

Concept and Expansion of Higher Education in India

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ABSTRACT

Education aims at creation of teaching and learning environments not only to produce more knowledgeable, skilled individuals but also to bring about positive changes in the attitudes and values of the learners. Higher education is of vital importance for the country, as it is a powerful tool to build knowledge-based society of the 21st Century it has formed a permanence basis for the progress of human beings and emphasized to make skilled leaders in different fields of the society. The main purpose of this paper is to study the expansion of higher education in India. In India, Higher Education had its roots in early time. It is the outcome of a long socio- historical process of evolution. From the early 5th and 7th century A.D. some educational monks have introduced higher education in India. Since independence higher education in our country has spread rapidly. This is because of the visionary planning of the leader's, educationists and policy-makers of our country.

1. Introduction

In the history of mankind, education has formed a continuum and a basis for the progress of human society. Education being a multipurpose process, not only inculcates social, economic and cultural awareness in humanity, but is also an important medium for grasping and promoting life enhancing values among human beings. Overall growth and development of any country depends on education of her countrymen. It plays a vital role in the life of an individual as well as society. For individual, education helps to discipline the mind, sharpens the intellect and refines the spirit. In case of social change, education has a special significance as stated by the Indian Education Commission (1964-66): "the realization of the country's aspirations involves changes in the knowledge, skills and values of the people as a whole". If this change in a grand scale is to be achieved without a violent revolution, the only one instrument that be used is "EDUCATION".

2. Concept of Higher Education

The term "Higher Education" carries two meaning. At first, it is critical learning which is above the memory level and is known as reflective learning. In this sense higher education is taken as the higher level of learning which has both the individual and social relevance. Secondly, higher education stands for college or university education which too, has both individual and social relevance. It is tertiary level of education and includes the education in colleges, universities and centers of advance studies. This education is beyond the level of post higher secondary education and refers to colleges and universities. But in fact higher educational institutions include professional schools in the field of Law, Theology, Medicine, Business, Music and Art etc. It also includes other institutions like Teachers' Training Schools and Technological Institutions. Moreover, institutions for training of highly skilled specialists in the field of economics, science, technology and culture of various types of higher levels are treated as Higher Educational Institutions. Higher education is accepted as a vehicle for sustainable development and is realized as a powerful tool to build a knowledgeable society. It is the strongest instrument to

make the mankind productive, progressive and powerful. It creates professional statesmen, politician, thinkers, future teachers, researchers, economists, scientists, social activists, knowledge worker and above all the novel human beings who will serve the state or society as effective citizens.

3. Background of Higher Education

In India, Higher Education had its roots in early time. It is the outcome of a long socio- historical process of evolution. From the workings of few Chinese travelers like Fa-hien, Tsang and I-Tsing who visited India in the 5th and 7th century A.D., we have known centers of learning and enquiry at Taxila, Kanchipuram, Nalanda, Odantapuri, Sri Dharryakataka, Kashmira and Vikramashila. Between 629 A.D. to 645 A.D., when Hiuen – Tsang came to India, he found Nalanda University is flourishing a Buddhist center of learning. Nalanda at that time got a world -wide reputation and they follow in sincerity the precepts of the moral laws. The rules of this convent are severe and all the priests are bound to observe them. The country people of India respect them and follow them."

Vikramashila, founded in around 800 A.D. Here grammar, metaphysics, logic, ritualistic books were taught by 108 resident monks and priests. Takshashila, whose site is now in Pakistan was a seat of higher learning in Buddhist literature as well as a Brahamic intellectual center. Here, pupils could get instructions in almost any subject, religious or secular, from the Vedas to Mathematics and medicine, astrology and archery. The admission by measure of excellence, interactive ways of learning combined with intellectual honesty made them world famous. With the establishment of the British Raj in India, India got the Western Education. In the pre-independence period there was very limited access to higher education. From the year 1883 till the independence both the numbers of colleges and enrolment of students in India was very low. Table 1, below shows the picture of higher Education in India from pre-independence to post- independence.

Table 1: Status of Higher Education in India from pre- independence to post independence

Year	1883	1928	1947	1961-62
No. of colleges	139	307	511	666
No. of enrollment	16,088	90,677	1,00,00,000	1,00,00,000

Source: <http://www.education.nic.in>

experiences of the past for further progress in the present and the future.

4. Higher Education in India: Post Independence Era

Indian higher education system has undergone massive expansion in post-independent India with a national resolve to establish several Universities, Technical Institutes, Research Institutions and Professional / Non-professional Colleges all over the country to generate and disseminate knowledge coupled with the noble intention of providing easy access to higher education to the common Indian. The Public initiatives played a dominant and controlling role in this phase. Most of the Universities were Public institutions with powers to regulate academic activities on their campuses as well as in their areas of jurisdiction through the affiliating system. Even the private institutions enjoyed large-scale financial support in the form of grants from the public exchequer. Private funds as well as individuals played key roles in the cause of higher education. The ministry of education took the step in the higher education and appointing a commission on university education under the chairmanship of Dr. S. P Radhakrishnan to report on Indian University education. They recognizes that “If India is to confront the confusion of our times, she must turn for guidance not to those who are lost to the exigencies of the passing hour but to her men of science, to her poets and artists to her discoveries and inventors. These intellectual pioneers of civilization are to be found and trained in the universities, which are the sanctuaries of the minor life of the nation.”

The Kothari Commission (1964-66) report mentioned that the universities are the dwelling places of ideas and idealism. Two decades later, the Govt. of India undertook a comprehensive review of the nation’s education policy. The policy statement which emerged following this review reaffirmed:

“Education is a unique investment in the present and the future.” This cardinal principle is the key to the National Policy on Education. Higher education, according to the 1986 policy provides people with an opportunity to reflect on the critical, social, economic, cultural, moral, spiritual issues facing humanity. The country paper (Govt. of India’s) articulating the vision of India on higher education in 1998 reflected the following important views:

- Education aims at liberation from bondage, ignorance, backwardness and gravitation pulls of the lower human nature.
- Education, being an evolutionary force that enables both the individually and collectively to evolve v
- arious faculties and to integrate them by the superior intellectual, ethical, aesthetic and spiritual power, should aim at highly cultured and integrated society.
- Education should be so designed as to become a powerful carrier of the best of the heritage and it should, therefore, aim at transmitting to the new generations the lessons of the accumulated

5. Influence and current status of Higher Education in India

Higher education occupies a special position in the education system of any country. It influences all levels of education. it influences every important national activity, it provides manpower for many areas like production, planning, management and technological development. It influences on the future of the nation through ideas and innovations. The importance of higher education has been expressed by Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, first Prime Minister of India, in his address to convocation of Allahabad University in 1947:

“A University stands for humanism, for tolerance, for reason, for the adventure of ideas and for the search of truth. It stands for the onward march of the human race towards even higher objects. If the universities discharge their duties adequately, then it will be well with the nation and the people”.

The expansion of Higher education in India after Post Independence is phenomenal. It is more than half a century ever since the government initiated a planned development of higher education in the country particularly with the establishment of University Grants Commission in 1953. During 1950 and 2012 the number of universities has increased from 20 to about 659, and colleges from 695 to 33023, and teachers from 15,000 to 9.46 lakhs. Consequently, enrollment of students has increased from a mere of 0.1 million in 1950 to 25.9 million (UGC Report 2012). From 1980 to 1990 a rapid change took place in the domain of higher education. The global economy is only now beginning to bear upon the international role of higher education. Universities are at present engaged in enrolling international students, becoming partners in inter-institutional schemes and pushing forward in the drive towards globalization. Students, academic staff and curricula are transformed and exchanged between institutions, accreditation agencies. It is only the developments of globalization and liberalization which will play a crucial role in setting the aims, role and functions of the university in the near future. In the last decade, the system of higher education has been reviewed by both government commissioned committees as well as others, for reforms from different perspectives. The focus of these studies broadly has been on the lines of:

- I. growth of institutions,
- II. access to higher education and
- III. enhancing the quality of education. (Kakodkar Committee, Report 2011).

India occupies an important position in respect of higher Education. India’s position in the field of Higher Education system is 3rd after the United States and China. After independence numbers of both the Higher Educational Institutions and number of students have been increasing. The Table:2 and 3 will support the picture described above:

Table: 2 Growth of Higher Education Institutions

Year	No. of Universities	Colleges/ Institutes	Students	Teaching staff
1950-51	30	695	397000	23549
1960-61	55	1542	1050000	56673
1970-71	103	3060	1954000	128876
1980-81	133	4722	2752000	193341
1990-91	190	7346	4925000	263125
2000-01	256	12806	8399000	411628
2010-11	564	33023	16975000	816966

Source: Annual Report 2011-12 MHRD-Govt. of India & Higher Education in India at a Glance 2012.

Table 3: University Level Institutions in India

Type	2002	2006	2007	2009	2010	2011
Central Universities	18	20	25	40	41	43
State universities	178	217	231	234	257	285
Institutions of deemed to be Universities	52	102	102	128	130	129
Institutions of National importance(by State Legislation)	5	5	5	5	5	5
Institutions of National importance(by Central Legislation)	12	13	33	39	39	39
Private Universities	-	10	21	21	61	110
Total	265	367	367	467	533	567

Source: Higher Education in India -strategies and Schemes during 11th Plan Period (2007-12).

6. Place of Women in Higher Education in India

In India, women education started in the British period though it was limited only to primary school level education and only the richer section of the society enjoyed the facility. In 1854 the East India Company acknowledged women's education. The literacy rate for women increased from 2% in 1882 to 6% only in 1947. It goes without saying that for century's higher education of women was neglected. It is fact that in post-independence era the female literacy rate was 8.9%. So, in 1958, the Govt. of India appointed a National Committee for Women Education. The committee submitted the report in favor of women education and Govt. of India accepted it.

There is a possibility of revolutionary change in India's higher education by the participation of Women. It is now seen that enrolment of women in higher educational institutions are growing day by day. In some elite institutions also we find a good number of female students. It is also found that in some competitive higher educational institutions women are gaining entry without availing gender quota. Since independence we find a phenomenal growth in respect of women students' enrollment in higher education. In the year 1947, less than 10% of the total women enrolment has increased up to 41.5% in the year 2010-11. The literacy rate before independence was 2.6% in 1961 to 15.3% by the year 2001. Now as per the report of

census 2011, the male literacy rate is 82.14% while female literacy rate is 65.46%.

Now it is the time to recognize the women's role to make society as well as education. They have all kinds of potentiality to make or building the society than that of men. Since initiation of the society women's deprived from all kinds of facilities like education, culture etc. most of the time authority of the women like 'moral', father, husband and society create hindrance on their forward looking thinking. But now we can see that the attitude towards women's education has been changed.

7. Conclusion

There have been considerable advancements in the field of higher education over the years, and it continues to develop and change in response to the changing needs of the academic world. Considering the importance of higher education, policy makers and administrators have to understand the trends and contemporary issues about the higher education in order to improve the higher education systems. This study underlines the expansion of higher education during the period of pre and post-independence era which contribute to an increased understanding of the growth of higher education institutions, enrollment, faculty and University level institutions, place of women in higher education.

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