CHAPTER- III
GROWTH OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA:

Introduction:

Indian society, from the times immemorial, has been regarding knowledge as the highest virtue of man. Since the dawn of civilization, our great saints and seers have been showing the entire world the path of enlightenment leading to the ultimate truth. Even during the Vedic and Upanishadic period, India had some of the prominent institutions of higher education, which attracted scholars from distant places located in different parts of the world to come to India in pursuit of knowledge. It was much later that modern universities were established in Europe and other western countries. University Education Commission (1948-49), appointed by the Government of India immediately after independence, mentioned that the universities of Takshashila and Nalanda survived till the end of the fifth and twelfth Century AD respectively. These universities imparted knowledge in different areas according to the requirements of the contemporary society. The curriculum in these universities included the study of Vedas in addition to Upanishads, religious scriptures, philosophy and logic. Nalanda was basically a Buddhist center of learning, but its working resembled the
contemporary Vedic centres of education such as those located at Vallabhi, Vikramshila, Banaras, Nadia, Ujjain and Kanchi. However, during the last one and half-century, modern universities have also been established in India. Let us have a glance over the historical development of these universities.

Advent of Modern Higher Education:
The western higher education in India began with the establishment of Hindu College at Calcutta (1817) by Raja Rammohan Roy and his friend David Hare with the objective of providing a channel by which real knowledge might be transferred from European sources to the intellect of Hindustan. The East India Company founded another Sanskrit College at Calcutta (1825) which was protested against by Raja Rammohan Roy because he felt that Indians should also receive education in European languages and western science. By this time, the Christian missionaries had started establishing colleges at other places, with the objective of spreading Christianity through teaching of English and western science. Elphinstone College was founded at Bombay (1834), and Madras Christian College (1837) at Madras, to prepare natives for public employment. In the same succession, colleges were set up at Masulipatnam (1941), Nagpur (1844) and Agra (1853). Till that time, the number of colleges had risen to 25, in
the whole country. One interesting fact about Indian higher education is that colleges were established earlier than the birth of universities.

It was in 1854 that the establishment of modern universities in India was first recommended by the Wood's Education Despatch, and as a consequence, three universities in the presidency towns of Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras were set up in 1857. The main function of these universities was to conduct examinations and award degrees, while teaching work was done in affiliated colleges. This was, in fact, an adoption of the London University model. With the rapid rise in enrolment after the establishment of these three universities, Punjab University at Lahore (1882) and the University of Allahabad (1887) were also established. After this, no new university was set up in the Nineteenth Century. By 1902, there were five universities and 191 affiliated colleges with a total enrolment of 17,650 students.

In the meantime, the National Freedom Movement had gathered momentum and the enlightened Indians took keen interest in the education of their fellow natives. Consequently six new universities came into existence between 1913 and 1921. These included Banaras Hindu University (1916), Patna University (1917) Osmania University (1918), Lucknow University
(1920) which were established by Acts of Central Legislature. All these institutions were Central Universities that time. With the establishment of Delhi (1922) Nagpur(1923) Andhra(1926), Agra (1927) and Annamalai (1929) universities, the total number of universities became 16 by 1930. This sudden spurt in the number of universities was due to favourable recommendations of Calcutta University Commission (1917-19). Most of these universities were teaching type universities. However, during the period 1929-1947, the official effort to develop higher education was slow due to some political problems related to freedom struggle and breakout of the Second World War in 1939. Therefore, only three universities could be set up during this period – Kerala (1937), Utkal (1943) and Sagar (1946). In this way, the number of universities established before independence rose to 19. Rajasthan University, Jaipur and Punjab Univerisity, Chandigarh were set up in 1947, because Punjab University, Lahore had gone to Pakistan during partition. Thus, the total number of universities set up by 1947-48 became 20 with about 500 affiliated colleges and 2.30 lakhs of students.

The Era of Unplanned Expansion:
As India achieved freedom in 1947, the Department of Education created in 1945 was converted into full-fledged Ministry of Education. Higher education was the first sector of education to attract the attention of the
Union Government. As a first step, the University Education Commission (1948-49) was appointed, which recommended rapid expansion of higher education in India on a priority basis. The Commission also made several other recommendations having significant bearing on future development of higher education in the country. During the period of three years from 1947 to 1950, seven new universities were created raising the total number of 27 with 695 colleges affiliated to them. The total enrolment in these institutions of higher education was 174,000 (excluding those enrolled in PUC) in 1950-51. The total number of teachers working in these institutions was a little more than 21,000. It was from this point onwards the 'era of unplanned expansion' of higher education in our country began.

Table 3.1
Growth of Institutions of Higher Education in India

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Universities</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>State Universities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutions of National</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
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Source: AIU Occasional Paper 97/1
Table 3.2
Student Enrolment in Higher Education in India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Student Enrolment</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>228881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>862075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>1368803</td>
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<td>1977</td>
<td>2332935</td>
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<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>3728607</td>
</tr>
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<td>1996</td>
<td>5532998</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: AIU Occasional Paper 97/1

During the period of 50 years since 1950-51, the growth of higher education has been phenomenal. On the average, four to five universities and 225 colleges were established annually. The total number of universities at present is 273 and that of affiliated colleges is 11,831 with a total enrolment of over 77.34 lakhs. During the last 50 years, the total number of teachers in the universities and colleges has also increased to more than 3.51 lakhs. The growth rate of higher education had been as higher as 13-14% during the 1950s and 1960s, but declined to about 2-3% during 1970s. During 1980s and early 1990s the overall growth rate had been about 4.2%. However, at present the growth rate is around 5% per annum.
As evident from the foregoing analysis, the quantitative development of higher education during the post-independence period has been apparently very impressive. Unlike the pre-independence period, the benefits of higher education are now reaped by a sizeable number of youth even from underprivileged sections of the society. At present, we have one college for every 11,000 and one university for every 4.7 lakhs of persons in the relevant age group (18-23 years), but in the real terms, only about 6-7% of the eligible age group are getting the benefit of higher education. This is insignificant compared to the corresponding figures of over 50% for the countries belonging the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and about 30% for some other developed countries. Highlighting the significance of higher education in the modern times, the World Bank document (1994) states, “The development of higher education is correlated with the economic development: enrolment ratios in higher education average 51% in the countries that belong to OECD, compared with 21% in middle-income countries and 6% in low-income countries.” Therefore, the first and foremost task that India should undertake is to expand higher education system further in a planned way so as to cover as large a portion of the eligible age group as possible.
This large system was supported till the late eighties of the twentieth century almost entirely by the State in most countries. The State’s share in the expenditure on higher education was 88% in Australia (1988), 89.5% in France (1984), 90% in India (1990). As higher education continued to be elitist and benefited only a few, the economic policy of the State changed. As the return from elementary education is 25% and that of higher education less than 1% the latter was considered to be a ‘non-merit’ good and, accordingly, subsidies were slowly withdrawn. The expenditure on education as a proportion of GNP marginally increased from 1.2% in 1950-51 to about 4% in 2000. In terms of plan expenditure, the share of education as a percentage of the total plan outlay also decreased from 7.86% in the First Plan to 2.97% in the Sixth and to 3.87% in the Eighth. This is still lower than 6% of the GNP as recommended by the Education commission in 1964-1966. Conversely, student fees decreased from more than 20% to 7.5% during 1950-1951 and to less than 5% at the present time.
### Table 3.3
Expenditure on Higher Education in India (1951-52 to 1993-94)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Expenditure (in '000 Rs)</th>
<th>Per Student Expenditure (in Rs)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951-52</td>
<td>72319</td>
<td>416</td>
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<tr>
<td>1961-62</td>
<td>344931</td>
<td>639</td>
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<tr>
<td>1971-72</td>
<td>935982</td>
<td>428</td>
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<td>1981-82</td>
<td>955309</td>
<td>1800</td>
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<tr>
<td>1991-92</td>
<td>24427774</td>
<td>5522</td>
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<td>1993-94</td>
<td>29155611</td>
<td>4537</td>
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Source: Ministry of HRD

### Table 3.4
Sources of Income of Educational Institutions in India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Govt. Funds (Centre&amp;State)</th>
<th>Local Bodies Funds</th>
<th>University Funds</th>
<th>Fees</th>
<th>Endowments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950-51</td>
<td>57.06</td>
<td>10.93</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20.39</td>
<td>11.62</td>
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<tr>
<td>1960-61</td>
<td>67.97</td>
<td>6.53</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>17.14</td>
<td>8.35</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>75.65</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>12.81</td>
<td>5.85</td>
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<tr>
<td>1980-81</td>
<td>81.70</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>8.20</td>
<td>4.03</td>
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</table>

Source: Ministry of HRD
Table 3.5
Plan Expenditure on Different Sectors of Education in India

(in %)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>I Plan</th>
<th>II Plan</th>
<th>III Plan</th>
<th>IV Plan</th>
<th>V Plan</th>
<th>VI Plan</th>
<th>VII Plan</th>
<th>VIII Plan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
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<td>34</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>37</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Higher</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>Technical</td>
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<td>21</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Others</td>
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Expenditure on higher education has registered a considerable increase from Rs 7.23 crore in 1951-52 to Rs 2915.56 crore in 1993. Though the per student expenditure has increased by 11 times, the students do not benefit much out of it due to inflation. Inspite of this steep increase in student enrolment, number of institutions and consequently expenditure on higher education, our higher education system caters still to only 5 of the relevant age group who could go to higher education.

Though the same trend, in terms of quantitative expansion, expenditure, and shift towards mass education, has been witnessed in the other countries also, countries like UK, USA and Germany have succeeded in providing higher
education to nearly 40 of the relevant age group, and consequently it is these countries that have shown tremendous growth and development in terms of national prosperity. This indicates that to be better prepared to meet the challenges of this trend, we cannot simply project the reasons on to our lack of mass education culture and unprecedented quantitative expansion.

India has the second largest system of higher education and is one of the lowest per capita income countries in the world. In the context of the ongoing economic reforms, a major problem which decision-makers confront today is how to provide financial sustenance for the system. The changing perception on the subsidization of higher education further accentuates this problem. The government has been the major source of funding for higher education. Since independence, the government’s contribution to higher education has been increasing while the funding from other sources has been on the decline. Table 3.4 gives the details of this trend. Data also reveal that the share of higher education sector in the total outlay for education remained between 11 and 13 during 1951-52 to 1991-92. It was only in 1981-82 that higher education could receive 15. Even this percentage is much lower than that in many of the developed countries. Table 3.5 gives the details on the declining share of higher education in the total educational budget.
If we look at the plan grants, in the First Five Year Plan, allocation to higher education was 9 percent only. The allocation was almost doubled in the Second Five Year Plan and declined slightly in the Third Five Year Plan. The allocations in the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Plans were relatively high, accounting for as much as 25 percent, but declined sharply in the subsequent Five Year Plans and reached 8 percent in the Eighth Five Year Plan. This is even less than the allocation made in the First Five Year Plan, indicates the rethinking of the policy makers on the extent of support to be given to higher education.

Even adult education has got higher allocation than the entire higher education in the last plan. The allocation to adult education in the Sixth Plan as well as the Eighth Plan was 9 percent. If the responsibility of adult education is given to the elementary and secondary education sectors, the flow of funds to school education will not only strengthen the infrastructure facilities and support services of the schools but also lead to optimum utilization of available resources including human resources. A comparison between the allocations for adult education and higher education during these plan periods reveals that the priority given to adult education is consistent while the funding pattern of higher education is towards steady decline from 22 percent in 1980-85 to 8 per cent in 1992-97. In fact, in the
Eighth Plan, adult education gets 9 percent while higher education gets less than that.

Financial Crisis:
There are three main sources of educational finance in India—Central and State governments, local bodies, and private sector including the students who are its potential beneficiaries. As the system of higher education grew in size, it required increased funds even for its maintenance. Simultaneously, due to successive reduction in the private contribution, its dependence on government for funds also increased. Consequently, the government contribution to educational finance increased from about 57% in 1950-51 to about 90-95% during 1990s. During the same period the contribution of students in terms of fees decreased from about 20% to less than 5%. Moreover, the allocation of funds for education over the nine five-year plans has not shown noticeable improvement, rather, in relative terms, it has been declining continuously.

The Education Commission (1964-66) presented sound arguments for increased investment in education. It had suggested that the proportion of GNP allocated to education should have risen from 2.9% in 1965-66 to 6% by 1985-86. The National Policy on Education-1968 also endorsed this recommendation. Again the National Policy on Education 1986 reiterated,
the proposal. The modified NPE-1992 categorically stated that the outlay on education would be stepped up to ensure that during the Eighth Five-year Plan and onwards, it would uniformly exceed 6% of the national income. But, there has been no noticeable improvement in the situation. Though, there has been a slight increase in allocation for education in Ninth Plan, we are far behind the 6% mark as stipulated. This situation has had the most adverse impact on higher education. The relative share of higher education in the total allocation for education was the highest, 25% during the 4th Plan. It declined systematically to 8% during the 8th Plan. However, in the Ninth Plan this figure has risen to 12%. It is said that subsidy on higher education is being reduced because larger allocation has to be made for primary education. But the basic question is "Should we develop primary education at the expense of higher education? Prof. Kulandaiswamy, the Ex VC of IGNOU, has rightly stated that "highest of education for a few is as important as the basic education for all in a large country like India, the former provides necessary leadership in all areas of activity while the latter creates an enlightened and literate society, capable of taking advantage of development in the field of science and technology". The department of economic affairs (GOI) has classified higher education as a non-merit service and has recommended that the subsidy must be reduced. According
to Prof. Kulandaiswamy, "this viewpoint is completely ill informed and has in it, potential for disastrous consequences"

Concept of Private Support:
The ancient tradition of education in India and other countries was based on the assumption that offering education was a sacred task and that, therefore, it should be offered free of cost. The onus was on the guru to provide free education to his disciples who in turn looked after his domestic needs. The concept of paying for education in cash was not known until higher education came to be institutionalized. The University of Taxila charged "1000 pieces of money as fixed sum of fee". The aura of nobility and dignity attached to education continued to make it a philanthropic activity. Philanthropists established educational institutions—so did missionaries of religion—to serve the cause of education by creating Trusts and endowments. “Nowhere were private bodies motivated to establish these institutions to earn profit. Christian missions established many institutions of higher learning in India in the 19th century. Education was offered at a minimal cost and it offered the where withal to promote spirituality, self-dignity and personal integrity. Public support given to them in the form of grants and aids did not alter the character and purpose of higher education. The role of
the private sector during the period was one of leadership on the one hand and education sought social transformation— and partnership with public effort on the other.

Emergence of the Private Sector:
The private sector has emerged as an inevitable alternative to public effort because of several reasons. The changed economic policy of the State, as observed earlier, has shifted the focus to primary and elementary education thus enfeebling the State’s involvement in higher education. The massification of higher education leading to a phenomenal growth of the institutions of higher learning and student registration in the last few decades is of the magnitude the State cannot manage with its limited human and material resources. Thirdly the advancement of technology, which is inextricably wedded to market economy, demands a vast enlightened workforce within a minimal time frame. It is, therefore, projected that by 2011 A.D. India may need 344 universities as against 178 in 1997 (256 in 2001) which exist today, 12,695 Arts and Science colleges as against 418, 1231 Medical colleges as against 655 and 1375 Technical training colleges as against 697. Another reason for the snowballing of the system of higher education is the economic imperative: being market-driven, countries inevitably caught in the web of competitive development have no other
choice but to depend on education and training to manage economies. Education is also relevant to globalization through cultural integration: fashion designers, sartorial magnates who make national and global beauties, designers and makers of status symbols in several spheres including cars and houses, entertainers, sportspersons and artists, not to speak of media makers—these and more are products of education and training of a high order. Westernization of global civilizations through colonization has already set in motion the phenomenon of globalization. Thus education has become ubiquitous and omnipresent. There is no sphere of human activity which has not been enriched by education. However, globalization ought not to be understood as an erasure of individualities as nations. It only means that we continue to be Indian in sensibility, in the indestructible values of our heritage and in our national aspirations. It implies that we need not board any bandwagon: higher education admirably contributes to this happy synthesis of globalization without compromising our national identity. And the enterprise of higher education in the context of technology, market-economy and cultural integration has outgrown the resources of the public exchequer. It cannot function without the private sector.
The Concept of Self-financing/Capitation-fee:

Dr. T.M. Pai was the pioneer to introduce the concept. He advocated the establishment of well-equipped and quality-driven institutions of higher learning at places where college, which offered technical training, were few and ill equipped. It was in this context the need to raise funds was deemed necessary. Capitation fee was charged from students who sought admission to courses of study they desired. Thus a chain of engineering and medical colleges was established in Manipal. They have now become Deemed-to-be-Universities. Many such institutions arose in many parts of the country, largely in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka during the last 15 years. A considerable number of Arts and Science Colleges were also established on the same model chiefly to offer quasi-professional courses in computer, management, commercial and media studies. Thus more than one-third, and in some states more than half of the higher education effort has moved into the private sector. We cannot wish away this development as self-financing colleges have come to stay.

Parallel Effort within the Private Sector:

Inadequacies and Dangers:

There are two major blocs within the private sector: the government-aided institutions and those, which are self-financed. Both remain within the affiliating system. The former and most of the latter are academic partners of
the public system. They follow a common curriculum; prepare students for conventional examinations, adopt conventional pedagogy and produce a large number of graduates and post-graduates most of whom are not often successful. There are, of course, exceptions where discipline, personal values, professional training and social sensitivity are sought to be inculcated. These are generally achieved outside the curriculum and the affiliating framework. Nevertheless, these institutions do not often meet global standards in providing professionalism in the use of skills, personal self-confidence obtained by the learner through independent academic inquiry and communicative competence. They also lack other qualities which go to make a sound work ethic without which the education offered cannot be compatible with that offered else where. In spite of these shortcomings the private sector has an edge over the public sector, generally speaking, in regularity of work, self-discipline and egalitarian and social outlook. Autonomy has helped a few of them to make local innovations in curriculum, partially vocationalise it and to regulate academic activity to keep pace with the academic calendar. They have not yet made a radical departure from the affiliating system for obvious reasons. Nor have they altered conventional pedagogy. Autonomous colleges cannot go far in achieving radical academic autonomy as most educational institutions do in
the rest of the world because of many constraints. It is here, the other bloc, namely, that of self-financing institutions has a definite edge over private-aided colleges and agencies. With the financial and administrative autonomy they enjoy, some of them are in the process of proving themselves to be equal to the task of providing globally comparable facilities in terms of academic and human resource support (they have labs, equipment, contacts and other strategies for student progression comparable to global standards) and teacher talent. This has led to academic innovations, even within the constraints of the affiliating systems: many of the self-financing colleges offer enrichment course, part-time courses and other modular inputs; organize industry linking; offer and facilitate global mobility; and do such other things as may competitively bring about centers of meaningful and successful academic activity.

Both the blocs are victims of inherent dangers. Those that are state-aided do not have the freedom to expand or change their academic activity so long as they ply a common curriculum, which is not responsive to local, regional and national aspirations. Entrenched in an age-old system of education with just sporadic and fragmentary alterations, which are fortuitous, not considered, these colleges cannot do what they want to do. Neither can they
stop what they do not want to do. The dangers of self-financing colleges are far more serious. Most of them, with the exception of just a few, commercialize education. They are run for profit. There is nothing wrong in offering courses of study which are the need of the hour but, in doing so, they charge capitation and high fees. This goes against the core of the National Policy on Education, which seeks equity and social constitution of the country. Investors in self-financing colleges—there are exceptions as—are generally on the quest to earn more and spend little: whole this may not be true of some professional colleges, in most arts and science colleges' teachers are pain little, learner-facilitating programmes are restrained where they involve spending without return. Educators and educational administrators of long experience are not let free to be innovative. Some unscrupulous investors flout regulations, make the worst of loopholes of law and selfishly exploit both teachers and learners. For all the slander, justified and unjustified, that self-financing institutions have attracted, no one can deny the powerful potential they possess to bring about a radical change in the higher education system of the country for the better. If self-financing institutions of higher learning cease to serve only the elite but equally make a commitment to equity and social justice—it is here the public effort may co-partner with the private the quality of education can reach global standards.
Creative Role of the Private Sector: A Prospect:
The inevitability of the participation of the private sector in the effort of providing higher education to the youth of the country has been established beyond doubt. The role of the private sector ought now to change from one of synergetic- and, to some extent, sterile- partnership with the public sector to creative partnership on the one hand, and independent leadership on the other. Both must coexist.

Partnership:
The private sector ought not to set itself up against the public sector, for, education is a common cause bolstered by the concurrent list between the central and the state governments under the purview of which all institutions exist. It is high time we outgrew the juvenile complacency of self-congratulation on having established pockets of private excellence. It is one thing to develop them to global standards but it is totally another to deny their benefits to co-partners in the educational enterprise. Education, unlike, commodities which command market monopoly, is the common free good like air and water and it must flow to everyone without any discrimination whatsoever. Creative partnership between public and private sectors envisages optimization of common sharing of the best human and material
resources across the sectors. It is a misnomer to say that one has all and the other has nothing.

Neither the private nor the public sector alone can manage higher education in the country. Complete privatization does not exist anywhere. In Japan, Korea, Philippines and Latin America mass privatization exists alongside restricted public sectors. In South Asia, Africa and Western Europe a mixed system exists with the domination of the public sector. In Netherlands and Belgium both coexists in Sweden, U.K., France, Spain and Thailand. Partnership and leadership ought to co-exist within the private sector in our own country. All the strategies listed above in the foregoing section may be selectively or collectively tried out in order to lead the higher education of our country out of the present academic and professional stagnation into the rightful place it may take in the context of globalization. Unless complete autonomy is available, as in developed countries, within a minimal regulatory framework, this will have to remain a distant dream.