

PARLIAMENT OF INDIA
RAJYA SABHA

DEPARTMENT-RELATED PARLIAMENTARY STANDING
COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
HUNDRED SEVENTY - SECOND REPORT
ON
UNIVERSITY AND HIGHER EDUCATION

(PRESENTED TO THE RAJYA SABHA 22ND MAY, 2006)

(LAID ON THE TABLE OF LOK SABHA 22ND MAY, 2006)

RAJYA SABHA SECRETARIAT

NEW DELHI

MAY, 2006/ JYAISTHA, 1928 (SAKA)

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COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE (2005-06)

1. @Shri Janardan Dwiwedi ¾ *Chairman*

MEMBERS

RAJYA SABHA

2. Shri Dwijendra Nath Sharmah
3. *Shri Shantaram Laxman Naik
4. @@Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad
5. **Shrimati Chandra Kala Pandey
6. ^ Shrimati Brinda Karat
7. Shri S. Anbalagan
8. Shri Uday Pratap Singh
9. Shri M.P. Abdussamad Samadani
10. Prof. Ram Deo Bhandary
11. ^^Shri Anil Dhirubhai Ambani

LOK SABHA

12. Shri Basudeb Barman
13. Shri Hari Sinh Chavda
14. Shri G.V. Harsha Kumar
15. Shri R. L. Jalappa
16. Shri Ramswarup Koli
17. Shri Manjunath Kunnur
18. \$Shri Y.G. Mahajan
19. \$Shri Manoj Kumar
20. Shri Babu Lal Marandi

21. Dr. Thokchom Meinya
22. Shri Krishna Murari Moghe
23. Mohd. Mukim
24. Shri Tukaram Ganpatrao Rengepatil
25. Prof. Rasa Singh Rawat
26. Shri M. Rajamohan Reddy
27. Shri Tufani Saroj
28. Smt. P. Satheedevi
29. Shri A.R. Shaheen
30. Smt. Jyotirmoyee Sikdar
31. Shri K. Virupaxappa
32. Shri Devendra Singh Yadav

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@appointed as Chairman w.e.f. 24.3.2006 on the vacancy caused due to the relinquishment of Chairmanship by Shri Vayalar Ravi w.e.f. 29.1.2006 consequent on his induction into the Union Cabinet

*nominated w.e.f. 23.8.2005

@@ Ceased to be a member of the Committee on expiry of his term in Rajya Sabha w.e.f. 2.4.2006

** Ceased to be a member of the Committee on expiry of her term in Rajya Sabha w.e.f. 18.8.2005

^nominated w.e.f. 25.9.2005

^^ Ceased to be member w.e.f. 27th March, 2006

\$ Ceased to be member w.e.f. 23rd December, 2005.

SECRETARIAT

Shri N.C. Joshi, Additional Secretary
Smt. Vandana Garg, Joint Secretary
Shri N.K. Singh, Director
Shri J. Sundriyal, Under Secretary
Shri Swarabji B., Committee Officer

Smt. Meena Kandwal, Research Officer

PREFACE

I, the Chairman of the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resource Development, having been authorized by the Committee, do hereby present this Hundred Seventy-Second Report of the Committee on University and Higher Education.

2. The University and Higher Education is faced with newer challenges emerging out of an unprecedented changes taking place in different areas of the global plane. Expansion of knowledge and information technology had added new dimensions to this area. In view of this, university and higher education in the country needs to be transformed, supported and empowered accordingly. While quality and relevance of our higher education is a big concern, the lack of access and equity in higher education is no less important. In fact, promoting research and development, modern management in education, promoting basic sciences, education under GATS, etc. are the areas, which require immediate attention and these could be achieved only after the nation has a world-class university and higher education system. Apart from these, pressure on higher education is bound to increase in future. It is, therefore, high time that the university and higher system gears itself to face the demands and challenges. The Committee notes the growth in private initiatives in university and higher education sector and this trend is going to get further momentum as higher education has been defined as 'service' under GATS.

3. The Committee decided to make an in-depth study of our university and higher education with a view to identify the challenges before the university and higher education and to broadly suggest measures to make it more competitive and affordable.

4. The Committee invited memoranda from public, interacted with academia, vice-chancellors, education administrators and experts on various occasions and visited many institutions of higher learning in the country to understand and deliberate on issues threadbare. The Committee held discussion on various related issues with the representatives of C.I.L., ASSOCHAM, PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Education Promotion Society for India, AMITY and also from the Association of Indian Private Universities.

5. The Committee also held extensive discussion with Secretary, Department of Secondary and Higher Education and Chairman, University Grants Commission and other concerned officials on a number of occasions.

6. The Committee considered and adopted the Report at its meeting held on the 25th January 2006 and authorized Shri Vayalar Ravi the then Chairman to present the Report to the House. However, he could not present the Report consequent on his induction into the Union Council of Ministers w.e.f 29.1.2006. Now the Committee has authorized me to present the Report.

NEW DELHI

May 16, 2006

1928, (Saka)

JANARDAN DWIVEDI

Chairman, Vaisakha 16, Department-latedParliamentary

Standing Committee on Human Resource Development

REPORT

I INTRODUCTION

1.1 Indian Tradition

India has a glorious and rich tradition of learning since ancient times, which in fact, was looked upon as the highest pursuit of mankind. The quest for higher knowledge and enlightenment has been continuously transmitted to posterity and kept alive for a long time through the *Gurukulas and Ashrams* run by our *sages and Rishis*. Subsequently, there were world famous seats of learning like *Takshashila* and *Nalanda* Universities and the likes spread through the length and breadth of the country. These universities attracted students from far and wide and enjoyed international reputation. Nevertheless, with the passage of time, these ancient seats of learning/knowledge vanished perhaps because they outlived their utility to the needs and aspirations of the contemporary society. Universities then re-entered the Indian scene in 1857, when universities of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras were set up followed by the one at Allahabad in 1887.

1.2 Growth after Independence

1.2.1 At the time of Independence, India had only 20 universities and 500 colleges located in different parts of the country with an enrolment of around a hundred thousand students and participation of women being highly restricted. Determined efforts were made to build a network of universities and the affiliated colleges with a view to expanding the scope and outreach of the higher education. The country has gradually built up now a very large system of higher education and has created a vast pool of men and women of international calibre in different areas of life.

Institutions	1950-51	1990-91	2004-05
Universities	30	117	229+(95)*
Colleges	750	7346	16000 (1849)#
Enrolment ('000)	263	4925	9228
Teachers ('000)	24.0	272.7	436^

*Deemed Universities

Women Colleges

^for the year 2002-2003

1.2.2 India has today 324 universities (including Deemed ones) and equivalent institutions including general universities, science and technology universities, open universities, agricultural universities, women's universities, language universities and medical universities. In addition, there are about 16000 colleges where 80% of undergraduate and 50% of postgraduate education is imparted. The number of students enrolled in universities & colleges in 2005 was 9.28 million, of which 3.6 million i.e. 40 per cent were women.

1.3 Commissions/Committees

1.3.1 The growth of higher education in India has been guided by recommendations and suggestions made by various Committees, Boards and Commissions set up before and after Independence. They are Woods Dispatch (1854), Hunter Commission (1882), the Indian Universities Commission (1902), Central Advisory Board of Education (1923), Inter-University Board (now known as Association of Indian Universities) (1924), the University Education Commission (1948), the Education Commission (1964), Committee on Problems of University Administration (1969), Committee on Governance of Universities (1969), Review Committee on UGC (1977), Committee on the Working of Central Universities (1982). The University Education Commission (1948) that was headed by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan set out the aims of higher education in the following words:

“Democracy depends for its very life on a high standard of general, vocational and professional education. Dissemination of learning, incessant search for new knowledge, unceasing effort to plumb the meaning of life, provision for professional education to satisfy the occupational needs of our society are the vital tasks of higher education”

1.3.2 The Education Commission (1964) headed by Dr. D.S. Kothari recommended *inter alia* to set up six universities; promoting inter-disciplinary research in universities; development of affiliated colleges and granting autonomous status to outstanding ones; improvement in quality of teaching and learning; introduction of internal and continuous evaluation in place of external examination. The Commission also visualized having three years first degree followed by second or research degrees of varying durations.

1.4 National Policy on Education – 1986

In the wake of the Report of the Education Commission (1964), the first National Policy on Education was formulated in 1968. Making a fresh assessment of status of education in the country, almost a quarter of century later, the National Policy on Education was adopted in 1986 which reaffirmed that education was a unique investment in the present and the future. The policy urged that in the context of the unprecedented expansion of knowledge, higher education has to become dynamic, constantly covering uncharted and newer areas. It also proposed that a large number of universities and colleges in the country needed all-round improvement and that the main emphasis in the immediate future should be on their consolidation and expansion. The policy underlined the need for launching the ‘open university system’ as an instrument of democratizing and making education more accessible. It also felt the importance of the rural universities to take up the challenges of micro-planning at grassroots for the transformation of the rural areas.

1.5 Structure of Higher Education

1.5.1 In Article 246 of our Constitution, education has been placed as Entry 25 in the Concurrent List under the Seventh Schedule, which allows both Central and State Governments to establish and administer universities, those in turn set up/affiliate colleges - main bodies of higher education in India. Universities, thus, may be Central as well as State universities. Most of the universities in India are "affiliating universities" which affiliate colleges and prescribe their courses of study, hold examinations and award degrees, while teaching is imparted by the affiliated colleges. Universities impart mostly postgraduate education and conduct and promote research in a variety of disciplines.

1.5.2 There are also professional universities such as technical, medical, law and agricultural, which are established by State governments. They are also of unitary and affiliating types. The third category is of open universities established by central and state governments, which offer open and flexible education through distance mode using correspondence courses, modern educational technology like multimedia, interactive TV, Edusat etc. Then, there are deemed to be universities established under Section 3(f) of the UGC Act. There are also autonomous colleges, which themselves prescribe the curriculum and conduct evaluation of their students through a system of continuous evaluation.

1.5.3 Apart from universities and colleges, there are also some institutions offering professional UG, Graduate, PG and research programmes established as Centres of Excellence, some by an Act of Parliament such as IITs and

others at the instance of the Central Government such as National Law Institutes, National Institute of Design, Indian Institute of Management, National Institute of Fashion Technology, etc.

1.6 Coordination in Higher Education

1.6.1 Different bodies are required for coordination in and smooth working of the higher education system in view of the involvement of both Centre and States. While the university system falls within the jurisdiction of the UGC, professional institutions are coordinated by different bodies. The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) is responsible for coordination of technical and management education institutions. The other such bodies are National Council of Teachers' Education (NCTE), Medical Council of India (MCI), Central Council of Indian Medicine, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Indian Nursing Council, the Dental Council of India, the Pharmacy Council of India, the Bar Council of India, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), etc. There are also bodies at the state level, such as State Councils of Higher Education and Medical Education. UGC has set up National Accreditation & Assessment Council (NAAC) for periodical assessment of quality and standard of universities and colleges in India. There is yet another coordinating agency called Association of Indian Universities (AIU), which has its members from all the universities and other equivalent institutions of higher education. This Association although not enjoying executive powers yet plays an important role as an agency for dissemination of information and also as an advisor, both to the Government and/ or UGC and universities.

1.6.2 The country has also a developing open university system under the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) set up in 1985. A Distance Education Council (DEC), a statutory authority under the IGNOU Act, provides development funding to open universities and distance education institutions from the funds placed at its disposal by the Central Government.

II. HIGHER EDUCATION TODAY: *Important Issues*

2.1 India today has a vast pool of trained and skilled manpower; it is with the help of these people that our country has made significant strides in many fields such as agriculture, industry, defence, medicine, atomic energy, space, ICT, etc. India is today seen as a nation with immense potential for providing highly skilled and professional manpower to the world. It has acquired a new identity in this respect. It is estimated that about half a million Indians are presently working as scientists, engineers, doctors, researchers and IT professionals at premier bodies & institutions throughout the world.

2.2 Nevertheless, in the light of these achievements, India should not lose sight of the new problems and challenges faced by us today. Access to higher education in India has been highly restrictive; only close to 7 per cent of its students between 18-23 years are able to go for it. While this percentage is as high as 40 per cent in other countries with whom India has to compete in the coming years. Another problem before our higher education is that of relevance. While it has grown in quantity, but a lot has to be done for its quality and relevance particularly in the emerging scenario of intense competitiveness. Management of education in this era also needs to be radically reformed for imparting effective autonomy and enforcing accountability in the educational institutions. Problem of managing resources is also one of the major issues before us today.

2.3 Challenges before higher education are no more nation-centric; they have become global now, particularly after the trade in services has been brought under the GATS. Socio-economic dimension of higher education have become more significant today than ever before. If India were to achieve the developed status in this milieu of global competition, the Committee feels that there is no option but to reorient its higher education system to be vibrant, competitive, meaningful and relevant. It will have to grow both in terms of quantity as well as quality, mainly with a view to converting its vast population as asset, rather than a liability, as has been done by the China.

2.4 Our higher education system, Committee is of the view, is faced with many challenges today. The pressure on higher education system is going to further increase due to large number of additional students expected to join the higher education institutions in coming years, particularly due to upward pull generated by popular interventions like *Sarva Siksha Abhiyan* and Mid-Day Meal Scheme.

2.5 It was with these concerns and the need for taking immediate measures at structural, financial, institutional as well as policy planning and implementation levels, that the Committee decided to make an in-depth study of the status of higher education in the country. To begin with, a Sub-Committee on University and Higher Education was constituted for the purpose, which worked for some time under the convenorship of Shri M. P. Abdussamad Samadani, M.P., Rajya Sabha before the full Committee took up the subject. A Press Release inviting comments/suggestions on the subject was issued in newspapers by the Committee. Tremendous response was received

not only from the public at large but also from those directly or indirectly involved in the higher education field. The Committee received valuable insight and useful suggestions through written memoranda submitted to it. The Committee also held extensive discussions not only with the representatives of Union and State Government but also with Vice-Chancellors of several universities, heads of professional institutions, representatives of teaching and non-teaching community. Representatives of industry/trade and those running private universities were also consulted by the Committee. Representatives of the foreign universities working in India showed their reluctance to appear before the Committee.

2.6 Mainly, the following issues/concerns emerged after the discussions: Commercialization and commodification of education due to privatization of higher education; emergence of foreign universities; problem of fake universities; need for change and reform in the governance and management in higher education; maintenance of standards in teaching, research, etc. in universities and colleges; examination reforms; access and equity in higher education; quality and relevance of higher education; enhancement of academic ambience; promotion of Indian education abroad; declining academic standards; near absence of alternative educational opportunities for school leavers; resource constraints and state financing of higher education; resource mobilisation; structure of expenditure; poor infrastructure in universities; lack of sufficient teaching staff; lack of inter-disciplinary approach and revision of syllabi/curriculum; intrusion of political process in the institution of higher education; impact of globalization on the agenda of our education in general and higher education in particular; knowledge becoming prime mover of economic growth and social progress in future; autonomy of academic institutions; de-bureaucratization of university administration; non-interference by civil servants; review of functioning of bodies like UGC, AICTE, NCTE, etc.; the level of coordination between the Central and State Governments in dealing with the deemed universities; convergence of conventional and distance education and many others. This report seeks to study these problems broadly under the following heads:

- Access and Equity;
- Relevance;
- Quality and Excellence;
- Governance and management;
- Funding;
- Private participation; and
- Globalisation and Liberalisation
- Institutional restructuring

III ACCESS AND EQUITY

3.1 The goal of moving towards equality has been reiterated in the National Policy on Education, 1986 as follows:-

“To promote equality, it will be necessary to provide for equal opportunity to all not only in access, but also in the conditions for success.....In higher education in general, and technical education in particular, steps will be taken to facilitate regional mobility by providing equal access to every Indian of requisite merit, regardless of his origin.”

3.2 Today, the national governments world over, as also the international agencies, are working for a right to education for all. The UNESCO has urged all the nations *inter alia* to see that no one was “excluded from higher education or its study fields... on grounds of race, gender, language, religion, or age or because of any economic or social distinctions or physical disabilities”.

3.3 The Committee observes that higher education in India was never freely available to all; it was basically elitist in nature due mainly to historical and other reasons. Even after its expansion in post-Independence period, it could not be made a mass activity. Even today, it is neither fully accessible nor equitable. The Committee is of the opinion that the issues of access & equity, in fact, are the two core issues to the expansion of higher education and hence, to the overall progress of a nation. The Committee, therefore, underlines the urgent need for broadening access to higher education by expanding it and by making it affordable.

3.4 The Committee is of the view that the two issues of access and equity are inextricably linked to one another. There are two aspects of issue of access. Firstly, it can be looked as percentage of our young people (18-23

years) who are eligible for higher education. Only close to seven per cent of our young people in this age-group today are in higher education. The corresponding figure in the OECD countries is as high as 45-50 per cent and is over 90 per cent in countries like Canada.

3.5 The Committee was informed that there are other ways also of looking at this access ratio which are given here as follows:

(a)	- Percentage in terms of people in 18-23 age.	-	6-7 per cent
(b)	- Percentage in terms of number appearing for class 12 th	-	30-35 per cent
(c)	- Percentage in terms of number who has passed class 12 th	-	40-45 per cent

3.6 The Committee notes that in the case of (b) and (c) categories, our performance is not too bad; it is comparable to some of the developed countries. It, however, feels that it would not be a proper way of looking at this aspect. We must look at the 'access ratio' in relation to our student population in the eligible group *i.e.* 7 per cent. It is far below the average of other countries. The Committee is of the firm opinion that if, India were to compete and survive the intense global competition in the 21st century as knowledge/information society, this percentage will have to be increased sufficiently. The Tenth Plan, the Committee notes, has fixed a target of increasing the access ratio from 7 per cent in 2003 to 10 per cent by 2007. The Committee feels that even this target is unlikely to be achieved with the present level of our efforts and performance in higher education field. The Committee is happy to note the visible yearning, both in government as well as private sector, to enhance the access to and equity in our higher education system. The Committee emphasizes that we would have to set our goals high and work for it relentlessly. The Committee, therefore, recommends that our aim should be to increase the access ratio to at least 20 per cent by 2015, which could be the threshold limit for our remaining in global race as also for sustainable development of the country.

3.7 ***Major Constraints***

3.7.1 Several social, economic, administrative and other reasons seem to act together as constraints to access and equity in higher education. Factors like rural-urban divide, gender disparity, regional imbalances, decreasing public allocation, economic hardship, increasing cost due to commercialization, etc. are some of the major reasons of this phenomena. This scenario of higher education, particularly in the ever-expanding competitive environment, does not inspire required confidence, if India were to play its assigned role at the global level. The Committee, therefore, believes that India has to rise to the occasion urgently and make its higher education system not only competitive but also accessible and affordable to everyone.

3.7.2 Dimension of this problem is not only confined to access to higher education of the age group of 18-23 years. It also extends to those in the need of continuous learning and are older than the age group of 18-23 years. The Committee feels that the demand for higher education from diverse kind of learners calls for the courses that are flexible; can be studied off- campuses and credits received are portable. The Committee desires the Government to take proactive measures in this regard urgently.

3.8 ***Other Imbalances***

3.8.1 The Committee is dismayed to note that there was tremendous imbalance in access to higher education in urban and rural areas. Most of the colleges and universities, the Committee notes, are located in urban or semi-urban areas. Whatever colleges were in rural areas, less said is better about their quality and output. While only 16 out of every 1000 were college graduates in rural areas, 111 out of every 1000 belonged to this category in urban areas. The same trend is also discernable in relation to house-hold economic status both in rural as well as urban areas. Higher education in the country, the Committee notes, is thus largely a pro-rich and urban phenomenon.

3.8.2 Similarly, the gender disparity in higher education in India was yet another area of concern, which has been dealt with in detail elsewhere in this Report. The Committee is of the considered opinion that urban bias and gender disparity in higher education are the two main stumbling blocks to access and equity in this area. Large sections of our population, therefore, are denied access to learning for economic, cultural, religious, geographical and other

reasons.

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3.9 Regional Disparity

3.9.1 The Committee notes the conclusion of a study undertaken by a group of Indian scholars based in Japan and USA, which had analyzed the funding of Higher education in different states by the Department. The study has shown that Union Government's expenditure on higher education to various states was grossly uneven. For example, last year's budget allocation for the states like Bihar, Rajasthan, Orissa etc., was highly inadequate. Per person expenditure on higher education in Bihar was Rs. 1.87, in Rajasthan Rs. 2.59 and in Orissa it was Rs. 4.07 while in States like Uttaranchal it was Rs. 105.42, in Arunachal Pradesh Rs. 105 and in Assam 77.7.

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3.9.2 Another distinctive feature of regional disparity is visible in the number of colleges/institutions located in different States. The four Southern States and Maharashtra having 32% of India's population have 46% of total general colleges and almost 60% of professional institutions. In contrast, in the States of UP, MP and Bihar (including Jharkhand) having 34% of population, only 23% of general colleges and only 14% of professional colleges are located. The Committee is concerned to see that in the most populous States where nearly 3/4th of our population lived, the access ratio is far below the national average. It presents quite a dismal picture about the existing status of higher education in the country.

3.9.3 The Committee strongly feels that there is an urgent need to remove this regional disparity. It is high time that Central Government takes some initiatives for encouraging and helping the State Governments to set up educational institutions in tune with the global requirements

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3.9.4 The Committee also emphasizes the special focus for improving access and equity in remote regions and geographically disadvantaged places. It also desires special funding and region-specific norms for North-East Region & Jammu & Kashmir. The Committee appreciates the efforts of the government for setting up Central universities in North-Eastern States. The Committee recommends that such universities may be set up in the remaining States of North-Eastern region including Sikkim at the earliest. The colleges in these areas should be given special funding in addition to normal development grants by the UGC.

3.10 SCs/STs in Higher Education

The Committee notes that the UGC had tried to help the under-privileged sections of the society through some special schemes. A Remedial Coaching scheme for the benefit of students belonging to the SC/ST and weaker sections of the society was introduced in 1994. Another scheme of remedial coaching was introduced with a view to improve the overall performance of these students in the examinations. The Commission introduced the scheme of establishment of SC/ST cells in the universities in the year 1983, with a view to provide information regarding facilities available for SC/ST students in universities and colleges. The SC/ST Cells are closely monitoring the implementation of reservation policy in higher education. But these attempts, the Committee notes have not helped much. For example, the enrolment of SCs in higher education has ranged between 8.6 per cent in 1990-91 to 11.3 per cent in 2002-03. Enrolment of ST students in higher education was between 2.1 per cent to 3.6 per cent in 1990-91 and 2003-04 respectively. The Committee recommends that special programmes for encouraging students from backward and minority communities also need to be prepared urgently as their participation in higher education is abysmally low, as compared to their percentage in total population. This poor situation reflects the poor enrolment and retention of all children including the SC/ST students in school education. All efforts be made to ensure the enrolment and retention of students right from school level.

3.11 Convergence of Conventional and Distance mode

The problem of access and equity is closely linked to opportunity. The Committee feels that the solution to the problem of opportunity lies in convergence of conventional with modern distance education systems with open and flexible structure. The Committee, therefore, is of the considered opinion that we must exploit our ICT potential for its penetration to the country's remotest corners to expand the access to higher education. The Committee is of the view that the Government should make an earnest beginning to train the people for utilizing the latest technologies to make the higher education easily accessible. It would also cut across the rural-urban divide as well as gender disparities in this regard.

3.12 System of Affiliation

Another issue that Committee wishes to highlight is about system of affiliation. In India most of its 16000 odd colleges are affiliated ones. In the absence of proper facilities, many of these colleges perform only classroom teaching in a traditional way. The Committee was informed that nearly 89 per cent of UG students, 66 per cent of PG students and 85 per cent of the faculty in higher educational institutions, were in these affiliated colleges. Consequently, the M.Sc., MA, Ph.Ds that are coming out of such colleges are undoubtedly of poor quality. What is worse, in India major affiliating universities are over-burdened with the administrative works which are unproductive in academic terms. The Committee is of the view that this is certainly telling upon the academic competence of our universities. The VCs of such universities are left with no time for their academic pursuits. The Committee, therefore, recommends that there should be a cap on the number of colleges being affiliated to a university. For this, we would need to open more and more universities for which about 1000 universities and university level institutions be set up by 2015 in the Central, State and private sector. A country like Japan, it may be noted, has around 700 universities and USA has nearly 3000 of them. Besides, setting up more universities, we must encourage good colleges and institutions to acquire 'deemed university' or autonomous status by fulfilling the norms laid down in this regard. This, the Committee feels, would not only lessen the burden of universities but also enhance their quality and output greatly. Besides, the colleges should be encouraged to offer more and more applied courses by offering job-oriented courses particularly after 10+2. These measures, if taken up in a planned and fixed schedule would go a long way in decreasing the unnecessary burden on our universities.

3.13 Open Universities

3.13.1 Open and distance mode of learning has, in fact, had revolutionary impact on accessibility to education. Geographical distances, space and time are no longer barriers to learning because through information and communication technology education is made available even in the remotest corner of the globe. Easy access, low cost and flexible approach, in fact, are the distinct advantages of this system. A large number of countries are already using this system. Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) was set up in 1985 to provide the expertise & funds for operating Open Universities in the country. IGNOU is offering programmes and courses leading to certificates, diploma and degrees in different disciplines/trades in distance mode. It has 1100 study centres spread throughout the country.

3.13.2 The Committee believes that for a vast country like India where accessibility to higher education is quite low, Open Universities have the vast potential for taking higher education to more and more people irrespective of different barriers. This system caters also for in-service persons for whom it is a second chance as well as for regular learners. It, therefore, needs to be provided greater thrust by integrating utility courses with personal development and socio-economic problems. The courses offered should be mainly job-oriented as far as possible. High priority should be given for opening more study centres particularly covering rural and remote areas with concentration of SC/ST and other backward communities' students.

3.13.3 In view of many other Open Universities run by the State governments, the Committee feels the need for closer relationship and regular interaction between them and the IGNOU, with a view to avoiding unnecessary duplication in the production of course material etc. For this, a strong networking has to be developed amongst them. This also calls for uniformity with regard to the structure of the courses leaving adequate scope for region-specific variations.

3.13.4 The Committee's attention has been drawn to some inherent drawbacks present in this system of education. Lack of quality faculty members, non-availability of relevant study material, lack of basic facilities like good libraries, modern labs, computer, multimedia facilities, etc. are the major issues that need immediate redressal. Absence of an effective and efficient information dissemination system to the students about various types of courses, examination schedules, results, degrees, etc. causes great hardship to students. Even at the IGNOU (HQ), students have to run from pillar to post for these things. The Committee, therefore, recommends that these aspects be looked into urgently with a view to provide an adequate and efficient delivery mechanism and support system in the IGNOU and other Open Universities. The Committee is of the considered view that to make Open Universities more attractive and relevant, efforts be made to ensure quality of study material, timely dispatch thereof, dedicated teachers at the study centres, provision of necessary infrastructure, use of ICT, etc.

3.13.5 The Committee finds that there is no accreditation system in IGNOU. It is surprised to note that the work

of neither IGNOU nor any other State Open University any Correspondence Course Institutes (CCI) has ever been assessed since they started functioning. As a result, credibility of these institutions *vis-à-vis* mainstream education system is poor. The Committee, therefore, emphasizes the urgent need for an effective assessment and accreditation system for these institutions so as to enhance and maintain quality of education provided through the distance mode.

3.13.6 The Committee is concerned over the plight of students of open universities who are in different areas of the country. The Committee notes that they do not have a platform at present to voice their grievances effectively. The Committee, therefore, emphasizes an urgent need for putting a mechanism in place for the students to highlight/redress their grievances. Such a machinery can also be utilized for a regular feedback on the efficacy of open learning programmes.

3.13.7 The Committee notes that the students of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) are projected as poor cousins of mainstream students. It has been reported that students coming through ODL channel are found to be lower in ability and performance as compared to the mainstream students. The Committee is perturbed to note that pass percentage of ODL students is very unsatisfactory. It strongly feels that this situation needs to be corrected urgently for instilling confidence in the public about the ODL system. The Committee recommends that all necessary steps be taken urgently for improving quality as well as standard of education imparted through ODL channel so that it can be made as a popular and affordable system.

3.13.8 The Committee takes note of the fact that the open universities were able to raise some revenue by running various courses offered through distance mode, there was no facility of fee concession available to eligible students in the ODL system. The Committee finds such a system to be discriminatory. It feels strongly that the fees in this system should also be rationalised and the poor and meritorious students be given some kind of fee concessions or assistance.

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3.14 Distance Education Council

The Distance Education Council (DEC) has been created under the IGNOU Act for the promotion and coordination of Open University and distance education system and for the determination of its standard. The Committee found that the opinion is divided on the power of the DEC to recognize/approve the courses/degrees being offered by the various other universities/institutions in the country by distance mode. It is argued that the DEC having been created under the Act of a university should not have such jurisdiction in respect of courses/degrees offered by the other universities. It may be pointed that the DEC has been issuing notifications to universities asking them to get their programmes approved quoting a particular Gazette Notification regarding students not being eligible for Central Government jobs, if they pursue courses not approved by the DEC. Many of the universities are not prepared to accept the DEC jurisdiction in this regard mainly on the ground that the DEC was a body under IGNOU Act. As a result, a lot of confusion has been created. The Committee feels that to make the decision explicit, there is a need to have a separate Act for the DEC for making it a regulatory body for open university and open learning system and distance mode on the lines of AICTE or UGC.

The DEC also provides development funds to open universities and other such institutions from the funds given by the Central government. The Committee is happy to note the several initiatives taken by the DEC, such as common pool of programmes, evolving common standards, system of credit transfer, etc. The Committee is also of the view that the DEC should be developed as an apex body for promoting, coordinating and determining standards in distance education more or less on the lines of the UGC in the case of conventional education.

3.15 Women & Higher Education

3.15.1 National Policy on Education, 1986 had emphasized to gear the entire education system to play a positive role for the empowerment of women by providing special support services for their education and also by removing factors, which impede the spread of women education. The 'Programme of Action, 1992' also proposed to use education as an agent of basic change in the status of women for neutralizing all the distortions to have a well-conceived edge in favour of the women. These well meaning proclamations by the landmark documents, the Committee feels, have remained on paper only even after more than two decades they were made. Women's participation in higher education has been quite disappointing, despite significant contributions made by them in different areas of life. They constitute almost half of the total population of India, yet a large proportion of them is still illiterate and ignorant. In Committee's opinion, the overall picture of women education, in fact, is of discrimination, limited opportunity, numerous obstacles and utter neglect.

3.15.2 The Department sought to make out a case before the Committee that there had been significant

improvement in the position of women in higher education. The Committee was informed that the enrolment of women in higher education had increased from 10% of the total enrolment in higher education in 1950-51 to 40 per cent in 2004-05. It has also been informed that the number of women colleges has increased from 1003 in 1993-94 to 1849 in 2004-05. The Committee feels that it is not a realistic way of projecting the position of women in the higher education. These figures become meaningless if compared with the proportion of women in the age group of 18 to 23 years to the total population in this group. Secondly, their participation (40 per cent) in higher education becomes abysmally low because this percentage is, in fact, of the 7 per cent of the total youth in the eligible age group that is currently in higher education.

3.15.3 The faculty-wise women enrolment as provided in the following table presents a highly dismal picture.

Women Enrolment by Faculty: 2004-05

S.No.	Faculty	Women Enrolment	Percentage of total women enrolment
1.	Arts	21,62,482	51.07
2.	Science	8,50,255	20.08
3.	Commerce/Management	6,96,548	16.45
4.	Education	78,758	1.86
5.	Engineering/Technology	1,75,725	4.15
6.	Medicine	1,53,706	3.63
7.	Agriculture	10,585	0.25
8.	Veterinary Science	3,387	0.08
9.	Law	68,596	1.62
10.	Others	34,298	0.81

3.15.4 Of the total women enrolled during 2004-05, as may be noted, more than 50 per cent were in Arts & Humanities. Of the remaining 50 per cent 20 per cent were in Sciences; 16 per cent in Commerce & Management; just 1.86 per cent in education; 4.15 per cent in Engineering & Technology and 3.6 per cent in Medicine. The presence of women in agriculture, mainstay of Indian economy, is just negligible. It is a matter of great concern that the participation of women in the areas with great demand such as management, engineering/technology, medicine, etc. is very low in India. Such a situation, the Committee feels, does not augur well for the future of this nation. Can a nation progress in real terms and catch up with others in this fiercely competitive world with their women-folk remaining virtually outside the higher education system? The Committee, therefore, recommends that the participation of women in professional courses, which is abysmally low at present, needs to be improved manifold without further delay. More and more women as Engineers, Professors, Lawyers, Doctors, Architects and Entrepreneurs could mould the face of India to a great extent.

3.15.5 The representation of women in higher education, the Committee recommends, needs to be increased proportionately particularly, when their performance as well as number at the senior secondary level has improved greatly. Some kind of institutional mechanism for looking into this problem and coordinating various efforts made in this regard at the national level needs to be put in place. It is high time that the curriculum is redesigned to remove all gender biases as also to gender sensitize education personnel and administrators. A pro-girl-child climate in the community needs to be created for this. Provision for enough scholarships, fee concession, hostels, staff quarters, provision for transportation, etc. for women needs to be provided in the institutions of higher learning.

3.15.6 The Department appears to have no relevant and accurate statistics in respect of women's participation in higher education. Information given by the Department to the Committee was simply taken out of UGC Annual Report 2004-05. The Committee expected the Department to provide every relevant data in respect of different components reflecting exact status of women in higher education. So much so, the allocations and expenditure made for the women-specific programmes, which form a part of gender-budgeting that every Department has to have, was conspicuous by absence in the note supplied to the Committee. The Committee is at a loss to see as to how the Department was planning for the expeditious development of women in higher education in the absence of relevant statistics/information.

3.15.7 The Department in its notes has mentioned the following schemes that were currently being run for the women: Special scheme for construction of women hostels; establishment of women's studies centres; Day Care centres in universities, etc. The Committee notes that neither the Department nor the UGC had any concrete and targeted scheme or programme for improving the participation of women in higher education. Such an indifferent approach for this very crucial aspect is almost perilous. The Committee, therefore, recommends that formulation of targeted/specific

schemes and programmes for this purpose needs to be done by the Government urgently. The Committee has learnt that a very good scheme for supporting single girl child of a parent for higher education has been announced. The Committee emphasizes the need for its wide publicity. Sufficient funds should be provided for this purpose.

3.15.8 The UGC scheme for opening women study centres in the universities, the Committee found, could not pick up and precious little appears to have been done in this regard. The Committee recommends that it must be ensured that all the universities both Central as well as State, have these centres in one form or the other, by the end of Tenth Plan period. For this, adequate funds need to be provided urgently.

3.15.9 The open distance learning, the Committee feels, could be a very potent method to fight gender disability in higher education. Studies in different areas may be promoted for women in user-friendly manner in the language they prefer with suitable study materials. Training rural women for the purpose of involving them through community participation in our development process should also be promoted. Their involvement in *Sarva Siksha Abhiyan* more particularly the *Mid-Day Meal* could make these schemes a great success. For achieving these objectives, the Committee is of the considered view, Government will have to play a pro-active, positive, interventionist role to ensure access of all eligible women to the higher education.

IV. RELEVANCE

4.1 Education, be it primary, secondary or higher, if it is not contextual and relevant, will not be able to meet the challenges and demands of the time. The Committee notes that in today's world, things in every walk of life are changing at a very fast pace. It has, therefore, become a daunting task for education to keep pace with the challenges posed by the contemporary socio-economic transformation. Higher education, in fact, faces this impact more than other levels. Relevance of higher education, therefore, becomes of utmost significance for the development and survival of a nation in the changed global/liberal context. In the Committee's view, its relevance should be seen with reference to marketability of the graduate and postgraduate students it produces; with reference to its reach to marginalized sections; and its relevance for the socio-economic development of a society.

4.2 The Committee notes that the problem of relevance of higher education is mainly with reference to general education i.e., Arts, Humanities & Social Science and Law & Commerce, wherein 83 % of the 92 lakhs students, i.e., 76 lakhs are enrolled. However, in today's new economic environment, need for knowledge-workers and graduates with sound fundamentals, good analytical abilities and appropriate utility-oriented skills are on rise and they are in great demand. The Committee finds that most of our universities and colleges are providing out-dated, if not sub-standard education in these disciplines, leading to the degrees and diplomas of little or no substance. The content as well as the quality of education is mostly out of context and even if the curriculum is relevant, the teaching process is unscientific and sub-optimal. Not only this, the Committee came to know that our institutions sometimes copy syllabi from Western Universities. Standard books used for teaching are from the West and those written indigenously are usually without an original view on the subject. As a result, solutions to our problems turn out to be highly misplaced. Such an education, the Committee is of the view, would not have much relevance to our conditions and demands. It is, in fact, one of the main reasons for increasing disinterest and frustration amongst the country's youth. The Committee recommends that the Government must take necessary measures, in consultation with experts, to ensure that required revision in the content and curriculum is carried out periodically. It has to be in keeping with indigenous conditions and requirements. There has to be an institutional mechanism to ensure that higher education remained relevant to the changing times. Process of such revision, the Committee feels, should be an on-going one for making higher education relevant and useful.

4.3. Vocational Education

4.3.1 The Committee notes that as envisaged in the National Policy on Education as also in the revised Plan of Action-1992, the UGC implemented the recommendations made by the Core Committee on Vocationalisation (Career Orientation) of Education. This was to ensure that the students at the first degree level develop knowledge, skills and attitudes for gainful employment with emphasis on self-employment. Since 1994-95, a large number of colleges and universities, the Committee was informed, had been identified to provide assistance under the scheme on selective basis. The Committee was informed that the UGC, in fact, had been receiving very good response from the universities/colleges to start vocational courses in various subjects, but not all such requests from the universities/colleges could be agreed to because of the inadequacy of funds. This, according to the Committee, indicates that the students are accepting the concept of Vocationalisation of Education as it is job-oriented and a move towards

entrepreneurship. The Committee, therefore, recommends that inadequacy of funds should not act as an obstacle to vocationalisation of education. It would, in fact, reduce the undesired pressure on universities and institutions of higher learning. Adequate funds be allocated for this purpose.

4.3.2 The scheme of vocationalisation of education actually, stipulates a close coordination between the industries and educational institutions. The institutions intending to avail of the scheme of Vocationalisation of Education and applying to the UGC for financial assistance, are required to submit a letter of intent to UGC duly signed by the industries that the students will have on-the-job training and other practical experiences in their industries and that they will pick up some of the students after completion of particular vocational course. The Committee is of the opinion that linking of education with industry is something very desirable today. The Committee believes that industry-institution linkages be encouraged as this will take care of many problems simultaneously - promote relevance in the curriculum, enhance the employability of students, provide training facilities and mobilising some resources. Such an interface with industries, Committee believes, would encourage more and more students to opt for the vocational streams instead of going for the general courses, which have not much demand in the job- market. In the process, industry will also get suitable trained manpower relevant and dedicated to its needs. A body consisting of eminent persons from industry and academia be formed to lay down necessary modalities for such a partnership as soon as possible.

4.4 *Dual Degree*

The Committee was informed that UGC had allowed the system of earning certificate/diploma in utility-oriented programmes through parallel mode alongwith the regular degree. This is to provide an alternative to the students just in case. The AICTE has also allowed the system of earning dual degrees simultaneously. The Committee welcomes this and feels that the system of degree plus certificate/diploma in utility oriented programme appears to be quite germane to the emerging scenario where demand for skilled manpower in different disciplines is increasing at the global level. The Committee feels that our ultimate objective should be to ensure that students do not merely have to look for a job; instead they are able to create jobs for themselves and many others. Need of the hour, according to the Committee, is to develop in-house faculty and other facilities in the colleges for this purpose. This will make our colleges more vibrant and attractive. This is an area, the Committee feels, where public-private partnership can play a creative role in augmenting the activities of our colleges. The Committee at the same time expresses its apprehension about the possibility of main degree neglected at the cost of utility-oriented one, as a result, a student may not be able to show his best in either. This aspect needs to be taken care of by the UGC and AICTE. We must also put a system of accreditation for such courses.

4.5 *Promoting Research*

4.5.1 Research performance is one of the parameters for deciding world ranking of the universities. The fact that only one of our universities finds place in top 500 universities of the world, speaks volumes about the status of research in our country. The Committee finds that the research activities were not getting due attention in our universities, which should have been one of their real bases. In fact, there have emerged the system of premier institutes and laboratories, both in pure sciences and the social sciences and humanities, where research was moved away from our universities. As a result of separation of research from teaching, the latter acquired gradually a secondary importance. The Committee, therefore, is of the opinion that research needs to be closely linked with teaching for which scientific base in our universities needs to be strengthened that will attract not only talented students but also industry to our university laboratories.

4.5.2 Private people are not inclined to support research in universities and research being a capital-intensive activity, their participation would help greatly. The needs of the institutions, research labs and industries are mutually common. Therefore, there need to have greater degree of connectivity and cooperation. The Committee strongly feels that needs of these three entities may be interlinked to make research more relevant and productive. Inability of researchers to secure employment for themselves is also one of the reasons for such a state of affairs in this area.

4.5.3 Lack of allocation from state kitty is also a reason for poor research activities in the universities. The Committee observes that only a fraction of UGC fund is spent on research. This is one of the reasons that universities do not have much of R&D efforts. Smaller outlays mean UGC assistance to only a handful of universities. Secondly, of the research assistance that UGC extends, only a small fraction goes to specific projects; a sizable proportion thereof goes in the form of individual fellowships. The Committee feels that it would be worthwhile if the bulk of research funds from the UGC go to specific projects which have been found to be more fruitful and result-oriented the world over.

4.5.4 The Committee, therefore, proposes the following measures to help make research a mainstay of our

higher education. Governments, both Central and State and other funding agencies should provide organized support to research activities for modernizing laboratories and removal of obsolescence in equipments on regular basis. A Research Council in UGC needs to be set up; the UGC should launch a network for access to research material and data across the universities.

4.5.5 The Committee also emphasizes the need for monitoring and evaluation of research in universities by setting up Monitoring & Evaluation (ME) units under the supervision of a Committee of eminent professors from different disciplines. It needs coordination with national laboratories. Number of fellowships also needs to be suitably enhanced so that students are attracted to undertake research in newer areas.

4.6 Promoting Basic Sciences

4.6.1 Another worrisome fact that was brought to the notice of the Committee was the future of basic sciences in India. It came to know that India's best minds were not turning to pure and basic sciences and those who do, do not continue. The students are not finding the basic sciences attractive enough to pursue it as a career. Less than 3% of our school children, the Committee was informed, were generally opting today for pure sciences. Many colleges were closing down their science departments, not to speak of opening new institutions for imparting science education. The students have more preference for courses in management, commerce, engineering, IT and related areas.

4.6.2 India has had a long tradition of pure sciences, the Committee is concerned to notice the increasing disinterest among the younger generations in this area. It was mainly because of non-availability of suitable job opportunities and other incentives in the pure sciences. The Committee finds this situation disquieting because India badly needs to integrate R&D activities in sciences with its economic and social programmes, because science must serve the socio-economic and other needs of our society. Science & Technology has to play a greater role in prevention, mitigation and management of the impact of natural disasters like earthquakes and *Tsunamis*. The Committee, therefore, feels that we must find ways of making the study of pure as well as applied sciences, both in teaching & research, more attractive for our students, if India were to use science for the welfare of its people. We must augment further our efforts in critical areas like agricultural production, food processing, energy, transportation, communication, etc. so as to be able to compete and excel in the global arena. Immediate steps, therefore, need to be taken for popularizing the study of basic sciences by having career-oriented programmes in applied sciences. Adequate incentives and infrastructure for research & development is needed urgently. The base for sciences in the universities needs to be rebuilt and strengthened by taking newer initiatives in the frontier areas.

4.6.3 The de-bureaucratization in most of the scientific & technological institutions, will have to be ensured for promoting research activities and preserving their academic autonomy.

4.6.4 The entire science & technological support system, in Committee's view, needs to be restructured for making the study of basic sciences more attractive. The Committee is of the view that all research institutes may also be persuaded to have under-graduate teaching programmes. Another feasible approach could be to have a co-coordinating mechanism whereunder research institutes participate in teaching as well as take up collaborative research projects with university faculty and students. Secondly, regular exchange of faculty can be managed between the research institutes and universities.

4.6.5 The Committee is of the view that there is urgent need for building more centres of excellence in science like Indian Institute of Sciences. The Committee is happy to learn that two such institutions have already been proposed to be established at Kolkata & Pune. More such institutions should be provided in other regions of the country. The Government will have to provide necessary resources and funds for research and development for inventing required technologies for agriculture, food processing, energy, bio-technology, pharmaceutical and health. These must be treated as priority areas for such funding.

4.7 Social Sciences & Humanities

4.7.1 Education can be considered to be an effective medium of social development and not a commodity that can be traded in market. The National Policy on Education (1986) envisaged the social role of education as follows:-

“Education has an acculturating role. It refines sensitivities and perceptions that contribute to national cohesion, a scientific temper and independence of mind and spirit – thus, furthering the goals of socialism, secularism and democracy enshrined in the Constitution.”

4.7.2 The processes of privatization and liberalization have generated new demands, particularly in higher education. It has led to considerable neglect of social sciences. These disciplines are such branches of knowledge which do not have any immediate market value. Private participation has been mainly confined to professional courses.

Government funding, therefore, remains the only source available for social sciences. What is more disturbing is that Government funding is increasingly being diverted for professional institutions, thus leaving the social sciences in the state of utter neglect. The Committee is of the view that utility of social sciences to our society, polity, economy, etc. cannot be overlooked. They add value to one's life and any study that is value-free, in fact, tends to become sterile. The Committee, therefore, is of the considered opinion that this imbalance needs to be corrected immediately by making the study of social sciences scientific, interesting and relevant to present situation. The government and the UGC may set up an Expert Committee for presenting a blueprint for this purpose.

V. QUALITY AND EXCELLENCE

5.1 The Committee notes that while setting up the universities, not much attention could be paid to the standards and quality of teaching/learning processes. Besides, erosion in values, decline in the work ethics and dilution of norms have also been noticed in the Indian university system. Structure of governance in our educational institutions including universities is not conducive to change of any kind, including that of curriculum. Anything that does not change with time, becomes redundant soon in the fast moving world.

5.2 India, in fact, does not figure at all in the world ranking of top 100 universities. Even among Asia-Pacific countries, India ranks 6th in the list, with South Korea and Israel ahead of it. The only institutions appearing in top 500 institutions from India are: Indian Institute of Sciences, Bangalore, IIT Khargpur and University of Calcutta. Even the "five star" level by the National Assessment & Accreditation Council (NAAC) or considered as 'potential centres of excellence' by the UGC does not find a place in top 500 universities except the University of Calcutta.

5.3 Such a situation, the Committee feels, does not augur well for the future of higher education in the country. The Committee, therefore, feels that the issue of quality and excellence of higher education should have been given more importance in India. Academic ambience in our universities, etc. needs to be improved a great deal. India has to create its new identity as knowledge-creator so as to face the challenges posed by the GATS as also to promote Indian higher education abroad. Quality and excellence are the watch-words in today's liberalized environment. Making higher education globally competitive, therefore, cannot be postponed any further.

5.4 The Committee at the same time cannot overlook the fact that India despite severe limitations has created a large scientific/technical manpower, who have earned a pride of place in the world community. India has not only to sustain its position but also to be a front-runner in the global competition. This can be done, according to the Committee, only when the standard and quality of our educational institutions and its graduates are greatly improved. They will have to be instilled with a high level of creativity, innovation, dedication, patriotism, etc.

5.5 Quality in education does not necessarily connote its demand in the job market only. It also requires students to acquire basic values and norms of life. Our education system unfortunately, appears to be neglecting this aspect greatly. As a result, deviant behaviour, particularly amongst our youth is increasing at alarming proportion that needs to be arrested. The role of our education system for this purpose must be restored, before it is too late.

5.6 Question of quality is also linked directly with the quality of teachers, curriculum design & development; evaluation of teachers' and students' performance; teacher's training; and other infrastructure such as good labs, libraries, sports facilities, etc. Greater and regular sharing of experiences through networking and otherwise between different institutions at the national and global plane is highly recommended. Multi-disciplinary curriculum with stress on developing problem-solving abilities, augmenting knowledge skills and group activities are essential to provide relevance and usefulness to real life situations. Quality of higher education can be greatly enhanced through the use of audio-visual techniques and the modern information & communication technologies.

5.7 Providing adequate exposure to teachers and students by holding more and more conferences and seminars, orientation and refresher courses for teachers; making selection process of Lecturers/Readers/Professors more transparent and shifting from incremental budgeting to performance budgeting are some of the areas, the Committee feels, if implemented, can go a long way in improving the quality and standard of higher education.

5.8 The Committee feels that there is a need for instilling a sense of accountability in teaching community. The Committee found that the quality of many teachers, if not all, does not inspire confidence as scholars or researchers or as educationists. The Committee recommends to carry out some kind of performance-audit of the teachers and in this process, the students' participation must also be ensured. The Committee strongly feels that the conditions of service, remuneration and career advancement of the teachers be linked with their overall performance.

5.9 The Committee is of the opinion that examination reforms be carried out so that "learning by rote" is replaced by "learning for joy". The Committee strongly feels that semester system should be introduced instead of the one-time final examination. The advantage of the semester system is that assessment of student performance becomes a continuous and integral part of the teaching-learning process. Also, a mechanism for joint conferring of degree by the

university as well as colleges concerned will make colleges more responsible as their name will also appear on the degree.

5.10. Assessment & Accreditation

5.10.1 The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) was established by the UGC in 1994 to assess the quality and accredit universities and colleges depending upon certain specified parameters/indicators. The Committee was, however, informed that even after almost two decades, the process of assessment and accreditation has not had the desired impact. Hardly 10 to 15% of the total higher & technical education institutions have gone through this process mainly due to inadequate infrastructure and other weaknesses in the NAAC.

5.10.2 A major weakness in the existing institutional assessment, the Committee notes, is that while it assesses the performance of the university or colleges as a whole; it does not do it Department-wise. What is known to the people is the grades and stars, which signify only averages. Academic performance of a university, in fact, is mostly department-specific. As a result, weaker ones are not exposed. Therefore, the idea of grouping them together for assessment, the Committee feels, needs to be reconsidered. The Committee recommends that the NAAC should start accrediting individual departments also of a university in addition to its overall grading, at the earliest.

5.10.3 The Committee was informed that accreditation being voluntary, many institutions that have secured accreditation may not turn up for re-accreditation after five years and may still continue to use the grade obtained earlier. Others do not turn up for accreditation at all. The Committee is aware that it would be difficult to enforce, if accreditation is made mandatory. The Committee proposes, as incentive for this purpose, that the accreditation must be linked with the grants or special assistance/recognition by the UGC and other bodies so that institutions turn up for accreditation. In USA, the Committee learnt, federal grants are available only to the accredited institutions.

5.10.4 The Committee was informed that the process and procedure of assessment and accreditation by the NAAC takes a long time. It, therefore, emphasizes the urgent need to identify efficient ways and effective strategies for expediting the assessment and accreditation by NAAC within a stipulated time frame.

5.10.5 The Committee learnt that parameters adopted by the NAAC for evaluating the quality, although useful, leave some scope for subjectivity in this exercise. The Committee recommends that this aspect should be re-examined with a view to making these parameters transparent and objective.

5.10.6 The Committee also underlines the greater need for evolving an internal self-regulatory quality assurance mechanism by the accredited institutions for maintaining and upgrading their quality level. This mechanism may also monitor both academic excellence as well as administrative efficiency of that institution. Periodic assessment of accredited institution should also be carried out regularly by the NAAC.

5.10.7 The Committee, in view of the emerging scenario, is of the opinion that a Government agency like NAAC for assessment of standards and accreditation of higher educational institutions may not have the desired credibility/acceptability to our higher education institutions at the international level. In fact, the need for a third party evaluation model with participation of all the stakeholders in higher education was underlined by some experts who appeared before the Committee. The Committee also feels that the establishment of an independent accreditation agency having regional offices in different areas of the country should also be considered. The industry should also have its participation in such a machinery. It should be, more or less, on the lines of quality assurance bodies like ISO and other rating agencies like CRISIL and ICRA.

5.11 National Board of Accreditation

5.11.1 The accreditation of technical institution is done by the National Board of Accreditation (NBA) established by AICTE. Although the procedure adopted by the NBA is comprehensive yet the accreditation is a time-taking process. The Committee feels that this process needs to be streamlined and accelerated to complete the backlog which is building up. The accreditation work needs to have a global interface which has become important in the emerging regime under WTO.

5.11.2 In view of mushrooming of private professional institutions in different parts of the country having little regard for the quality of teaching, infrastructure, etc. the Committee emphasizes that every institution must be required to have its quality assessment done by the NBA within three years of their existence.

VI. GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

6.1 The Committee takes note of the fact that importance of management in education was underlined for the first time in India by the National Policy on Education (NPE) in 1986. The Policy called for evolving a long-term planning and management perspective and its integration with the country's developmental and manpower needs. It

emphasized the need for making decentralization, autonomy for educational institutions and the principle of accountability the guiding principles in remodeling the management of education. The 'Programme of Action' for implementing the NPE called for specific initiatives for the management in higher education. Accordingly, a UGC Committee was established to look into the matter and recommend on the pattern of management of universities. The Committee was informed that this UGC Committee stopped short of advocating any major overhaul of university management. The NIEPA, the universities and the management institutes are also not known to offer any major programmes for educational management.

6.2 With major interventions by the State for universalisation of education, latest being the SSA and MDM, the Committee feels, the secondary and then the higher secondary education is bound to face in the coming years unprecedented pressure of numbers as well as quality. Besides, the emerging new regime under GATS has also posed newer challenges before higher education. Such a situation calls for a modern system of management for the higher education to enable India to compete and survive at the global level. The Committee feels that our universities and institutions of higher learning should be prepared to respond to such demands and challenges, and this cannot be done without making suitable changes in the system of governance and administrative structures of higher education in the country.

6.3 The Committee notes that management in education though not unknown in India, works more or less, on old structure and concepts. It is a matter of concern that most of our universities have become merely examination boards for conducting examinations and conferring degrees, apart from the major work of granting affiliations. The Committee is dismayed to note that research as well as pedagogical innovations seems to have taken a back seat in the universities. The Committee is of the considered opinion that in such a scenario what is needed is the greater autonomy, professionalism, transparency and accountability in the administration of higher education.

6.4 The Committee feels that it is high time that aspects like performance measurement, quality improvement, professional development, institutional and cultural change, resource mobilization, marketing of the intellectual products, public relations etc. are imbued in the practices of higher education management in our country.

6.5 The Committee believes that there is an urgent need to adopt best managerial practices in the structure of higher education institutions and universities, since these are no longer traditional institutions engaged only in creation, presentation and dissemination of knowledge. Rather they are progressively being called upon to involve themselves in a variety of problems and concerns of national development, especially in the social and economic spheres.

6.6 The Committee finds that there is no effective planning body in universities both central as well as State. The Committee feels that it is only by better planning and optimum use of resources that universities can improve their efficiency and can excel. It is of the opinion that proper strategic planning keeping in view the priorities and options available be adopted in the planning activities of the universities.

6.7 The Committee is also of the view that autonomy to the universities be made inviolable because it is, the life-breath to intellectual and academic initiatives and innovations. This autonomy, however, should not lead to autocracy and it must be ensured that academic bodies were kept away from any kind of interference, political, bureaucratic and any other. Views of academicians should have effective say in the management of higher education.

6.8 The Committee also recommends to ensure that academic decision in the institutions of higher learning is taken on merit and the government control must be reduced. Any outside interference in appointments of university teachers and administrators should be totally avoided. Direct interference of Finance Department in financial management of the universities must also be avoided as it proves to be counterproductive.

6.9 The Committee was informed that instances of uneasy relationship between various bodies, particularly the Academic Council and the Executive Council in the universities are not very uncommon. This, the Committee feels, prepares grounds for internal bickering and outside interference that ultimately vitiates the academic atmosphere in the campuses. All possible measures be taken for avoiding such situations.

6.10 The Committee is of the considered opinion that the role of a Vice-Chancellor in a university system is very crucial. In today's complex university environment, the person to be appointed as Vice-Chancellor must be the one who is not only an academic leader but also trained in sound management practices. The Committee during its visit to IIM, Ahmedabad came to know that the Institute was running an orientation programme for the CBSE school Principals. The Committee is of the opinion that all the IIMs may be requested to develop and run suitable modules for the orientation and refresher courses for the Vice-Chancellors and Registrars of the universities as also for the heads of other institutions of higher learning. The Committee also emphasizes the need for running such programmes in education management specially designed for the government-officials responsible for implementing/supervising primary, secondary and higher education.

6.11 The Committee takes note of the fact that there are a number of regulatory bodies like the UGC, ICAR,

AICTE, MCI, NCTE concerning various areas of higher education. These bodies fall under different Ministries/Departments. It was argued before the Committee that the existence of various regulatory bodies not only makes the system complex, but also gives it a fragmented character. The Committee, therefore, recommends that some kind of coordinating mechanism at the national level be put in place in the best interest of efficiency and effectiveness. A Board of Higher Education at national level for the purpose as visualized by the NPE 1986, could not be set up so far, for the reasons not known to the Committee. The Committee recommends that the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development initiate and coordinate with other Ministries like Agriculture, Health, Law and Finance to create a National Apex body for coordination among the various regulatory agencies.

6.12 Most of those who gave input to the Committee, verbal or written, mentioned about the cumbersome procedure and large scale corruption prevailing in the regulatory bodies mentioned above. The Committee while appreciating the work being done by these bodies, takes such allegations seriously. Besides, the procedure for granting necessary clearances, etc. needs to be streamlined and made easier so that institutions/individuals do not feel deterred to approach these bodies. In view of increasing private participation in technical, medical and management education, these bodies need to be made more alert, transparent and pro-active in performing their mandate. Their regional offices need to be increased and made more responsive and efficient. Cases of corruption, deliberate delay, etc. must be dealt with sternly to establish credibility of these bodies.

6.13 Besides, there is no systematic planning and objective statewide assessments of demands and needs for higher education institutions and facilities. The Committee is, therefore, of the view that a state level mechanism – Higher Education Council as is functioning in some States, be put in place for coordinated development of higher education in all the States.

6.14 The Committee was informed that many a time, it has been experienced that University Acts in different States have provisions which are no longer relevant or are not keeping with the emerging challenges. The Committee recommends that Ministry of Human Resource Development should advise the State governments to review, from time to time, their University Acts and amend them in the light of new requirements and challenges being faced by the universities. UGC must take a lead in this exercise.

6.15 The Committee is also of the opinion that for good governance, there is an urgent need for the use of Management Information System in the universities. The Committee notes that majority of the universities have done it in reference to examination & general administration. However academic governance has not been covered under this. The Committee desires that academic governance be also brought in the Management Information System.

6.16 The Committee is of considered view that system of micro-management be given up and structures of governance outside universities also need reform. The Committee strongly feels that the internal management of institutions needs to be strengthened. More autonomy and greater authority to the head of institutions may also be given. There is a need to create a legal and conducive environment to initiate changes at the institutional level. It also needs to be underlined that the government works as a facilitator rather than controller in the affairs of institutions of higher learning.

VII. FUNDING

7.1 The higher education system and the pattern of financing it, vary across the world, based on the size and strength as well as degree of diversification of its institutions. But the fact remains that they all face a severe constraint of public finances available for higher education. India is no exception in this regard.

7.2 Funding of higher education in India has been an area of great concern because the resources are limited and there is a need to balance the growing demands of higher education within the limited resources. Of late, there has been an intense debate over the pattern of funding education in general and higher education in particular. Public expenditure on education in India has increased significantly since the inception of planning in the country. It has increased upto more than Rs. 9000 crores today. The trend of public expenditure on higher education, the Committee notes, showed a real rate of growth of 7.5% per annum during the 1950s, which went upto 11% during the 1960s. In the following decade, however, the annual growth rate came down to 3.4%, with only marginal recovery during the 1980s. The public expenditure per student, the Committee was informed, has also registered a negative growth in the 1990s. The Committee also notes that the share of higher education in Five Year Plans after increasing from 0.7% in the First Plan to 1.2% in the Fourth Plan. It has ever since stagnated at 0.5% upto the Ninth Plan. During Eighth Plan, it had further come down to 0.3%.

7.3 During the 1990s, the Committee observes, that the process of economic reforms and the concomitant structural adjustments hit hard the expenditure on all social sector investments, including higher education. With the general withdrawal of subsidy and emphasis on cost-recovery, there has been a noticeable fall in the budgetary support

to the recurrent expenses. This fall is visible not only in government contribution to higher education but also in the share of higher education to the total expenditure on education.

7.4 The Committee was informed that the Central Government expenditure on higher education in real terms had, in fact, declined because the increase in spending was, in fact, offset by increase in the prices and in the number of students opting for higher education. Secondly, the bulk of the central allocation went to the central universities and very little was left for the State universities which are virtually left to fend for themselves. Although the State governments financial crunch is well-known constraint, they could not cut the budget for higher education mainly because their contribution was mostly for non-plan expenditure including salary, allowances, etc. The Central Government allocation, in other words, being mainly for plan purposes, any squeeze in it, therefore, tells directly upon the development of the higher educational institutions.

7.5 The Committee recalls that the Education Commission (1964-66) had strongly argued for devoting 6% of the GDP to education which was reiterated by National Policy on Education, 1968 also. The NCMP has also promised this target. However, the goal of allocating 6% of the GDP to education, in Committee's view, has since remained merely an ambition than a realized commitment. While, only 4% of the GNP is currently being spent on education, 0.4% of GNP is being spent on higher education.

7.6 The Committee is of the view that the declining public finances for higher education coupled with the inflation and increase in the number of students aspiring for it, severely impair its growth, both quantitative as well as qualitative. And this is what has happened in our country. Reduction in expenditure on higher education, in fact, has affected not only recruitment of the teachers and creation of physical infrastructure but has also restricted to a great deal access to higher education particularly, by the poor people. The Committee feels that for the economic and technological progress of a country in this era of intense global competition, the country can ill-afford to ignore the higher education sector. It was argued before the Committee that lately, we have witnessed shifting of emphasis from higher education to primary education. The Committee is of the considered opinion that while universalizing primary education was the constitutional mandate, the higher education also needs to be supported by increased allocations in the coming years, should India were to provide higher education of world class standard.

7.7 The Committee is aware of the resource constraints both with the Central and State Governments which cannot fill the gap between the supply and demand of the higher education sector. The Committee, therefore, is of the opinion that new sources of financing higher education have to be found for bridging this gap.

7.8 The Committee notes that the funds for higher education in India come mainly from three sources, viz., government allocation, fee from students and other sources like philanthropy, industry, sale of publications, etc. In the 1950s, only 58% of public expenditure on education came from government sources. Over a period of time the share of government in educational expenditure has increased. Currently, nearly 80% of the educational expenditure comes from government sources- central, state and local. Consequently, there has been a decline in other sources of funding for higher education. For example, the share of fees in total expenditure declined from over one-third in the 1950s, to nearly one-seventh in the 1980s. Like-wise, endowments and other sources of income to the universities have also declined.

7.9 In the light of this, the Committee feels that mobilizing resources from non-government sources has become imperative now, not only to sustain the system of higher education at its present level but also for its further expansion both in its qualitative as well as quantitative dimensions.

7.10 An estimate puts this demand at Rs. 3,400 crores for the remaining period of 10th Plan. Managing such a huge sum is an uphill task. This can be achieved *inter alia* by promoting distance education, private participation and cost recovery methods. Besides, the universities need to recognize the importance of helping themselves through their internal resource generation. The Committee also feels that Income Tax concessions can be given to philanthropists and to the community, should they invest in higher education.

7.11 The need for the cost recovery in higher education to fight the fiscal crunch in system was emphasized before the Committee. Cost-recovery, according to the Committee, would imply among others, a reduction in subsidies to higher education. This, the Committee feels, would shift the financial burden either to the beneficiaries (students) or to their users (employers). Student loans, graduate tax, enhancing fees and education cess were some other suggestions made in this regard.

7.12 Student Fees

7.12.1 The Tenth Five-Year Plan has emphasized the shift of resources from higher to primary education leaving thereby lesser funds for the former. Besides, due to increasing enrolment at upper primary and secondary levels,

the pressure on higher education is likely to increase manifold in coming years. In such a situation, the Committee feels that it was high time that the universities made greater efforts to supplement their resources by generating their own resources, apart from what they may be getting from the UGC and the government. The industry-academia interface, the Committee feels, can be valuable source of resource mobilization, relevant curricula, R&D, practical training including employment of our graduates.

7.12.2 It was impressed upon the Committee that student fees were extremely low and had not been revised for decades. The Mid-Term Appraisal of the Tenth Five-Year Plan has also underlined the need for hike in the student fees. Some people advocated that fee could be one of the major sources of income in the present context. It was argued by them that currently, only about 15-20 per cent of annual recurring cost per student was recovered from the students in the form of fees, and remaining 80-85 per cent came as subsidies from the government.

7.12.3 The Committee was also informed, on the other hand, that fee income had been continuously on rise and it was already on higher side and any further rise in it, could cause much hardship to an ordinary household.

7.12.4 The Committee is fully aware of the implications of hike in fee paid by students, as it may restrict the access to the higher education. There is a possibility that beneficiaries, particularly from vulnerable groups, social and economic, would find it difficult to afford the higher education affecting thereby their upward mobility adversely. The Committee, therefore, feels that raising of fee and other charges should be considered only after examining its social and economic implications on the poor people. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Government should emphasize on other options also. If the raise in the fee becomes unavoidable, it must be gradual and supplemented/supported by other assistance.

7.12.5 The Committee at the same time is of the opinion that it is not prudent to charge same fees from all students, irrespective of their socio-economic status. It is true that the daily pocket-expenses of some students are much more than the fee they pay per month. It is an anomaly. Therefore, there is urgent need for having a rational and just policy in this regard. Meritorious students coming from weaker sections of the society need to be financially supported through effective mechanisms so that their inability to afford the cost of education does not deprive them of higher education. Therefore, provision of adequate and liberal free-ships and merit-cum-means scholarships to the students coming from the disadvantaged groups is considered imperative.

7.12.6 What is a matter of concern to the Committee is the high fee structure of private colleges/universities. The Committee emphasizes that we must keep in mind the social and economic milieu of the students while deciding fee and other charges. The private institutions particularly unaided/self-financing colleges must ensure that education was not made unaffordable to poor and meritorious student. The Committee feels that a suitable formula for fixing/regulating fees in private institutions of higher learning needs to be worked out in consultation and agreement with their management. The Committee notes that Courts have already suggested some mechanism in this regard.

7.12.7 The Committee appreciates the contribution of unaided institutions in supplementing the efforts and resources of the governments in providing higher education. While working out any formula for this purpose, their interest needs also to be kept in mind for avoiding the risk of losing this option.

7.12.8 The Committee is also of firm belief that the universities' fees be restructured and the UGC may bring necessary modifications in its formula for computing grants, which at present does not adjust the fees for capital expenditure.

7.3 Student Loan

7.13.1 Student loan is envisaged by some as one of the means to mobilize resources for higher education. It is argued that such a loan would enable those meritorious students whose parents are not in a position to afford higher education. The Committee feels that one of the crucial aspects that is overlooked is that the student loan shifts the burden of higher education from society to the beneficiary under this scheme, individual students have to repay the loan themselves. The Committee is, therefore, of the view that the student loan programme may not be very popular as it is fraught with many risks. There is a high possibility that student loans might act as disincentives for students from low-income families willing to go for higher education. The Committee is particularly apprehensive of student loan for women, which may be regarded as negative dowry in the Indian society.

7.13.2 The Committee notes that various Commercial Banks charge prohibitive rates of interest and demand collateral guarantee, etc., which renders it highly unattractive proposition. This scheme does not provide for any exemptions for the weaker sections in terms of security, guarantee, repayment period, repayment as per earnings, waivers, etc. Further, the high administrative cost of the loan makes the scheme susceptible to failure. The Committee recommends that the Government must take necessary measures to study the financial viability of the

programme to make it a success and a convenient alternative to public finances.

7.13.3 The Committee also feels that a student loan can create two types of distortions. First, only those courses, which enjoy a premium market, will be preferred, both by loan providers and borrowers. The professional courses may get priority at the expense of others, which are important from the point of social and national concerns but do not enjoy a premium in the labour market. Second, the educational credit market in India is not well developed. It is recommended that necessary correctives be initiated to take care of distortions and adverse implications of the student loan by providing some kind of shield to the poor and meritorious students. The Committee also recommends that setting up of an Educational Development Bank of India as suggested from time to time for helping financially poor and needy students should be considered urgently.

7.14 Graduate/Exit Tax

7.14.1 Other measures suggested to the Committee to recover the cost of higher education were what may be called as “graduate tax”, “exit tax”, “education cess” etc. Such taxes are already in vogue in some countries. Graduate tax is levied on those who use the services of skilled and trained manpower. An employer is required to pay an annual tax to the government for each graduate recruited by it. The major drawback, the Committee feels, with this scheme is that it might lead to substitution of university graduates by lower level educated manpower. Nevertheless, the Committee feels, that taxing employers based on the type and number of manpower they use has a good rationale and should be considered seriously for implementation.

7.14.2 Imposition of Exit Tax on our students immigrating to other countries for taking up jobs after obtaining their degrees, particularly from our premier institutions which are run on massive State subsidies, was suggested by some experts who appeared before the Committee. They argued that the expenditure incurred on those students go without any return to the country. The Committee would like to point out the changed perception about the traditional brain-drain theory in the wake of globalization which recognizes certain indirect benefits – developing one’s skill further, remittances in foreign exchange, etc. The Committee is of the view that students passing out from premier Government institutions get the best education on payment of nominal fees. In the event of their leaving the country for good, imposition of Exit Tax on them must be considered. The Committee, therefore, recommends that feasibility of this proposal needs to be examined and implemented in the larger interest of the country.

7.14.3 As regards the education cess for higher education, the Committee feels that this proposal would not be conducive in the present scenario when people are already paying another cess for primary education.

VIII. PRIVATE INITIATIVE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

8.1 The Committee notes that private participation in higher education is not new in India. Colleges set up by public spirited/philanthropic persons has been there for a long time. Most of these colleges, however, enjoyed large-scale grants from the public exchequer. The public funding, the Committee notes, has its own constraints and the State support alone will not be sufficient to meet the requirement in this area. In the long run, therefore, the involvement of private initiatives becomes imperative to meet the challenging demands of expansion and diversification of higher education in India. However, the Committee is at the same time fully aware of the adverse impact of privatization of education; it might lead to profit orientation and commercialization of higher education. As has been seen in a few cases recently, there is an attempt to full cost recovery or more from students. As a result, only those who are able to pay exorbitant amount of fees are able to go, particularly for engineering, medical and management education and this is certainly an unacceptable situation.

8.2 The Committee wonders that despite subsidized education and low fee structure, only about 7% of the students in the age group of 18-23 years could afford to go to Universities and Colleges. And those 83% who are left out, the Committee feels, are not able to bear even that paltry fees.

8.3 The Committee understands that a high level of public subsidy reduces the scope for the government to mobilize additional resources. It is also of the opinion that only the State can have long-term perspective and focus on social concerns in promoting higher education. The State, therefore, cannot shy away from investing in higher education, as it is a long-term investment for the overall economic development of the country and its people. Only State can invest in basic research and development without any profit motive in financial terms. The Committee, therefore, is of the view that until the private participation and the concerns associated with it were taken care of, necessary legal framework was put in place and adequate safeguards were provided for protecting interest of vulnerable sections of our society, the government must continue to provide necessary resources for the purpose. Any indiscriminate reduction in subsidies would leave the sector to the vagaries of market forces. The Committee, therefore, calls upon the Planning Commission, Ministry of Finance and Department to spare adequate funds for higher education.

8.4 *Private Universities*

8.4.1 A large number of private universities were recently allowed to be set up by some of the States in India. These universities with no minimum infrastructure, qualified faculty, etc. started functioning like 'education shops' opening their off-campus centres in different parts of the country offering various courses. Most of these universities had no campus of their own and functioned from a one-room tenement with quality being given a complete go-by. Thousands of students took admission in various courses offered by these one-room-universities which were collecting hefty fees from the unsuspecting students. Moreover, they did not have necessary clearances etc. from the statutory regulating bodies like UGC, AICTE, MCI, DCI etc.

8.4.2 Such a situation created genuine and serious concern in the minds of the parents and the students. Government and UGC also tried to intervene by issuing certain guidelines/regulations for establishment and maintenance of standards in these private universities. But these guidelines, the Committee notes could not have much impact and these universities continued to function unregulated, offering sub-standard education for a heavy price. Ultimately, the matter went to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court came out heavily against all the private universities established under the Chhattisgarh Act declaring them illegal as the clause of the Act providing for the establishment of private universities was declared *ultra vires*. It is, however, important to note that the Supreme Court did not hold the establishment of private universities *per se* illegal.

8.4.3 The Committee is concerned over the fact that neither there is any regulatory mechanism in the States nor is there any policy/legislation at Centre for regulation and control of private universities in India. As a result, it is very difficult to ensure transparency and accountability in the working of private universities. Regulatory bodies like UGC, AICTE, MCI, DCI, etc., have proved to be ineffective in this case. The Committee in the light of these developments is of the considered opinion that there is an urgent need for proper policy and mechanism to regulate aspects such as admission, fee structure, quality control, teachers' qualifications, physical infrastructure, etc. of the private universities. The regulatory mechanism must see that higher education was not commercialized to the detriment of the students.

8.4.4 The Committee was cautioned that some corporate entities might try to open private universities to enhance their profits under that garb. The possibility of a company opening a private university for the purpose of creating an affiliating body to get all frivolous or sub-standard courses offered by it affiliated, cannot be ruled out. The Committee, therefore, desires that the Government should bring a comprehensive legislation for providing effective machinery to ensure that only genuine and quality private providers of higher education services remain in the field.

8.5 *Unaided professionals institutions*

8.5.1 The country in recent years has witnessed emergence of self-financed institutions offering various courses in engineering, medical, management, etc., that are mainly run by trusts and societies. Lakhs of enthusiastic men and women have taken admission in these institutions. For example, if we take only engineering colleges, there was an intake of more than 4 lakhs students in 2004-2005 in the self-financed technical institutions scattered in different parts of the country. The administrative and management structure of these institutions, the Committee came to know, was archaic. While some of them are doing extremely well, others do not have even the basic infrastructure for the courses being offered by them. Most of these institutions, the Committee was informed, suffered from acute shortage of qualified teachers, lack of required facilities for teaching & research, etc. Two main problems bedeviling them are their admission procedure and the fee structure. Huge sums are charged for admission under different categories followed by hefty tuition and other fees.

8.5.2 The Committee notes that self-financing institutions were functioning under various authorities, State as well as central as education is a Concurrent Subject. As a result, we have different syllabi, admission and examination systems throughout the country. The existing system of diverse regulatory authorities, the Committee feels, is creating avoidable problems in this regard. This situation gives rise to confusion among the students which undermines the delicate balance between merit, affordability and equity in professional education. The Committee is of the view that this state of affairs is mainly due to absence of a national policy in respect of the self-financing professional institutions. This calls for a unified control and regulatory mechanism, having regard to our federal character, for looking after different aspects of their functioning. The Committee, therefore, emphasizes the need for a transparent national framework for the regulation & nurturing of such institutions. There is an urgent need for rationalizing the existing plethora of admission tests, which are creating lot of problems for the students. The admission to these institutions should be on merit in which total transparency needs to be maintained. Besides, there is also an urgent need to provide a legal mechanism for regulating/fixing fees and management and other quota with a view to removing any uncertainty in this regard.

8.5.3 While doing so, we must give due regard to views/concerns of the people opening these institutions. Otherwise, good spirited people would feel discouraged to come forward in this regard.

8.5.4 Steps should be taken to ensure that these institutions are properly assessed and accredited by the respective agencies. Furthermore, the private institutions be rated by independent rating agencies and their ratings be disseminated through print and internet across the country. The Committee is of the considered view that such a publicly announced ratings would help the students in selecting an institution to enroll in; the institutions in upgrading its standards; and the employers in assessing the quality of students graduating from these institutions. The Committee also desires that all such educational institutions need to come out with their Annual Reports containing necessary details about the courses offered, quality of faculty, teaching, student strength, examination results, infrastructure and facilities available, the corpus available and the source of funding, accreditation ratings, etc.

8.5.5 These institutions, particularly in the field of engineering and management need to have effective partnership with trade and industry to ensure that the product emerging out of these institutions would be better suited for the job which they would eventually take up. Such a partnership, the Committee feels, shall not only make the curricula more relevant and contextual, increase the employability of students and would also enable the sponsors to get some resources.

IX. GLOBALISATION AND LIBERALISATION

9.1 The Committee notes that the higher education is in the throes of globalisation as is evident from the increasing number of students going abroad for higher study, increase in exchange and linkages among faculties and researchers, increased international marketing of curricula and programmes, establishment of branch campuses abroad and development of international mechanisms for educational cooperation between academic institutions across countries. The international trade and investment in higher education has attained growing importance in recent years with a global market estimated at \$27 billion in mid 1990s. The US, France, Germany, UK, Australia are the main exporters while China, India, Japan, Korea, Taiwan are the main importers of higher education.

9.2 This trend in higher education was brought to the notice of the Committee, more so, in face of the fact that GATS (to which India is a signatory) identifies 'Education' as one of the twelve classified sectors to be opened up.

9.3 GATS and Higher Education

9.3.1 The Committee notes that GATS is a comprehensive legal framework of rules and disciplines covering hundreds of service activities across different sectors and excludes services supplied in the exercise of governmental authority, i.e., on a non-commercial and non-competition basis. GATS envisages services trade occurring by following four modes of supply:

Mode 1 *Cross Border Delivery*

Mode 2 *Consumption Abroad*

Mode 3- *Commercial Presence*

Mode 4- *Movement of Natural Persons*

9.3.2 In the field of education, mode 1 is reflected in the form of distance education, tele-education, education-testing, etc. Mode 2 is reflected in movement of students from one country to another for higher education. Mode 3 is reflected in establishment of local branch campuses or subsidiaries by foreign universities in other countries, courses offered by domestic private colleges leading to degrees of foreign universities, twinning arrangements, franchising, etc. Mode 4 is reflected in temporary movement of teachers, lecturers and education personnel to provide education services overseas.

9.3.3 It was argued before the Committee that the liberalization allowed in the area like allowing 100 per cent FDI on automatic route and permitting foreign participation in higher education is essentially a domestic decision and has not yet been included under the obligations of GATS since India was yet to commit its education services under GATS framework. The Committee appreciates that the liberalization allowed is basically due to our capacity constraints in higher education. However, the Committee is concerned about the less reputed, fly-by-night operators who lure the gullible students through their tall claims in glossy advertisements making away with their hard-earned money and

spoiling their future. The Committee is of the strong opinion that the capacity constraints cannot be an excuse for the survival of sub-standard institutions. The Government should immediately come up with a proper supportive regulatory mechanism with a view to ensuring that only accredited and known foreign institutions enter the Indian market and by creating a level playing field for foreign and domestic institutions. The Committee feels that by putting such a mechanism in place, the country will be better placed to schedule education services under GATS.

9.3.4 The Committee is of the considered view that markets and globalisation represent the key where opportunity and danger exists and both are closely intertwined. While the importance of competition and striving to do better are the pluses, motivation of profit only is the minus. The Committee feels that the country should brace itself up to take the maximum advantage of the opportunities opening with the globalisation of education services. The Government is advised to adopt an aggressive and pro-active, rather than defensive approach on both import as well as export fronts to take the benefit under GATS and concomitant process of liberalization of higher education. The Committee notes that Indian export of higher education to other countries is very low as compared to its import. Our students are queuing up to go for higher studies to countries like US, UK, Canada and Australia in large numbers. In US, they form the largest group.

9.3.5 The Committee notes that the Government has constituted a Committee for Promotion of Indian Education Abroad (COPIE) with the twin objectives of promoting Indian education abroad and regulating operations of foreign educational institutions in India. The Committee desires that the COPIE takes steps to safeguard the larger national interest and the interest of the student community in particular.

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X. FOREIGN UNIVERSITIES

10.1 The Committee observes that with the sweeping economic and financial reforms set in motion by Government of India since beginning of the nineties, nearly all sectors, including education has felt the impact in a big way. A large number of foreign educational institutions have started establishing their presence in India.

10.2 The Committee notes that the existing laws and regulations of the country do not provide any statutory mechanism for regulating the operation of such foreign institutions in this country. It is only the AICTE that has come up with a notification that carries revised regulations for the entry and operation of foreign universities/institutions imparting technical education in India. The Committee is aware that the C. N. R. Rao Committee has been set up by the Government for reviewing this aspect. The Committee notes that the Rao Committee is yet to submit its reports. The Committee only hopes that the Government would take necessary *interim* measures in this regard before the Rao Committee's recommendations are considered and accepted.

10.3 The Committee is perturbed to note that there is still no authentic database on operation of foreign educational institutions in the country, which is a grim reminder of our concern for higher education and our preparedness towards maximizing the fruits of liberalization in education sector.

10.4 According to the information compiled by the Association of Indian Universities during the year 2000 on the basis of advertisements appearing in the Indian newspapers, 144 foreign universities and colleges/institutions have been offering various courses of study to the Indian students. Out of them, 117 offer programmes on their home campuses and the remaining 27 are conducting programmes in India through their Indian partners. The largest number of these institutions is from UK and Australia followed by USA and Canada and New Zealand. The remaining 14 institutions are from other countries like Bulgaria, Cyprus, Hong-Kong, France Ireland, Mauritius, Nepal, Romania, Russia and Switzerland. The Committee is astonished to note that over 100 foreign institutions are offering different courses without any regulation on their operations, quality of education, management, etc. The Committee notes that the AICTE regulation that permits the entry of a foreign university/institution either directly or through collaborative arrangement with an Indian university/institution extends only to technical education. The law is silent on foreign university/institution offering non-technical education including medicine, law, arts, sciences, social sciences, etc. The Committee feels that this gap needs to be filled at the earliest. It is incumbent upon the Government and related regulatory bodies like the UGC, the MCI, etc. to come out with a definite policy/legislation for regulating the entry and operation of foreign university/institution as soon as possible. Only good institutions, which are accredited in their countries should be allowed to operate and they need to get clearance from respective authorities. Fee, etc. charged by these foreign institutions also needs to be regulated.

10.5 The Committee notes the possibilities of some of these institutions of doubtful credibility hoodwinking the gullible students cannot be completely ruled out. The Committee, therefore, desires that an inquiry into the antecedents and credentials of these institutions be thoroughly made and if any of them is found to be of fake/fictitious

nature, strict action be taken against it and due publicity be given against them.

10.6 The Committee has been informed and it appreciates that the lists of foreign educational institutions offering programmes to the Indian students have been sent to the High Commission/Embassies of India in the concerned countries with the request to check on the antecedents and the credibility of these institutions and let the Ministry have a feed-back on them.

10.7 The Committee is also of the opinion that permission to foreign university/institution to operate in the country should be granted with caution as there is every possibility that even a good foreign university/institution can adopt double standards in quality so much so that the learning that they provide at their home countries is of high standard while the distance learning in developing countries by them is sub-standard. The Committee recommends the establishment of a body that oversees all the activities of a foreign university/institution and allows only the *bona fides* to take a plunge in the Indian market having all sensitivities to the moorings and culture of the country.

XI. DEEMED UNIVERSITIES

Existing institutions may be given university status under a provision in the UGC Act which are known as Deemed Universities. These institutions offer advance level courses in a particular field, while many of them award general degrees. Currently, we have 95 deemed universities in different parts of the country. The Committee came to know through several experts who appeared before it that the quality & standard in many deemed universities were seriously wanting. It was also informed that the concept of deemed universities has not been able to achieve the desired objectives. The Committee, therefore, feels that there is an urgent need for reviewing the procedure and criteria for providing deemed university status to an institution.

XII. STATE UNIVERSITIES

12.1 The Committee during its visits to some of the State universities found that these were facing serious financial crunch mainly due to inadequate allocation by their respective State governments. The Committee notes that for every Rs. 100 - Rs. 70 goes to salaries & superannuation payments; of the remaining Rs. 30; Rs. 15 goes into pre-emptive claims like rent, taxes, electricity bills, examination expenses and so on. Thus, precious little is left for maintenance, let alone development. As a result, libraries & laboratories languish and quality of education is severely affected. This grim scenario is further aggravated with the UGC ceiling of Plan expenditure to mere 3% of the total allocation. The Committee feels that this ceiling on Plan expenditure is really unrealistic and it desires that the UGC should increase this ceiling so that development of infrastructure in the universities could be taken up with a view to improving the quality of our institutions of higher learning. The Committee also notes that for corpus creation, the universities are offered to raise one crore to get an additional grant of the same amount from the UGC with the condition to use the interest on that corpus fund for developmental activities. With ever decreasing decline in the interest rate, this fund also is shrinking day by day.

12.2 Apart from the financial crunch, large number of vacancies of teachers, lack of modern equipments in the laboratories, advanced international research journals & periodicals in the library, interference in the appointment of teachers, mixing of too much of politics in academics, etc., the Committee found, were the major reasons affecting the academic ambience in the campuses adversely.

12.3 The Committee expresses its concern about large number of vacancies at different levels in teaching community. Presently, there is a serious shortage of faculty at the current level of demands. The Committee finds that most of the State universities and colleges are ill equipped lacking required infrastructure and trained teachers. The Committee views with serious concern the status of vacant teaching posts. As per the information available with the Committee, in the 16 Central universities, there are 1988 vacancies as on 31-03-2005, with the Banaras Hindu University and Delhi University having as many as 687 and 396 vacancies respectively. Situation is also far from satisfactory in JNU, Visva Bharti and Mizoram University. The Committee observes that out of total vacant 1988 posts, 1056 posts belong to Lecturer category. The Committee fails to understand the reasons for such a large number of posts of Lecturer lying vacant which is the entry point to a university. The Committee apprehends that situation may be worse in State universities. The Committee is of the view that drastic steps need to be taken so that students are not deprived of proper guidance.

12.4 The Committee at the same time feels that we need not only more qualified but also highly motivated teachers. In order to attract/retain them, we have to supplement their salaries with an attractive package of perquisites and support for academic activities coupled with appropriate recognition with outstanding achievement.

12.5 The Committee's attention was also drawn towards the need for relaxing the requirement of NET

qualification for a person to be appointed as a Lecturer in a university/college because this sometimes prohibited the qualified and outstanding persons from being inducted in the teaching community, if they have not cleared the NET. The Committee, therefore, recommends that this issue needs to be considered by the Department and the UGC in a positive spirit.

XIII. FAKE UNIVERSITIES/INSTITUTIONS

13.1 As per the information available with the Committee, there are 21 fake universities/institutions located in different parts of the country, UP having the highest number of such universities (8), closely followed by Delhi (7). The Committee takes a serious view that these fake universities continue to operate with impunity cheating the innocent students. Government seems to be totally helpless. Section 22 of the UGC Act, 1956 provides that the right to conferring/granting degrees can be exercised only by a university established or incorporated by or under a Central Act, Provincial Act or a State Act or an institution specially empowered by an Act of Parliament to confer or grant degrees. Section 23 further provides that word 'university' can be associated only with those bodies covered under Section 22. The Committee notes that as per Section 24, a penalty of Rs. 1000/- is liable to be imposed in case of violation of these provisions. This mild penalty has failed to make any impact for obvious reasons. The Committee has been given to understand that State Governments are being regularly requested by UGC to institute criminal proceedings against fake institutions. Even UGC has also decided to take action. The Committee would, however, like to point out that criminal proceedings will not make any difference in the status of such institutions due to the continuation of very mild penalty provisions.

13.2 The Committee understands that pursuant to the recommendations of the Committee on Petitions (Lok Sabha), a Bill was introduced in the Rajya Sabha in December, 1991 providing for imprisonment upto six months and a fine of not less than Rs. 1 lakh which may extend to Rs. 10 lakhs. This Bill was subsequently withdrawn on 1st June, 1995. Thereafter, no further project seems to have been made on such a vital issue. The Committee would like to emphasize that urgent steps need to be taken for bringing a legislation providing for more stringent penalties for running fake universities.

XIV. ROLE OF THE UGC

14.1 The UGC during its 50 years of existence, higher education has grown enormously. As a result, not only its responsibilities have increased manifold, problems before it today have become more complex than ever before.

14.2 The UGC was established to promote, coordinate and determine standards in respect of higher education in the country. The Committee is of the opinion that the UGC has not been able to live upto the expectations. It has become unequal to the task and challenges before it. It is now functioning mainly as grant disbursing body than a body for the promotion of teaching/research and maintenance of standards in higher education. The institutions of higher learning in India have become just degree conferring bodies than academic and intellectual entity.

14.3 Today, something like 50 to 60 percent of our colleges do not have even the basic infrastructure, qualified teachers, lab, libraries, etc. There has been no way of regulating the proliferation of such colleges. The Committee is perturbed to see that after nearly 50 years of the UGC's existence, there is no set of rules regulating the establishment of sub-standard colleges. The Committee is of the opinion that the UGC should not act as a Department of the government but should act as a professional body in which the university interests should be fully represented.

14.4 The Committee was informed that the UGC did not have the power to de-recognize degrees awarded by any university. Absence of such power has made it difficult for the UGC to ensure compliance with its priorities and directives. The Committee, however, is of the opinion that the so-called fitness-to-function-norms for the universities be defined more precisely as this will take care of the unworthy universities even without taking on the power of derecognising a degree.

14.5 Another fact brought to notice of the Committee was, certain amount of defiance by the State governments of the UGC's guidelines and regulations. For example, despite UGC's guidelines regarding selection procedure of teachers, certain States like U.P., Bihar, Punjab and Haryana have evolved their own mechanism. Another area of defiance is regarding colleges not having their governing bodies as stipulated by the UGC rather than being controlled by Department of Higher Education of respective States.

14.6 The Committee notes that the only power to enforce compliance that the UGC has is that of the purse. However, in present time, even funds with the UGC have become scarce. The claim for funds that the central universities make, the UGC is not left with much for State universities. Besides, the UGC is crushed under the weight

of excessive staff, particularly at the lower and middle levels and a large part of its allocations goes for paying salaries, allowances, pensions, etc.

14.7 The Committee recommends a national level body of higher education be established to advise the government on policy matters, coordinate the activities of the various professional bodies, encourage interface among different areas, allocate resources in terms of national needs and manpower planning, and establish and manage common infrastructure and institutions and primacy of professional opinion over other considerations be ensured.

14.8 The Committee notes that not only are there disputes about the jurisdiction of the various regulatory bodies, the fact remains that the Centre is cagey about asserting its rights more than is minimally necessary. Example of Chhattisgarh is there. A situation had arisen where the Centre is feeling outmaneuvered by the initiatives being taken by certain States. Foreign institutions too have penetrated the Indian market quite extensively and the UGC is unable to do anything than being a helpless spectator. The Committee strongly feels that the UGC even in the existing mandate under the UGC Act could have adopted a number of measures for regulating mushrooming of sub-standard private/foreign institutions.

14.9 The Committee desires that prescription of minimum standards of fitness for admission to universities or to technical and professional institutions as well as direct inspection of colleges and other institutions in order to maintain standards be undertaken by the UGC. The Committee is of the view that the UGC should put in place a better system of monitoring and take decisions on the basis of feedback obtained from it. Throughout its existence, UGC has not even once insisted that State Government must prepare a Plan of Action in respect of both universities and colleges. The UGC can ask the State Governments to send it a plan of development for higher education every year. Thereafter, a meeting can be fixed at the UGC Headquarters. The Committee feels that the UGC's interaction with States should be more frequent so that there is no space of doubts in anyone's mind about the other's intention. It is suggested that State Councils of Higher Education be established for the purpose of interaction with the UGC.

14.10 It is suggested that full-time members of the UGC to look after different portfolios falling under higher education be provided for and their numbers be increased in comparison to the present system, which permit for only a full-time Vice-Chairman to assist the Chairman. Further, these members should be chosen from the top three-four experts in a particular field.

14.11 A suggestion was made to the Committee that the UGC should concentrate only on post-graduate education leaving undergraduate education out of its purview with a view to lessening the responsibility of the UGC of disbursing small amounts all over the country. Instead it should fund only the autonomous colleges and post-graduate institutions and in return demand for quality and accountability in a better manner.

14.12 The Committee notes that in 1998, a Committee was appointed by the Ministry of HRD to examine amendments to the UGC Act. Report of the Committee was submitted to the Ministry of HRD but Amendment Bill is yet to be brought before Parliament. Even the Committee on Autonomy of Higher Education Institutions, recently constituted by the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), has also desired for setting up a task force to re-examine the existing UGC Act to provide for incorporation of new provisions to suit the emerging concerns and realities of higher education and to make the UGC Act a more significant body. The Committee feels that the Amendment Bill to amend the UGC Act be brought in after consulting the expert opinion for making the UGC a purposeful and relevant body in the existing conditions. The Committee also feels that it is a high time to rechristen the UGC to project it mainly as a developmental body rather than as a grant disbursement one. It may, therefore, be renamed as Higher Education Development Commission or any other similar name which is in keeping with the changed dimensions in this area.

XV. CONCLUSION

15.1 In view of the new situations and the resulting challenges before higher education in the emerging scenario, the need for preparing ourselves to face them successfully brooks no delay. India will have to take various measures, legal, institutional, financial and others well in time so that we are not left behind in this fast changing world. For this, there is an urgent need for reform and revitalization of education sector to make it relevant and suitable to the emerging socio-economic and other realities. The National Policy on Education that was formulated nearly two decades ago even before the process of liberalization had begun, the Committee feels, needs to be revisited with a view to making it more forward-looking and vibrant. The new concerns also will have to be included in it. Besides, the existing legal framework in the higher education sector particularly, the UGC Act and the Acts of various State Universities also need to be made more relevant and effective in the present context.

15.2 This Report, in fact, has attempted to suggest mechanisms/measures for tackling most of the problems and

challenges, if not all, before higher education. The Committee is aware of the fact that doing all this would need huge amount of resources. And how to manage that resources, is a million dollar question today. To begin with, till the concerns relating to private funding were taken care of, the major share of the required money, the Committee feels, will have to be primarily provided by the government. As per an estimate, nearly 3400 crores of rupees shall be required for improving the infrastructure in the existing universities, filling vacancies of the teachers, upgrading the libraries and laboratories, providing broadband connectivity as also for opening more universities in the coming years. The State universities and colleges also need to be supported in a big way with a view to bring them at a particular standard. The Committee, therefore, is of the opinion that efforts should be made for mobilizing this amount for the higher education by the government, both Centre and State. This may certainly not be impossible to arrange the required resources, if the Planning Commission, Ministry of Finance, Department of Secondary and Higher Education sit together and apply their mind on this issue. This investment should not be a big price for the benefits that would accrue to the country. Socio-economic benefits of higher education are immense and radiate to various areas of life.

NOTE OF DISSENT

BRINDA KARAT
M.P., RAJYA SABHA

January 28, 2006

The Chairman,
Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resource Development

Dear Shri Vayalar Raviji,

Thank you for the inclusion of several points that I had raised on the Draft of the 172nd Report of the Committee on University and Higher Education. However, I continue to have objections to a few of the recommendations that have been made in the Report. The following points may kindly be included as a note of dissent.

1. There should not be any further hike in fees charged from students in the colleges and universities since in most places they are already quite high, as has been recently noted by the CUBE Committee on Higher and Technical Education Chaired by Prof. Mungekar. While efforts by universities to mobilize resources internally are not objectionable *per se*, provided that such attempts do not adversely affect the academic standard of the institutions, fee hikes in the name of cost recovery is totally avoidable since it would further limit access to higher education.
2. The report seems to be in favour of opening universities in the private sector, despite noting the dangers involved in terms of commercialization of higher education. The Committee has noted the urgent need to regulate unaided colleges and professional educational institutions in the private sector through an effective regulatory framework. Such regulation of private educational institutions would be rendered meaningless if universities, which in most cases are the affiliating bodies, are themselves run by private parties. Universities should not be allowed in the private sector.
3. The Committee has advised the Government to adopt “an aggressive and proactive, rather than defensive approach on both imports as well as exports fronts to take the benefits under GATS and concomitant process of liberalization of higher education”. This includes FDI in higher education. Foreign investment in higher education would impede the development of indigenous and critical research within our university system thereby impinging upon our intellectual self-reliance and aggravate the tendency towards commercialization of higher education. Moreover, bringing university education under GATS is totally unwarranted. While academic collaboration between reputed foreign universities and Indian universities, which is already happening under mutual exchange programmes, should be further encouraged, establishment of offshore campuses of foreign universities in India should not be allowed.
4. The recommendation that there should be “an independent accreditation agency” with the participation of industry” on the lines of quality assurance bodies like ISO and other rating agencies like CRISIL and ICRA”

arises out of an erroneous understanding which views higher education as a commodity being produced in teaching shops. Assessment and accreditation of universities should remain with the UGC and the functioning of the NAAC should be improved.

Sd/-

(Brinda Karat)

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS AT A GLANCE

II. HIGHER EDUCATION TODAY: *Important Issues*

Nevertheless, in the light of these achievements, India should not lose sight of the new problems and challenges faced by us today. Access to higher education in India has been highly restrictive; only close to 7 per cent of its students between 18-23 years are able to go for it. While this percentage is as high as 40 per cent in other countries with whom India has to compete in the coming years. Another problem before our higher education is that of relevance. While it has grown in quantity, but a lot has to be done for its quality and relevance particularly in the emerging scenario of intense competitiveness. Management of education in this era also needs to be radically reformed for imparting effective autonomy and enforcing accountability in the educational institutions. Problem of managing resources is also one of the major issues before us today. (Para 2.2)

Challenges before higher education are no more nation-centric; they have become global now, particularly after the trade in services has been brought under the GATS. Socio-economic dimension of higher education have become more significant today than ever before. If India were to achieve the developed status in this milieu of global competition, the Committee feels that there is no option but to reorient its higher education system to be vibrant, competitive, meaningful and relevant. It will have to grow both in terms of quantity as well as quality, mainly with a view to converting its vast population as asset, rather than a liability, as has been done by the China. (Para 2.3)

Our higher education system, Committee is of the view, is faced with many challenges today. The pressure on higher education system is going to further increase due to large number of additional students expected to join the higher education institutions in coming years, particularly due to upward pull generated by popular interventions like *Sarva Siksha Abhiyan* and Mid-Day Meal Scheme. (Para 2.4)

III. ACCESS AND EQUITY

The Committee observes that higher education in India was never freely available to all; it was basically elitist in nature due mainly to historical and other reasons. Even after its expansion in post-Independence period, it could not be made a mass activity. Even today, it is neither fully accessible nor equitable. The Committee is of the opinion that the issues of access & equity, in fact, are the two core issues to the expansion of higher education and hence, to the overall progress of a nation. The Committee, therefore, underlines the urgent need for broadening access to higher education by expanding it and by making it affordable. (Para 3.3)

The Committee notes that in the case of (b) and (c) categories, our performance is not too bad; it is comparable to some of the developed countries. It, however, feels that it would not be a proper way of looking at this aspect. We must look at the 'access ratio' in relation to our student population in the eligible group i.e. 7 per cent. It is far below the average of other countries. The Committee is of the firm opinion that if, India were to compete and survive the intense global competition in the 21st century as knowledge/information society, this percentage will have to be increased sufficiently. The Tenth Plan, the Committee notes, has fixed a target of increasing the access ratio from 7 per cent in 2003 to 10 per cent by 2007. The Committee feels that even this target is unlikely to be achieved with the present level of our efforts and performance in higher education field. The Committee is happy to note the visible yearning, both in government as well as private sector, to enhance the access to and equity in our higher education system. The Committee emphasizes that we would have to set our goals high and work for it relentlessly. The Committee, therefore, recommends that our aim should be to increase the access ratio to at least 20 per cent by 2015, which could be the threshold limit for our remaining in global race as also for sustainable development of the country.

(Para 3.6)

3.7 *Major Constraints*

Several social, economic, administrative and other reasons seem to act together as constraints to access

and equity in higher education. Factors like rural-urban divide, gender disparity, regional imbalances, decreasing public allocation, economic hardship, increasing cost due to commercialization, etc. are some of the major reasons of this phenomena. This scenario of higher education, particularly in the ever-expanding competitive environment, does not inspire required confidence, if India were to play its assigned role at the global level. The Committee, therefore, believes that India has to rise to the occasion urgently and make its higher education system not only competitive but also accessible and affordable to everyone. (Para 3.7.1)

Dimension of this problem is not only confined to access to higher education of the age group of 18-23 years. It also extends to those in the need of continuous learning and are older than the age group of 18-23 years. The Committee feels that the demand for higher education from diverse kind of learners calls for the courses that are flexible; can be studied off- campuses and credits received are portable. The Committee desires the Government to take proactive measures in this regard urgently.

(Para 3.7.2)

3.8 Other Imbalances

The Committee is dismayed to note that there was tremendous imbalance in access to higher education in urban and rural areas. Most of the colleges and universities, the Committee notes, are located in urban or semi-urban areas. Whatever colleges were in rural areas, less said is better about their quality and output. While only 16 out of every 1000 were college graduates in rural areas, 111 out of every 1000 belonged to this category in urban areas. The same trend is also discernable in relation to house-hold economic status both in rural as well as urban areas. Higher education in the country, the Committee notes, is thus largely a pro-rich and urban phenomenon. (Para 3.8.1)

Similarly, the gender disparity in higher education in India was yet another area of concern, which has been dealt with in detail elsewhere in this Report. The Committee is of the considered opinion that urban bias and gender disparity in higher education are the two main stumbling blocks to access and equity in this area. Large sections of our population, therefore, are denied access to learning for economic, cultural, religious, geographical and other reasons. (Para 3.8.2)

3.9 Regional Disparity

The Committee notes the conclusion of a study undertaken by a group of Indian scholars based in Japan and USA, which had analyzed the funding of Higher education in different states by the Department. The study has shown that Union Government's expenditure on higher education to various states was grossly uneven. For example, last year's budget allocation for the states like Bihar, Rajasthan, Orissa etc., was highly inadequate. Per person expenditure on higher education in Bihar was Rs. 1.87, in Rajasthan Rs. 2.59 and in Orissa it was Rs. 4.07 while in States like Uttaranchal it was Rs. 105.42, in Arunachal Pradesh Rs. 105 and in Assam 77.7. (Para 3.9.1)

Another distinctive feature of regional disparity is visible in the number of colleges/institutions located in different States. The four Southern States and Maharashtra having 32% of India's population have 46% of total general colleges and almost 60% of professional institutions. In contrast, in the States of UP, MP and Bihar (including Jharkhand) having 34% of population, only 23% of general colleges and only 14% of professional colleges are located. The Committee is concerned to see that in the most populous States where nearly 3/4th of our population lived, the access ratio is far below the national average. It presents quite a dismal picture about the existing status of higher education in the country. (Para 3.9.2)

The Committee strongly feels that there is an urgent need to remove this regional disparity. It is high time that Central Government takes some initiatives for encouraging and helping the State Governments to set up educational institutions in tune with the global requirements. (Para 3.9.3)

The Committee also emphasizes the special focus for improving access and equity in remote regions and geographically disadvantaged places. It also desires special funding and region-specific norms for North-East Region & Jammu & Kashmir. The Committee appreciates the efforts of the government for setting up Central universities in North-Eastern States. The Committee recommends that such universities may be set up in the remaining States of North-Eastern region including Sikkim at the earliest. The colleges in these areas should be given special funding in addition to normal development grants by the UGC. (Para 3.9.4)

3.10 SCs/STs in Higher Education

The Committee notes that the UGC had tried to help the under-privileged sections of the society through

some special schemes. A Remedial Coaching scheme for the benefit of students belonging to the SC/ST and weaker sections of the society was introduced in 1994. Another scheme of remedial coaching was introduced with a view to improve the overall performance of these students in the examinations. The Commission introduced the scheme of establishment of SC/ST cells in the universities in the year 1983, with a view to provide information regarding facilities available for SC/ST students in universities and colleges. The SC/ST Cells are closely monitoring the implementation of reservation policy in higher education. But these attempts, the Committee notes have not helped much. For example, the enrolment of SCs in higher education has ranged between 8.6 per cent in 1990-91 to 11.3 per cent in 2002-03. Enrolment of ST students in higher education was between 2.1 per cent to 3.6 per cent in 1990-91 and 2003-04 respectively. The Committee recommends that special programmes for encouraging students from backward and minority communities also need to be prepared urgently as their participation in higher education is abysmally low, as compared to their percentage in total population. This poor situation reflects the poor enrolment and retention of all children including the SC/ST students in school education. All efforts be made to ensure the enrolment and retention of students right from school level.

(Para 3.10)

3.11 Convergence of Conventional and Distance mode

The problem of access and equity is closely linked to opportunity. The Committee feels that the solution to the problem of opportunity lies in convergence of conventional with modern distance education systems with open and flexible structure. The Committee, therefore, is of the considered opinion that we must exploit our ICT potential for its penetration to the country's remotest corners to expand the access to higher education. The Committee is of the view that the Government should make an earnest beginning to train the people for utilizing the latest technologies to make the higher education easily accessible. It would also cut across the rural-urban divide as well as gender disparities in this regard.

(Para 3.11)

3.12 System of Affiliation

Another issue that Committee wishes to highlight is about system of affiliation. In India most of its 16000 odd colleges are affiliated ones. In the absence of proper facilities, many of these colleges perform only classroom teaching in a traditional way. The Committee was informed that nearly 89 per cent of UG students, 66 per cent of PG students and 85 per cent of the faculty in higher educational institutions, were in these affiliated colleges. Consequently, the M.Sc., MA, Ph.Ds that are coming out of such colleges are undoubtedly of poor quality. What is worse, in India major affiliating universities are over-burdened with the administrative works which are unproductive in academic terms. The Committee is of the view that this is certainly telling upon the academic competence of our universities. The VCs of such universities are left with no time for their academic pursuits. The Committee, therefore, recommends that there should be a cap on the number of colleges being affiliated to a university. For this, we would need to open more and more universities for which about 1000 universities and university level institutions be set up by 2015 in the Central, State and private sector. A country like Japan, it may be noted, has around 700 universities and USA has nearly 3000 of them. Besides, setting up more universities, we must encourage good colleges and institutions to acquire 'deemed university' or autonomous status by fulfilling the norms laid down in this regard. This, the Committee feels, would not only lessen the burden of universities but also enhance their quality and output greatly. Besides, the colleges should be encouraged to offer more and more applied courses by offering job-oriented courses particularly after 10+2. These measures, if taken up in a planned and fixed schedule would go a long way in decreasing the unnecessary burden on our universities.

(Para 3.12)

3.13 Open Universities

The Committee believes that for a vast country like India where accessibility to higher education is quite low, Open Universities have the vast potential for taking higher education to more and more people irrespective of different barriers. This system caters also for in-service persons for whom it is a second chance as well as for regular learners. It, therefore, needs to be provided greater thrust by integrating utility courses with personal development and socio-economic problems. The courses offered should be mainly job-oriented as far as possible. High priority should be given for opening more study centres particularly covering rural and remote areas with concentration of SC/ST and other backward communities' students.

(Para 3.13.2)

In view of many other Open Universities run by the State governments, the Committee feels the need for closer relationship and regular interaction between them and the IGNOU, with a view to avoiding unnecessary duplication in the production of course material etc. For this, a strong networking has to be developed amongst them. This also calls for uniformity with regard to the structure of the courses leaving adequate scope for region-specific variations. (Para 3.13.3)

The Committee's attention has been drawn to some inherent drawbacks present in this system of education. Lack of quality faculty members, non-availability of relevant study material, lack of basic facilities like good libraries, modern labs, computer, multimedia facilities, etc. are the major issues that need immediate redressal. Absence of an effective and efficient information dissemination system to the students about various types of courses, examination schedules, results, degrees, etc. causes great hardship to students. Even at the IGNOU (HQ), students have to run from pillar to post for these things. The Committee, therefore, recommends that these aspects be looked into urgently with a view to provide an adequate and efficient delivery mechanism and support system in the IGNOU and other Open Universities. The Committee is of the considered view that to make Open Universities more attractive and relevant, efforts be made to ensure quality of study material, timely dispatch thereof, dedicated teachers at the study centres, provision of necessary infrastructure, use of ICT, etc. (Para 3.13.4)

The Committee finds that there is no accreditation system in IGNOU. It is surprised to note that the work of neither IGNOU nor any other State Open University any Correspondence Course Institutes (CCI) has ever been assessed since they started functioning. As a result, credibility of these institutions *vis-à-vis* mainstream education system is poor. The Committee, therefore, emphasizes the urgent need for an effective assessment and accreditation system for these institutions so as to enhance and maintain quality of education provided through the distance mode. (Para 3.13.5)

The Committee is concerned over the plight of students of open universities who are in different areas of the country. The Committee notes that they do not have a platform at present to voice their grievances effectively. The Committee, therefore, emphasizes an urgent need for putting a mechanism in place for the students to highlight/redress their grievances. Such a machinery can also be utilized for a regular feedback on the efficacy of open learning programmes. (Para 3.13.6)

The Committee notes that the students of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) are projected as poor cousins of mainstream students. It has been reported that students coming through ODL channel are found to be lower in ability and performance as compared to the mainstream students. The Committee is perturbed to note that pass percentage of ODL students is very unsatisfactory. It strongly feels that this situation needs to be corrected urgently for instilling confidence in the public about the ODL system. The Committee recommends that all necessary steps be taken urgently for improving quality as well as standard of education imparted through ODL channel so that it can be made as a popular and affordable system. (Para 3.13.7)

The Committee takes note of the fact that the open universities were able to raise some revenue by running various courses offered through distance mode, there was no facility of fee concession available to eligible students in the ODL system. The Committee finds such a system to be discriminatory. It feels strongly that the fees in this system should also be rationalised and the poor and meritorious students be given some kind of fee concessions or assistance. (Para 3.13.8)

3.14 *Distance Education Council*

The Distance Education Council (DEC) has been created under the IGNOU Act for the promotion and coordination of Open University and distance education system and for the determination of its standard. The Committee found that the opinion is divided on the power of the DEC to recognize/approve the courses/degrees being offered by the various other universities/institutions in the country by distance mode. It is argued that the DEC having been created under the Act of a university should not have such jurisdiction in respect of courses/degrees offered by the other universities. It may be pointed that the DEC has been issuing notifications to universities asking them to get their programmes approved quoting a particular Gazette Notification regarding students not being eligible for Central Government jobs, if they pursue courses not approved by the DEC. Many of the universities are not prepared to accept the DEC jurisdiction in this regard mainly on the ground that the DEC was a body under IGNOU Act. As a result, a lot of confusion has been created. The Committee feels that to make the decision explicit, there is a need to have a separate Act for the DEC for making it a regulatory body for open university and open learning system and distance mode on the lines of AICTE or UGC.

The DEC also provides development funds to open universities and other such institutions from the funds

given by the Central government. The Committee is happy to note the several initiatives taken by the DEC, such as common pool of programmes, evolving common standards, system of credit transfer, etc. The Committee is also of the view that the DEC should be developed as an apex body for promoting, coordinating and determining standards in distance education more or less on the lines of the UGC in the case of conventional education.

(Para 3.14)

3.15 Women & Higher Education

National Policy on Education, 1986 had emphasized to gear the entire education system to play a positive role for the empowerment of women by providing special support services for their education and also by removing factors, which impede the spread of women education. The 'Programme of Action, 1992' also proposed to use education as an agent of basic change in the status of women for neutralizing all the distortions to have a well-conceived edge in favour of the women. These well meaning proclamations by the landmark documents, the Committee feels, have remained on paper only even after more than two decades they were made. Women's participation in higher education has been quite disappointing, despite significant contributions made by them in different areas of life. They constitute almost half of the total population of India, yet a large proportion of them is still illiterate and ignorant. In Committee's opinion, the overall picture of women education, in fact, is of discrimination, limited opportunity, numerous obstacles and utter neglect.

(Para 3.15.1)

The Department sought to make out a case before the Committee that there had been significant improvement in the position of women in higher education. The Committee was informed that the enrolment of women in higher education had increased from 10% of the total enrolment in higher education in 1950-51 to 40 per cent in 2004-05. It has also been informed that the number of women colleges has increased from 1003 in 1993-94 to 1849 in 2004-05. The Committee feels that it is not a realistic way of projecting the position of women in the higher education. These figures become meaningless if compared with the proportion of women in the age group of 18 to 23 years to the total population in this group. Secondly, their participation (40 per cent) in higher education becomes abysmally low because this percentage is, in fact, of the 7 per cent of the total youth in the eligible age group that is currently in higher education.

(Para 3.15.2)

Of the total women enrolled during 2004-05, as may be noted, more than 50 per cent were in Arts & Humanities. Of the remaining 50 per cent 20 per cent were in Sciences; 16 per cent in Commerce & Management; just 1.86 per cent in education; 4.15 per cent in Engineering & Technology and 3.6 per cent in Medicine. The presence of women in agriculture, mainstay of Indian economy, is just negligible. It is a matter of great concern that the participation of women in the areas with great demand such as management, engineering/technology, medicine, etc. is very low in India. Such a situation, the Committee feels, does not augur well for the future of this nation. Can a nation progress in real terms and catch up with others in this fiercely competitive world with their women-folk remaining virtually outside the higher education system? The Committee, therefore, recommends that the participation of women in professional courses, which is abysmally low at present, needs to be improved manifold without further delay. More and more women as Engineers, Professors, Lawyers, Doctors, Architects and Entrepreneurs could mould the face of India to a great extent.

(Para 3.15.4)

The representation of women in higher education, the Committee recommends, needs to be increased proportionately particularly, when their performance as well as number at the senior secondary level has improved greatly. Some kind of institutional mechanism for looking into this problem and coordinating various efforts made in this regard at the national level needs to be put in place. It is high time that the curriculum is redesigned to remove all gender biases as also to gender sensitize education personnel and administrators. A pro-girl-child climate in the community needs to be created for this. Provision for enough scholarships, fee concession, hostels, staff quarters, provision for transportation, etc. for women needs to be provided in the institutions of higher learning.

(Para 3.15.5)

The Department appears to have no relevant and accurate statistics in respect of women's participation in higher education. Information given by the Department to the Committee was simply taken out of UGC Annual Report 2004-05. The Committee expected the Department to provide every relevant data in respect of different components reflecting exact status of women in higher education. So much so, the allocations and expenditure made for the women-specific programmes, which form a part of gender-budgeting that every Department has to have, was conspicuous by absence in the note supplied to the Committee. The Committee is at a loss to see as to how the Department was planning for the expeditious development of women in higher education in the absence of relevant statistics/information.

(Para 3.15.6)

The Department in its notes has mentioned the following schemes that were currently being run for the women: Special scheme for construction of women hostels; establishment of women's studies centres; Day Care centres in universities, etc. The Committee notes that neither the Department nor the UGC had any concrete and targeted scheme or programme for improving the participation of women in higher education. Such an indifferent approach for this very crucial aspect is almost perilous. The Committee, therefore, recommends that formulation of targeted/specific schemes and programmes for this purpose needs to be done by the Government urgently. The Committee has learnt that a very good scheme for supporting single girl child of a parent for higher education has been announced. The Committee emphasizes the need for its wide publicity. Sufficient funds should be provided for this purpose. (Para 3.15.7)

The UGC scheme for opening women study centres in the universities, the Committee found, could not pick up and precious little appears to have been done in this regard. The Committee recommends that it must be ensured that all the universities both Central as well as State, have these centres in one form or the other, by the end of Tenth Plan period. For this, adequate funds need to be provided urgently. (Para 3.15.8)

The open distance learning, the Committee feels, could be a very potent method to fight gender disability in higher education. Studies in different areas may be promoted for women in user-friendly manner in the language they prefer with suitable study materials. Training rural women for the purpose of involving them through community participation in our development process should also be promoted. Their involvement in *Sarva Siksha Abhiyan* more particularly the *Mid-Day Meal* could make these schemes a great success. For achieving these objectives, the Committee is of the considered view, Government will have to play a pro-active, positive, interventionist role to ensure access of all eligible women to the higher education. (Para 3.15.9)

IV. RELEVANCE

Education, be it primary, secondary or higher, if it is not contextual and relevant, will not be able to meet the challenges and demands of the time. The Committee notes that in today's world, things in every walk of life are changing at a very fast pace. It has, therefore, become a daunting task for education to keep pace with the challenges posed by the contemporary socio-economic transformation. Higher education, in fact, faces this impact more than other levels. Relevance of higher education, therefore, becomes of utmost significance for the development and survival of a nation in the changed global/liberal context. In the Committee's view, its relevance should be seen with reference to marketability of the graduate and postgraduate students it produces; with reference to its reach to marginalized sections; and its relevance for the socio-economic development of a society.

(Para 4.1)

The Committee notes that the problem of relevance of higher education is mainly with reference to general education i.e., Arts, Humanities & Social Science and Law & Commerce, wherein 83 % of the 92 lakhs students, i.e., 76 lakhs are enrolled. However, in today's new economic environment, need for knowledge-workers and graduates with sound fundamentals, good analytical abilities and appropriate utility-oriented skills are on rise and they are in great demand. The Committee finds that most of our universities and colleges are providing out-dated, if not sub-standard education in these disciplines, leading to the degrees and diplomas of little or no substance. The content as well as the quality of education is mostly out of context and even if the curriculum is relevant, the teaching process is unscientific and sub-optimal. Not only this, the Committee came to know that our institutions sometimes copy syllabi from Western Universities. Standard books used for teaching are from the West and those written indigenously are usually without an original view on the subject. As a result, solutions to our problems turn out to be highly misplaced. Such an education, the Committee is of the view, would not have much relevance to our conditions and demands. It is, in fact, one of the main reasons for increasing disinterest and frustration amongst the country's youth. The Committee recommends that the Government must take necessary measures, in consultation with experts, to ensure that required revision in the content and curriculum is carried out periodically. It has to be in keeping with indigenous conditions and requirements. There has to be an institutional mechanism to ensure that higher education remained relevant to the changing times. Process of such revision, the Committee feels, should be an on-going one for making higher education relevant and useful.

(Para 4.2)

4.3. Vocational Education

The Committee notes that as envisaged in the National Policy on Education as also in the revised Plan of Action-1992, the UGC implemented the recommendations made by the Core Committee on Vocationalisation (Career Orientation) of Education. This was to ensure that the students at the first degree level develop knowledge, skills and attitudes for gainful employment with emphasis on self-employment. Since 1994-95, a large number of colleges and universities, the Committee was informed, had been identified to provide assistance under the scheme on selective basis.

The Committee was informed that the UGC, in fact, had been receiving very good response from the universities/colleges to start vocational courses in various subjects, but not all such requests from the universities/colleges could be agreed to because of the inadequacy of funds. This, according to the Committee, indicates that the students are accepting the concept of Vocationalisation of Education as it is job-oriented and a move towards entrepreneurship. The Committee, therefore, recommends that inadequacy of funds should not act as an obstacle to vocationalisation of education. It would, in fact, reduce the undesired pressure on universities and institutions of higher learning. Adequate funds be allocated for this purpose.

(Para

4.3.1)

The scheme of vocationalisation of education actually, stipulates a close coordination between the industries and educational institutions. The institutions intending to avail of the scheme of Vocationalisation of Education and applying to the UGC for financial assistance, are required to submit a letter of intent to UGC duly signed by the industries that the students will have on-the-job training and other practical experiences in their industries and that they will pick up some of the students after completion of particular vocational course. The Committee is of the opinion that linking of education with industry is something very desirable today. The Committee believes that industry-institution linkages be encouraged as this will take care of many problems simultaneously - promote relevance in the curriculum, enhance the employability of students, provide training facilities and mobilising some resources. Such an interface with industries, Committee believes, would encourage more and more students to opt for the vocational streams instead of going for the general courses, which have not much demand in the job- market. In the process, industry will also get suitable trained manpower relevant and dedicated to its needs. A body consisting of eminent persons from industry and academia be formed to lay down necessary modalities for such a partnership as soon as possible.

(Para 4.3.2)

4.4 Dual Degree

The Committee was informed that UGC had allowed the system of earning certificate/diploma in utility-oriented programmes through parallel mode alongwith the regular degree. This is to provide an alternative to the students just in case. The AICTE has also allowed the system of earning dual degrees simultaneously. The Committee welcomes this and feels that the system of degree plus certificate/diploma in utility oriented programme appears to be quite germane to the emerging scenario where demand for skilled manpower in different disciplines is increasing at the global level. The Committee feels that our ultimate objective should be to ensure that students do not merely have to look for a job; instead they are able to create jobs for themselves and many others. Need of the hour, according to the Committee, is to develop in-house faculty and other facilities in the colleges for this purpose. This will make our colleges more vibrant and attractive. This is an area, the Committee feels, where public-private partnership can play a creative role in augmenting the activities of our colleges. The Committee at the same time expresses its apprehension about the possibility of main degree neglected at the cost of utility-oriented one, as a result, a student may not be able to show his best in either. This aspect needs to be taken care of by the UGC and AICTE. We must also put a system of accreditation for such courses.

(Para 4.4)

4.5 Promoting Research

Research performance is one of the parameters for deciding world ranking of the universities. The fact that only one of our universities finds place in top 500 universities of the world, speaks volumes about the status of research in our country. The Committee finds that the research activities were not getting due attention in our universities, which should have been one of their real bases. In fact, there have emerged the system of premier institutes and laboratories, both in pure sciences and the social sciences and humanities, where research was moved away from our universities. As a result of separation of research from teaching, the latter acquired gradually a secondary importance. The Committee, therefore, is of the opinion that research needs to be closely linked with teaching for which scientific base in our universities needs to be strengthened that will attract not only talented students but also industry to our university laboratories.

(Para 4.5.1)

Private people are not inclined to support research in universities and research being a capital-intensive activity, their participation would help greatly. The needs of the institutions, research labs and industries are mutually common. Therefore, there need to have greater degree of connectivity and cooperation. The Committee strongly feels that needs of these three entities may be interlinked to make research more relevant and productive. Inability of researchers to secure employment for themselves is also one of the reasons for such a state of affairs in this area.

(Para 4.5.2)

Lack of allocation from state kitty is also a reason for poor research activities in the universities. The

Committee observes that only a fraction of UGC fund is spent on research. This is one of the reasons that universities do not have much of R&D efforts. Smaller outlays mean UGC assistance to only a handful of universities. Secondly, of the research assistance that UGC extends, only a small fraction goes to specific projects; a sizable proportion thereof goes in the form of individual fellowships. The Committee feels that it would be worthwhile if the bulk of research funds from the UGC go to specific projects which have been found to be more fruitful and result-oriented the world over.

(Para 4.5.3)

The Committee, therefore, proposes the following measures to help make research a mainstay of our higher education. Governments, both Central and State and other funding agencies should provide organized support to research activities for modernizing laboratories and removal of obsolescence in equipments on regular basis. A Research Council in UGC needs to be set up; the UGC should launch a network for access to research material and data across the universities.

(Para 4.5.4)

The Committee also emphasizes the need for monitoring and evaluation of research in universities by setting up Monitoring & Evaluation (ME) units under the supervision of a Committee of eminent professors from different disciplines. It needs coordination with national laboratories. Number of fellowships also needs to be suitably enhanced so that students are attracted to undertake research in newer areas.

(Para 4.5.5)

4.6 Promoting Basic Sciences

India has had a long tradition of pure sciences, the Committee is concerned to notice the increasing disinterest among the younger generations in this area. It was mainly because of non-availability of suitable job opportunities and other incentives in the pure sciences. The Committee finds this situation disquieting because India badly needs to integrate R&D activities in sciences with its economic and social programmes, because science must serve the socio-economic and other needs of our society. Science & Technology has to play a greater role in prevention, mitigation and management of the impact of natural disasters like earthquakes and *Tsunamis*. The Committee, therefore, feels that we must find ways of making the study of pure as well as applied sciences, both in teaching & research, more attractive for our students, if India were to use science for the welfare of its people. We must augment further our efforts in critical areas like agricultural production, food processing, energy, transportation, communication, etc. so as to be able to compete and excel in the global arena. Immediate steps, therefore, need to be taken for popularizing the study of basic sciences by having career-oriented programmes in applied sciences. Adequate incentives and infrastructure for research & development is needed urgently. The base for sciences in the universities needs to be rebuilt and strengthened by taking newer initiatives in the frontier areas.

(Para 4.6.2)

The de-bureaucratization in most of the scientific & technological institutions, will have to be ensured for promoting research activities and preserving their academic autonomy.

(Para 4.6.3)

The entire science & technological support system, in Committee's view, needs to be restructured for making the study of basic sciences more attractive. The Committee is of the view that all research institutes may also be persuaded to have under-graduate teaching programmes. Another feasible approach could be to have a co-coordinating mechanism whereunder research institutes participate in teaching as well as take up collaborative research projects with university faculty and students. Secondly, regular exchange of faculty can be managed between the research institutes and universities.

(Para 4.6.4)

The Committee is of the view that there is urgent need for building more centres of excellence in science like Indian Institute of Sciences. The Committee is happy to learn that two such institutions have already been proposed to be established at Kolkata & Pune. More such institutions should be provided in other regions of the country. The Government will have to provide necessary resources and funds for research and development for inventing required technologies for agriculture, food processing, energy, bio-technology, pharmaceutical and health. These must be treated as priority areas for such funding.

(Para 4.6.5)

4.7 Social Sciences & Humanities

The processes of privatization and liberalization have generated new demands, particularly in higher education. It has led to considerable neglect of social sciences. These disciplines are such branches of knowledge which do not have any immediate market value. Private participation has been mainly confined to professional courses. Government funding, therefore, remains the only source available for social sciences. What is more disturbing is that Government funding is increasingly being diverted for professional institutions, thus leaving the social sciences in the state of utter neglect. The Committee is of the view that utility of social sciences to our society, polity, economy, etc. cannot be overlooked. They add value to one's life and any study that is value-free, in fact, tends to become sterile. The Committee, therefore, is of the considered opinion that this imbalance needs to be corrected immediately by making the study of social sciences scientific, interesting and relevant to present situation. The government and the UGC may set up an Expert Committee for presenting a blueprint for this purpose. (Para 4.7.2)

V. QUALITY AND EXCELLENCE

Such a situation, the Committee feels, does not augur well for the future of higher education in the country. The Committee, therefore, feels that the issue of quality and excellence of higher education should have been given more importance in India. Academic ambience in our universities, etc. needs to be improved a great deal. India has to create its new identity as knowledge-creator so as to face the challenges posed by the GATS as also to promote Indian higher education abroad. Quality and excellence are the watch-words in today's liberalized environment. Making higher education globally competitive, therefore, cannot be postponed any further. (Para 5.3)

The Committee at the same time cannot overlook the fact that India despite severe limitations has created a large scientific/technical manpower, who have earned a pride of place in the world community. India has not only to sustain its position but also to be a front-runner in the global competition. This can be done, according to the Committee, only when the standard and quality of our educational institutions and its graduates are greatly improved. They will have to be instilled with a high level of creativity, innovation, dedication, patriotism, etc. (Para 5.4)

Quality in education does not necessarily connote its demand in the job market only. It also requires students to acquire basic values and norms of life. Our education system unfortunately, appears to be neglecting this aspect greatly. As a result, deviant behaviour, particularly amongst our youth is increasing at alarming proportion that needs to be arrested. The role of our education system for this purpose must be restored, before it is too late. (Para 5.5)

Question of quality is also linked directly with the quality of teachers, curriculum design & development; evaluation of teachers' and students' performance; teacher's training; and other infrastructure such as good labs, libraries, sports facilities, etc. Greater and regular sharing of experiences through networking and otherwise between different institutions at the national and global plane is highly recommended. Multi-disciplinary curriculum with stress on developing problem-solving abilities, augmenting knowledge skills and group activities are essential to provide relevance and usefulness to real life situations. Quality of higher education can be greatly enhanced through the use of audio-visual techniques and the modern information & communication technologies. (Para 5.6)

Providing adequate exposure to teachers and students by holding more and more conferences and seminars, orientation and refresher courses for teachers; making selection process of Lecturers/Readers/Professors more transparent and shifting from incremental budgeting to performance budgeting are some of the areas, the Committee feels, if implemented, can go a long way in improving the quality and standard of higher education. (Para 5.7)

The Committee feels that there is a need for instilling a sense of accountability in teaching community. The Committee found that the quality of many teachers, if not all, does not inspire confidence as scholars or researchers or as educationists. The Committee recommends to carry out some kind of performance-audit of the teachers and in this process, the students' participation must also be ensured. The Committee strongly feels that the conditions of service, remuneration and career advancement of the teachers be linked with their overall performance. (Para 5.8)

The Committee is of the opinion that examination reforms be carried out so that "learning by rote" is replaced by "learning for joy". The Committee strongly feels that semester system should be introduced instead of the one-time final examination. The advantage of the semester system is that assessment of student performance becomes a continuous and integral part of the teaching-learning process. Also, a mechanism for joint conferring of degree by the university as well as colleges concerned will make colleges more responsible as their name will also appear on the

degree.

(Para 5.9)

5.10. Assessment & Accreditation

A major weakness in the existing institutional assessment, the Committee notes, is that while it assesses the performance of the university or colleges as a whole; it does not do it Department-wise. What is known to the people is the grades and stars, which signify only averages. Academic performance of a university, in fact, is mostly department-specific. As a result, weaker ones are not exposed. Therefore, the idea of grouping them together for assessment, the Committee feels, needs to be reconsidered. The Committee recommends that the NAAC should start accrediting individual departments also of a university in addition to its overall grading, at the earliest.

(Para 5.10.2)

The Committee was informed that accreditation being voluntary, many institutions that have secured accreditation may not turn up for re-accreditation after five years and may still continue to use the grade obtained earlier. Others do not turn up for accreditation at all. The Committee is aware that it would be difficult to enforce, if accreditation is made mandatory. The Committee proposes, as incentive for this purpose, that the accreditation must be linked with the grants or special assistance/recognition by the UGC and other bodies so that institutions turn up for accreditation. In USA, the Committee learnt, federal grants are available only to the accredited institutions.

(Para 5.10.3)

The Committee was informed that the process and procedure of assessment and accreditation by the NAAC takes a long time. It, therefore, emphasizes the urgent need to identify efficient ways and effective strategies for expediting the assessment and accreditation by NAAC within a stipulated time frame.

(Para 5.10.4)

The Committee learnt that parameters adopted by the NAAC for evaluating the quality, although useful, leave some scope for subjectivity in this exercise. The Committee recommends that this aspect should be re-examined with a view to making these parameters transparent and objective.

(Para 5.10.5)

The Committee also underlines the greater need for evolving an internal self-regulatory quality assurance mechanism by the accredited institutions for maintaining and upgrading their quality level. This mechanism may also monitor both academic excellence as well as administrative efficiency of that institution. Periodic assessment of accredited institution should also be carried out regularly by the NAAC.

(Para 5.10.6)

The Committee, in view of the emerging scenario, is of the opinion that a Government agency like NAAC for assessment of standards and accreditation of higher educational institutions may not have the desired credibility/acceptability to our higher education institutions at the international level. In fact, the need for a third party evaluation model with participation of all the stakeholders in higher education was underlined by some experts who appeared before the Committee. The Committee also feels that the establishment of an independent accreditation agency having regional offices in different areas of the country should also be considered. The industry should also have its participation in such a machinery. It should be, more or less, on the lines of quality assurance bodies like ISO and other rating agencies like CRISIL and ICRA.

(Para 5.10.7)

5.11 National Board of Accreditation

The accreditation of technical institution is done by the National Board of Accreditation (NBA) established by AICTE. Although the procedure adopted by the NBA is comprehensive yet the accreditation is a time-taking process. The Committee feels that this process needs to be streamlined and accelerated to complete the backlog which is building up. The accreditation work needs to have a global interface which has become important in the emerging regime under WTO.

(Para 5.11.1)

In view of mushrooming of private professional institutions in different parts of the country having little regard for the quality of teaching, infrastructure, etc. the Committee emphasizes that every institution must be required to have its quality assessment done by the NBA within three years of their existence.

(Para 5.11.2)

VI. GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

With major interventions by the State for universalisation of education, latest being the SSA and MDM, the Committee feels, the secondary and then the higher secondary education is bound to face in the coming years unprecedented pressure of numbers as well as quality. Besides, the emerging new regime under GATS has also posed newer challenges before higher education. Such a situation calls for a modern system of management for the higher education to enable India to compete and survive at the global level. The Committee feels that our universities and

institutions of higher learning should be prepared to respond to such demands and challenges, and this cannot be done without making suitable changes in the system of governance and administrative structures of higher education in the country.

(Para 6.2)

The Committee notes that management in education though not unknown in India, works more or less, on old structure and concepts. It is a matter of concern that most of our universities have become merely examination boards for conducting examinations and conferring degrees, apart from the major work of granting affiliations. The Committee is dismayed to note that research as well as pedagogical innovations seems to have taken a back seat in the universities. The Committee is of the considered opinion that in such a scenario what is needed is the greater autonomy, professionalism, transparency and accountability in the administration of higher education.

(Para 6.3)

The Committee feels that it is high time that aspects like performance measurement, quality improvement, professional development, institutional and cultural change, resource mobilization, marketing of the intellectual products, public relations etc. are imbued in the practices of higher education management in our country.

(Para 6.4)

The Committee believes that there is an urgent need to adopt best managerial practices in the structure of higher education institutions and universities, since these are no longer traditional institutions engaged only in creation, presentation and dissemination of knowledge. Rather they are progressively being called upon to involve themselves in a variety of problems and concerns of national development, especially in the social and economic spheres.

(Para 6.5)

The Committee finds that there is no effective planning body in universities both central as well as State. The Committee feels that it is only by better planning and optimum use of resources that universities can improve their efficiency and can excel. It is of the opinion that proper strategic planning keeping in view the priorities and options available be adopted in the planning activities of the universities.

(Para 6.6)

The Committee is also of the view that autonomy to the universities be made inviolable because it is, the life-breath to intellectual and academic initiatives and innovations. This autonomy, however, should not lead to autocracy and it must be ensured that academic bodies were kept away from any kind of interference, political, bureaucratic and any other. Views of academicians should have effective say in the management of higher education.

(Para 6.7)

The Committee also recommends to ensure that academic decision in the institutions of higher learning is taken on merit and the government control must be reduced. Any outside interference in appointments of university teachers and administrators should be totally avoided. Direct interference of Finance Department in financial management of the universities must also be avoided as it proves to be counterproductive.

(Para 6.8)

The Committee was informed that instances of uneasy relationship between various bodies, particularly the Academic Council and the Executive Council in the universities are not very uncommon. This, the Committee feels, prepares grounds for internal bickering and outside interference that ultimately vitiates the academic atmosphere in the campuses.

All possible measures be taken for avoiding such situations.

(Para 6.9)

The Committee is of the considered opinion that the role of a Vice-Chancellor in a university system is very crucial. In today's complex university environment, the person to be appointed as Vice-Chancellor must be the one who is not only an academic leader but also trained in sound management practices. The Committee during its visit to IIM, Ahmedabad came to know that the Institute was running an orientation programme for the CBSE school Principals. The Committee is of the opinion that all the IIMs may be requested to develop and run suitable modules for the orientation and refresher courses for the Vice-Chancellors and Registrars of the universities as also for the heads of other institutions of higher learning. The Committee also emphasizes the need for running such programmes in education management specially designed for the government-officials responsible for implementing/supervising primary, secondary and higher education.

(Para 6.10)

The Committee takes note of the fact that there are a number of regulatory bodies like the UGC, ICAR, AICTE, MCI, NCTE concerning various areas of higher education. These bodies fall under different Ministries/Departments. It was argued before the Committee that the existence of various regulatory bodies not only makes the system complex, but also gives it a fragmented character. The Committee, therefore, recommends that some kind of coordinating mechanism at the national level be put in place in the best interest of efficiency and effectiveness. A Board of Higher Education at national level for the purpose as visualized by the NPE 1986, could not be set up so far,

for the reasons not known to the Committee. The Committee recommends that the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development initiate and coordinate with other Ministries like Agriculture, Health, Law and Finance to create a National Apex body for coordination among the various regulatory agencies. (Para 6.11)

Most of those who gave input to the Committee, verbal or written, mentioned about the cumbersome procedure and large scale corruption prevailing in the regulatory bodies mentioned above. The Committee while appreciating the work being done by these bodies, takes such allegations seriously. Besides, the procedure for granting necessary clearances, etc. needs to be streamlined and made easier so that institutions/individuals do not feel deterred to approach these bodies. In view of increasing private participation in technical, medical and management education, these bodies need to be made more alert, transparent and pro-active in performing their mandate. Their regional offices need to be increased and made more responsive and efficient. Cases of corruption, deliberate delay, etc. must be dealt with sternly to establish credibility of these bodies. (Para 6.12)

Besides, there is no systematic planning and objective statewide assessments of demands and needs for higher education institutions and facilities. The Committee is, therefore, of the view that a state level mechanism – Higher Education Council as is functioning in some States, be put in place for coordinated development of higher education in all the States. (Para 6.13)

The Committee was informed that many a time, it has been experienced that University Acts in different States have provisions which are no longer relevant or are not keeping with the emerging challenges. The Committee recommends that Ministry of Human Resource Development should advise the State governments to review, from time to time, their University Acts and amend them in the light of new requirements and challenges being faced by the universities. UGC must take a lead in this exercise. (Para 6.14)

The Committee is also of the opinion that for good governance, there is an urgent need for the use of Management Information System in the universities. The Committee notes that majority of the universities have done it in reference to examination & general administration. However academic governance has not been covered under this. The Committee desires that academic governance be also brought in the Management Information System.
(Para 6.15)

The Committee is of considered view that system of micro-management be given up and structures of governance outside universities also need reform. The Committee strongly feels that the internal management of institutions needs to be strengthened. More autonomy and greater authority to the head of institutions may also be given. There is a need to create a legal and conducive environment to initiate changes at the institutional level. It also needs to be underlined that the government works as a facilitator rather than controller in the affairs of institutions of higher learning.

(Para 6.16)

VII. FUNDING

The Committee recalls that the Education Commission (1964-66) had strongly argued for devoting 6% of the GDP to education which was reiterated by National Policy on Education, 1968 also. The NCMP has also promised this target. However, the goal of allocating 6% of the GDP to education, in Committee's view, has since remained merely an ambition than a realized commitment. While, only 4% of the GNP is currently being spent on education, 0.4% of GNP is being spent on higher education. (Para 7.5)

The Committee is of the view that the declining public finances for higher education coupled with the inflation and increase in the number of students aspiring for it, severely impair its growth, both quantitative as well as qualitative. And this is what has happened in our country. Reduction in expenditure on higher education, in fact, has affected not only recruitment of the teachers and creation of physical infrastructure but has also restricted to a great deal access to higher education particularly, by the poor people. The Committee feels that for the economic and technological progress of a country in this era of intense global competition, the country can ill-afford to ignore the higher education sector. It was argued before the Committee that lately, we have witnessed shifting of emphasis from higher education to primary education. The Committee is of the considered opinion that while universalizing primary education was the constitutional mandate, the higher education also needs to be supported by increased allocations in the coming years, should India were to provide higher education of world class standard. (Para 7.6)

The Committee is aware of the resource constraints both with the Central and State Governments which cannot fill the gap between the supply and demand of the higher education sector. The Committee, therefore, is of the

opinion that new sources of financing higher education have to be found for bridging this gap. (Para 7.7)

In the light of this, the Committee feels that mobilizing resources from non-government sources has become imperative now, not only to sustain the system of higher education at its present level but also for its further expansion both in its qualitative as well as quantitative dimensions. (Para 7.9)

An estimate puts this demand at Rs. 3,400 crores for the remaining period of 10th Plan. Managing such a huge sum is an uphill task. This can be achieved *inter alia* by promoting distance education, private participation and cost recovery methods. Besides, the universities need to recognize the importance of helping themselves through their internal resource generation. The Committee also feels that Income Tax concessions can be given to philanthropists and to the community, should they invest in higher education. (Para 7.10)

The need for the cost recovery in higher education to fight the fiscal crunch in system was emphasized before the Committee. Cost-recovery, according to the Committee, would imply among others, a reduction in subsidies to higher education. This, the Committee feels, would shift the financial burden either to the beneficiaries (students) or to their users (employers). Student loans, graduate tax, enhancing fees and education cess were some other suggestions made in this regard. (Para 7.11)

7.12 Student Fees

The Tenth Five-Year Plan has emphasized the shift of resources from higher to primary education leaving thereby lesser funds for the former. Besides, due to increasing enrolment at upper primary and secondary levels, the pressure on higher education is likely to increase manifold in coming years. In such a situation, the Committee feels that it was high time that the universities made greater efforts to supplement their resources by generating their own resources, apart from what they may be getting from the UGC and the government. The industry-academia interface, the Committee feels, can be valuable source of resource mobilization, relevant curricula, R&D, practical training including employment of our graduates. (Para 7.12.1)

The Committee is fully aware of the implications of hike in fee paid by students, as it may restrict the access to the higher education. There is a possibility that beneficiaries, particularly from vulnerable groups, social and economic, would find it difficult to afford the higher education affecting thereby their upward mobility adversely. The Committee, therefore, feels that raising of fee and other charges should be considered only after examining its social and economic implications on the poor people. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Government should emphasize on other options also. If the raise in the fee becomes unavoidable, it must be gradual and supplemented/supported by other assistance. (Para 7.12.4)

The Committee at the same time is of the opinion that it is not prudent to charge same fees from all students, irrespective of their socio-economic status. It is true that the daily pocket-expenses of some students are much more than the fee they pay per month. It is an anomaly. Therefore, there is urgent need for having a rational and just policy in this regard. Meritorious students coming from weaker sections of the society need to be financially supported through effective mechanisms so that their inability to afford the cost of education does not deprive them of higher education. Therefore, provision of adequate and liberal free-ships and merit-cum-means scholarships to the students coming from the disadvantaged groups is considered imperative. (Para 7.12.5)

What is a matter of concern to the Committee is the high fee structure of private colleges/universities. The Committee emphasizes that we must keep in mind the social and economic milieu of the students while deciding fee and other charges. The private institutions particularly unaided/self-financing colleges must ensure that education was not made unaffordable to poor and meritorious student. The Committee feels that a suitable formula for fixing/regulating fees in private institutions of higher learning needs to be worked out in consultation and agreement with their management. The Committee notes that Courts have already suggested some mechanism in this regard. (Para 7.12.6)

The Committee appreciates the contribution of unaided institutions in supplementing the efforts and resources of the governments in providing higher education. While working out any formula for this purpose, their interest needs also to be kept in mind for avoiding the risk of losing this option. (Para 7.12.7)

The Committee is also of firm belief that the universities' fees be restructured and the UGC may bring necessary modifications in its formula for computing grants, which at present does not adjust the fees for capital expenditure.

(Para 7.12.8) **7.13**

Student Loan

Student loan is envisaged by some as one of the means to mobilize resources for higher education. It is argued that such a loan would enable those meritorious students whose parents are not in a position to afford higher education. The Committee feels that one of the crucial aspects that is overlooked is that the student loan shifts the burden of higher education from society to the beneficiary under this scheme, individual students have to repay the loan themselves. The Committee is, therefore, of the view that the student loan programme may not be very popular as it is fraught with many risks. There is a high possibility that student loans might act as disincentives for students from low-income families willing to go for higher education. The Committee is particularly apprehensive of student loan for women, which may be regarded as negative dowry in the Indian society.

(Para 7.13.1)

The Committee notes that various Commercial Banks charge prohibitive rates of interest and demand collateral guarantee, etc., which renders it highly unattractive proposition. This scheme does not provide for any exemptions for the weaker sections in terms of security, guarantee, repayment period, repayment as per earnings, waivers, etc. Further, the high administrative cost of the loan makes the scheme susceptible to failure. The Committee recommends that the Government must take necessary measures to study the financial viability of the programme to make it a success and a convenient alternative to public finances.

(Para 7.13.2)

The Committee also feels that a student loan can create two types of distortions. First, only those courses, which enjoy a premium market, will be preferred, both by loan providers and borrowers. The professional courses may get priority at the expense of others, which are important from the point of social and national concerns but do not enjoy a premium in the labour market. Second, the educational credit market in India is not well developed. It is recommended that necessary correctives be initiated to take care of distortions and adverse implications of the student loan by providing some kind of shield to the poor and meritorious students. The Committee also recommends that setting up of an Educational Development Bank of India as suggested from time to time for helping financially poor and needy students should be considered urgently.

(Para 7.13.3)

7.14 Graduate/Exit Tax

Other measures suggested to the Committee to recover the cost of higher education were what may be called as "graduate tax", "exit tax", "education cess" etc. Such taxes are already in vogue in some countries. Graduate tax is levied on those who use the services of skilled and trained manpower. An employer is required to pay an annual tax to the government for each graduate recruited by it. The major drawback, the Committee feels, with this scheme is that it might lead to substitution of university graduates by lower level educated manpower. Nevertheless, the Committee feels, that taxing employers based on the type and number of manpower they use has a good rationale and should be considered seriously for implementation.

(Para 7.14.1)

Imposition of Exit Tax on our students immigrating to other countries for taking up jobs after obtaining their degrees, particularly from our premier institutions which are run on massive State subsidies, was suggested by some experts who appeared before the Committee. They argued that the expenditure incurred on those students go without any return to the country. The Committee would like to point out the changed perception about the traditional brain-drain theory in the wake of globalization which recognizes certain indirect benefits – developing one's skill further, remittances in foreign exchange, etc. The Committee is of the view that students passing out from premier Government institutions get the best education on payment of nominal fees. In the event of their leaving the country for good, imposition of Exit Tax on them must be considered. The Committee, therefore, recommends that feasibility of this proposal needs to be examined and implemented in the larger interest of the country.

(Para 7.14.2)

As regards the education cess for higher education, the Committee feels that this proposal would not be conducive in the present scenario when people are already paying another cess for primary education.

(Para 7.14.3)

VIII. PRIVATE INITIATIVE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The Committee notes that private participation in higher education is not new in India. Colleges set up by public spirited/philanthropic persons has been there for a long time. Most of these colleges, however, enjoyed large-scale grants from the public exchequer. The public funding, the Committee notes, has its own constraints and the State support alone will not be sufficient to meet the requirement in this area. In the long run, therefore, the involvement of private initiatives becomes imperative to meet the challenging demands of expansion and diversification of higher education in India. However, the Committee is at the same time fully aware of the adverse impact of privatization of education; it might lead to profit orientation and commercialization of higher education. As has been seen in a few cases recently, there is an attempt to full cost recovery or more from students. As a result, only those who are able to pay exorbitant amount of fees are able to go, particularly for engineering, medical and management education and this is certainly an unacceptable situation. (Para 8.1)

The Committee understands that a high level of public subsidy reduces the scope for the government to mobilize additional resources. It is also of the opinion that only the State can have long-term perspective and focus on social concerns in promoting higher education. The State, therefore, cannot shy away from investing in higher education, as it is a long-term investment for the overall economic development of the country and its people. Only State can invest in basic research and development without any profit motive in financial terms. The Committee, therefore, is of the view that until the private participation and the concerns associated with it were taken care of, necessary legal framework was put in place and adequate safeguards were provided for protecting interest of vulnerable sections of our society, the government must continue to provide necessary resources for the purpose. Any indiscriminate reduction in subsidies would leave the sector to the vagaries of market forces. The Committee, therefore, calls upon the Planning Commission, Ministry of Finance and Department to spare adequate funds for higher education. (Para 8.3)

8.4 Private Universities

The Committee is concerned over the fact that neither there is any regulatory mechanism in the States nor is there any policy/legislation at Centre for regulation and control of private universities in India. As a result, it is very difficult to ensure transparency and accountability in the working of private universities. Regulatory bodies like UGC, AICTE, MCI, DCI, etc., have proved to be ineffective in this case. The Committee in the light of these developments is of the considered opinion that there is an urgent need for proper policy and mechanism to regulate aspects such as admission, fee structure, quality control, teachers' qualifications, physical infrastructure, etc. of the private universities. The regulatory mechanism must see that higher education was not commercialized to the detriment of the students. (Para 8.4.3)

The Committee was cautioned that some corporate entities might try to open private universities to enhance their profits under that garb. The possibility of a company opening a private university for the purpose of creating an affiliating body to get all frivolous or sub-standard courses offered by it affiliated, cannot be ruled out. The Committee, therefore, desires that the Government should bring a comprehensive legislation for providing effective machinery to ensure that only genuine and quality private providers of higher education services remain in the field. (Para 8.4.4)

8.5 Unaided professionals institutions

The Committee notes that self-financing institutions were functioning under various authorities, State as well as central as education is a Concurrent Subject. As a result, we have different syllabi, admission and examination systems throughout the country. The existing system of diverse regulatory authorities, the Committee feels, is creating avoidable problems in this regard. This situation gives rise to confusion among the students which undermines the delicate balance between merit, affordability and equity in professional education. The Committee is of the view that this state of affairs is mainly due to absence of a national policy in respect of the self-financing professional institutions. This calls for a unified control and regulatory mechanism, having regard to our federal character, for looking after different aspects of their functioning. The Committee, therefore, emphasizes the need for a transparent national framework for the regulation & nurturing of such institutions. There is an urgent need for rationalizing the existing plethora of admission tests, which are creating lot of problems for the students. The admission to these institutions should be on merit in which total transparency needs to be maintained. Besides, there is also an urgent need to provide a legal mechanism for regulating/fixing fees and management and other quota with a view to removing any uncertainty in this regard. (Para 8.5.2)

While doing so, we must give due regard to views/concerns of the people opening these institutions. Otherwise, good spirited people would feel discouraged to come forward in this regard.

(Para 8.5.3)

Steps should be taken to ensure that these institutions are properly assessed and accredited by the respective agencies. Furthermore, the private institutions be rated by independent rating agencies and their ratings be disseminated through print and internet across the country. The Committee is of the considered view that such a publicly announced ratings would help the students in selecting an institution to enroll in; the institutions in upgrading its standards; and the employers in assessing the quality of students graduating from these institutions. The Committee also desires that all such educational institutions need to come out with their Annual Reports containing necessary details about the courses offered, quality of faculty, teaching, student strength, examination results, infrastructure and facilities available, the corpus available and the source of funding, accreditation ratings, etc. (Para 8.5.4)

These institutions, particularly in the field of engineering and management need to have effective partnership with trade and industry to ensure that the product emerging out of these institutions would be better suited for the job which they would eventually take up. Such a partnership, the Committee feels, shall not only make the curricula more relevant and contextual, increase the employability of students and would also enable the sponsors to get some resources. (Para 8.5.5)

IX. GLOBALISATION AND LIBERALISATION

9.3 GATS and Higher Education

It was argued before the Committee that the liberalization allowed in the area like allowing 100 per cent FDI on automatic route and permitting foreign participation in higher education is essentially a domestic decision and has not yet been included under the obligations of GATS since India was yet to commit its education services under GATS framework. The Committee appreciates that the liberalization allowed is basically due to our capacity constraints in higher education. However, the Committee is concerned about the less reputed, fly-by-night operators who lure the gullible students through their tall claims in glossy advertisements making away with their hard-earned money and spoiling their future. The Committee is of the strong opinion that the capacity constraints cannot be an excuse for the survival of sub-standard institutions. The Government should immediately come up with a proper supportive regulatory mechanism with a view to ensuring that only accredited and known foreign institutions enter the Indian market and by creating a level playing field for foreign and domestic institutions. The Committee feels that by putting such a mechanism in place, the country will be better placed to schedule education services under GATS. (Para 9.3.3)

The Committee is of the considered view that markets and globalisation represent the key where opportunity and danger exists and both are closely intertwined. While the importance of competition and striving to do better are the pluses, motivation of profit only is the minus. The Committee feels that the country should brace itself up to take the maximum advantage of the opportunities opening with the globalisation of education services. The Government is advised to adopt an aggressive and pro-active, rather than defensive approach on both import as well as export fronts to take the benefit under GATS and concomitant process of liberalization of higher education. The Committee notes that Indian export of higher education to other countries is very low as compared to its import. Our students are queuing up to go for higher studies to countries like US, UK, Canada and Australia in large numbers. In US, they form the largest group. (Para 9.3.4)

The Committee notes that the Government has constituted a Committee for Promotion of Indian Education Abroad (COPIE) with the twin objectives of promoting Indian education abroad and regulating operations of foreign educational institutions in India. The Committee desires that the COPIE takes steps to safeguard the larger national interest and the interest of the student community in particular. (Para 9.3.5)

X. FOREIGN UNIVERSITIES

10.2 The Committee notes that the existing laws and regulations of the country do not provide any statutory mechanism for regulating the operation of such foreign institutions in this country. It is only the AICTE that has come up with a notification that carries revised regulations for the entry and operation of foreign universities/institutions imparting technical education in India. The Committee is aware that the C. N. R. Rao Committee has been set up by the

Government for reviewing this aspect. The Committee notes that the Rao Committee is yet to submit its reports. The Committee only hopes that the Government would take necessary *interim* measures in this regard before the Rao Committee's recommendations are considered and accepted. (Para 10.2)

The Committee is perturbed to note that there is still no authentic database on operation of foreign educational institutions in the country, which is a grim reminder of our concern for higher education and our preparedness towards maximizing the fruits of liberalization in education sector. (Para 10.3)

According to the information compiled by the Association of Indian Universities during the year 2000 on the basis of advertisements appearing in the Indian newspapers, 144 foreign universities and colleges/institutions have been offering various courses of study to the Indian students. Out of them, 117 offer programmes on their home campuses and the remaining 27 are conducting programmes in India through their Indian partners. The largest number of these institutions is from UK and Australia followed by USA and Canada and New Zealand. The remaining 14 institutions are from other countries like Bulgaria, Cyprus, Hong-Kong, France Ireland, Mauritius, Nepal, Romania, Russia and Switzerland. The Committee is astonished to note that over 100 foreign institutions are offering different courses without any regulation on their operations, quality of education, management, etc. The Committee notes that the AICTE regulation that permits the entry of a foreign university/institution either directly or through collaborative arrangement with an Indian university/institution extends only to technical education. The law is silent on foreign university/institution offering non-technical education including medicine, law, arts, sciences, social sciences, etc. The Committee feels that this gap needs to be filled at the earliest. It is incumbent upon the Government and related regulatory bodies like the UGC, the MCI, etc. to come out with a definite policy/legislation for regulating the entry and operation of foreign university/institution as soon as possible. Only good institutions, which are accredited in their countries should be allowed to operate and they need to get clearance from respective authorities. Fee, etc. charged by these foreign institutions also needs to be regulated. (Para 10.4)

The Committee notes the possibilities of some of these institutions of doubtful credibility hoodwinking the gullible students cannot be completely ruled out. The Committee, therefore, desires that an inquiry into the antecedents and credentials of these institutions be thoroughly made and if any of them is found to be of fake/fictitious nature, strict action be taken against it and due publicity be given against them. (Para 10.5)

The Committee is also of the opinion that permission to foreign university/institution to operate in the country should be granted with caution as there is every possibility that even a good foreign university/institution can adopt double standards in quality so much so that the learning that they provide at their home countries is of high standard while the distance learning in developing countries by them is sub-standard. The Committee recommends the establishment of a body that oversees all the activities of a foreign university/institution and allows only the *bona fides* to take a plunge in the Indian market having all sensitivities to the moorings and culture of the country. (Para 10.7)

XI. DEEMED UNIVERSITIES

Existing institutions may be given university status under a provision in the UGC Act which are known as Deemed Universities. These institutions offer advance level courses in a particular field, while many of them award general degrees. Currently, we have 95 deemed universities in different parts of the country. The Committee came to know through several experts who appeared before it that the quality & standard in many deemed universities were seriously wanting. It was also informed that the concept of deemed universities has not been able to achieve the desired objectives. The Committee, therefore, feels that there is an urgent need for reviewing the procedure and criteria for providing deemed university status to an institution. (Para 11)

XII. STATE UNIVERSITIES

The Committee during its visits to some of the State universities found that these were facing serious financial crunch mainly due to inadequate allocation by their respective State governments. The Committee notes that for every Rs. 100 - Rs. 70 goes to salaries & superannuation payments; of the remaining Rs. 30; Rs. 15 goes into pre-emptive claims like rent, taxes, electricity bills, examination expenses and so on. Thus, precious little is left for maintenance, let alone development. As a result, libraries & laboratories languish and quality of education is severely affected. This grim scenario is further aggravated with the UGC ceiling of Plan expenditure to mere 3% of the total allocation. The Committee feels that this ceiling on Plan expenditure is really unrealistic and it desires that the UGC should increase this ceiling so that development of infrastructure in the universities could be taken up with a view to

improving the quality of our institutions of higher learning. The Committee also notes that for corpus creation, the universities are offered to raise one crore to get an additional grant of the same amount from the UGC with the condition to use the interest on that corpus fund for developmental activities. With ever decreasing decline in the interest rate, this fund also is shrinking day by day. (Para 12.1)

The Committee expresses its concern about large number of vacancies at different levels in teaching community. Presently, there is a serious shortage of faculty at the current level of demands. The Committee finds that most of the State universities and colleges are ill equipped lacking required infrastructure and trained teachers. The Committee views with serious concern the status of vacant teaching posts. As per the information available with the Committee, in the 16 Central universities, there are 1988 vacancies as on 31-03-2005, with the Banaras Hindu University and Delhi University having as many as 687 and 396 vacancies respectively. Situation is also far from satisfactory in JNU, Visva Bharti and Mizoram University. The Committee observes that out of total vacant 1988 posts, 1056 posts belong to Lecturer category. The Committee fails to understand the reasons for such a large number of posts of Lecturer lying vacant which is the entry point to a university. The Committee apprehends that situation may be worse in State universities. The Committee is of the view that drastic steps need to be taken so that students are not deprived of proper guidance. (Para 12.3)

The Committee at the same time feels that we need not only more qualified but also highly motivated teachers. In order to attract/retain them, we have to supplement their salaries with an attractive package of perquisites and support for academic activities coupled with appropriate recognition with outstanding achievement. (Para 12.4)

The Committee's attention was also drawn towards the need for relaxing the requirement of NET qualification for a person to be appointed as a Lecturer in a university/college because this sometimes prohibited the qualified and outstanding persons from being inducted in the teaching community, if they have not cleared the NET. The Committee, therefore, recommends that this issue needs to be considered by the Department and the UGC in a positive spirit. (Para 12.5)

XIII. FAKE UNIVERSITIES/INSTITUTIONS

As per the information available with the Committee, there are 21 fake universities/institutions located in different parts of the country, UP having the highest number of such universities (8), closely followed by Delhi (7). The Committee takes a serious view that these fake universities continue to operate with impunity cheating the innocent students. Government seems to be totally helpless. Section 22 of the UGC Act, 1956 provides that the right to conferring/granting degrees can be exercised only by a university established or incorporated by or under a Central Act, Provincial Act or a State Act or an institution specially empowered by an Act of Parliament to confer or grant degrees. Section 23 further provides that word 'university' can be associated only with those bodies covered under Section 22. The Committee notes that as per Section 24, a penalty of Rs. 1000/- is liable to be imposed in case of violation of these provisions. This mild penalty has failed to make any impact for obvious reasons. The Committee has been given to understand that State Governments are being regularly requested by UGC to institute criminal proceedings against fake institutions. Even UGC has also decided to take action. The Committee would, however, like to point out that criminal proceedings will not make any difference in the status of such institutions due to the continuation of very mild penalty provisions. (Para 13.1)

The Committee understands that pursuant to the recommendations of the Committee on Petitions (Lok Sabha), a Bill was introduced in the Rajya Sabha in December, 1991 providing for imprisonment upto six months and a fine of not less than Rs. 1 lakh which may extend to Rs. 10 lakhs. This Bill was subsequently withdrawn on 1st June, 1995. Thereafter, no further project seems to have been made on such a vital issue. The Committee would like to emphasize that urgent steps need to be taken for bringing a legislation providing for more stringent penalties for running fake universities. (Para 13.2)

XIV. ROLE OF THE UGC

The UGC was established to promote, coordinate and determine standards in respect of higher education in the country. The Committee is of the opinion that the UGC has not been able to live upto the expectations. It has become unequal to the task and challenges before it. It is now functioning mainly as grant disbursing body than a body for the promotion of teaching/research and maintenance of standards in higher education. The institutions of higher learning in India have become just degree conferring bodies than academic and intellectual entity.

(Para 14.2)

Today, something like 50 to 60 percent of our colleges do not have even the basic infrastructure, qualified teachers, lab, libraries, etc. There has been no way of regulating the proliferation of such colleges. The Committee is perturbed to see that after nearly 50 years of the UGC's existence, there is no set of rules regulating the establishment of sub-standard colleges. The Committee is of the opinion that the UGC should not act as a Department of the government but should act as a professional body in which the university interests should be fully represented.

(Para 14.3)

The Committee was informed that the UGC did not have the power to de-recognize degrees awarded by any university. Absence of such power has made it difficult for the UGC to ensure compliance with its priorities and directives. The Committee, however, is of the opinion that the so-called fitness-to-function-norms for the universities be defined more precisely as this will take care of the unworthy universities even without taking on the power of derecognising a degree.

(Para 14.4)

The Committee recommends a national level body of higher education be established to advise the government on policy matters, coordinate the activities of the various professional bodies, encourage interface among different areas, allocate resources in terms of national needs and manpower planning, and establish and manage common infrastructure and institutions and primacy of professional opinion over other considerations be ensured.

(Para 14.7)

The Committee notes that not only are there disputes about the jurisdiction of the various regulatory bodies, the fact remains that the Centre is cagey about asserting its rights more than is minimally necessary. Example of Chhattisgarh is there. A situation had arisen where the Centre is feeling outmaneuvered by the initiatives being taken by certain States. Foreign institutions too have penetrated the Indian market quite extensively and the UGC is unable to do anything than being a helpless spectator. The Committee strongly feels that the UGC even in the existing mandate under the UGC Act could have adopted a number of measures for regulating mushrooming of sub-standard private/foreign institutions.

(Para 14.8)

The Committee desires that prescription of minimum standards of fitness for admission to universities or to technical and professional institutions as well as direct inspection of colleges and other institutions in order to maintain standards be undertaken by the UGC. The Committee is of the view that the UGC should put in place a better system of monitoring and take decisions on the basis of feedback obtained from it. Throughout its existence, UGC has not even once insisted that State Government must prepare a Plan of Action in respect of both universities and colleges. The UGC can ask the State Governments to send it a plan of development for higher education every year. Thereafter, a meeting can be fixed at the UGC Headquarters. The Committee feels that the UGC's interaction with States should be more frequent so that there is no space of doubts in anyone's mind about the other's intention. It is suggested that State Councils of Higher Education be established for the purpose of interaction with the UGC.

(Para 14.9)

It is suggested that full-time members of the UGC to look after different portfolios falling under higher education be provided for and their numbers be increased in comparison to the present system, which permit for only a full-time Vice-Chairman to assist the Chairman. Further, these members should be chosen from the top three-four experts in a particular field.

(Para 14.10)

The Committee is of the opinion that the existing structure and functioning of the UGC need a re-look as the education scenario has changed drastically. The Committee emphasizes the need for revisiting the UGC Act and amending it suitably. The Committee notes that in 1998, a Committee was appointed by the Ministry of HRD to examine amendments to the UGC Act. Report of the Committee was submitted to the Ministry of HRD but Amendment Bill is yet to be brought before Parliament. Even the Committee on Autonomy of Higher Education Institutions, recently constituted by the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), has also desired for setting up a task force to re-examine the existing UGC Act to provide for incorporation of new provisions to suit the emerging concerns and realities of higher education and to make the UGC Act a more significant body. The Committee feels that the Amendment Bill to amend the UGC Act be brought in after consulting the expert opinion for making the UGC a purposeful and relevant body in the existing conditions. The Committee also feels that it is a high time to rechristen the UGC to project it mainly as a developmental body rather than as a grant disbursement one. It may, therefore, be

renamed as Higher Education Development Commission or any other similar name which is in keeping with the changed dimensions in this area. (Para 14.12)

XV. CONCLUSION

In view of the new situations and the resulting challenges before higher education in the emerging scenario, the need for preparing ourselves to face them successfully brooks no delay. India will have to take various measures, legal, institutional, financial and others well in time so that we are not left behind in this fast changing world. For this, there is an urgent need for reform and revitalization of education sector to make it relevant and suitable to the emerging socio-economic and other realities. The National Policy on Education that was formulated nearly two decades ago even before the process of liberalization had begun, the Committee feels, needs to be revisited with a view to making it more forward-looking and vibrant. The new concerns also will have to be included in it. Besides, the existing legal framework in the higher education sector particularly, the UGC Act and the Acts of various State Universities also need to be made more relevant and effective in the present context. (Para 15.1)

This Report, in fact, has attempted to suggest mechanisms/measures for tackling most of the problems and challenges, if not all, before higher education. The Committee is aware of the fact that doing all this would need huge amount of resources. And how to manage that resources, is a million dollar question today. To begin with, till the concerns relating to private funding were taken care of, the major share of the required money, the Committee feels, will have to be primarily provided by the government. As per an estimate, nearly 3400 crores of rupees shall be required for improving the infrastructure in the existing universities, filling vacancies of the teachers, upgrading the libraries and laboratories, providing broadband connectivity as also for opening more universities in the coming years. The State universities and colleges also need to be supported in a big way with a view to bring them at a particular standard. The Committee, therefore, is of the opinion that efforts should be made for mobilizing this amount for the higher education by the government, both Centre and State. This may certainly not be impossible to arrange the required resources, if the Planning Commission, Ministry of Finance, Department of Secondary and Higher Education sit together and apply their mind on this issue. This investment should not be a big price for the benefits that would accrue to the country. Socio-economic benefits of higher education are immense and radiate to various areas of life.

(Para 15.2)

MINUTES ***CONFIDENTIAL***

MINUTES OF THE DEPARTMENT-RELATED PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

XIV FOURTEENTH MEETING

The Committee on Human Resource Development met at 11.00 a.m. on Wednesday, the 25th January, 2006, in Committee Room 'D', Ground Floor, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Shri Vayalar Ravi - Chairman

RAJYA SABHA

1. Shri Dwijendra Nath Sharmah
2. Shri Uday Pratap Singh
3. Prof. Ram Deo Bhandary

LOK SABHA

4. Shri Basudeb Barman
5. Shri Ramswarup Koli
6. Shri Manjunath Kunnur
7. Dr. Thokchom Meinya
8. Shri Krishna Murari Moghe
9. Shri Mohd. Mukim
10. Prof. Rasa Singh Rawat

11. Shri M. Rajamohan Reddy
12. Shri Tufani Saroj
13. Shri A.R. Shaheen
14. Smt. Jyotirmoyee Sikdar
15. Shri Devendra Singh Yadav

SECRETARIAT

Smt Vandana Garg, Joint Secretary

Shri N.K. Singh, Director

Shri J. Sundriyal, Under Secretary

Shri Swarabji B., Committee Officer

Smt Meena Kandwal, Research Officer

1. The Chairman welcomed the Members and then, took up for consideration its 172nd Report on "University and Higher Education". After detailed discussion the Committee adopted the Report with some modifications suggested by the members.

2.. The Chairman and Members of the Committee expressed their appreciation for the good work done in preparing a comprehensive Report on the subject that not only covered all the major issues before the Higher Education in emerging scenario, but also for incorporating important innovative recommendations/suggestions.

3. The Committee decided that the Notes of Dissent, if any, may be sent to the Rajya Sabha Secretariat to be incorporated in the Report.

4. The Committee decided to present/lay the Report in the forthcoming Budget Session 2006 of the Parliament.

5. Members of the Committee stood in silence for a minute to offer its condolence, after they were informed about the sad and untimely demise of Shri P.C. Paikray, Deputy Secretary, in the Rajya Sabha Secretariat.

6. The Committee, then, adjourned at 1.24 p.m.

NEW DELHI

25th January, 2006

J.SUNDRIYAL
UNDER SECRETARY

CONFIDENTIAL

**MINUTES OF THE DEPARTMENT-RELATED PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON
HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

XVIII
EIGHTEENTH MEETING

The Committee on Human Resource Development met at 5.30 p.m. on Tuesday, the 16th May, 2006 in Room No. 63, First Floor, Parliament House, New Delhi.

MEMBERS PRESENT

1. Shri Janardan Dwivedi ^¾ *Chairman*

RAJYA SABHA

2. Smt. Brinda Karat
3. Shri Uday Pratap Singh

LOK SABHA

4. Shri Basudeb Barman
5. Shri Manjunath Kunnur
6. Shri Mohd. Mukim
7. Shri M. Rajamohan Reddy
8. Smt. P. Satheedevi

9. Smt. Jyotirmoyee Sikdar
10. Shri K. Virupaxappa

SECRETARIAT

Smt Vandana Garg, Joint Secretary
Shri J. Sundriyal, Under Secretary
Shri Swarabji, B., Committee Officer
Smt. Meena Kandwal, Research Officer

2. The Committee took up for consideration the draft Reports on the Demands for Grants (2006-2007) of the Ministry of Women and Child Development and Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. The Committee adopted the same with certain modifications. The Committee decided to present the four Reports on the Demands for Grants (2006-2007) to both the Houses of Parliament on the 22nd May, 2006.

3. The Committee further decided that the Report on University and Higher Education which was adopted on 25th January, 2006 may be presented/laid in both the Houses of Parliament alongwith the Reports on Demands for Grants (2006-2007) on the 22nd May, 2006.

4. The Committee authorized the Chairman, Shri Janardan Dwiwedi and in his absence, Smt. Brinda Karat to present the Reports in the Rajya Sabha and Dr. Thockchom Meinya, and in his absence, Shri Basudeb Barman to lay the Reports in the Lok Sabha.

5. The Committee then adjourned at 6.55 p.m.

NEW DELHI

16th May, 2006

J. SUNDRIYAL
UNDER SECRETARY