000.
- [2] Webster, F., Theories of the Information Society, Routledge, NewYork, 2002.