INTRODUCTION
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Higher education refers to education being offered in institutions leading to graduate and post-graduate degrees and institutions preparing people with higher level skills, knowledge and competence. Institutions in this category are colleges preparing students for undergraduate degree courses in Arts, Science and Commerce. Technical / Medical colleges imparting education in Medicine, Engineering, Agriculture and Law also fall in this category. Higher education also includes post-graduate institutions and centers of advanced studies. These institutions can be divided into general, technical and medical ones.

Higher education raises great hopes both among the students and the society. Students expect well-paid jobs after graduation as well as a raise in social status. They also expect higher education to make them knowledgeable. Society's expectations are manifold. It expects highly educated persons to provide leadership in social, political and cultural developments. It also expects such persons to spur the economic development by meeting effectively society's need of educated and able manpower. Further, it hopes that since educational opportunities are open to all sections, privileged and non-privileged, higher education will help in bridging the gap.
between these sections. With such hopes a society builds up the
system of higher education at a large investment of financial and
human resources.

While talking about Indian education in general and higher
education in particular, an attempt here has been made to
investigate its colonial origins and to trace the continuity and
persistence of the system into our post-colonial times.

The India Act of 1813 was the first important land mark in the
East India Company's education policy for it included "a clause
requiring the annual expenditure by the Directors of the East India
Company a lakh of rupees on education (Report of the Commission
on Christian Higher Education in India: 1931:63). Earlier the
company had refrained from such commitments, but now the earlier
ban on private enterprise in education in its territories was lifted in
1816(lbid). But the government's commitment was never adequate
to the task. For it adopted a 'downward filtration' approach as first
proposed by Lord Auckland in 1839, and described by Nurullah and
Naik thus:

"The company was expected to give a good education (which
then necessarily meant education through English) to only a few
persons (these may or may not be from the upper classes) and
leave it to these persons to educate the masses through modern Indian languages (Nurullah, S & Naik, J.P.: 1951:113). The implicit class and caste bias of such an elitist policy was inevitable. It was only strengthened further by the adoption of Macaulay's minute of 1835 in favor of English as the medium of European learning. This effectively destroyed the old indigenous system of education and put the new western education decisively beyond the reach of the masses.

The Company's Education dispatch of 19th July 1854, called the Wood Dispatch, rejected this theory in principle, but "replaced it with the doctrine of state withdrawal in favor of a system of grants-in-aid to privately managed institutions. The expansion of education became dependent on the private agencies who were willing to carry the burden which the government pleaded inability to bear" (Heredia, Rudolf C: 1981).

This relieved the government of some of the financial cost and much of the organizational initiative in education, but it led to, "the laissez-faire policy, enunciated by the Indian Education Commission (1882) also called the Hunter Commission" (Basu, A: 1982:108).

The rapid expansion of education that resulted from this caused serious concern to the government. Curzon tried to put
some order and consolidate education with an emphasis on quality over quantity but in spite of the Indian Universities Act of 1904, the Calcutta Universities Commission, chaired by Sir Michael Sadler in 1917 still found the system "fundamentally defective in almost every aspect" (Report of the Calcutta University Commission: 1917-19: 1919: 302). The demand for education especially western and English Education fuelled a rapid expansion by private agencies motivated by the desire of upward mobility for their respective caste and/or religious communities. Thus in 1967, J.P. Naik estimated that "85 per cent of our colleges and 65 per cent of our secondary schools are in private sector" (Dickinson, S.R. & Appaswamy, S.: 1967).

Following the missionaries, as each new group jumped on the educational bandwagon, the Brahmins after 1882, the non-brahmins after 1921, the dalits with Ambedkar in the 1940s and the adivasi seva mandals in the 1950s, the government recognition and grants were demanded not on the basis of performance and quality, but on the principle of equality and non-discrimination.

Moreover, higher education was extremely elitist and the focus here was on the transmission of knowledge, not its creation,
and that too more in arts than in sciences, more generalists than specialists, more liberals than professionals.

In India, a system of higher education was created from a European model. It was intended to be a complement of its emerging modern sector, which comprised rational and bureaucratic administration, modern forms of litigation and adjudication, technological construction, transportation and communication, the care of health, improvement of agriculture and diffusion of secular knowledge and information. It was expected that higher positions in the modern sector of Indian society would be filled by persons who become qualified for them, to a large extent by the certified and systematic study of more or less codified bodies of knowledge. However, the bodies of knowledge taught in the universities through their affiliated colleges belong to traditions, which had grown up not in India but outside.

The teaching of undergraduates has always been the main business of the Indian academic. This tradition was derived from a tradition of undergraduate instruction in the United Kingdom. The Oxford model, devoted to the "education of young men", took root in India. It was the intention of the founders and rulers of the Indian Educational Services that such a pattern should prevail and thus the
tradition of concern with the undergraduates and of a disregard for research became established in India (Shils, Edward: 1974:214).

In the present study an humble attempt has been made to study the role of political elites in the general higher education. As we know in the realm of the social sciences, the term 'elite' is placed in a specific context. One is treated as a member of the elite strata in that particular branch or field in which one is better placed vis-à-vis the rest of the society or one's companion. This term was not widely used in social sciences in the 19th century in Europe or until the 1930s in Britain and America, when it was diffused through the sociological theories of elite, notably in the writings of Vilfred Pareto (Bottomore: 1966:2). He classified elites as "governing elites" - those who participate, more or less, directly in political decisions and "non-governing elites" those at the top of the non-political structures. It could, therefore, be maintained that the term 'Political elites' refers to persons in politics, who occupy posts of political command and who influence major political policies (Pareto, V. 1961: 552). Harold D lasswell holds the same view when he considered power elites as the power holders of a body politic (Lasswell: 1952).
The Indian political elites before the independence of the country were mostly landed gentry, lawyers, commercial people, journalists, doctors and teachers (Misra, B. B. 1961:355) As the political movement grew in strength the landed gentry was increasingly isolated and the political elite role passed on to the educated middle class and professional groups (Singh, Y: 1973:3). After independence the political power passed into the hands of the people who were earlier engaged in the struggle for liberation and who then tended to widen their leadership from the political to social developments of the country.

Implicit in all discussions concerning higher education in India is the crucial ingredient of Politics. The educational system, which before the Second World War catered mostly to an elite group within the society, stimulated political activity by assuring the students that they were atleast potential leaders of a free India (Altback: 1966: 469). Thus, with support from the society and in a volatile political situation, politics came to the campus with substantial force, and involved many thousands of students in dramatic, although usually sporadic, political movements.

The main reason, for the expansion of the universities/colleges, has been political. Groups applied pressure for expansion,
local politicians wanted to use colleges as a base of operations, and educational politicians desired to expand their empire. 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..." (1986:2). Associated with the politician are the business and higher civil servants. The ruling triumvirate is utterly unsympathetic to the intellectuals outside the circle of the powerful. The university intellectuals are left out of the favored circle. In the colleges and universities, they feel particularly the harsh hand and disparaging look of the politician who interferes with university administration and talks to professors as if they were his servants (Shils, Edward: 1961:101).

If one studies the data available, one perceives that the number of universities including deemed universities have more than doubled over the past two decades. From mere 110 universities in 1980-81, we have today 229 of them. The same growth rate is observed in the Arts and Science colleges; from mere 3421 two decades ago, we have today 7199 of them (Statistical
Outline of India, 1999-2000:207). In case of Orissa there were 14 colleges in 1950-51, which have increased to 1,367 during 1999-2001.

The growth at the level of higher education, however natural and desirable it may be, contains certain features that are matters of concern. In Orissa, during the second plan period, the need for skilled educated manpower was keenly felt for the various development projects. This was met by encouraging private high schools to come up by relaxing conditions of recognition of schools and by providing grants-in-aid. This led to rapid growth of High schools in fifties and sixties of the last century. To provide seats for high schools graduates opening of new government and private colleges was encouraged. This reached a peak in early seventies. As a consequence of the quantitative expansion, quality of higher education suffered as government was unable to meet the growing demand for building, equipments and higher grants for libraries and laboratories. An alarmed government tried to put a ban on opening of private colleges. In spite of this early warning of the impending crisis, new colleges were allowed to be opened mostly during the 8th plan period. The problem became very acute in the nineties. In 1995-96, the number reached the figure 893. In 1999-2000, this
increased to 1367 general colleges, of which the number of
government colleges was 59 and private aided colleges was 448.
All the 1367 colleges teach +2 courses. Only 528 colleges have
facilities for +3 teaching. P.G. courses are taught in 24 Government
colleges in 27 subjects (Mishra, D.C. 2002:33)

This expansion is partly owing to political compulsions.
Politicians consider it a matter of greater prestige to have a college
in their constituencies than to promote literacy of the grass root level
and strengthen primary education with adequate infrastructural
facilities.

In a narrow sense educational institutions are inevitable
political institutions. They both affect and are affected by local, state
and national politics. Their decisions about admission policies and
educational programmes have direct or indirect political impact.
Finally, colleges/universities often act politically when the interests
of higher education itself are directly at stake. Institutional positions
in favor of increased financial support, in opposition to government
policies that directly and adversely affect higher education, or in
defense of institutional autonomy and academic freedom, are widely
regarded as both political and legitimate.
Even more important, the frequent assumption of political position by universities / colleges as institutions reduces their ability to pursue their central mission. Thus, their ability to defend the critical function would be undermined.

The Nobel Laureate Professor Amartya Sen while addressing the participants of the four-day south-Asian conference on Education on November 14 1999 at the Delhi University said; “University education in India is in a state of crisis. It is not a crisis of lack of resources. It is a deterioration of quality. When it comes to higher education, there is no escape from seeking the highest quality we can get” (Sen, Amartya 2000). In this context a report of the Planning Board of the state of Kerala (1984) has the following to say: “The state of higher education in Kerala today presents a dismal picture. A number of new colleges have sprung up like mushrooms in thatched sheds and rented buildings without the needed physical infrastructure, laboratory equipment or library facilities. Old or new, all the colleges are overcrowded with students to such an extent as to make them unmanageable. The high standards of academic excellence, which marked the college teaching community in bygone days, have considerably deteriorated with the introduction of criteria other than merit for the selection of...
staff in colleges and the system of purchasing posts with donations, which is rampant in private colleges. Frequent strikes for one reason or another accounts for a good percentage of the working days lost, so that a college is seldom in a position to work the number of days stipulated by the university. The teaching standards in regular colleges have reached low ebb. The regular colleges apparently act as a convenient forum for fermenting strikes in support of political parties.

Often political parties with a vested interest seize every available opportunity to exploit the students' agitation for their own nefarious purposes. It is true that students are probably one of the easiest groups for politicians to sway and recruit. They are strong enough physically to face up to force, they have leisure time and have not yet taken over adult responsibilities.

Student unions in a number of colleges have taken on political importance. In some of the Indian universities, such as Aligarh and Banaras, student unions have spearheaded protest campaigns. Agitations undertaken by student unions stem from local issues, such as university examination policies, increases in college fees, living condition and the like, but in some cases student unions are
controlled by ideological factions attempting to use the union as a base of operations against an opposition political group within or outside the university. Moreover, every election in the college becomes a national election in microcosm.

To say that Indian higher education is strongly influenced by political considerations is not to attack it, but simply to point to a crucial fact. The major university systems of the west, which India has sought to emulate, particularly that of Great Britain, have been able to build up some insulation from politics over the years and are able to maintain a substantial degree of academic independence. The Indian universities, however, have been unable to build up this independence. This inability is in part due to the fact that the universities must have substantial government aid in order to survive and function in an economy of scarcity, and in part to the fact that there have never been strong traditions of academic independence in the universities. (Attach, P.G.: 1969:2).

NEED OF THE STUDY

The present study "Higher General Education in the State of Orissa: The Role of Political Elites" looks more pertinent when the
number of colleges in Orissa have grown three times during the last decade. Quantitative expansion in the shape of numerical growth of substandard and non-viable colleges has resulted in the fast deterioration of standards, almost bringing down the colleges to the level of teaching shops.

It is common knowledge that most of the colleges are either directly managed by politicians or indirectly controlled by them.

It is a fact that university students feel frustrated because the rate of turnover of graduates is much larger than the rate at which they can be absorbed in the economy. A frustrated community of students becomes a happy haunting ground for political adventurism and naturally teaching and research standards suffer. The teachers also join the merry-go-round, often those particularly, who have political links outside the campus

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The present study has been designed with the following objectives

1. To identify and classify different categories of general higher education in function in the state of Orissa.
2. To identify and classify different categories of politicians associated in different activities of the general higher education colleges.

3. To analyze and ascertain the role of politicians in the General Higher Education system with respect to:
   
   (a) Foundation of the college;
   
   (b) Students admission in the college;
   
   (c) Appointment of staff in the college;
   
   (d) Student council election;
   
   (e) Different function held in the college; and
   
   (f) Examination held in the college.

The problem of higher education and political development in the new nations, issues on the study on which students can shed some light, are crucial with the modern world. It is hoped that the present study can add some knowledge to an important area of enquiry.
CHAPTERIZATION

The present study is divided into the following chapters.

Introduction

Chapter –I  Theoretical and Conceptual Analysis

Chapter –II  Review of Literature

Chapter – III  The Development of Higher General Education in India.

Chapter – IV  Development of Higher General education in Orissa

Chapter – V  Methodology

Chapter – VI  Analysis and Interpretation

Chapter – VII  Summary, Major findings and Recommendations.
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1. Altbach, Philip G, The permanent Crisis of Indian Higher Education, Quest No. 60 Jan-March 1969

2. Altbach, Philip G. “Students, Politics and Higher Education in a Developing Area: The Case of Bombay” P469.


