CHAPTER 2

The Higher Education Scenario in India
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- Role of Central & State Governments in Promoting Higher Education
- Components of Higher Education System
  - Universities
  - Colleges
  - Regulatory & Funding Agencies
- Work Environment in Higher Education

Introduction
India is emerging as one of the leaders in knowledge race. In terms of students enrolment, it is the third largest in the world after China and United States. It has an added advantage of having English as its primary language of higher education and research. The students have wider horizons for gaining knowledge in their respective areas through books, journals, magazines and electronic media which is mostly in English. India has a long academic tradition and academic freedom has been respected through ancient times. It is the pride pioneer of university system like Nalanda and Takshashila which used to house approximately a lac students in its campus.

The higher education system of India comprises of seven Indian Institutes of Technologies (IITs), approximately 300 universities and deemed universities, over 15000 colleges and hundreds of national and regional research institutes. In addition to this there are top class business schools, professional institutes like Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT) etc. There is no company or institute in the world that has not benefited by the
graduates, post-graduates or research scholars from Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), Indian Institute of Science/Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) and various Universities of India, be it NASA, IBM, Microsoft, Intel, Bell, Sun, MIT, Harvard, Caltech, Cambridge or Oxford.

As on date there are 342 Universities including 18 Central Universities, 211 State Universities, 99 deemed Universities and 5 institutions established under State Legislation and 13 Institutes of National Importance. There are approx. 17625 colleges, of which 5386 have been recognized by the University Grants Commission under Section 2(f) and 2(B) of the UGC Act. 138 colleges have been functioning as autonomous colleges in eight states in the country.

As per the data available, as on date an estimated 104.81 lakh students were enrolled in the institutions of Higher Education as against 99.54 lakh in the year 2005 and the faculty strength is 4.71 lakh as compared to 4.57 lakh in the year 2005.

Main players in the higher education system in the country are Central Government, State Governments, University Grants Commission (UGC) and other Professional Councils for recognition of courses.

Education is the Special Constitutional responsibility of the Central Government and falls at No.66 of the 'Concurrent list' in the Union List of the Constitution. This gives exclusive Legislative Power to the Central Govt. for co-ordination and determination of standards in Institutions of higher education or research and scientific and technical institutions.

Central Government is responsible for major policy relating to higher education in the country. It provides grants to the UGC and establishes central universities in the country. The Central Government is also responsible for declaration of Educational Institutions as 'Deemed to be University' on the recommendation of the UGC. The UGC provides grants and regulates the Indian university system.
State Governments are responsible for State Universities and colleges, and provide plan grants for their development and non-plan grants for their maintenance. The establishment of universities, colleges and schools in the state and appointment of staff members, regulation of their service conditions and provision of funds comes under the purview of respective State Governments.

The Central Advisory Board of Education coordinates and ensures cooperation between the Union and the State governments.

University Grants Commission

The Government of India established University Grants Commission (UGC) by an Act of Parliament in 1956 to execute the Constitutional mandate of coordination, determination, and maintenance of standards of teaching, examination and research in Higher Education. UGC serves as a vital link between the Union and State Governments and the institutions of higher learning. It monitors developments in the field of collegiate and university education; disburses grants to the universities and colleges; advises Central and State Governments on the measures necessary for the improvement of university education; and frames regulations such as those on the minimum standards of instruction.

The Commission comprises the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and ten other members appointed by the Central Government. The Chairperson is selected from among persons who are not officers of the Central Government or any State Government. Of the ten members, two are representatives of Central Government. More than five persons are the eminent teachers in Universities. Remaining members are selected from among eminent educationists, academics and experts in various fields.

Funding

UGC has no funds of its own. It receives both Plan and Non-Plan grants from the Central Government to carry out the responsibilities assigned to it by law. It allocates and disburses full maintenance and development grants to all Central Universities, Colleges affiliated to Delhi and Banaras Hindu Universities and some
of the institutions accorded the status of ‘Deemed to be Universities’. State Universities, Colleges and other institutions of higher education, receive support only from the Plan grant for development schemes. Besides, it provides financial assistance to Universities and colleges under various schemes/programmes for promoting relevant knowledge and skills to bring social change.

Following are the details of the grants provided by the Government to UGC during the IX Plan and X Plan both under Plan and Non-Plan, are as under:

**IX Plan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Plan (Rs. in crores)</th>
<th>Non-Plan (in crores)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1997 - 1998</td>
<td>352.10</td>
<td>545.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998 - 1999</td>
<td>360.35</td>
<td>1009.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>1999 - 2000</td>
<td>376.00</td>
<td>975.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000-2001</td>
<td>435.00</td>
<td>1000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-2002</td>
<td>467.78</td>
<td>1020.68</td>
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**X Plan**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
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<th>Non-Plan (in crores)</th>
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<td>2002-03</td>
<td>559.76</td>
<td>1100.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003-04</td>
<td>516.75</td>
<td>1132.30</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004-05</td>
<td>719.75</td>
<td>1182.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>374.41(upto 31.8.05)</td>
<td>609.17(upto 31.8.05)</td>
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Regulatory and Professional Councils

Following Professional Councils are responsible for recognition of courses, promotion of professional institutions and providing grants to undergraduate programmes and various awards. The statutory professional councils are:

- All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)
- Distance Education Council (DEC)
- Indian Council for Agriculture Research (ICAR)
- Bar Council of India (BCI)
- National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE)
- Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI)
- Medical Council of India (MCI)
- Pharmacy Council of India (PCI)
- Indian Nursing Council (INC)
- Dentist Council of India (DCI)
- Central Council of Homeopathy (CCH)
- Central Council of Indian Medicine (CCIM)

Academic Qualification Framework - Degree Structure

After twelve years of schooling the students proceed for degree courses in their respective subject areas - Science, Arts or Commerce. There are three principle levels of qualifications within the higher education system in the country. These are:

Undergraduate level - Bachelor's degree
Post-graduate level - Master's degree
Pre-doctoral level - Doctoral degree

Other fields of studies have come up from the existing streams of studies to go into different professions like business studies, medical, para medical, fine arts etc.

Some institutes offer degrees with honours and special courses. These are not necessarily longer in duration but indicate greater depth of study. Bachelor degree in professional field of study in agriculture, dentistry, engineering, pharmacy,
technology and veterinary medicine generally take four years, while architecture and medicine, it takes five and five and a half years respectively. There are other bachelor degrees in education, journalism and librarianship that are known as second degrees. Bachelor's degree in law is either taken as an integrated degree lasting five years or three-year course as a second degree.

Diploma courses are also available at the undergraduate and postgraduate level. At the undergraduate level, it varies between one to three years in length, postgraduate diplomas are normally awarded after one year's study.

Master's degree is normally of two-year duration. It could be coursework based without thesis or research alone. Admission to postgraduate programmes in engineering and technology is done on the basis of Graduate Aptitude Test in Engineering or Combined Medical Test respectively.

A pre-doctoral programme - Master of Philosophy (M. Phil.) is taken after completion of the Master's Degree. This can either be completely research based or can include course work as well. Ph.D. is awarded two year after the M. Phil. or three years after the Master's degree. Students are expected to write a substantial thesis based on original research which generally takes longer.

New Initiatives - Vocationalization

In conformity with the National Policy on Education, 1986, a scheme to provide career orientation to education at the first degree level was launched in 1994-95. Under the scheme, a university/ college could introduce one to three vocational courses in 35 identified subjects.

National Eligibility Test (NET) is being conducted by the UGC since 1989 for eligibility for lectureship. Around 50000 students appear for the test every year. Pass percentage is around 5%. Eight State level Tests have been accredited at par with NET.
System of Governance of Higher Education Institutions

The Universities are of various kinds: with a single faculty, or multi-faculties; teaching or affiliating, or teaching cum affiliating, single campus or multiple campuses. Most of the Universities are affiliating universities, which prescribe to the affiliated colleges the course of study, hold examinations and award degrees, while undergraduate and to some extent postgraduate colleges affiliated to them impart graduate instruction. Many of the universities along with their affiliated colleges have grown rapidly to the extent of becoming unmanageable. Therefore, as per National Policy on Education, 1986, a scheme of autonomous colleges was promoted. In the autonomous colleges, whereas the degree continues to be awarded by the University, the name of the college is also included. The colleges develop and propose new courses of study to the university for approval. They are also fully responsible for conduct of examination.

The Indian Institutes of Technology are set up by the Government of India as 'Institutions of National Importance' and almost all reputed international academic benchmarks have given them high rating. The Institutes teach technology at UG, PG and doctoral level and carry out basic and applied research in pure and applied sciences. The IITs are funded by the Ministry of Human Resource Development and their policy matters are decided by a nodal monitoring body headed by the Minister for Human Resource Development.

There are seven IITs in the country located at Bombay, Delhi, Kanpur, Kharagpur, Madras, Guwahati — and Roorkee.

There are 18 Central Universities under the purview of the Ministry of Human Resource Development which have been set up by Acts of Parliament.

President of India is the Visitor of all Central Universities. The President nominates some members to the Executive Committee/Board of Management/Court/Selection Committees of the University as per the provisions made in the relevant University Act.
Indian Higher Education System - The Real Scenario

Despite being the third largest educational system of the world, Indian education system is gasping for breath needs an urgent cure. Though Indian students are serving the most reputed organizations and institutions abroad, Indian institutions can’t pat their back on the achievements of their students, as they are not able to achieve the same status at par with the best institutions all over the world.

The reasons for lagging behind are many and the solutions need to be taken out from them. Due to the long span of foreign rule the educational system is influenced by the feudal system, inadequate funding and excessive political interference. Only 10% students are able to get admission in institutes of higher education due to the social, political, economic and other reasons. The percentage of students going for higher education in major industrialized countries is approximately 50%.

The 21st century has brought new challenges and opportunities for higher education. In the wake of the transition from elitist to mass education, universities worldwide are under pressure to enhance access and equity, on the one hand, and to maintain high standards of quality and excellence, on the other. Governments are determined to ensure equity of opportunities for higher education for all round progress of the society at large. The latest controversies over fee cuts and reservation of seats for backward classes in prestigious business schools as well as other private higher education institutions are some examples of these efforts.

The government is bent on extending access to higher education and technical skills to SCs, STs and Other Backward Classes to the extent of 49.5% in all central universities, prestigious professional schools, and elite colleges, such as the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), and National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT). This step has been opposed by the general people as it will adversely affect the quality and merit.
The Privatization of Higher Education

The privatization of higher education did not bring better changes. Though with the new theme of Self Financed or Self Supported courses, some government colleges and institutions have been able to provide proper infrastructure and lab facilities to its students, the private colleges and institutions are running on minimum infrastructure and facilities despite high fee structure.

The idea of privatization of education has been approved by all governments regardless of the fact that which political party is running the government. The privatization brought many sweeping changes in higher and professional education. Thousands of private colleges and institutes cropped up all over the countries offering IT courses in late nineties but disappeared in less than a decade leaving thousands of faculty members and students in lurch. The same situation is being witnessed in the field of Biotechnology, Bioinformatics, Biomedical and other emerging areas. These private institutions are not properly questioned by any concerned authority or govt. agency about the quality of teachers, teacher-student ratio, floor area ratio, class rooms, laboratories, libraries etc.

The plight of 150 private universities of Chhatisgarh in 2003 is evidence of the carelessness and negligence of the concerned authorities. The scam got exposed by a public interest litigation and then the courts ordered the state government to de-recognise and close most of these universities or merge them with the recognized ones. Again a whole generation of students and teachers suffered from irreparable damage to their career due to these wrong trends and irregularities.

There are some well established universities and colleges who are doing better and trying to do better also but they are suffering from governmental neglect, poor funding, frequent ban on faculty recruitment and promotions, reduction in library budgets, lack of investment in modernization, obsolescence of equipment and infrastructure and on the top of it the political pressures and interference for wrong selections and admissions. Even political favours are gained to open new colleges and institutions.
There is another aspect of this picture also. An educational institution recognized in a particular state need not limit its operations to that state. This means that universities approved by the governments of Chattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh etc. can set up campuses anywhere in India, where they are more likely to get students from well off families who can afford their astronomical fees. What is more, they are not even accountable to the local governments, since their recognition comes from a far away state. In this way a new culture of well-branded private educational institutions is breeding which allows franchisees at far away locations to run their courses, without being responsible to the students or teachers in any other way. Similar trend is also being followed by foreign universities, who do not want to set up their own shop here, but would like to benefit from the degree-purchasing power of the growing upwardly mobile economic class of India. What we are witnessing in this information age of twenty first century is a huge number of private educational institutions getting themselves listed in the stock market and soliciting investments in the education business with the slogan that its demand will never see the sunset.

The economics of higher education has taken a new shape now. Barring a few courses in arts and humanities, imparting quality education in science, technology, engineering, medicine etc. requires huge investments in infrastructure, all of which cannot be recovered through student fees, without making higher education inaccessible to a large section of students. Unlike many better-known private educational institutions in Western countries that operate in the charity mode with tuition waivers and fellowships (which is one reason why our students go there), most private colleges and universities in India are pursuing a profit motive. This is the basic reason for charging huge tuition fees, apart from forced donations, capitation fees and other charges. Despite huge public discontent, media interventions and many court cases, the governments have not been able to regulate the fee structure and donations in these institutions. Even the courts have only played with the terms such as payment seats, management quotas etc., without addressing the basic issue of fee structure.
It is not only students but also teachers who are at the receiving end of the ongoing malpractices in higher education. India is witnessing the declining popularity of teaching as a profession, not only among the students that we produce, but also among parents, scientists, society and the government. The teaching profession today attracts only those who have missed all other "better" opportunities in life, and is increasingly mired in bureaucratic controls and anti-education concepts such as "hours" of teaching "load", "paid-by-the-hour", "contractual" teachers etc. The privatization has reduced the education to a commodity, teachers are reduced to tutors and teaching is reduced to coaching. The consumerist boom and the growing salary differentials between teachers and other professionals and the value systems of the emerging free market economy have made teaching one of the least attractive professions that demands more work for less pay. In this scenario how the society can expect the teachers to inspire the students.

Another area of concern is the emerging government policy of according deemed university status to national labs and research institutes, so that these institutes can award their own Ph.D. degrees, without any affiliation to a university or fulfilling any other role of being a university. These are Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Department of Space (DOS) etc. under the purview of Union government.

These national laboratories were specifically established with the aim of meeting the technological needs of the country in the areas of medicine, agriculture, petroleum, metallurgy, energy, defence, space etc. It was envisaged that these laboratories would employ selected scientific manpower selected from the colleges/universities and nurture them for achieving specific applied goals. But this aim was sidelined and these national labs became more sophisticated versions of university departments drawing better monetary and infrastructural support and publishing research papers. For this they appoint research students with the condition that they will pursue their research degree from the labs if they want to be retained for long. Such tendency can have major implications on higher
education and research in science and technology as the national labs do not provide enough opportunity to young researchers to relate their research to broader social and national values. The more open intellectual environment of universities, which include natural and social sciences, is essential for interdisciplinary learning, personality development, national values and better citizenship.

With emergence of reservations for various backward castes and tribes in the name of equity and access to higher education the quality and performance of higher education and research is suffering. The country is not able to generate knowledge creators or knowledge workers of high quality to keep pace with the needs of the emerging knowledge economy.

Earlier the country was suffering from external brain drain of students going abroad never to return, and now this is another internal brain drain of students taking up careers in areas quite different from their academic backgrounds which is a total wastage of national resources.

In this era of liberalization and globalizations when India needs quality education and knowledge to compete with the rapid advancements in science and technology, research and development, commerce and industry, Indians are grappling with selfish motives and narrow thinking of the policy makers at every level in every area. The situation of unemployment and underemployment is worsening day by day.

The reforms implemented by the Government and concerned agencies are limited to withdrawal of government funding, suspending or terminating the culprits which hardly solves the problem. The real sufferers, the students and teachers affected by the closing down of fake universities or institutions do not get any relief or compensation.