

Aims of Higher Education

Introduction

Education means enabling the mind to find out that ultimate truth which emancipates us from the bondage of dust and gives us the wealth of not things but of inner light, not of power but of love, making this truth its even and giving expression to it.

Rabindra Nath Tagore

Higher education occupies a special position in the educational system of any nation because it is at the apex of the entire educational structure and thus influences all levels of education. In fact, by providing manpower for many areas of production, planning, management and technological development, it influences practically every important national activity. Through ideas and innovations, its influence on the future of the nation is also very considerable. The importance of higher education has been very considerable. The importance of higher education has been very succinctly expressed by our first Prime Minister Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru, in his address to a convocation of Allahabad University in 1947 in the following words:

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

Society's expectations from higher education, however, have not remained the same always, but have kept changing with differing social concerns, economic situations and political conditions.

Learning outcomes

In this unit, we intend to give you an overview of what we mean by 'education' and 'higher education'. An attempt is made to discuss the changing role and functions of higher education in different historical periods. Towards the end, we briefly discuss the aims of higher education today in order to affirm its importance to our society and its progress.

After working through this unit, you should be able to:

- appreciate the meaning and significance of education;
- discuss the changing role and functions of higher education through the history of education;

- estimate the role of higher education with regard to its three central concerns – individual, society and knowledge.

Education and higher education

The term 'education' is used in a variety of contexts and with different shades of meaning. In its broadest sense, any act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character or physical ability of an individual can be called as educational. It is in this sense that travelling, reading, conversation or even living with someone can be an education. The famous author Maxim Gorky has written an autobiographical book describing his experiences of people, situations, family and social relationships from which he learnt a lot about life, and he has called the book. 'My Universities'. In the same sense, it is not surprising that an assessment of learning by children has revealed that the school contributes only a limited share in the education of children; the other part comes from family, life, society, playmates and reading of books and magazines – in modern times, from radio, television or the computer. Education is thus a very broad term as far as individual is concerned.

However, education may also connote a system of institutions organized by society to deliberately transmit its cultural heritage – its accumulated knowledge, values and skills – from one generation to another. The educational system of a society would, accordingly, comprise institutions such as schools, colleges, universities including teachers, administrators, curricula and courses, examination and certification procedure, and so on.

Formal arrangements for the education of individuals in present day societies are conceived in terms of stages arranged in a hierarchy. Our own educational ladder starting at six years of age, comprises the elementary, secondary, higher secondary and higher education stages. Since 1968, when the Parliament approved a National Policy on Education, we are committed to a structure symbolically called "10+2+3". This means ten years high school education including five years of primary, three years of upper primary and two years of secondary education. The structure of higher education consists of three years of education (after 12 years of school education) leading to a Bachelor's degree in Arts and Science and four years in professional fields like Engineering and Medicine. This is followed by two years of study for a Masters degree; and three years at least beyond the Masters degree for a Ph. D degree which generally takes longer. The new National Policy on Education, 1986, reaffirms the same structure adopted by most Indian States.

Higher education

Higher education refers to education in post higher secondary institutions, colleges and universities. It is higher education, firstly, because it constitutes the topmost stage of formal education and more importantly, because it is concerned with processes in the more advanced phases of human learning. The entrants are about eighteen years of age and, therefore, they are mentally mature and capable of performing at the abstract level. They can analyse, synthesise and grasp concepts and ideas of all kinds. Their creative faculties are also developed adequately. Consequently the content, methods of interaction and organization of work have to be very different from what they are at the school.

Three aspects of higher education are of relatively recent origin. One of them is that social, economic and industrial development have created a pressure towards greater **specialization**. Whereas two centuries ago, students could study Philosophy, Mathematics and Medicine in their university's programmes, today these subjects are studied usually by different students in different faculties or institutions. Because of specialization today's student in higher education knows more and more about less and

less and sometimes special efforts are necessary to create a broader understanding of subjects and disciplines.

The second aspect is that as societies grew more complex, more selective and efficient means of cultural transmission evolved. The result is the **formal, institutionalized system** of education. The curriculum, due to specialization and paucity of time has crystallized into clear-cut 'papers' or courses. Formalism both in structure and content have crept in. The need of producing students of comparable base of knowledge and standard of achievement by a large number of institutions, has led to formalism in evaluating or examining of students.

Thirdly, **research** has emerged as one of the most significant dimensions of higher education today. Creation of knowledge is a tangible output of the educational system because of which the Universities have acquired a new social status, particularly, in the developed countries. In fact, there exists a symbiotic relation between research and specialization of knowledge and skills. Much research is a team effort of collaborative nature in which the combined intelligence of large numbers is brought to bear on the solution of a problem.

Higher education – a historical perspective

Higher education as we have it today, is the outcome of a long socio-historical process of evolution. In a brief presentation such as this we can only highlight some important aspects of a character of education and its development; a fuller account can be found in the literature some of which is listed at the end of the unit.

A basic character of education is that it informs a person and it enlightens her / him about things she / he does not know and thus initiates her / him into asking all sorts of questions about nature, about life, about society and its organizations. One is made capable of thinking for herself and finding answers to the questions which one considers important or significant for one's life. In this sense, education is said to be a 'liberating' force. It makes the individual free and capable of ordering his / her life according to one's own choice or playing a more active role in society either to preserve it or to change it. This basic feature of education has led, throughout history, to education being used as an instrument of struggle, for liberation or for suppression both by the individual and by the society.

In the earliest human societies, what mattered most for the primitive man was survival. In such a situation, education was not a separate component of human activity and it was a means of handing over racial experience from the older to the younger generation. But as social production increased and activities became differentiated in the sense that some people hunted, others engaged in production of crops and still others actively fought tribal wars, etc., education became a distinct activity. This was the stage in society when the most important question was whether to educate or not to educate individuals, and if they were to be educated to what limited or broad purpose were they to be educated. Those who came to rule over such societies were naturally afraid that education would liberate the individual and he or she would be in a position to challenge their authority. Societies are known to have had laws to deny education to large sections of their population because education would cause disaffection. This is the reason why for thousands of years, in recent human history, vast numbers were kept illiterate and uneducated. The idea of universal education or education for all, is a part and parcel of recent socio-political ideas of recognizing that all men and women are equal before the law or that every member of the society has a vote and possesses other basic human rights.

Self-assessment

1. What were the priorities of Society with regard to education in the following eras?

- Pre-civilisation
- At the time that society was stratified by occupation
- When democratic thought gained currency

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

We thus see that education is on the one hand, a liberating force for the individual but on the other hand, for this very reason it has been used for suppressing the individual in all societies; and for the same reason in the developing countries which have attained Independence, it would be tremendous social force for economic, social and cultural advancement.

With this general understanding, we can examine in some more detail how 'education of the individual' has undergone changes; and how ideas about 'transmission of knowledge' and 'education and progress of society' have evolved.

Development and perfection of the individual

The highest development of the human individual is one of the time-honoured functions of education. But what constitutes such development has been interpreted differently according to the prevailing philosophical and social temper. To the ancient Indians, it was spiritual perfection or the attainment of **Moksha**. Higher education during the **Vedic** and **Upanishadic** times aimed at preparing individuals for such a life. Only the very select could think of joining such an endeavour. To the medieval Christians in Europe, the aim of education was to prepare the individual not for this life but for the life to come in the other world. The Christian 'salvation' promoted the values of humanity and self-abnegation.

A more secular interpretation of individual development which came as a result of socio-political developments produced the concept of liberal education. In the Graeco-Roman times, liberal education had meant the education of the 'free' man, as contrasted to the slave or the artisan. The slaves did the work of the world enabling the free men, the aristocrats to devote their leisure for the development of their mind and intellect. In feudal society of Europe, liberal education at the higher level comprised the study of grammar, logic and rhetoric (**the trivium**) and arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music (**the quadrivium**). In this genesis of 'liberal education', we can locate the concept of higher education as a means of learning, the creative use of leisure rather than providing a way to earn a living, or to develop a responsible citizen.

The kind of individual to be shaped through liberal education also underwent change periodically. As the social and economic conditions changed during the Renaissance (the revival of commerce, rise of urban life and decline of the rural castle and monastery), a humanistic movement began in education. The Humanists wanted learning for the express purpose of life in this world, which included appreciation of culture, inculcation of values, some teaching of skills (for example, in Mathematics or

Medicine). The aim was the all round development of the individual who was now to be shaped as a 'gentleman' in the mould of a courtier.

Aims of Higher Education

The development of the individual has also been interpreted as his or her development as a citizen of a State. It has been believed that the individual has no existence apart from the State and that one's development consists in the total identification with the State. Education, accordingly, has stressed individual development not as an end in itself but for extreme examples of educational systems which subordinated the individual to the State. On the other hand, there has been a trend throughout history to orient educational aims at all stages to the full development of the individual's personality as a self-justifying end. It is believed that the 'highest' development of all individuals will contribute towards social good, rather than working against it. But of course, what is 'social good' and what is 'highest development', has been understood differently in different societies at different times. Society is an organized entity and education must prepare individuals to fit into a variety of jobs and responsibilities. Society must, itself be protected against minor conflicts between its various sections, sectors or classes, and society must generate resources to supply all the goods, service and education itself. Hence education's claim cannot be just 'highest' development of the individual and nothing else.

The table below illustrates Bertrand Russell's thoughts on the 'aims of education' in different societies. According to him these are perfection of the individual by building vitality, courage, sensitiveness and intelligence. This is a gist of his exploration of the aims of education in different societies.

Vitality	Courage	Sensitiveness	Intelligence
● Promotes interest in the outside world leading to objectivity ● Promotes the power of hard work	● Combination of self-respect with an impersonal outlook on life ● Perfection of courage is found in a person who feels his / her ego to be small part of the world, not through despising oneself, but through valuing much that is not oneself. This happens when the instinct is free and intelligence is active	● Person is emotionally sensitive ● The emotional reaction must be appropriate: mere intensity is not what is needed	● Intelligence means actual knowledge and receptivity to knowledge ● Intelligence demands an alert curiosity. Curiosity is inspired by a genuine love of knowledge

If curiosity is to be fruitful, it must be associated with a certain technique for the acquisition of knowledge. There must be habits of observation, belief in the possibility of knowledge, patience and industry. These things will develop of themselves, given the fund of curiosity and the proper intellectual education. But since our intellectual life is only a part of our activity, and since curiosity is perpetually coming into conflict with other passions, there is need of certain intellectual virtues, such as open-mindedness. We find it hard to disbelieve what we have emphatically believed for a number of years, and also what ministers to self-esteem or any other fundamental passion. Open-mindedness should therefore be one of the qualities that education aims at producing.

Courage is essential to intellectual probity, as well as to physical heroism. The real world is more unknown than we like to think, from the first day of life we practise precarious inductions, and confound our mental habits with laws of external nature. All sorts of intellectual systems – Christianity, Socialism, Patriotism, etc – are ready, like orphan asylums, to give safety in return for servitude. A free mental life cannot be as warm and comfortable and sociable as a life enveloped in a creed: only a creed can give the feeling of a cosy fireside while the winter storms are raging without.

Bertrand Russell

Jiddu Krishnamurthy, a contemporary thinker, talks about the aim of education being the development of a seeker of knowledge through the process of enquiry.

Alvin Toffler in his book 'Future Shock' talks about aims of education for an individual as:

- Learning how to learn
- Learning to relate
- Learning to make choices

As we explore these different perspectives, what comes out clearly is that the aims of higher education are universal across time. Our own Constitution, inter alia, mentions objectives of education – such as creating a scientific temper, or promoting national integration.

Pursuit and transmission of knowledge

The role of higher education in relation to knowledge has been so predominant in history that higher education has come to be equated with production and dissemination of knowledge. In fact, the emergence of higher education as a distinct stage of education with its own aims, content and pedagogy was due to the substantial increase in the fund of knowledge and even more to man's increasing desire, and need, to know more and more. The medieval ancestors of the modern universities started as **universitas** (corporations), communities of scholars, committed to the search for and dissemination of knowledge.

As in the case of individual development, the knowledge transmission function also has not been free from controversies. The basic questions that have been asked are what knowledge is of most worth? For example, in scientific research is basic research more important than applied research? And whether knowledge should be pursued for its own sake or for its utility, or for both?

Ancient Chinese education represented both the views. Confucius looked upon education as a process of socialization and knowledge as existing for the sake of harmony in society. Against this, Lao Tse argued for learning for the sake of internal growth and understanding.

The Vedic Indians classified knowledge as **paravidya** (knowledge that transcended human experience, spiritual knowledge) and **aparavidya** (knowledge based on human experience) and held the former as the worthy goal of education and of life itself. Such knowledge, again, was not to be pursued for its instrumental use in this world but for attaining spiritual perfection or **Moksha**. The **parishads** which were assemblies of Brahmans, learned the Vedas, functioned as centers of higher learning to provide the seeker with such knowledge. Even the later universities of Takshashila and Nalanda essentially concerned themselves with spiritual learning. The same was the case with the medieval Christian monasteries in Europe.

There was a broader, secular interpretation of knowledge too. Originally education in India was restricted to Theology, Philosophy and Logic but later to win over a larger

number of people from the laity, curriculum was broadened to include Medicine, Law, Administration, etc., so as to enable them to enter into government service or follow the professions. In a way, this paved the way for the modern university education. In Europe, the **trivium**, and the **quadrivium** (the seven liberal arts) dominated the curriculum of higher education right until the last century. Apart from general education, the medieval universities of Europe also specialized in Medicine, Law and Administration. The **Madrasahs** in India founded during the medieval period by Muslims were basically centers of Arabic learning and religious scholarships, but the curriculum also provided knowledge of Logic and Philosophy, Law and even Astronomy, much like their counterparts in Europe.

The sheer weight of tradition sometimes decided the kind of knowledge to be transmitted through education. Latin, for example, continued to be taught in Europe for centuries, although it had lost its relevance, on the pretext that it trains the mental faculties of reasoning, memory, concentration, etc.

The growth of Science and Technology during the later centuries not only vastly increased man's fund of knowledge but also opened up more avenues for creativity. Knowledge came to be differentiated and specialized into different disciplines. The need now was manifold: to preserve what is known, to refine it and transmit it, to explore new knowledge and to expand its frontiers.

Preservation and progress of society

The third abiding concern of higher education has been the society itself. In relation to society, higher education has performed three kinds of functions. These could be described as **conservative, creative and critical**.

In its conservative aspect education has tried to preserve and transmit through instruction, the existing social culture, its belief and value systems, customs, traditions and mores. In this way it has acted as an agency to preserve the status quo, an existing pattern of social life and give society at any point of time a stability. Educational systems in the early stage of their evolution all over the world were predominantly conservative in this sense. Even the medieval universities which are the fore-runners of modern universities primarily concerned themselves with the transmission of established traditions in knowledge handed down from Aristotle.

However, in history, education has not only functioned as a residual institution merely to preserve existing social patterns but also taken on a more active role, that of enriching social heritage by adding on to it and by creating new knowledge, ideas, technologies and forms of art and craft, and by creating among students the urge to think independently. As explained earlier, it is in the very nature of education to disseminate cultural heritage and the same time to develop new thinking and urge for change. Even the most conservative and traditional societies have, therefore, transformed under the impact of education, conservatism only slowed down the process of change, but could not stop it.

As culture grew in complexity due to industrialization and its social effects, and particularly in democratic societies, higher education assumed an additional role to its traditional one of transmitter of cultural heritage. It functioned as an objective critic of the social order – its value and belief systems, its customs and traditions. In modern times, societies look up to higher education to create an intellectual climate to examine all policies, plans and achievement, and to enable discernment of the directions in which society is moving. We expect higher education today not only to preserve and transmit the best in our culture and enrich our fund of knowledge but also to be an assessor of our social life, its ideals, values and its institutions. For we believe that such criticism will pave the way for further progress of the society.

Self-assessment

2. How has role of higher education transformed through history in the areas of:

- a) development and perfection of the individual
- b) transmission of knowledge and
- c) preservation and progress of society

Write at least three points for each.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Higher education in the changing Indian context

After India became free and set about the task of reorienting its educational system to suit the needs and aspirations of an independent nation committed to Democracy, Secularism and Socialism, intensive and widespread discussions have taken place on the aims and purposes of its higher education. These discussions have involved all concerned with higher education, teachers, students, parents, educationists and leaders in the community. Their considered views have found expression in important national documents like reports of Commissions and Committees and statements of National Policies. Like always, the various aims proposed revolve around the abiding concerns of education, viz; individual, society and knowledge. We present below a synthesis of these different expressions on the aims of higher education.

1. The first step taken by the Ministry of Education after Independence (1947) in higher education was to appoint a commission on university education under the chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan (who later became President of India) to report on Indian university education. Dr. Radhakrishnan recognizes that **"If India is to confront the confusion our times, she must turn for guidance not to those who are lost to the exigencies of the passing hour but to her men of letters and men of science, to her poets and artists to her discoverers and inventors. These intellectual pioneers of civilization are to be found and trained in the universities, which are the sanctuaries of the minor life of the nation"**.

What he was trying to say was that the University is the place where the right kind of leadership in all walks of life is developed. Gifted youths in different pursuits of excellence are identified. The University then helps in inculcation of physical fitness, the development of the powers of the mind, cultivation of the right interests, attitudes and promotion of moral and intellectual values. In the modern days, the University should promote a rational outlook and nurture scientific temper among the youth. It should wipe out dogmatism, fundamentalism and prejudices from the minds of the youth. On the other hand, it should develop right kind of temperament and ability to judge between right and wrong, good and evil.

2. The report of the 'Education Commission (1964-66), popularly known as the Kothari Commission says about the universities that they are the dwelling places of ideas and idealism, and expect high standards of conduct and integrity from all their members. Their's is the pursuit of truth and excellence in all its diversity

— a pursuit which needs, above all, courage and fearlessness. “**Great universities and timid people go ill together**”. It is instructive to study what kind of mind was to be cultivated in the universities according to the Education Commission. Dealing with the special responsibilities of the Universities the Commission says: “... The universities must learn to encourage individuality, variety and dissent within a climate of tolerance ... that man will be able to live wisely and intelligently.

The Commission set out the **aims of university education** in the following terms:

- Higher education policies and programmes should be in line with the social purposes which we profess to serve;
 - There should be a sufficient unity of purpose in the diversity to produce a community of values and ideas among educated men and women;
 - Institutional forms may vary as time and circumstances require, but there should be a steadfast loyalty to the abiding elements of respect for human personality, freedom of belief and expression for all citizens, a deep obligation to promote human well-being, faith in reason and humanity;
 - Mere vocational and technical education, important though they are, do not necessarily serve the spirit. We might have a number of scientists without conscience and technicians without taste who would find a void, a moral vacuum, within themselves;
 - We should preserve the values of democracy, justice and liberty, equality and fraternity. Universities must stand for these ideals which can never be lost so long as men seek wisdom and follow righteousness;
 - The Indian Constitution lays down the general purposes of the State. The universities should educate people on the right lines to make the understanding and vision of the framers of the Constitution, the common possession of all the Indian people.
3. The Education Commission (1966) said in its report: “While the fundamental values to which the universities owe their allegiance are largely unrelated to time and circumstances, their functions change from time to time. Their tasks are no longer confined to the two traditional functions of teaching and advancement of knowledge. They are assuming new functions and the older ones are increasing in range, depth and complexity”

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

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

4. Two decades later, the Government of India undertook a comprehensive review of the nation's education policy. The Policy statement which emerged following this review reaffirmed: "Education is a unique investment in the present and the future". This cardinal principle is the key to the **National Policy on Education**.

Higher education, according to the 1986 Policy, provides people with an opportunity to reflect on the critical social, economic, cultural, moral and spiritual issues facing humanity. It contributes to national development through dissemination of specialized knowledge and skills. It is, therefore, a crucial factor for survival. Being at the apex of the educational pyramid, it has also a key role in producing teachers for the education system.

The Policy urged that in the context of the unprecedented explosion of knowledge, higher education had to become dynamic as never before, constantly entering uncharted areas, and it proposed that the large number of universities and colleges in the country needed all-round improvement and that the main emphasis in the immediate future should be on their consolidation and expansion.

5. The country paper (Government of India's) articulating the vision of India on higher education in 1998 reflected the following views:

- Education aims at liberation – liberation from bondage and ignorance, backwardness and gravitational pulls of the lower human nature;
- Education, being an evolutionary force that enables both the individual and the collectively to evolve various faculties and to integrate them by the superior intellectual, ethical, aesthetic and spiritual powers, should aim at developing a new type of humanity highly humane, cultured and integrated;

Education should be so designed as to become a powerful carrier of the best of the heritage and it should, therefore, aim at transmitting to the new generations the lessons of the accumulated experiences of the past for further progress in the present and the future.

The paper further suggested that considering the contemporary problems of environment, of conflicts and of asymmetrical relationships need to be resolved as early as possible, the Indian system of education aims at the promotion of the goals of universal peace, harmony and unity, based on the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity.

Within the broad canvas of these objectives, the specific objectives of higher education that are evolving especially within the Indian context are:

- To seek and cultivate new knowledge, to engage vigorously and fearlessly in the pursuit of truth, and to interpret all knowledge and beliefs in the light of new things and discoveries;
- To provide the right kind of work ethos, professional expertise and leadership in all walks of life;
- To strive and promote quality and social justice;
- To foster among teachers and students and, through them in society generally, integral development of all values inherent in physical, emotional, rational, aesthetic, ethical and spiritual education; and
- To promote synthesis of knowledge, with special emphasis on unity of scientific and spiritual pursuits that would revitalize our country's heritage and promote the ideal of the whole world as one united family.

Universities and contemporary changes

The 1980s and then 1990s have witnessed rapid changes in the domain of higher education. Internationalisation and globalisation today are high on the agendas of governments and universities. The global economy is only now beginning to bear upon the international role of higher education. Universities are at present engaging in enrolling international students, becoming partners in inter-institutional schemes, and pushing forward in the drive towards globalisation, students, academic staff and curricula are transferred and exchanged between institutions, accreditation agencies ensure promptness in accrediting learning experiences and governments append their signatures to cooperative projects in higher education. In the context of the above changes Coffield and Williamson take the view that universities, in general, must take the initiative in defining radically different arrangements for their future if only for their own good: "Universities must themselves change, as otherwise their future will be defined by political and business elites" {(1997); 5}. According to this perspective, universities have to envision their future in a most creative way in order to escape the trap of offering more of what already exists: "The task facing people in higher education is to think beyond the constraints of conventional wisdom, if universities are to respond to the challenges and uncertainties of the new century, they must find fresh ways to do so {(Ibid, (1997) ; 117}

Against the backdrop of globalisation and linking education to industry and the world of work, certain changes in the basic aims of universities seem in the offing. For example, it is being envisaged that traditional degree programmes will increasingly be replaced by continuing education / lifelong learning, more teaching than research will take place, teachers will become facilitators than the main transmitters of bodies of knowledge, different forms of knowledge generation to suit the diversified student population and different markets is likely to emerge along with varied mechanisms for dissemination and delivery of knowledge.

Further it is not only the developments of globalisation and liberalization which will play a crucial role in setting the aims, role and functions of the university in the near future. The limits on what universities can achieve are also set by the societies in which they function. In this context it is being felt that "universities, despite all the changes they have made, have not responded and are also responding, with sufficient speed or at an appropriate level, to the technological, economic, social and demographic changes of the past twenty years" (Coffield and Williamson, {1997:(2)}). Further, "it is not enough for universities to reform themselves. They must seek to engage in a wide-ranging and critical dialogue within society to secure the conditions of both the future growth and sustainable development of both" (Ibid; 5). We will discuss all this in greater detail in Block 3.

To conclude, the contemporary changes have generated new social meanings and understandings regarding the aim, purpose and function of higher education. To what extent will these displace the old understandings is a matter of debate to be resolved over the passage of time.

Self-assessment

3. Visit the website <http://www.education.nic.in/html/web/unhighedu.htm#objectives> and briefly describe the development of the aims of higher education in India since Independence.

.....

.....

.....

4. *Discuss the various trends in our world today (Knowledge explosion, availability of various options for specialization, globalization, telecommuniting, etc) and how do these impact the aims of higher education in the present context.*

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

5. *How can education lead to social change? Discuss the important functions that a modern university is expected to perform in this context.*

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Summary

In this unit, we have seen that there has often been a broad correspondence between the values of a society at a given point in time and the aims of education. Today, however, certain aims of education have been widely adopted – education should develop the all round intellectual, moral, physical and aesthetic capabilities of individuals and that education should contribute to the improvement of society economically and, depending on circumstances, politically and socially. These aims are, however, interpreted in different ways.

The wide range of actual aims and goals of education, seen through a historical perspective can be said to revolve around three major concerns namely: development and perfection of the individual, pursuit and transmission of knowledge, and stability and change in society. Educational institutions preserve cultural traditions they can also contribute to social change. Colleges and universities are centers of creative thought and discovery and all contemporary educational institutions disseminate new knowledge and values to younger generations. They can modify and transform traditional socio-economic hierarchies. Finally, because education also promotes critical attitudes and analysis it may contribute to scepticism toward traditional institutions and become bases of rebellion and revolution. The range of functions and uses that education can assume also highlights the fact that conflicts exist among some of these functions and uses. For example, using educational institutions to preserve cultural traditions may conflict with using them to maximize talent and develop a technologically sophisticated workforce. Using education to promote ideological purity may conflict with promoting science and creativity. It is also worth noting that although the traditional aims of education remain undisputed yet in the context of changes brought with the onset of globalisation, the emergence of information society and withdrawal of public funding for higher education, there would be an occasional blurring of the roles that the university system is expected to perform in the future.

Unit-end activities

1. 'Education is such a huge undertaking, it has so radical an influence on man's destiny, that it will be damaging if it is only considered in terms of structures, logistical means and processes'. Elaborate what is meant by this statement.

Points for discussion

1. The Education Commission (1964-65) recommended the model of the National System of Education based on three significant assumptions: 1) the type of future society one has in view; 2) the type of educational system one visualizes; 3) the relationship between society and education which one postulates. Discuss your own views on each of these aspects.
2. Educational systems are expected to be capable of adapting themselves to changing circumstances. Why is this change important? Discuss with your colleagues the important changes in your college / university.

Suggested readings

Barnett, R. (1992) *The Idea of Higher Education*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Bettleheim, C. (1968) *India Independent*. London: Haggikon and Kee.

Chhagla, M.C. (1966) *Education and the Nation*, New Delhi: Allied.

Coffield, F. and B. Willaimson (1997) *Repositioning Higher Education*, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Damle, Y.B. (1967) "The school and college as a social system", in M.S.Gore, I.P. Desai, and S. Chitnis, (eds) *Papers in the Sociology of Education in India*. New Delhi: NCERT, pp. 250-280.

Ministry of Education, Government of India (1949) Report of the University Education Commission (1948-49), New Delhi : Chapter 1.

Ministry of Education, Government of India (1949) Report of the Education Commission (1964-66), New Delhi: Chapters: XI, XII, & XIII.

Naik, J. P. and Nurullah, Syed (1974) *A Students' History of Education in India: 1800-1976*. New Delhi: Macmillan.

Shukla, S. (1967) "Social responsibility of the university teacher", *Educational Trends*. 2, November 8-13.

Shukla, S. (1964) "The University in Indian Society", *Journal of University Education*. 4 March 171-179.

Indian National Commission for Cooperation with UNESCO "Higher Education in India Vision and Action Paper" October 1998.

<http://www.education.nic.in/htmlweb/unhighedu.htm#objectives>

Russell, Bertrand, "The Aims of Education", in *Voices of Prose*.

Toffler, Alvin, *Education in the Future Tense, in Future Shock*, Bantam Books (Non Fiction).

Krishnamurti, Jiddu, *On Right Education*.

Higher Education and Society

Introduction

Educational purposes, content of education, processes by which education is imparted and the institutional system of education are at any point of time, shaped according to the needs, demands and aspirations of the society. Vice versa, society is deeply influenced by the education which is provided for its members. Our discussion in the previous unit has thrown some light on this generative relationship between education and society, with special reference to higher education. In this unit, we will examine the relationship between higher education and some specific aspects of society, for example, higher education and the State, higher education and the economy, etc.

Learning outcomes

In the previous unit, we already discussed the aims of higher education in different historical contexts and how these have kept changing with developments in different sectors of social life. In this unit, we shall discuss the linkages between education and other subsystems within the broader societal system and examine how they influence the aims and role of higher education at a particular point in time. This will be followed by a discussion on the university as a social institution.

After you have read through this unit, you will be able to

- interpret the inter-connectedness among various subsystems in society;
- appreciate the idea that 'university is a social organism' and understand its obligations to the society at large;
- recognize the importance of characteristics like 'autonomy', 'academic freedom' and 'accountability' for higher education institutions in fulfilling their obligation of higher education.

Higher education and other systems

Education has always played an important part in preparing men for life in society and moulding them accordingly, whether directly or indirectly, overtly or covertly. Improvement of the human mind with its potential powers of rational thought and ability to discover knowledge about nature and its laws, to be came regarded as the key to human progress during the enlightenment. Rather than regard the learning of skills and knowledge as a virtuous pastime or merely to carry out important political and civil operations (as in the case of Egyptian Greek and Roman scribes), men of enlightenment

saw cognitive development and the pursuit of knowledge as essential not only for survival, but also for the advancement of society itself. Education in the modern sense, as a formal and deliberate process by which the cultural and normative heritage of a society is transmitted from generation to generation, and through which that heritage is improved through scientific discovery, had its roots in the enlightenment. The precursors of the modern school and university, with their presumed functions relating to progress became established during this period, however, formal institutions for education existed in ancient societies as well. Clearly the development of writing represented a major breakthrough in the development of civilization and the acquisition and use of this important skill was soon institutionalized.

From the beginning, it appears that schools and their skilled products were seen as serving the State and the society as a whole. Even in Greece and Rome where much learning was admired for its own sake, the advantages to the State of an educated citizenry were recognized. Plato, in particular was concerned with education, for only through proper training could the State be assured of a loyal citizenry and talented leaders. Although the nature of relationship between education and society is a subject of debate, Sociologists like Durkheim have argued that changes in society always precede changes in the educational system. Durkheim emphasized that 'educational transformations are always the result and the symptoms of the social transformations in terms of which they are to be explained'. (1977, 166)

Higher education and economy

There has been a close relationship between education and economy in all historical periods. In the days of subsistence economy, or when humans had to struggle to produce just enough food for their consumption, education consisting of traditional knowledge and skills was passed on from generation to generation in an informal manner. When improved production led to the availability of leisure for at least some people, more formal schooling came into existence. Right from that day, the State, such as it was perhaps tribal chiefs reigning through some advisory groups, came to have influence over what was to be taught and how.

Some aspects of relation between education and the economy are quite obvious, for example, small countries with agricultural or plantation economy are not likely to have steel mills or an aircrafts industry and hence they will probably not have education in metallurgy or aeronautics. In India, when the setting up of technical institutions was first proposed at the end of the last century, the colonial Government turned it down saying that there was no industry in the country to absorb the products of such institutions. But, in spite of all this and the fact that the economically advanced countries have all a high level of education available to their people, two tendencies have strongly prevailed for quite some time, and even now there are many who accept these positions. One is that education's role in cultivating the individual is so much emphasized that concern for the social impact of education and hence economic impact is ignored or underplayed. Education for the sake of education, education and educated living in an ivory tower distant from the mundane problems of life, and hence education as a social service provided by the government – it can spare any resources for the purpose – all these views are correlates of each other. The second is that economists like to measure the benefits of education by statistical means and by qualifying the monetary benefits in terms of life-time earning capacity of the individual. This totally ignores the non-monetary benefits, such as social influence by virtue of better education, or the enhanced capacity of society to be master of its own destiny by virtue of education. In the context of Indian education, a clear policy statement in the National Policy on Education (1986) says that education is an investment in the future of the nation. Economic studies are available to show that in the longer run, every rupee spent on education brings greater returns than a rupee invested elsewhere.

The relationship between education and economic growth is like a two-edged sword. There is little doubt that in some contexts education can be an extremely important motor for economic growth. On the other hand education does have limits in what it can do for an economy. Education contributes to economic growth by producing skills and knowledge which promote it and make it possible; on the other hand, economic growth potentially contributes further to educational expansion and efficiency through increases in national productivity, accumulation of capital and savings for reinvestment into the system, and in the improvement of human resources. Improvement of human resources is not limited to the inculcation of skills and knowledge, but includes having attitudes, values, and motives consistent with the goals and methods of development plans. Here education is again inextricably linked with development since it is the major vehicle for bringing about the social and psychological changes, necessary for the improvement of productive labourer.

In the context of globalization, the relationship between economy and education assumes a significant dimension. Because globalization affects employment, it touches upon one of the primary traditional goals of education: preparation for work. Educational institutions will need to reconsider this mission in the light of changing job markets in a new environment (Post Fordist) new skills and the flexibility to adapt to changing job demands and, for that matter, changing jobs during a lifetime; and dealing with an increasingly competitive international labour pool. Yet educational institutions do not limit themselves to preparing students as producers but also help shape consumer attitudes and practices as well, leading to increasing commercialization of the educational environment.

Meanwhile due to changes in the economy since the 1980's resulting in a shift in financing of universities, the university system is undergoing a change. Resultantly, the growing proximity between the corporate sector and the university system, has redefined its role, processes and image. This shift encourages university's support of technological change and private sector development as the dominant guiding vision of future higher education policy. This has the following significant implications for the nature of universities and its role in society:

The changing university agenda

Until now central importance has been given to the production of social knowledge, the creation of curricula to meet academic objectives, the organization of administration to support academic objectives and the pure research base, with the universities response to the private productive sector, the agenda shifts and academic control of agenda wavers.

The commodification of knowledge

Providing a broad focus on the diverse needs of society and developing research which produces knowledge to be socially used to be available to all, has been at the heart of the university's agenda. By contrast the pull to divert knowledge into the market place through the development of marketable products encourages research which is specifically targeted to these ends for knowledge to be exploited through the marketplace, it must be turned into 'the appropriate commodity form, in other words into private property'

Institutional changes

The university - corporate linkages also leads to certain changes within the institutions - chief among them are

- the structures and practices of management within the university are changing in order to accommodate the new agenda;
- the need for a centralized bureaucracy to manage all new offices of technology

transfer, centers of excellence, etc reduces and alters the influence of the academic departmental structures;

The major consequence of this corporate university linkages is the emerging image of the **university** as a **business corporation** rather than a public social institution.

Self-assessment

1. *Discuss the relationship between education, employment and the economy.*

.....

.....

.....

2. *How has the image and role of the University changed with recent changes in the economic policies.*

.....

.....

.....

State, government and higher education

The relationship between the State and higher education can be seen in terms of the **interplay** of the dynamics generated by the **economy**, the **dominant state bureaucracy** and **political institutions** and interests. The modern economy, first of all is fuelled by an ever evolving mix of manpower and scientific knowledge and ideally, would require the education system to train and research the appropriate educational products necessary for optimum economic advance. However, intervening between the economic dynamic and its potential impact upon education is the central bureaucracy of the State and the political institutions and interests, each with its own identity and concerns. To the best of its ability each interprets and channels the demands from the economy in a way which suits the dynamic inherent in its own interests and policy preferences.

What exactly is the nature of the State's interest in higher education? In the view of Halsey and Trow (1971), the State's interest derives from the fact that the universities are a crucial foundation of the economy, have been conceived as integral to a higher education system which supplies, scientific manpower and technological innovation for economic growth and widening opportunities to a rising proportion of the population. They are thus of crucial **political importance** and are in any case pressed into responsibility, or at least responsiveness to the **State as manager of economic growth**, and the **dispenser of individual opportunity** for participation.

Let us now try to understand why the State needs higher education and therefore why higher education possesses the power that it does?

Higher education offers a unique blend of two resources essential for economic and social development: **knowledge** and **status**. At the **apex** of the educational hierarchy, higher education makes the decision on how knowledge **should be organized** and what status should be attached to different knowledge areas. Likewise any significant change in the content or boundary of a knowledge area has to be sanctioned by higher education if it is to carry lasting weight. Further within higher education, universities act as the **custodians** of the **selection process** through their control of the examination system. Society only accepts that an individual, has acquired a particular body of knowledge if the possession of that knowledge has been certified by an appropriate institution. Not only that, universities also strongly influence the **form** and content of certificates awarded by institutions lower down the educational hierarchy. In effect, they thus define the context in which much individual social mobility takes place. In acquiring the mantle

of university respectability an occupation also gains access to a high status culture which judiciously employed, will enhance its claims to professional respectability.

Besides recognizing that the universities perform a key social function by controlling the individual and occupational mobility for social change, the State also recognizes that the universities also promote particular set of values which it would also like to control. In other words, if the socio-political power of the universities was to be harnessed and directed within an overall policy-framework for higher education, State intervention had to be justified before it could be implemented. For instance, the economic ideology of education is to enable students to become part of the "efficient distribution of human capital and so facilitate linkage, between economic demand and human supply". The rise of the New Right's view of education as a market place where educational products should be bought and sold and where supply and demand should be left to resolve distribution problem has now challenged the right and the duty of State organizations to intervene in higher education.

In the current scenario, relations between the State and the universities can best be described as an attempt on the part of the government to create a managed market financed essentially by public money. Therein the universities are given wide constitutional control over their own affairs while operating within centrally defined and regulated parameters that are managed by funding agencies.

Self-assessment

2. *In what way is higher education important to the State?*

.....

.....

.....

.....

Higher education and social class structure

Coming as I do from the lowest order of the Hindu society I know what is the value of education. The problem of moving the lower order is deemed to be economic. This is a great mistake. The problem of raising the lower order in India is not to feed them, to clothe them and make them serve the higher order as is the ancient idea of this country. The problem of the lower order is to remove from them that inferiority complex which has stunted their growth and made them slaves to others to create in them the consciousness of the significance of their lives for themselves and for the country, of which they have been cruelly robbed by the existing social order. Nothing can achieve this except the spread of higher education.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

Such was the importance accorded to education by Dr. Ambedkar, the foremost leader of the socially backward classes in India. But, does education fulfil the aspirations of changing the social structure?

Let us now discuss the relationship between education and social classes. We can notice the relationship between education and social and economic class structure from the earliest beginnings of education. In slave societies, slaves were not only deprived of education, but they were also prohibited from entering the system. In feudal society too, education was confined to the gentry whereas only occasionally people belonging to farming families or farm workers received some education but rarely did they reach higher levels of education. The process and content of education corresponded with its social function; it tended to further the interests of the upper classes either by

painting them as the custodians of refinement and culture or allowing notions of caste and class superiority to be popularized. Education did not encourage questioning of social structure or distribution of privilege by making itself more accessible or relevant to the masses. In order to forestall such questioning it adopted an "ivory tower" point of view – i.e. lack of concern for current social, economic or political issues, and concentrating on abstract or "neutral" concepts under the excuse of being non-partisan. In India, the lower castes remained deprived or deficient in education for so long that special provision had to be made in the Constitution to give them "concessions" in education and then in employment. These were not essentially concessions because the handicap of centuries of unfair treatment was being partially rectified.

After the Second World War and the liberation of dozens of countries from colonial dependency, education, started slowly being perceived as a catalyst of social transformation. Efforts by the respective nationalist governments to improve the quantity and quality of education for the socially disadvantaged did not however yield impressive results. Distribution of education continued along lines of caste, class, gender and ethnic inequality. In India, for instance, let us take the case of the Dalits, they got access to education and their access broke the traditional linkage between caste, education and occupation, yet it could only transported them from menial occupations in the caste feudal structure to menial low status, low – paying and low skilled jobs in the modern occupational structures. (Velaskar, 1998) Thus despite impressive gain in improving access, empirical evidence points to education, by and large, continuing to legitimize power structure, social status quo and colonial policies even in post colonial India.

But does this mean that education privileging the elite is something intrinsic to its function? Can education bring about social change? Moving away from viewing the education system to legitimize and reproduce dominant forms of knowledge and skills and its distribution in a manner that conforms to the structures of stratification in an unequal society, is another view of education which opposes the functionalist stance of reproduction and takes into account the resistance and challenges to hegemonic structures by oppressed groups, classes and social movements. In this context, for instance, Padma Velaskar (1994) argues that despite limitations and constraints, the acquisition of higher education by the Dalits has resulted in positive social, political and cultural images which are manifested in a variety of tangible and intangible forms. Therefore, even though education may not contribute to mobility – both social and economic, in a big way, its contributions to positive gains politically and culturally can hardly be overemphasized.

Self-assessment

4. Discuss how, in the Indian context education has influenced social change?

.....

.....

.....

5. How does education 'privelege the elite'? Give examples from the Indian context.

.....

.....

.....

Higher education, culture and social integration

As discussed earlier, education, from the point of view of society, is a process of transmission of culture. By culture, here we mean a great deal more than mere art, music or literature. It refers to the total way of life of a society – its knowledge, beliefs,

attitudes, values, skills and behaviour patterns. Education can be considered as the mechanism by which society inducts its members into its ways of life and beliefs. It is partially responsible for the transfer from one generation to the next of society's beliefs, values, sentiments, knowledge and patterns of behaviour. This process of **socialization** is **conservative** in that it perpetuates current cultural patterns and discourages deviation from them. However, ways of life, concepts of decency, and beliefs are not monolithic; they may change with region or historical origin of a group of population; they may also be different for the various classes in the same social groups. The question whether education should endeavour to promote a common culture or help diverse groups to develop their own different cultures is a vexed one, not least in relation to those minority, ethnic groups that are to be found in most societies (Jeffcoats, 1984; Kelley, 1986). Since there is **no unanimity** regarding **what culture is** and therefore what the content of education should be, educational provisions for different social and ethnic groups and a **need for diversity** rather than uniformity of educational provision is called for. It becomes important in a class, poverty, unemployment and disaffection ridden society such as ours, that the content of education is relevant to the lives of its citizens and their 'outside - the school experiences' so that alienation from and rejection of education does not take place.

The other important issue to be considered is that most societies are in a change of flux, technological change in particular brings about changes in the norms, the values, the beliefs and the customs of a society. Rapidity of the social change and the need for people to be equipped to cope with it and even exercise some degree of control over it suggests that education should prepare individuals for the fact of social change itself, to adapt to and to initiate changes in the norms and values of the community.

Thus more recent views have stressed that culture must be seen as the total environment within which an individual develops and learns and which he / she must be helped to come to terms with, to operate effectively in / and to gain some control over it. Individuals learn, it is claimed, by making sense and constructing meaning through interaction with their environment and their culture. The task of education is to help individuals towards this form of learning, to negotiate 'meaning in a manner congruent with the requirements of the culture' (Bruner and Haste, 1987:1). In this sense, culture is viewed as supporting cognitive growth by providing 'cultural amplifiers' through which pupils develop those 'modes of representation', access to public structures through which the meaning of experiences can be not only internalized and understood but also shared. In this kind of analysis, learning is interactive and the relationship between culture and education is two-way.

In recent times education has been under tremendous pressure to ensure social integration. Social integration is considered dependent on a founding system of norms and values shared by the vast majority of a society. Consequently, an appeal is made to educators to make sure (future) members of society embrace and internalize those values. However, in the context of rapidly changing pluralistic societies, the 'shared - values' view of social integration causes problems. An alternative view of social order defines social integration as emergent at the level of the social system and relates it to its individual members through the **dynamics of communication** instead of the status of 'value - endorsement'

As discussed, education cannot contribute to the integration of society by passing on norms and values to the next generation. Rather its contribution should consist of **developing narrative skills** and a **sense of connection** (namely, the ability to reflectively position oneself in a complex and changing environment and the inclination to assume liability for the outcome). **Communication** and **reflectivity** are the two main components of this kind of narration. Therefore as discussed earlier, the role of education should be an enabling one by imparting the necessary skills.

Stakes and Ladders

Involve Public in Higher Education

By Dipankar Gupta

Today universities in India are beleaguered institutions. They are just about tolerated by the public because they hand out degrees that are often prerequisites for getting salaried jobs, or for getting married. There is little expectation that students will excel in Indian universities, nor are faculty members taken seriously as knowledge producers.

Universities are where one goes to in one's youth with a narrow utilitarian motive, but are otherwise not considered as vibrant public spaces. Though most universities are viewed with disdain by the public, there are some stellar exceptions to this rule. Yet, these universities too get tarred and feathered with the same brush by a very unappreciative public. This is primarily because all universities in India, without exception, have no time to relate to the non-specialised world outside. Consequently, they do not have the public in their corner, which is why they are constantly at the whim of politicians, big and small.

Most Indian universities do not appreciate the importance of linking up with the rest of society in an ongoing fashion. They stand aloof in the belief that the mountain will always come to Mohammed. In the initial years after Independence, when universities enjoyed a certain degree of prestige in the country, teacher activists did not pay attention to the public and instead aimed their guns at politicians. Indeed they won the early rounds, but their isolation from the public is now hurting them.

Politicians have intuitively sensed this and are, therefore, emboldened to impose all manner of outrageous curricula modifications without fearing any public backlash. For universities to be able to function as true centres of higher education, they have to win the public to their side. This does not mean dilution of standards, but rather an elevation of research and teaching programmes that are then meaningfully communicated outside the portals of the university.

Indeed, without an appreciative audience, it is impossible to raise resources for universities. This holds true for both private and public grants. Universities in India have to realise that the public is an important stakeholder. This would fundamentally alter the way institutions of learning are run in this country. Faculties must recognise that their core competence in universities is to advance knowledge through critical research. These advances must be made available to public through lectures, science exhibitions, popular literary festivals, aesthetic displays, and so on.

The community around universities would then feel a sense of belonging with the institution, which, ultimately, is the best guarantor for an unbiased and unprejudiced advance of knowledge. If politicians and their pet projects are to be kept at bay, then the

faculty must demonstrate its competence not only to its peers, but to the public as well. If truth be told, ivory tower intellectuals are not intellectuals at all. Intellectuals that do not have a sense of engagement with their surroundings eventually produce the most ordinary drivel in the most bombastic fashion.

A sense of engagement does not mean identification with political parties either. In fact, this is the most tempting, and also the most dangerous, choice. Once teachers are seduced into taking this option, it makes it easy for politicians to march in through the front door. For academics to pursue their intellectual agenda in a meaningful manner, they must have the public, and not the politician, on their side. But this public can be won if universities are able to communicate their scholarship to them in a meaningful way.

When the public is an important stakeholder of the university system, the university will also devise ways of meeting public expectations, and even raising public aspirations. New courses will be designed keeping in mind the changing needs of the day, and special attention will be given to those who, for one reason or another, cannot make it as regular full-time students. None of these would entail a dilution of standards. They would demand instead greater imagination, and a more profound intellectual engagement with the world around.

Once the public is accepted as a legitimate stakeholder, university teachers and researchers have a solid bulwark to protect them from political predators. Further by accepting that the public has an integral role to play in the intellectual life of the university, there is the constant pressure to upgrade research and teaching standards. Only politicians can trade bad research for patronage and support. The public, in general, is more demanding and fair.

It is true that not every good researcher will have a ready public support base, but the very act of taking collectively the public into confidence on research programmes, and inviting them as students and participants in intellectual gatherings, raises the general appreciation of universities in the society. The valuable real estate on which most universities are situated are eyed hungrily by politicians. One sure way of making all this real estate appear as valid possession is to open the grounds and the buildings to the public when teaching is not taking place.

This is how the university becomes true public property outside the reach of petty politicians. A stakeholder approach to university management recognises that it is not by defying the public and making peace with politicians that institutions of higher learning can prosper. On the other hand, it is only by relying on public goodwill that universities can truly guard its core competencies.

Source: The Times of India - 18 September 2003.



Self-assessment

6. *In what way, you, as a teacher, will prepare learners for social integration?*

.....

.....

.....

.....

University as a social entity

In the preceding discussions, we have seen how the role and functions of higher education have centred around the individual, society and knowledge. The higher educational system, howsoever important it may be, is only one part of the larger socio-economic system. Its students come from various strata of society, with hopes and aspirations related to possibilities of careers and life as a whole in the given society, it draws its financial and administrative support from society, its alumni have to look for employment in the society. This intricate relationship requires the higher educational system to be a living and dynamic entity. If it turns passive and only carries out the orders of those who at any time are at the helm of affairs in society, it will fail in providing positive impulses for changing the society for the better. If the society or government interfere with the natural academic freedom of the university, they deprive themselves of what good the university could have done to them. It has become a cardinal principle in all enlightened societies to respect the academic freedom of university life, in particular freedom of speech and expression, freedom in framing curricula, establishing teaching methods and choosing problems for research.

This relationship between the society and university has however undergone a change. Eric Hobsbawm (1994) has characterized the twentieth century as the age of extremes unable to say what the future holds, though hopeful that it might yet be better than the past. Hobsbawm is clear on two things an era has ended (with the collapse of communism) second, although no one can know how history will unfold, the past is no longer a guide to the future. The same can be said of higher education as can be said for the century as a whole; an era has ended; what has gone before no longer provides a credible model for the future.

As mentioned earlier, universities are undergoing a redefinition of their role and purpose. In the changing context higher education institutions can make themselves relevant to the society by being more flexible and open. Universities engaged in meeting lifelong education needs of people in employment and redefining teaching, learning with the use of new information technology are likely to draw more public support. New ideas, new ways of thinking and learning will help universities to redefine their position vis a vis society. For example helping societies to 'learn their way out' of the problems of the society which sustains them is an important source of university – society linkage. Similarly, although universities are no longer the only players in generating new knowledge through research they still have a vital role in evaluating public policies and in forming multi – disciplinary teams to tackle societal problems.

Therefore freedom is, undoubtedly, required for higher education institutions to discharge their true function in society even in the changing contexts. But no freedom is absolute, freedom of expression and speech has to be within the framework of reason and responsibility. Irrational, emotional or intolerant thoughts could destroy the very fabric of a society. Let us now examine some concepts intrinsic to the university system.

Autonomy

University's freedom to exercise its power to achieve its various goals set by the society or to influence change in society itself is called its **autonomy**. University's autonomy runs parallel to its commitment and responsibility of discharging its social obligation. In other words, university is accountable to the society for its acts of omission and commission. It is in this context we talk of autonomy, academic freedom and accountability. We will explore these linkages further.

When we speak of university autonomy, we mean its right to govern its own affair and particularly its rights to carry out its legitimate activities of teaching and research without interference from any outside authority. Autonomy implies university's **four essential freedoms** – to determine for itself on academic grounds **who may teach, what may be taught, how it should be taught, and who may be admitted** to study. In other words, autonomy means the university or college's power of **decision-making** with regard to **academic programmes and activities**, within financial bounds laid down by Government or by raising funds from interested sources. Only an autonomous institution, free from regimentation of ideas, pressure, or power politics can pursue truth fearlessly and build independent thinking essential for the development of society. There are many other spheres of activities in which universities need autonomy. Some of these are selection of students, appointment and promotion of teachers, determination of curriculum, methods of teaching, research activities, contents of courses, student evaluation, other administrative and financial matters and staff appraisal. **Autonomy** has to be seen as operating at two levels, viz., **external** and **internal**. By external autonomy of a University is meant, university as a corporate entity and its independence in its activities in relation to other institutions in society. Internal autonomy, on the other hand, signifies the autonomy of individual teachers / groups within the University, with their accountability to the academic community at large.

Universities' dependence on public funds makes them increasingly open to scrutiny by the State. It is also interesting to note here that universities tend to face interferences from the government in those times and places where their activities are perceived to be of national importance. In a sense when universities have been least central and important, their autonomy has been safest and this is because institutions that are purely "Ivory Towers" are of little relevance to the society and external authorities are often content to leave them alone.

The autonomous status for higher education institutions, thus, in essence, aims at giving opportunity to the teachers and students to make innovations, utilize their creative talent, improve the standards of teaching, examination and research and quickly respond to social needs.

Academic freedom

Freedom of expression in all its forms, can be justified on two fundamental grounds. For the **individual**, the right to speak and write as one chooses is a **form of liberty** that contributes in important ways to a rich and stimulating life. To be deprived of such liberty is to lose the chance to participate fully in an intellectual exchange that helps to develop one's values to make one's meaning of the world and to exercise those qualities of mind and imagination that are most distinctively human. Beyond its significance to the individual, **freedom of speech** has traditionally been regarded as important to the welfare of society. Throughout history, much progress has occurred, through growth in our understanding of ourselves, our institutions, and the environment we live in. But experience teaches us that major discoveries and advances in knowledge are often highly unsettling and distasteful to the existing order. Only rarely do

individuals have the imagination and intelligence to conceive such ideas and the courage to express them openly. If we wish to stimulate progress, we cannot afford to inhibit such persons by imposing orthodoxies, censorship, and other artificial barriers to creative thought.

Universities should be unreserved in the exercise of this liberty because freedom of expression is critical to their central mission.

While university autonomy relates to the freedom of the university as an institution with certain functions to fulfil, academic freedom is nothing more or less than the professional freedom of the teacher as a member of the university or college where he or she teaches. **Academic freedom** is generally defined as a freedom of members of the academic community, assembled in colleges and universities, which underlies the effective performance of their functions of teaching, learning, practice of the arts and research. Further elaborated, this means that it would be regarded as an infringement of academic freedom for a university to impose any censorship on the utterance of any member of its staff on any subject, whether or not it relates to the field of his expert knowledge and whether or not it deals with religion or politics or it is made in the classroom.

Even though interpretation of what academic freedom is largely depends on subjective values, modified over a period of time. It is however not difficult to offer the following classification as **levels for academic freedom**: (Becher and Kogan, 1985) (Tight 1985)

i) **The personal level**

This level concerns the standard of behaviour and ethics we adopt and develop for ourselves (Passmore 1984). The focus here is both individual and outward looking. It concerns the use which we make of academic freedom, both personally and in consort with others in pursuing understanding and truth, in investigating subjects of interest, in creatively seeking possible solutions to problems and in communicating our findings to others.

ii) **The professional level**

At the professional level, the values embodied are of democratic functioning in the higher education system and the belief that each individual is as worthy of attention and opportunity as any other.

iii) **The institutional level**

Within the institutional value system the concept of the university remains supreme and it is primarily within the institution that personal and professional value systems are expected to come together and be exercised.

iv) **The societal level**

Finally, there are general societal values which influence and cushion the operation of higher education. The values involved here are that a particular view or a set of practices is good / beneficial for society. Societies' values have changed considerably in recent years – from acceptance of higher education as being good for its own sake and emphasizing on long-term benefits, the view now seems to have settled around seeing higher education as an investment seeking an immediate pay-off in terms of outputs like saleable skills, etc. The prevalent societal values constitute an important input of academic freedom.

Each of these four value systems more or less underlie what constitutes academic freedom. The nature of academic freedom accorded depends, on the specific circumstances under consideration; institutional contexts, professional judgements, etc.

In this context, emphasizing on the importance and the sphere where academic freedom is exercised, the Education Commission (1964-66) states, "we would like to emphasize

the freedom of teachers to hold and express their views, however, radical, within the classroom (and outside), provided they are careful to present the different aspects of a problem without confusing teaching with 'propaganda' in favour of their own particular views". In concrete terms it may mean:

- that a teacher cannot be forced to teach something which goes against his / her conscience or his / her concept of truth;
- freedom to hold and express views, however radical provided teaching is not converted to propaganda;
- freedom to speak and write about and participate in debates on significant national / international issues
- facilities and encouragement in his / her work of teaching and research even when his / her views are in opposition to those of his / her authority.

Academic freedom is not to be seen as merely a reflection of society's commitment to free speech as stated earlier, it is a safeguard essential to the aims of the university and to the welfare of those who work within it. Teachers and scholars have a vital stake in continuing to enjoy the liberty to speak and write as they choose, because their lives are entirely devoted to developing and expounding ideas. Universities, in turn, have a **critical interest** in preserving **free expression**, for without that freedom they will be hampered in appointing the most creative scientists and scholars and will suffer from forms of censorship that will jeopardize the search for knowledge and new discoveries that represents their most distinctive contribution.

Obviously, the extent and kinds of academic freedom enjoyed by teachers depends to some extent on social and political realities, and to some extent on **how teachers use these freedoms**. Natural consolidation may be a goal or a task identified by a society for its coherence and progress and therefore any teacher tending to go against it may have to be constrained. Teachers neglecting their duties to teach, learn and research; or those mis-evaluating their students by reason of prejudice, favouritism or sheer neglect; or engaged in disrupting the system by overemphasizing privileges and benefits and underplaying responsibility and duty, may be inviting outside interference in the affairs of educational institutions. If there is **self-discipline**, then **no rules of discipline** would be in evidence; but if there is no such internal constraint then "authority" and "enforcement of discipline" become necessary for universities to play their characteristic role in society, but they call for an immense sense of responsibility on the part of institutions and individuals.

Self-assessment

7. *Why is academic freedom important for the individuals in the university system as well as the society?*

.....

.....

.....

8. *What, in your opinion, constitutes academic freedom?*

.....

.....

.....

Relationship between academic freedom and institutional autonomy

Academic freedom and **institutional autonomy** are **closely related**, the distinction between the two concepts is that while academic freedom relates to academics, that is to individuals, institutional autonomy relates to institutions, their employers. Institutional autonomy guarantees academic freedom to some measure but cannot be construed as a sufficient condition. Is academic freedom possible without institutional autonomy? The answer is 'yes' but with reservations. Where institutional autonomy is virtually non-existent, as in centrally controlled institutions, academic freedom is less likely to exist or be maintained. It seems reasonable to conclude that while it is possible to have academic freedom without institutional autonomy, and vice-versa, the two concepts tend to be mutually supporting and it is desirable that both should be encouraged if each is to flourish (Tight, 1990, 123).

Accountability

While **academic freedom** may be assumed as a **privilege** by academics or as a necessary part of their job, this carries with it an inevitable **quid pro quo** in terms of expectation, **responsibility** and **accountability**. There are two levels of responsibility required of academics in their exercise of academic freedom: those internal to academe and those external to it. The **internal responsibilities** involve a due regard for the academic freedom of other academics, the positive encouragement of academic developments and an acceptance of the procedures adopted for safeguarding academic freedom. **External accountability** which may be formal or informal, direct or indirect, is owned to society because society is the major funder of higher education as well as its major beneficiary.

What now, does it mean to be accountable? "To be accountable", is "to be answerable legally or morally for the discharge of some duty, trust or debt". Applied to higher education, this means that higher education should give an account of its performance in terms of the extent of fulfillment of its social expectations and accept responsibility for its failures. It would also mean that society can intervene in the affairs of higher education when the latter fails to discharge its obligations. The question of giving an objective and adequate account of the performance of higher education, making the system or any part of it responsible, and deciding on who should have the right to intervene, are however highly complex issues. In whatever way these issues are decided, the fact remains that higher education should strive to fulfil all its individual and social obligations.

There has long been a **tension** between the demands for **academic freedom** in higher education and the demands of its funders for **accountability**. One thing however has changed in recent times and that is more stringent funding procedures accompanied by specificity in funding arrangements resulting in increased accountability of higher education institutions. It is **difficult to judge** whether the **increased accountability** is **reasonable** or whether it goes too far infringing academic freedom. A system which embodies greater accountability may turn out to be fairer and better able to prevent abuses of academic freedom. Academics are not only in the business of advancing knowledge but should also be concerned with sharing their understanding / discoveries to as many as possible.

For **autonomy** and **accountability** to be functional and meaningful the **government** will have to **provide adequate resources** to higher education for it to **play its role**. It is also required that the **government lifts the bureaucratic pressures** on universities and explores more cost effective and **credible systems of quality, audit, research,**

evaluation, accountability and control. Development of a national system of credit accumulation and transfer flexible enough to incorporate the accreditation of prior learning and of work based learning is also essential in this regard.

As far as the role of universities is concerned, the universities should defend critical basic research and scholarship as both the life blood of the intellect and the hallmark of a civilized society. They should articulate, promote and defend their commitment to democratic values and the responsibility to be engaged directly in major public debates in modern society. **Innovation** for local needs generation of income with local sources needs, to be explored. **Opening up the curriculum** to engage in more **flexible forms** of study exploiting new **information technologies** and developing better mechanisms of strategic planning to anticipate change and define appropriate responses to it is what the universities need to examine to keep themselves relevant.

The society too has a role to play so that universities as accountable institutions can perform better. It has to acknowledge that higher education is part of society and vital to the development and promotion of the cultural and moral values upon which modern society and the quality of people's lives within it ultimately depends. Policies for the university cannot be detached from discussions about how this society should develop and change. There has to be a critical space in the public spheres of modern society where intellectual honesty and ceaseless vigilance about social, economic and political development has to be maintained, free of the patronage of government and other interest groups, universities have a role to play in the context of a democratic society, they are not and never should be arbiters of morality; but they do have a part to play in sharpening up the moral discussions of modernity.

To sum up, autonomy and accountability are the two sides of the same coin. These are complementary to each other. Autonomy without accountability may lead to anarchy. Accountability without autonomy may turn into regimentation. A balance or a "trade off" between the two is necessary – which may depend on prevailing social climate, and which in any case has to evolve through experience.

Self-assessment

9. *Discuss how autonomy and accountability are two sides of the same coin in the university system?*

.....

.....

.....

.....

Summary

In most modern societies, educational institutions are considered key instruments of social purpose. The relationship between education and other sectors of society is an intrinsic one. Education is considered necessary for both order and progress. On the one hand, education is expected to maintain hallowed traditions: respect for authority, obedience to the law, patriotism and the like. On the other hand, education is expected to promote political, economic and social development and change. Educational systems differ in the extent to which they accommodate wide range of values within society but the educational functions and uses vis-a-vis the society broadly fall under the kind of society we are aiming at. The functions and uses of education alter as societies go through economic, political and social developments. In summary, we have seen that the various parts of society, however they are defined, are integrated with each other.

These parts are not just interdependent – they are coordinated and complementary. Each part supports the working of the other, as well as the society as a whole. The University is a part of the society, yet it is an autonomous social entity by itself. Features such as 'autonomy' 'accountability' and 'academic freedom' give it a unique character and simultaneously, help it in its discharge of obligations, to itself and to the society at large.

Unit-end activities

1. How does education perpetuate inequalities among classes? Think about the members of the teaching community in your college / university. What kinds of people occupy the highest position? How many of them are first generation learners?
2. Make a list of your students in a class. Estimate their socio-economic positions. Compare these positions with such factors as their performance in class, their extra curricular activities and their vocational goals. What function of education is highlighted by this exercise?
3. Read excerpts from John Dewey's 'Democracy and Education' to know his views on education and society.

Points for discussion

1. What do you think of the idea of 'privatization' of universities? Discuss the positive and negative features of raising the tuition fees for higher education.
2. Should educators see their role as maintainer of the status quo as far as the social 'system is concerned'? Discuss.
3. Initiate a discussion among your colleagues on 'autonomy versus accountability' with specific reference to your institution. How far is it correct to place autonomy of a university and its accountability in this equation?
4. Discuss how the privilege of academic freedom enables you to discharge your obligations smoothly in your college / university. What would happen in the absence of this freedom?

Suggested readings

Ashby, Eric. (1966) *Universities – British, Indian, African*. Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press.

Dreze, Jean and Amartya Sen (1995), *India: Economic Development and Social Opportunity*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Omvedt, Gail (1994), *Dalits and the Democratic Revolution" Dr. Ambedkar and the Dalit Movement in Colonial India*. New Delhi : Sage.

Shills, Edward. (1989) "The Modern University and Liberal Democracy", *Minerva*. XXVII. (4) Winter.

Indian Higher Education: The Legacy

Introduction

We have a heritage in higher education drawing upon many sources, viz. ancient, medieval, colonial and post-independence. It is upon this heritage that further developments directed towards new national objectives in the changed circumstances on the eve of the 21st century have been based. Our legacy has assets as well as liabilities and both will have to be taken into account. In this unit, we propose to examine what resources and traditions our country has had on which it has to build and which legacy or liabilities we have to take into account while planning towards fulfillment of national goals.

Learning outcomes

After going through this unit you will be able

- to appreciate the development of higher education in general, and in India, in particular;
- to understand the genesis of our affiliating, external examination – oriented system, weak in science, technology, research and creativity;
- to acquaint yourself with the role played by the intelligentsia in the national movement in creating a suitable system. This will be highlighted in both its positive and negative aspects;
- to appreciate the repercussions of colonialism for India's higher education and, finally;
- to identify the problems which remain and have to be taken into account while evaluating the post-independence developments in education.

The evolution of the university

As with other professional groups, historical traditions play a key role in the academic profession. The history of the academic consciousness of the academic profession not only tells us a great deal about how the profession developed over time, but also the contemporary situation. This section is devoted to a discussion on the historical perspective of the university.

University – the concept

To begin with, let us note that the typical contemporary Indian institutional form of higher education is the university with a number of affiliated or constituent colleges. The unitary universities are few and far between. However, the concept of a university is generally associated with Europe, where many universities have a continuous tradition of a thousand years or more, and where, but for a few exceptions, separate colleges within a university did not exist. The university was an institution which was **universal** in as much as it gathered students or scholars from many lands (territorial university) and pursued knowledge of various kinds (intellectual universality) at the higher levels within a single unit. The universal milieu in terms of people as well as knowledge was and is conducive to free enquiry, to fertilization of ideas across disciplinary boundaries and to research as well as teaching.

Development of the university system

Over the Western world, the university developed many variations. Oxford and Cambridge took the form of colleges in which learned fellows lived along with their students and taught them mainly as under-graduates. To begin with Oxford and Cambridge colleges were essentially academically independent. Their being located in the same place and within a common organization merely facilitated individual exchange. In the beginning there were no external examinations which were instituted only as a measure of reform of corrupt practices which had crept in during the eighteenth century. In Germany particularly, a tradition of research and specialization around a chair occupied by a specialist professor, and the free development of disciplines (**Lernfreiheit** and **Lehrfreiheit**, i.e., freedom to learn and to teach according to one's preference and area of competence) was the custom. The French university acquired large number of students who were not residents and were free to attend or not attend the lectures of professors. The role of the University of Paris and of its faculty grew to be central to society. The University became responsible for training the key professions of the day – the clergy, lawyers and medical doctors. Based mainly on the University of Paris model, universities grew throughout Europe. Only in Italy and to a lesser extent in Spain did the student dominated model of the university persist.

Influence of science and technology

When Science and Technology grew, many specialized institutions developed e.g. the higher national schools such as **Ecole Normale Supérieure**, **Ecole Technique** etc. in France, and the technological institutes (**Technische Hochschule**) in Germany. In post-revolution USSR, a large number of specialized institutes were established. The circumstances in the U.S.A. were however special. It was a new country of immigrants continuously opening up newer areas and building a new society and economy and, therefore, less bound by tradition and more free to change institutional forms and practices. Greater emphasis was laid on **useful** learning, e.g., agriculture, and later social work, education, etc., and on **extension** functions, i.e., direct teaching to farmers, artisans, professionals in skills and knowledge of immediate practical use, in some of the universities. In Britain, during the nineteenth century, the following factors marked the universities of the industrial cities (called the Redbrick Universities):

- a) the introduction of Science and Technology,
- b) the participation of industrialists, merchants and professionals in university management, and
- c) a preponderance of day scholars (in contrast to residential universities where most students lived on campus in secluded places)

- d) teaching programmes and research in non-traditional and interdisciplinary areas relevant to socio-political needs of the country.

Indian higher education – a historical perspective

The development of most Indian higher education as we know it today derives from a particular style of British higher education even as it is influenced by all the others. But before we discuss that we must note another important source – and that is, India's heritage in higher education.

While accepting the basically Western origins of today's higher education in India, we must notice important and significant elements of India's own past which have also been influential in varying degrees. In the long distant past as also in the not so distant past, India had its institutions of higher education, some like the universities and other quite different. There were two, or perhaps three, streams of tradition on which we have to rely. They are (i) the **ancient and medieval Sanskrit and Buddhist traditions**, (ii) the **medieval Arabic and Persian traditions** and (iii) other **East and South Indian traditions**, such as the **Tamil traditions**. In the sections to follow, we will discuss the first two of these traditions.

Ancient seats of learning

We have existing records of centers of learning and enquiry at Taxila, Kanchipura (Conjeevaram), Nalanda, Odantapuri (or Uddandapura), Sri Dharryakataka, Kashmira, and Vikramashila. We get a valuable picture of the working of some of these institutions from Chinese travellers. Fi-hien, Hiuen Tsang, and I-Tsing who visited India in the fifth and seventh centuries A.D. Fi-hien, for example, was in India between 399 and 414 A.D. and visited Nalanda but apparently found no monks or monasteries. However, when Hiuen-Tsang came (629 A.D. to 645 A.D.) he found a flourishing Nalanda University as a Buddhist center of learning which, by then, had a world-wide reputation. Its site has been found, near Rajgir in Bihar, and excavations have revealed the existence of large buildings, a library, and other academic and residential buildings.

Perhaps it was not until 450 A.D. that it received recognition of the King of Magadh and assumed the character of a university, and it may have existed for four hundred years, until about 850 A.D. Hiuen Tsang wrote about Nalanda:

"The priests, to the number of several thousand, are men of the highest ability and talent. They follow in sincerity the precepts of the moral law. The rules of this convent are severe and all the priests are bound to observe them. The countries of India respect them and follow them. The day is not sufficient for asking and answering profound questions. From morning till night they engage in discussion, the old and the young help one another. Those, who cannot discuss questions out of Triptika are little esteemed and are obliged to hide themselves for shame If men of other quarters desire to enter and take part in discussions, the keeper of the gate proposes some hard questions, many are unable to answer, and retire.

He further adds that 70 to 80 per cent of such applicants failed to pass the test for admission. The sense of integrity and discipline is notable, as is the role of discussion as a means of learning.

Vikramashila, founded in around 800 A.D. had given and taken with Nalanda, but about its location it is only known that it was on a hill on the right bank of the Ganges. Among the subjects studied here were **grammar**, **metaphysics** including **logic** and **ritualistic** books. The monastery had 108 resident monks and priests at one time. Pandits who were eminent for learning and character were rewarded by having their images painted on the walls of the university. Six of the most learned sages were appointed

to guard its gates, i.e., to control admissions. This university was destroyed during the invasion of Bakhtiar Khilji in 1203 A. D.

Takshashila (Taxila) whose site is now in Pakistan, was a center of its own kind which is frequently referred to as a seat of higher learning in **Buddhist literature**, as well as a Brahmanic intellectual center. Taxila was the capital of Gandhara in northwest India, the native land of Panini. It was a strong hold of Brahmanic learning from the 4th or 5th century B.C., and it was here at the time of Alexander's invasion that the Greeks first came into contact with Brahmanic philosophers and were astonished by their asceticism and strange doctrines. Students here could get instruction in almost any subject, religious or secular, from the Vedas to mathematics and medicine and astrology and archery.

This heritage is of interest because these universities existed in one of the best periods in Indian history, where philosophy, art (Ajanta and Ellora caves are of the same period) and science and technology all flourished. The admission by measure of excellence, and interactive ways of learning combined with intellectual honesty and rigour made them famous.

The Arabic and Sanskrit tradition

The **Arabic madrassah** was a much more unified entity, intact when the British came but not much more enquiry-based and perhaps also more religious in the orientation of its learning or methods. In terms of social extraction, while the **Sanskrit scholar** was by definition a **Brahmin male**, the Arabic scholar was perhaps a little less exclusive in his social origin or location. In both Sanskrit and Arabic higher learning, much secular and scientific learning in law, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, etc. was cultivated besides literature, philosophy and theology with the help of books and discussion but chiefly through memorization. The creation of new knowledge based on imagination, free thinking or intense observation was not so much in demand in those feudal monarchical societies as conformity and ability to reproduce long texts purely from memory.

This tradition did not continue to grow as such. The **causes** of its **decline** could possibly be

- the Indian caste system leading to segregation of knowledge of Brahmins from or manual skills of the "others"/castes and lesser status / prestige of practical arts or perhaps
- the related failure of an Indian Industrial Revolution and Nation State to emerge for which the times and technology were not yet ripe or
- the dogmatic, authoritarian intellectual tendencies set in motion by traditional Hindu orthodoxy. These were the main causes of the **decline** of the tradition. Most scholars tended to concentrate in some cities such as Varanasi, Pune, Tanjore, Madurai, Nadia etc. mostly by encouragement of local rulers.

Self-assessment

1. Write a short essay on the evolution of the University in Europe. Restrict your answer to 200 words.

.....

.....

.....

.....

The advent of the British

The advent of the British was at first in the form of a great **commercial concern** called the **East India Company**, most of whose employees had low salaries and an indifferent attitude towards local education. In order to protect the English trading interests, the commercial enterprise turned into service of the empire. To fulfil the new job, the Company had to involve the dominant groups of Indian society – which would facilitate the setting up of the colonial state. The colonizers introduced a system of education in India with the agenda of initiating a process of **socialization** in order to create a new order in the colony and a civil society amongst the natives. But unlike the popular education movements in nineteenth century England where education had become a viable dream for all, in India the colonizers had no such objectives. Their objectives were to expand and facilitate profit making with the help of dependable persons in the native community and to ‘pierce India’s ignorance with the light of Western science to enable Indians to lead a life of reason, with their passion under control’. These sentiments were echoed by Charles Grant who came to India in 1767 who contended that only the “healing touch” of Christianity through the dissemination of Science and Literature of Europe could transform the situation. In this connection he believed that the knowledge of English language was essential and establishment of English schools under teachers of “good moral character” was needed. Charles Grant’s views on education covered all aspects of the imperialist education-religio, cultural, commercial and political. No British thinker on Indian education from Macaulay to Curzon and later could improve upon his blue print (Sharp, 1920:85). The Act of British Parliament, renewing the East India Company’s Charter for another 20 years passed in 1813, authorized, on the one hand, missionaries to operate in India, and on the other, the Governor General to appropriate “a sum of not less than one lac of rupees” for the revival and improvement of literature, the encouragement of learned natives of India and for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the Sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories in India. In spite of the Parliamentary sanction, there had been a lull in the educational activity and the money remained unspent. Nothing was done upto 1823 when General Committee of Public Instruction was appointed. The Committee recognized the Calcutta Madrasa and the Benaras Sanskrit College. In 1823 Lord Amherst founded the Sanskrit College of Calcutta. Two more oriental colleges at Agra and Delhi were also established. The Committee undertook the task of publishing Sanskrit and Arabic texts and translation of English books containing, ‘useful knowledge’ into oriental classical languages.

By now the British Government had become the principal agent in disseminating modern education in India which was primarily motivated by the political, administrative and economic needs of Britain in India. It was not a mere accident that by the middle of the nineteenth century, especially under Lord Dalhousie important beginnings of the inauguration of modern education in India were made. It was by that time that Britain brought under its rule a substantial portion of the Indian territory. It was also then that the industrial products of Britain began to flow into India and the trade between Britain and India reached huge proportions.

The well-known “**minute**” of **Macaulay** was written in 1835, championing the cause of English, and summarizing the aim of British educational policy in the following words: “We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions we govern, a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and intellect”. Sir William Bentinck was the Governor General who approved this minute, and he was the same who made Sati illegal in 1829 and took steps to eradicate **thugi** and infanticide, besides establishing the first Medical College at Calcutta.

For whatever we might say about the deleterious effects of English on education, English education was very popular in the big cities of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras because in the otherwise uncertain economic situation, it was a passport to jobs, even though at the lower rungs.

Education influenced the self-perception of the educated Indian. In some individuals education caused a turmoil, an identity crises but in a greater number of cases, education led to a new positive self-image. The educated man's loyalty to the empire was distinct from that of the semi-literate soldier precisely because it had the added component of faith in oneself as a product of English education. This faith made the completion of one's educational career look like a second birth (Kumar: 35)

Soon demand for higher education became so great that a note was sent in 1845 from the Indian side to the Court of Directors of the East India company including a proposal for setting up universities in India, in addition to other very important recommendations regarding education as a whole. This, in a way, led to another famous document, the **"Education Despatch"** or **"Wood's Despatch"** of 1854, which was sent by the Company to Dalhousie, the then Governor General of India. Dalhousie had a positive attitude towards education and he had already converted the senior part of the Calcutta Madrassah into the Arabic College, and the Hindu College in Calcutta into the Presidency College, thrown open to young people of all castes, classes or creeds and expected to "expand itself into something approaching to the dignity and proportions of an Indian university". He had also extended support to technical education and women's education. Charles Wood had sent a directive of a 100 paragraphs regarding many aspects of education, but a small quotation from the opening paragraphs presented give a taste of this important document:

"Among many subjects of importance, none can have a stronger claim to our attention than that of education(for) confirming upon the natives of India those vast moral and material blessings which flow from the general diffusion of useful knowledge and to supply you with servants to whose probity you may with increased confidence commit offices of trust in India".....

"Not, while the character of England is deeply concerned in the success of our efforts for the promotion of education, are her material interests altogether unaffected by the advance of European knowledge in India; this knowledge will teach the natives of India the marvelous results of the employment of labour and capital, rouse them to emulate us in the development of the vast resources of their country, guide them in their efforts, and gradually, but certainly, confer upon them all the advantages which accompany the healthy increase of wealth and commerce; and at the same time, secure to us a large and more certain supply of many articles for our manufacturers and extensively consumed by all classes of our population, as well as an almost inexhaustible demand for a produce of British labour"

The Despatch further observed, "The system of Science and Philosophy which forms the learning of the East abounds with grave errors, and Eastern literature is at least very deficient as regards all modern discovery and improvement" and concluded the discussion with the following declaration: "We must emphatically declare that the education which we desire to see extended in India is that which has for its object the diffusion of the improved Art, Sciences, Philosophy and Literature of Europe; in short of European knowledge" (Richey: 366). The Despatch made valuable suggestions as regards university education. The Despatch emphasized the importance of vocational instruction and also recommended Teachers Training Institutions on the model then prevalent in England.

The ideas and methods advocated in the Despatch dominated the field for about five decades – the same period also witnessed a rapid westernization of the education system in India and the demise of the indigenous system.

Soon after this Despatch was received, Dalhousie set in motion the process of creating universities in India, and in the very year of the revolt in 1857 the three universities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras came into existence. It is a quaint fact that Wood himself was afraid of creating a "discontented class unless they are employed" they would ruin the British Empire in India ultimately.

Although, it was good that the universities were created and modern learning thus promoted in India. These were, however, unconnected with even the positive aspects of oriental learning, and with Indian culture, and consideration for the uplift of Indian society. They became such a powerful stereotype that even to this day, more than 56 years after Independence, we have not quite succeeded in altering them to our advantage. These universities were set up as purely examining bodies with affiliated colleges where actual teaching took place. To further improve the situation, the British Government set up the first **Indian Universities Commission** in 1902 and in this connection Lord Curzon is reported to have said,

"How different is India! Here the university has no corporate existence in the same (as in Oxford Cambridge) sense of the term; it is not a collection of buildings, it is scarcely even a site. It is a body that controls courses of study and sets examination papers to the pupils of affiliated colleges. They are not part of it. They are frequently not in the same city, sometimes not in the same province". (quoted in the report of the Education Commission, 1964-66).

Lord Curzon was not satisfied with the condition of Indian Universities which were set upon London model by the Wood's Despatch. Though the London University had been remodeled in 1829, Indian Universities went on following the old model. They were all examining bodies and affiliating universities. The expansion in higher education had been so great and so much burden was placed on each university that it was incapacitated to discharge its duties efficiently.

In 1901 Lord Curzon summoned the first All India Conference of Directors of Public Instruction and representatives of universities at Simla. The deliberation of the Conference were a great help to him in planning his educational reforms. Lord Curzon appointed a Commission on Education known as the Indian Universities Commission under the Presidency of Sir Thomas Raleigh on 27 January 1902 'to enquire into the condition and prospects of universities in India and to recommend proposals for improving their constitution and working'. (Report Indian University Commission, 1902, p.1). The recommendation of the Indian Universities Commission were incorporated in the Government of India Resolution 1904. The publication of the Government of India Resolution was followed by the passing of the Indian Universities Act, 1904. The functions of universities were enlarged. They could now appoint their new professors and lecturers, undertake research, hold and manage educational endowments, maintain their own libraries, laboratories and museums. (Nurullah and Naik, 1962. pp.219-20).

The impact of the British policy

As noticed earlier, the minute of Macaulay and the Despatch of Wood, generally, express the objectives of British policy namely:

- to form a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and intellect;
- to supply trusted servants for running the functions of the empire in India; and
- to create a market in India for British goods, and to obtain supply of articles needed in Britain.

A glance at the development of education in India during that phase clearly shows that the objectives articulated as part of the British policy had been fulfilled. Although unemployment of educated youth reared its head early, and the expansion of university education was restricted, the manpower needed for various lower categories and mostly clerical jobs was supplied by the colleges and the universities.

Content of education

The most important aspect, however, was the content of education which was limited to passive and unquestioning learning of ideas projected by British authors and conveyed through books published in Britain. These ideas denigrated oriental learning, cultivated the concept of British and Western superiority, encouraged prejudices based on community, language and region, and promoted alienation from Indian society and culture. All this suited the rulers, and made most of the educated people to uncritically accept the point of view of the British ruling classes. The spirit of questioning and enquiry, of critical evaluation of social and economic life, of creativity in science, technology and other fields was discouraged and constrained in a variety of ways. Unfortunately the knowledge of English, exclusively made even honest scholarship in India, a victim of a host of concepts which may have had relevance in British society, but which were not applicable in Indian conditions. The textbook came to acquire a revered position in the teaching-learning process. For both teacher, and pupil, the textbook was the curriculum. It was seen as containing the only knowledge that mattered in the sense of having been approved by authorities as the basis of examination. It excluded virtually the entire culture of the colonized society, including its traditions, folklore, religions, and its crafts, arts and sciences. (Kumar, 67). Even to this day we find that our universities are using English reference books or even textbooks in subjects as sensitive as Sociology, Political Science, Social Works, Social Anthropology, etc. The message, in the present context, is not that English should be given up, but that the medium of instruction should be the regional language and, simultaneously, high standards of competence in English should be maintained. There should be more critical studies and original work done in our universities in relation to our own society, so that books would be produced in our own languages with concepts founded on our own data, and of course, world experience. The universities should have far more interaction with the productive sectors of our economy, and pay much more attention to raise the quality of research undertaken by them.

Self-assessment

2. *Discuss the main characteristics of the teaching-learning process that was being followed during the British period.*

.....

.....

.....

.....

Role of the national movement

In any assessment of the legacy of Indian education system, it is important to notice the role of the national movement. While, indeed, it is correct that some academically oriented British educational officers and even Governor General, Lord Curzon, spoke of advanced teaching and research, their main thrust was towards restriction of expansion in the name of quality. This was so because they were concerned about the

nationalist political fallout of the unemployment of the educated young people.

Regarding the role of the nationalists, Historians, such as Pannikar say that 'the educational ideas of the Indian intellectuals of the nineteenth century differed from the policy of the colonial rulers on the following three counts

- first, in the emphasis on science education;
- secondly, in the realization of the need for mass education, and
- thirdly, in support for education in the vernacular (1975)

There are however differences of opinion on this position expressed by others. {Kumar 1991, Acharya (1998) and Banerjee (1998)} maintain that there were similarities between the colonial and nationalists views on the role of education which can be attributed to the social background of these leaders, majority of whom came from upper, caste, Brahmin families. Without getting any further into this debate it is however clear that the national movement did create a fervour for the following:

Focus on expansion and pursuit of equality

National intelligentsia took the position that education must both rise and spread. It was only in the context of a wide expansion of higher education that sufficient numbers of able individuals from among whom great and creative minds could develop would be reared. A ferment of ideas and a climate of enquiry and thought would also require a wide and expanding intelligentsia drawn from diverse social classes of Indian society. The greater demand for higher education was also projected by an expanding middle class. Wider expansion, creation of new universities at Dacca, Patna, etc., paying more attention to specific and local needs and development of research thus resulted. The spread of education amongst the lower strata in colonial India was extremely low, leaders like Jyotirao Paule and Ambedkar fought for its spread to disadvantaged sections.

Promotion of culture, creativity, Science and Technology

National movement was concerned not only with freedom from the British rule, but also with national culture and, even more significantly, education in Science and Technology and intellectual creativity. There was however a conflict among nationalists – those who perceived English education as an enriching contribution to India's culture and those who perceived English education eclipsing higher Indian culture. Both however believed that the control of educational institutions should pass into Indian hands. Thus, we notice that early in the twentieth century, after the movement against partition of Bengal in 1905, and through Rash Behari Bose and others, a national education movement developed. The Bengal National Council of Education (NCE) with its emphasis on industrial training created the Engineering College which has now grown into Jadavpur University.

Creation of new institutions

(Vishwa Bharti, Banaras Hindu University and the Muslim-Anglo Oriental College at Aligarh)

The goals of spreading Science and Technology and promoting research and creativity in education were sought to be achieved by founding new institutions. Tagore created the **Viswa Bharati** emphasizing Indian cultural roots, creativity, and philosophical synthesis of the best that was in Western thought and Oriental philosophy. The Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science at Calcutta created facilities for research where resources from Government were not available. In Bombay and Madras also criticism was voiced of the manner in which the meagre resources and tight control of

Government led to low quality and unspecialized education in scientific and technical fields. At Benaras, a whole new university was founded where technological education was emphasized by Pt. Malaviya and his associates. Seeing that Muslims had been left behind in Western education and hence Government employment, the Muslim-Anglo Oriental College of Aligarh was founded (which later grew into the Aligarh Muslim University). Here emphasis was on mastery of English, gentlemanly attributes, gracious living and sports. In course of time, study of Science, and later, of Technology was started. The Benaras Hindu University, even as it emphasized Technology, gave substantial attention to classical and even religious elements in higher education.

Reform, consolidation and the legacy

During the five decades of Independence (since 1947), India has built up a massive system of higher education (in 1998-99, there were 214 universities, 198 State Government established and 16 Central Government established), 38 institutions "deemed-to-be universities", 11 institutes of national importance, 9,703 colleges, and 887 polytechnics. The system now employs 321,000 teachers and caters to 6,755,000 students – though estimated to be covering barely 6 percent of the population in the relative (17-23) age group. Let us discuss the key characteristics of this system.

The 10+2 system

Note must be taken here of the Report of the Calcutta University Commission (1919) and the University Education Commission (1948). We will discuss the findings in these sections.

One of the problems noticed by the 1919 University Commission was that the Indian student entering the universities right after high school tended to be too young and immature for the type of courses and instructional methods adopted in the universities. The young students needed greater personal attention under conditions of proper discipline, both of which factors were not available in the universities. A proposal to separate the first two classes of the affiliated colleges, after 10 years of high school was made but remained unimplemented at Calcutta itself for a long time. However gradually intermediate colleges were set up in U.P. and some other states. The Report of the Education Commission (1964-66), on the basis of which Government adopted a policy on education in 1968, strongly recommended the transfer of these two classes to the schools since the Intermediate Colleges were themselves a neglected lot and their facilities and working conditions led to comparative neglect of these two classes. Furthermore, the Kothari Commission Report recommended that during the two-year period following 10 years of school, there should be greater diversification of studies, vocational courses should be made available and it should be possible for more students to enter services after 10+2 years of education. By this it visualized a "flexible" educational structure covering

- a pre-school stage of one to three years;
- a primary stage of seven or eight years divided into two substages – a lower primary stage of four or five years and a higher primary stage of three years;
- a lower secondary or high school stage of two or three years in general education or of one to three years in vocational education;
- a higher secondary stage of two years of general education or one to three years of vocational education;
- a higher education stage having a course of three years or more for the first degree followed by courses of varying duration for the second or research degrees.



We have experienced lot of difficulties in implementing the idea of vocational courses and 10+2 is largely acting as a conduit to enter universities. In the absence of vocational courses the only choice students have is academic type of study rather than cultivation of skills related to jobs.

The influence of English

The other important point of the Calcutta University Commission Report about the dominating influence of English and the consequent failure of higher education has remained unresolved until today. English remains the dominant medium of world scientific and intellectual discourse. While the solution put forward by the Report was to make the intermediate college a transitional institution where mastery of English would be one major objective, the actual development has been in two directions. The Indian society has allowed that for an elite section, a stream of English medium schools would be run followed by an elite set of colleges. However, the bulk of institutions after Independence have tended to move in the direction of Indian languages. This transition has also been partial and incomplete, partly because the protagonists of Indian languages to be used as medium of instruction failed to undertake translations on a

suitable scale, and original writings, which should have been based on original research or studies, have also been in short supply. Unfortunately, whatever books are published in Indian languages in the universities or the academies largely remain unsold. Sciences, Technology and selective institutions remain firmly anchored to English. Society remains divided between the upper classes and urban intelligentsia which takes advantage of English, and the lower classes or rural people who have to do with regional language. Naturally lots of benefits are associated with the English medium. This is what prevails while official policies are clearly committed to regional languages as medium of instruction in the universities.



I knew someone was bound to come up with that idea. He is saying, "English is essential, I admit – but ways and means should be found to teach it in regional languages!"

Courtesy: R.K. Laxman

Research and creativity

The emphasis on research and creativity which was lacking in the British period was strengthened after Independence. But, ostensibly to apply research more closely to practical tasks – a chain of laboratories outside the university system has developed under the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Ministries of Defence and Agriculture, etc. Similarly, some institutes in Social Sciences have also been set up. The originally weak research orientation of the Indian university has thus not been substantially corrected even after Independence. In fact, because of a diversion of human and material resources to the system of laboratories and institutes outside the university system, there is considerable handicap to the development of high quality research in the universities.

Important exceptions to this generally have been in the field of agriculture. Agricultural higher education has been more realistically organized since the late 60s because of its emphasis on useful knowledge and extension thereof to the cultivator. Similarly, Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) were set up to undertake higher education and research in engineering. These institutions are sometimes criticized for relative failure because:

- a) industry has not tended to profit from the technological institutions;
- b) their graduates often prefer foreign employment since the developed countries have a demand for their services and Indian industry has not picked up high technology areas of operation;
- c) the industry itself has relied much more on foreign and imported technology than indigenous efforts to correct its weaknesses.

Medical higher education has been equally afflicted with the tendency towards brain drain. There has been reluctance to train medical personnel suited for service in rural areas. This is related to the health policy of the Government more than to educational failure. These problems are really rooted in the class divided social reality of India where its middle and upper middle classes using English are profiting from their higher education, separating themselves from the rest of people and seeking profitable links abroad. These developments leave the vast mass of our college and university students in the same weak state which was inherited from British rule.

The content of education

The legacy in the matter of content of education also needs some attention. Two themes have recurred again and again, **indigenouness** and **relevance**. The Nationalist Movement, and later the student movement of the 1930s and 40s, emphasized the inclusion of national culture, national and anti-imperialist ideas in the Social and Human Sciences. The tradition of subservience and inactivity in the methods in institutional discipline as well as in learning processes also came in for adverse attention. However, it is only after Independence that some correctives in the intellectual content of Social and Human Science instruction have emerged. Vast and rapid expansion of higher education in the post-Independence period has prevented the correction of these negative features adequately. The growth of social and historical research and its incorporation into curricula is taking its own time, and barely effects a small number of elite institutions. Increasing number of new and existing weak institutions continue to teach mechanical and uncreative content. Also the fact that India had a "peaceful" transfer of power and therefore "smooth transition" or rather continuity with the pre-Independence period rather than a radical break must explain some of the features of the current situation. Neither curricula, nor enrolment of students from the weaker sections radically changed after Independence.

The issue of relevance

The question of relevance of the higher education curriculum has been a difficult one the world over. For, knowledge in higher learning is not always directly relevant but is in fact a medium for the training of the mind without necessarily being applicable immediately. The processes and practices of higher education institutions provide the skills and personality qualities which are useful in contemporary civil and productive life. Only a fraction of people in higher education are taught directly productive skills. This has been so in most countries except in planned socialist economies in conditions of nearly full employment and / or of restriction of enrolments in higher education in

accordance with employment requirements. The usefulness or success of this practice is also open to question. In the Indian case, however, given India's weak and subservient relation to the world economy, a substantial part of its manpower is surplus whether educated or uneducated. Thus, except for a small number of persons trained for specified skills, education of most youth of college age has had to be "general" which incidentally is also more economical to provide. The major element in our heritage (negative, infact) thus is employment bottleneck. Most of the expansion is in the Humanities and Social Sciences. In spite of much expansion of science education, the percentage of enrolment in the Sciences continues to hover around 20%. And even so, not all are employed in Science or Technology based occupations. Continued and increasing differentials of reward in terms of emoluments and prestige in favour of bureaucratic-professional occupations as against the skill-vocational ones continue to accentuate preference for traditional courses except in the as yet small managerial – technological sector.

Methods of teaching

The legacy in terms of methods of teaching by lecturing is difficult to overcome even in normal circumstances. Large sized classes resulting from expansion, inadequately backed by resources and an external examination system which is easy to negotiate with small amounts of unimaginative work perpetuate this legacy in teaching and learning. Corrective to this can come through a context of life and work in which it has to be applied. As, however, much educated manpower has no employment, this corrective does not operate. On the other hand, competition among large numbers of young people for the same small number of jobs and admissions to valued courses, tends to emphasise further the importance of written external examinations for selection – a difficulty which can to a certain extent be met by more skilled examining but not entirely. In the event, marks and grades tend to get inflated. The number of examinations individuals have to take increase, influencing the teaching-learning process in the same prevalent direction of bookishness, verbal memory, etc.

Education for whom?

A British view of knowledge has prevailed in India in respect to elite education especially at upper secondary and higher levels, yet political and educational aims since Independence in 1947 have been to democratize educational access. The expansion of provision has not been even or universal. There is stringent selection of pupils for every level of education either, through exams or through differing economic capabilities of the pupils to support attendance especially in higher levels of education.

Issues of quality and quantity

The response of the Union government to the growth of poor-quality higher education both before and after 1947, was to develop a few quality institutions often concentrating on scientific and technological subjects. These high-quality institutions often have a very high reputation in teaching and research. But the typical higher education student still follows predominantly Humanities courses at poor quality institutions and highly specialized curriculum at higher levels has not been amenable to change when such change would involve parallel changes in selection procedures. Humanities have retained a strong place in the curriculum of higher education and these subjects have offered greater opportunities for success for poor students in poor institutions.

Self-assessment

3. *Discuss the reasons responsible for weak research orientation of Indian universities?*

.....

.....

.....

.....

4. *Has the content and method, of instruction in higher education contributed to making it an elitist stronghold? Discuss with reasons in support of your answer.*

.....

.....

.....

.....

Summary

In this unit, we have seen how education clearly serves the needs of colonizer, not the colonized, the rulers are the one who make educational decisions – who shall get education, what shall be learned, what language it shall be learned in and the parameters of the use to which education can be put. The colonizers, in the process of establishing their empire, in the Indian case, drew upon the negative features of our heritage choosing to ignore its assets. This trend was accentuated by many other factors such as the use of a foreign language, the teaching of a great deal about alien culture and society and the stifling influence of uniform external examinations. After Independence, attempts were made in the direction of translating the positive aspirations of the National Movement. But these were consistently marked by the difficulty of breaking with past patterns of behaviour and established institutions. Not only is there a lack of readily available models but the cost of changing the structures is often quite high such has been the post-Independence experience. There have been successes in some areas. But many negative elements of the legacy have also tended to get emphasized in the bulk of the system, keeping aspirations at the level of aspirations only.

Unit-end activities

1. “The thread that ran through all colonial education was the fact that it was offered by the colonizer without the input or consent of the colonized”. After going through this unit, write an essay on how this statement holds true in the context of British policies on education in India.
2. “The curriculum represented a basic denial of the colonized’s past and withheld from them the tools to regain the future... With this education one might become a secretary or interpreter; one could not become a doctor or a scientist or develop indigenous cultures on their own terms”. Compare this situation with the one that exists today. Do you think there is a radical difference? How do you account for the differences, if any?
3. Do you agree with the statement that the universities of modern India owe very little to our ancient or medieval centers of learning? Discuss in detail.
4. What is your opinion on the continuation of English as a medium of instruction in higher education? Discuss the significance of the three-language formula in this context.

Suggested readings

Altekar, A. S. (1944) *Education in Ancient India*. (2nd ed.). Benaras.

"Academic Colonialism: A Symposium on the Influence which Destroy Intellectual Independence", *Seminar* No. 112, 1968, 10-43.

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

Carnoy, Martin (1974) *Education as Cultural Imperialism*. New York: David McKay.

Chitnis, Suma and Philip G. Altbach, (eds.) (1993) *Higher Education Reform in India: Experiences and Perspectives*. Sage: New Delhi.

Dharampal (1983) *The Beautiful Tree: Indigenous Indian Education in the Eighteenth Century*. New Delhi: Biblia Impex.

Evans, David (1971) "Decolonization: Does the Teacher Have a Role?" *Comparative Education Review*. 15, 276-87.

Kumar, Krishna (1991) *The Political Agenda of Education*. New Delhi: Sage.

Nurullah, Syed and Naik, J. P. (1951) *History of Education in India during the British Period*. Bombay: Macmillan.

Shukla, S. C. and Rekha Kaul (eds.) (1998) *Education, Development and Underdevelopment*. Sage: New Delhi.

Higher Education and Development

Introduction

You have seen in the first two units of this block, aims of higher education and interaction of higher education with society. In the previous unit, you have seen how higher education has evolved through the changing historical contexts in India. A discussion on the retrospect and prospect of higher education, however, will not be complete without examining the relationship between higher education and development. This is what is attempted in the present unit. But, this is not an easy task. The major hitch is that 'development' as a concept may be defined in a variety of ways depending on this historical and socio-economic position of a society. Therefore, an entire section in this unit is devoted to a discussion on the various perspectives in which 'development' is understood. What follows this is an articulation of the relationship between education and development as viewed from various angles. Finally, there is a section discussing the role higher education plays in development with special reference to countries like India.

Learning outcomes

This unit is meant to create an appreciation in you about the crucial role that higher education plays in national development.

After working through this unit, you will be able to

- distinguish between growth, modernization and development;
- differentiate between the definitions of development as formulated within various paradigms;
- interpret the relationship between education and development;
- analyse the relationship between education and development in the Indian context;
- evaluate the role of higher education in development in terms of its involvement in the knowledge enterprise, human resource development and in the generation of leadership and social criticism.

What is 'Development'?

When one talks about development of a society or a nation, what precisely does one mean? 'Development' seems to connote different things to different people. The terms 'development' is at times used to denote economic growth, and at times to mean

imbibing modern values and attitudes. It is also used sometimes to describe a society moving towards greater equality and social justice. Each of these connotations of development seems to be derived from a certain theory or an ideology. Thus, whenever one talks about social or national development, one seems to make a set of theoretical and ideological assumptions. Therefore, in order to understand development, we may, first of all, analyse the theoretical and ideological assumptions underlying it. Such an analysis is attempted in the section below.

Paradigms of development

There exist several perspectives of viewing development. When analysed, these perspectives seem to cluster around the following main paradigms. These paradigms represent widely different views of development and they are being presented below. However, it must be stated here that it would be quite simplistic to view these different views of development as mutually exclusive, or as opposing paradigms. The plurality of concepts of development is also related to historical factors.

Becoming modern

After World War II, the USA found itself alone at the top of the world power structure. It was the only nation on either side of the war that had its infrastructure of roads, bridges, buildings, and banks intact. It had a near monopoly on new technology and the industry in place to produce goods that would sell for a high price around the world. But without functioning economies to buy these products, the growth of the US economy was limited. Therefore after the end of the war, the US had the following concerns to grapple with

- i) aiding the recovery of Europe and Asia;
- ii) fear of social unrest that could result from widespread poverty in a world of modernity and late-twentieth-century prosperity;
- iii) containing Communism and debunking it as a path to development as compared to Capitalism.

As a response to the emerging situation, theories about development were generated in the 1950s and 1960s in the USA as a solution to poverty and underdevelopment. Development experts and "modernization theorists" in their attempt to analyse the lack of development of poor countries felt that poorer nations are poor because they lack big capital, technology, and modern social organization and values.

Modernisation theorists explored the process of development and offered a composite portrait of what it means to be "modern". In modernization theory dualistic schema, societies go from being one type of society (traditional or undeveloped) to another type of society (modern, or developed). Although different disciplines produced their own species of these theories, they all set up dichotomies and perceived development as progressing from point A to point B along a single trajectory. All these authors saw modernization as a process; a social, psychological, economic, cultural, political and even a biological sequence of changes. So what does modernization theory suggest nations should do to become more "developed"? Although the major thrust of modernization implied that nations should focus on changing their internal society by rationalizing it, many also believed that "developed" countries could play a pivotal role assisting and guiding the modernization of later developers.

After two decades of dominance in development circles, modernization theory came under attack from several angles. First, it was seen to be ahistorical: modernization theory failed to make distinctions between countries, regions, structural conditions, or

specific historical experiences. For example, modernization theorists did not address the fact that these poorer regions exhibited not one situation of poverty or one type of society, but multiple "pre-modernities". Many of the countries that would be classified as "undeveloped" in fact already had "modern" industries, educational systems or the other "precursors" that were thought necessary for modernity. Modernization theorists also contend that modern values and behaviour by individuals necessarily lead to socio-economic development at the societal level. However, as argued (Portes) this causal linkage does not necessarily hold because a society is not simply the sum total of individuals within it. Finally, a critique was lodged that the term "modernization" was only a euphemism for "Americanisation". The field was therefore labeled ethnocentric and pro-capitalist. Amongst the main proponents of the modernization theory were W.W. Rostow, Samuel Huntington, Daniel Lerner and McClelland.

Dependency theorists

Beginning in the late 1950s, harsh refutation of the modernisationists' ideas came from a steadily growing group of scholars and planners in Latin America. There emerged a theory that as a result of colonial and later neocolonial relationships the "Third World" had been kept in a subordinate position to Europe, serving merely as a source for cheap raw materials and as a market for its more expensive manufacturers. Dependency theorists paid special attention to exploring the savage inequalities in poor nations, tying them to colonial histories of those regions and to current economic and political systems of exclusion and repression of the masses. While dependency theory was already influencing policy in Latin America with economists like Samir Amin, Alain de Janvry and Carlos Garramon, it was not until the 1960s that authors like Andre Gunder Frank "popularized" the theory and development scholars in the rich countries began to take note.

Dependency theory presented the world as consisting of two poles: wealthy countries are the "center" of the global capitalist system, and poor countries are its "satellite" or "periphery". Peripheral countries have low wages, enforced by coercive regimes that undermine independent labour unions and social movements. The center exploits them for cheap labour, cheap minerals and fertile tropical soils. Therefore the poor and wealthy countries are parts of the same whole (that whole being the global capitalist system), not similar entities at different stages of development (as modernization would have had us believe). For dependency theorists, underdevelopment in the periphery is the direct result of development in the center and vice versa. Within this broad framework, other strands also existed explaining situations of dependency in different ways. Amongst the critiques of dependency theory is that it failed as a theory of development. It is alleged that the highly descriptive nature of dependency theory does not have much explanatory power. Furthermore, after dependency theory's initial splash in the development theory arena, many analysts sought to move beyond the rather crude dichotomy of core-periphery and to engage in more rigorous attention to the impact of historical circumstances.

From Development to Globalization

From the earliest social theorists all the way through the dependency theorists of the 1950s and 1960s, the literature on social change and development was largely associated with industrialization and the gaps between wealthier and poorer nations. Since then, understandings about what leads to development have been questioned. Development is now perceived very differently – building factories and infrastructure no longer is seen as raising well being for a nation or its people. Rather power in the world is increasingly linked to control over information, technology and international

banking institutions. Secondly, instead of perceiving the world as a division between the poor versus rich nations, the world is now being seen as a interdependent and integrated entity.

The term '**globalisation**' can be understood as a set of processes that increasingly make the parts of the world interdependently integrated. Although the world has long had important international linkages, globalisation refers to integration where firms are interdependent production is linked on a global scale, there is a dramatic increase in visible and invisible trade and national economies are linked. Beyond this increase in trade and globally organized production, for some globalisation means also the control of decision making by a new "largely accountable political and economic elite" or more explicitly, the "Wall Street, US Treasury – IMF/ World Bank Complex".

Debt has played an important part in the globalisation process. The poorer nations took on heavy debts in the 1960s and 1970s to try to build their industrial sectors and infrastructures to catch up with the core nations. Loans allowed these poor nations to finally do some development planning- building roads, airports, new capitals, dams, and oil refineries. But the rates for their loans were often adjustable, an increase in US interest rates exponentially increased the total debt burden of these countries. In 1982 Mexico and then Brazil could not pay their debts and soon the list of defaulting nations grew. To continue to get the money they needed to pay even just the interest they owed, these nations had to secure more loans and usually it was only multinational agencies like the World Bank and IMF that agreed to lend to them. In exchange for these loans, the heavily indebted nations had to submit to a sweeping programme of cuts in food, housing and transport subsidies, privatization of state run companies and lowering tariff barriers to force local industries to face global competition. These sweeping reforms called **Structural Adjustment Programmes** have been the subject of two decades of bitter debate, protests, riots and even rebellions across the Third World. Cutting government intervention in the economy, changing political and economic structures, and acting to stabilize macroeconomic indicators are more broadly called "neoliberalism".

Parallel to the economic arguments that some profound change is occurring in the world, **postmodernist** thought has emerged. Modernism held that there was a concrete reality and progress that could be described with the scientific and rational approaches of western society. Postmodernism responded that other cultures were equally valid and that scientific / linear thought was not the only way to truth, because no single truth exists. This brought into question the idea that the development process is dependent on increased rationalization. Further more, this means that no single form of social organization can provide a template of what it means to be "developed" or even "rational". Another way in which postmodernists confronted the conventional wisdom of development theory was by their argument that in our age it is not the economy that determines culture, but that culture drives economic change.

Development in the Indian context

The above discussion clearly serves to demonstrate the serious divergence of views even in the basic definition of development, and how these views are based on different interpretations of world history and social dynamics. We must therefore realize that there is no universally agreed definition of development and that there are no clear-cut prescriptions to follow to attain development.

One thing is however clear that development involves something more than economic growth. Development is taken to mean growth plus change: there are essential qualitative dimensions in the development process that extend beyond the growth or expansion of an economy through a simple widening process. There is also a vital

distinction between initiating development and the more difficult task of sustaining development over the long run.

Although the increase in the real income per head can be adopted as the primary goal, it is common to interpret development in terms of a number of subgoals or particular categories of the overall primary objective. Thus the alleviation of poverty and the diminution of economic inequality are generally stated objectives of development plans. A few of the many possible other subgoals may be, the specification of a minimum level of consumption, a certain composition to the consumption stream, and a maximum level of unemployment that will be tolerated; the avoidance of market disparities in the prosperity and growth of different regions within a country; and the diversification of the economy. Now, beyond equitable development, sustainable development that lasts without making future generations worse off through environmental damage is another challenge. Owing to this variety of policy objectives, the emphasis on various dimensions of development will vary at different times and in different countries.

A word of caution is in place here. We should beware of interpreting development as economic development only. **Economic welfare** is but a **part** of **social welfare**, and even if in the course of a country's development all the conditions necessary to promote economic welfare have been satisfied, this need not mean that social welfare has also been promoted. The process of development has a profound impact on social institutions, habits and beliefs, and it is likely to introduce a number of sources of tension and discord. Some aspects of human welfare might suffer if relations that were once personal become impersonal, the structure and functions of the family change, the stability in one's way of life is disrupted and the support and assurance of traditional values disappear. Tensions also arise when the inequalities of income distribution, both among individuals and among regions in the developing country, tend to increase; when development creates "open unemployment" as well as employment; and when the pressures of excessive urbanization occur. Taking cognizance of these factors, the attempt, now increasingly is to focus on the quality of the development process. This involves renewed emphasis on reducing the incidence of poverty – on giving more attention to improving the lives of the poorest of the world's poor.

From the point of view of a country like India, the view that development involves not just economic growth and not going the same way as the West did, looks quite valid. As for India, development seems to make sense only if it means economic growth coupled with equitable distribution of wealth, social justice, and improvement of certain objective parameters of living standards such as health (reducing infantile mortality, raising life expectancy), clothing, shelter and literacy. This ideal has been embodied in the Preamble to the Constitution which summarises the aims and objects of the Constitution:

"WE THE PEOPLE OF INDIA having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a **SOVERIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC** and to secure to all its citizens:

JUSTICE, social, economic and political

LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship

EQUALITY of status and of opportunity; and to promote them all;

FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation.

Keeping in view India's democratic polity and socialistic aspirations, one expects development to cater to the entire population on the basis of its full participation in the process of development. All this presupposes a change in political consciousness and a qualitative transformation in economic production and distribution relations. A country with a huge section of its population living under the poverty line; two-thirds of it illiterate; strong prevalent prejudices based on gender, caste, community and

language and such a diverse population has to live in peace and amity, would be threatened by discontent and instability if it were not to have a development perspective ensuring social and economic justice to all.

In delimiting the nature of poverty, a serious problem in the Indian context, Amartya Sen has stated that

poverty is not just a matter of being relatively poorer than others in the society, but of not having some basic opportunities of material well-being – the failure to have certain minimum “capabilities”. The criteria of minimum capabilities are “absolute” not in the sense that they must not vary from society to society or over time but people’s deprivations are judged absolutely, and not simply in comparison with the deprivations of others in that society. If a person is seen as poor because he is unable to satisfy his hunger, then that diagnosis of poverty cannot be altered merely by the fact that others too may also be hungry A person’s advantage is judged in this approach by his capabilities, viz., what he can or cannot do, can or cannot be. The relevant capabilities are of many different kinds (e.g. being free from hunger, from undernourishment, participating in communal life; being adequately sheltered; being free to travel to see friends; and so on). The ranking of “capability vectors” can be used to rank people’s advantages vis a vis others. But in the context of poverty analysis, it is a question of setting certain absolute standards of minimum material capabilities relevant for that society. Anyone failing to reach that absolute level would then be classified as poor, no matter what his relative position is vis a vis others. Poverty, in this view, is not ultimately a matter of incomes at all, it is one of a failure to achieve certain minimum capabilities. The distinction is important since the conversion of real incomes into actual capabilities varies with social circumstances and personal features. (1985:669-70).

In any case, development in the context of a country like India seems more to be a process and not a state or a finished enterprise. One major dimension of this process is education. We will therefore devote the next section to an analysis of the relationship between education and development.

Self-assessment

1. *Discuss the different perspectives on development. What is your own understanding of the term?*

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. *How will you define development in Indian context?*

.....

.....

.....

.....

Education and development

Just as there is no universal agreement about the definition of development, there is none about the role of education. But expecting universal agreement about anything is unrealistic, particularly where the points of view concern very potent, political

concepts. What view we take of development will colour our social and economic policies and plans. Similarly, one view of education may presage sticking to the status quo, and the other may impel us to organize and support education in an entirely different way. The paradigms of development described above suggest almost conflicting views as to the role of education.

Apart from the problems of role ascription to education, education cannot of its own achieve the desired societal goals without additional structural supports. One of the major fallacies of the theories of education and development has been their overdeterministic nature. An underlying assumption is the belief that formal education can both manipulate and be manipulated in order to attain specified educational goals. Educational goals are only partially determined by educational factors such as teacher quality or curricula. Considerable impact on these presumed outcomes is actually exercised by both home background, peer groups and structural features of society itself. Education is hardly the single determining factor in the attainment of educational, much less development goals. Further, issues related to education and development cannot be resolved without taking into account the role of the State. However one chooses to view the State, it seems inevitable that the State is never neutral, irrespective of the type of economy or level of development. The goals of both education and development in any country are inherently political. The issue that needs to be addressed is what kind of education is appropriate for what kind of development or "under what conditions" and "for what purpose" are the education and development strategies to be implemented.

Higher education and development

Many of the functions of education with respect to development relate to higher education. Higher education is not merely at the apex of the education system, it is also the level which prepares personnel for all other levels of education and expertise for a great variety of jobs that have to be manned in the social, economic and cultural sectors. In addition to being at the frontier of knowledge, it plays a crucial role in the generation of new knowledge. Therefore, the relation between higher education and development is a crucial one. And this is the main theme of this unit. We will examine in this section the crucial role that higher education plays in working towards economic growth, self-reliance in the scientific and technological know-how that is basic to it, development and mobilization of human resources that is a prerequisite to the above, and also the role of higher education in providing leadership and social criticism. The section is divided into three subsections each concerning one aspect of the link between higher education and development.

Higher education in the knowledge business

In India, all the institutions of higher education put together, constitute the most important partner in the knowledge business. Through the undergraduate and post-graduate programmes, the practitioners of this enterprise are being systematically prepared, and through the research activities that the faculty undertakes, the higher education system directly takes up knowledge generation. In a country like India, there is a heavy dependence on the institutions of higher education for self-reliance on know-how so crucial to development. Not only that the universities themselves undertake research, but also, they provide the trained manpower for research and development institutions, both in the public and private sectors of industry.

The entire knowledge business has undergone tremendous changes during the past forty years. This is a global phenomenon. First of all, the volume of this business has increased drastically. Within the university system itself, there is considerable expansion

in research infrastructure and the number of people involved in it. In terms of research coverage, newer areas are being brought under the purview of research. And research concerns are related both to basic and applicational aspects.

The lapse of time between discovery and its application is decreasing progressively. Photography was first conceived of in 1727, but there was a lag of 112 years before the camera appeared on the market in 1839. The early experiments and corresponding theory of radio waves were established around 1867, but it was after 35 years, in 1902, that it was applied in the invention of radio. Nuclear reactor was thought of in 1932, and in ten years, in 1942, the first one was made. The transistor which was invented in 1948 took just three years for being put as a device to be used in radio and communication. When it comes to micro-electronics or biotechnology, and many other new other areas, the lag between discovery and application has reduced even further. For instance, every few months or even every few weeks, we hear of new discoveries and new applications in computers. This trend indicates tremendous pressure from the field of application on the knowledge generation enterprise. Research by the universities, and the faculty which is capable of doing it are in great demand from industry, agriculture, health, defence and so on.

The scenario described above is bewildering. There is a fierce competition in research and development among countries and industrial houses. Higher education institutions are under pressure to undertake more and more research, and to interact with other research agencies to make research more fruitful from a practical point of view. This crucial mediation by the universities ensures, to a large extent, the sharing of research facilities and data among professionals, and also provide a value content to the entire business of knowledge generation, bringing into context the broader ethical issues of ecology, peace and human well-being.

Every young nation today attaches priority to the development of certain minimum capabilities in the area of science and technology, industry and defence, and self-sufficiency in certain basic commodities such as food, medicine, building and clothing material and energy. Such self-reliance reduces vulnerability of a nation to international pressure in the matter of crucial decisions pertaining to economic development and even national security. Another driving force behind the policies of many developing nations is "their desire to change as rapidly as possible of raw materials and markets for other people's finished products" and to pursue a path of rapid industrialization.

The changing scenario in developing countries is that of greater dependence of the economy on knowledge-based industries and knowledge-oriented employment. The narrowing gap between theory and practice which was discussed earlier is clearly visible in the agricultural sector, where the results of research done in the labs have to be taken to the land so as to produce all the grain, or oil seeds or cotton that is needed. Thus, more and more responsibility gets vested in the higher education institutions in providing the two crucial factors for development: knowledge and human resources.

In India, the State takes a tremendous lot of initiative in the knowledge business; it has established many premier research institutions, more than 40 of them under the aegis of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), and more than 30 under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research. This has definitely given a fillip to scientific and technological research in the country. However, this policy, has to some extent, deprived the universities of resources for scientific research. The best products of the university system tend to abandon the universities and join these well-equipped research institutions. Even though the universities because of their inherent strength derived from fresh young minds and free atmosphere still produce, for each rupee spent, much original and useful research, their pre-eminence has been taken away, much to the loss of the country. This has been observed by an Indian scientist as eminent as Dr. George Sudarshan (Sudarshan and Mahajan, 1989). This has been wrongly justified

sometimes by stating that the primary function of the university is teaching and not research. This, however, is not a very sound argument. It must be recognized that only in those universities where outstanding research takes place can there be outstanding teaching.

Higher education for human resource development

There is a considerable opinion which is opposed to tying education and development together because it considers that if education and development are linked together, human and material growth will be imagined somewhat like construction enterprises in domains of different nature. This school is also opposed to discussing the trade-offs between investment in material and human capital. In other words, it opposes the view of education as a means to make people adjuncts to economic growth. The other school in this context, recognizes educational investment in human capital next to plant capacity raw materials and credit, as a major factor for economic growth.

That India now has one of the largest scientific manpower in the world is not a mean achievement. And this is entirely due to the expansion in higher education undertaken ever since Independence. The higher education sector till 1947 had not been geared quantitatively as well as qualitatively to cater to the human resource requirements of a developing economy; it had been conceived of on the basis of the economic reality which accompanied colonialism. After Independence, the first major rethinking about the educational structure and content was at the university education stage, through the University Education Commission appointed in 1948. This emphasis on higher education was deliberate. The main reason for this was the acute need for trained manpower for almost every sector of national development.

The initial phase was marked by large scale expansion. This emphasis on quantity was understandable; it was meant to meet the manpower requirement of the various sectors of national development. However, this had two consequences. One, there was an alleged drop in quality of higher education. And two, there was some disproportionality in the development of manpower between various sectors. Coupled with this have been the problems facing the Indian economy and the resultant erratic way of its expansion. A third related problem has been the inadequate manpower projection and manpower planning. All these have resulted in a certain amount of dysfunctionality between the output of higher education and the intake of the job market, in other words, unemployment of the educated.

There is a strong feeling that the legacy of colonial higher education still influences Indian universities. One way in which this manifests itself is in the fact that the education programmes offered by the Indian universities are not specifically designed to the development needs and processes of India of today and tomorrow. Very many crucial sectors of development are relatively underemphasized. There is still a clear bias towards elitism and liberal arts and other general courses. Certain crucial sectors of development such as rural health and rural technology are not sufficiently catered to by the present programmes of higher education.

Higher education for leadership and social criticism

Development as we found earlier, is not entirely economic growth. Attaining a certain level of social justice and a certain level of social and political consciousness supportive of a structural transformation in economic, social and political institutions are also important dimensions of development. Even for economic growth, there needs to be a certain change in the attitudes and values of people. With the present knowledge revolution, the most crucial faculty which ought to be developed in every one is the

ability to learn. It is not an exaggeration to describe the present society as a learning society. The most important demand that development makes on people is probably to learn, to adapt and to grow.

Higher education is expected to generate a climate in the society conducive to the development of the above mentioned attitudes, values and abilities. This is a very difficult task. It can be accomplished only if the academia comes forward from its back bench and collaboration with other professional groups and communities such as those in the Press, the Bar and other professionals involved in development.

All major social changes have originated in the minds of people. In fact such people provide leadership to the society at certain junctures. By and large, such people are the products of the universities. The university community will be able to respond to a call for leadership at such junctures only if it consistently endeavours to refine its own social sensitivity and disciplines itself to view social phenomena objectively. A democracy owes its dynamism essentially to two professional communities, one, the academics and two, the journalists. The universities role of social criticism, therefore, can never be over-emphasised.

The university community develops this ability of acting as a watch-dog for the society by nurturing within itself a climate in which both dissent and discipline coexist. In a country like India, where there are only seven graduates in a thousand population, it is only natural that the university community comprising both teachers and students is viewed as catalyst for development.

Self-assessment

3. *On the basis of the discussion in the previous section, write a short note on how higher education relates to knowledge based industry and knowledge based employment in contemporary societies.*

.....

.....

.....

4. *In the light of what we have discussed in the subsection on human resource development, what is your reaction to the statement that "education as manpower qualification is an enterprise by which people, are disciplined for competent performance at work which remains meaningless to them"?*

.....

.....

.....

5. *How is the leadership and social criticism function of higher education crucial in development? Give examples from the Indian scene after Independence in this regard.*

.....

.....

.....

Summary

In the preceding sections of this unit, we have attempted to examine the various theoretical perspectives which are important in the evaluation of the role of education in the development of both Capitalist and Socialist societies. We have also discussed the relationship between education and development, though establishing one is not an

easy task. Education in general, and higher education in particular, cannot of its own, achieve the societal goals without additional supports. Moreover, in any given context, the contribution of education to the attainment of development goals depends on the overlap between educational goals and the goals of the State. What is important therefore is a need for a better understanding of and planning for, the relationship between educational process and the attainment of national development objectives.

Unit-end activities

1. "The role of education in development is powerfully, even painfully, political" What is meant by this statement?
2. John K. Galbraith in his book, '**The Industrial State**' remarks that, 'Modern higher education is of course extensively accommodated to the needs of the industrial system'. In the light of the discussion in this unit, write a case in favour or against this statement.
3. What do you think development would mean in the context of India? What role will education play in this? Write your answer in about 400 words.

Points for discussion

1. Education has a series of roles to play in different types of development in differing situations. Discuss what is meant by the statement.
2. The aims and objectives of the Indian State have been summarized in the Preamble to the Indian Constitution. Juxtapose the development of education in India against these objectives and point out its achievements and the shortcomings.

Suggested readings

Allahar, Anton L. (1995) *Sociology and the Periphery: Theories and Issues*. Toronto: Garamond.

Brohman, John (1996) *Popular Development*. Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell.

Carnoy, Martin (1983) "Education and Theories of the State", *Education and Society*. 1(2): 3-25.

Galtung, Johan (1976) "Towards new indicators of development", *FUTURES*, (June): 261-26.