



# REVIEW OF RESEARCH

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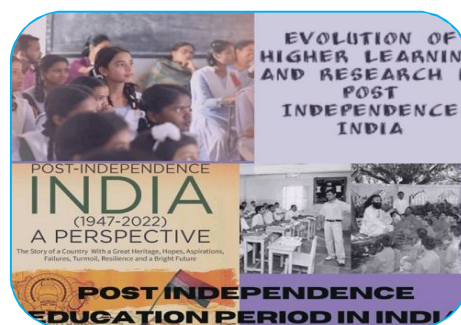
## HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA: POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

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### ABSTRACT

Higher education was expanded rapidly after independence. A large number of public higher education institutions were established in every field. For economic development and nation building process, higher education was an important tool. The Indian government at that time took all the responsibility for developmental growth of higher education. In the post-independence era, many Commissions were setup to provide its valuable recommendations for the betterment of higher education such as Radhakrishnan Commission (1948-49), University Grants Commission (1953) and Kothari Commission (1964-66). The recommendations of these commissions provide a base for the current higher education.



**KEYWORDS :** Higher Education, Higher Education Institutions, Post-Independence Period.

### INTRODUCTION

The post-independence era started when India got freedom. As we know that our beloved country India became independent on 15 August 1947. After independence, India was facing lots of challenges; higher education was one of them. At that time, India had a system of higher education developed during the Colonial period which was very small in terms of numbers. There were only 20 universities and 500 colleges across the nation. The enrolment in higher education was very low as compared to eligible population for higher education. Only a few women had graduated from these institutions hardly. All the marginalized sections were far away from the main stream. In the post-independence period, many Commissions were setup to provide its valuable recommendations for the betterment of higher education.

### University Education Commission/ Radhakrishnan Commission (1948-49)

After independence the process of reform and reconstruction began in every field including education. The standard of higher education was not so good. The central Advisory board (CABE) and the Inter University Board of Education (IUBE) advised the Indian government to appoint a university education commission to suggest reforms in Indian education.

After independence, the first education commission was setup for university education in November 1948 as University Education Commission. Dr. Radha Krishnan was the Chairman of the University Education Commission. The commission is also known as Radhakrishnan Commission. The committee submitted its report in August 1949 and suggested its recommendations for university education. Followings are the major recommendations, as given by University Education Commission/ Radhakrishnan Commission:

- Higher education should be kept in Concurrent List.
- For the internal administration internal Committee should be formed.
- The administrative responsibility of the affiliated colleges should be on their management.
- The financial burden should be jointly borne by the central and state.
- University Grants Commission should be setup to supervise the proper functioning of universities and allocate funds for their running.
- Higher education should be organised at three levels- Graduation, Post-graduation and research.
- Research work in the university should be promoted and specialized research personnel should be appointed. Research fellowship should be given to students to increase their interest and encourage research works.
- Prior to their appointment the teachers should be properly trained. For this purpose teachers-training should be organised and they should be sent for practice teaching in suitable schools.
- Agriculture University should be established.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad had a great role in the development of higher education in India. He established first IIT in India at Kharagpur in the year 1950. On the recommendations of Radhakrishnan Commission, Maulana Azad established University Grants Commission (UGC) in the year 1953 with a motive to have a look on the higher education system of India and allocate funds for the development and proper functioning of universities all over India. UGC became a statutory body in 1956 by the act of parliament. Several other institutions like Lalit Kala Academy established in the year 1954 to promote fine arts, Sangeet Kala Academy established in 1953 to promote performing art and Sahitya Academy established in 1954 to promote literature all over the country were also developed.

IISc, Bangalore got the status of deemed to be university in 1958. Four more IITs were established, IIT Bombay in 1958, IIT Kanpur in 1959, IIT Madras 1960 and IIT Delhi in the year 1961. These IITs played and are playing a great role in developing higher technical education in India. IIM Ahmedabad established in 1961 was the first institution of higher education in management which aims at creating professional and value oriented management graduates.

### **National Education Commission/ Kothari Commission (1964 -1966)**

The National Education Commission was appointed by the government of India in 1964. The Chairman of this Commission was Dr. D.S. Kothari. The commission recommended that, to improve higher education, at first develop major universities where education could be provided at Post graduation and research level in such effective way that these universities could be compared with world's best universities. For developing major universities, University Grants Commission should choose 6 universities among the already existing universities. Among these 6 universities, a minimum of one technical university and one Agriculture university should be opted. Teachers and students of these institutions should be extraordinary. Scholarship should be provided to meritorious students at secondary and graduation levels so that best students could be selected for admission in these institutions. The selection of teachers should be done at national and international levels.

The Kothari Commission strongly recommended that if India has to be developed economically, socially, it should have spent at least 6% of Gross National income on education. A large investment in education helps in ensuring the equity and bridging the gap among different socio-economic groups. But unfortunate, even after 75 years of independence our Nation has not crossed the 4% education budget of GNP.

### **National Policy on Education (1968)**

On the basis of the recommendations of the Kothari Commission, Indian Government declared a national policy of education which is indicative of efforts towards Indianization of education.

The national policy of education 1968 was recognized as "radical restructuring". The main features for higher education of this policy are as follows-

- Improvement in status, emoluments and competence of the teachers.
- Equal education opportunities to all sections of society. Inclusive efforts are needed for the development of tribal people, backward classes, women education.
- To develop technical and vocational education at university and college level.
- Infrastructure development of the higher education institutions.
- Reorganize a uniform system of education for the whole country.
- Increase the education budget to 6% of Gross National Income.

Significantly, before 1976, education was the subject of state List. But after 42<sup>nd</sup> amendment in Indian Constitution in 1976 education became the subject of Concurrent List. From now onward it was the responsibility of both the Centre and states to develop education in India.

### **National Policy on Education (1986)**

The new policy paid special attention on removing the imbalance in the field of higher education by paying special focus on the needs of the denied groups which include Women, Schedule Caste, Schedule Tribes, OBCs, Minorities and Handicaps. The policy emphasized to give equal educational opportunities to all the marginalized sections so that they could also be linked with the mainstream and lift up their standard in the society. The policy put special attention on the deformities that were prevailing in the society in past regarding all the deprived section can be removed only through education. Curriculum and textbooks be redesigned as per their need which must include their languages, culture, tradition and values. Major steps were needed to remove the obstacles that were inhibiting the access and retention of students to education. Various measures needed to be taken to ensure their participation in professional, technical and vocational courses. According to the NPE, 1986, Post-matric scholarship should be given to the SCs, STs so as to increase their participation in higher education. They should also be provided with hostel facilities and recruitment of SCs, STs Teachers should be encouraged.

When NPE, 1986 came into force, there were 150 universities and around 5000 colleges existed in India. The policy recommended special focus on consolidation and expansion of these existing institutions. The policy emphasized on Minimum Facilities in higher education institutions and the regulation of admission would be as per the capacity of these facilities.

### **Programme of Action (1992)**

To review NPE (1986) and suggest modification and recommendation for its better implementation, a total of 23 special task forces were formed. Each task force was given a specific subject which was covered under National Policy on Education (1986). So, there were 23 task forces with 23 different subjects covering all the aspects of NPE (1986). The Programme of Action (1992) in the context of higher education covered subjects like open university and distance learning, technical education, education of management, Research in HEIs, Media and Educational Technology, Delinking Degrees from Jobs and Man Power Planning, evaluation process and examination reforms, teachers and their trainings, Management of education and Rural Universities.

For higher education, POA (1992) suggested the merit based admission of students along with promotion of research work in universities. It also emphasized establishment of a central body which would promote rural education. Media and Technology be used as a medium to train in-service teachers and various technical Teachers' Training Institution and State Institute of Educational Technology (SIET) are established. It emphasized on upgrading professional working skills and modernizing laboratories, workshop by using modern technology. It also suggested that learning should be of minimum level and a continuous and comprehensive process of evaluation should be adopted. POA (1992) also advocated that for admission in various professional and technical programmes, a common entrance exam should be conducted on All India basis.

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### **National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) 1994**

"To address the issues of deterioration in quality of education", National Policy on Education (1986) and POA (1992) recommended to establish a national level independent Accreditation body which could assess and accredit the institution on the basis of their quality assurance parameters. National Assessment and Accreditation Council' (NAAC) was established in 1994. The Headquarter of NAAC is situated in Bangalore.

NAAC Accreditation is pre-requisite for the institution to be eligible for taking fund from RUSA. From this only, we can understand how important NAAC is, even after 28 years of its establishment and how farsighted the vision of NEP (1986) was, to establish such a premier Accreditation agency (NAAC) for quality improvement in higher education institutions.

### **National Knowledge Commission (NKC) 2005**

The national Knowledge commission (NKC) recognized as think-tank in the history of Indian Higher education. There were eight members of this commission including Sam Pitroda, who was the chairman of this National Knowledge Commission (NKC). This commission focused on creating a knowledge society in the country.

The National Knowledge Commission recommended various suggestions regarding as many aspects of Indian education including higher education. For improvement in higher education the commission aimed for expansion of universities which would lead to increase in Gross Enrolment ratio (GER). The Commission focused to create at least 1500 universities so that Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) could reach to 15% by 2015. The National Knowledge Commission felt to change the current higher education regulatory system and recommended to establish Independent Regulatory Authority for Higher Education (IRAHE). The National Knowledge Commission (NKC) also suggested for increasing funds for public institutions in diversified way and Establish 50 National University of highest standard. The NKC also recommended modification the curriculum and course credit system in already existing universities.

### **Yashpal Committee Report (2009)**

Prof. Yashpal was the Chairman of this Committee. The report entitled "The Committee to Advice Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher Education" was submitted in 2009. This report suggested so many structural changes in higher education.

Yashpal Committee expressed its concern about mushrooming deemed universities. The Committee recommended for converting all the deserving deemed universities into full-fledged universities and scrapped all those deemed universities which do not deserve or abandon their status of deemed universities. It was also recommended by the Yashpal Committee to not give status of deemed university to any university until the new regulation come for it. The Committee also recommended for structural changes in regulatory bodies like AICTE, UGC, and NCTE. The Committee emphasized to replace all these bodies to a "National Commission for Higher Education and Research." The Yashpal Committee also recommended that universities must be structured and given complete autonomy in terms of not only academics but also finance and administration.

### **National Education Policy (2020)**

When we talk about NEP, 2020 in the context of higher education, it aims at increasing the gross enrolment ratio (GER) to 50% by the year 2035 and making the curriculum for higher education more flexible. It also suggested establishing academic banks for transfer of credit along with establishing National Research Foundation for developing better research culture. It emphasized on establishing Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) as a single monitoring body for higher education. According to NEP (2020), within this one umbrella institution, four independent verticals will be setup as "National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC) for regulation, General Education Council (GEC) for setting various standards, Higher Education Grant Council (HEGC) for funding and National Accreditation Council (NAC) for accreditation." In 15 years, the affiliation of colleges should be phased

out and for granting Grade autonomy to colleges' step-wise mechanism should be developed. National Education Technology Forum (NETF) should be establishing, so as to increase the use of technology in higher education with equity.

To implement the recommendations of NEP, 2020 related to higher education, the ministry of education extended the centrally sponsored scheme RUSA till 2026. RUSA will continue in new phase which targets the inclusion of socio-economically disadvantaged groups, Gender, Disadvantaged areas, Remote and Rural areas and areas with low GER.

### Current Higher Education System

Next to US and China, India is having the third largest higher education which is funded by government. For coordination between centre and state, the University Grants Commission (UGC) is the main governing body. It also enforces various standards and gives advices to the government. In India education is the subject of concurrent list which means its responsibility of the both central and state government to provide education to its citizens. Current higher education system of India has been divided into four categories i.e. central government institutions, state government institutions, deemed institutions and private institutions.

### CONCLUSION

Higher education in India evolved through several periods, including ancient, medieval, colonial, and post-independence. However, following independence, India's higher education system experienced the most substantial growth. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, India's then-education minister, was influential in transforming higher education in the country. His foresight serves as a watershed moment for the Indian higher education system. Several institutions of national importance formed after independence have contributed significantly to the nation and become centers of excellence in higher education. Various commissions, education policies, committees, regulatory bodies, and accrediting agencies that were set up or established earlier are playing a significant role in the functioning of the existing higher education system. The premier higher education institutions of India are now included in the global higher education rankings. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 establishes the foundation for a more comprehensive, multidisciplinary, and technologically integrated system, with the goal of making Indian universities globally competitive and relevant. Indian higher education is facing so many challenges also, which must be addressed in order to reform the system. A well-developed higher education and research ecosystem will not only benefit students and scholars but also contribute to India's vision of becoming a knowledge-driven economy in the 21st century.

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