

# **Modern Education**

## **Progress of Education After Independence**

### **Introduction**

On August 15, 1947 India attained independence from the British domination. This gave the people of the country the first fullest opportunity to mould their educational policy according to the needs of the nation in the fast changing times. But this opportunity was not free from heavy responsibilities that lay ahead for reorienting the entire system of education, which apart from enabling the coming generations to develop their natural faculties may also enable them to rebuild a new India. The content of learning, which from the very beginning of the British era had been mainly of a general and theoretical nature, had to be given a practical basis. The country needed a large number of technicians, engineers, doctors, scientists and other skilled workers who could impart a new shape to various things in the developing economy of the country, which had been languishing under colonial exploitation for about two centuries.

The most important problems in the field of education before the national government were the expansion of facilities for mass compulsory elementary education, reform of the secondary and university educational systems, to develop vocational and technical education at various levels, to encourage women education and also to reorganize the structure of educational administration. With a view to fulfill all these objectives, the Central and State Governments have been endeavouring to give a concrete shape to various programmes under the Five-year Plans.

### **Administration of Education**

Since 1947, Education Department in the Center has developed in a full-fledged Ministry under the Central Government. The education at the State level is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments; the Union Government is concerned only with the coordination and determination of academic standards in respect of higher education, research and scientific and technical education. The problem of standards and co-ordination in the sphere of higher education is now the responsibility of the University Grants Commission. Co-ordination in regard to primary and secondary education is secured through All-India Councils. The Union Government is also managing Central Universities of Delhi, Aligarh, Benaras and Shantiniketan and other such institutions of national importance as may be decided by the Parliament of the country. The Central Advisory Board of Education lays down the general educational policy. The Board has four Standing Committees dealing with the primary, secondary, university and social

education. These Standing Committees formulate aims and objectives, assess present position and draw up future plans of development in their respective fields.

In the States there is an Education Minister assisted by subordinate Ministers and then a secretary to execute the government's plans. The Director of Education controls the Elementary and Secondary education in states with the help of inspectorate, which is directly responsible for the supervision of schools. The Universities in India are purely autonomous bodies, where as secondary institutions are partly under the State Government, partly under local bodies and largely under private control, but recognized and aided by the State departments of education. The majority of educational institutions are managed on grant-in-aid basis, by non-governmental agencies, such as local bodies, religious or denominational trusts, private associations or individuals.

### **Modern Education System in India**

Soon after gaining independence in 1947, making education available to all had become a priority for the government. As discrimination on the basis of caste and gender has been a major impediment in the healthy development of the Indian society, they have been made unlawful by the Indian constitution. The 86th constitutional amendment has also made elementary education a fundamental right for the children between the age group 6 to 14. According to the 2001 census, the total literacy rate in India is 65.38%. The female literacy rate is only 54.16%. The gap between rural and urban literacy rate is also very significant in India. This is evident from the fact that only 59.4% of rural population is literate as against 80.3% urban population according to the 2001 census.

The present education system in India mainly comprises of primary education, secondary education, senior secondary education and higher education. Elementary education consists of eight years of education. Each of secondary and senior secondary education consists of two years of education. Higher education in India starts after passing the higher secondary education or the 12th standard. Depending on the stream, completing graduation in India can take three to five years. Postgraduate courses are generally of two to three years of duration. After completing post graduation, scope for doing research in various educational institutes also remains open.

There are quite a good number of educational institutes in India that can compete with the best educational institutes of the world. The Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), Indian Institutes of Science, National Law Schools, Jawaharlal Nehru University are some such institutes. The growing acceptance of distance learning courses and expansion of the Open

University system is also contributing a lot in the democratization of higher education in India.

### **Higher Education: Situation after independence**

Since the beginning of modern university education in India towards the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, universities have been criticized for their shortcomings and limitations. Universities are the seats of higher learning from where the society gets its leaders in sciences, arts and various other fields of national life. *“If India is to confront the confusion of our times, she must turn for guidance, not to those who are lost in the mere exigencies of the passing hour, but to her men of science, to her poets and artists, to her discoverers and inventors. These intellectual pioneers of civilization are to be found and trained in universities, which are the sanctuaries of the inner life of the nation.”* The aim and purpose of higher education is to provide an integrated and coherent picture of the creation. It is through education that we must obtain a sense of perspective, a synoptic vision and a coordinated view of the different items of knowledge.

Education is not knowledge or information. It is, in fact, a training of mind and a training of spirit; it should aim at imparting both knowledge and wisdom. University education in India must aim at providing the knowledge and wisdom, which are necessary attributes of a fuller personality. Unfortunately, universities in this country have been working under severe limitations and hence suffer from all possible ills, which would vitiate an unhampered academic growth.

After independence, considerable changes in the political, social and economic structure of the country took place throwing greater responsibilities and challenges before the universities to provide leadership, guidance and qualified personnel in various fields of national reconstruction. The academic problems assumed new shapes and universities had wider conception of duties and responsibilities before them. They had to meet a growing demand for every type of higher learning- literary and scientific, technical and professional. It began to be realized that universities in an independent India must play a fuller role of nation- building and enable the country to attain freedom from want, disease and ignorance in the shortest possible time, by the application of the knowledge of science and technology in the development in various directions.

Some of the main events in the sphere of university education during the post-independence period have been the appointment of the University Education Commission in 1949, the establishment of the University Grants Commission in 1953 and the passing of the UGC Act in March 1956 by the Parliament and establishment of a number of national laboratories and other institutions of Higher Technical and

Engineering Education. Out of these events the appointment of the University Education Commission could be regarded as an epoch-making event.

### **The University Education Commission (1948-49)**

The setting up of the University Education Commission popularly known as the Radhakrishnan Commission in 1948 was a major landmark for enunciating the goals and objectives of higher education in Independent India. This Commission was appointed under the Chairmanship of Dr. Sri. S. Radhakrishnan. The Commission was required to study the problem of university education in the country and to suggest measures for its reforms keeping in view the needs and aspirations of the people. The then Minister of Education, Abdul Kalam Azad inaugurated this Commission on December 6, 1948 and gave it the necessary directions.

The Commission made, after extensive deliberations, some very significant recommendations, many of which are pertinent even in the contemporary context. **The recommendations were as follows:**

1. The aim of education must be to awaken and promote the innate ability of a person and to train him/her for development of self and democratic attitudes. Thus, the purpose of education is to acquaint an individual with his/her cultural heritage and to impart professional and vocational training.
2. The Commission emphasized the role of post-graduate education, training and research for the advancement of knowledge.
3. It stressed the university's role in studying agriculture in an agrarian economy like India and suggested that special attention should be paid to the development of higher education in rural areas. It also emphasized that the scientific and technical base of the education system should be strengthened.
4. Realizing the importance of the medium of instruction, the Commission recommended that English as a medium of instruction in higher education should be replaced as early as possible by an Indian language.
5. A university degree should not be required for government administrative services. Special State examination for recruitment to various State services should be organized.
6. Realizing the deficiencies of the examination system and the magnitude of the wastage, the Commission recommended a thorough study of the scientific methods of educational testing and appraisal.

In subsequent years, several Commissions and Committees were also appointed by the government for educational restructure and changes in the system of higher education in India. The important documents that have been published are:

1. Report of the Education Commission, 1964-66

2. National Policy on Education, 1968
3. Draft Policy on Education, 1978
4. National Commission on Teachers-II, 1983
5. Challenge of Education: A Policy Perspective, 1985
6. National Policy on Education, 1986
7. National Policy on Education: A Programme of Action, 1986
8. Towards an Enlightened and Human Society- A Perspective Paper on Education, 1960
9. National Policy on Education: A Programme of Action, 1992

Some of these documents will be discussed hereafter.

### **Secondary Education Commission (1952-53)**

On September 23, 1952, the Government of India appointed the Secondary Education Commission under the Chairmanship of Dr. A.L. Swami Mudaliar. Also known as the Mudaliar Commission after his name. The Commission studied the various problems of secondary education in the country and submitted its report on August 29, 1953 in 240 pages consisting of 15 chapters. The Commission was basically required to study deeply the various problems of secondary education and to suggest measures for reforms on aims, teaching arrangements, organization, the relationship of secondary education with primary and university education, the useful pattern of secondary education for the whole country. The Commission pointed out various defects in the existing pattern of secondary education and suggested various reforms. **The Commission gave the following recommendations:**

The Commission advocated that the aim of secondary education is to produce ideal citizens, to develop capacity for earning money, to develop human virtues and to develop the quality of leadership in students. Character formation and development of personality should be the main aim of secondary education. Secondary education should be for children between 11 to 17 years of age and these seven years should be divided into two parts-the Junior High School stage for three years and High School stage for four years. The Commission also suggested some changes in the Secondary school curriculum. Agriculture should be made compulsory subject for schools in villages and home science should be made compulsory for girls. Multipurpose schools should be opened according to the needs and interests of the students. Mother tongue or the regional language should be made the medium of instruction.

The Commission recommended that the curriculum should be diversified. It emphasized on vocational courses and suggested that at the Middle School Stage, the curriculum should include languages, social studies, general sciences, mathematics, art and music, craft and physical education. It also gave important suggestions pertaining to suitability of textbooks and improving their quality. The aim of the method of teaching should not be merely imparting of knowledge, but also inculcating desirable values and proper attitudes and habits of work in the students. Learning should be through purposeful, concrete and realistic situations.

The Commission also felt that in order to broaden the pupil's understanding of the scope, nature and significance of various occupations of industries, proper arrangements should be made for their guidance and counseling. The Commission laid stress on physical welfare of the students by providing suitable medical facilities in the school. As far as examination system is concerned the Commission suggested that the number of external examinations should be reduced and the element of subjectivity in the essay type tests should be minimized by introducing objective tests and also by changing the type of questions.

The Commission has suggested a uniform procedure for the selection and appointment of the teachers. The Mudaliar Commission suggested that there should be a Director of Education in every State to advise the Minister and should have a direct access to the Minister concerned. Finally the Mudaliar Commission made recommendations to improve the financial conditions in the realm of secondary education. There should be a close cooperation between the Center and the State in matters connected with reorganization and improvement of secondary education.

Thus, we see that the Commission has given numerous practical suggestions for the reforms of secondary education in the country. The Commission has drawn our attention to the various defects of the existing system of secondary education. There is no doubt that inspite of some defects of the recommendations of the commission; if the suggestions had been implemented in full, secondary education in the land would have improved to a great extent.

### **Narendradeo Committees on Secondary Education**

Two Narendradeo Committees were set up to suggest reforms in secondary education. The First Narendradeo Committee was set up in 1939 during the First Congress Ministry in U.P. The Committee recommended Hindustani as the medium of instruction for children between 7 and 14 years of age. It gave

some suggestions for Basic Education and Secondary Education. The Second Narendradeo Committee was set up in 1952-53. The current system of secondary education in U.P. is a contribution of this Committee.

### **Education Commission (1964-66)**

After the achievement of independence our leaders introduced Five Year Plans with a view to effect the development of the country in various fields. In these plans education, too, found an important place. So plans have been made for the development of various stages and kinds of education. However, the execution of these plans made aware of certain inherent weaknesses due to which the expected success was not being achieved. Education appeared to be one of the areas, which indicated many problems and needed efforts for immediate solutions. Thus, the Government appointed the University Education Commission in 1948 and Secondary Education Commission in 1952 for suggesting reforms in education. The recommendations of these Commissions could not be implemented in their entirety. Consequently the defects in the area of education persisted. For removal of these defects the Government of India appointed an Education Commission in 1964 under the Chairmanship of Dr. D.S. Kothari. The Commission is thus popularly known as 'Kothari Commission'.

The purpose of the Commission of 1964, too, was to study the various problems of education in the country and suggest measures for their removal. This Commission basically emphasized on education for national development. The Commission asserted that the progress of the country, development of finance, social security and welfare activities could be ensured only through education. Therefore, education should be given highest priority in any scheme of national development. The Education Commission opened its report thus: *'the destiny of India is now being shaped in her classrooms. This, we believe, is no more rhetoric. In a world based on science and technology, it is education, that determines the level of prosperity, welfare and security of the people.'*

The report emphasized that the universities are the dwelling places of ideas and idealism, and expected high standards of conduct and integrity from all the members. They must be continuously engaged in the pursuit of truth and excellence in all its diversity, a pursuit that needs above all, courage and fearlessness. In its comprehensive report, the Education Commission proposed that education should:

- address the problems of national development, particularly issues concerning self-reliance, economic growth, employment and social and national integration;
- relate to the life, needs and aspirations of the people;

- help improve productivity by emphasizing work-experience, vocationalization, improvements in scientific and technological education and research;
- be perceived as the main instrument of change through human development;
- contribute to social and national integration;
- modernize the society through knowledge and its applications and
- inculcate social, moral and spiritual values in the people.

The Kothari Commission said, *"While the fundamental values to which the universities owe their allegiance are largely unrelated to time and circumstances, their functions change from time to time. Their tasks are no longer confined to the two traditional functions of teaching and advancement of knowledge. They are assuming new functions and the older ones are increasing in range, depth and complexity."*

The Commission emphasized that the Universities must learn to encourage individuality, variety and dissent within a climate of tolerance. The Indian universities should strive to assist the schools in their attempts at qualitative self-improvement. Universities should conduct experimental schools, run advanced courses for teachers in various school subjects, assume greater responsibility for the training of teachers at all levels, develop new curricula, text books and teaching materials. Most important responsibility is to lower the dominant place given to examinations, to improve the standard in every aspect and by a symbiotic development of teaching and research, to create at least a few centers comparable to those of their type in any other part of the world.

**The Commission set out the following functions for the universities in the modern world:**

- To seek and cultivate new knowledge, to engage vigorously and fearlessly in the pursuit of truth and to interpret old knowledge and beliefs in the light of new needs and discoveries;
- To provide the right kind of leadership in all walks of life by helping the individuals develop their potential;
- To provide society with competent men and women trained in all professions who, as cultivated individuals, are imbued with a sense of social purpose;
- To strive to promote equality and social justice and to reduce social and cultural differences through diffusion of education;
- To foster in the teachers and students, and through them in the society generally, the attitudes and values needed for developing the 'good life' in individuals and society;



- To bring the universities closer to the community through extension of knowledge and its applications for problem solving.

### **National Policies on Education**

The necessity of national policy on education cannot be over emphasized, as it is related to the essential development of a country. It was in 1968, for the first time that a national policy on education was formulated for preparing suitable hands for shouldering responsibilities in the various fields of our national reconstructions. Number of programmes was included in this policy viz. free and compulsory education, development and protection of all the Indian languages, equality of educational opportunities, identification of gifted children, provision of work experience and national service scheme, science education and research, education in Agriculture and Industries, reform in examination system, part time education and correspondence curriculum, expansion of literacy and adult education and sports and games.

On April 20, 1986 a New Educational Policy was placed before the Indian Parliament for consideration and approval. It was a result of the renewed priority assigned to Education by the Government of Late Shri Rajiv Gandhi. The policy had the following objectives:

1. Vocationalization of education; particularly at the secondary stage of education, the curriculum should be job-oriented.
2. To awaken people about the various scientific and technological developments and to make the students at the various stages of education aware of the same in order that they may utilize them in their future life.
3. To encourage the governmental and non-governmental efforts for wiping out illiteracy and to emphasize the necessity of adult education, formal education and open schools.

The basic recommendations of the policy were related to national form of education, more emphasis on learning, delinking degree for any service, vocationalization of education, importance on moral values, emphasis on reforms in the examination system, education of the weaker section of the society, starting of an All India Educational Service, starting of Open Universities, establishing many Navodaya Vidyalayas, women education, Operation Blackboard and preservation of culture.

For raising the standard of women, special attention has been paid on their education in the new educational policy. In order to minimize the prevailing distinction between men and women, it has been recommended that in technical and vocational education women should be accorded due place. It was also

suggested that textbooks hinting at distinction between men and women in providing facilities should be rewritten according to the new education policy.

The National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 and its Programme of Action (POA), which was the result of deliberations, consultations and consensus was reviewed and updated in 1992. The introductory part of the POA envisages that given the rich diversity of our nation it would be in the fitness of things if each State and Union Territory formulates a State POA in accordance with their situational imperatives as well as with the POA, 1992.

National Front Government entrenched at the Center as early as 1990 formed an Education Committee under the Chairmanship of Sarvodaya leader Prof. Ram Murti. The purpose was to examine old education policies and to suggest new measures for promoting industrialization and development of rural areas of the country. Also, it suggested suitable measures for decentralization of educational system and for making the Operation Black Board Scheme of 1986 policy more successful. The Committee further advised to point out ways and means for reorienting higher education.

### **Janardan Reddy Report, 1992**

Janardan Reddy Committee was appointed in 1992 in order to make a detailed examination of the Report submitted by Prof. Ram Murti in 1990 under the Central Advisory board of Education. It was basically formed to look into the educational progress of scheduled castes and tribal people and to do the needful for bringing these people upto a desirable educational standard according to their inherent capacity and expressed desire. The Reddy committee further recommended that all the state government in the country should appoint similar committees in their separate jurisdictions in order to educate the scheduled caste and tribal people as much as possible. The Committee emphasized the development of a common school system in order to provide all the needed facilities to the so far neglected backward class people. It also emphasized that Navodaya Vidyalaya school should be established in all the districts of each and every state of the country.

The Committee also gave suggestions with regard to free and universal education of the children, adult education, and vocationalization of secondary education, university education, teachers' training and financial provision. It also recommended for the appointment of AICTE i.e. All India Council for Technical Education. It suggested that a new system of education should be established where the load of the school bag of children will definitely be reduced.

### **Some Experiments in Indian Education**

Although the Britishers succeeded in crushing the Indians physically, yet they could not change the Indian's mental defiance. The revolution was crushed but the sparks continued to emanate and the fire of revolution remained burning in the hearts of Indians. One of the sparks that emanated from this fire was that of educational revolution. Men in position made efforts to open such educational centers that followed the education pattern of Vedic and Buddha era and was also in keeping with the pattern followed by the other progressive nations of the world.

It was decided to impart education of nationalism, cooperation and social unity, besides various other subjects. It also aimed at creating in the student love for the country, for society, for independence and for human beings and boycott foreign language, dress, communalism and untouchability. Consequently some such institutions were founded that did not have any interests in the Government financial help and its educational policy. The important ones among these were the Viswa-Bharti, Vanasthali Vidyapeeth, Gurukul Kangri, Jamia Milia, Aurobindo Ashram, S.N.D.T. University, Vidhya Bhavan, Udaipur etc. In the beginning although these institutions had people's inner sympathy, they did not receive their solid and open support because of the Government's wrath. But in course of time with the appearance of Mahatma Gandhi on the political horizon of the country and also of a number of political parties, these institutions received encouragement. These institutions continued their struggle for life during the British in the hope of a better future atmosphere and started developing after the country achieved freedom. Today these are the one of the most renowned institutions not only in India but also in the world.

### **Progress of Technical and Vocational Education**

A common charge, which is leveled against the Indian education, is that it is, from the very beginning, literary in character and that it lacks seriously in vocational, industrial and technical aspects. Nearly all the Commissions and Committees appointed on Indian education from time to time, have reiterated this complain. After independence the attention of the country has been focused on this deficiency and efforts have been made in the sphere of technical and vocational education. The Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) and the Kothari Commission (1964-66) have emphasized the importance of vocationalized education and they have recommended that education at least upto secondary stage must be vocationalized. The Kothari Commission also emphasized the need of production-oriented education and the necessity of work experience for all students at all the stages of education.

Many of the recommendations of Education Commission for vocationalization of education could not be fully implemented. Some multi-purpose schools were started according to the Secondary Education Commission, but this scheme was ultimately stopped because it could not succeed. The Basic Education Scheme as advocated by Mahatma Gandhi was a definite step towards vocationalization of education but the Government has not been able to promote this scheme well.

As far as Commercial education is concerned during the period between 1857-1902, it did not show any marked progress like agriculture education. Except the Punjab University, no other university had recognized it. However, commercial education did make progress during 1902- 1950. By 1936, the number of colleges imparting commercial education was eight. The first Commerce College was founded at Bombay in the year 1913. Later on, the facilities of Commerce were instituted in Calcutta, Dacca, Allahabad, Delhi, and Lucknow universities. During 1946-47, the number of commerce colleges was 14 and that of schools 296. Commerce faculties had been established nearly in all the universities upto 1950. Besides, in many degree colleges, commerce department had been opened like Arts and Sciences ones. Education in this subject was introduced in Middle, High School and Intermediate Classes also.

Vocational and technical education in India has developed mainly in relation to assessed future demand for manpower and has largely been responsible for the growth of our industrial structure. According to the Planning Commission, *“The technical education system represents a national resource of science and technology with specialized laboratories, sophisticated instrumentation facilities and more importantly, teams of highly qualified scientific and engineering personnel on their faculty. These internal resources should be utilized not merely towards technological self-reliance but also to bring about progressive improvement in the quality of technical education.”*

### **Educational Development: Current Scenario in India**

The various States of the country are made responsible for progress of education in their respective areas, but the Centre also shares responsibility in some fields of education. According to the Constitution Amendment of 1976 some of the subjects of education have been placed under the joint responsibility of the State and the Centre. The Centre is responsible for determining the standard of higher research, science education, technical education and higher education. Aligarh University, Banaras Hindu University, Hyderabad University, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, Visva Bharti University, Shantiniketan and North Eastern Hill University, Shillong and some other centers of higher learning have come under the direct control of the Central Government. All Educational Institutes, Scientific and Technological Institutes of

national importance are run on the finances obtained from the Center. Hence, these are under the control of the Central Ministry of Education. Educational planning and education of the backward classes are also the responsibility of the Center.

The Universities in India in the present times can be classified in various categories like Central Universities, State Universities, Deemed Universities, Private Universities, Agricultural universities, Institutes of National Importance and Open Universities. These universities play an important role not only in the sustenance of a just and vibrant society but also in the continuation of its rich democratic tradition.

After independence, the number of institutions has increased significantly. The expansion of the system normally refers to one, or a combination of an increase in the number of institutions; a growth in student enrolment; an increase in the number of teaching and non-teaching staff, the diversified structure in terms of courses, institutional structures and management styles; and an enhancement of expenditure on the operation and development of the system. India's higher education system is the largest system of higher education in Commonwealth countries and second largest in the world with 25 Central Universities, 231 state universities, five institutions established through state legislation, 100 deemed universities, 31 Institutes of National Importance as on 31st December 2007. In 2008, the total number of university level institutions including 11 private universities was 431, number of colleges- 20,677, teachers was 5.05 lakhs and the number of students enrolled was 116.12 lakhs. Realizing the urgent need of revamping the Indian higher education system the Ministry of Human Resource Development recently proposed to establish 8 new Indian Institutes of Technology, 7 Indian Institutes of Management and 30 Central Universities under the 11th five-year plan.

The Government of India is responsible for arranging, allocating and distributing financial resources required by the University Grants Commission (UGC) for the establishment of Central Universities in India. The responsibility rests on the Central Government to devise policies with a view to improve the quality of higher education in India. Improving the quality of and access to higher education and research in India has become all the more important keeping in view the growing need of qualified human resources in various sectors of the economy.

The Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) has been constituted to assist in the functioning of the two Governments and ensure that parity is maintained in the field of higher education. Open Universities provide the facility of distance education to people who are unable to pursue regular courses. Distance

education is provided on academic, technical and professional subjects. These universities offer undergraduate, post-graduate and doctoral programmes. They also offer diploma and certificate level courses. As Agriculture plays an important role in the Indian Economy, setting up of adequate number of Agricultural Universities were considered very important in India.

### **Technical Education**

The technical education system in the country covers engineering, technology, management, architecture, pharmacy etc. The Ministry of Human Resource Development supports the programmes at undergraduate, graduate, post-graduate and research levels. The technical education system at the central level comprises of Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), Indian Institute of Management (IIMs), Indian Institute of Sciences (IISc), National Institutes of Technology (NITs) and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).

### **Professional Education**

Higher education also deals with the professional education. For this a network of public and private polytechnics and vocational institutions, controlled and supervised by the councils specializing in each discipline, exist. Professional councils, like All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), Distance Education Council (DEC), National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), Medical Council of India (MCI) and others are responsible for recognition of courses, promotion of professional institutions and providing grants to undergraduate programmes and various awards.

### **Adult Education**

Our Government has rightly chosen to educate the illiterate adults. In the education of adults the emphasis has not been only on making them literate, but an attempt is also made for education of the personality in order that they may fulfill the responsibilities of citizens of a democracy intelligently. In 1973 a Programme of Adult Education was launched. Its objective has been to educate 30 crores adults within the age range of 15-35 years by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The main purpose of this Adult Education Programme is to increase the working efficiency of the adults and to create in them a social and national consciousness.

### **Women Education**

The Government has paid special attention on women education since 1957-58. In the programmes made for the same special provisions have been made for arrangement of stipends, appointment of lady,

residential accommodation for women teachers and training of women teachers. By 1995 i.e. within 48 years the progress of women education had reached such a point that there remained little difference between the percentage of educated boys and girls. Under Adult Education Programme for women the objectives have been to make women over 15 years of age literate and to make them economically self-dependent by educating them and developing other skills in them. Another aim has been to give them training in rearing up children, family planning and information about health principles; also to acquaint them with the laws relating to women's rights in order to raise their social status and to inform the Government about the atrocities committed against them at times.

### **Rural Higher Education**

The purpose is to impart higher education to youths of rural areas after secondary education in order to enable them to contribute in the development of rural community. The programme was started in 1956.

### **Educational Research and Training**

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) was established by the central Government in 1961 for implementing the educational policies and plans of the Central Ministry of Education. The Council contributes in the educational progress by cooperating with various universities in the country and Boards of Education in various States. The Council runs four Regional Colleges of Education situated in Ajmer, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar and Mysore. These colleges train teachers and arrange for in-service training of teachers during summer also.

### **Development of Languages**

It may be divided into three parts- development of Hindi national language, development of Indian languages and development of English. The Central Government has established a Kendriya Hindi Sansthan at Agra, which makes researches in new Hindi teaching methods, constructs Hindi teaching materials, publishes Hindi books, awards degrees to trainees. For the development of other Indian languages, a Central Institute of Indian languages has been established. The Central Government has opened at Hyderabad the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages. The Institute prepares curriculum for teaching English and other foreign languages and conducts researches in foreign languages.

### **Youth Services in India**

In India there are many Youth Services, which work towards promoting physical, mental, social and cultural development of our youths.

- **Nehru Youth Center**

Constructive work for youth between 15 and 35 years of age, informal education, competitive sports and games, community service work and land improvement work are the main activities of these centers.

- **National Service Scheme**

This Scheme was enforced in 1969 for under-graduate boys and girls. Their chief activities are co-operation in spreading literacy and constructive work through free labour, planting trees, cleaning dirty colonies etc.

- **All India Board of Sports and Games**

This Board has been established for promoting physical, mental, moral and social developments of the youths. This Board has appointed a committee of sports and games, which sends suggestions to universities, schools of various States, state boards of sports and games and federations of sports and games. It is on the advice of this National Board that players are sent to foreign countries to participate in international games and sports.

Besides the above Board at the Centre, there is another National Organization of Sports, which gives training in sports and games to the selected youths of universities and colleges in the country. The two institutions, which are playing leading roles in the field of physical development of youths of the country, are The Netaji Subhash National Institute of Sports, Patiala and Lakshmibai National College of Physical Education, Gwalior.

Apart from the several hundred state universities, there is a network of research institutions that provide opportunities for advanced learning and research leading up to a PhD in various branches of science, technology and agriculture. Several have won international recognition. 25 of these institutions come under the umbrella of the CSIR - Council of Scientific and Industrial Research and over 60 fall under the ICAR - Indian Council of Agricultural Research. In addition, the DAE - Department of Atomic Energy, and other ministries support various research laboratories.

The following autonomous institutions established by the University Grants Commission oversee **accreditation for higher learning:**

- All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)
- Distance Education Council (DEC)
- Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)
- Bar Council of India (BCI)



- National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)
- National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE)
- Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI)
- Medical Council of India (MCI)
- Pharmacy Council of India (PCI)
- Indian Nursing Council (INC)
- Dental Council of India (DCI)
- Central Council of Homeopathy (CCH)
- Central Council of Indian Medicine (CCIM)
- Veterinary Council of India (VCI)

The Indian Education System is generally marks-based. However, some experiments have been made to do away with the marks-based system, which has led to cases of depression and suicides among students. In 2005, the Kerala government introduced a grades-based system in the hope that it will help students to move away from the cutthroat competition and rote learning and will be able to focus on creative aspects and personality development as well.

### **SC/STs and OBCs**

The Government has reserved seats for SC/STs in all areas of education. Special scholarships and other incentives are provided for SC/ST candidates. Many State Governments have completely waived fees for SC/ST students. The IITs have a special coaching program for the SC/ST candidates who fail in the entrance exams marginally. Seats have been reserved for candidates belonging to Other Backward Classes as well in some states like Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.

### **The University Grants Commission**

The University Grants Commission of India is a Union government body that provides funds for government-recognized universities and colleges. It is the body that provides recognition for universities in India. Its central office is in New Delhi, and it also has a southern regional office in Hyderabad. UGC conducts NET exams for the appointments of teachers in colleges and universities, nevertheless, some years back the NET had been exempted those having M Phil degree to teach at graduation level. However, PhD holders can teach at Post Graduation level since June 2006.

## **The National Knowledge Commission**

The National Knowledge Commission was constituted on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2005 as a high level Advisory Body to the Prime Minister of India. The vision for NKC was articulated in the address of Dr. Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India, “ *The time has come to create a second wave of institution building and of excellence in the fields of education, research and capacity building.*”

### **The Terms of Reference of NKC are:**

- Build excellence in the educational system to meet the knowledge challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and increase India’s competitive advantages in the fields of knowledge.
- Promote creation of knowledge in Science and Technology laboratories.
- Improve the management of institutions engaged in Intellectual Property Rights.
- Promote knowledge applications in Agriculture and Industry.
- Promote the use of knowledge capabilities in making government an effective transparent and accountable service provider to the citizen and promote widespread sharing of knowledge to maximize public benefit.

The report is a compilation of the recommendations submitted by NKC till November 2007 on reforms relating to education. These include viz. Right to Education, English language, Vocational Education and Training, Higher Education, Medical Education, Legal Education, Management Education, Open and Distance Education and Open Educational Resources. Wide consultations on school education, Technical education and encouraging more students in Maths and Science Streams are in process.

### **Recommendations of the Yashpal Committee 2009**

The most recent Yashpal Committee, 2009 emphasized that at the undergraduate level students should be exposed to various disciplines like humanities, social sciences, aesthetics etc., in an integrated manner. This should be irrespective of the discipline they would like to specialize in, whether general or professional higher education like medicine, engineering, etc. Therefore, the Committee recommended that professional institutions, including IITs and IIMs, should be returned to universities in a complete administrative and academic sense by abolishing intermediary licensing bodies. Such a measure will open the possibility of new kinds of course-designing for professional learning in all fields from management and architecture to medicine and engineering. Whether the IITs and IIMs should be returned to universities or not require an intense informed debate, the role played by them cannot be undermined.

The Committee has made a very important recommendation about vocational education which has remained under-developed as it is perceived to be largely for the poor, who either cannot afford academic education or who pass out of poorly-equipped and uninspiring schools with low marks. Students who go for vocational and technical education after completing higher secondary education are deprived of any possibility of pursuing higher education after completing their vocational or technical training. Therefore, the Committee recommended that this sector should be brought under the purview of universities and necessary accreditation to the courses available in polytechnics, industrial training institutions (ITIs), etc. should be provided.

### **Education for all: Targets and Achievements in 11<sup>th</sup> Plan**

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has termed the 11th five-year plan as "*India's educational plan*". The 11th Plan, approved at the meeting of the National Development Council in December 2007, places the highest priority on education as a centered instrument for achieving rapid and inclusive growth. At INR 2.70 lakh crore, it constitutes 20% of the Plan, representing a credible progress towards the target of 6% of GDP. The 11th Five Year Plan presents a comprehensive strategy for strengthening the education sector covering all segments of the education pyramid. It is through universal literacy, access to education and knowledge-based industrial development that India will believably march ahead to join the front ranks of the great nations of the world overcoming the challenges of ensuring that everyone has an access to education and skill building in their activity.

In order to attain the objective of Universalisation of Elementary Education, the Government has enacted the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, which provides for free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of 6-14 years. The RTE Act has come into force with effect from 1.4.2010. This is a historic day for the people of India as from this day the right to education will be accorded the same legal status as the right to life as provided by Article 21A of the Indian Constitution. Every child in the age group of 6-14 years will be provided 8 years of elementary education in an age appropriate classroom in the vicinity of his/her neighbourhood. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), which is the main vehicle for implementation of RTE Act also seeks to attain the objective of Universalisation of Elementary Education in the age group of 6-14 years in a time bound manner. The target fixed vis-à-vis the achievements made under SSA during the 11th Plan period is as under:

Activity	Targets for 11 <sup>th</sup> Plan Achievements during the first three years of 11 <sup>th</sup> Plan (Till 31.12.2009)	
	Target	Achievement
Opening of Primary Schools	20000	29850
Opening of Upper Primary Schools	70000	49920
Construction of Additional Classrooms	887000	631360
Drinking Water Facilities	68000	26209
Toilet Facilities	204000	83641
Teachers sanctioned	818831	181949

In order to strengthen and bring qualitative improvement in school education at Secondary/Senior Secondary stages the following three centrally sponsored schemes have been launched during the current 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan:

- (i) Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan;
- (ii) Schemes for setting up of 6000 Model Schools at Block Level as benchmark of excellence; and
- (iii) Scheme for construction and running of Girls' Hostels for Students of Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools.

The Government have fixed target of achieving 80% literacy, bridging the gender gap of 10 % and minimizing the social and regional disparities by 2012. To achieve this goal, Government has launched Saakshar Bharat, a new variant of National Literacy Mission w.e.f. 1.10.2009. During 2009-10 this programme was rolled out in 167 districts in 19 States to cover 3.83 crore non-literates in over 80,000 gram panchayats under basic literacy programme and to establish 81.007 adult education centres, one each in gram Panchayat, under Continuing Education component. Grant-in-aid of Rs. 325.98 crore has been released to 19 States as first installment of Government of India's share.

As far as the Adult Literacy Programme is concerned the aim is to increase adult literacy to 85% by the end of the 11th Plan period. Of the 30 crore adult illiterates in our country, a significant proportion is not covered under any adult education programme. A programme using the new computer based self-learning system will be framed for the 35+ age group. Currently, literacy programmes cover 598 out of 600 districts

in the country. A computer based functional literacy tool developed by Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has the capacity to make an adult illiterate read a newspaper in 8-10 weeks. This seems as a potential tool, if deployed nationally as a mission, India can become 100% literate within 5 years.

### **Conclusion**

Despite all the efforts to develop the education system in India, access, equity and quality of education in India continue to haunt the policy makers till this date. This has mainly been due to the widespread poverty and various prejudices. The inability to check the drop out rates among the marginalized sections of the population is another cause of worry. Many aspects of the current educational setup demand review and change. Until concrete steps are taken to reformulate our methodology of imparting education, we shall continue to underutilize, even waste our youth, and this could have serious consequences in the future. It would be better to draw an analogy between our education system and the theory of evolution, which states that whenever members fail to modify their reaction in response to the variation in the stimuli, that species is set on the way to extinction. (Mansi Joshi as expressed in *Views paper*) However, the renewed emphasis in the education sector in the 11th five year plan and increased expenditure in both primary and higher education can act as palliatives for the Indian education system.

### **References**

- Jha, D.M., "Higher Education in Ancient India". In Raza, M. (Ed.), *Higher Education in India: Retrospect and Prospect*, New Delhi: AIU, 1991, Pp 1-5.
- Altekar, A.S., *Education in Ancient India*, (5<sup>th</sup> edition), 1957, Varanasi: Nand Kishore and Bros.
- Raza, M. (Ed.), *Higher Education in India: Retrospect and Prospect*, 1991, New Delhi: Association of Indian Universities.
- Nurullah, Syed and Naik, J.P., *History of Education in India during the British Period*, 1951, Bombay: Macmillan.
- Chaube, S.P. and Chaube, A., *Education in Ancient and Medieval India*, 1999, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House.
- Naik, J.P. and Nurullah, Syed, *A Students' History of Education in India: 1800-1976*, 1974, New Delhi: Macmillan.
- Raza, M. (Ed.), *Higher Education in India: Retrospect and Prospect*, 1991, New Delhi: Association of Indian Universities.

Government of India, *Report of the University Education Commission (1948-49)*, 1949, New Delhi: Ministry of Education.

Government of India, *Report of the Education Commission (1964-68): Education and National Development*, 1966, New Delhi: Ministry of Education.

Government of India, *National Knowledge Commission: Compilation of Recommendations on Education*, 2006, 07 & 08, New Delhi: Ministry of Education.

Government of India, *Report of the Yashpal Committee on Higher Education: The Report on 'Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher Education'*, 2008, New Delhi: Ministry of Education.

Basu, Aparna, *The Growth of Education and Political Development in India, 1898-1920*, 1974, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

*UGC Annual Report 2005-06*, New Delhi: University Grants Commission and Selected Educational Statistics, New Delhi: Ministry of Human Resources Development.

Powar, K.B. (Ed.), "The Changing Role and Functions of Universities". In K.B. Powar (Ed.), *Higher Education for Human Development*, 2000, New Delhi: Association of Indian Universities.

Kumar, D., 'Challenges of Rural Development and the Responsibilities of Universities'. In, *What can we do for our Countries? The Contribution of Universities to National Development*, 1988, ACU, London, Pp 457-465.

Soni, Rashmi, *Intellectuals' Expectations from a University: An Exploratory Study*, Ph.D. Thesis, 2007, Department of Education, University of Lucknow, Lucknow.

Gartia, Radhakanta and Dash Jagannath, 'Higher Education in India: A Reality Check', *University News*, 47(02) January 12-18, 2009.

*UGC Annual Report 1996-97 and 2005-06* (New Delhi: University Grants Commission); and Selected Educational Statistics (New Delhi: Ministry of Human Resources Development).

UGC, *Model Act Committee Report*, New Delhi, 1964. P8.

Planning Commission. *Towards Faster and Inclusive Growth: An Approach to the 11<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan*, 2006, Government of India, New Delhi.

- Mehta, Arun C. (1995): **Education for All in India- Myth and Reality**. Kanishka, New Delhi.
- Mehta, Arun C. (1996): '**Reliability of Educational Data in the Context of NCERT Survey**'. Journal of Educational Planning and Administration, NIEPA, July 1996, Volume X, No. 1, New Delhi.
- Mehta, Arun C. (1998): **Education for All in India- Enrolment Projections**. NIEPA and Vikash Publishing House, New Delhi.
- Mehta, Arun C. (1999): '**Status of Education for All in India in the Light of Sixth All India Educational Survey Data**', Occasional Paper No. 27, NIEPA. New Delhi.
- MHRD (2000a): **Selected Educational Statistics: 1998-99**. New Delhi: Government of India.
- MHRD (2000b): **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan: A Peoples Movement for Education for All, Draft Guidelines**. New Delhi: Government of India.
- MHRD (2000c): **Annual Report: 1999-2000**. New Delhi: Government of India.
- MHRD & NIEPA (2000d): **EFA The Year 2000 Assessment, Country Report: India and Other Studies**. New Delhi: Government of India.
- NCERT (1992): **Fifth All India Educational Survey** (Volume I and II). NCERT, New Delhi.
- NCERT (1998): **Sixth All India Educational Survey Statistics on Schooling Facilities**. NCERT, New Delhi.
- Thakur, R. S. and Arun C. Mehta (1999), **Education for All: The Year 2000 Assessment, Core EFA Indicators**, New Delhi.
- Varghese, N. V. and Arun C. Mehta (1999a): '**Universalisation of Upper Primary Education in India - An Analysis of Present Status and Future Prospects**'. National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), New Delhi, February.