

6

The Evolving Policy Perspectives in Higher Education

Introduction

The challenge of self-reliant development after Independence necessitated growth with equity and social justice, and modernization of the inherited socio-economic structures so that they formed the basis of development planning in India. Education was considered as a critical input in development to achieve the goals of social and economic development. It was in this context that, soon after Independence, considerable emphasis was placed not only on the expansion of infrastructure at different levels of education but also on strengthening the scientific and technological component therein so as to meet the requirements of skilled and high level manpower.

The trend of development in education in Independent India has been governed by a set of complex forces. Since, the provision of education is by and large the responsibility of the Government, the developments have been under the constant review during the past six decades of planned development. From time to time, the Government has been laying policy thrusts based on the overall strategy of development planning in the country. Each policy reform inevitably affects some or all aspects related to the organization, content and control of higher education.

A quick perusal of development in education indicates that inspite of various inadequacies and limitations of higher education, the country has by now produced a stock of scientific and technical manpower which is one of the largest in the world. There are still miles to go however. Many reforms have not yet been fully implemented. It would therefore be appropriate and instructive to make a general survey of the policies and programmes of higher education aimed at bringing about qualitative improvements so as to make the system more responsive to the changing demands. This unit intends doing precisely that.

Learning outcomes

After going through the unit, you would be able to

- identify the major landmarks in the evolution of policy in higher education;
- understand some of the prevailing policies and thrust areas in higher education in India;
- understand the problems of implementation of these policies; and
- identify the gaps between the policy pronouncements and realized goals and to pinpoint the areas which require critical intervention so that the country is able to face the challenges of the future.

Educational planning in India

In the field of education the country was faced with the task of providing a minimum level of education to all and at the same time **restructure higher education** to meet the manpower requirements of a growing economy. A **multi pronged strategy** was adopted for this purpose. First, to provide education to all children up to the age of 14 years; second, to eradicate adult illiteracy; third, linking education to the world of work; and finally, to strengthen the research and development role of higher education in the structural transformation of the economy.

Till 1976, with the exception of higher education, education was exclusively a State subject. However, the 42nd amendment to the Constitution of India has placed education on the Concurrent List. In addition to the State governments, the Parliament is also authorized to legislate on matters related to education, and its legislation would have precedence over that of the States. However, in the case of higher education, as discussed in the previous unit, the Central government has been entrusted with:

- the responsibility of coordination;
- of determining and maintaining standards in the institutions of higher education, research, scientific and technological institutions, union agencies and institutions of professional and vocational training;
- promotion of special studies or research, central universities and any other institution declared by the Parliament as institutions of national importance.

Policy perspectives in higher education

It may be observed that while the UGC has been an apex body essentially concerned with the setting up and maintenance of standards in higher education throughout the country on a uniform basis, the Central government has been playing a key role in providing overall policy directions. The UGC thus acts as a vital link between the policy-making bodies of the government and institutions of higher education. The task of arriving at a set of policies to be pursued in the development of education is usually entrusted to Commissions and Committees set up for specific purposes. The development of higher education in India has been significantly affected by the various policy pronouncements and the consequent programmes undertaken to operationalise them. The important landmarks in the evolution of policy in higher education are:

- i) University Education Commission, 1948-49.
- ii) Education Commission, 1964-66.
- iii) National Policy on Education, 1968.
- iv) Draft Policy on Education, 1978.
- v) National Commission on Teachers-II, 1984.
- vi) Challenge of Education: A Policy Perspective, 1985.
- vii) National Policy on Education, 1986.
- viii) National Policy on Education: A Programme of Action, 1986.
- ix) National Policy on Education: A Programme of Action, 1992.

In the following discussion, a brief analysis of the historical background and important recommendations of various Commissions and Policy statements aimed at the improving system of higher education in India would be undertaken.

University Education Commission (1948-49)

Soon after Independence, the process of the restructuring and reforming the system of education was set into motion. The University Education Commission (UEC) was set up in 1948 under the Chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, a distinguished educationist, who later became the President of India. The main objective of the Commission was to suggest measures for improvement of the system that may be necessary to suit present and future requirements of the country. The programmes of educational development during the first three Five-Year Plans were all based on the recommendations of the UEC.

Although the Commission was specifically looking into the various facets of higher education, it also examined some aspects of school education particularly those having a bearing on the development of higher education.

The UEC observed that a large majority of the students admitted to universities are ill equipped to take advantage of the university education and suggested radical reforms in secondary education. Following its recommendations, a separate Commission for restructuring secondary education was set up in 1952.

In a study conducted by the UEC, it was found that the number of actual working days in a year in most universities and colleges are insufficient. Interestingly, it was found that in case of certain universities, the number of actual working days was as low as 120.

The **major recommendations** of the UEC were:

- The **aim of education** should be to awaken the innate ability to live and to train citizens for democracy and self-development, to acquaint individuals with their cultural heritage and to impart to them professional and vocational training;
- the Commission emphasized the role of the **study of agriculture** in an agrarian economy like India. It suggested that special attention be paid to the development of **higher education in rural areas**. It further suggested that on the basis of critical studies about the nature and type of manpower requirements, the scientific and technical base of educational system should be strengthened; Mere imitation of the existing institutions at home and abroad should be avoided;
- the Commission emphasized the role of **post-graduate research** and training for the advancement of the country. It suggested that PH.D scholars should emphasize both on the breadth and the width of the knowledge. They should not have narrow specializations;
- **overcrowding** at universities and colleges should be **avoided** and the number of working days should be increased to a minimum of 180, exclusive of examination days;
- realising the importance of the **medium of instruction**, the Commission recommended that English as a medium of instruction in higher education should be replaced as early as possible by an **Indian language**;
- a university degree should not be required for government, administrative services. Special state examinations for recruitment to various State services should be organized;
- realizing the deficiencies of the examination system and the magnitude of wastage, the Commission recommended a thorough study of the **scientific methods of educational testing** and appraisal.

The UEC also recommended that completion of **12 years of study** at a school or an intermediate college should be the standard for **admission to university courses**. In the proposed structure, the first degree Course in Arts and Science was of three

years' duration. The degree course in engineering, were of four years' duration after Intermediate in Science, exclusive of the period of work training or of five years in case of work practice being a part of study. The UEC recommended that in order to divert students to different vocations after 10-12 years of schooling, a large number of occupational institutes be established. To avoid overcrowding in the universities and colleges, the Commission recommended that the maximum number of students in Arts and Science faculties of a teaching university be fixed at 3000 and an affiliated college at 1500. It also recommended diversification of higher education so as to provide the necessary manpower in critical areas like agriculture and industry.

The Education Commission (1964-66)

Before looking specifically into the recommendations of the EC, it may be noted that the enrolments in higher education witnessed a massive expansion and recorded the highest growth rates in the fifties and the sixties. The enrolment in absolute numbers increased from about 1.74 lakhs in 1950-51 to about 10.67 lakhs in 1965-66. The growth rates for different periods are as under:

Table 1 Increase in enrolment (1951-65)

Period	Growth rate %
1950-51 to 1955-56	11.2
1955-56 to 1960-61	13.5
1960-61 to 1965-66	14.0

Another important feature of higher education has been that a large proportion of enrolment was located in affiliated colleges. In 1965-66, about 88% of the total enrolment at the undergraduate level was in affiliated colleges. It is therefore very clear that the demand for education picked up more in response to populist pressure (a more detailed discussion on this aspect takes place in the forthcoming units). In India, the system of setting up of affiliating universities was started during the colonial period so as to monitor large number of colleges which sprang up in various parts of the country. Over the years, the affiliated colleges have grown in numbers.

With a view to look into these problems, the Government of India appointed the Education Commission (EC) under Chairmanship of Professor D. S. Kothari in 1964. The main function of the Commission was to advise the Government on the national pattern of education and to suggest the general principles and policies for the development of education at all stages and in all aspects. The setting up of EC was significant on account of the following:

- i) For the first time in Independent India, the **role of education** in the context of **national development** was examined.
- ii) As such the EC was not only concerned with the identification of changes needed in a particular sector of education but for the system as a whole.

The recommendations of the EC formed the basis of National Policy on Education announced in 1968 and it provided the framework for educational development during the Fourth and the subsequent Five-Year Plans. The programme of **educational reconstruction** proposed by the EC broadly falls into three categories.

- i) **Transformation of the education system so as to relate it to life, needs and aspirations of the nation;**

- ii) **Qualitative improvements** of education so that the standards achieved are adequate, keep continually rising and, at least, in a few sectors, become internationally comparable;
- iii) **Expansion of education** facilities broadly on the basis of manpower needs and with an accent on **equalization** of educational opportunities.

The Education Commission felt that the affiliation system, in trying to enforce same programmes and rules in all colleges, was holding back desirable changes even from those colleges which had the will and competence to undertake the much needed reforms. It advocated autonomy for selected colleges, and even for highly innovative departments in the universities.

The fundamental principles for the provisions of facilities at different stages and sectors of education as suggested may be stated as follows:

- provision of effective and compulsory general education to all children;
- higher secondary and university education to those who are willing and qualified to receive such education, consistent with the demands for trained manpower and the need to maintain essential standards;
- emphasise the development of professional, technical and vocational education and to prepare the skilled personnel needed for the development of agriculture education and the industry.
- to identify talent and to help it grow to its full potential.

As a result of the recommendations of the Education Commission, corrective measures to check the malignancy were taken up. Research for excellence in higher education led firstly, to the establishment of Centres of Advanced Studies as well as Departments of Special Assistance within the university system and secondly, to some augmentation of research funding to universities, as compared to the national laboratories etc. The **seventies** thus was the **period of consolidation** of higher education in India. The growth rates of enrolments fell to about 4% per annum. Although, the switching over to 10+2+3 pattern of schooling is partly responsible for this, other factors, like large-scale unemployment among the educated, also had an affect on the enrolment patterns.

Realising the special significance of highly qualified manpower for socio-economic development, the Commission with the assistance of other experts, undertook a very elaborate study on the manpower requirements and proposed a plan of action to suitably adjust the enrolment patterns so that there was no shortage of skilled manpower. The manpower projections related to a time span of 15-20 years. The Commission also suggested that the Planning Commission should have the responsibility for preparing the estimates of manpower requirements in all sectors of development and revising them continuously. The EC also observed that the implementation of these policies should be taken up seriously '... as the stakes are too big to be taken lightly'.

Self-assessment

1. *What was the proposal of the EC with respect to national education system in the country?*
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2. *What were the main areas in higher education impacted by the recommendations of the EC?*
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National Policy on Education (1968)

Based on the recommendations of the Education Commission, a resolution on National Policy on Education was formally adopted by the Parliament in 1968. The principles enunciated in the National Policy on Education aimed to promote **national progress**, a sense of **common citizenship** and **culture**, and strengthen **national integration**. The policy laid considerable emphasis on the **reorganization of courses** at the first degree level.

The following aspects of higher education were specifically highlighted in the policy statement:

- The number of full-time students to be admitted to a college or university department should be determined with reference to the laboratory, library and other facilities and the strength of the staff. Since the demand for higher education will be much larger than the provision that can be made for it or is needed on the basis of manpower requirements, a system of selective admissions will have to be adopted;
- Considerable care is needed in establishing new universities. These should be started only after the adequate provision of funds has been made for the purpose and due care has been taken to ensure proper standards;
- Special attention should be given to the organization of post-graduate courses and to the improvement of standards of training and research at this level;
- Centres of Advanced Studies should be strengthened and a small number of 'clusters of centres' aimed at the highest possible standards in research and training should be established;
- There is a need to give increased support to research in universities generally. The institutions for research should, as far as possible, function within the fold of universities or in intimate association with them;
- Facilities for part-time education and correspondence courses should be developed on a large scale at the university stage.

Many reforms proposed by the Education Commission (1964-66) and the National Policy on Education (1968) were included as an integral part of the Fourth Five-Year Plan and were carried further in the subsequent Plans also. The post-graduate and research sectors were given high priority. A number of 'Centres for Advanced Studies' in different disciplines were set up in the universities. The Indian Council for Social Science Research (ICSSR), was also set up 'to promote research in Social Sciences'. Specialized institutions of research, extension and training were also set up in many parts of the country. Despite the recommendations of the EC, the following situation has arisen:

- i) Admissions according to infrastructure and capacity has not been possible. Good institutions have bloated a lot;
- ii) Universities are being rather freely set up, without ensuring adequate financial support;
- iii) Post-graduate education and research have received some augmented support.
- iv) Institutions for research have all been set up outside the universities, and interaction with the universities is quite inadequate.

Development of Higher Education: A Policy Framework (1978)

The NPE (1968) had proposed certain reforms in higher education, which were either implemented slowly, or there was some resistance to their implementation. The problem of raising standards in higher education defied all solutions that were

tried. In the face of these and many more critical problems, the University Grants Commission prepared a policy framework for the development of higher education. The document analysed the following important problems. It was considered that policy planners should evolve measures to tackle them on a priority basis. The issues identified by the UGC were:

- Role of the university system in national development;
- Guidelines for restricting access to higher education;
- Measures for improvement of standards;
- Restructuring of courses;
- Post-graduate and research priorities;
- Diversification of courses;
- Decentralization of control;
- Autonomous colleges;
- Academic freedom;
- Medium of instruction

Self-assessment

3. *Identify four important causes of low standards in higher education as enunciated in the University Education Commission (1948).*

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4. *Outline, in brief, the recommendations of the Education Commission (1964-66) with respect to problems of affiliated colleges which found articulation in the National Policy of Education in 1968.*

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National Commission on Teachers (higher education) (1984)

The National Policy on Education (1968) envisaged a periodic review of the progress, and working out of new policies and programmes of education. It was suggested in the policy that a comprehensive review of the implementation should be undertaken every five years. The first step in this direction was the setting up of two National Teachers Commissions on Teachers, one dealing with schools, and the other with higher education. The National Commission on Teachers for Higher Education (NCT-II) was set up under the Chairmanship of Prof. Rais Ahmed to look into the various facets of higher education, especially concerning the teaching profession.

The Commission resolved to base its work on large-scale interactions with the university and college teachers. With a view to arriving at its findings, the Commission had extensive discussions with teachers, received memoranda from teacher organizations and carried out a survey of about 6000 university and college teachers on various aspects of the teaching profession.

The recommendations of the Commission are significant in the sense that for the first time in the history of Independent India, attention was given to the **role of teachers in education** and an in-depth analysis was undertaken about their **status, work ethos, recruitment procedures** and other associated conditions. It was expected that the findings and the recommendations of the Commission would provide the necessary inputs for the professionalisation of higher education.

Challenge of Education: A Policy Perspective (1985)

The process initiated by the NCT was carried further in 1985 and a comprehensive overview of the state of education in the country was carried out by the then Ministry of Education. The review document entitled 'Challenge of Education: A Policy Perspective' represented an important stage in the process of evaluating the past performance and pointing out explicitly the various inadequacies and constraints operating on the education system to meet the aspirations of the masses, and the stated objectives and goals of higher education. It also highlighted the new directions in which immediate action was needed so as to enable higher education to meet the future challenges, improve the quality and increase the efficiency of the system. This type of critical evaluation and spelling out of a policy perspective was not only unique but was of its own type in the history of Independent India. Although the document was not intended to be a policy statement, its essential purpose was to generate a nation-wide debate which was absolutely necessary to understand the perception of scholars, teachers, students, employers and the general public at large. The ensuing debates and discussions provided the necessary policy inputs and facilitated the formulation of the new education policy in 1986.

The **critical analysis** of past developments continued to show similar findings as before:

- i) an **overwhelming expansion** of enrolment at various stages;
- ii) performance with respect to **equality** was less than **satisfactory**;
- iii) the relevance of higher education and the growing unemployment particularly among the highly education continued to be an Achilles' heel;
- iv) the declining standards of teaching, examination and research;
- v) identification of factors, which have inhibited the implementation of strategic reforms, suggested by the earlier Commissions and found in the policy statements.

It was explicitly recognized that at the undergraduate level, the problem is not merely of access and equity but that of preventing excessive waste of scarce resources due to very high failure rates. At the post graduate level, the need for encouraging students with good academic record is equally important. Many scholars have attributed this malaise to the inadequacy of financial resources especially in the case of programmes related to the development of technical and vocational education.

National Policy on Education (1986)

Based on the findings of the NCT and the critical assessment through Challenge of Education on the one hand, and the feedback obtained through the nationwide debates, seminars and conferences on the other hand, the Parliament in 1986 adopted a policy resolution called the National Policy on Education, 1986. It is noteworthy that the new education policy has particularly **reiterated** some important **recommendations** of the **Education Commission, 1964**, which could not be implemented fully earlier because of a variety of reasons. The policy has not only restated some of the earlier objectives which are quite **pertinent** even today and need immediate implementation but also cautioned that although implementing these reforms is going to cost the nation some money, the cost of non-implementation would be much greater in every respect.

The major objective of the NPE, 1986, is to prepare the Indian people and the nation to face the challenge of the twenty-first century. Taking note of the major technological changes and the critical role of human resources, both as producers as well as users of technological innovations, for raising the quality of life, it

emphasized that investment in the overall **development of human resources** is non-negotiable. It is development of human resources. It is in this context that a new Ministry, called the Ministry of Human Resource Development, was created by enlarging the scope of the then Ministry of Education.

In the newly created Ministry of Human Resource Development, education is now one of the departments. The NPE 1986, reiterates and suggests new initiatives in areas of **autonomy** in universities and colleges and **decentralized planning and management**. The policy has also emphasized the role of **open learning systems** in **enlarging opportunities** for higher education.

It is undoubtedly true that the new dimensions of education make it an integral part of national development and call for a greater responsibility on the part of the teacher. Due to the explosion of knowledge and the accompanying technological changes, the role of teachers has undergone significant changes in the last few decades. Teachers have to be more innovative, and have to be trained to exploit various teaching methodologies and explore all possible sources of knowledge.

An important part of the policy statement is the emphasis on making the system work. If education is to meet the future challenges, the phrase 'all teachers should teach and all students learn' becomes highly important. The strategy in this regard consists of:

- a **better deal to teachers and greater accountability**;
- provision of **improved student services** and insistence on **observance of accepted norms** of behavior;
- provision of **better facilities** to the institutions;
- creating a system of **performance appraisal** of institutions according to standards and norms set up at the national level.

Achieving **excellence** in higher education involves the **strengthening of infrastructure, modernization and changes in curricula** and raising the **quality and performance of teachers**. All these reforms cannot be carried out without adequate provision of resources. The goals and objectives of education can only be realized if sufficient investment in education, of the order commensurate with the nature and dimensions of the task, is made. A perusal of the university finances in India reveals the extent of inadequacy of financial resources. It has been found that the government funds are the major source of funding. The EC (1964) had raised three major issues related to the **financing of education** in India:

- What should be the total **level of financial support** for education?
- What **guidelines** can be formulated about the distribution of funds between different levels of education?
- What **proportion of total resources** should be broadly devoted to improvement of quality and consolidation and the expansion of education?

The analysis of educational expenditure showed that education got 1.2% of the total analysis of education national income in 1951 and 1.9% by the end of the first Plan and 2.9% by the end of the Third Plan. Based on the likely developments in the field of education, the EC, 1964 had recommended that a minimum level (6%) of the national income should be spent on education. This figure has been accepted by the Parliament in its educational policy resolution of 1968,

In line with the recommendations of the Education Commission, the NPE, 1986, specifically highlighted the need for appropriate level of investment in education, and assured the nation that adequate resources will be made available for the

purpose. The policy had also cautioned about the serious consequences of inadequate investments in education and neglect of vocational and technical education and research. In view of these imperatives, education has to be treated as a crucial area of investment for national development and survival. So, as far as policy goes, the idea that "expenditure" on education is an investment on the future, bringing returns of many kinds, including financial returns, has been clearly accepted. What happens in practice has to be watched.

Programme of Action (1986)

The experience of last six decades has shown that the implementation in many cases became very tardy because a comprehensive and co-ordinated effort was lacking. Therefore, this time around, Parliament approved a detailed document called the "Programme of Action". The newly constituted Ministry of Human Resource Development took a bold step in preparing a sector-wise detailed plan of implementation for this purpose. Realizing the significance of policy implementation, actions to avoid various bottlenecks were initiated. A preliminary review indicated that progress in many areas had been significant, but there is no scope for complacency.

In spite of some progress, which has been achieved so far, many reforms have been found to be proceeding at snail's pace. Issues like reforms in examinations and restructuring of degree courses, don't need either action of the entire community or a great deal of money. The community of teachers is also sometimes responsible for narrow traditionalism. Other issues like the relationship of education with employment, or linkages of educational institutions with research and productive activity are indeed more complex.

As discussed in the earlier unit, the All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) was set up in 1945 as a national expert body to advise the Central government and the State governments on the development of technical education. Since, the AICTE did not have statutory powers, its authority relating to the maintenance of standards and coordinated development of technical education could not be fully exercised. During 1987-88, a Bill was passed by the Parliament vesting statutory powers to the AICTE in the following areas:

- proper planning and coordinated development of technical education throughout the country
- promotion of qualitative improvement of technical education in relation to planned quantitative growth
- regulation of the system and proper implementation of norms and standards.

Some progress of implementation of NPE, 1986, is as under:

- **guidelines** for granting **affiliation** to new colleges were finalized;
- proposals from a number of colleges for the grant of **autonomy** were considered by the UGC and accorded autonomy;
- the **qualifying examination** for the **recruitment** of university teachers called the **NET** (National Eligibility Test) has been initiated;
- the University Grants Commission has put in practice **Academic Staff Colleges** for the orientation of the newly appointed university and college lectures. Academic Staff Colleges are functioning in many universities.
- Performance appraisal and **code of professional ethics** for teachers has been finalized and awaiting formal implementation.

- The revised guidelines for setting up **State Councils of Higher Education** have been formulated and circulated to the State Governments. In some States the SCHEs are functional.

Self-assessment

5. *We have discussed in the above section the idea "challenge of changes in education lies in policy implementation".*
- a) *What were the areas of successful implementation in quality improvement as a result of POA, 1986?*
- b) *In which areas are challenges still being faced?*
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6. *What did the POA (1986) suggest for developing human resources for the 21st century?*
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7. *List down the major points of departure in National Policy of Education from the Education Policy of 1968.*
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Programme of Action POA (1992)

The implementation of the NPE (1986) and POA (1986) was constrained by lack of consensus on some important measures such as non-proliferation of institutions of higher learning; development of autonomous colleges; establishment of State Councils of Higher Education (SCHEs); redesigning of courses; promotion of student and teacher mobility. Resource insufficiencies and absence of effective monitoring and review mechanisms were also constraints.

In the light of the experience of the implementation of NPE (1986) and POA (1986) the Programme of Action (POA) 1992 proposed the following actions:

- the establishment of State Councils of Higher Education as statutory bodies in all States during the Eighth Five-Year Plan to ensure proper planning and coordination of the development of higher education;
- pending the establishment of SCHEs, every State government should in partnership with UGC, undertake a survey of the existing facilities for higher education in the State and its projected needs up to the year 2000;
- minimize the establishment costs of universities and colleges by establishing them where infrastructural facilities are easily available; usage of present institutions should be optimized by introducing extra shifts;
- entrance tests for admission to institutions of higher learning will be encouraged and promoted by UGC and the State Governments.
- Development of Autonomous Colleges and departments through:
 - the implementation of the recommendations of the UGC;
 - the establishment of a Council for Autonomous Colleges in every State to review progress and resolve implementation difficulties;
 - establishment of a separate mechanism to evaluate the performance of autonomous colleges;

- initiation of a review of autonomous departments by UGC;
- granting autonomy in a phased manner to departments receiving financial assistance from the commission by 1997.
- Redesign of courses:
 - UGC should ensure updating of the model curricula at least once in five years;
 - revision of UGC's existing guidelines for restructuring of undergraduate courses;
 - in future the emphasis should be on development of integrated honours courses in vocational subjects rather than optional vocational courses, which do not enhance job prospects sufficiently;
 - a concerted effort should be made by the conventional universities to develop courses on a modular basis in the Eighth Plan to encourage mobility between conventional and open universities;
 - teachers in autonomous colleges and departments should be given incentives and training to equip them for designing vocational courses and revising curricula.
- Teacher's training in academic staff colleges should be done in a planned manner and courses be offered regularly. These colleges should be monitored quantitatively and qualitatively. A network of them should be set up to share and coordinate their activities in close collaboration with National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA). Efforts should be made to initiate training and orientation of teachers in engineering and technical subjects. Suitable distance education programmes should be designed for upgrading knowledge and skills of teachers in institutions of higher learning. The efforts by UGC and IGNOU should be integrated;
- Research in universities :
 - university – industry linkages should be made on a priority basis with incentives made available for such linkages;
 - increase flow of research funds to universities;
 - facilitate basic research in priority areas through inter-institutional links between Indian universities and state-of-the-art research institutions abroad;
 - constitution of a committee with representatives of DOS, CSIR, ICSSR, ICHR etc. to assess the quality of research in our universities;
 - new inter-university centers for research should be established in humanities and social sciences.
- Promotion of Science education in Universities:
 - equipping at least one Science college in every district with a modern laboratory during the Eighth Plan by the UGC;
 - a strategy in collaboration with the department of Science and Technology, for meeting training needs of science teachers on a priority basis should be worked out the UGC.
- Improving efficiency of universities:
 - augmentation of training facilities for university and college administrators;

- establishment of autonomous departments and units to decentralize administrative, academic, financial powers in universities; and
- setting up of effective grievance redressal machinery.
- Mobility of students and teachers:
 - 10% of seats on a supernumerary basis should be made available in post-graduate departments for children of employees with all India transfer liability and non-residents.
 - teachers from one state university / college should be permitted to carry forward benefits of past services to another.
- Finances:
 - institutions of higher learning should consider measures for raising internal resources and improving their cost efficiency without compromising measures such as financial support to students from weaker sections of society;
 - efforts should be made to evolve rational norms (e.g. per capita cost, teacher- student ratio etc.) for providing grants to universities.
- Review and monitoring:
 - one major scheme of the POA should be reviewed in every meeting by the UGC and recommendations for improvements should be reviewed by CABE (Central Advisory Board for Education) at the national level. At the state levels SCHEs and SABEs (State Advisory Board for Education) would play the roles of UGC and CABE. At the institutional level affiliating universities should be entrusted with the task of review and monitoring.

The Ambani - Birla Report (2000)

A special subject group on policy framework for private investment in education and health and rural development under the convenorship of Mukesh Ambani submitted its report to the Prime Minister's Office in April 2000. The report has not been approved in the Parliament yet but throws considerable light on the direction which higher education is likely to take in the near future. The Report discussed a number of issues including constraints in higher education and offered suggestions to overcome them:

- There is a **need to evaluate** the **utility** of current Arts and Science courses in the prevailing scenario. This evaluation should not restrict to the curriculum alone but also to the linkage to employment opportunities.
 - The private institutions should be encouraged to establish science and technology institutions. There should be no funding from Government to these institutions. The linkages between industry and academic institutions, especially in research and development, should be institutionalized.
 - All courses from the UG level should have a module on entrepreneurship.
- Continuous learning should be made mandatory for all teachers in higher education on a periodic basis. This should be at least 6 weeks of training for every two years of teaching.
- The institutions should be rated by independent agencies, as is done in the financial market: The process should be analogous to the credit rating for financial instruments. All institutions failing the minimal quality tests to be given a pre-specified time to improve, failing which these are de-recognized. All institutions should obtain this rating each year. This should be prominently

displayed in all communication and application forms. This would strengthen the accreditation process.

- The University governance structure should be compact and effective. In view of global participation of the Universities, the issue concerning their jurisdiction of geographical territory needs a review. Also the University should be allowed to establish their centers of studies at various locations in India and abroad.
- The University administration should be effectively decentralized and based on the latest information technology techniques. The courses of studies should be flexible to encourage the students to choose the variety of subjects in tune with their strengths and the market demands.

The Report also discussed the following aspects:

Government controls

According to the Report, the education sector in India is probably the most controlled sector in India. The whole mindset is on grants and aids. Arising out of this mindset is a plethora of rules and regulations. There are far too many bodies managing education. Rules and regulations govern virtually everything from location, student intake, course content, fees and fee structure, appointments, compensation for faculty and so on.

The whole system needs to be overhauled. Institutions that do not depend on the government for funding or have low levels of funding must have operational freedom and the flexibility to innovate. Management of education must be decentralized.

Foreign direct investment

The Report recommended, for the first time perhaps foreign, direct investment in education which it stated will improve standards and quality of education. It can facilitate global integration of the Indian education which, even to date, is not accepted in many professional disciplines such as medicine and accounting, the report suggested.

Financing

Privatization of higher and professional education can relieve government funding from these areas which can be used for primary education and improving literacy. Subsidies for higher education should be gradually withdrawn through higher fees and changes in fee structure.

Concurrently, a credit market for education needs to be developed to support financing the higher costs. Financial institutions should be encouraged to offer assistance in the form of loans to students in higher education and professional streams. Introducing loans improves resource allocation since students will enroll in courses with better returns. It will also attract resources to the education sector as it is linked to graduates future earnings. Since sufficient collateral cannot be provided by students, a scheme for government guarantees coupled with an independence recovery authority needs to be institutionalized.

Marketing Indian education abroad

There is a good market for Indian education in Asia, Africa, South America and East Europe. Our cost levels will easily be less than one fourth of those in the developed world with comparable quality.

The Indian education system, once reformed, will have the ability to attract a large number of foreign students. This will have to be encouraged in order to generate additional finances and earn goodwill. To begin with the establishment of international

schools in all our existing centers of excellence, which have international reputation, can be started.

The Ambani – Birla report, for the first time, explicitly treated the sector of education like a business enterprise recommending, accordingly, measures to overcome the shortcomings. The Report was met with considerably opposition on account of both its perception of higher education and solution to the problems.

Policies and their salient features

Policies	Salient features
University Education Commission (1948-49)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Improvement and extension for nation's requirements ✓ Reforms in secondary education suggested ✓ Need to improve standards emphasized ✓ No. of working days to be increased ✓ Role of research ✓ Recommended Indian language as medium of instruction ✓ Suggested vocational courses
The Education Commission (1964-66)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Structured the degree courses ✓ Stressed the importance of education in national development ✓ Quality and relevance of higher education questioned by critics. ✓ Increase in enrolment in higher education ✓ Setting up of the Education Commission ✓ System of selective admissions to be adopted. ✓ Ensuring adequate funding before establishing new universities ✓ Improvement of standards of training and research at Post Graduate level. ✓ Support of research in universities ✓ Facilities for correspondence and part-time education
National Policy of Education, 1968	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Set up 2 Commissions on Teachers. ✓ Focused on economic, social status and various other aspects of the working life of teachers by interviewing more than 6000 teachers. ✓ Evidence showed teachers were poorly placed.
National Commission on Teachers (higher education), 1984	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Recommended career development of teachers

National Policy of Education (1986)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Development of Human Resources ✓ Education came under the purview of the Ministry of Human Resource Development ✓ Responsibility on teachers to be more innovative and up to date with the latest information on their subjects ✓ Perusal of university funds revealed inadequacy of financial resources ✓ Need for investment in education
Programme of Action (1986)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Guidelines given to new colleges for affiliation ✓ Committee set up to look into management patterns of universities ✓ Steps initiated to conduct qualifying exam to recruit univ teachers. ✓ UGC approved scheme for Academic Staff Colleges. ✓ Performance Appraisal for teachers finalized ✓ State Councils for higher education finalised
Programme of Action (1992)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Establishment of SCHEs ✓ Development of autonomous colleges. ✓ Establishment of State Councils of Higher Education (SCHEs) ✓ Redesigning of courses. ✓ Measures for improvement of the quality of research ✓ Promotion of student and teacher mobility ✓ Resource recommendations ✓ Setting up monitoring and review mechanisms.

Summary

When the issues described above are put together, one gets an idea about the diverse manner in which the development of education in general, and, that of higher education, in particular, is constrained. Even after 55 years of Independence the access to higher education remains very limited. According to the UNESCO, World Education Report for 2000, only 6.9 per cent of the youth in the age group of 17 to 23 are enrolled for higher education in India, in the U.S. the figure is 80.9 percent, in the United Kingdom 52.3 per cent, Australia 79.8 percent and New Zealand 62.6 per cent. An overwhelming section of the population is deprived of higher education. The problems discussed above are only illustrative of the issues. There are hardly any signs to imply that the system is likely to either correct itself or the policy statements would provide dependable remedy. For the policy reforms to be implemented, one would require a decisive and strong leadership at the national and institutional level as well as a committed and professionalised teaching community.

Unit-end activities

1. Estimate the number of working days in your college / university. Is it close to the minimum of 180, as recommended by the University Education Commission? Discuss the reasons for this.
2. What are the major problems commonly experienced by affiliated colleges?
3. What are the various activities that you perform as a teacher and you would like to be assessed on as part of the appraisal of teachers proposed in the NPE (1986). Make an appraisal form in this context.

Points for discussion

1. Initiate a debate among your colleagues at your college / university on the implications National Eligibility Test (NET) for teachers in higher education as a measure to improve standards in education.
2. From the University Education Commission (1948) to the Programme of Action (1986), we have come a long way in framing policies for higher education, yet there is a lot that has remained unaffected. Discuss the major implementation bottlenecks that stand. the way of education reforms.
3. Academic Staff Colleges have been established as part of recommendations of the NPE (1986). Write your own experience of the importance of Academic Staff College in enriching teachers knowledge?

Suggested readings

In addition to the policy documents and the material referred to in the text, the following supplementary readings are suggested:

Aggarwal, Yash (1988), *Education and Human Resources Development: Emerging Challenges in the Regional Context*. New Delhi: Commonwealth.

Azad, J. L. (1984), *Government Support for Higher Education and Research*. New Delhi: NIEPA Concept.

Biteille, Andre (1995), *Universities as Centres of Learning*. Journal of Higher Education, 18 (3): 358-406.

Naik, J. P. (1982), *Education Commission and After*. New Delhi: Allied.

Prakash, B. and Yash Aggarwal (1986), Selected Issues for Implementing New Education Policy. Indian Journal of Public Administration, Vol. 32(3), 476-498.

Tilak, J.B.G. (1993), *Financing Higher Education in India: Principles, Practice and Policy Issues*. Higher Education. 26, No.1 (July) 43-67.

UGC (1981), Report of the Review Committee on UGC Programmes, New Delhi: UGC.

Veeraraghvan, J.(1984), *Higher Education in the Eighties: Opportunities and Objectives*. New Delhi: Lancer.

Programme of Action 1992, Government of India, MHRD, Department of Education.