

Evolution of higher education in India

¹ Dr. Amit Kumar Maity, ² Sanglap Maity

¹ Assistant Professor in Education HOD, Dept. of B. Ed. & Coordinator ODL B. Ed., NSOU Y. S. Palpara Mahavidyalaya, alpara, Purba Midnapur, West Bengal, India

² Assistant Teacher in Education Ghasipur Vivekananda Vidyamandir Mahishadal, Midnapur (East), West Bengal, India

Abstract

Education is a most important weapon of social progress and development. Higher education emphasized to make skilled leaders in different fields of the society. The main purpose of this paper is to study the evolution of higher education in India. In India, Higher Education had its roots in early time. It is the outcome of a long socio- historical process of evolution. From the early 5th and 7th century A.D. some educational monks have introduced higher education in India. Since independence higher education in our country has spread rapidly. This is because of the visionary planning of the leader's, educationists and policy-makers of our country.

Keywords: evolution, higher education

Introduction

Growth and development of any country depends on education of her countrymen. It plays a vital role in the life of an individual as well as society. For individual, education helps to discipline the mind, sharpens the intellect and refines the spirit. In case of social change, education has a special significance as stated by the Indian Education Commission (1964-66): "the realization of the country's aspirations involves changes in the knowledge, skills and values of the people as a whole. If this 'change in a grand scale' is to be achieved without a violent revolution there is one and only instrument that be used--- EDUCATION."

Concept of Higher Education

Higher education means the education beyond the level of post higher secondary education. it refers to colleges and universities. But in fact higher educational institutions include professional schools in the field of Law, Theology, Medicine, Business, Music and Art. It also includes other institutions like Teachers' Training Schools and Technological Institutions. Moreover, institutions for training of highly skilled specialists in the field of economics, science, technology and culture of various types of higher levels are treated as Higher Educational Institutions. Those students, who have completed their study at the H. S. level, are allowed to get entry in these campuses.

They are about eighteen years of age, so they are mentally mature and capable of performing at the level of abstract thinking. They can grasp concepts and ideas of all kinds; they can analyse, synthesize, create novel innovations and thus enrich the higher education. Every society expects from higher education but the expectations have not revised as higher education changing with social concerns, economic situations and political conditions.

Background of Higher Education

In India, Higher Education had its roots in early time. It is the outcome of a long socio- historical process of evolution. From the workings of few Chinese travelers like Fa-hien, Tsang and I- Tsing who visited India in the 5th and 7th century

A.D., we have known centers of learning and enquiry at Txila, Kanchipuram (Canjeevaram), Nalanda, Odantapuri (Uddandapma), Sri Dharrya kataka, Kashmira and Vikramashila. Between 629 A. D. to 645 A. D., when Hiuen – Tsang came to India, he found Nalanda University- is flourishing a Buddhist center of learning. Nalanda at that time got a world -wide reputation. In about 850 A. D. Huien Tsang wrote about Nalanda University

"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 country people of India respect them and follow them."

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

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

year	1883	1928	1947	1961-62
No. of colleges	139	307	591	2282
No. of enrollment	16,088	90,677	2,28,881	11,77,245

Source: <http://www.education.nic.in/cd50yrs/n/2j/3j/2j3j0201.htm> p, 1 of 4 dated 31.08.2011.

Woods Despatch (1854) or education Despatch was sent by the company to Dalhousie, the then Governor General of India, played a significant role to fulfill the demand for higher education in India. The ideas and methods advocated in the Despatch dominated in the field for about five decades. Soon after this Despatch was received, Dalhousie set in motion the process of creating universities in India, and the very year of the revolt in 1857 the three universities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras came into existence. On the year 1902 the British Govt. set up the first Indian University Commission. Lord Curzon was not satisfied with the condition of Indian Universities which were set upon London model by the Wood’s Despatch. The recommendations of the Indian University Commission were incorporated in the Govt. of India Resolution, (1904) which was followed by the passing of the Indian Universities Act (1904). As a result, the functions of universities were enlarged.

Higher Education after independence

After India became free the ministry of education took the step in the higher education appointing a commission on university education under the chairmanship of Dr. S. P Radhakrishnan to report on Indian University education. The recognizes that “If India is to confront the confusion of our times, she must turn for guidance not to those who are lost to the exigencies of the passing hour but to her men of letters and men of science, to her poets and artists to her discoveries and inventors. These intellectual pioneers of civilization are to be found and trained in the universities, which are the sanctuaries of the minor life of the nation.”

The report of Kothari Commission (1964-66) said 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. Two decades later, the Govt. of India undertook a comprehensive review of the nation’s education policy. The policy statement which emerged following this review reaffirmed:

“Education is a unique investment in the present and the future.” This cardinal principle is the key to the National Policy on Education.

Higher education, according to the 1986 policy provides people with an opportunity to reflect on the critical, social, economic, cultural, moral, spiritual issues facing humanity. The country paper (Govt. of India’s) articulating the vision of India on higher education in 1998 reflected the following views:

- Education aims at liberation (from bondage, ignorance, backwardness and gravitation pulls of the lower human nature).

- Education, being an evolutionary force that enables both the individual and collectively to evolve various faculties and to integrate them by the superior intellectual, ethical, aesthetic and spiritual power, 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.”

Influence of higher Education

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

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

Present out look towards University Education

From 1980 to 1990 a rapid change took place in the domain of higher education. The global economy is only now beginning to bear upon the international role of higher education. Universities are at present engaging in enrolling international students, becoming partners in inter-institutional schemes, and pushing forward in the drive towards globalization, students, academic staff, and curricula are transformed and exchanged between institutions, accreditation agencies. Ensure promptness in according learning experiences and governments appeared their signatures to co-operative projects in higher education. It is only the developments of globalization and liberalization which will play a crucial role in setting the aims, role and function s of the university in the near future.

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

Table 2: Institutions of Higher Education and their intake capacity

No. of University Level Institutions	25	117	320	367	467	544
No. of Colleges	700	7346	16,885	18,064	25,951	31,324
Capacity Indicators	1950	1991	2004	2006	2009	2010
No. of teachers (in thousands)	15	272	457	488	588	699
No. of students Enrolled (in Millions)	0.1	4.9	9.95	11.2	13.6	14.6

Source: Higher Education in India (strategies and schemes during 11th plan Period (2007-2012) for universities and colleges) UGC Report January 2011 Chapter 1 and 2 pp, 1- 3. Total University level institutions by 01.07.2010.

Table 3: University Level Institutions in India

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

Source: Higher Education in India (strategies and Schemes during 11th Plan Period (2007-12) for universities and colleges) UGC report January 2011 Chapter 2 pp, 3-4 and p-8.

So, since independence higher education in our country has spread rapidly. This is because of the visionary planning of the leader's, educationists and policy-makers of our country.

Place of Women in Higher Education in India

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

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

It is very unfortunate that due to strong bias against women, they were lagged behind from higher education. The traditional view supports women's education as waste of time and money. People should equip them to become better wives and mother. But modern attitude visualizes education as an instrument for women's equality and development as well as the sustainable development of the country.

Necessity of Higher Education for Women

Theoretically the need of higher education for both male and female is equal but practically it could be said that female education is more important than that of male. Truly Pt. Neheru commented: "If you educate a man you educate an individual, however, if you educate a women you educate a whole family. Women empowered means mother India empowered."

It is education that can help women to go ahead, to free from all types of prejudice, to deal with the problems of her life her family, her society and nation. An educated girl can easily understand the demerits of early marriage and high birth rate. In the third world countries the need for higher education among women is more important because colonialism has

reminded a great force which hinders education for the general masses and women in particular.

UGC report revealed that out of 169.75 lakh students enrolled in higher education in 2010-11, almost 70.49 lakh were women as compared to just about 47.08 lakh women enrolled in 2006-2007.

Women Education in Ancient Period:

- Women were involved actively in religious and social matters.
- They got liberal attitudes to choose their partner in marriage and a widow was permitted to remarry.
- According to Buddha, "women's spiritual capacities were equal to men's"
- The high status of women enjoyed during early Vedic Period gradually started deteriorating in the late Vedic Period.
- The position of women reached an all-time low during the age of the Dharmashastras. During this period, child marriage was encouraged.

Women Education in Medieval period:

The conditions of women in society deteriorated more during the medieval periods with the entrance of Muslims. 'Purdah' system was started. They were also forced to practice 'Zenana'. Rajput women practiced 'Jauhar' though a few women like Razia Sultana became to the throne of Delhi.

Women education in British Period:

In the British period there was revival of interest in women's education in India. At that time some pioneers like Raja Rammohan Roy, Iswarchandra Vidyasagar emphasized on women's education in India.

Women Education after independence:

The literacy rate before independence was 2.6% in 1961 to 15.3% by the year 2001. Now as per the report of census, 2011, the male literacy rate is 82.14% while female literacy rate is 65.46%.

Women Education in Modern Period:

Today 0.3 million NFE centers have primary education to 0.12 million girls out of 7.42 million children. But in tribal communities the picture is lower. So the Govt. is providing so many steps like Kanyashree, providing cycles, dresses, minority scholarships etc. to increase the rate of women education and employment. A survey report by (Maity & Maity, 2015) [5] found that rural parents who are illiterate and engaged in MGNREGS project are changing their attitude towards women education. They understood and became

aware the importance of women education. In the muslim parents' view it is found that they do not send their daughter to school due to convenience problem and poverty. Afjol's study (2000) also coincide the same findings. But after SSA, SSK, MSK were established and some minority scholarships also motivated the muslim parents for schooling their daughters from earlier. Some Govt. projects towards women education gradually motivated the parents to their daughters' education and schooling. Most of the parents became motivated by many Govt. supports towards women education such as: Kanyashree, providing school uniform and cycles, mid-day meal, different scholarships and school facility within their locality.

It is the matter of Joy that Kerala and Mijoram have achieved universal female literacy rates in India.

Women Empowerment through Education

The concept of women empowerment was introduced at the international women conference at NAROIBI in 1985. Education is milestone of women empowerment as it enables them to respond to challenges, to confront their traditional roll and change their life. The year 2020 is not far away, it is just 5 years away. To fulfill our dream in 2020 to become a developed country, women empowerment is urgently needed rapidly.

The 93rd Constitutional Amendment 2001 enacting 'free and compulsory education for all children is a fundamental right still remain a ray of hope to millions of children in the age group of 6 to 14 yrs. The SSA programme of Govt. of India is providing quality education for children aged between 6 to 14 years has increased the literacy rate of boys and girls.

Constitutional Provisions for Women

Through the Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of State Policy, the constitution of India guarantees certain rights and privileges to women.

- Article 14 confers on man and women equal rights and opportunities in the political, economic and social spheres.
- Article 15 (3) contains an enabling provision for the State to make affirmative discrimination in favour of women.
- Article 15 prohibits discrimination against any citizen on the ground of religion, race, caste, sex etc.
- Article 16 provides for equality of opportunity in matters of public appointments for all citizens.
- Article 39(a) mentions that the State shall direct its policy towards securing to all citizens' men and women equally the right to a means of livelihood.
- Article 39 (e) ensures equal pay.
- Article 51(A) (e) imposes dignity of women as a fundamental duty to every citizen.

Conclusion

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

emphasized on women's education. According to them without women's education, women's liberation will not be possible. Education of women and Sudra is the ultimate goal of our country. Even Manu also emphasized about education of girls through higher education, "Bharat abar Jagatsabhay srestha asana labae".

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