CHAPTER 2

HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

“Education is more than just reading the sciences and reading biotechnology or specializing in particular sphere. I think, the primary goal of our education has to be the development of the human being to be a better human being. All our aims, whether they are technological or scientific, must be towards the same end. When we are able to achieve and move towards this target we shall really see a betterment coming about in India…”

Rajiv Gandhi

Indian tradition is steeped in the highest philosophical foundation laid by her ancient sages and seers in the course of their pursuit of the highest knowledge and excellence. Ancient records of this good Indian tradition testify that India had a highly developed system of higher education at par with the modern university system. Historically the earliest university in India dates back to 6th century BC and was set up in Takshashila, now in Pakistan. Later in fourth and fifth century AD the highly acclaimed universities of Nalanda and Vikramasila came in to existence. The modern higher education system is 150 years old with the first three universities being set up in Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras in 1857 under the British rule.

The ‘Sutra Literature’ mentions the greatness of a teacher. A unique feature of Indian tradition is the unstained and undiluted respect and devotion towards the Teacher or ‘Guru’. Guru, literally means “one who deserves and commands ‘Gaurava’ or ‘Honour.’ Gu means darkness and Ru means removal and hence Guru is the one who removes darkness. Guru leads one from darkness unto light”.¹
Adi Sankara observes in ‘Vivek Chudamani’: “It is by the blessing of the Almighty that we have three great opportunities-

- To be born as a Human
- To seek Satya Tatwa, and
- To have an Ideal Guru”.

The most outstanding quality of the ancient Indian educational system is its ‘values’. The whole world knows the Indian origin of the very fundamentals of modern sciences. The Arabic numerals are called Hidsa, in Arabic means ‘from India (from Hindustan)’. The concept of zero and the decimal systems are traced to the Indian thought. Ancient India produced most valuable treatises on astronomy, mathematics, cosmology, geography, physiology, medicine, logic and philosophy, sculpture and architecture, music and dance, grammar, linguistics as well as science of war including ‘training of elephants and horses’. ‘Total Quality’ was the hallmark in all these spheres and the theme of “Total Quality Management (TQM)” had been seemed to be exercised throughout in the ancient Indian educational system.

Another outstanding feature of the ancient Indian educational system is Adhyaatma Vichara. Whatever be the walk of life or the field of specialization, be it the science or medicine, or the maxims of war or the art of music or dance, the performer and the performance are always dedicated to the divine. Daivarpana Mastu is the attitude of every author, scientist, teacher or the taught.

The humility and faith are other distinct features of ancient Indian educational system. The Vedic maxim reads: Aano Bhadraha Kratavo Yantu Vishwatatha, means “let noble thoughts come from all sides”. We should, freely and frankly, accept the ideas and thoughts of all centuries and of all languages. The Indian system of education teaches ‘the student not to be
unlimited in his wants but to be limitless only in thirst for knowledge’. Such a system is based on an innate discipline which comes by cultivation of mind, not by an external imposition. The student is taught to be simple in his habits of food, life-style, and living. One’s contribution to this world should be more than proportionate to one’s own receipts there from. The resources of the earth have to be preserved for posterity. A very vast depletion of this resources leads to environmental pollution and ecological imbalance. The humble and the faithful ancient educational system teaches us to use up as little possible of Chaya-Thoyam-Asanam-Vasanam ie; of natural resources of roofing, water, food and clothing. We can use up these resources for meeting our needs, not greeds.

The Guru-Sishya Parambara of the ancient system reveals the intense individual involvement and commitment between the teacher and the taught. This ardent relationship between the Guru and Sishya is the greatest contribution of India to the humanity.

Ancient Indian tradition believes that the teacher could change even the destiny of the student. Until a few centuries ago, the entire system of Indian education was based on the 14 works of Pramana. They comprise of the Four Vedas Six Vedantas the Meemamsa, the Puranas, the Nyaya Sastras, and Dharma Sastras. In addition to these fourteen, four more worldly vidyas viz; Aurveda, Artha Sastra, Dhanur Veda, and Gandharva Veda were also considered as Vidya Sthanas. These Ashtadasa Vidyas, i.e.; these 18 systems, where considered to be very important for any man to be considered educated in those days.

The Guru-Sishya Parambara

The ancient relationship between the Guru and Sishya was the strong bed-rock for the quality education in ancient India. The intense individual involvement and commitment between the teacher and the taught is so much missing today. In ancient India, an eminent educator had always been known
as the Acharya. The word Chara means ‘to move’ or ‘to march’. The march of times, the procession of events and the movement of men and matters is called Charitha or Charitra. An Acharya is ‘one who practices what he preaches’- one who makes people ‘move’ in the right direction. He is an example to be emulated both in precept and in practice, both in Aachaara and Aacharana. He is an ideal practitioner of Aachara-Anusthana as well as Shatriya-Sampradayas. An ancient Sanskrit proverb reads: Sishya-Paapam Gurum Vrajet, means ‘the master is responsible for the sins of the student’.

Traditionally a university had a special place in society, commanding respect, and enjoying a measure of freedom. The faith of the student in the teacher is as affectionate and unshakeable as that of the child in the mother. The educational institutions, where the life and career of the student are shaped and molded, is called Alma Mater, in Latin; it means ‘Nourishing Mother’. Alma means “Nourishing”, and Mater means “Mother”. There is no country where the loving of learning had such an early origin or has exercised such a lasting influence as India. In ancient India education was free and accessible to all - except Shudras - who sought it. “Teachers were highly honored even by kings. The Gurus in ancient Nalanda used to travel on elephants back. Teachers were great learned Brahmins. The students used to stay with the Gurus, and for them the Guru was Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. The ultimate aim of education was ‘Perfect Knowledge’”.

The Gurukula system in ancient India expanded gradually to a community of scholars and parishads. Historians speculate these centers as the genesis of university education in India and find a striking resemblance to the much later European medieval universities. Nalanda in Bihar, Thakshasila in Ravalpindy, Vaisali in Bihar, and Midhila in Bihar-Nepal (Bihar-Nepal border) were the seats of higher education in very ancient times.
Higher Education under British Rule

The Charter Act of 1813 was the foundation stone of British education system in India. The aim of the British education in the beginning stage was well brought out by Lord Macaulay in his Minutes of Education in 1835. “We must, at present, do our best to form a class who may be the interpreter between us and the millions whom we govern”.5 This group had to be “Indian in blood and colour but British in taste, in opinions, and in morals and intelligent”6

The system of higher education built by the British was a response to the needs of an imperial administration, seeking on the overhand to supplant the indigenous set up and on the other hand to produce a manpower pool alienated from the local people and capable of performing territory functions of an align administration. The colonial higher education system was a device to build up a perfect exploitative machinery to deny the Indian an identity of his own. It was an instrument used by the British to create a socio-cultural base for recruitment and training. It enabled some to become aware of the nature of imperialism where as some converted themselves in to tools of westernisation. Yet another group was struck by the contradiction of that culture.

The impact of growth of higher education under British Rule was not uniform and even, throughout the country. The facilities for higher education was not in even supply and was concentrated in a few regions like port towns and business centers. This brought about the inter and intra-regional disparities in the development of higher education in India. The distortions and inequities embedded during the period have continued to persist. The system developed an anti-imperialist movement for national independence, and inspired the search for alternative models of education, symbolised by the intellectual contributions of a group of Indian leaders ranging from Raja Rammohan Roy, C.R.Das, Dadabai Naoroji, Aurobindo Ghosh and Syed Ahamed to Rabindranath Tagore, Jawaharlal Nehru, Abdul Kalam Azad, and
Zakir Huzzain. The following table shows the poor enrolment in higher education in British India.

**Table 2.1**

Enrolment in Higher Education in British India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Enrolment</th>
<th>Growth rate (per cent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>6738</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>9636</td>
<td>43.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>14268</td>
<td>48.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>18484</td>
<td>29.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>20440</td>
<td>10.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>25800</td>
<td>26.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>29465</td>
<td>14.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>50579</td>
<td>71.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>61013</td>
<td>20.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>66100</td>
<td>8.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>71100</td>
<td>7.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>74190</td>
<td>4.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>84060</td>
<td>13.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>99100</td>
<td>17.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947-48</td>
<td>106043</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Higher education in India: An Assessment by Moom Raza Y.P., Aggarwal and Mabud Hassan (An essay from higher education in

**Figure 2.1**

**Enrolment in Higher Education in British India**

Table 2.2

**Enrolment in Higher Education (Faculty-wise)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stream</th>
<th>1916-17</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Enrolment</th>
<th>1947-48</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Enrolment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>47394</td>
<td>88.23</td>
<td>60614</td>
<td>57.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>5426</td>
<td>9.25</td>
<td>7576</td>
<td>7.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>2481</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>8850</td>
<td>8.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>1139</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>6437</td>
<td>6.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>716</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>3087</td>
<td>2.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1916-17</td>
<td>1947-48</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>3759</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>809</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>14658</td>
<td>13.82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58639</td>
<td>106043</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excluding the enrolment in Intermediate class

Source: Ibid.

**Figure 2.2**

Enrolment in Higher Education (Faculty-wise)

The analysis of the above table reveals that about 2/3 of enrolment in 1947-48 and as much as 88 per cent in 1916-17 was concentrated in general education with a view to produce ‘graduate-office functionaries and
clerks’. In contrast, engineering and medicine accounted for only 1.94 per cent and 4.23 per cent of enrolment respectively in 1916-17. In fine, it was totally a non-productive and non-development oriented higher education.

The first engineering college in the country was started at Roorkee and it specialized in producing civil engineers. The first three Indian universities were established at three metropolitan port towns in 1895 - Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta. For more than half a century, no new universities were opened except that of Allahabad.

Women accounted for only 1.25 per cent of the total enrolment in the year 1916-17. In 1947-48 their percentage share in the total was less than 10 as is depicted in the table given below:

**Table 2.3**

**Women Enrolment Faculty-wise, in British India**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>1916-17</th>
<th>1947-48</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>12.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>____</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>18.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>____</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>6.48</td>
<td>28.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>____</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinary</td>
<td>____</td>
<td>____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>____</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry</td>
<td>____</td>
<td>____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>9.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Until 1947, opportunities for higher education in India were limited. There were only hundred thousand students in education enrolled in 500 colleges and in a few universities”. Modeled on the university of London, these universities began as affiliating universities with only a few colleges affiliated to them. The total intake was very negligible fraction of population of the eligible age group of that time. “The system of higher education prevailing in India at present is essentially an offshoot of the education policy of the British whose main concern was how to exploit India to the full without endangering its traditional modes of control and exploitation. The British colonialists found its efficient solution in the use of middlemen. education was looked upon as an effective instrument for all purposes”. 
Higher Education Since Independence

“India’s Independence brought a new hope, a new vision, and a new future for this sub-continent. It offered new opportunities and new challenges”. Freedom urged India to get more concerned with the question of a social re-engineering and the country got more concerned with the question of producing middle and higher level manpower in the shortest possible time to meet the demands of faster growth. It set new objectives and responsibilities before the people. The immediate task before the country was to seek re-establish identity and to explore every respect of life. “It is the man who is the cause and consequence of under-development and the subject and object to all development. Hence, it is the major responsibility of the university to develop human resource for orderly socio-economic growth”.

“Education is the most important single factor in achieving rapid economic development and technological progress and for creating a social order founded on the values of freedom, social justice and equal opportunities”. Such a precious service must be quality full and must be accessible for all without any discrimination. The enrollment in higher education has expanded considerably, since independence. The table given below elucidates the phenomenal growth.
### Table 2.4

#### Growth of University Enrolment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Enrolment (in 000’s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>294.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>481.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>952.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>1792.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>2363.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>2648.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>3404.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>4246.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>5315.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>6324.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>9396.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The percentage of literacy, keep higher education at bay, was only 14 when we became independent in 1947 about which our national leaders, particularly Mahatma Gandhi, were very much concerned and Gandhiji rightly condemned it as a ‘curse and a shame’ for the nation.\(^{12}\) This was, indeed, part of the legacy of the colonial rule which neglected long the basic problems of vast majority of the common people of the country and selectively catered to the needs of a small section of the
society true to the spirit of the notorious minutes of Thomas Babblington Macaulay.

**Structure of Higher Education In India**

In the Indian system, higher education includes the education imparted after the 10+2 stage. In simple parlance, it is degree education and post degree education which we conduct in our colleges and universities. The professional education like medicine, engineering and technology, law, management, and the like belong to the upper strata of higher education. However, for the present study, the researcher takes the under graduate and post graduate education in arts/ science/ commerce colleges only and the under graduate and post graduate courses run by the affiliating universities, wherever so required.

**Indian Universities**

At the time of Independence, there were only 25 universities in the country, most of them imparting arts and science education through affiliated colleges. In the last six decades, the number of institutions of higher education has grown enormously. “Today, there are 20 central universities, 215 state universities, 100 deemed universities, 10 open universities, 13 institutions of national importance, and more than 17,000 colleges, of which 1,798 are women’s colleges. Around 39 institutions provide education in agriculture (including forestry, dairy, fisheries, and veterinary science), 16 in health sciences, 38 in engineering and technology, four in information technology, one in journalism, and four in law”.

13
Table 2.5
University Institutions in India, 2005 & 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Central universities</th>
<th>State universities</th>
<th>Deemed universities</th>
<th>Open universities</th>
<th>Institutions of national importance</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>358</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Annual Reports, 2005 & 2006, MHRD, government of India.

Types of Universities

- The Indian universities are basically of three types- Unitary, Federal, and Affiliating

‘Unitary university’ is one where the entire teaching work is organized within the campus and the students reside in the hostels or within the prescribed geographical jurisdiction of the university has provision for both post graduate and under graduate programmes, and also has a strong emphasis on research. Aligarh Muslim university, Banaras Hindu university, Mysore university, and Jawaharlal Nehru university are Unitary universities.

‘Federal university’ is one where the teaching work is shared by the university with its constitutional colleges. Delhi university is the only example of a Federal university in India.

‘Affiliating university’ is one in which a number of colleges under its academic control (not administrative or financial control), distributed over a large area, the whole state, a region of the state or more than one state. Affiliating universities generally have a central campus which has departments or schools that impart postgraduate instructions and conduct
research. They also have a variable number of colleges affiliated to them and these may be distributed over a number of districts, in accordance with the jurisdiction of the university. The colleges mostly do under-graduate teaching though some of them also have postgraduate classes in selected subjects. Most Indian universities are of affiliating types with the larger ones like Calcutta, Mumbai, and Bangalore having more than 250 affiliated colleges.\textsuperscript{14}

In addition, there are two other types of university level institutions too - “Deemed – to-be universities (also referred to as deemed universities) and institutions of National Importance. The Deemed universities are the institutions that are conferred the status of a university by virtue of their long tradition of teaching, or specialization and excellence in a particular area of knowledge. The deemed-to-be university status is granted by the UGC with the approval of the Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resources Development Govt. of India.\textsuperscript{15}

The ‘Institutions of National Importance’ are established, or so designated, through Acts of Parliament. There are 13 such member institutions of AIU including the six ‘Indian Institutes of Technology’. As a special case, they are empowered to award their own degrees. This privilege is normally granted only to universities.\textsuperscript{16}

**Colleges**

There are three types of colleges in India. The same composition we see in Kerala also. They are:

- government colleges,
- privately-managed colleges (aided colleges), and
- university colleges.
The government colleges are a few in numbers, only about 15 to 20 per cent of the total. They are managed by the state government concerned, and the teachers therein enjoy the privileges of government servants. The great number of colleges, about 70 per cent to 80 per cent of the total, have been founded by Privately-managed Trusts or Societies. Their management is constituted according to the norms laid down by the statues of the university concerned. Their relationship with the university is defined by the university Acts and Statutes. ‘University colleges’, called Constituent Colleges, are those run and managed by the university itself. The coming table gives an account of higher education institutions (faculty-wise) in Kerala, barring universities.

Table 2.6

Faculty-wise Distribution of Colleges (2002-2003 to 2004-2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Arts, Science, and Commerce</td>
<td>8737</td>
<td>9993</td>
<td>11391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Engineering / Technology.</td>
<td>838</td>
<td>903</td>
<td>1033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Health Sciences: Pharmacy, Ayurveda, Unani, Homeopathic and Nursing</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>754</td>
<td>779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Management Institutions</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Teachers Training</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>854</td>
<td>915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11521</td>
<td>12907</td>
<td>14609</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During 2004-2005, there were 14609 colleges of the AIU member universities and total enrolment of students was 9463821 including 2258653 women students.\(^{17}\)

**Distance Education**

Correspondence education was started in Indian universities in 1962. In 1982 the first Open University was established at Hyderabad in A.P. and in 1985 the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) was established in Delhi. Other open universities have since been set up in the state of Rajasthan, Maharastra, Bihar, Gujarath, UP, MP, Karnattaka , and W. Bengal. Now there are 10 Open universities. Distance educational institutes for the benefit of part-time or working students exist in 104 universities including the 10 Open universities.\(^{18}\)

**Quality Assurance in Higher Education**

The post-independence period of India has been an era of educational expansion (resulting in 311 universities, 15343 colleges, 4.6 lakh teachers and 92 lakh students). Indian higher education, today, is one of the largest educational systems in the world.\(^{19}\) The higher education system in India is passing through a flux but is not in a crisis. It is exposed to internationalisation and globalisation. It is more of a public good and has to be integrated with national development. However, higher education would be of no use if the requisite standards of quality were not maintained. Quality has been described as a ‘degree of excellence and superiority in kind’. Depending up on the view point of the stake-holders in higher education, quality is viewed (Green and Harvey, 1993):
in terms of highest standard

in terms of consistency

as fitness for purpose

as value of money

Quality assurance means the development of mechanism and procedures that are designed and used to maintain and enhance institutional effectiveness (Green and Harvey, 1993). For effective quality assurance in higher education, the following aspects need to be monitored and assessed:

- Infrastructural development,
- Curriculum design, human resources and research development
- Teaching and learning methodology,
- Evaluation and monitoring,
- Linkages with community,
- Internationalization of higher education.

Training for teachers in higher education

It is a common opinion that only primary and secondary school teachers require formal professional qualification while teachers engaged in higher education are hardly indeed of any such qualification. This view is held by all throughout the world. There are hardly any pre-service courses for teachers at tertiary level and when ever they exist, they are available for teaching assistants who are ready in higher education system. However, in-service training has been recognized as a significant step in the professional development of teachers in higher education. Essentially this training includes short-term courses, orientation of teaching profession, development
or sharpening of institutional skills, class-room or institutional management, subject up-gradation and up-dating.

“In the U.K. 3 days to 2 week courses pertaining to teaching and examination techniques are organized. In Sweden and Germany, new teachers work more or less as apprentices under the experienced teachers besides participating in pedagogical courses. In the U.S.A., the introductory training is such that participants are encouraged for mutual interaction among themselves. It seems that all over the world, the need for in-service training of teachers is strongly felt by the educational planners and therefore, various models practiced in different countries are being refined further”.

It has been felt very seriously now-a-days in India, about the quality control of higher education to improve the teaching standards. James report (1972)\textsuperscript{22}, Mayer Report (1973-75)\textsuperscript{23}, National Commission on Teachers\textsuperscript{(NCT)}– 1983-85 and National Policy on Education (1986)\textsuperscript{25} observed that there is no training and orientation for teachers in Higher Education. They had emphasised that highest importance should be given to the programmes of qualitative improvement in the in-service education. World Education Commission (1977)\textsuperscript{26}, Pal Rajinder(1993)\textsuperscript{27}, Rao and Palsane(1994)\textsuperscript{28}, Gnanam(1997)\textsuperscript{29}, Dubhasi(1998)\textsuperscript{30}, Dutta(2000)\textsuperscript{31}, Pattania(2001)\textsuperscript{32}, Gauder(2002)\textsuperscript{33} while stressing the need for Orientation Programmes (OPs)/Refresher Courses (RCs) for teachers expressed that these programmes improve the knowledge with regard to student psychology, code of professional ethics and teaching skills. Certain studies undertaken by Bhatia(1993)\textsuperscript{34}, Dupkar(1993)\textsuperscript{35}, Ramanujam(1993)\textsuperscript{36}, Sethumadhav Rao(1995)\textsuperscript{37}, Arora(2002)\textsuperscript{38} pinpointed Academic Staff Colleges (ASCs) programmes for giving more stress on certificates for career achievement that on up-dating of knowledge and skills of teachers.

With this background, UGC set up 45 Academic Staff Colleges in various educational institutions of higher education to organize refresher
courses and orientation programmes across the country for updating and up-gradation of knowledge, to develop professional competence and enhance personality development of college and university teachers. With the addition of six more ASCs, at present, the strength has risen to 51. Most of the ASCs are available to achieve the objectives of orientation, motivation, and empowerment of teachers to a satisfactory level, which have been laid down by the UGC. These ASCs are considered the nerve centre for teachers’ development in higher education. Teaching is a vast public profession. If marginal or unprepared teachers enter the profession, it is arguably the work of induction to assist their growth or, equally important, to facilitate their exit from the profession.

A Balanced view

Education is regarded as a “Bi-polar Process” – both the educator and the educand influence each other. The personality of the educator modifies the behaviour of the educand and in turn is affected by the personality of the educand. Education is also regarded as a “Tri-polar Process” involving the interaction of the personality of the educator on that of the educand in a social setting which affects the modification of the behaviour of the educand. The social setting has to be presented by the educator to the educand in a simplified and purified manner.

We should try to avert the danger of education being isolated from the subject-matter of life experience. Education is recognized as the mirror of society and the educational institution as the society in miniature. In order to understand, appreciate, and evaluate the real meaning of the educational system of a nation, it is essential to know something of its history and traditions, of the forces and attitudes governing its social organization, and the political and economic conditions that determine its development. Thus, the following factors play in shaping and determining the objectives and the system of quality education:
- Geographical factors,
- Economic factors,
- Religious factors,
- Political factors,
- Social factors,
- Linguistic factors.  

Educational system in ancient Greek states presents an interesting study. Education in Sparta aimed at developing physical strength, courage and endurance and obedience and the aim was to train Spartan Youths as soldiers who would protect the state from foreign aggression. Athenian education, on the other hand, was rich and finer. 

A rich economy, where production exceeds consumption, provides men with leisure to pursue education whereas in a subsistence economy, it is a far cry to afford a longer time education. The Brahmanic system of education, the Buddhist education, the early Mohammedan education the Protestant and the Catholic systems and the like are the examples of the influence of religious thoughts in education. Different political ideologies like totalitarian or fascist, communist or socialist, and democratic will call for different systems of education. Education is an activity which goes on in a society and its aims and methods depend on the nature of the society and the social factors prevailing in the society alike. Language is one of the natural factors that help the growth of the educational system in a country. Uni-lingual nations have ties more well-knit than multi-lingual nations.

Types of higher educational institutions

It was the new types of institutions that were born and brought up in free India that really contributed to the qualitative growth of
higher education. Of these, the agricultural universities, the deemed universities, the institutions of national importance and the open universities deserve special mention.\textsuperscript{43} They are new categories of institutions unknown at the time of independence, innovated and founded to meet the emerging needs of a growing society. It is to the credit of these institutions that they have added value to the Indian higher education and have generally justified the money and the care bestowed on them by the government. The role of agricultural universities, e.g., in the green revolution and in making the country self-reliant in farm produces is substantial. These specialized universities proved that the transformation of society is possible in a different way- by changing the external milieu through the introduction of modern technology in traditional means of activities in a massive way. The agricultural universities have their own out station campuses directly under their responsibility, but no remotely-controlled affiliated colleges.

Similarly, the deemed universities and institutions of national importance are specialized in one particular discipline or a group of related disciplines with a great deal of emphasis on higher researchers of excellence and with total developmental orientation. Essentially, they are single-campus institutions performing all the functions of a university like teaching, research, practical training, and extension services and so on. The Indian Institutes of Technologies (IITs), the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Sri Chitra Institute of Medical Science (SCIMS), Thiruvananthapuram, the Indian Institute of Sciences (IISs), Bangalore, the TATA Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, etc., belong to this category.\textsuperscript{44} These prestigious institutions have contributed not only to the advancement of knowledge, but also to the developmental efforts of the society in the respective fields. The students coming out of these institutions find ready acceptance in responsible positions in different
fields of activities, and are in turn instrumental for further conscious growth in their respective disciplines.

Open universities mark another landmark in the history of higher education in the country. The launching of open universities can be described as the most revolutionary reform measure introduced in education after independence, for they promise to fulfill the democratic ideals and the aspirations of the people for upward social mobility through life long education. The non formal channels made available through the open universities broke the rigidity and exclusivity of higher education and opened it up to the entire populace who wish pursue their studies without the restrictions of age, formal pre-qualification, regular attendance and so on. The new opportunity greatly strengthened the democratic and the secular fabrics of the society. “Nearly a dozen open universities are now functioning in different parts of the country and catering to the educational aspirations of lakhs of youngsters as well as adults, otherwise, would have had no accessibility to higher learning. IGNOU has already become the largest agency in the world.”

The ill-equipped laboratories, poorly stocked libraries, totally inadequate space in buildings and play grounds, neglected and remote campus set ups, uninterested and often under-qualified teachers, inexperienced administrators and managers, non-involvement of parents and guardians in the affairs of the educational institutions - all these factors contribute to the all-round decay of the higher education, in addition to the entirely new composition of the students population who come from extremely variegated backgrounds. Many students are first generation scholars with parents who were very often illiterate themselves, with no tradition of learning or reading.

This degradation happens chiefly in the afflicted universities and in the colleges affiliated to them. But in the new generation institutions viz., agricultural universities, the deemed universities, the institutions of
national importance, or the open universities, fairly high standards are maintained both in the academic activities and in the general discipline. On the one hand, there is a great deal of qualitative growth in education in the new breed of institutions conceived and founded in free India, while on the other hand, stagnancy and deterioration both in academic standards and in general discipline are the rules in institutions inherited from the colonial pattern.

**Autonomy**

As a structural adjustment in the affiliating system, the colleges should be given adequate functional freedom, so that, they could be held responsible and accountable for the quality of education they impart. The university may continue its regulatory role regarding admission to students, appointment of teachers, maintenance of standards etc., strictly observing the government policies in the matter. “But colleges should be allowed to share genuine academic autonomy with the university both in the planning and in the execution of the educational programmes they undertake. There should be vertical demarcations in the academic functions between the university and its affiliated colleges. The present command pattern introduced by the colonial rules to suit their needs should be given up for ever”.

In higher education, autonomy is an essential attribute and cannot be compromised for orders from above. We have seen that it is the exercise of autonomy, not affiliated controls and regulations, which produced excellent results in the new types of institutions, started in free India. Though the agricultural universities, the deemed universities, the institutions of national importance and the open universities together were only about 15 per cent of the student population in the country, their qualitative share in the higher education is far greater than the combined contribution of the entire affiliation system. The reason is very clear: in the former sector, a free, unhindered academic flowering of the students and the faculty is promoted
and encouraged through the built-in provisions in the structural pattern of the institutions; however, the command structure of the affiliation system permits no such autonomy, but encourages only a dependency mentality on the part of the affiliated institutions who always look toward the university for orders, even on flimsy matters.

“Campus life must be experienced as an intense process involving close and intimate academic interaction between the students and teachers and must result in the overall enrichment of both. This is possible only if adequate freedom is exercised by the colleges as is done in the IITs and or the IIMs”.47

In qualitative expansion, the situation in Kerala more or less corresponds to the national scenario. When the state was formed in 1956, there was only one university, The Travancore University, while today we have seven. With about 300 plus colleges, their number has also increased seven folds. However, when one looks in to the quality side of higher education in Kerala, the situation is not satisfactory. With half a dozen centenarian colleges and relatively higher rate of literacy and general education our state had a pre-eminent place in the educational map of India. Recent studies clearly show that both the variety of courses available and in the levels of excellence achieved, the state is now far behind even in relation to the neighboring states that were once considered educationally backward. The reason for this fall is not far to seek. “The state has followed the affiliation pattern rather rigidly and the colleges have been rendered to mere coaching centers for examinations to be conducted by the university at some far away date. The college education as practiced today is almost totally devoid of any worth scholarly - intellectual or moral. The most crucial measure of any higher educational institution is the quality of its products”.48
“The National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986, advocates autonomy for colleges and university departments with the objective of bringing about the de-centralisation of academic administration and promoting innovation and higher standards. This autonomy relates to the framing of courses, conduct of examinations, innovations in pedagogy and admissions. The number of autonomous colleges was 135 by the end of May 2003”.

**Paucity of Funds**

Higher education presents a dismal picture which is the result of unplanned fast growth. A large number of newly started colleges and universities, due to paucity of funds and facilities, “remain academic slums”. The awfully inadequate allocation for education when distributed among these institutions, what each one gets is just enough for establishment expenses with hardly anything left for modernization, development and research. According to the World Science Report of 1993, India spends only 0.9 per cent of its Gross National Products (GNP) for the development of science and technology. For education also we spend only an average of not more than 3.5 per cent of our Gross Domestic Products (GDP). Barring Bangladesh, India spends the least among 117 developing nations of the world. The poor funding is clear from the following table.

**Table 2.7**

**Indian Educational Expenditure**

(Expenditure on Education in the Five Year Plans)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Five Year Plans</th>
<th>Elementary (per cent)</th>
<th>Secondary (per cent)</th>
<th>Higher (per cent)</th>
<th>Total Expenditure (Rs. lakh)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>85(56)</td>
<td>20(13)</td>
<td>14(9)</td>
<td>15300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The fact is that after Independence, India’s educational expenditure has never touched the 4 per cent mark of the GDP. “Nearly three decades ago Kothari Commission had recommended that it should not be less than 6 per cent”\(^{50}\) and the recommendation had been accepted in principle but not implemented so far in spite of the repeated promise by the successive governments. Moreover the benefit of the educational development of the last 50 years were cornered away by the elite sections of the society of certain regions of the country. This dangerous imbalance has been pointed out by several reports and studies, both official and non-official.

**Investment in Education**

“Only about 2 per cent of GDP is the investment in Indian education, though the government in principle has expressed its intent to increase it to 6 per cent ”.\(^{51}\) Most advanced countries have been investing from 8 per cent to 12 per cent. This is our greatest failure. The ‘Deterioration of Quality of Education’ starts here. From this meager 2 per cent - 3 per cent, higher education gets only pittance. The prosperity of a country is directly proportioned to skilled manpower and specialized human capital that are the storehouse of knowledge and are products of higher education. This century may witness what is known as “Intellectual Colonialism”, and therefore we
need a large investment in higher education and a determination to attract the best of manpower for the conduct of higher education.

Of the four factors of production – Land, Labour, Capital, and Organisation – it is labour and more particularly the quality of labour that is the key determinant for a country’s competitiveness. Therefore, there is a strong correlation between endowment of skilled labour and the GDP per worker across the country. Higher education enhances a country’s capacity for participation in an increasingly knowledge-based world economy and has the potential to enhance economic growth and reduce poverty. Any investment in higher education is not superfluous and it will only enhance the quality of human resource. From the following table we can read the five year plan expenditures on university education in India.

Table 2.8

Expenditure in the Five Year Plans (university Education)
(Rupees in Crores)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Five Year Plans</th>
<th>university Education</th>
<th>Total Education</th>
<th>Total Plan Expenditure</th>
<th>Education as per cent of Total Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I Plan - 1951-56</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>1946</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II Plan - 1956-61</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>4680</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III Plan - 1961-66</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>589</td>
<td>8572</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Annual Plans</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966-69</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV Plan - 1969-74</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>786</td>
<td>45224</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan</td>
<td>Years</td>
<td>Expenditure</td>
<td>Total Expenditure</td>
<td>Growth Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V Plan</td>
<td>1974-78</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>1285</td>
<td>39322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI Plan</td>
<td>1980-85</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>2524</td>
<td>97500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII Plan</td>
<td>1985-90</td>
<td>878</td>
<td>7699</td>
<td>222922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII Plan</td>
<td>1992-97</td>
<td>1313</td>
<td>19600</td>
<td>434100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX Plan</td>
<td>1997-2002</td>
<td>1923</td>
<td>29300</td>
<td>625000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X Plan</td>
<td>2002-07</td>
<td>2306</td>
<td>33457</td>
<td>835000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Five Year Plan Documents, Government of India.

The five plan expenditure are not at all satisfactory or even average. Only twice it has reached the level of six per cent of total plan. This declining trend in allocation is the arch reason for the poor educational infrastructure and hence the poor quality of education.

**Figure 2.4**

**Five Year Plan Expenditures on University Education, Government of India**

![Graph showing five year plan expenditures](image-url)
“The National Policy of Education 1986(revised in 1992) has stipulated that allocation of funds for education will uniformly exceed 6 per cent of the national income from the eighth plan onwards.52

**Poor budget allocation**

It has been an argument, since years back, that only a very low priority is given to education in the budget sessions of the parliament. Every year the industry, agriculture, banking and other sectors like export and import and the like speculate about the union budget but academics of the education sector do not bother about it. ‘Education Budget’ is not discussed so importantly by politicians. They decide the policy without due and fair consultation. The political development of the country depends up on primary education, but technological development depends upon higher education. It is seemed that politicians are more interested in primary education.

So the academics request to the governments that the education budget must be discussed in the budget session of the parliament and be debated separately. The 50 years of under-investment in education, according to Dr.Amartya Sen, is at the root of all developmental ills of India today. Educational expense of India has never been more than 3.5 per cent of our GDP.53 While the Education Commission (1964-66) popularly known as the “Kothari Commission” had recommended that it should be a minimum of 6 per cent, India is still the only one country that spends the least for education, barring perhaps Bangla Desh. Therefore, the education sector in general and higher education in particular, is in the throes of a severe financial crisis in the country. Being the integral part of the higher educational set up of India, the predicament of the higher education in Kerala is also very sad, in this respect.

The Kothari Commission also compared this estimate with the corresponding figures of other countries, available in the UNESCO statistics: “Japan and the U.S and the USSR are spending considerably more than 6 per
cent of GNP on education” (p860). The Commission also felt that “these countries might be spending about 10 per cent of GNP by 1986, and perhaps more than 10 per cent, if comprehensive disarmament takes place. Hence, the need for India to increase its public expenditure towards education, at least to the level of 6 per cent of GNP by 1985-86”, is very urgent. The Kothari Commission, regarding the 6 per cent of GNP, had categorically mentioned that “it is the 6 per cent of national income and it is the ‘public expenditure’ only and it does not include the ‘private expenditure’”. It is clear that the total expenditure on education will be “public spending”, meaning that it will be the “budget expenditure” of the union and state governments, and not the public plus private outlays.

To provide education for all as a fundamental right and as a means of development, to provide for further growth of high quality manpower commensurate with India’s growing position in the world economy and the urgent need to keep pace with global developments in all spheres of science and technology, we may, indeed require much more than 6 per cent. Therefore, the 6 per cent can be seen as our immediate target, and it does not and should not be treated as an upper limit. Rapid growth in elementary education will have effects on the demand for secondary education, which will, in turn enhance demand for higher education. Efforts are already being contemplated for initiation for universalisation of secondary education, which would also require stepping up of the resources considerably. An enrolment ratio of 20 per cent is also being tentatively aimed at in case of higher education for the near future. In short, any exercise that considers these aspects may produce an estimate of resource requirements much above 8 – 10 per cent of GDP. Further, many of the estimates have not made any provision for increases in the quality and standards of education to reach international levels of excellence, or for spending per student amounts anywhere equivalent to the levels the developed countries spend. In one such exercise, Bhanoji Rao (1992) had estimated that India might require as much
as 25 per cent of GNP, to spend amounts equivalent to what relatively advanced countries like Singapore spend per student on education.

“We should accord the highest priority to education and allocate the largest portion of GNP to it. Thus the 6 per cent target suggested by the education commission is based on the following considerations: The requirements of the system for the next 20 years; the level of spending by the economically advanced countries like Japan, the US, and the USSR as a proportion of their GNP on education and the likely trends in future; and the simple normative principle: Normally expenditure on education should grow at double the rate of economic growth in educational expenditure, compared to an expected 6 per cent rate of economic growth”\(^{55}\). Thus the commission felt that the target of 6 per cent of GNP was not at all an “ambitious one”. Methodological, including conceptual and definitional aspects of educational expenditure and the details of the analysis and the targets of the commission are unambiguously clear. The rationale provided by the commission for its recommendation was also sound and it also gave enough time to the government for reaching the goal, providing a 20-year period. Of the several recommendations of the commission, 6 per cent of the GDP was accepted by the government of India. It resolved in the National Policy on Education 1968 “to increase the investment in education so as to reach a level of expenditure of 6 per cent of the national income as early as possible”\(^{56}\).

**Performance**

Now we shall have a GNP-wise allocation to education. At the inception of Planning (1951-52), India was spending 0.7 per cent of GNP, and by 2004-05 (budget estimates) it has increased to 3.5 per cent level. Even though the growth is not smooth, this is indeed a remarkable increase. But the goal was not achieved by the date suggested by the Kothari Commission, nor even 20 years later. This is clear from the following table:
Table 2.9

Share of government expenditure on education in GNP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951-52</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965-66</td>
<td>1.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-86</td>
<td>3.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989-90</td>
<td>4.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-2000</td>
<td>4.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-01</td>
<td>4.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td>3.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-03</td>
<td>3.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003-04RE</td>
<td>3.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-05BE</td>
<td>3.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Legends: RE – Revised Estimate. BE – Budget Estimate

After crossing the 4 per cent mark in 1989-90, just about the time the new economic reform policies were introduced, the proportion then slid down below 4 per cent - to 3.9 per cent in 1991-92 and to 3.6 per cent by 1997-98. There was a modest increase later and at the beginning of the present century (2000-01), it was above 4 per cent; but even that level could
not be sustained in the following years. The current ratio is the lowest since 1985-86, i.e., after the National Policy on Education 1986 was formulated.

Figure 2.5

Share of government expenditure on education in GNP

It also needs to be underlined that the current proportion is also less than (a) the requirements of the education system to provide reasonable level of quality education to all students enrolled; (b) the requirements of the system to provide free and compulsory universal elementary education of good quality for eight years for every child of the age group 6-14, as a fundamental right, as proclaimed in the 86th amendment of the constitution of India in 2002, and the consequent growth in secondary and higher education; and (c) the proportion of GNP invested in education in many other developing countries of the world. According to the latest statistics, “India ranks 80th among 130 countries of the world on which such data are available, in the proportion of GDP spent on education in 2000-02 (2005)”\textsuperscript{57}.
As the goal remained unaccomplished, the National Policy on Education 1986 (revised in 1992) also resolved: “It will be ensured that from the Eighth Five-Year Plan onwards the outlay on education will uniformly exceed 6 per cent of the National Income” (p.29). The non-accomplishment of the goal led the government to repeatedly reiterate the commitment in subsequent years in every five-year plan, in every policy statement, party manifestos and other agendas, and even in the independence day speeches of the Prime Ministers from the ramparts of the Red Fort.

Under-investment in Education and Quality of Education

Under-investment in education is regarded as one of the most important reasons for our failure in achieving the democratic educational goals and targets, such as:

- Universal adult literacy,
- Universal elementary education, including universal enrolment, universal completion of eight years of schooling and universal achievement of minimum levels of learning,
- Vocationalisation of secondary education,
- Maintenance of, if not improvement in, quality and standards of higher education,
- Reduction in regional disparities, and
- Equity by gender, and other socio-economic groups of population.

Under-investment and non-prioritisation are the basic reasons for the low quality education in India and the state. Even after six decades of independence, unacceptably large number of people are illiterate; large number of children are yet to see a school; and socio-economic, gender and
regional inequalities are significant. The failure to reach the educational goals also resulted in non-accomplishment with respect to socio-economic, cultural and political transformation of society, leaving the country to continue to be labeled as an ‘underdeveloped’ or a ‘developing’ nation. International forecasts still describe the nation as one that will not reach the “Education for All (EfA)”, or “Millennium Development Goals”(MDGs) in the near future.

**Intra-Sectoral Allocation of Resources**

All sectors of education are closely linked and all, including higher education, produce externalities, justifying public funding. Public funding has to see that allocation of resources to various levels of education, promoting access, equity and quality in education. The Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) committee on financing higher and technical education suggested that of the agreed 6 per cent of GDP to education, 3 per cent be allocated to elementary education, 1.5 per cent to secondary education, 1 per cent to higher general education, and 0.5 per cent to higher technical education. These mark significant improvement over the current situation. “In 2004-05, elementary education received 1.43 per cent of GDP, secondary education 0.88 per cent, higher general education 0.34 per cent, and higher technical education 0.03 per cent”.

The recommended allocations presuppose formulation of proper plans, schemes, and setting up mechanisms for spending the resources efficiently. The recommended allocations need to be complemented by investments in other sectors. It may be reiterated that the suggested levels of expenditure have to be met from government resources – the Centre and the states – and that they are not inclusive of any contributions from the private sector, the community in general and students and parents in particular. All non-governmental resources will be additional.
Reaching the goal of 6 per cent of GDP is a difficult but not an impossible task. Allocations to education can be increased either (1) by re-allocating resources from other sectors, or (2) by raising more resources by the government for the common pool or especially for the education sector or (3) by both. Re-allocation of resources from other sectors should not be viewed as if it takes place at the cost of other sectors; after all almost all other sectors are beneficiaries’ investments in education. Hence, a generous approach needs to be adopted in allocation to and re-allocation of resources in favour of education.

Skewed Priority

The Central government, with their changed priority of universalisation of primary education and ‘eradication of illiteracy’ campaign in backward BIMARU (Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh) states has given only secondary importance to higher education. Added to this growing problem of funding is the N.E.P (New Economic Policy) of the government with its main thrust on reducing fiscal deficit, as a result of which the axe inevitably falls on social expenditure, including education.

The government spends merely 0.37 per cent of the Country’s GDP on higher education compared to 1.41 per cent in the U.S., 1.07 per cent in the U.K., and even China spends 0.50 per cent of its GDP on higher education. Only countries such as Japan and Korea, where more than 80 per cent of students are in largely unsubsidized private institutions, is government spending at a level similar to that of India62. Though there are many schemes for providing financial aid to the poor students, the amount given is awfully low and procedures to secure loans are cumbersome. While the U.S. spends nearly 80 billion dollars to higher education annually, mostly in the form of students’ aids, India has allotted only about 3 million dollars in 2005-06 for its flagship merit-cum-means scholarship scheme63.
There is a great deal of truth in the widespread lament of academics that funding of higher educational segment has been rapidly declining over the years and a skewed priority is given to primary education at the cost of higher education. This is a common phenomenon across the country and the case is still verse in Kerala, in particular. The National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 or its revised form, the Programme of Action (PoA, UGC) 1992 says: “Education in India has largely been a budget-based system, where efficiency is rated by ability to ‘consume’ budget and to demand more. Performance at delivery point has not been an important criterion. The ongoing economic reform and structural adjustments would, therefore, demand a shift from inputs to performance and outcomes…”

To conclude, it is crystal clear that the “Under-investment, low priority, and skewed treatment” towards higher education have paused the main villainy against quality of higher education in the states.

**Access to Higher Education in Kerala**

Access to higher education signifies the extent to which the enrolment capacity (the supply side) of the colleges, universities and, and post secondary institutions fulfils the aspirations (the demand side) of the eligible candidates. The demand for higher education increases on account of a variety of factors such as enhanced high school enrolment and growing aspirations of newer groups of the society. If the economic and social benefits of higher education are to be fully realized, it is necessary that the access is widened to include all sections of the society. Experience in India shows that the benefits of educational expansion accrued essentially for the already privileged sections, with limited participation of the disadvantaged in the development process.
Even after almost six decades of independence, the access to higher education remains very limited in India. Only 11 per cent of the youth in the age group of 17 to 23 are enrolled for higher education in India.

Indian higher education is riddled with many contradictions. It is both large and small. In terms of absolute enrolment – around 11 million students – it is the third largest system in the world, but in terms of gross enrolment ratio, it is small – just around 11 per cent. By taking the universities and the colleges together, there are 18000 higher educational institutions in India. This is more than the rest of the world taken together. Yet the number of degree granting institutions is merely 350.

Archaism in Higher Education

An ideal higher education system is supposed to play a more innovative, more aggressive and more revolutionary role in the affairs of the nation. But the Indian scene has a different story to tell. Except in a few cases, the academic pursuits in our universities and colleges are marked by archaic courses, irrelevant curricula, anemic syllabus, un-inviting instructional materials, un-challenging methods of teaching, un-reliable procedures of examination and evaluation, and a freezing and de-motivating institutional climate.

Many of our universities and colleges have not been provided with the minimum level of infrastructure for maintaining the quality and standards. In spite of the impressive progress here and there, there are serious problems relating to the quality and the relevance of higher education, with the result that the links between education, employment and development are not well formed. No wonder, the growth of Indian higher education has been “merry but a fruitless exercise in panned drift”
Inclusiveness in Higher Education

In the current approach to planning, “inclusive economic growth” is intended to occupy centre-stage, with “inclusive” education as its major component. Inclusiveness in higher education would mean, above all, increased access to education for groups that currently have only limited access. The identification of such groups with their specific constraints is critical for developing a policy of inclusive education. In the recent context, exclusion from access to higher education occurs in multiple ways and is reflected in the disparities observed not only between the poor and the rich, but also across social groups classified according to caste, religion, ethnicity, and gender, across the country. The National Sample Survey data for 2005 provide useful information. The overall Gross National Enrolment ratio in higher education is about 10 per cent. However, it is six to seven per cent for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and other backward classes compared with 17 per cent for the others. Enrolment is low for Muslims (5.23 per cent), compared with Hindus (10.44 per cent), Sikhs (11.2 per cent), and Christian and other religious groups (18.56 per cent). It is also low for girls (8 per cent) compared with boys (12 per cent).65

“Providing quality education to all, including students from the poor and minority sections, will be the focus of higher education during the 11th plan”, says the Chairman of university Grants Commission, Sukhadeo Thorat66. “Everyone who deserves and desires should get higher education. Focus of higher education during the 11th plan will be inclusiveness which aims to ensure that students from all sections, including the poor and minorities, get quality education. Presently, 10 per cent of people in the age group of 18 to 23 are in the stream of higher education”67. For a better nation, for a better morrow, we must concentrate on education – primary, secondary, tertiary and professional education.
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