

Higher Education In Independent India

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ABSTRACT

Though the planning of higher education undoubtedly has contributed to socio-economic growth, Higher education has been producing thousands of Art and Science degree holders including medical doctors, agricultural experts and technologists every year without having any consideration whether there are sufficient employment opportunities for them in the country. During plan period continuous efforts were made to regulate the growth of higher education as well as the establishment of new universities and colleges, and equip these with the latest of facilities but the results could not be attained upto desired extent. Now there is an urgent need to implement a new development strategy, which would progressively reduce the existing imbalance between the output and the employment opportunities.

1. INTRODUCTION

The planning commission is an apex body, which included education in its five year plans for the economy. By now it has prepared 10 Five Year Plans, which have covered implementation of various educational policies and programmes of the government and recommendations of different commissions and committees set up from time to time.

2. THE STEPLADDER

The First Five Year Plan was an attempt to assess the overall economic situation in the country. Although the imbalance between the output and the demand was recognized to be the reason for graduate unemployment, the plan did not suggest any restriction on admissions to curtail the output and no specific target was laid down for Higher education in this plan.

During the Second Five Year Plan there was a rapid increase in the number of colleges and universities, which adversely affected educational standards. Therefore, no specific target was laid down in respect of enrolment in arts, science and commerce courses.

During the Third Five Year Plan Government of India adopted the policy of selective admissions as a measure to reduce pressure on arts courses. It recommended opening of 12 new universities, 350 colleges and increase in enrolment to 4,00,000 students, which compared with the first two plans put together was a 63.2 per cent increase in the opening of additional universities, 68.9 per cent in the opening of additional colleges and 74.1 per cent in enrolment through correspondence.

After the Third Five Year Plan, there was virtually a gap of three years i.e. from 1st April 1966 to 31st March 1969 between the third plan and the fourth plan, which was introduced in 1969.

JOURNAL OF
COMMERCE
& TRADE

During Fourth Five Year Plan several measures were taken to improve the standard through larger provisions of scientific equipments, as well as augmenting the number of well-qualified science teachers. Qualitative improvement at the post-graduate level was the main target of the Government. Apart from increasing the facilities of post-graduate education and research, development of some promising university departments were encouraged as centres of advanced studies. In order to develop inter-disciplinary research, clusters of centres of advanced studies were set up in related subjects. Setting up of the Indian Council of Social Science Research as a plan project, helped in promoting research in Social Sciences. The Fourth Plan brought the revolution in the field of Higher Education in real sense giving the different proposals to U.G.C. and has Ministry of Education for giving a serious thought.

In the Fifth Five Year Plan Government recommended consolidation and improvement of university education. It provided for extending educational facilities to weaker sections of the society and backward areas. The expansion included evening colleges, correspondence courses and private study. Therefore, higher education, especially post-graduate education, was strengthened during this period.

The Sixth Five Year Plan stressed on the expansion of higher education for first generation learners, particularly from socially disadvantaged sections, and the redesigning of under-graduate courses to improve employment orientation and extension. In the area of post-graduate education and research, emphasis was laid on promoting research and development capability of the university system and on inter-disciplinary studies, especially in newly emerging areas of knowledge. The need for coordinating

research in the university system with the national science and technology institutions and other research organizations was stressed upon.

The Seventh Five Year Plan followed a programme of action to implement the National Education Policy 1986 and its main stress was on developing human resource in the country. To meet the continuing demand for higher education, a network of facilities were proposed through open universities, correspondence courses and part-time and private education. Research within the university system was proposed to be given due importance. Technical education was expected to play an important role in improving productivity.

In the Eighth Five Year Plan emphasis was given on integrated approach to higher education and strengthening of the management system in the universities. Many new universities and colleges were opened particularly in the North-Eastern region and efforts were made to provide facilities to the Scheduled Caste/ Scheduled Tribes and women. The Eighth Plan concentrated on allowing the education system to expand, while ensuring provision of infrastructure for technical and management education. New schemes related to the modernization of laboratories and advancement programmes of polytechnics were provided under the AICTE-sponsored programme during this plan.

The Ninth Five Year Plan stressed upon the objectives and policy directions of the National Policy for Education 1986 and its programme of action prepared in 1992. During this Plan an emphasis was given for adopting different strategies to improve the higher education system by consolidation and expansion of institutions, development of autonomous colleges and departments, redesigning of courses, training of teachers, strengthening of

research, improvement in efficiency and review and monitoring. It emphasized an integrated approach by covering excellence and equity, relevance, promotion of value education and strengthening the management system.

Though the Tenth Five Year Plan is still in operation, the Government recognizes the need for economic and technological changes. The plan emphasizes the creation of Information Technology (IT) manpower by setting up exclusive IT institutes, IT faculty development initiatives, evolving curriculum and courses of IT institutes, promoting technology-mediated IT education using a web-based and multi-media approach, improving connectivity and promoting post-graduate education and research. It lays down that higher

education should have links with all national goals, whether in the general or technical stream.

3. CONCLUSION

On the basis of the above facts, it can be concluded that the planning of higher education undoubtedly has contributed to socio-economic growth. Higher education has producing thousands of Art and Science degree holders every year. More efforts are being made to regulate the growth of higher education as well as the establishment of new universities and colleges, and equip these with the latest of facilities. Attempts are being made to implement a new development strategy, which would progressively reduce the existing imbalance between the education and employment in the country.

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