CHAPTER III

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The modern system of Higher Education in India is basically Western in outlook. But in the development of most of Indian higher education we notice important and significant elements of India's own past which have also been influential in varying degrees. It is definitely to be admitted that the nature of society, economy, religion, culture and attitude of the ruling elite have always influenced the structure and the content of education (Rao & Sudnarsanam: 1992:37). It is a fact that there has been no unanimity about the classification of the higher education into different phases; still one can have a proper understanding about the present and future developments in the sphere of higher education.

The history of higher education can be divided into five distinct phases: ancient or our past cultural heritage, medieval period, British or colonial era, era of national movement and modern or post Independent period.

Ancient: In ancient days higher education was popularly known as 'Hindu system or 'Brahmanical system' (Das; 1983). The
education was imparted in the home of the individual teachers and the education continued till about the student attained majority. Generally the Kulapati presided over the centers of higher learning. Philosophical discussions used to take place. Students would also improve their knowledge by taking part in philosophical discussions at 'Parishad' or Academy. The Vedas constituted an integral part of the curriculum (Jha 1991:3). Education was an important instrument that transferred oral and written tradition from one generation to another. Education was not denied to women as a matter of principle. Girls used to receive instructions at home. Vocational education seemed to be prevailing as references to it was also to be found. They were to be imported through caste guilds (ibid: 4).

Some of the famous universities during this period were Nalanda, Vikaramshila, and Taxila. Education was both religious and secular. The curriculum included philosophy, logic, religion, rituals, grammar, astrology, medicine, fine art and handicrafts. Huien Tsang, Fi-hien had visited India in fifth and seventh centuries A.D. Fi-hien, for example, was in Indian between 399 and 414 A.D. and visited Nalanda but apparently found no monks or monasteries. However, when Huien-Tsang came (629 A.D. to 645 A.D) he found a flourishing Nalanda university as a Buddhist center of learning.
Taxila was a center of its own kind, which was frequently referred to as a seat of higher learning in Buddhist literature, as well as a Brahminical intellectual center.

The Arabic Madrassah was a much more unified entity, intact when the British came but not much enquiry-based and perhaps also more religious in the orientation of its learning or methods. In terms of social extraction, while the Sanskrit scholar was by definition a Brahmin male, the Arabic scholar perhaps a little less exclusive in his social origin or location. In both Sanskrit and Arabic higher learning, much secular and scientific learning in law, medicine, mathematics, astronomy etc was cultivated besides literature, philosophy and theology with the help of books and discussion; but chiefly through memorization. The creation of new knowledge based on imagination, free thinking or intense observation was not so much in demand in those feudal monarchical societies as conformity and ability to reproduce long texts purely from memory.

Provision of payment of fee was there, by students who went to the 'vihar'. Poor students were helped by the community to pay their fees and in some cases they were allowed to pay in the form of services to their teachers.
MUSLIM PERIOD

In the Islamic East madrassah were already developed to impart proper education. 'Urdu' language, which is a mixture of Hindi and Arabic, was a gift of this period. Higher Education revolved round madrassah during the medieval period (12th to 18th century). The early Indian tradition of learning co-existed with madrassah, which marked continuity and change as important features of the history of higher education during this period (Alam: 1991:10). Apart from madrassah there was scope for private coaching and the residence of maulavis become small institutions of learning. Places like Badayan, Multan, Bijapur, Ahmednagar, Mand and Gaur were famous for Muslim education. Philosophy, Religion, Logic, Mathematics, Diplomacy, Grammar, Law, History, Geography, Literature, Agriculture, and Medicines etc. were taught. Most of the texts prescribed at madrassah at higher levels were Arabic but Persian language was the medium of instruction. Political patronage was provided to the Madrassah with lands for their maintenance. No tuition fee was charged; students were allowed to offer something to their teachers after the completion of their study. Hindus could apply for the study of Persian language only during the reign of Sikandhar Lodi. Women belonging to higher and middle
class families were taught music, dancing, velvet making, shoe making, carpentry, goldsmith work, iron smith work and also in wrestling and warfare (ibid: 16)

The Mughal rulers (1526-1857) were interested in higher education. Akbar has encouraged both Hindus and Muslim to study in madrassah. He had set up a separate madrassah exclusively for girls. He had also introduced changes in the mode of study and curriculum. However, unlike Akbar, Aurangzeb had prescribed text of his own choice in madrassah, which received state grants.

Medieval Indian educational institutions which had the vitality, popularity and adaptability to local environment, produced scholars of equivalent talent and depth in various branches of knowledge comparable to their counterparts in other regions of medieval World (Nayak and Nurullah 1974; 27).

BRITISH PERIOD

During this period, advent of education took place in two phases- the first phase started from the beginning of the rule of East India Company and continued till 1857. Thereafter, when the governance became the direct responsibility of the crown, the second phase of the educational development was started. Through various Acts, Policies, the Government tried to develop education in
India. During the first phase some of the significant developments took place in this direction in the form of Lord Macaulay's Minute, Lord Auckland's Minute and Woods Dispatch. The appointment of Indian Education commission in 1882, Indian University Commission 1902, Educational Policy of Lord Curzon in 1904, Indian universities Act of 1904, the Calcutta University Commission of 1917, Mont-Ford reform of 1919 and grant of provincial autonomy in 1937 had brought some changes and facilitated the development of higher education in India.

In 1750, when Warren Hastings came to India he had great love for Indo-Persian culture and under his patronage Bengali and Sanskrit grammars were written. The first college was established at Calcutta known as “College of Fort William” in 1800 by Lord Welsely. In order to win the confidence of the people of the upper classes, Company had established some centers of higher learning like Madrasah at Calcutta, Sanskrit college at Benaras even before the introduction of the Charter of 1813. When Charles Grant came to India he blamed East India Company for viewing these grave evils with apathy, and the knowledge of English was essential and establishment of English schools under teachers of good moral character was needed.
A certain section of educated and liberal minded Indians had also realized the futility of pursuing a system of exclusively classical education, as also the great possibilities, which knowledge of the language and literature of the West afforded. There was, furthermore, a demand among young Indians of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras for learning English, which would assist them in getting jobs in the growing British establishments. In 1815, Ram Mohan Roy, a leading reformer of Hindu religion and a man of wide learning, teamed up with David Hare, a British liberal and well wisher of India, to draw up a plan for an English institution at Calcutta, which let to the setting of the David Hare College in 1817.

Lord Macaulay, the law member of the Governor General's Executive council was appointed as president of Committee on Public Instruction. Asked to interpret the implications of the section concerning education in the Charter Act of 1813, he presented a lengthy minute to Bentick where he made it clear, "We want a class of persons Indian in blood and color but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect" (Bhatt and Aggarwal: 1977:3). In this context it is apt to mention that clause 43, East India, Act, 1813 inserted in the Charter largely influenced the subsequent educational policy of the company and is rightly regarded as the
foundation stone of English Educational System in India. Lord William Bentick subsequently accepted the arguments advanced by Macaulay, which found expression in his Resolution of 7th March, 1835. In fitness of things it can be said that this was the first declaration of the British Government in the sphere of education in India. It eventually determined the aim, content and the medium of instruction in India. Promotion of western sciences and arts was acknowledged as the avowed object (ibid: 5).

The idea of creating a properly articulated scheme of education from primary school to the university was emphasized by Sir Charles Wood, who was the president of the Board of Control. Known as Wood’s Dispatch 1854, it was sent by the company to Dalhousie, the then Governor General of India. Soon after this Dispatch was received, Dalhousie set on motion the process of creating universities in India, and in the very year of the revolt in 1857 the three universities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras came into existence. Regarding the distinct purpose of education under East India Company, Aparna Basu writes; “In the traditional Indian Institutions, education had mainly a religious and cultural aim...but the new degree granting institutions enabled students’ access to
power in the colonial, political and economic system (Basu: 1991; 24).

Lord Ripon appointed the first Indian Education commission, known as Hunter commission, on February 3, 1882 with William Hunter as its chairman (The commission is sometimes termed as 'Hunter Commission' after the name of its chairman). This commission emphasized the expansion of primary and secondary education and opening up of new colleges. At Punjab and Allahabad, accordingly, new colleges were established. Provisions were made for extension of Grant-in-aid facilities to colleges on the basis of their performance and requirements. The missionary enterprises were considered inferior to private institutions in the sphere of education. To evaluate standards of university teaching and to promote the advancement of learning Lord Curzon appointed Indian University Commission in 1902.

National Council of Education was organized in 1906 and it emphasized on education on National Lines which in turn implies interalia, (a) imparting education, ordinarily through the medium of vernacular, English being a compulsory subject and (b) preparation of suitable text books, especially in the vernaculars.
While analyzing the impact of the British education policy, it is being noticed that the content of education was limited to passive and unquestioning learning of ideas projected by British authors and conveyed through books published in Britain. These ideas denigrated oriental learning, cultivated the concept of British and western superiority, encouraged prejudices based on community, language and region, and promoted alienation from Indian society and culture.

In general, uniform development in the field of education could not take place in India, during British period. The gulf between the masses and the educated elite had widened. There was very little scope for the post-graduation studies and research work. Further, during this period there was no development of agricultural and also industrial aspect, so the only motto was to get into government services and degree was the only a passport to it. The institutions of higher learning were located in the vicinity of port cities. Owing to this reason, women and people from backward classes could not have adequate access to higher education.

ROLE OF THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT

While the main thrust of British educational system was towards restriction of expansion in the name of quality by contrast,
the national intelligentsia took the position that education must rise and spread. An expanding middle class also projected the greater demand for higher education. Wider expansion, creation of new universities at Decca, Patna etc., paying more attention to specific and local needs and development of research, thus resulted.

National movement was concerned not only with freedom from British Rule, but also with national culture and, even more significantly, education in science and technology and intellectual creativity. Thus we notice that early in the twentieth century, after the movement against partition of Bengal in 1905, and through Rash Behari Bose and others, a national educational movement developed. The Bengal National Council of Education created the Engineering College that has now grown into Jadavpur University. Tagore created the Viswa Bhārati emphasizing Indian cultural roots, creativity, and philosophical synthesis of the best that was in western thought and oriental philosophy. At Benaras, a whole new university was founded where Pt. Malaviya and his associates emphasized technological education. This Benaras Hindu University, even as it emphasized technology, gave substantial attention to classical and even religious elements in higher education. Seeing that Muslims had been left behind in western
education and hence government employment, the Muslim Anglo Oriental College of Aligarh was founded (which later grew into the Aligarh Muslim University).

It is here worth discussing the reports of the Calcutta University Commission (1917). Regarding the Calcutta University Commission, which is also known as Sadler Commission, A. N. Basu comments, "The reports of the commission contain the most comprehensive and authoritative study of the Indian education system from the secondary stage to the university" (Basu: 62). The Commission, among other things, recommended (i) that intermediate classes should be separated from university and a curriculum spreading over three years should be prescribed for the degree of B.A. The stage of admission to the university was to be intermediate and not matriculation examination, (ii) the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction in intermediate colleges (Bhatt and Aggarwal: 1977: 34-35).

The British Government appointed a Committee in 1944, headed by John Sargent which prepared a scheme of post-war educational reconstruction and development. This Committee favored for three-year degree course and 2-year post-graduate courses, scope for technical, vocational, professional and industrial
education. Regarding university education, the Sargent Report said: "If on the other hand the total number of university students is calculated in relation to the total population, it will be found that India is perhaps the most backward of all the principal nations of the world in University Education" (Naik and Nurullah: 368)

The growth in the number of colleges and students enrolment also substantiates this view, which can be presented as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of General college</th>
<th>No. of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1855-56</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>41,355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901-02</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>23,009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921-22</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>59,591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931-32</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>99,493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946-47</td>
<td>933</td>
<td>199,253</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Naik and Nurullah: 186).
POST – INDEPENDENT PERIOD

Even within a period of one year of Independence, the University Education Commission (1948-49) could observe that the demand for university education was neither proportional to the capacity to profit from such an education nor adequate infrastructure was prevailing for its pursuance. The commission had also expressed concern over deteriorating standards, low percentage of passes, over-crowding of institutions, over-specialization and insufficiency in number of working days. It pleaded for eleven year schooling followed by three years degree course, adoption of three language formula, de-linking of government administrative jobs from degrees, establishment of rural universities, placing of education in the concurrent list, and setting up of University Grants Commission (UGC) for allocating grants. The commission also highlighted the need for recruitment of quality teachers on the basis of merit and the sincere involvement of teachers in reading, research and teaching (University Education Commission Report: 1948-98, Government of India: 1949).

To be more clear the University Education Commission under the chairmanship Dr. S. Radhakrishna had the following important recommendations:
i) The aim of education should be to awaken the innate ability to live and to train man for democracy and self-developments, to acquaint individuals with the cultural heritage and to impart them professional and vocational training.

ii) Overcrowding of universities and colleges should be avoided and the number of working days should be increased to a minimum of 180, exclusive of examination days.

iii) The commission emphasized the role of post-graduate research and training for the advancement of the country. It suggested that Ph.D. scholars should emphasize both on the breadth and width of the knowledge. They should not have narrow specializations.

iv) The commission emphasized the role of the study of agriculture in an agrarian economy like India. It suggested that special attention be paid to the development of higher education in rural areas. It further suggested that on the basis of critical studies about the nature and type of manpower requirements, the scientific and technical base of educational system should be strengthened.

v) Realizing the importance of the medium of instruction, the commission recommended that English as a medium of
instruction in higher education should be replaced as early as possible by an Indian language.

vi) Realizing the deficiencies of the examination system and the magnitude of wastage, the commission recommended a thorough study of the scientific method of educational testing and appraisal.

At a meeting attended by state ministers of education and the vice-chancellors in early 1953, it was agreed that a UGC would be established and it would have both the functions: to determine standards and co-ordinate higher education, and to support the universities with related funds. On December 28, 1953, the UGC was established under an administrative order, a bill to set up a statutory body, when moved, was referred to a joint select committee of both Houses of Parliament and the bill was eventually adopted and enforced in 1956. The UGC had both the functions of inquiring into the financial needs and requirements of the universities and to help them to maintain and raise standards of performance. It was for the first time, in any country of the world, that these two functions had been vested in the same body. The UGC in Britain, for instance, which was perhaps the first funding body of its kind to be set up for this purpose, had the power only to
provide funds. It had no power to determine standards or to co-
ordinate. In other countries also where Central or Federal funding is
made available to institution of higher learning, no such power is
available to the funding agency or the federal/ center. In that sense,
India had embarked upon a new experiment.

However, following the experience of development planing
during the first three five-year plans, various limitations and
inadequacies of education in meeting the challenges of socio-
economic planning became apparent. Many critics were questioning
the quality and relevance of higher education. The rapid expansion
of university enrolment and the mushroom growth of affiliated
colleges had put a considerable strain on the financial resources
and teaching personnel. The large-scale failures at the first-degree
examination and the falling standards of teaching could not be
checked over the years. Rather, these problems became more
acute with the passage of time.

It may be noted that the enrolments in higher education
witnessed a massive expansion and recorded the highest growth
rates in the fifties and sixties. The enrolment in absolute numbers
increased from about 1.74 lakhs in 1950-51 to about 10.67 lakhs in
1965-66. The growth rates for different periods are as under:

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Another important feature of higher education is that a large proportion of enrolment is located in affiliated colleges. In 1965-66, about 88% of the total enrolment at the undergraduate level was in affiliated colleges.

With a view to look into these problems, the Government of India appointed the Education Commission (EC) under the chairmanship of professor D.S. Kothari in 1964. The main function of the commission was to advise the Government on the national pattern of education and to suggest the general principles and policies for the development of education at all stages and in all aspects.
The fundamental principles suggested by the commission may be stated as follows:

i) Provision of effective and compulsory general education to all children.

ii) Higher secondary and university education to those who are willing and qualified to receive such education, consistent with the demands for trained manpower and the need to maintain essential standards.

iii) Emphasize the development of professional, technical and vocational education and to prepare the skilled personnel needed for the development of agriculture and industry.

One of the major recommendations of this commission was for having a 10+2 system in India. A proposal to separate the first two classes of the affiliated colleges, after 10 years of high school, was made but remained unimplemented at Calcutta itself for a long time. However, gradually intermediate colleges were set up. The report of the Kothari Commission on the basis of which Government adopted a policy on education in 1968, strongly recommended the transfer of these two classes to the schools since the intermediate colleges were themselves a neglected lot and their facilities and working conditions led to comparative neglect of these two classes.
Furthermore, the Kothari commission report recommended that during the two-year period following 10 years of school, there should be greater diversification of studies, vocational courses should be made available and it should be possible for more students to enter services after 10+2 years of education.

As a result of discussion on the recommendations of Kothari Commission and report of the committee of members of Parliament (1967), the Government of India formally issued a resolution on National Policy on Education (NPE) on 24th July 1968. Specification of broad objectives of the educational system, assessment of success or failure of the existing system to serve their purpose, promotions of equalization of educational opportunity, introduction of various measures for qualitative improvement, simultaneously making the system more effective to meet the needs of the people, opening avenues for the education of large number of people outside the usual class-room teaching and ear-marking adequate fund for ensuring development in the sphere of education, has been the basic concern of the Government's resolution of 1968. With regard to the educational structure, it was indicated in the policy to have a uniform educational structure in all parts of the country having a 10 plus 2 plus 3 pattern, the higher secondary stage of two
The NPE (1968) had thus proposed certain reforms in higher education, which were either implemented slowly, or there was some resistance to their implementation. One such reform was the selective admission to university degree, not enough attention was paid to regulate the expansion of higher education similarly, the education. Selective admission to universities was suggested by the UGC and the Education commission repeated the same recommendation. In the latter case, manpower estimates were used to argue for limiting university admissions. Unfortunately, as it happened all over the world, the manpower approach to educational planning came in for severe criticism. Against this background, and the populist demand for acquiring a university programme for using regional languages as medium of instruction was taken up very slowly. The problem of raising standards in higher education defied all solutions that were tried In the face of these and many more critical problems; a policy framework for development of higher education was prepared by the UGC. This Policy Frame Development, 1978 defines the role of university system as having important responsibilities to the society as a whole as well as to the
education system itself and emphasizes that the system should (i) inculcate and promote basic human values and the capacity to choose between alternate value systems, (ii) preserve and foster the cultural traditions and blend them with essential elements from other cultures and people, (iii) promote a rational outlook and scientific temper, (iv) enrich the Indian languages and promote their use as important means of communication, national development and unity, (v) promote and development of the total personality of the students and inculcate in them a commitment to society through involvement in national service programme, act as an objective, critic of society and assist in the formulation of national objectives and programmes for their realization (v) promote commitment to the pursuit of excellence; (vii) promote the development of science and technology and of an indigenous capability to apply it effectively with special emphasis on national problems, and above all (vii) contribute to the improvement of the entire educational system so as to sub serve the community.

It was only in the early eighties, that specific measures were taken to assess the various achievements and to identify the impediments in achieving the goals of education. The first step in this direction was the setting up of two National Commissions on
Teachers, one dealing with schools, and the other with higher education. The National Commission on Teachers (higher Education) 1984 was set up under the chairmanship of Prof. Rais Ahmed to look into the various facts of higher education, especially concerning the teaching profession. The studies carried out by the commission clearly showed that there has been a gradual decline in the social and economic status of teachers in higher education. Evidence showed that teachers are poorly placed as compared to other professionals having similar qualification and experience. The commission made a number of recommendations to strengthen the participation of university teachers in research and developmental activities.

The latest development in education is the publication of 'Challenge of Education a Policy Perspective (1985) by the Ministry of Education, Govt. of India and the subsequent formulation of the New Education Policy (1986). As has been indicated in the policy perspective, "College and university education has greatly expanded since independence. Taken as a whole the general condition of colleges and universities is a matter of concern. Many of these are known for rampant casteism, regionalism and inbreeding. Some of these are virtual battlefields in which political
and other factions backed by teachers and aided by other staff, often fight pitched battles for power and supremacy. There is widespread feeling that the present state of higher education is largely because of the overt and covert interference by external agencies. This underlines the importance of real autonomy. However, attention has also to be given to the equally important aspect of accountability. In addition, it has been pointed in the document that to a great extent the quality and employability of college graduates is adversely affected by the fact that arts and humanities are offered as unilinear programmes of study unrelated to the requirements of real life, multifaceted development of personality and the reasoning and learning capabilities of students.

The main issues highlighted in the document relate to:

i) The growing mismatch between education, employment and the world of work.

ii) The increasing emphasis on quantitative expansion rather than on qualitative improvements.

iii) The declining standards of teaching, examination and research etc.

This document categorically mentions about a moratorium on the expansion of the traditional pattern of college, favoring the
opening of only those colleges, which have a vocational character and are linked with identified multi-disciplinary tasks. New colleges will bridge the world of work with the world of knowledge by offering integrated courses for: Agriculture and Home Economics, Forestry and Land and Water Development, Urban Planning and Transport Management etc.

The Government of India had to formulate the National Policy on Education, 1986 at a time when the India’s political and social life was passing through a phase that posed a danger of erosion to long-accepted values and the goals of secularism, socialism, democracy and professional ethics were coming under increasing strain. That was a time when there was a need to reduce rural urban disparities and efforts to promote diversification and dispersal of employment opportunities. So the Government of India announced in January 1985 that a New Education Policy would be formulated for the country in spite of the fact that the National Policy of 1968 had marked a significant step in the history of education in post-independent India. Since the adoption of the 1968 policy, there had been considerable expansion in educational facilities all over the country at all levels. A beginning was also made in restructuring of courses at the undergraduate level. Centers of Advanced studies
were set up for post-graduate education and research. While these achievements are impressive by themselves, the general formulations incorporated in the 1968 policy did not, however, get translated into a detailed strategy of implementation, accompanied by the assignment of specific responsibility and financial and organizational support.

This new policy of 1986 laid special emphasis on the removal of disparities and equalization of educational opportunities for those who had been denied equality. It emphasized on:

i) Education for women equality.

ii) Education of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and people of other educationally backward sections and areas.

iii) Creation of autonomous colleges in order to protect the educational system from degradation.

iv) Transformation of teaching methods with the application of audio-visual aids and electronic equipment.

v) Development of science and technology curricula.

vi) Strengthening of Open University System in order to augment opportunities for higher education.
vii) Enhanced support for research in universities with special emphasis on inter-disciplinary research.

viii) De-linking in services for which university degree need not be a necessary qualification.

ix) Qualitative improvements in examination system etc.

An important part of the policy statement is the emphasis on making the system work. This is known as Programme of Action (1986). A new ministry, called the Ministry of Human Resources Development was created by enlarging the scope of the then Ministry of Education.

A brief outline of the progress of implementation of NPE, 1986, is as under.

i) Guidelines for granting affiliation to new colleges have been finalized.

ii) A committee is looking into the management patterns of university bodies so as to evolve the models of educational management.

iii) Proposals from a number of colleges for the grant of autonomy are under the active consideration of the UGC.
iv) Steps have been initiated to conduct the qualifying examination for the recruitment of university teachers.

The Programme of Action certainly makes a valuable source of information, but it fails to generate strong optimism that it can be implemented successfully for it has not suggested any time-bound programme based on the availability of funds (Aggarwal: 1989).

The national front Government at the Center subsequently announced for the revision of NPE 1986 and for that purpose, a 17-member committee with Acharya Rammamurthy was set up in May 1990. The review indicated that while the framework provided by NPE, 1986 continues to be of relevance, the development during the last few years and the experience gained in the implementation of the policy would require certain modifications which were then introduced in May, 1992. As a sequel to the revision of the policy, the Government also prepared a revised Programme of Action (POA) in August 1992. The POA, 1992 among other things, perceived the problem of girl child and underlined the need to enhance participation of girls at all stages of education particularly in streams like silence, vocational, technical and commerce subjects where girls are grossly under-rated.
When an analysis of the progress of higher education in India is made, it is seen that Indian system of higher education is one of the largest in the world. It has undergone a rapid expansion in the post independence period. In 1947, there were only 20 universities and about 500 colleges in India. After half a century of freedom, number of institution of higher education in the country has multiplied many folds. Today we have 229 universities and 7199 science and art colleges. (Statistical Outline of India, 1999-2000).

This growth rate has been propelled by two factors; one is country's vibrant democracy that makes people compete for access to higher education to ensure better opportunities for social mobility. The government has encouraged this process of democratization of higher education through its reservation policy on behalf of the weaker and deprived sections of the population. More and more first generation learners knock at the doors of our colleges today.

But there has been an unplanned growth of collegiate institutions catering to arts, science and commerce courses. As pointed out by the UGC, “A particular mention should be made here of country’s large number of affiliated colleges, in which the vast majority of our university level students study, having been created more for political and regional considerations rather than to meet
the higher educational needs of their respective states. Many of these institutions are extremely small in size, lack the minimum facilities needed to develop viable instructional programmes, and pose a constant threat to the quality and standards of higher education. Unfortunately, the Commission has no say in the establishment of new colleges or in their affiliation to a University ...(1986:2). The States, which seem to be in a disadvantageous position with regard to the number of universities or enrolment, are sufferers because they have arts and commerce colleges in very large numbers since it is the cheapest way to satisfy the thirst for higher education.

However, it is interesting to note that in spite of increase in absolute terms, there has been a perceptible decline in the growth rate of student enrolment at the higher education stage particularly in the post 1970-71 period. There was considerable expansion in enrolment upto 1970-71; the highest average annual increase (13.90 per cent) was reached during the quinquennium 1960 to 1965. After 1971, the growth rate slumped and was in the realm of three to five percent per annum. Various reasons could be attributed to the perceptible fall in the growth rate of student enrolment, particularly after 1971. The structural changes in the system of

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education introduced as per recommendation of the education commission (1964-66) under which the state governments gradually introduced the 10+2+3 system with possible termination of studies at the plus two stage, could be an important reason for this downward trend. The growing spectra of unemployment among the educated could be another factor.

Implicitly and explicitly, there have been references to a decline in the quality of education as a whole, and also in higher education. Keeping in view the emphasis on the quality of higher education as given in National Policy of Education (1986), the University Grants Commission has identified the following thrust areas for implementation on a priority basis.

i) Autonomous colleges.

ii) Redesigning courses.

iii) State Council of Higher Education

iv) Accreditation and Assessment Councils

v) Making Research and Development board-based

vi) Training / orientation of teachers.

vii) Improvement of efficiency.
The higher education in this country is now being put to test. It has to cope up with the resources inadequacy situation. The National Policy on Education, 1986, has referred to the seriousness of the ‘deleterious consequences of non-investment or inadequate investment in education” (1986:28). In a study of university finances conducted in 1984, it was revealed that 38 per cent of the universities had consistently deficit budgets. This meant that two out of five universities had to borrow in order to meet their minimum expenditure. The position of colleges, where most of the higher education takes place, is such that about fifty per cent are academically non-viable and therefore not eligible for UGC assistance. They are the worst hit.

Here it is apt to mention that Kothari Commission had recommended that at least six per cent of our G.N.P. should be spent on education and even today after more than fifty years of independence expenditure on education has remained more or less four percent of our G.N.P. This is due to the fact that there is an understanding that investment in education gives lower-rate of return.
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