CHAPTER I
CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

The Indian education system has been bogged down by innumerable problems which can be traced back to preindependent India. For instance, as pointed out by Lord Curzon in 1904, the Indian university had no corporate existence, and was merely collection of buildings. As early as 1913, the Government resolution on Educational Policy accepted the need for establishing more universities. Thus between 1913 and 1921, 6 universities came into existence, and again between 1921-47, 58 more universities came up taking the total to 64. However, establishing universities actually led to more and more problems, including at the planning level. The persistent increase in the enrolment can be seen in the UGC Report (1985). The Figure-X presents the graph, showing an upward and rapid expansion in the enrolment at the university level.
With enrolment explosion, many types of problems cropped up, one amongst them being poor quality and dropout.

It is evident from the historians and educationists that the root cause of all the present day problems of education is somehow lying in the planning of higher education from the very beginning itself; and the flaws and loopholes appear to have been noticed from the pre-independent India itself.

As observed by many educationists, for example, Ghosh (1975, 1985), Naik (1975), Kothari Commission Report (1966), the purpose of higher education in British India was in accordance with their own administrative needs and not in terms of the needs of India or needs of the people of the country. Desai (1970), rightly pointed out that, "It was a matter of short sighted policy and an attitude of escapism on the part of the early British officials to model the first three universities of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras on the model of London Universities".

Thus, historically, the establishment of the universities had not been in the interest of the nation or the people of India. Furthermore, the contents of the subjects taught at the University level were also defective, as mentioned by the International Study of University Admission (1965), "In pre-independent India the education imparted was predominantly literary and bookish, cut off from the realities of the Indian environment
and divorced from the life and occupation of the people. The more striking feature of this system is that not much changes had been brought in even after independence in India and the pattern of higher education remains almost the same as it was hundred years ago. In this context it is relevant to note the passage in the UNESCO report (1965) which reads out as follows:

"The establishment of these universities had influenced the whole course of educational development in the country, and although a number of changes and reforms had been introduced in the educational system since 1857, the broad organizational pattern of university education had remained more or less what it was a hundred years ago".

Perhaps, failure in the system to incorporate changes commensurate with the changes in the society, the government and the political system, could have been due to various reasons including defective planning, uncontrolled expansion, unchecked growth in enrolment, falling of educational standard, increasing graduate unemployment etc. Commenting on the defects in the education system twenty years ago Gaudino (1965) wrote that higher education in India is less purposeful, less innovative, less inspired, less in initiative, and suffers
from hastily assembled new departures with less far
sighted planning and suffers from uneven movement. In
this context Shah (1967) observed that, "Education
lacked any real purpose in the past, today it is also
confused and more wasteful". Similar views were
expressed by many educationists and scholars who
perceived higher education as less meaningful and less
relevant due to the dominance of a limited group of the
people. Pointing to the irrelevance and meaninglessness
of education, Mishra, et al, (1968), specifically drew
attention to the limitations set by the dominant groups of
the society, which had reduced the entire education system
to the most unenviable state as of today. As stated by
Gandhi (1977), the credibility of the educational system
itself appears to be threatened by this general irrelevance
and meaninglessness. Khan (1979), perceived higher
education in India as a failure because it had failed to
solve the problem of poverty, had not made the country
self sufficient, but had only created more inequalities
in all spheres perpetuating the class structure. According
to him higher education has been expanding without any
purpose as a result of the pressure of expansion at the
elementary and secondary education levels; as such it has
not been able to bring about the desired socio-economic
development.
Bose (1977), pointed out that planning in India has failed, perhaps in the field of higher education where the situation is rather at its worst. There appears to be practically no co-ordinated plan embracing all faculties and universities. This has led to as mentioned by Joshi (1978), wastage of the scarce resources and fruitless explorations in the name of higher education.

The University Grants Commission, the body meant for the planning and development of higher education in one of its report said that the system of higher education is now in a state of crises, due to uncontrolled and unplanned expansion, inadequate inputs in terms of money, materials, and talents, falling of standards in a large proportion of institutions, weakening of the students' motivation, increase of educated unemployment, weakening of discipline and disfunctioning created by adverse effect of socio-economic problems, a lack of relevance and significance..." (UGC 1978).

Inspite of all the above mentioned criticism of higher education, its importance and relevance had never been under-estimated. Gandhi (1977) pointed out how a system of higher education is of strategic importance to our national development and how its expansion is not to
be undertaken illogically. In fact a real boost to the expenditure in higher education was supported and advocated by Schultz when he gave the concept of capital formation to the investment done in this field. He is probably the one who strongly supported the investment in Higher Education as he felt that higher education is in some measure a consumption activity, rendering satisfaction to the person who receives it. It is predominantly an investment activity undertaken for the purpose of acquiring capabilities that render future satisfaction, and that which enhances the future earnings of a person as a productive agent. Thus, a part of it is a consumer good item, akin to conventional consumer durables and the other part of it is a producer goods. He, therefore, pleaded that education be treated as an investment and its consequences as a form of capital.

Azad (1975) called for better financial policy for higher education, so as to ensure maximum and effective utilization of the available resources and infrastructure. In this regard, as one glances at the expenditure incurred on education in the seven 5-year plans, one notices that on the one hand the expenditure is decreasing on higher education in every five year plan, while on the other hand the demand and need to spend more on higher education appears to have been increasing. Singh (1982), was of the
view that our universities are grossly underfinanced for the tasks they are required to perform. More universities, more enrolment, more libraries, more staff, better paid staff, more equipment, more scholarships, more hostels and more buildings were all generally required. Instead of increasing in any of the above mentioned areas, one finds only a reduction in the plan outlay from 7.2% to 2.6% in our country. It is indeed, a paradox in that, while on the one hand there is a recognition of the need and infrastructure to spend more on higher education, on the other hand it is interesting to observe at the same time that not only the plan outlay on higher education has been reduced but from whatever is invested, much of it goes in wastage and stagnation thereby wasting whatever financial allocations had been made. The remedy appears to lie not only in minimising the paucity of resources, but to take measures to check the wastage and stagnation at higher education by better and meaningful planning in the field of higher education.

WASTAGE AND STAGNATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION :-

As pointed out time and again by educationists and scholars, the wastage and stagnation in higher education had all along been one of the major reasons rendering higher education less productive and less meaningful.
Singh (1981), observed that, "For every 10 students joining a college not more than five are likely to get their degrees. This rate of wastage had existed for such a long time that almost everyone has come to accept it as a fact of life". According to Rawat (1970), "In higher education, out of every 100 students who entered first year class in a degree college, only 41 could reach and pass out". UNESCO's report (1965), gives still less than 40% of enrolled students as emerging successful at the B.A. examination. Commenting on the low percentage the report goes on to add that, "A high rate of failure in examination and low standard of achievement have marred the efficiency of the Indian educational system in many decades". In a study made by the Rector of Bombay University in 1965, only about 25% students were found to complete the degree course within the minimum period prescribed for it. Thus, one may conclude that it is the wastage which has created a threat to the success of higher education rather than investment or other economic aspects. Perhaps, by identifying the root cause of the problem of wastage, one may be able to suggest remedial measures which may make higher education more meaningful and more useful.

Wastage in education is a global phenomenon, though it varies to an extent in magnitude from one country to
another. According to Miller (1970), it is a problem that the developed and underdeveloped countries alike are facing. In the developed countries such as the USA and the U.K., the problem has been widely investigated for many years. In India, though the problem has drawn considerable attention, it has been investigated only at the school level and not at the higher education level. A few studies which have focussed attention on wastage in higher education have viewed the problem from the financial angle. The psycho-social aspects related to the problem remain uninvestigated. Thus there is a need to study the problem in depth and efforts made to root out the causes.

A problem of this nature cannot be handled unless education is given an important place in the country's planning and policies. As correctly observed by Bhandari (1982), in all the previous five year plans education was taken as a social service to the community rather than a potential input in the national development of the country. It was for the first time in the 6th plan that education has been accorded its rightful place in the national planning, and investment in education reflected the pivotal role of producing human resources for the economic and social development of the country.
The working group set up by the Planning Commission in this context selected a four fold aspect of human resources namely, (1) to prepare the individual for assessing his role as a responsible citizen in the country; (2) to develop in him a specific outlook and attitude; (3) to synthesize in him the ethical, social and cultural values; and (4) to impart knowledge, skills, attitude and values which could enable him to contribute to the productive programme of national development efforts.

Thus, for the first time efforts were made to render education meaningful and relevant to the Indian public.

EXPANSION OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND DROPOUTS :

As one traces the development of higher education in India after independence, one finds that at the time of independence there were in all 19 Universities and only two lakhs and seventy four thousand enrolment in 1950-1951 for a population of 40 crores. This was too small a number to be enrolled in higher education, and thus at that time emphasis was given more on rapid expansion of colleges and increasing enrolment at higher education level. Thus in 1982 (35 years after independence) there were 150 Universities, 495 University colleges, 4391 affiliated colleges and 5204131 enrolment at college and above levels. Table below presents a comparison of expansion of Universities, colleges and enrolments -
### Expansion in Higher Education-India

**Basic Facts and Figure, All India Statistics Increase in number of Institutions and Enrolment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of universities</th>
<th>Institutions deemed to be university</th>
<th>University college</th>
<th>Affiliated college</th>
<th>University enrolment</th>
<th>Enrolment in affiliated college</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1977-78</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>4,259</td>
<td>25,64,972</td>
<td>21,59,877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978-79</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>4,108</td>
<td>26,18,228</td>
<td>21,78,188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979-80</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>4,206</td>
<td>26,48,579</td>
<td>22,10,224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>4,311</td>
<td>27,52,437</td>
<td>22,99,448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-82</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>4,391</td>
<td>29,52,066</td>
<td>24,55,377</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** University Grants Commission, (1984).
### TABLE

**Growth of Student Enrolment**

(1964-65 to 1983-84)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Enrolment</th>
<th>Increase over the preceding year</th>
<th>Percentage increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1964-65</td>
<td>9,50,277</td>
<td>1,08,167</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965-66</td>
<td>10,66,884</td>
<td>1,16,607</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966-67</td>
<td>11,90,713</td>
<td>1,23,829</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967-68</td>
<td>13,70,261</td>
<td>1,79,548</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968-69</td>
<td>15,66,103</td>
<td>1,95,842</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969-70</td>
<td>17,92,780</td>
<td>2,26,677</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>19,53,700</td>
<td>1,60,920</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-72</td>
<td>20,65,041</td>
<td>1,11,341</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972-73</td>
<td>21,68,107</td>
<td>1,03,066</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973-74</td>
<td>22,34,385</td>
<td>66,278</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974-75</td>
<td>23,66,541</td>
<td>1,32,156</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-76</td>
<td>24,26,109</td>
<td>59,568</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976-77</td>
<td>24,31,563</td>
<td>5,454</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977-78</td>
<td>25,64,972</td>
<td>1,33,409</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978-79</td>
<td>26,18,228</td>
<td>53,256</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979-80</td>
<td>26,48,579</td>
<td>30,351</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>27,52,437</td>
<td>1,03,858</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-82</td>
<td>29,52,066</td>
<td>1,99,629</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982-83</td>
<td>31,33,093</td>
<td>1,81,027</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983-84*</td>
<td>33,59,323</td>
<td>2,26,230</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Estimated.

Both the tables clearly show the persistent increase in the enrolment at higher education level.

With enrolment explosion, many types of problems cropped up, one amongst them being poor quality and dropping out. Concern about dropouts and poor quality is reflected in the Education Commission Report (1964-66), which observed that, "There is a general feeling in India that the condition in higher education is unsatisfactory and even alarming in some ways, that the average standard has been falling and rapid expansion has resulted in lowering of the quality". Commenting on poor quality in higher education Bose (1977), pointed out that it was due to the abrupt expansion in higher education, that quality and standard had come down. Furthermore, the deteriorating standards were also attributed to the uncontrolled and unplanned expansion of the universities. Due to this unplanned expansion, graduate unemployment started increasing as the number of graduates churned out by these universities was proportionately higher than the requirements of man-power in national development. As rightly observed by Veeraraghavan (1974), that, "If the present rate of expansion (10% a year) is assumed to be continued for the next 20 years; the total enrolment in higher education would be between
7 to 8 million in 1985-86, or more than twice the estimated requirements for manpower for national development.

In other words, the present planning in higher education appeared to need a review of its policies and plans. Thus, as the major emphasis was on increasing the number of colleges and enrolment, it led not only to graduate unemployment, but also to the questioning of its very relevance and significance. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that wastage and dropouts at higher education are being reported from the general education rather than the professional or other job oriented courses. As reported by the Directorate of General Employment and Training (1982), the unemployment is very high and on the increase in general education; as for instance, in 1980 and 1981 over 33,000 and 35,000 vacancies respectively were cancelled because of non-availability of suitably qualified candidates. In 1981-82 according to the Union Public Service Commission (1983), it was difficult to find suitable candidates for over 350 posts. These figures suggest that while there is a surplus of people with general education, there appears to be a shortage of persons with specialized education, for which there is a growing need. Unless the manpower
requirements and the type of courses being offered in the colleges are synchronised, the wastage and dropouts will continue. This replanning and restructuring of courses are also called for, so that the expenditure incurred to produce 100 graduates, should lead to at least 80 to 90 becoming graduates, in which one may consider the investment worthwhile and not wasted. As is well known, presently this is not the case, only 50 percent of the total enrolled students appear to complete their graduation, which means that nearly 50 percent is 'wastage'.

To check this 'wastage' and 'dropout' it is important to carry out an investigation at college level on the students who get admission and then leave their studies midway, so as to ascertain where they go, what they do, what they think, what role the socio-demographic factors play in their giving up the courses, what sort of difficulties these college students face, what they think about education and occupation and what is their perception of higher education system, what changes they would suggest to make the system more meaningful etc. Such an investigation would go a long way in sorting out the problem of dropouts and finding remedial measures to correct the phenomenon.
The need to study the point of view by students in this regard had been felt for a long time, as is reflected in the statement of Bose (1977), who said that, "If we are to plan higher education of the future it is extremely necessary to know the reaction of the present generation of students about the current educational system". Tickoo (1980), suggested that, "A second yard stick lies in the study of attitudes - those of students and teachers and of society at large towards its temple of learning".

Studies on students' unrest have also pointed out that the alienation, dissatisfaction and disillusionment factors amongst students were responsible for the development of negative attitude towards education and consequently for the failure of higher education in India.

Keeping the above in view in the present research, it was considered worthwhile to study the undergraduate education (B.A., B.Sc., B.Com.) at college level to ascertain the percentage of students who complete the graduation after taking admission to a particular course. The percent of wastage and dropout will be determined on the basis of the number of students leaving the course incomplete after that. It is also the endeavour of this study to find out what the students do after dropping out
of the courses and reasons for their dropping out. The research intends to study the dropouts in detail with regard to their home and social background, attitude towards higher education, their achievement motivation, personality adjustment, their future plans regarding their career, their opinion about the present education system, opinion about education and its relationship with jobs, their opinion about examination system and examination reforms etc. It is expected that such a study would be able to throw light also on the remedial measures to be introduced, so as to make the higher education system more useful and meaningful to all students.

The present study being one of the first of its kind and exploratory in nature proposes to take up one university i.e. Delhi University, and all its constituent colleges offering general courses at graduation level. The number of dropouts will be determined from each of these colleges. Then an attempt will be made to trace these dropouts with the help of the addresses available in the concerned college records for contacting and interviewing them personally. Thus, the present research has as its main aim: (1) to ascertain the proportion of dropouts to the total enrolment; (2) to ascertain the causes and correlates of dropouts; and (3) to compare
the various socio-demographic and personal characteristics of dropouts with those who completed the study for which they initially took admission in a college.

The findings of this research hope to enlighten the factors relating to the problems of students with regard to higher education enrolment, dropouts, the causes related to dropping out and the opinion of students on the education system. It would help in understanding this crucial phenomenon from the students' point of view. The study could perhaps be considered as a small step towards understanding a fraction of a major problem which haunt the field of higher education.