CHAPTER - II

INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM - A PERSPECTIVE

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2.1 INTRODUCTION

Education in India is provided by the public sector as well as the private sector, with control and funding coming from three levels: central, state, and local.\(^1\) The Nalanda University was the oldest university-system of education in the world.\(^2\) Western education became ingrained into Indian society with the establishment of the British rule. Education in India falls under the control of both the Union Government and the States, with some responsibilities lying with the Union and the States having autonomy for others. The various articles of the Indian Constitution provide for education as a fundamental right.

India has made progress in terms of increasing primary education attendance rate and expanding literacy to approximately two thirds of the population.\(^3\) India's improved education system is often cited as one of the main contributors to the economic rise of India.\(^4\) Much of the progress, especially in higher education and scientific research, has been credited to various public institutions. The private education market in India is merely 5 per cent although in terms of value is estimated to be worth $40 billion in 2008 and will increase to $68–70 billion by 2012.\(^5\)

However, India continues to face stern challenges. Despite growing investment in education, 25 per cent of its population is still illiterate; only 15 per cent of Indian students reach high school, and just 7 per cent graduate.\(^6\) The quality of education in India whether at primary or higher
education is significantly poor as compared to major developing nations of the world. As of 2008, India's post-secondary institutions offer only enough seats for 7 per cent of India's college-age population, 25 per cent of teaching positions nationwide are vacant, and 57 per cent of college professors lack either a master's or PhD degree. As of 2011, there are 1522 degree-granting engineering colleges in India with an annual student intake of 582,000, plus 1,244 polytechnics with an annual intake of 265,000. However, these institutions face shortage of faculty and concerns have been raised over the quality of education.

2.2 HISTORY

Monastic orders of education under the supervision of a Guru were a favored form of education for the nobility in ancient India. The knowledge in these orders was often related to the tasks of a section of the society had to perform. The priest class, the Brahmins, was imparted knowledge of religion, philosophy, and other ancillary branches while the warrior class, the Kshatriya, was trained in the various aspects of warfare. The business class, the Vaishya, was taught of their trade and the working class, the Shudras, was generally deprived of educational advantages. Secular Buddhist institutions cropped up along with monasteries. These institutions imparted practical education, e.g. medicine. A number of urban learning centers became increasingly visible from the period between 200 BC to 400 AD. The important urban centers of learning were Taxila (in modern day
Pakistan) and Nalanda, among others. These institutions systematically imparted knowledge and attracted a number of foreign students to study topics such as Buddhist literature, logic, grammar and the like. By the time of the visit of the Islamic scholar Alberuni (973–1048 AD), India already had a sophisticated system of mathematics.\(^{10}\)

With the arrival of the British, the modern European education came to India. This dramatically changed the whole educational system. Educated people failed to get jobs because the language in which they received their education had become redundant. At present, Indian education system is divided into different into pre primary level, primary level, elementary education, secondary education, under graduate level and post graduate level.\(^{11}\) Between 1867 and 1941 the British increased the percentage of the population in primary and secondary education from around 0.6 per cent of the population in 1867 to over 3.5 per cent of the population in 1941. However, this was much lower than the equivalent figures for Europe, where in 1911 between 8 and 18 per cent of the population was in primary and secondary education.\(^{12}\) In 1901, the literacy rate in India was about 5 per cent; by India's independence it was nearly 20 per cent.\(^{13}\)

The credit for fostering education to the masses following independence in 1947 chiefly goes to the first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. India's first education Minister Maulana Azad envisaged strong central government control over education throughout the country, with a
uniform educational system.\textsuperscript{14} However, given the cultural and linguistic diversity of India, only higher education, which dealt with science and technology, came under the jurisdiction of the central government. The government also held powers to make national policies for educational development and could regulate selected aspects of education throughout India.\textsuperscript{15}

Following independence, India viewed education as an effective tool for bringing social change through community development. The administrative control was effectively initiated in the 1950s, when, in 1952, the government grouped villages under a Community Development Block—an authority under national programme which could control education in up to 100 villages. A Block Development Officer oversaw a geographical area of 150 square miles (390 km\textsuperscript{2}) which could contain a population of as many as 70000 people.\textsuperscript{16} The community development programmes comprise agriculture, animal husbandry, cooperation, rural industries, rural engineering (consisting of minor irrigation, roads, buildings), health and sanitation including family welfare, family planning, women welfare, child care and nutrition, education including adult education, social education and literacy, youth welfare and community organization. In each of these areas of development there are several programmes, schemes and activities which are additive, expanding and tapering off covering the total community, some
segments, or specific target populations such as small and marginal farmers, artisans, women and in general people below the poverty line.

Despite some setbacks the rural education programmes continued throughout the 1950s, with support from private institutions. A sizable network of rural education had been established by the time the Gandhigram Rural Institute was established and 5, 200 Community Development Blocks were established in India. Nursery schools, elementary schools, secondary school, and schools for adult education for women were set up.\(^{17}\)

The Government of India formulated the National Policy on Education (NPE) in 1968 and in 1986 and also reinforced the Programme of Action (POA) in 1992. The government initiated several measures like launching of DPEP (District Primary Education Programme) and SSA (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, India's initiative for Education for All) and setting up of Navodaya Vidyalaya and other selective schools in every district, advances in female education, inter-disciplinary research and establishment of open universities. India's NPE also contains the National System of Education, which ensures some uniformity while taking into account regional educational needs. The NPE also stresses on higher spending on education, envisaging a budget of more than 6 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product.\(^{18}\) While the need for wider reform in the primary and secondary sectors is recognized as an issue, the emphasis is also on the development of science and technology education infrastructure.
The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) is the apex body for curriculum related matters for school education in India. The NCERT provides support and technical assistance to a number of schools in India and oversees many aspects of enforcement of education policies. In India, the various curriculum bodies governing school education system are:

- The state government boards, in which the majority of Indian children are enrolled.
- The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). CBSE conducts two examinations, namely, the All India Secondary School Examination, AISSE (Class/Grade 10) and the All India Senior School Certificate Examination, AISSCE (Class/Grade 12).
- The Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE). CISCE conducts three examinations, namely, the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE - Class/ Grade 10); The Indian School Certificate (ISC - Class/ Grade 12) and the Certificate in Vocational Education (CVE - Class/Grade 12).
- The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS).
- International schools affiliated to the International Baccalaureate Programme and/or the Cambridge International Examinations. Islamic Madrasah schools, whose boards are controlled by local State
Governments, or autonomous, or affiliated with Darul Uloom Deoband.

Autonomous schools like Woodstock School, Auroville, Patha Bhavan and Ananda Marga Gurukula.

In addition, NUEPA (National University of Educational Planning and Administration) and NCTE (National Council for Teacher Education) are responsible for the management of the education system and teacher education respectively.\(^\text{20}\)

The Central and most State Boards uniformly follows the "10+2+3" pattern of education. In this pattern, 10 years of primary and secondary education is followed by 2 years of higher secondary (usually in schools having the higher secondary facility, or in colleges) and then ‘3 years’ of college education for bachelor degree.\(^\text{21}\) The ‘10 years’ is further divided into ‘5 years’ of primary education and ‘3 years’ of upper primary, followed by ‘2 years’ of high school. This pattern is originated from the recommendation the Education Commission of 1964–66.\(^\text{22}\)

2.3 PRIMARY EDUCATION

The Indian government lays emphasis to primary education up to the age of fourteen years (referred to as Elementary Education). The Indian government has also banned child labour in order to ensure that the children do not enter unsafe working conditions. However, both free education and the ban on child labour are difficult to enforce due to economic disparity and
social conditions. Eighty per cent of all recognized schools at the Elementary Stage are government run or supported, making it the largest provider of education in the Country.

During 2011, there were 58,16,673 elementary school teachers in India. As of March 2012 there were 2,127,000 secondary school teachers in India. Education has also been made free for children for 6 to 14 years of age or up to class VIII under the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009.

The primary education scheme has shown a high Gross Enrollment Ratio of 93–95 per cent for the last three years in some States. Significant improvement in staffing and enrollment of girls has also been made as a part of this scheme. The current scheme for universalization of Education for All is the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan which is one of the largest education initiatives in the world. Enrollment has been enhanced, but the levels of quality remain low.

In India, nearly 80 per cent of schools are government schools making the government the major provider of education. However, because of poor quality of public education, 27 per cent of Indian children are privately educated. With more than 50 per cent children enrolling in private schools in urban areas, the balance has already tilted towards private schooling in cities; even in rural areas, nearly 20 per cent of the children in 2004-05 were enrolled in private schools. Private schools often provide
superior results at a multiple of the unit cost of government schools. In their favour, it has been pointed out that private schools cover the entire curriculum and offer extra-curricular activities such as science fairs, general knowledge, sports, music and drama. The pupil teacher ratios are much better in private schools (1:31 to 1:37) for government schools and more teachers in private schools are female.\textsuperscript{31}

According to the latest DISE survey, the percentage of untrained teachers (para techers) is 54.91 per cent in private, compared to 44.88 per cent in government schools and only 2.32 per cent teachers in unaided schools receive in service training compared to 43.44 per cent for government schools. The competition in the school market is intense, yet most schools make profit. However, the number of private schools in India is still low - the share of private institutions is 7 per cent with upper primary being 21 per cent and secondary 32 per cent.

\textbf{2.4 SECONDARY EDUCATION}

The National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986, has provided for environment awareness, science and technology education, and introduction of traditional elements such as Yoga into the Indian secondary school system.\textsuperscript{32} Secondary education covers children of 14–18 years which covers 88.5 million children according to the Census, 2001. However, enrolment figures show that only 31 million of these children were attending schools in 2001–02, which means that two-third of the population remained out of
school. A significant feature of India's secondary school system is the emphasis on inclusion of the disadvantaged sections of the society. Professionals from established institutes are often called to support in vocational training. Another feature of India's secondary school system is its emphasis on profession based vocational training to help students attain skills for finding a vocation of his/her choice.

World Bank statistics found that fewer than 40 per cent of adolescents in India attend secondary schools. The Economist reports that half of 10-year-old rural children could not read at a basic level, over 60 per cent were unable to do division, and half dropped out by the age 14.

2.5 HIGHER EDUCATION

India's higher education system is the third largest in the world, after China and the United States. The main governing body at the tertiary level is the University Grants Commission (India), which enforces its standards, advises the government, and helps to coordinate between the Centre and the State. Accreditation for higher learning is overseen by 12 autonomous institutions established by the University Grants Commission. In India, education system is reformed.

Indian higher education system has expanded at a fast pace by adding nearly 20,000 colleges and more than 8 million students in a decade from 2000-01 to 2010-11. As of 2011, India has 42 Central Universities, 275 State Universities, 130 Deemed Universities, 90 Private Universities,
five Institutions established and functioning under the State Act, and 33 Institutes of National Importance.\textsuperscript{39} Other institutions include 33,000 colleges as Government Degree Colleges and Private Degree Colleges, including 1800 exclusive women's colleges, functioning under these universities and institutions as reported by the UGC in 2012. The emphasis in the tertiary level of education lies on science and technology. Indian educational institutions by 2004 consisted of a large number of technology institutes. Distance learning and open education is also a feature of the Indian higher education system, and is looked after by the Distance Education Council.\textsuperscript{40} Indira Gandhi National Open University is the largest university in the world by number of students, having approximately 3.5 million students across the globe.\textsuperscript{41}

Some institutions of India, such as the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), Indian Institute of Management (IIMS), National Institute of Technology (NITS) and Jawaharlal Nehru University have been globally acclaimed for their standard of undergraduate education. The IITs enroll about 10,000 students annually and the alumni have contributed for the growth of the private sector and the public sector Industries. However the IIT's have not had significant impact on fundamental scientific research and innovation. Several other institutes of fundamental research such as the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science (IACS), Indian Institute of Science (IISC), Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR),
Harishchandra Research Institute (HRI), are acclaimed for their standard of research in basic Sciences and Mathematics.\(^{42}\)

Besides top rated universities which provide highly competitive world class education to their pupils, India is also home to many universities which have been founded with the sole objective of making easy money. Regulatory authorities like UGC and AICTE have been trying very hard to extirpate the menace of private universities which are running courses without any affiliation or recognition. Many private colleges and universities do not fulfill the required criterion by the Government and central bodies (UGC, AICTE, MCI, BCI) and take students for a ride. For example, many institutions in India continue to run unaccredited courses as there is no legislation strong enough to ensure legal action against them. Quality assurance mechanism has failed to stop misrepresentations and malpractices in higher education. At the same time, regulatory bodies have been accused of corruption, specifically in the case of deemed-universities.\(^{43}\) In this context of lack of solid quality assurance mechanism, institutions need to step-up and set higher standards of self-regulation.\(^{44}\)

Government of India is aware of the plight of higher education sector and has been trying to bring reforms, however, 15 bills are still awaiting discussion and approval in the Parliament.\(^{45}\) One of the most important bill at present is Foreign Universities Bill, which is supposed to facilitate entry of foreign universities to establish campuses in India. The bill is still under
discussion and even if it gets passed, its feasibility and effectiveness is questionable as it misses the context, diversity and segment of international foreign institutions interested in India.\textsuperscript{46} One of the approaches to make internationalization of Indian higher education effective is to develop a coherent and comprehensive policy which aims at infusing excellence, bringing institutional diversity and aids in capacity building.\textsuperscript{47}

Three Indian universities were listed in the Times Higher Education list of the world’s top 200 universities - Indian Institutes of Technology, Indian Institutes of Management, and Jawaharlal Nehru University in 2005 and 2006.\textsuperscript{48} Six Indian Institutes of Technology and the Birla Institute of Technology and Science - Pilani were listed among the top 20 science and technology schools in Asia by Asiaweek.\textsuperscript{49} The Indian School of Business situated in Hyderabad was ranked number 12 in global MBA rankings by the Financial Times of London in 2010\textsuperscript{50} while the All India Institute of Medical Sciences has been recognized as a global leader in medical research and treatment.\textsuperscript{51}

2.6 TECHNICAL EDUCATION

The number of graduates coming out of technical colleges increased to over 700,000 in 2011 from 550,000 in 2010.\textsuperscript{52} However, 75 per cent of technical graduates and more than 85 per cent of general graduates are unemployable by India’s high-growth global industries, including information technology.\textsuperscript{53} From the first Five Year Plan onwards, India's
emphasis was to develop a pool of scientifically inclined manpower.\textsuperscript{54} India's National Policy on Education (NPE) provisioned for an apex body for regulation and development of higher technical education, which came into being as the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) in 1987 through an act of the Indian parliament. At the Central (federal) level, the Indian Institutes of Technology, the Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology, the National Institutes of Technology and the Indian Institutes of Information Technology, Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology are deemed of national importance. The Indian Institutes of Technology are among the nation's premier education facilities. Since 2002, Several Regional Engineering Colleges (RECs) have been converted into National Institutes of Technology giving them Institutes of National Importance status.

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MOP&NG), Government of India set up The Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology at Jais, Rae Bareli district, Uttar Pradesh through an Act of Parliament. RGIPT has been accorded "Institute of National Importance" along the lines of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) and Indian Institute of Management (IIM). With the status of a Deemed University, the institute awards degrees in its own right.\textsuperscript{55}

The UGC has inter-university centres at a number of locations throughout India to promote common research, e.g. the Nuclear Science
Centre at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Besides there are some British established colleges such as Harcourt Butler Technological Institute situated in Kanpur and King George Medical University situated in Lucknow which are important center of higher education.

Central Universities such as Banaras Hindu University, Jamia Millia Islamia University, Delhi University, Mumbai University, University of Calcutta, and the like are also pioneers of technical education in the country. In addition to above institutes, efforts towards the enhancement of technical education are supplemented by a number of recognized Professional Engineering Societies such as Institution of Mechanical Engineers (India), Institution of Engineers (India), Institution of Chemical Engineering (India), Institution of Electronics and Tele-Communication Engineers (India), Indian Institute of Metals, Institution of Industrial Engineers (India), Institute of Town Planners (India) and Indian Institute of Architects that conduct Engineering/Technical Examinations at different levels (Degree and diploma) for working professionals desirous of improving their technical qualifications.

2.7 OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING

At school level, National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) provides opportunities for continuing education to those who missed completing school education. Fourteen lakh students are enrolled at the secondary and higher secondary level through open and distance learning.
At higher education level, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) co-ordinates distance learning. It has a cumulative enrolment of about 15 lakhs, serviced through 53 regional centres and 1,400 study centres with 25,000 counsellors. The Distance Education Council (DEC), an authority of IGNOU is co-coordinating 13 State Open Universities and 119 institutions of correspondence courses in conventional universities. While distance education institutions have expanded at a very rapid rate, but most of these institutions need an up gradation in their standards and performance. The Open Learning System allows a learner to determine his pace of learning and provides education at the doorstep of the learner. The mode of transaction is through self-learning print material, supplemented by audio and video programmes. It has further scope of students accessing material through internet and various other media.

According to the Census of 2011, "every person above the age of 7 years who can read and write in any language is said to be literate". According to this criterion, the 2011 survey holds the National Literacy Rate to be around 74.07 per cent. Government statistics of 2001 also hold that the rate of increase in literacy is more in rural areas than in urban areas. Female literacy was at a national average of 65 per cent whereas the male literacy was 82 per cent. Within the Indian States, Kerala has shown the highest literacy rates of 93 per cent whereas Bihar averaged 63.8 per cent.
literacy. The 2001 statistics also indicated that the total number of 'absolute non-literates' in the country was about 304 million.  

2.8 WOMEN'S EDUCATION

Women have a much lower literacy rate than men. Far fewer girls are enrolled in the schools, and many of them drop out. Conservative cultural attitudes prevent some girls from attending school. The number of literate women among the female population of India was between 2–6 per cent from the British period onwards to the formation of the Republic of India in 1947. Concerted efforts led to improvement from 15.3 per cent in 1961 to 28.5 per cent in 1981. By 2001, literacy for women had exceeded 50 per cent of the overall female population, though these statistics were still very low compared to world standards and even male literacy within India. Recently the Indian government has launched Saakshar Bharat Mission for Female Literacy. This mission aims to bring down female illiteracy by half of its present level.

Since 1947, the Indian government has tried to provide incentives for girls’ school attendance through programs for midday meals, free books, and uniforms. This welfare thrust raised primary enrollment between 1951 and 1981. In 1986 the National Policy on Education decided to restructure education in tune with the social framework of each state, and with larger national goals. It emphasized that education was necessary for democracy, and central to the improvement of women’s condition. The new policy
aimed at social change through revised texts, curricula, increased funding for schools, expansion in the numbers of schools, and policy improvements. Emphasis was placed on expanding girls’ occupational centers and primary education; secondary and higher education; and rural and urban institutions. The report tried to connect problems like low school attendance with poverty, and the dependence on girls for housework and sibling day care. The National Literacy Mission also worked through female tutors in villages. Although the minimum marriage age is now eighteen for girls, many continue to be married much earlier. Therefore, at the secondary level, female dropout rates are high.61

The education of women in India plays a significant role in improving livings standards in the country. A higher women literacy rate improves the quality of life both at home and outside of home, by encouraging and promoting education of children, especially female children, and in reducing the infant mortality rate. Several studies have shown that a lower level of women literacy rates results in higher levels of fertility and infant mortality, poorer nutrition, lower earning potential and the lack of an ability to make decisions within a household.62 Women’s lower educational levels is also shown to adversely affect the health and living conditions of children. Infant mortality rate was inversely related to female literacy rate and educational level. It shows a correlation between education and economic growth.
In India, it was found that there is a large disparity between female literacy rates in different states. For example, while Kerala actually has a female literacy rate of about 86 per cent, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh have female literacy rates of around 55-60 per cent. These values are further correlated with health levels of the Indians, where it is found that Kerala is the State with the lowest infant mortality rate, while Bihar and Uttar Pradesh are the States with the lowest life expectancies in India. Furthermore, the disparity of female literacy rates across rural and urban areas is also significant in India. Out of the 24 States in India, 6 of them have female literacy rates of below 60 per cent. The rural State Rajasthan has a female literacy rate of less than 12 per cent.63

2.9 PROBLEMS IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

“Our university system is, in many parts, in a state of disrepair... In almost half the districts in the country, higher education enrollments are abysmally low, almost two-third of our universities and 90 per cent of our colleges are rated as below average on quality parameters... I am concerned that in many states university appointments, including that of vice-chancellors, have been politicized and have become subject to caste and communal considerations, there are complaints of favouritism and corruption” said the Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in 2007.64

Students from rural and semi urban background often fall prey to these institutes and colleges. One the fundamental weaknesses of the system
is lack of transparency and recommendations have been made to mandate high standards of data disclosures by institutions on performance. Modern education in India is often criticized for being based on rote learning rather than problem solving.

2.10 HIGHER EDUCATION IN TAMIL NADU

Tamil Nadu enjoys the privilege of being one of the most developed states in the Country in the field of Higher Education. Tamil Nadu has 37 Universities, 455 Engineering Colleges, 449 Polytechnic Colleges and 566 Arts and Science Colleges.

Tamil Nadu is the eleventh largest state in India by area and the seventh most popular state. It is the second largest state economy in India as of 2012. The state ranked 6th among states in India according to the Human Development Index as of 2011. Tamil Nadu is also the most urbanised state in India. The state has the highest number (10.56 %) of business enterprises and stands second in total employment (9.97 %) in India, compared to the population share of about 6 per cent.

Tamil Nadu is the home of the Tamil people. Its official language Tamil has been in use in inscriptions and literature for over 3800 years. Tamil Nadu is home to many natural resources, Hindu temples of Dravidian architecture, Hill stations, beach resorts, multi-religious pilgrimage sites and eight UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Tamil Nadu is having 32 district. It was established as Madras State in 1950 and renamed as Tamil Nadu on
14th Jan. 1969. At present Chennai is the capital city of Tamil Nadu. The population of Tamil Nadu state was 7th rank in India as per 2011 census report and the literacy rate was 80.33 per cent.

2.10 SUMMARY

This chapter brings into light the Educational setup of Higher education in India and Tamil Nadu. It deals with the primary Education, Secondary Education and Higher Education. The National Council of Education Research and Training (NCERT) is the apex body for curriculum related matters for school education in India. National University of Educational Planning and administration (NUPEA) and National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) are responsible for the management of the education system and teacher Education.

Higher Education includes Technical Education, Professional Education, Arts and Science Colleges, Open and Distance Learning, Teacher Education Colleges. The main governing body at the higher education level is UGC. Higher Education is growing fast quantitatively but not developed qualitatively. It is because of weakness of system and lack of transparency. The problems of Higher Education is the problems of resources involved in Higher Education i.e. both teachers and students. It may be due to the lack of facilities in colleges.
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