Higher Education in Meghalaya

(An Analysis for the Future)

BILORIS LYNDEM (LASO)
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Seeds of learning were sown in today's Meghalaya as early as in the first half of nineteenth century. Higher education proper here came to its own in the beginning of the last century. Even before the British left India, Shillong, capital of composite Assam, came to be known as a salubrious resort for education with some excellent schools and a few colleges for general education. Leaving aside the past of small beginnings in higher education, the state of Meghalaya today has one of the best universities in the north east region of India, the NEHU, under which are affiliated fifty-two colleges of higher learning, all situated within Meghalaya. Expansion has been phenomenal numbers have swelled.

Higher education in Meghalaya An Analysis for the Future tells the whole story of this subject, without twisting historical facts and actual figures, upto the end of 2002. From this point of view, the book is a must-read for students and teachers and everyone interested in education, especially in the story of higher education in Meghalaya. More importantly, the book, from the beginning, does not merely attempt to relate accurate history and figures. It rather has an analytical focus with a clear aim to suggest measures for the future. In short, the future of Meghalaya's higher education is the thrust of the work of Prof. Lyndem and Dr. Siby, and not its past. Higher Education in Meghalaya is, thus, a book of hope. For a state like Meghalaya, small and limited in many ways, focus should really be on human resource building, for which education, and higher education in particular, is the best, if not the only way—the book argues. Two central emphasis of this book are: (i) the decadence of Meghalaya's higher education sector through the mere concentration on general education which is indifferent to the job market can be transformed by diverting expansion to the professional stream, (ii) social indicators point to social decadence and intolerance even among the educated class side by side with higher educational expansion; this needs to be corrected through a re-focusing on the ideal of higher education as the enlightenment/ empowerment of the individual.

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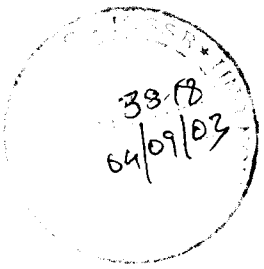

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The preponderant majority of people are convinced that the present system of education, despite many positive contributions in the past, needs radical transformation... It cannot be improved by marginal changes.[1]

Higher Education: Preliminary Remarks

Education is the enlightening and liberating tool in an individual's life. Described poetically as the wealth that thieves cannot steal, moths cannot destroy, kings cannot capture, education is one of the first priorities of the modern human being. Though it had been restricted for the elites of the society in the olden times, largely due to the fear of the ruling class that it might provoke the ruled to rebellion, since the days of the enlightenment, 'education for all' (*sarva siksha abhiyan*) has gradually come to acceptance in societies all over.

However, higher education is the more complex aspect of formal education in its last stages and even though anyone of ability, talent and means in principle may pursue it, generally speaking, it is not conceived as an ideal for all. Higher education, simply speaking, is the education imparted in the post-higher secondary institutions or colleges and universities. Higher education is the period of advanced study following the completion of secondary and higher secondary education. The duration of the study may be from three to six years or more, depending upon the nature and complexity of the programmes pursued. The institution providing higher

education may be either a college or university or a type of professional school or a university. When the basic course of study is successfully completed, usually at the end of three years, the graduate receives a bachelor's degree. He/she may continue for a master's degree, generally requiring an additional two years, and then for a doctorate, which normally requires the candidate to submit a dissertation and to complete a minimum of two or three or more years of further studies. Higher education, which usually includes some general education, is a time for specialized study to qualify the individual for professional activity or for employment in higher positions in business, industry, other private enterprises and government. In recent years, especially in the United States, the trend has been towards requiring a greater number of courses common to all students in order to counteract a growing tendency towards overspecialization. This case is not really applicable to our country.

It is called 'higher' both because it is concerned with the higher stages of formal learning and because what is learned at this 'higher' stage is itself 'higher' in sophistication and depth than what has been learned at the lower stages of formal education. While it is not restricted to anyone in modern societies on the basis of the limitations of birth, higher education is also not thought of as a fundamental right of individuals in most societies, unlike school education. In fact, the modern popularization of the distance and open modes of learning is part of an attempt at democratizing the higher educational system, making it available at low costs and bringing it at the doorstep of people who desire it. Still, one has to pass the hurdle of aptitude and abilities to avail oneself of higher education; one has to do it voluntarily.

Higher education in modern times has become increasingly specialized due to the increase in the quantity and depth of human knowledge itself and increasingly technical and training-oriented in response to the demands of the job market. This development has led to strict formalism in the content of formal courses offered and to the pride of place that research enjoys today as the creator of more and more knowledge.

Objective of Higher Education

The *objectives of higher education* vary according to societies and ideologies that govern them. The choking of education under the Communists and the Nazis are only recent phenomena, still fresh in our memories. In India too different governments and political parties are constantly being accused of tailoring text-books and the educational system itself for suiting their own ideological purposes. There are also thinkers on education who claim that there is a conspicuous lack of a modern educational theory and philosophy the world over.[2] Nevertheless, certain broad aims of higher education may be pointed out here:

Enlightenment/liberation of the Individual

Every form of education is primarily for enlightening and liberating the individual, and so higher education is even more directed towards this aim. In ancient India education was supposed to lead to liberation or *moksha*. In the Graeco-Roman context education had the more liberal aim of making a person 'free' by undergoing a high level programme comprising the study of grammar, logic and rhetoric, called the *trivium*, and arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music, called the *quadrivium*. The Renaissance movement idealized the appreciation of culture, inculcation of values and learning skills – all for the use of present life. Though varying meanings have been given to this noble aim from time to time and according to the changing contexts and ideologies, perfecting the individual is the primary aim of higher education. The more educated a person is, the more he/she is expected to behave properly and know greatly. Every type of education should have an emancipating and liberating influence on the individual; but the emancipation and liberation intended by *higher* education is 'higher' in depth. As Barnett points out:

> ... 'higher education' is essentially a matter of the development of the mind of the individual student... An educational process can be termed higher education when the student is carried on to levels of reasoning which make possible critical reflection on his or her experiences, whether consisting of propositional

knowledge or of knowledge through action. These levels of reasoning and reflection are 'higher', because they enable the student to take a view (from above, as it were) of what has been learned. Simply, 'higher education' resides in the higher-order states of mind.[3]

Research

Higher education is both the repository and creator of knowledge and research consists of the knowledge-creation aspect of higher education. Research is methodical investigation into a subject in order to discover facts, to establish or revise a theory, or to develop a plan of action based on the facts discovered. Research arises from the human curiosity to know more and more. As Aristotle's first statement in the *Metaphysics* reads "All men by nature desire to know." In fact, since research contributes greatly to the society, there is so much money spent on it and so much expectations rest on it. Today, the academic community is judged by its research capacities, even to the detriment of the teaching and training aspects of higher education. Though this is not an encouraging trend, it only shows the importance of progress and advancement attached to learning, marked by the compulsions of the times. Institutions of higher learning should be accountable to the society that invests so much on them – trust, material resources, and its best brains – by way of adding constantly through arduous and authentic research, to the fund of knowledge, especially knowledge that helps the society to progress in every sphere.

Teaching and Training

One of the important functions of higher education is to teach and train the person seeking it. Of course, this must include, and primarily include the fact that the chief aim of higher education is higher *learning* itself. Institutions of higher education should meet the increasing learning needs of the student population with better quality of teaching and training. Higher education is also called to participate in teacher training even outside its own system, so that better teaching and better learning will prevail all over. The teacher's role is not merely to present knowledge in understandable

form, but also to help the student to cultivate the learning habit as an attitude of life. The teacher needs to try to inculcate in his/her students the insatiable desire to pursue learning as a life-time goal. For this, the teacher first and then the student should perceive learning as pleasurable, enjoyable activity. A teacher at the level of higher education should make himself/herself redundant by helping the student to learn by himself/herself. Teaching at this level is more guidance, showing directions, aiding to take up personal research, challenging the student to think independently and arrive at conclusions personally, rather than a job of making someone understand or instruct.

Continuing Education

The static concept of education as attaining the compendium of wisdom has been rejected. Instead education is something to be pursued throughout life; it is a life-long process. Continuing education makes the society a learning society. The introduction of open and distance modes of learning helps knowledge-seekers to continuously update their knowledge levels. The world is fast paced and the quantum of knowledge in different fields is increasing faster than we can imagine. It is the mandate given to higher education by society that it should meet the life-long learning needs of its members not only by way of offering formal courses through modes accessible to the general public without the barriers of age and independently of whether one is employed, but also by publishing research findings, writing and presenting advancing and new knowledge in forms both formal and popular for the benefit of all the members of the society. The challenges of fast-changing, fast-paced life in the twenty-first century necessitate life-long learning habit not as a luxury any more but as an essential requirement. Even though higher education can play a great role in the 'continuing education' of the members of the society, the need for people to return to education in order to deal with new situations arising in their personal and working lives can be satisfactorily met, only when each individual learns how to learn, so that he/she need not pick up formal courses all the time, but can self-learn by doing, by reading and, above all, from experience.[4]

A Neutral and Open Forum for Debate & Preservation of the Intellectual Culture

Higher education is the forum for insightful, useful debate in the society, unstained by partisan considerations and unproved assumptions already taken. Higher education, for this matter, should be autonomous to pursue intellectual freedom and freedom of debate. In some countries, and even in India, universities are often stifled by political ideals and groups and elsewhere they are under siege by religious bigots and other propagandists. Ideally, as the autonomous intellectual nerve-centre of the society, centres of higher education should guide the society and its leaders. The UNESCO report on education in the twenty-first century reiterates:

> In their social role, universities can use their autonomy in the service of debate on the great ethical and scientific issues facing the society of the future, and serve as links with the rest of the education system by providing further learning opportunities for adults and acting as a centre for the study, enrichment and preservation of culture.
>
> Culture should here be considered in its widest sense, ranging from the most mathematical of sciences to poetry, by way of all the fields of the mind and the imagination.[5]

In fact, it is the conservative social function of higher education to preserve and teach the society's cultural values, beliefs, customs and traditions in order to give it stability; its creative role is to enrich the cultural heritage of the society by creating and adding to it new knowledge, ideas, technologies, art and craft forms and teaching its pursuers to think independently; its critical role is to be a critic of the social order, including the negative aspects of the cultural heritage of the society. It is in this critical role that higher education becomes an unprejudiced arena of debate on all the plans, policies, institutions, failures and achievements of the society. Appropriate future directions may be shown towards where society should move next by critically analyzing what movements it has already taken, if higher education were to fulfill its critical role.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development of the society it represents is another crucial aim of higher education. Institutions of higher learning are increasingly pressurized to respond to social situations, not just academically but actively and positively. This aim of higher education may not be a guarantee or prerequisite for academic excellence, but is becoming progressively more acceptable as the best justification and reward for the trust, efforts and resources the society is investing on higher education. We failed to see any better reason for the social relevance of knowledge and the system that stores and transmits it. We quote rather extensively from the UNESCO report regarding the special social role higher education should play in the developing countries:

> As autonomous centres for research and the creation of knowledge, universities can address some of the developmental issues facing society...
>
> Nowhere is the universities responsibility for the development of society as a whole more acute than in developing countries, where research done in institutions of higher learning plays a pivotal role in providing the basis for development programmes, policy formulation and the training of middle- and higher-level human resources. The importance of local and national institutions in raising the developmental levels of their countries cannot be overemphasized. Much of the responsibility for building bridges between the developed, industrialized countries and the developing, non-industrialized countries rests with them. They can also be instrumental in the reform and renewal of education.[6]

Professional Competence for the Labour Market

It is also a fundamental aim of higher education in the twenty-first century to prepare students to be professionally competent in the labour market, if it is to fulfil its place in modern society. As even a predominantly agrarian economy like India is getting more and more industrialized, manual jobs are on the decrease and supervisory, managerial and organizational jobs are on the increase. This scenario has called for intellectual abilities in employees at all levels. Even in agriculture, the sector India still lives by, modern

technologies are becoming popular and this situation demands people who are capable of understanding and coping with them. Employers in most sectors ask for those who can solve new problems and take initiatives, and in the service sector those with general education and an understanding of the human environment. Higher education *per se* cannot be blind to these comparatively new situations, and thus needs to respond with new courses tailored for the purpose and more training in science and technology. Specialized knowledge for managing more and more complex systems should be another priority of higher education as a way of responding to the needs of the society.[7] In a country like India, where graduates in social sciences and humanities greatly outnumber graduates in the sciences and specialized courses, it is truly a priority of higher education to not only design courses in line with the labour market but also popularize them and convince the student population to choose to do courses according to aptitude, possibility of employment and the means available at one's disposal to undertake a particular course. The singular place of career guidance, especially at the higher secondary school level, needs to be emphasized here.

International Cooperation

Globalization is being talked about all over, unleashing a vision of making Planet Earth into a global village, a vision of 'shrinking space, shrinking time, disappearing boundaries.' Envisioned as a holistic concept but practised primarily as an economic exercise, globalization by no means is something from which a country like India can shy away. In fact our economic liberalization measures of the 1990s were part of India's rising up to this new challenge. A critical evaluation of India's decade-long trial at globalization has shown that it has filled our markets with dazzling goods, often killing local initiatives and increased the economic wants of even our lower middleclass without a rise in their purchasing power alongside. Overall effects of globalization had been negative in India though the GNP rose notably during the last two five-year plans, revealing a penchant for making the rich richer and poor poorer. According to the Nobel Laureate, Prof. Amartya Sen, education could make the difference: "If more

people are literate and basic education is ensured for the majority, the effects of globalization could be positive."[8] Of course, he was talking about elementary education, which will aid people to reap the benefits of globalization. The task of higher education is to help evolve a global philosophy of a new culture of cooperation and convergence, shedding conflict and competition, thereby bringing about a consensus:

> that the planet we inhabit and of which we are all citizens – Planet Earth – is a single, living, pulsating entity; that the human race in the final analysis is an interlocking, extended family – *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* as the Veda has it; and that differences of race and religion, nationality and ideology, sex and sexual preference, economic and social status – though significant in themselves – must be viewed in the broader context of global unity.[9]

Higher education, according to the UNESCO report on education in the twenty-first century, has the mandate to bridge the knowledge gap between countries and communities, enriching the dialogue between peoples and cultures. International linking and networking of ideas, research and technologies are the biggest challenge of higher education in this century.[10]

In this context, globalization and internationalization of higher education itself through the open and distance modes of education, which now are in the mainstream of higher education and training, should be brought to light. "It enables students to learn at the location, time and pace of their choice, for far less money and with far greater results."[11] Some authors make a useful distinction between 'globalization and internationalization of higher education,' which is especially relevant for a country like India.

> Globalization of higher education involves a supranationalism that straddles national boundaries, ignoring cultural identity... Increasing mobility of human capital, demands for mutual recognition and globalization of higher education could pose threats to the accreditation of higher education by national systems... and may involve cultural imperialism.
>
> In contrast with globalization, internationalization of higher education recognizes nations and describes a process of

> interchange of higher education between nations. It involves partnerships, between nations, between national systems, between accreditation systems, between institutions.[12]

Among all these aims/goals of higher education, the first objective of emancipation of the individual takes precedence because education, whether higher or elementary, is primarily an emancipating force that dispels the darkness of ignorance and frees the human mind from primitive fears. Higher education should enhance research and contribute to the society and the world order; it should enhance the skills of the individual so that he/she can earn a livelihood; but above all, it must empower the individual. A truly liberal education is not divorced from the world of daily cares or absorbed purely in a heaven of knowledge. The liberal higher education that we mean here while fulfilling these above objectives, will be more importantly judged by the cognitive self-empowerment of the individual. We are in agreement with Barnett's philosophy of higher education here.[13] He writes:

> The graduate is able, intellectually, to stand on his or her own feet, although aware of the predicament of the essential uncertainty (cognitively or morally) of any position taken up or action performed. The well-educated graduate is able to keep an eye on himself or herself, continually looking over his or her own shoulder on the essential insecurity of any stance adopted.
>
> This is not a completely satisfactory situation. But it is the best available.[14]

The relevance of the empowerment/emancipation/liberation ideal of education in a more basic sense than the other more feasible looking ideals in the Meghalaya society – the context of our investigation – will be revealed in the following chapters. With regard to the essence and role of education in India, the National Education Policy, 1986 says:

> In our national perception education is essentially for all. This is fundamental to our all-round development, material and spiritual. (2.1) Education has an acculturating role. It refines sensitivities and perceptions that contribute to national cohesion, a scientific temper and independence of mind and spirit, thus furthering the goals of socialism, secularism and

democracy enshrined in our Constitution. (2.2) In sum, education is a unique investment in the present and the future. This cardinal principle is the key to the National Policy on Education. (2.3)[15]

Higher Education in India: Progress and Problems

India has a long tradition of learning at the highest level, dating back to the pre-Christian times. The centres of higher learning in *ancient India* took a more formal look in the later years but much earlier than the establishment of institutions of higher education in Europe during the medieval times. The Brahmanic University of Taxila in the Northwest of the subcontinent, now in Pakistan, which flourished upto the end of fifth century A.D. taught the Vedas and 18 arts, including medicine and surgery, astronomy and astrology, agriculture and accountancy, archery and snake charming. The Buddhist University of Nalanda in today's Bihar which flourished up to the end of twelfth century A.D. taught the Vedas and the Upanishads, the works of Mahayana Buddhism, Jainism, systems of philosophy and logic. Students here had to study for 12 years. There were other important centres of higher learning contemporaneous with Nalanda like Vallabhi and Kanchi in South India, Vikramashila in Bihar, Banaras in Uttar Pradesh, Nadia in Bengal and Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh.

These centres of learning were characterized by a close *guru-sikshya* bond and an interactive and ascetic style of learning. In ancient India knowledge was acquired for its own sake, never caring about its utility for life. Teaching was considered a noble, sacred job and no formal fee was charged for the imparting of knowledge. Funds for running the centres of learning were largely irregular and were mainly gifts received by teachers and the institutions themselves from students, rich people and kings. However, teachers enjoyed great respect in the society and no one meddled with academic matters – neither kings nor the donors. Indian learning system of old was saturated in academic autonomy for which the system today craves. However, higher education was restricted to some sections of the society and the teacher almost had autocratic powers over what the students learnt.

He was neither curtailed by a syllabus nor by a supervisory agent. Since there was a great deal to prove for someone to be a teacher, a great deal of faith was reposed on him when he became one.

During the *medieval period* of Islamic rule in India, the old centres of higher education lost their ancient glory. Sultan Mohammed Ghori started the first madrasa or religious school in Ajmer. Later Mughal rulers encouraged higher education by opening colleges and granting money or land for the purpose. The curriculum of learning in these times was comparable with the *trivium* and *quadrivium* of the contemporary European institutions, though the medium of instruction was Arabic and Persian.

The system of higher education the country has today is a heritage of the *British rule.* For more than two centuries the British East India Company paid no attention to the education of the Indians. The first step towards Western education in India came when Article 43 of the Charter Act of 1813 of the British Parliament enjoined it as duty of the Company to spend not less than one lakh rupees for the purpose. This injunction largely remained a dead letter both due to the indifference of the Company and reluctance of the Indians. In the 1830s the theory of "downward filtration" of elitist education got formed, according to which mass education was rejected and education of the elites of India was accepted as a government policy under the assumption that the masses will imitate the educated elites and will soon follow suit. In the government there were supporters of oriental/Sanskrit education instead of English education and advocates of mass education. However, even Raja Rammohan Roy, though hailed as the father of modern India and Indian Renaissance, was against both. His letter to the government on 11 December 1823 stated: "The Sanskrit system of education would be the best calculated to keep this country in darkness."[16] To say the least, the 'downward filtration' theory met with failure as the English educated Indians kept themselves aloof from the masses.

Though most people who participated in the debate about oriental against English education supported the former,

people who mattered like Lord Bentick, Lord Macaulay, Raja Rammohan Roy, junior civil servants, missionaries and Anglo-Indians supported the latter. Lord Macaulay was the father of modern system of higher education in India. It was his polemics that defeated those who supported mass education and oriental education and it was on him that Lord Bentick depended the most. The system of higher education he gave shape to was aimed at forming "a class of who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect."[17] Basing on this principle, the British system of higher education in India set out to create a class of Indians faithful to the British regime and useful to it as low-cost man-power to help the administration. Most of the enlightened Indians of the time including Rammohan Roy supported this move and believed that what is acclaimed as the cultural heritage of India will not stand it in good stead in the modern age of progress and development. Our efforts here are not to criticize or justify the developments of history but to state facts in order to bring the problems of Meghalaya in perspective. However, one truth of history vouches for the 'self-empowerment' ideal of higher education; that is, though founded as a tool to efficiently rule the colonial state, higher education in India–which was and is very much English–supplied most of the freedom fighters of India, showing that whatever liberal content remains in education will rule the roost and turn the oppressive contents on their head. The detailed plan of British education in India, formulated by Lord Macaulay in 1935 and popularly known as "Macaulay's Minute" became the basis for the formal establishment of Western education in India. However, there was no marked progress in higher education for the next twenty years or so. There were only 25 colleges in the whole country in 1855 and there was no university.

In fact, the English system of higher education in India was truly born when the British established *three universities in the residency towns of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras* in 1857, which are all today renamed as Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai, respectively. Charles Wood's dispatch in 1854, while standing by "Macaulay's Minute" almost in its entirety,

articulated the scheme of education from the primary level to the university. The three universities that were set up in the model of London University were for conducting examination for twenty-seven affiliated colleges at that time. The first post-graduate degree (M.A) was conferred in 1862 by Calcutta University. In 1882 the Punjab University was set up in Lahore, now in Pakistan, and in 1887 the Allahabad University was set up. In 1913 the Government of India Resolution on Educational Policy decided to institute teaching universities in important centres and examining universities in smaller states, and stressed the need to train teachers and on the importance of research. By 1929 the number of universities in India had jumped to sixteen – some for teaching and others for examining, and on the eve of independence India had nineteen universities. Progress of policy-making regarding higher education and opening new universities was slow during the two decades before independence due to the speeding up of the independence struggle, the Second World War and handing over of the education department to Indian ministers and keeping the finance ministry to the English (that is, responsibility/power with Indians and resources with themselves).

Higher education during the British times was geared towards producing graduates in liberal arts as cheap labour for the colonial administration. Scientific and technological education was not in the British agenda, about 80 per cent of higher education imparted, being of the general category, mainly in liberal arts. This fact is borne by table 1.1:

The total strength of students enrolled in higher education including secondary education increased from 1,26,228 in 1937 to 2,15,000 in 1947. The number of affiliated colleges was 496 including 297 arts and science degree colleges and 199 intermediate colleges. There were also 140 colleges of professional and technical education. Immediately after independence two new universities were opened in 1947 itself and the Punjab University, Lahore, came under Pakistan. Hence, towards the end of 1947 India had 20 universities. In the academic year 1949-50 the number of students at the post-graduate level was 13,700 and those engaged in research was

Table—1.1: Enrolment in Higher Education before Independence[18]

Faculty	*1916-17*		*1947-48*	
	Enrolment	*% of total enrolment*	*Enrolment*	*% of total enrolment*
General	46,484	79.29	6,614	57.16
Law	4,426	9.25	7,576	7.14
Medicine	2,481	4.23	8,850	8.35
Engineering	1,139	2.25	6,437	6.07
Teaching	716	1.22	3,087	2.91
Agriculture	445	0.79	3,759	3.54
Veterinary Science	461	0.79	806	0.76
Commerce	416	0.71	14,658	13.82
Forestry	161	0.27	256	0.24
Total	58,639	100.00	1,06,043	100.00

922. During the independence year there was only 9 per cent of women in the total enrolment in higher education, of which a whopping 87 per cent was doing general courses. This percentage was 10.7 in 1949-50.

The system given shape to by Macaulay was fairly successful in meeting its *objective of creating a governing class.* In fact, India even today has not truly replaced it with another that can serve our socio-economic ambience better. This has produced large-scale unemployment and colossal wastage. And that actually shows the failure of Macaulay's system.

Higher Education in Independent India: Progress and Problems

After independence, the Department of Education, created in 1945, became the Ministry of Education, and subsequently the University Education Commission 1948-49 was constituted under the chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. Radhakrishnan Commission's comprehensive report on higher education circulated in 1949, the first comprehensive attempt at reorganization of higher education since independence, became the basis of much of India's progress in higher education ever since. As recommended by this document the University

Grants Commission (UGC) was founded in 1956. Two prominent functions of UGC are: (i) carefully allocating government grants to the universities and colleges, and (ii) maintaining academic quality in these institutes of higher learning. Before the UGC came into being, there has been the existing Inter-University Board of India since 1925. This organization which suffered an identity crisis since the foundation of UGC became a registered society in 1967 and its name was changed to Association of Indian Universities (AIU) in 1973. Unlike UGC under whose purview the agricultural universities and the Indian institutes of technology do not fall, the AIU embraces all these, other regular universities and deemed universities. While the UGC is a statutory body appointed by, and responsible to, the Union Government, the AIU is an autonomous body which acts as a platform for the universities to assemble, share problems and discover solutions. It acts as a channel of inter-university communication, a passage of information and an arena for coordination and mutual consultation. It has useful publications, a library and documentation centre, sports and cultural activities, a research cell and other innovative schemes. The National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) is another autonomous organization set up by the MHRD to undertake, promote and coordinate research in educational planning and administration, to provide training and consultancy services, to train and orient key level functionaries as well as senior level administrators from the centre and state, to collaborate with other agencies, institutions and orgaisations, and to provide facilities for training and research to other countries, particularly of the Asian region in the field of educational planning and administration, besides preparing, printing and publishing papers, periodicals and books for the furtherance of these objectives. Though dealing not only with higher education, the NIEPA has done wonderful service to the cause of education in general and higher education in particular in this country. It has taken two national-cum-state level surveys on educational planning and administration so far, the first in 1973-74 and the second in the 1990s. There is a useful current series of publication by the NIEPA on innovative practices in higher education in India.

Quantitative growth of higher education in India has been phenomenal since independence. "The Higher Education System has witnessed a thirteen-fold increase in the number of universities, twenty-five-fold increase in the number of colleges and thirty-fold increase in the enrolment of students since independence. There are now 193 Universities, 47 deemed to be universities and five other institutions established through state and central legislation, and nearly 12,342 colleges including around 1,500 (12.3 per cent) women colleges in the country in addition to the unrecognized institutions existing in the higher education sector."[19] Of the 193 universities only seventeen are central universities, funded directly by the Central Government. More statistics on the higher education scenario of India as of today may be gathered from Table 1.2. However, the statistics gathered by the MHRD is not complete. Approximate estimation reveals that in the beginning of the academic year 2001-02 around 80 lakh students have been enrolled for higher education, 11 lakh being in universities and 69 in affiliated colleges. There will be around 96 lakh students in 2004-05, 109 lakh in 2006-07 and 129 lakh in 2007-08. In the year 1950-51 this number was 3.96 lakh and in 1985-86 35 lakh. Around 3.95 lakh teachers are at work in the higher education sector in this country today. In 1950-51 this number was a mere 21,264 and in 1985-86 2.26 lakh.[20] Hence, one can assuredly say with confidence that the Indian higher education sector has had a magical numerical growth. Whether the same can be said of qualitative growth is a matter of debate.

As regards *government funding of education,* it is always said that funds are inadequate and unevenly distributed. The plan expenditure of government's funds for education is meant for expansion of physical facilities such as new constructions and non-plan expenditure is for maintaining the existing infrastructure, and the latter is something like 80 per cent of the total expenditure on education. In the successive Five-Year Plans though the funds for education increased, it has been decreasing in terms of proportion to total plan allocation. Table 1.3 bears testimony to this fact. It is a fact that India cannot even spend 6 per cent of the gross domestic product on education even now. Among the different sectors of education,

Table—1.2: Statistics: Higher Education in India (2000-2001 Provisional)[22]

S. No.	States/UTs	Higher educational institutions				Enrolment								
		Junior colleges	Colleges for general education	Professional education	Universities/ deemed universities and Instt. of national importance	Total No. of boys	Total No. of girls	Total No. of students	Total No. of SC boys	Total No. of SC girls	Total No. of SC students	Total No. of ST boys	Total No. of ST girls	Total No. of ST students
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1.	Andhra Pradesh	12520	998	220	21	406900	224845	631745	62792	29048	91840	16156	6710	22866
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	184	7	1	1	3812	1712	5524	173	234	407	2888	1160	4048
3.	Assam	Information not received												
4.	Bihar	3565	Complete information not received											
5.	Goa	436	20	10	1	6625	9772	16397	69	77	146	20	5	25
6.	Gujarat	Complete information not received				23203	4994	28197	Complete information not received					
7.	Haryana	4228	150	52	5	126326	84566	210892	11269	4149	15418			
8.	Himachal Pradesh	1832	64	9	3	43882	32015	75897	5921	3024	8945	1794	1147	2941
9.	Jammu & Kashmir	1511	33	12	3	26191	21168	47359						
10.	Karnataka	10210	916	304	16	442073	487448	929521	58047	24261	82308	16966	6408	23374
11.	Kerala	4182	186	62	8	79734	12004	201738	9289	14780	24069	685	836	1521
12.	Madhya Pradesh	7943	Complete information not received											
13.	Maharashtra	15337	873	510	28	583763	388802	972565	69987	40162	110149	17696	7462	25158
14.	Manipur	605	50	4	2	14962	13174	28136	420	294	714	3219	2299	5518
15.	Meghalaya	572	33	2	1	7919	7126	15045	297	158	455	6021	5656	11677

(Table Contd...)

Table—1.2: (Contd...)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16.	Mizoram	413	30	1	0	4007	3102	7109	0	0	0	4007	3102	7109
17.	Nagaland	335	33	2	1	4438	3290	7728	62	54	116	4376	3236	7612
18.	Orissa	7196	Complete information not received		8	Complete information not received								
19.	Punjab	Information not received												
20.	Rajasthan	6709				3490	3195	6685						
21.	Sikkim	110	2	2	1	1817	1552	3369	44	59	103	219	252	471
22.	Tamil Nadu	7939	426	215	22	215428	203841	419269	37767	27642	65409	5345	703	6048
23.	Tripura	629	14	3	1	11232	7842	19074	2015	1179	3094	942	492	1434
24.	Uttar Pradesh	9915	758	189	30	662026	929439	1591465	109930	31777	141707	2566	1275	3841
25.	West Bengal	9398	350	82	14	362917	228662	591579	54423	25588	80011	6518	3167	9685
26.	A&N Islands	92	2	1	0	1011	1062	2073	0	0	0	37	37	74
27.	Chandigarh	105	12	8	2	22688	20324	43012	974	1029	2003	215	244	459
28.	D&N Haveli	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
29.	Daman & Diu	25	1	1	0	343	271	614	17	15	32	57	20	77
30.	Delhi	Information not received												
31.	Lakshadweep	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
32.	Pondicherry	194	8	12	2	6785	6298	13083	833	699	1532	64	14	78

Table—1.3:[21] Plan outlay for education in India

(Rupees in crores)

Sl. No.	*Five-year plan*	*Total plan outlay*	*Plan outlay on education*	*Percentage of total plan outlay*
1.	First Plan (1951-56)	1,960	153	7.8
2.	Second Plan (1956-61)	4,672	273	5.8
3.	Third Plan (1961-66)	8,577	589	6.8
4.	Annual Plans (1966-69)	6,625	323	4.8
5.	Fourth Plan (1969-74)	15,779	786	4.9
6.	Fifth Plan (1974-79)	39,426	1,285	3.2
7.	Sixth Plan (1980-85)	97,500	2,530	2.5
8.	Seventh Plan (1985-90)	1,80,000	7,633	4.2
9.	Eighth Plan (1992-97)	4,35,000	19,600	4.5
10.	Ninth Plan (1997-2002)	4,89,361	20,381.64	4.1
11.	Tenth Plan (2002-07)	8,93,183	43,825	4.8

the higher education sector got a clear preference by way of greater plan fund allocation for a long time. This trend is changing. Of a total of Rs.5450 crores as central plan allocation for education in 2000-2001 a whopping Rs.3608.75 crores (67 per cent) was spent on elementary education alone. For secondary education Rs.600 crores (11 per cent), for university and higher education Rs.501.85 crores (9 per cent), for technical education Rs.500 crores (9 per cent), for adult education Rs.120 crores (2 per cent) and for other educational expenses Rs.119.4 crores (2 per cent). In 2001-2002 too, of Rs.5920 crores, Rs.3800 crores (64 per cent) was spent on elementary education, and Rs.648 crores (11 per cent) for secondary education, Rs.575 crores each (10 per cent each) for higher education and technical education, Rs.200 crores (3 per cent) for adult education and Rs.122 crores (2 per cent) for other educational expenses. (See Table 1.4)

Hence, a cursory glance at the allocation of central plan funds in the past two years convinces one that the present national priority of the Government of India with regard to the education sector is elementary education and rightly so. In

Sl. No.	Description of sector	8th Plan		9th Plan		10th Plan	
		Amount in lakhs	%	Amount in lakhs	%	Amount in crores	%
1.	Development of universities and colleges	42,119.07	40.54	1,17,135.55	53.04	2,631	34.52
2.	Promotion of relevance	00	00	24,488.62	11.09	960	12.60
3.	Promotion of excellence and quality		00	25,351.90	11.48	2,054	26.9
4.	Promotion of excellence and research	16,547.23	15.93	00	00	00	00
5.	Inter-university resources for promotion of quality	00	00	14,825.06	6.71	00	00
6.	Manpower development	91,60.05	8.82	00	00	00	00
7.	Non-formal education	1,837.65	1.77	00	00	00	00
8.	Inter-university centres	11,339.08	10.91	00	00	00	00
9.	International cooperation	544.86	0.52	00	00	00	00
10.	Innovative courses in emerging area	10,952.02	10.54	00	00	00	00
11.	Sports and physical education	238.82	0.23	00	00	00	00
12.	Enhancing access and equity	00	00	8,422.49	3.81	700	09.18
13.	Improvement of management and efficiency of higher education	00	00	2,139.18	0.97	257	3.37
14.	Strengthening of UGC administration (establishment)	796.90	0.77	1,534.87	0.69	00	00
15.	Programme to strengthen scientific research	00	00	14,202.25	6.43	680	8.92
16.	Engineering and technology	10,348.58	9.96	12,725.39	5.76	340	4.46
	Total	**1,03,884.26**	**100**	**2,20,825.31**	**100**	**7,622**	**100**

fact, the 93rd Constitutional Amendment Bill, which has been passed in the Lok Sabha in November 2001, seeks to make free and compulsory education a Fundamental Right for children between 6-14 years of age. However, it is rather plain that UGC has a bizarre style of allocating its funds mostly to the central universities with a clear predilection for Delhi where it spends 50 per cent of its funds and 45 per cent of its time. State universities and affiliated colleges of all universities will have to depend primarily on the meagre resources of their respective states and trusts. The first decade of the twenty-first century may be the right time for the UGC to redefine its role with regard to the state universities and colleges.[24]

Together with Radhakrishnan Commission of 1948-49, several other landmarks also helped in the *evolution of a policy in higher education in India.* A list of these landmarks is given below:

(a) University Education Commission under Dr. Radhakrishnan, 1948-49

(b) Secondary Education Commission under A.L. Mudaliar, 1952-53

(c) Education Commission under Prof. D.S. Kothari, 1964-66

(d) National Policy on Education, 1968

(e) Development of Higher Education: A Policy Framework, 1978

(f) National Commission on Teacher in higher education under Prof. Rais Ahmed, 1984

(g) Challenge of Education: A Policy Perspective, 1985

(h) National Policy on Education, 1986

(i) National Policy on Education: A Programme of Action, 1986

(j) Revision of National Policy on Education of 1986, 1992

The Secondary Education Commission under the chairmanship of A.L. Mudaliar, appointed in 1952 and reported in the following year, was monumental in defining

secondary education as a self-sufficient course preparing students to enter life after completing the course. The Kothari Commission of 1964 submitted its bulky but significant report in 1966 suggesting several significant points with regard to education which only now are beginning to be recognized as truly important, like introducing work experience as an integral part of general education, vocationalising secondary education, improving the quality of teaching, achieving in some of our universities at least high international standards, combining teaching and research, giving special attention to education and research in agriculture etc. Since 1968 the Government of India has been adopting a National Education Policy to give focus and purpose to education in the country. The policy of 1968 was momentous in ways more than one. It envisioned education as a national project for the nation's future and a radical reconstruction of education. In fact, a lot of educational facilities have come about since its adoption; for instance, more than 90 per cent of the country's rural areas now have schooling facilities within a radius of one kilometre. "Perhaps the most notable development has been the acceptance of a common structure of education throughout the country and the introduction of the 10+2+3 system by most states. In the school curricula, in addition to laying down a common scheme of studies for boys and girls, science and mathematics were incorporated as compulsory subjects and work experience assigned a place of importance."[25] The uniformity provided by the 10+2+3 system wherein the first ten years are further split into 5+3+2 is a big advantage for education in India. The policy also initiated a restructuring of courses at the under-graduate level. Centres of advanced studies were set up for post-graduate education and research and India was marginally able to meet the requirements of educated manpower. Maybe the startling drawback of the 1968 policy was a conspicuous lack of clear-cut implementation programme of action.

The 42nd amendment of the Constitution in 1976 transferred education from the state list of responsibilities to the concurrent list, giving greater responsibility to the centre with regard to education for the sake of national integration. Prior to this assumption of direct responsibility for promoting

educational facilities for all parts of society, the central government had responsibility only for the education of minorities. Article 43 of the Constitution set the goal of free and compulsory education for all children through age fourteen and gave the states the power to set standards for education within their jurisdictions. Despite this joint responsibility for education by state and central governments, the central government has the preponderant role because it drafts the five-year plans, which include education policy and some funding for education.

The 1978 policy framework on the development of higher education brought out by the UGC was to meet the purpose of raising the standards in higher education which were stubbornly low despite the guidelines given and vision set by the 1968 policy. Issues like the role of the university in national development, guidelines for restricting access to higher education, measures for improvement of standards, restructuring of courses, priorities for research and post-graduate studies, diversification of courses, decentralization, autonomous colleges, academic freedom, medium of instruction etc., were raised by the document.

As a measure to evaluate the implementation of the policy of 1968 and to evaluate the impact of education itself, two national commissions on teachers, one on school teachers and the other on teachers in higher education were set up in 1984. The commission on the teachers in higher education under Prof. Ahmed carefully studied a variety of issues relating to college and university teachers and reported that there has been a gradual decline in the social and economic status of teachers in higher education. The commission suggested that the teachers should participate in research and development activities and improve their work ethos. This was the first study of teachers undertaken in independent India with the purpose of professionalizing higher education. Following this national exercise, a comprehensive overview of education was undertaken in 1985 by the Ministry of Education, the findings of which were formulated in a document entitled *Challenge of Education: A Policy Perspective*. The document intended to provoke a nationwide

debate on education with special reference to the growing mismatch between education, employment and the world of work, the increasing emphasis on quantitative expansion rather than on qualitative improvements, the declining standards of teaching, examination and research, the significance of implementation strategies so that the system is made to work and identification of factors which have inhibited the implementation of strategic reforms suggested by the earlier commissions and found in the policy statements.

In *1986 a new National Education Policy* was adopted with an unambiguous programme of action for implementing the policy, which was reviewed and updated in 1992 with the emphasis of making state level action plans. So far only nine states/union territories have adopted the state programme of action. India's national education policy, 1986 (revised in 1992) has laid the following points of emphasis with regard to higher education besides pledging towards education for equality, reorienting the content and process of education, better teacher qualities and better management of education at all levels:

- consolidation rather than mindless expansion
- autonomous colleges
- more specialized programmes and courses of study
- state level councils of higher education for assisting UGC to watch for standards
- teachers' quality
- high quality research
- indology and researches in social sciences and humanities
- a national body covering higher education in general, agricultural, medical, technical, legal and other professional fields
- open university and distance learning
- de-linking degrees from certain jobs where preference for a graduate degree is unnecessary
- rural university

- technical and management education with special emphasis on innovation, research and development
- vocationalization of education

The *structure of the Education Ministry* in India comprises two broad departments under the MHRD: the Department of Elementary Education and Literacy, and the Department of Secondary and Higher Education. The minister for human resource development is assisted by a minister of state. Each department is headed by a secretary to the Government of India. Secretary, Department of Secondary and Higher Education, is assisted by a special secretary and an additional secretary. The departments are organized into bureaus, divisions, branches, desks, sections and units. Each bureau is under the charge of a joint secretary assisted by divisional heads at the level of deputy secretary/director. In addition to establishment matters of the secretariat of both the departments of education, establishment matters of education wings in Indian embassies are handled in the administration division of the department of secondary and higher education. A scheme, namely, disbursement out of HRM's discretionary fund is also handled in the administration division of the department of secondary and higher education.

There are four *categories of universities* and three categories of colleges in this country. Among universities, the largest number are teaching universities that maintain and run a large number of departments and centres under them and to which many colleges may be affiliated. Unitary institutions, such as Allahabad University and Lucknow University, make up the second kind. The third kind are the twenty-six agricultural universities, each managed by the state in which it is located. Technical universities constitute the fourth kind. The first type of colleges is the government colleges chiefly found in those states where the private enterprise is weak. The second kind are colleges managed by religious organizations and the private sector. Professional colleges comprise the third kind and consist mostly of medical, teacher-training, engineering, law and agricultural colleges. More than 50 per cent of them are sponsored and managed

by the government. However, about 5 per cent of these colleges are privately run without government grant. They charge fees of ten to twelve times the amount of fees charged by the government-run colleges. The profusion of new engineering colleges in India in the late 1980s and early 1990s caused concern in official circles that the overall quality and reputation of India's higher education system would be threatened by these new schools, which operated mainly on a profit basis. As the government tightened its support to higher education in the early 1990s, colleges and universities came under considerable financial stress. The All-India Council of Technical Education is empowered to regulate the establishment of any new private professional college to limit their proliferation.

The question of *social justice and equality* of opportunities in higher education in India also acquires priority because of the social situations of the country, where education, especially higher education, was not available to many till a few years back. Whether this situation has significantly changed after more than 50 years of independence is another debatable issue. Indian society is very pluralistic and complex, hierarchical and stratified. The social distance between the rich and the poor, the educated and those who are not, is only widening as our democracy gets old. The highly undemocratic socio-religious institution of caste is strangely adjusting itself to the democratic system. However, everyone cherishes the dream of development of the deprived sections of the people like women, SCs, STs and the economically backward people as a whole as the hallmark of development of the nation. This had been a right point of emphasis in the national education policy of the country, 1986. Enrolment of women students in the higher education sector has shown remarkable improvement. In the year 1950-51 women enrolment in higher education was a mere 10.90 per cent of the total; this has risen to 37.65 per cent in 2001-02 (30.12 lakh in all). The highest percentage of women enrolment was in Goa (56.70) and the lowest in Bihar (24.42). Kerala had the second highest per cent of women enrolment in higher education (55.9 per cent). However, the same cannot

be said regarding higher education among the SC/STs. Despite numerous protective measures for the education of the SCs and STs, literacy rate and enrolment level among them continue to be very much below that of the others. As a nation India recognizes education as the greatest democratizing force for achieving the constitutional ideal of equity and social justice, without which quantifiable development indicators like rising GDP becomes meaningless. We quote certain revelatory findings from Chauhan, 1986:

> In general, higher education in India caters to the better off sections in the society... It is found that professional and technical courses, normally attract students from urban affluent families... sons and daughters of well off parents study in fields like medicine and engineering that are higher paying and are characterized by very low unemployment rate, whereas youths from lower socio-economic group attend art colleges.
>
> ... admissions in professional courses are made on the basis of competitive tests which being biased tend to help students from well-to-do families mostly from urban areas... urban background and public school education with high proficiency in English help in securing good marks in competitive tests rather than proficiency in the subject matter. This means obviously, that competitive examinations are biased in favour of a few rich families against the interest of the poor masses.[26]

Relevance of the bulk of higher educational courses in India is another matter of concern. The spate of numbers in educational institutions, enrolments and staff since independence has affected the quality of higher education. The efforts at universalization of school education have exerted pressure on the higher education sector and cornered governments have set up institutions for general higher education in abundance, which churn out lakhs of graduates and postgraduates with academic degrees that have no big use for the industry. Latest (2001-02) data of the MHRD will prove the point: "Eighty three per cent of the total enrolment was concentrated in the three faculties of Arts (42 per cent), Science (20 per cent) and Commerce (21 per cent) while the remaining was absorbed by the professional faculties."[27] This is one area of higher education in which India has not progressed very much, and in fact has even taken a backward

step. In 1947-48 only 57.16 per cent of total enrolment in higher education took up general education and now it has risen to 83 per cent, though during those years science and commerce graduation was not popular and the bulk of the graduates were in the liberal arts. This trend shows first of all that enrolment levels have shot up very high especially because of the rise in the number of colleges for general education. Irrelevant degrees is the chief reason for the high rate of educated unemployment in this country.

Hence the need for urgent *vocationalization of education* here. In fact, "introduction of systematic, well planned and rigorously implemented programmes of vocational education is crucial in the proposed educational reorganization" according to the NPE, 1986. The goal of the vocationalization programme is "to develop a healthy attitude amongst students towards work and life, to enhance individual employability, to reduce the mis-match between the demand and supply of skilled manpower, and to provide an alternative for those intending to pursue higher education without particular interest or purpose."[28] In fact, more and more vocational courses should be introduced at the higher secondary and school levels in order to take the number-pressure off the higher education sector. From the school level it needs to be implanted on the child's mind that the need of the hour is to 'learn to live and not so much live to learn.' (Frederic Harrison: "Man's business here is to know for the sake of living, not to live for the sake of knowing.")[29] Our competitive times should warn us against the all too common trend in the developing nations of multiplying colleges for general education which turn out irrelevant degree holders in abundance. Vocational degrees even at the level of higher education should be promoted, so that the educated folks can find their own means of sustaining themselves. While standing by the self-empowerment ideal of education in general and higher education in particular, we strongly recommend the utilitarian attitude towards education, especially in a nation like India where the 'wisdom for wisdom's sake' approach to learning had not only narrowed down education and its resultant 'wisdom' to a few, but also prevented development of the

nation in various ways. Even the self-empowerment ideal of higher education is very relevant only since it will be pragmatically useful in having the reigns on the society by way of intelligent planning, proposing and promoting right and relevant values from time to time and preserving and challenging the national ethos everyday.

Quality and professionalism among *teachers* is another grave matter that is to be discussed with regard to higher education. A huge quantity of government funds meant for education and the funds of educational institutions in general is rightly set apart to pay the teachers. Today around 0.79 lakh teachers work in universities and 3.16 lakh work in colleges, totalling 3.95 lakh teachers in the higher education sector – a ratio of around 1 teacher for every 20 students. Considered overall, this is not bad at all! India has a tradition of awesome respect for the teacher; his/her knowledge is not challenged; his/her tactics are never questioned. But time has truly come when such notion on the teaching profession is to be relinquished together with whatever nostalgia the teacher feels for the 'good old days', unless he/she comes up to the occasion and professionally review and update his/her knowledge and tactics everyday. The speed with which knowledge increases today is astonishing and that fact requires the teacher to be on the vanguard of new methodologies, new knowledge, new technologies, new tactics and better ethics of the profession. Teaching is a healing and moulding profession and therefore the value attached to those who pursue it has an abiding relevance, whether the profession has entered a technological and mechanized age or not. Indian teacher needs to fall back into the ethical importance attached to his/her profession by our tradition and should at the same time be on the watch-out for the new demands of the profession. The NPE, 1986 reiterates: "The status of the teacher reflects the socio-cultural ethos of a society; it is said that no people can rise above the level of its teachers. The government and the community should endeavor to create conditions which will help motivate and inspire teachers on constructive and creative lines. Teachers should have the freedom to innovate, to devise appropriate

methods of communication and activities relevant to the needs and capabilities of, and the concerns of, the community."[30] In fact, two of the important innovations suggested by the policy with regard to higher education are regarding the methods of recruitment of teachers and their training. The Indian teaching community is ravaged by political appointments, government and other meddling, inadequate training, lack of facilities within the institutions and all together a singular lack of ample academic ambience, except in a few institutions. In fact, governmental interference has been on the rise for the simple reason that the government paid for the institutions. As a result qualify of education was compromised. In this context a plea for academic freedom needs to be made by everyone who cares about education in India, especially higher education.

Open and distance learning in India is becoming increasingly popular, bringing cost-effective higher education at the doorsteps of aspirants and making education the truly democratizing force. The greatest beneficiaries of this mode of higher education are the economically weaker sections of the people, those who are already employed but look out to catch hold of opportunities to improve their employment credentials, women and some who want to learn just for the sake of it. All these groups deserve such opportunities just because of the lack of them in the major stream of education in India and because of the necessity involved in making education a life-long process if the country aims to better its chances in the twenty-first century. Lifelong learning or continuing education is the hallmark of a learning society. Equality of opportunities with regard to education, a high constitutional ideal of this country, is thus gradually being realized in this manner, although with several severe handicaps and shortcomings that have to be remedied at the earliest. The National Education Policy, 1986 says: "The open learning system has been initiated in order to augment opportunities for higher education, as an instrument of democratizing education and to make it a lifelong process. The flexibility and innovativeness of the open learning system are particularly suited to the diverse requirements of the citizens

of our country, including those who had joined the vocational stream."[31] In this regard, the establishment of the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), a central university, in 1985 was a certain milestone. Several other open universities are also becoming popular in this country. However, democratizing higher education through this accessible mode should not mean bringing down the standards. The biggest challenge of distance and open modes of higher learning is the crisis of standards. Vigilance with regard to curriculum planning and examination modes, introducing relevant and innovative job-oriented courses instead of adding to this country's already overflowing stream of general graduation and making the ideal of accessibility workable will work to the winning point of the distance/open mode of higher education in India. Delay in announcing results, procedural hazards and certain unreasonable ground rules are, for instance, some of the constant complaints one can hear about the otherwise much appreciated IGNOU.

Quality Control of Higher Education by the NAAC

Let us take a closer look at another important agency that is contributing to higher education in this country, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), Bangalore. The NAAC is an autonomous institution of the UGC established under section 12 CCC of the UGC Act of 1956(3) on 16 September 1994. The NAAC was established purely for ensuring quality in higher education, a felt need for a long time, especially since the National Education Policy of 1986, the Programme of Action of which stated that "Excellence of institutions of higher education is a function of many aspects; self-evaluation and self-improvement are important among them. If a mechanism is set up which will encourage self-assessment in institutions and also assessment and accreditation by a Council of which these institutions are corporate members, the quality of process, participation, achievements, etc., will be constantly monitored and improved."[32] The agenda of NAAC is to assess and accredit institutions of higher learning with an objective of helping them to work continuously to improve the quality of education. Assessment is a performance evaluation of an institution and/

or its units and is accomplished through a process based on self-study and peer review using defined criteria. Accreditation refers to the certification given by NAAC which is valid for a period of five years. The process of assessment followed by NAAC is in accordance with internationally accepted proactive criteria with certain modifications to suit the Indian context. The application of assessment and accreditation as a quality enhancing mechanism has yielded appreciable results worldwide and has shown similar favourable indication in India also during the short period of the NAAC's functioning. The philosophy of NAAC is ameliorative and enabling rather than punitive or judgmental, so that all constituencies of institutions of higher learning are empowered to maximize their resources, opportunities and capabilities.

The assessment and accreditation process has three stages:

- Preparation of the self-study report by the institution or department based on the parameters defined by NAAC,
- Validation of the self-study report by a team of peers through on-site visit; presentation of detailed quality report to the institution, and
- The final decision on assessment and accreditation by the executive committee of NAAC.

Any assessment and accreditation process is made with reference to a set of parameters so that the standing of an institution can be compared with that of other similar institutions. NAAC has identified the following seven criteria to serve as the basis of its assessment procedures:

- Curricular aspects
- Teaching-learning and evaluation
- Research, consultancy and extension
- Infrastructure and learning resources
- Student support and progression
- Organization and management
- Healthy practices

The NAAC's profile lists the following as the benefits of the process of assessment and accreditation:

- Helps the institution to know its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities through an informed review
- To identify internal areas of planning and resource allocation
- Enhances collegiality on the campus
- The outcome of the process provides the funding agencies with objective and systematic database for performance funding
- Initiates the institution into innovative and modern methods of pedagogy
- Gives the institution a new sense of direction and identity
- Provides the society with reliable information on the quality of education offered by the institution
- Employers have access to information on standards in recruitment
- Promotes intra-institutional and inter-institutional interactions

The NAAC also claims to have taken up the following new initiatives:

- Quality sustenance and promotion by sensitizing institutions to concepts such as credit transfer, student mobility, mutual recognition
- Networking among accredited institutions in order to promote exchange of best practices
- Formation of quality circles for follow-up of accreditation outcomes
- State-wise analysis of accreditation results for policy initiatives
- Promoting the concept of lead colleges and cluster of colleges for quality initiatives

- Research grants for the faculty of accredited institutions to execute projects on quality aspects
- Financial support to accredited institutions for conducting seminars/conferences/workshops etc., on quality issues in higher education
- Developing international linkages for mutual recognition
- Collaborating with other national professional bodies for accreditation of specialized subjects
- NAAC – DEC, IGNOU joint venture to assess open universities and correspondence course institutions
- State-level coordination committees for accreditation
- National Consultative Committees on accreditation in different areas.

Any institution wanting to apply to the NAAC may follow a very simple procedure of first submitting a letter of intention in a given format (see Annexure I) along with the general information of the institution (see Annexure II). The NAAC will scrutinize the information and inform the institution of its eligibility. If a positive response is received from the NAAC, the institution sends the prescribed fee for assessment and accreditation, on receipt of which the NAAC will send the manuals and guidelines that enable the institution to initiate the process of self-assessment. For the rest of the processes, the institution will be guided ably by the NAAC.[33]

As far as we are aware, though the accreditation and assessment procedure of NAAC is not a cakewalk for the higher educational institutions, it is nevertheless a very enriching process. The data preparation part is rather painstaking for many of the institutions. Even high quality institutions may have their data and reports in a shambles and that adds to the difficulty and the consequent fear of authorities in taking up the assessment process. However, those institutions which have weathered the storm report that the process was both painstaking and beneficial. First of all, their records and databank become orderly through the process. Accredited institutions also report that many facilities

have been added, sometimes infrastructurally and sometimes programme-wise, to give a better colour to the institution, which would not have come otherwise. The process also helps to show the strengths, opportunities and weaknesses of the institution. In almost all the cases, the accreditation procedure of the NAAC proved to be eye-openers. There are those who are unhappy with the star-system of accrediting by the NAAC and some, especially the financially weaker institutions, are wary of the financial burden. However, no one doubts the usefulness of the process, which is a foolproof quality control measure.

Moreover, a further point is to be noted. The UGC has made it mandatory that all the universities of the country should undergo the process of assessment and accreditation before December 2002 and colleges before December 2003. This is an obligatory precondition for the institutions of higher education to seek any funds from the UGC.

UGC's Tenth Plan Vision of Higher Education

The UGC, as the apex institution for providing coordination and determination of standards in universities, colleges and research institutions, has formulated a vision of higher education for the Tenth Plan period upto 2007. When this document was circulated for discussion, it stated that the "demand for higher education is increasing and the new paradigm, in higher education, involves creation of intellects... of world standards and also training of skilled human power at a mass level without compromising on quality." The UGC thus looked out for a forward-looking strategy of global standards but one that took care of India's internal demand for skilled human power. It asserted that Indians should be educated to be competent and successful in an interdependent world. It chalked out the following ground rules for achieving this agenda:

1. Create possibility of enhancing the quality of teaching and learning experience through use of information-pathway.
2. Create more open and flexible education structure with "cafeteria approach."

3. Invest in under-graduate education through provision of appropriate facilities.
4. Establish electronic network for sharing academic resources.
5. Revamp curricula to reflect the need for national development with international benchmark.
6. Increase understanding for social change and enhance perception for human values through outreach activities.
7. Harness the creativity of teachers, research fellows, students and external experts to develop multi-media teaching material.
8. Focus on faculty development and rewards.
9. Enhance research capabilities by upgrading scientific infrastructure in universities and inter-university centres and give easy access to research funding.
10. Invest in basic research and promote inter-disciplinary research in all the subjects and all the disciplines.
11. Twin with research and development institutions and industries for symbiotic research and development programmes.
12. Create opportunities for faculty for spending more time on research through "joint-employment" opportunities and research scientists' stream.
13. Promote cross-flow of teachers/scientists through interchange between universities and diverse research laboratories at national/international level.
14. Promote "quality" consciousness and monitor performance of educational institutions.
15. Create and enable organizational and administrative structure for making it more user-friendly.
16. Expand links with international educational and research institutions for enriching the students and faculty.

17. Expand study abroad opportunities for foreign students.
18. Focus on "exploring the higher education."
19. Create independent financial support structure for venture capital and student education loans.
20. Enhance opportunities for mobilizing and optimizing financial resource base.
21. Develop opportunities for enhanced financial support for innovative and creative institutions.

The UGC jotted down six strategies for realizing this vision:

Quality Teaching: The Need of the Hour

- Three aims of a graduate degree are to give the student (i) a sound base in the fundamentals, (ii) all-round development of personality, and (iii) skills for launching into the professional world.
- For realizing this, the need is to promote quality teaching at the under-graduate and post-graduate levels through an information pathway.
- An information flow network would be established by creating inter-connectivity in all the universities through the Internet pathway.
- Universities would establish linear area network for the campus and a college-network for the colleges under it and then the network can gradually connect all the universities in the country.
- The knowledge connectivity map will thus enhance the academic infrastructure in the classrooms for the help of teaching.
- It will enhance the access as well as quality in higher education.
- To enhance the utility of higher education at a post-graduate level, a "cafeteria approach" will be promoted in curricular structural arrangement by way of encouraging the concept of core and optional courses with modular credit-based approach with a

possibility of doing these courses in an open and flexible manner.

- Each university and college will be asked to adopt quality in their academic and organizational approach by going through the NAAC's process of assessment and accreditation.
- Through the UGC's curriculum development centres it will review and strengthen the existing curricula in each subject.
- The information network would form the backbone for content development and for flow of contents, and for the furtherance of the programme the teachers will be assisted to enhance their IT literacy.

Promoting and Strengthening Outreach Activities

- The colleges and universities should play a dominating role in social change through outreach activities.
- Universities would be supported to take activities in fields like:
  - *(a)* Adult continuing education and value education through the framework for sustainable development and raising the quality of life.
  - *(b)* Women studies, environment, human rights and rights of vulnerable groups.

Research and Teaching: Hand and Gloves Link

- The teaching and learning process gets further strengthened if it is integrated with research, and hence the need to support research activities in the universities.
- The links with other government agencies need to be strengthened to further support teaching and research.
- The UGC itself needs to widen and enhance the scheme of research funding.
- Interdisciplinary research should be given priority with focus on 'ideas that would work.'

- Focus should also be on the cultivation of culture for, (a) doing more application oriented work, and (b) safeguarding the research outputs through the process of patenting of knowledge.
- The concept of inter-university centres should be effectively used to create:
  - *(a)* Centres which concentrate on research in specific fields like the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla.
  - *(b)* Centres which support to enhance the quality of teaching and research like the NAAC, Bangalore.
- The research Inter-University Centres (IUC) need to plan for a decade to come out with a vision to make these centres infrastructurally at par with international standards and to create operational mechanism to give access to all desirous research workers.
- The support IUCs need to plan for meeting the volume demand, ensuring fast and efficient service of desired standard and mixing modern technology with optimal human power to achieve the desired goals.

Exporting of Higher Education

- The Indian higher education system is now recognized as one of the best systems for producing talented human workforce.
- The UGC would promote opportunities for foreign students for educating themselves in our colleges and universities by (i) promoting abroad programme for foreign universities, (ii) reserving certain percentage of seats in each of the degree programmes, (iii) setting up international cell in each of the universities, and by (iv) providing special funds for triggering export culture.
- Universities would be encouraged to expand their activities outside India by promoting web-based

education and initiating twin programmes in other countries.

Managing and Organizing Higher Education

- The management of colleges and universities needs to be done in a more professional and efficient manner in the changing educational scenario.
- For making the college and university administration more professional with a transparent approach, the MIS approach with the use of computers would be implemented by the UGC in these institutions.

Funds for Higher Education

- Those who manage, those involved and those who get advantage of higher education in this country still think that it is the duty of the government to support the entire education sector for infrastructure and recurring costs.
- In order to enhance and sustain the newfound identity of the nation that generates knowledge experts, funding for higher education should be taken to a promised level of 6 per cent of the GDP.
- Higher education sector would be encouraged to generate at least 25 per cent of the budgetary provision for each of the universities by:
  - *(c)* Developing a different fee structure based on the economic capacity of the students or their parents.
  - *(d)* Promoting profit-making outreach activities useful for industry and society in general.
  - *(e)* Generating finances through India abroad and export of higher education.
- The concept of Higher Education Development Finance Corporation needs to be encouraged for providing venture capital to colleges and universities to embark on innovative teaching and learning programmes and for creating a base for soft loan system for students.

The document concludes by urging that "higher education's public service role is of prime importance and it requires that colleges and universities work with their local communities, states and regions to advance the agenda for change" as defined by it. It also recognizes, and rightly so, that only bold and imaginative steps will bring the desired change.[34]

It should be in line with this proactive new vision that the UGC has proposed simultaneous registration in more than one university for students to widen the scope of employment opportunities. This was declared by the UGC Chairperson, Arun Nigavekar, while delivering the Lal Bahadur Shastri public lecture on January 24, 2003. He says: "At present, if a student is registered in a particular univerity, he or she stays married to that particular university for the entire duration of the course. We want to change this system so that a student can simultaneously register in more than one university for more than one course."[35] We believe that this proposal, if comes to effect, would go a long way in furthering the knowledge-smartness of a lot of hardworking students in India. After all, in the third millennium what counts is knowledge-smartness for employment as well as for life.

Higher Education in the Tenth Plan (2002-07)

General Objective: To achieve a profound transformation of higher education in order that it becomes an effective promoter of sustainable human development and, at the same time, improve its relevance by way of closer links with the world of work and achieve quality in its teaching, research and business and community extension functions, including life-long learning.

Specific Objectives

1. The relevance of higher education
2. Quality, evaluation and accreditation
3. Research and development
4. Outreach activities in business and community and life-long learning
5. The knowledge and use of the new information and communication technologies

6. Management and financing
7. Export of higher education and reorientation of international cooperation

Thrust Areas of Higher Education in the Tenth Plan are:

1. Identification of universities and colleges with potential
2. Cafeteria approach education
3. Clubbing of open and conventional system of education
4. Open and flexible approach for pursing degree and advance diploma and/or dual degrees simultaneously
5. Creation of information flow network in the higher education institutions
6. Modernization of teaching
7. Creation of higher end institutions in science in collaboration with national research laboratories comparable to IITs
8. Strengthening of research
9. Identifying and supporting institutions for focused research in traditional subjects like Sanskrit and occult sciences and interdisciplinary subjects like biotechnology, genomic subjects, defense strategies, patenting and intellectual property rights
10. Support outreach activities like value education, positive health and life skills and mind-consciousness studies
11. Professional management of higher education institutions
12. Promotion of internalization and export of higher education including study India abroad programme
13. Encouraging resource mobilization
14. Incentives for academic, administrative and financial reforms

Philosophy and Approach: The Planning Commission observes two identities of higher education in India, (a) the

social identity by which higher education is seen as a tool for gainful employment and consequent better life, and (b) economic identity of higher education emerged out of the recognition India's skilled manpower received world over as 'knowledge creators' and the changed economic environment as a result of ten years of reforms. The Tenth Plan takes good care of both these identities by addressing certain important issues in relation to higher education. These issues are five:

I. **Increasing Demand:** 9.1 million students are there in the higher educational scenario in India, both in formal (83%) and informal system (17%). By 2007-08 this number will bulge into 12.0 million. This increasing demand for higher education in this country can be met most cost-effectively by increasing the present physical and academic infrastructure in a limited manner and using the enhanced structure in double shifts with the added support of teachers on contract and such staff as well as encouraging students to combine conventional and open systems of higher education. Students can do this by partial full-time and partial distance-education mode to get a degree. The open system has to be enhanced accordingly. The information network that links all colleges and universities also needs to be enhanced accordingly for uniformity of access to teaching and learning materials to maintain standards of higher education. Training teachers to use and develop multimedia materials will reduce cost considerably and virtually enhance the academic infrastructure.

II. **Relevance:** According to the Tenth Plan, relevance of higher education in this country has a direct bearing on the need for projected humanpower. Presently, around 83 per cent of students in the formal stream are in traditional disciplines like arts, science, humanities and social sciences, law and commerce. The approach of clubbing vocational subjects in the conventional system followed by the previous plans negatively affects both the conventional and the professional system. The new market demands graduates, sound in their fundamentals with analytical abilities and enriched with appropriate

utility-oriented skills. Hence the need for a more dilated definition of relevance. This would mean an open and flexible system of education where students can pursue simultaneously a degree and utility-oriented programmes that would allow them to acquire an advanced diploma along with a degree or go for one more year of intensive professional subject learning and get two degrees at the end of four years. This calls for convergence of conventional and open education. Since, relevance of higher education should also mean relevance for the marginalized sections, enhanced access to relevant education by floating large number of skill-oriented courses widespread across all colleges in the conventional system figures strongly in the Tenth Plan. For relevance at the post-graduate level, an approach of intensive teaching in core subjects and additional training in emerging interdisciplinary fields with acceptance of credit-based 'cafeteria' approach with a modular structure needs to be focused on in the Tenth Plan. This is important for sustaining our growth and retaining our global identity, and for this post-graduate teaching and infrastructure in colleges and universities should be improved. University departments should have research as a prominent item in their agenda and the Tenth Plan sends clear signals in going for higher magnitude of funding in an organized manner for supporting research at an individual, group and departmental levels and a research council will be set up for this purpose under the UGC with functional autonomy. IUCs have proved useful in the past and they will continue to be supported in the Tenth Plan. The proposed connectivity network of the UGC will help in accessing research material through a repository of digital database. Under-graduate education in pure sciences will receive a fillip in the Tenth Plan since it will give a strong thrust to research which is vital for India's science and technology independence. For this, the focus will be on the 10+2 level for catching them young, and to encourage the trend, (a) a few universities will be identified and supported to do under-graduate teaching on the campus,

(b) a few colleges will be identified and supported to do under-graduate education in credit-based modular approach, and (c) a few national level institutions will be established and the already existing ones will be identified and supported for doing five year integrated teaching programme with a research blend. "The more flexible and more dilated definition of relevance thus achieves a greater significance in the Tenth Plan."

III. **Quality and Excellence:** India's system of higher education has grown into one of the biggest of the type in the world. In the last one decade, especially, India has contributed value-added humanpower to the world and consequently a new vision and identity of the nation as 'knowledge-creator' was bloomed, boosting the country's economic prospects and image. The Tenth Plan strives to continue the export of our talent and raise the present figure of half a million Indian graduates working at a premier level world across by ten times. We also need quality graduates in the country with its changed economic environment of public sector to private sector dominance. Pursuing excellence at par with global and national expectations, the quality of higher education should be raised by creating ar. improved academic ambience in rural, semi-urban and urban India. Since excellence can be nurtured only selectively, 25 universities will be identified in the Tenth Plan to be specially assisted to attain excellence in teaching and research and they will have to put graduate education in pure sciences at a priority level. The status of 'excellence' would also be awarded to a few hundred colleges and the UGC will fund them to improve their academic infrastructure. These colleges will conduct their own examinations and declare results and the university would award degree with name of the college on the degree certificate. This step in the Tenth Plan introduces the concept of sharing the credit jointly, leading to easing off the affiliating system and increase in the sense of responsibility in the colleges. The plan also aims to make 10 per cent of the existing colleges autonomous. Since excellence cannot be pursued in isolation, all the higher

educational institutions in the country also will have to raise their academic ambience by following healthy practices. The NAAC would have to go in a fixed time-frame mode for completing their task of assessing and accrediting these institutions in the Tenth Plan. Since India is still in a transition stage, afflicted by disparities, the Tenth Plan focus will also be on remote and backward areas and special opportunities will be provided to women, SCs, STs, minorities and physically challenged groups with a view to bridging the gap of knowledge disadvantage. The plan vouches also to support young colleges and universities since they are amenable to change.

IV. **Governance:** The plan emphasizes on governance for total quality management in higher education. "The quality in education is primarily dependent on what happens in the classrooms and laboratories, but it also goes beyond the wall-boundaries of classrooms; it is imbibed on sport grounds, in libraries, in hostels, in central administrative offices, in principal's room—the list is endless. The point to recognize is that we have to think of total quality management in higher education." For this, improving governance is of extreme importance, and for that again, the huge Indian education system needs to embrace Management Information System (MIS) approach to achieve efficiency. This is the best way of professionally managing higher education institutions. In the Tenth Plan, the UGC would go for the creation of generic MIS for running of colleges and universities and implement it and the administrators of higher education will be given intensive training in this.

V. **Resources:** Education in independent India was considered a social commitment and so higher education always remained a public-funded sector. It was also part of a policy to create human resources. However, no policy was similarly made to make the system financially independent. Today the system has grown too large for exclusive government funding and so the system is asked to create its own resources, though there will not be any

unwarranted sudden withdrawal of public funding for higher education. The higher education system is today proving to be an economic asset with export of quality humanpower, but at the same time, majority of our people remain poor and for the majority, higher education is still a social need. So the Tenth Plan focuses on a strategy that does not burden the parents or the students but will encourage the institutions to go for self-sufficiency by raising their own resources to solve the resource crunch through: (a) enhancing fees in a spread over time mode, (b) encouraging universities to go for more self-financing programmes, (c) encouraging universities to attract more foreign students, (d) encouraging universities to create 'corpus funds', and (e) creating *'Bharat Shiksha Kosh'*, an independently managed finance structure, through (i) initial bulk investment by the Government of India, (ii) introduction of *'Gurudakshina'* tax, equivalent to first month's salary of a freshly employed graduate, to private and public sector and transferring it to the *'Kosh'*, and (iii) appeal to public contribution to the future of their children and giving them tax benefit. Such *Kosh* can be turned into soft loans to students for studies and institutions for infrastructure development. The Tenth Plan initiates the process of raising resources by giving financial incentives to the colleges and universities.

Funding: The Tenth Plan endeavours to reshape higher education through these five approaches and initiatives. The funds for these approaches are projected in the plan in a multi-layered funding strategy with certain funding focuses. The plan claims to be a turning point for higher education in this country. It focuses on the strengths of the nation and encashes on it. It focuses on removing geographical and social disparities. It aims to bring in an information and communication revolution for enhancing excellence in teaching, learning and research with access to the best of material. It boasts of blending open, conventional and private education sector to give advantage to the students. It is a plan that ushers in quality in academics and total quality management in governance of institutions of higher learning.

The plan visualizes to make graduates useful and higher education more accessible to marginalized sections. The plan is directed towards heralding renaissance in higher education. The Tenth Plan of the UGC brings all these ideas at an operative level through imaginative schemes. The projected amount for schemes of the Tenth Plan is something like 7,622 crores spread over five years. The break-up of the same is given in the following table:

Table—1.5: Sector-wise Financial Estimates of Tenth Five Year Plan in Higher Education[36]

Sector No.	*Description of sectors*	*10th Plan proposal (Rs. in crores)*	*Absolute percentage*
Sector 1	Development of universities and colleges	2,631	34.52
Sector 2	Enhancing access and equity	700	9.18
Sector 3	Promotion of relevance	960	12.60
Sector 4	Promotion of quality and excellence	2,054	26.9
Sector 5	Improvement of management and efficiency of higher education	257	3.37
Sector 6	Programme to strengthen scientific research	680	8.92
Sector 7	Engineering and technology	340	4.46
	Total	**7,622**	**100**

The 21 *funding focuses* of the plan are:

1. Provide, at enhanced level of funding, normal development grant to the colleges and universities
2. Provide special funding to young colleges and universities as well as colleges and universities located in the backward areas
3. Identify colleges and universities with potentials and fund them to reach excellence in teaching and research with greater academic, administrative and financial flexibility
4. Cultivate and support credit-based "cafeteria" approach to education, especially in autonomous colleges as well as colleges and universities with potentials for excellence

5. Promote effective clubbing of open and conventional system to address increasing demands in higher education
6. Intensify fundamental education with good grounding in core subjects and fortify it with add-on-utility specialization
7. Propagate parallel education concept to do a degree and diploma or dual degree in sheer conventional and /or clubbed open and conventional system
8. Promote college-university joint degree conferring concept
9. Create information flow network between colleges and universities
10. Promote the creation and effective use of multimedia to supplement classroom and laboratory teaching
11. Create institutions, in link with research laboratories, for promoting integrated 5 years' teaching in science disciplines with imbibed research component
12. Pursue skill improvement activity for teachers
13. Reward innovativeness in teaching and research
14. Strengthen individual research and support research-ambience creation activities
15. Identify and support institutions for focused research in traditional and emerging interdisciplinary subjects
16. Support outreach activities
17. Focus programmes for women, SC/ST and differently-abled groups in society
18. Develop ambience and culture for professional management of higher education institutions through use of computers and training of administrators
19. Promote internationalization and export of higher education

20. Give incentives for academic, administrative and financial reforms
21. Encourage resources mobilization

The following is a *list of 88 schemes of the Tenth Plan for Higher Education* with objectives in bracket:

1. General development grant to central universities, deemed universities and state universities (to provide basic development grant to universities for improving infrastructure.)
2. New central universities (to establish a few conventional central universities.)
3. General development grant for colleges (to provide basic development grant to colleges for improving infrastructure.)
4. Special development Grant for universities in backward areas (to provide basic development grant to universities located in backward region for protecting equity and access.)
5. Special development grant for young universities (to provide basic development grants to universities that are young.)
6. Special development grant for colleges in backward areas (to provide basic development grant to colleges located in backward regions for protecting equity and access.)
7. Special development grant for young colleges (to provide well defined development grants to colleges that are young.)
8. Autonomous colleges (to provide academic freedom for potential colleges.)
9. Obsolescence removal grant for state universities (to support state universities for replacement of obsolete equipments.)
10. Digital repository of research and teaching material (to provide access to electronic research journals as a central service.)

11. Development grant for sports infrastructure (to strengthen sports infrastructure in universities and colleges.)
12. Institutionalization of teaching and research in interdisciplinary areas (to strengthen interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary studies.)
13. Universities with potentials for excellence (to help selected universities to achieve excellence in teaching and research activities.)
14. Colleges with potential for excellence (to help selected colleges to achieve excellence mainly in teaching activity and initiate research culture in such institutions.)
15. Development of teaching courseware (a) multimedia content material and (b) courseware repository development (to undertake exercise in the development of multimedia courseware in different subjects and also to create courseware repository.)
16. Incentives for reforms (to create conducive environment for introducing reforms in higher education by giving incentives to the universities for introducing reforms.)
17. Internal quality assurance and accreditation (to make universities and colleges to establish internal quality assurance cell and go through the assessment and accreditation process of the NAAC.)
18. National educational testing (to strengthen existing national test mechanism for certification of persons eligible for research and teaching profession.)
19. Promoting structural convergence of conventional and open education approach (to interlink conventional and open system to cater to increasing demands of higher education.)
20. Career orientation to education: Promotion of skill-oriented add-on courses for vocational education (to initiate skill-oriented add-on courses that have utility at under-graduate level.)

21. Implementation of curriculum development committee reports (to support teaching-learning innovations in different subjects.)
22. Initiation of teaching and research activities in emerging areas (to promote teaching and research in emerging areas.)
23. Support for area studies (to undertake studies relating to problems and culture of a given area in different countries and regions of the world, particularly with what India has a close and direct contact.)
24. Academic staff colleges: An instrument for teachers' orientation (to widen and enhance the range and scope of academic staff colleges.)
25. Committee on strengthening of infrastructure in science and technology (to assist those university departments on selective basis who have already achieved excellence in research to acquire expensive equipment and to enable them to do research and teaching at internationally competitive level.)
26. Grant for special assistance programmes (to develop selected university departments which had already shown potential in teaching and research for advance academic work to the level of centres of excellence in the identified thrust areas.)
27. Research funding council for supporting research schemes (to promote excellence in research.)
28. College science improvement programme (to strengthen under-graduate science education in colleges.)
29. Instruments maintenance scheme (to strengthen existing facility for repairs and maintenance of institutions in universities.)
30. Advanced centres for science education and research (to establish higher education teaching and research institutions with direct tie-up with research laboratories and industries.)

31. National lecturers (to attract and retain talent in pure science.)
32. Special assistance programme (to identify and support university departments that have potentials to do quality teaching, research in various social sciences/humanities/arts/law and allied disciplines.
33. Research funding council for supporting research schemes (to create a formal structure to support research programmes from teachers in various disciplines.)
34. College humanities and social science improvement programme (to strengthen humanities and social sciences programmes in the colleges.)
35. Research Awards (to provide opportunity to the teachers involved in teaching to pursue research for a brief period of time.)
36. Utilization of services of retired teachers (to utilize the expertise of retired teachers for academic activities.)
37. Research workshops/seminars/conferences (to organize workshops, seminars and conferences.)
38. Travel grant (to provide opportunity to teachers to attend national and international seminars, conferences, workshops/trainings.)
39. Faculty improvement programme (to pursue higher education, i.e., M.Phil. and Ph.D. for regular teachers.)
40. Unassigned grant (to provide block grant to universities for seminars, symposia, research, travel and publication.)
41. Development grant for national facilities (to support specific activities in science research at selected places.)
42. Development for inter-university centres (to support existing inter-university centres.)
43. Adult and continuing education (to undertake the literacy programme, population education, science

for people, environment education, legal literacy and technology transport, continuing education and extension.)

44. Value education and human rights and duties education including special studies (to promote value education and human rights and duties education in universities/colleges.)
45. Traditional languages (to promote traditional languages.)
46. History of science and ancient heritage (to conduct studies, research and extension programme to promote the ideas of great thinkers and apply them in the reconstruction of human society on moral, ethical and spiritual foundations for non-violent society.)
47. Interaction with business community for adjunct professors (to promote university-industry interaction.)
48. Special education activities like yoga, mind and human consciousness, positive health, career, personality, entrepreneurship development, community development and similar activities (to impart special education in various areas.)
49. Population education: UNFPA-UGC project (to enable the youth in universities and colleges and the community to comprehend clearly the issues related to family size, quality of life, gender equity, reproductive health, AIDS, impact of population growth on society and nation.)
50. UGC-Net: Intranet and internet connectivity for colleges and universities (to provide intranet and internet connectivity to universities and colleges.)
51. Computers and internet literacy for teachers and administrators (to impart computer and internet literacy to teachers and administrators.)
52. Special support activities for SC/ST, minorities, women and disadvantaged groups in computer,

communication and information and biotechnology studies (to impart special support activities for disadvantaged groups.)

53. Incentives for resource mobilization (to encourage universities to mobilize resources through external sources by participation of the society in their development.)
54. Professional management of universities (to manage the university system professionally to make it responsive to the socio-economic context of education).
55. Training of administrators (to impart training to the administrative personnel of the universities, i.e., Vice-chancellors, pro-vice-chancellors, registrars, finance officers and controllers of examinations and other staff.)
56. Travel grants for administrators (to enable administrators to get exposure.)
57. College development councils (to establish college development councils.)
58. State councils of higher education (to establish state councils of higher education.)
59. Counselling cells (to establish counselling cells in the universities.)
60. Grant for promotion of export of higher education (to evolve policy to promote free flow of students from other nations to India and vice versa.)
61. International cooperation (bilateral exchange programme between India and other countries.)
62. Women's hostels (to support universities and colleges for the construction of women's hostels.)
63. Day care centres (to help the women to continue the academic career.)
64. Women studies centres (to strengthen and sustain the women study centres in the universities.)
65. Part-time fellowship for women holding junior research fellowship (to encourage greater participation of women as academics.)

66. Infrastructure for women students and teachers (to provide proper infrastructure facilities specially for women students and teachers.)
67. Family studies (to promote integrated families.)
68. Remedial coaching for disadvantaged sections (to achieve social justice and equity amongst the weaker sections of the society including minorities.)
69. SC/ST cells (to implement the reservation policy for SC/ST in the universities and colleges.)
70. Coaching for NET for disadvantaged groups (to encourage members of disadvantaged groups to qualify NET examination.)
71. Facilities for differently-abled persons (to develop courses for persons with special needs and to provide facilities to the differently-abled persons.)
72. Visiting teachers from Kashmir and north-east Region (to provide opportunity to migrate Kashmiri teachers or teachers of north-east region.)
73. Special schemes for NE and border hill region (to help mobilization and integration of teachers in NE and border hill areas with rest of the country.)
74. UGC's campus development and construction of administration building and guest house (to construct office accommodation, guest house facilities, conference room facilities, etc.)
75. Automation of UGC functioning (to manage the higher education system more efficiently.)
76. Training for UGC officers (to improve the efficiency and working of UGC officers.)
77. Implementation and monitoring cell for Tenth Plan (to open a separate implementation and monitoring cell for Tenth Plan.)
78. Publication of UGC documents (to publish and print the UGC documents.)
79. Creation of reliable education data base (to create data base for higher education in India.)

80. Policy research cell (to create a mechanism for doing projection studies at policy level in higher education.)
81. Development grant for engineering and technical universities (to provide basic development grants to technical universities for improving infrastructure.)
82. Development grant for management departments in universities (to promote management education in the university system.)
83. Information, communication and computer education (to impart information, communication and computer education through courses and infrastructure development.)
84. Special programme in engineering discipline (to identify and support university departments that have potentials to do quality teaching and research in engineering and technology.)
85. Research projects (to encourage individual research in engineering and technology departments.)
86. Promotion of professional education for women (to impart professional education courses to women.)
87. Development grant for teaching innovations in engineering and technical subjects (to bring innovations in engineering and technology teaching.)
88. Development grant for teaching innovations in management subjects (to bring innovation in management teaching.)[37]

The Tenth Plan's chief emphasis is on the new-found identity of India as a nation that generates knowledge experts. Some of the forward-looking ventures in the plan like electronic connectivity of universities and colleges in the country, efforts to make higher education pay for itself, measures to take care of equity and access by removing disparities etc. are to be welcomed with an open hand. The stress on quality in the ever-expanding higher educational scenario cannot be over-emphasized. No doubt, a five-year plan is an economic-growth-oriented measure. And so, its

value should be counted from that spectrum only.

Speaking of the new-found identity of the nation, we cannot forget the industrious non-resident Indians (NRIs), the great Indian diaspora numbering over 20 million. The NRIs represent, in one sense, the cream of India's intellectual and entrepreneurial assets. That they have done well in their countries of residence – far better than they would have in India – is unquestionable. They have done so well in business and profession that they reportedly hold net assets estimated at roughly one-third of the $500 billion worth that is estimated to be India's annual gross domestic product. The 1.8 million-strong Indians of the United States are that country's richest ethnic group. That the Indian who is resident abroad has made great strides is a tribute as much to his/her spirit of enterprise and intellectual training as to the facilitating environment in the country he/she has adopted. Unlike the Chinese diasporas who are chiefly business personnel, the Indian diasporas until recently have been confined to the professional class apart from workmen and technicians who abound in West Asia. This fact, on the one hand, explains why NRI investment in India is only 10 per cent as against the Chinese diaspora's contribution of 50 percent, and on the other, speaks volumes of our high quality intellectual training in some premier institutes.[38] However, our chief problem in higher education should be reiterated: half-baked and poor quality training and education offered by the bulk of universities and colleges, increasing demand *vis-à-vis* problem of access, increasing supply *vis-à-vis* decreasing quality and the problem of equity (denial of higher education to the deprived sections).

One point should be made about the Government of India's currently pledged commitment to prioritize the furthering of *educational opportunities in the north-east region* of the country, so far neglected in a myriad ways. As the most tangible sign of this, the education sector of the government has stepped up its expenditure to a 10 per cent margin for the region. The sub-department of secondary and higher education even spent 12.74 per cent in the year 2000-01, though the department of elementary education could spend

only a paltry 3.70 per cent. Efforts are on to consistently spend the earmarked amount for the region every year and a committee of education secretaries of the region headed by the Secretary, Secondary and Higher Education, Government of India, for the purpose. The meeting of this committee held on 12 April, 2001, identified the following as some of the more serious problems plaguing the education sector: lack of trained teachers and skilled manpower, need for more relevant curriculum to curb the acute problem of educated unemployment in the region and the difficulties in attaining universal computer literacy. During the year 2001-02 a total of Rs.374.70 crore has been approved by the Government of India for the education sector of the northeast as non-lapsable central pool of resources, of which Rs.269.40 crore has already been released for higher education mainly, like the infrastructural development of central institutions like the Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati, North-Eastern Region Institute of Science and Technology, Itanagar, the five central universities of the region (North Eastern Hill University, Shillong, Meghalaya; Tezpur University, Tezpur, Assam; Assam University, Silchar; Nagaland University, Kohima; and Mizoram University, Aizawl) and IGNOU. Several constructions are undertaken using this fund, like academic, administrative and library buildings and staff quarters, and the laboratories and library holdings are also being developed currently.

IGNOU's proposals for the region include:

- Establishment of six new regional centres at Aizawl, Imphal, Agartala, Itanagar, Kohima and Gangtok (Sikkim) in addition to the two regional centres at Guwahati and Shillong. This will give IGNOU a base in all the eight states of the region, including Sikkim.
- Establishment of computer labs in these regional centres, providing internet facility to its students for computer courses and online courses, and setting up lease line connectivity at all regional centres.
- A North-East Media Focus project involving the production of 20 educational films on different

aspects of the region by young film produces of Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Nagaland and Tripura.

- Establishment of 10 vocational-cum-work centres under their entrepreneurship development programmes.
- Expansion of study centres and improving the delivery service network.

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2. "We have an economics of higher education, we have a developing understanding of student learning – particularly from a psychological perspective – and we have a number of other approaches... But, astonishing as it may seem, we have no theoretical framework in which we can talk about higher education *educationally*. Put simply, we have no modern educational theory of higher education." (Ronald Barnett, *The Idea of Higher Education*, pp. 3-4) Barnett goes on to say that though there are writings on the aims, values and goals of higher education, "we are still short of a properly worked-out examination of the meaning of 'higher education'." (Ibid.) See also M. Reeves, *The Crisis in Higher Education* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1988) and P. Scott, *The Crisis of the University* (London: Croom Helm, 1984).
3. *Ibid.*, p. 202.
4. *Learning the Treasure Within,* p. 22. See Chapter 5, "Learning throughout life," of this stimulating report.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 131-134.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 131-132.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 133.
8. Interview in *The Statesman*, 17 July 1999.
9. Karan Singh, "Education for the Global Society," *Learning the Treasure Within,* p. 226.
10. *Learning the Treasure Within,* pp. 135-136.
11. As quoted in http://www.col.org (The Commonwealth of Learning) in Denis Blight and others, "The Internationalization of Higher Education," Keith Harry, ed., *Higher Education Through Open and*

Distance Learning – World Review of Distance Education and Open Learning: Volume I (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 29.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
13. Barnett gives the following criteria to judge an authentic process of higher education:
    (a) A deep understanding, by the student, of some knowledge claims;
    (b) A radical critique, by the same student, of those knowledge claims;
    (c) A developing competence to conduct that critique in the company of others;
    (d) The student's involvement in determining the shape and direction of that critique (i.e. some form of independent inquiry);
    (e) The student's self-reflection, with the student developing the capacity critically to evaluate his or her own achievements, knowledge claims and performance;
    (f) The opportunity for the student to engage in that inquiry in a process of open dialogue and cooperation (freed from unnecessary direction). (Ronald Barnett, *The Idea of Higher Education*, p. 203).
14. *Ibid.*, p. 204.
15. *National Policy on Education, 1986*, Part II – "The Essence & Role of Education", Paragraph 2.
16. H. Sharp, ed., *Selections from Educational Records, Part I* (Calcutta: Government Printing, 1920) p. 101.
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19. *Annual Repot on Education: 2001-2002* (New Delhi: Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, 2002), p. 120.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 120.
21. Source: P.K. Nayak, *Higher Education in Arunachal Pradesh* (New Delhi: Akansha Publishing House, 2002) p. 28.

22. Source: *India's Five Year Plans—Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07)* New Delhi: Academic Foundation, 2003).

Note: Professional education includes engineering, technology and architecture, medical (allopathy/ayurvedic/homaeopathy/nursing/ pharmacy etc.) and teacher training colleges.

23. Source: Sita Ram Sharma, *UGC Schemes: A Manual for Universities, Colleges and Research Institutions*, 4th revised and enlarged edition (New Delhi: Mangal Deep Publications, 2003) pp. 993 & 1025-26.

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