

*Development of Higher Education
in India*

A Policy Frame

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SECTION I

Objective

1.01 The main objective of this paper is to suggest a policy frame for the development of higher education in India over the next ten to fifteen years. As education at all stages forms an integrated whole, and as the university has a significant role to play in school and adult education, this task has been attempted against the background of a perspective for the development of education as a whole during the same period.

SECTION II

Development of Education in India

2.01 *Achievements and Failures:* The history of Indian education is a picture of both light and shade, of some outstanding achievements along with many outstanding failures. As a result of the system of education that we have developed during the last 150 years, we have now more than 120 universities (or similar institutions), 4,500 affiliated colleges, 40,000 secondary schools and 6,00,000 elementary schools, 3.5 million teachers, 100 million students and an annual expenditure of Rs. 25,000 million, which is next only to that on defence. It has given us a high level trained manpower whose size is the largest in the world and the top-levels of which are comparable to those of leading countries in the world. It is this manpower which now provides the key-personnel in all walks of our national life, and also enables us to help several other developing countries.

2.02 Unfortunately, the system has also developed three major weaknesses.

(1) It still continues to be dominated by models and value-systems adopted during the colonial regime. For instance, it lays greater emphasis on narrow individualism, unhealthy competition to the neglect of social good, verbal fluency (especially in English), and mere acquisition of information, while it neglects social objectives, co-operation, manual work, training in skills and building up of character. It places an almost exclusive emphasis on the formal school (with its single-point entry, annual sequential promotions, insistence on full-time attendance, and almost exclusive use of

full-time teachers), and neglects both non-formal and recurrent education. The educational institutions function in isolation from the community as well as from one another. The system is a gigantic monolith, very difficult to move or change; and in spite of its achievements which are by no means inconsiderable, it has proved itself to be inadequate to meet our national needs and aspirations.

(2) The system maintains a set of double standards. A small minority of educational institutions at all levels is of good quality and compares favourably with those in developed countries. But access to them is *selective* and is mostly availed of by the top social groups, either because they can afford the costs involved or because they show *merit* which, on the basis of the existing methods of selection, shows a high correlation with social status. But this core of good institutions is surrounded by a large penumbra of institutions where although there is *open-door* access, the standards are poor. Consequently it is in these institutions that the large majority of the people including the weaker sections receive their education. This dualism leads to undesirable social segregation and to a perpetuation and strengthening of inegalitarian trends in our society.

(3) Even in quantitative terms, it is mainly the upper and middle classes that are the beneficiaries of this system. Sixty per cent of the population (age 10 and over), which is still illiterate, has obviously received none of its benefits. Of every 100 children of six years of age, 20 never go to school, 55 drop out at an early stage, so that only about 25 complete class VIII. 70 per cent of the seats in secondary schools and 80 per cent of the seats in higher education are taken by the top 30 per cent of income groups.

2.03 What the system needs, therefore, is a drastic overhaul: a transformation of its character, through the introduction of a modern scientific outlook and other essential measures, to suit our national needs and aspirations; a substantial improvement of standards; an extension of its coverage so that the education of the people becomes, not a peripheral pursuit, but a central objective. It is in these three main directions that educational reconstruction in India will have to be vigorously pursued in the years ahead.

2.04 *Transformation of the Educational System:* Perhaps the most urgent and significant reform needed is to transform the value system, the basic structure and processes of the educational system, to make it flexible and dynamic, and to move in the (ultimate) direction of providing opportunities for life-long learning to every individual. This transformation will emphasize ethical values and human welfare enriched by science and technology. It will also imply the shifting of emphasis from teaching to learning, from the individual to social objectives, and from mere acquisition of information to the development of skills and character formation based on knowledge. There would be multiple points of entry, flexible and student-oriented curricula, an equal emphasis on all the three channels of study (full-time, part-time or own-time), use of all the teaching resources of the community (both human and institutional) rather than depending only on the schools

or professional teachers. It would imply of the provision of every facility for recurrent education so that an individual can join or step off the formal system as and when necessary, adopt any channel of study that suits him, and learn at his own best pace and from whomsoever he chooses; work and education (which will be closely linked to productivity) would run concurrently throughout the life of an individual; and education and development would be linked together, education assisting socio-economic transformation and participation in programmes of such transformation, becoming a medium of education itself.

2.05 *Improvement of Standards:* The standards of education need to be defined in the wider sense of the all-sided development of the personality of the individual and his commitment to social objectives; and these would have to be substantially improved and continually raised to suit the changing needs of the country. The system of double standards in educational institutions—one for the rich and the well-to-do and the other for the large majority of the people—should be done away with. All children, both rich and poor should rub shoulders with each other in a system of common schools at the elementary stage; and in all post-elementary education. Access to the pace-setting institutions should be available to all talented children, irrespective of their social or economic status. Methods of identifying talents by test which do not discriminate against children from disadvantaged background should be devised; and a preference should be given to those from disadvantaged backgrounds even if their '*talent-rating*' is lower. For such children, special remedial coaching and training will have to be provided, and the appropriate methodology evolved with care. It is true that the maintenance and improvement of standards would need physical inputs, such as good teachers and better learning tools and facilities. But they depend more basically on discovery and cultivation of talent and the creation of a climate of dedicated hard work in all educational institutions. It is these programmes that need to be developed on the basis of a high priority.

2.06 *Expansion:* If the coverage of the educational system is to be improved and if the large majority who now remain outside it is to become its principal concern, high priority will have to be given to the following three programmes:

(1) ***Adult Education:*** The education of adults has received very low priority so far. But in view of the fact that it yields rich and early dividends, it should be accorded the highest priority in the years ahead and even among adults, the education of the large number of poor and illiterate persons should receive the utmost attention. The main objectives of this programme should be to educate and mobilize the masses and to involve them meaningfully in national development. It should also strive to make all adults (particularly in the age group 21-35) functionally literate, and lay the greatest emphasis on the non-formal education of youth (age-group 15-21). A massive programme of motivating adults and enthusing and training voluntary workers and institutions will have to be developed for the purpose.

(2) *Universal Elementary Education*: The objective of this programme should be to provide free and compulsory education for all children (age-group 6-14). The task is very difficult because the non-attending children now consists mostly of girls and children of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, landless agricultural labourers and other weaker sections of the society. An early solution to the problem, which is closely related to that of adult education, needs a deep political commitment, a mass movement, and a large investment of resources. It will also be necessary to bring about a radical transformation of the existing educational system by the introduction of a multiple-entry system, part-time education and use of non-professional teachers. In addition to the existing channel of full-time formal education in the age group 6-14, which will have to be strengthened and expanded, part-time classes would need to be run for children in the age group 9-14 who are required to work and do not, therefore, go to school, or drop out of it at an early stage. The principle to be followed will be that every child shall continue to learn, from the age of 6 to the age of 14 on a full-time basis, if possible, and on a part-time basis, if unavoidable for economic reasons. The standards of elementary schools should be improved, school timings and vacations suitably altered, and the programme of free midday meals expanded so that their attracting and holding power is substantially increased. The content of elementary education should be radically altered by the introduction of socially useful productive work and social service as integral parts of education and by relating the curriculum to the local environment. The common school system of education should be adopted to promote social cohesion and national integration. Side by side, low-cost programmes of pre-school education should be developed, especially for the children of the poor in rural areas and urban slums, with the use of local personnel and materials.

(3) *Special Facilities for Post-elementary Education*: The access of a large majority of people, and especially the poor, to secondary and higher education should be increased. From this point of view, the special facilities which are now given to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes should continue and should generally be extended to all people below a prescribed income level, irrespective of caste, region or sex. Special efforts should be made, at all stages of education, to discover talented children from the economically handicapped families, and as this talent is our best national asset, they should be treated as wards of the State and assisted, through scholarships and bursaries, placement, individual tuition and guidance, to receive the highest education they are capable of.

2.07 *Secondary Education*: The significance of high standards in secondary education is obvious; it supplies the teachers for elementary education and the students for higher education and thereby controls the standards in both the stages. Yet, in Indian education, secondary education has always remained the weakest link. This situation calls for immediate and vigorous remedial action.

2.08 The following measures are suggested for improving the *standards*

of secondary education:

(1) As in the new pattern, elementary and secondary education should cover twelve years so that secondary education can prepare for entry into work at a large variety of skilled levels and also send up more mature and better prepared students to the university.

(2) At present, there has been a very haphazard growth of secondary schools, many of which are of such small size that they can be neither economic nor efficient. It is necessary to plan the location of new secondary schools with great care and to rationalise that of the existing ones to the extent possible. Efforts should also be made to see that all secondary schools reach an optimum size, which makes them economically and academically viable.

(3) The curriculum of secondary schools should be drastically revised. Work and social service should become its integral parts. It is necessary to distinguish between the work-load of students and standards of attainment. Today, the work-load is heavy and the standards low. Good planning, good teachers and good methods of teaching and evaluation can reduce work-load and yet improve standards, and this is the direction in which we should work. Till class X, there is need to adjust the curricular load in order to find more time, not only for work and social service, but also for physical education, games and sports and cultural activities so as to develop a complete personality. In class XI-XII, the higher secondary level, adequate steps towards differentiation and diversification should be taken and the programme should be intensive enough to prepare students either for the university or for entry into the world of work, as the case may be. It is also necessary to emphasize that every thing included in the curriculum need not be a subject for examination. In fact, all curricula should have some elements which exist for their own sake and are not related to examinations.

(4) Great emphasis should be laid on teacher improvement, provision of adequate facilities for it (including improved teaching and learning materials), adoption of progressive and dynamic methods of teaching and evaluation, and creation of a climate of dedicated hard work.

(5) Every effort should be made to identify talented children at the elementary stage and they should be assisted in all ways possible and necessary, including the provision of bursaries, to continue their education at the secondary stage.

2.09 The present system of public (and similar) schools run by private bodies, charging high fees which restrict them to the children of the affluent, is inconsistent with an egalitarian society. There is a need for Government to establish many more quality schools so that talented children from poor families may be placed there, and also to require every existing institution of this kind to admit at least half of its students from among the talented but economically handicapped students, and to give freships to them.

2.10 Another major programme at the secondary stage which needs, attention on a priority basis is *vocationalization*, which will give us middle

level semi-skilled and skilled manpower in all walks of life. The programme will link education closely with productivity and what is even more important, it will reduce pressures on the universities. In the present educational system, each stage is treated as a preparation for the next higher stage of education. Instead, the curriculum at each stage must be designed keeping in view the fact that the stage may be terminal for a large percentage of students. Vocationalization will, therefore, have to be attempted at three levels: (1) at the end of the elementary stage; (2) at the end of class X; and (3) at the end of class XII. It should be clearly related to the employment opportunities available (including programmes of self employment) and should be school-based, industry/agriculture-based, or of a sandwich type, depending upon the circumstances. The ultimate objective should be to divert about half the young persons to appropriate vocational courses. The successful implementation of the programme will need the cooperation of industry and agriculture, and active participation of all agencies of Government. It must also be emphasized that the extent to which students will opt for these courses will depend upon the development of the economy and the availability of jobs, the narrowing down of the wage-structure between different levels of workers and especially as between the blue and white collar categories, the extent to which the admission to the academic course preparatory to the university become more selective. It will also depend on whether the students who opt for vocational courses are assured of opportunities for further education and vertical mobility, and on the discontinuance of the present practice of prescribing higher qualifications than actually required for performing the duties of middle level jobs.

2.11 These significant reforms will convert the existing system of education into a new system suited to our needs and aspirations, and will also involve a major socio-economic transformation. Obviously, the development of higher education and research over the next ten or fifteen years will have to conform to the directions of this educational and social transformation. What is even more important, the university system itself will have to play a leading role in bringing about this transformation. The details of this programme will be discussed in the next section. But before leaving the subject, we would like to emphasize one issue; no educational transformation can be brought about in a vacuum because education is a sub-system of the society as a whole and because the social and educational structure support and strengthen one another. Ours is a dual society in which economic and political power is mainly concentrated in the hands of a small class at the top. This reflects itself in a dual educational system in which the access to the best educational institutions at all stages is mostly limited to the same top class. It is this dual educational system which strengthens and perpetuates our dual society. If this vicious circle is to be broken, action on the educational front alone will not be enough and will not succeed. What we need is a radical, simultaneous and complementary action, for educational as well as social transformation.

2.12 While implementing the above educational reforms, therefore, we

must also mount a big programme of social, economic, political and normal action to reduce poverty and inequality. This will include the minimization of all forms of exploitation, imposition of limits and curbs on the consumption of the rich and well-to-do and provision of a basic minimum standard of living to all the people through an emphasis on the increased production of goods and services needed by the common man, a guarantee of gainful employment to all able-bodied persons willing to work, and the organisation of nation-wide and efficient public distribution system of food-stuffs and other essential commodities. It is also obvious that this attempt at a simultaneous educational and social transformation will not succeed unless we also develop a mass movement in support of these objectives and involve the people themselves in these programmes. The backdrop of a nation-wide and comprehensive mass movement and mass involvement thus becomes indispensable for the educational advance of the people as well as national development.

SECTION III

Development of Higher Education and Research

3.01 *The Role of the University System:* The university system has important responsibilities to the society as a whole as well as to the educational system itself. The significance of the traditional functions, of acquisition, preservation, dissemination and extension of the frontier of knowledge, the balance education of individuals, and the training of high level personnel for all walks of life is obvious. But a modern university, especially in a developing country like ours, has to undertake several other functions as well. It must, for instance,

- inculcate and promote basic human values and the capacity to choose between alternate value systems;
- preserve and foster our great cultural traditions and blend them with essential elements from other cultures and peoples;
- promote a rational outlook and scientific temper;
- enrich the Indian languages and promote their use as important means of communication, national development and unity;
- promote the development of the total personality of the students and inculcate in them a commitment to society through involvement in national service programme;
- act as an objective critic of society and assist in the formulation of national objectives and programmes for their realization;
- promote commitment to the pursuit of excellence;
- promote the development of science and technology and of an indigenous capability to apply it effectively with special emphasis on national problems; and above all
- contribute to the improvement of the entire educational system so as to subserve the community.

3.02 Access to Higher Education: Admission to post-elementary education should be linked to talent and aptitude. We should not also deny the right of an individual to life-long learning or to study to the highest extent he is capable of, although the state has every right to decide how its subsidy for such education is to be regulated on the basis of talent and social justice. Our policy in relation to further expansion of all post-elementary (and especially higher) education has, therefore, to be based on several conflicting considerations. On the one hand, we cannot ignore the increasing demand for higher education from all sections of the people and especially from the weaker sections, who consider it an almost exclusive channel of vertical mobility. On the other hand, we cannot also ignore or under-emphasize some aspects of the situation such as the inability of the economy to absorb its products, the growing spectre of educated unemployment, lack of resources in men, materials and money which often makes expansion lead to dilution of standards, and the unacademic considerations that drive thousands of young persons to the universities.

3.03 The policy to be adopted in this regard should, therefore, consist of the following: (1) adoption of measures which will reduce pressures on the University system, such as effective vocationalization at the secondary stage, delinking most of the jobs from degrees, and changing the present recruitment policies which virtually make a degree a minimum qualification for any good job; (2) exercising great restraint in the establishment of new institutions, which should not be set-up (except in backward areas) unless their need is clearly established on sound academic considerations and adequate resources in terms of men, materials and money are available; (3) planning the location of new institutions very carefully and rationalising that of the existing ones to the extent possible; (4) adopting a policy of selective admissions to full-time institutions of higher education at first degree and post-graduate levels on the basis of merit with reservation of at least half the seats for all weaker sections; (5) enabling talented but economically weaker students to pursue their studies on a whole-time basis by ensuring to them the full cost of their education through appropriate bursaries, for which funds may be raised from public and private bodies; (6) providing facilities for expansion of higher education through channels of—non-formal education such as correspondence courses; and (7) opening Board and university examinations to private candidates to encourage self-study.

The policy outlined above will create the essential basic conditions for the proper development of higher education. It will also ensure that expansion of facilities in post-elementary education will not be at the cost of quality (which is what often happens at present), that non-formal-post-elementary education, where the unit cost of education is appreciably lower, shall be available to all who desire it and qualify for it, that the access of the weaker sections to secondary and higher education will increase rather than decrease, and that it would be adequately subsidised from State funds. The programme outlined above will largely depend for its success on the quality

of leadership provided by university and college teachers. The terms and conditions of service should be attractive enough for some of the best minds in the country to join the profession. At the same time, the facilities for acquisition of further knowledge should be provided. Also, it will succeed better if there are adequate job opportunities for those who have not been selected, if the formal and non-formal channels of education are treated as equal in status for purposes of employment, and if due concessions (including age relaxations) are allowed to ensure that those who adopt a method of recurrent education (i.e. transferring themselves from school to work and *vice-versa*. according to needs) are at least not at a disadvantage in comparison with those who complete their education at one stretch.

3.03 *The Undergraduate Stage:* A major programme of reform of higher education is the restructuring of courses at the undergraduate stage to make them more relevant and significant, not only to the students but also to the nation as a whole by assisting social transformation and national development. It is absolutely essential that every undergraduate student should be given a grounding in four important areas: (1) a set of *foundation courses* which are designed to create an awareness of areas such as Indian History and Culture; history of the freedom struggle in India and other parts of the world; social and economic life in India, including concepts and processes of development; the scientific method including the role of science and technology in development; alternative value systems and societies based thereon; Culutures of Asia and Africa (selected countries) and Gandhian thought; (2) a set of *core courses* which will give the student an opportunity to acquire a broad familiarity with some chosen diciplines, including a study of one or more of them in depth; (3) *some applied studies* projects/field activity which will form an integral activity of the course and will be carried out in the final year; and (4) involvement in a programme of *national or social service* for the first two years. This will provide a rounded and richer education. To get the full advantage of this reform, several important measures will have to be adopted. For instance, the courses should be diversified, especially to cover newly emergent and inter-disciplinary areas; a greater freedom should be allowed to the student, through the adoption of the semester system, to choose the courses best suited to his interests and capability; unit courses and modern and dynamic methods of learning and study should be adopted; and examination reform should be carried out with vigour and determination.

3.04 It is also necessary to provide liberal and well planned assistance for the improvement of affiliated colleges, which do most of the undergraduate teaching. From this point of view, the central programmes of assistance to affiliated colleges should be diversified and expanded. An effective machinery should be created at the State level for grants-in-aid to affiliated colleges, and the State grant-in-aid codes should be modernised and revised to bring about improvement of standards. Side by side, adequate and firm measures should be taken to improve the management of colleges.

3.05 Post-graduate Education and Research: The post-graduate stage assumes the highest significance for maintaining educational standards and for programmes of development. As its objective is to take a student to the threshold of new knowledge, it is essential that the teachers and students at this stage are themselves actively involved in the creation of new knowledge and its techniques, i.e., in research. Every institution providing post-graduate instruction must, therefore, have competent staff actively engaged in research and adequate research facilities in terms of laboratory equipment and research journals. It, therefore, follows that the responsibility for post-graduate education must, by and large, be directly assumed by the universities themselves.

At present about 50 per cent of post-graduate students and about 11 per cent of research students are studying in colleges. While a few colleges have outstanding research and teaching departments, most of them are poorly equipped for post-graduate instruction. Their situation should be reviewed in terms of the norms established by the University Grants Commission, and those having the potentiality of coming up to the norms within a few years should be assisted to do so as soon as possible, while the others should discontinue post-graduate instruction in the interest of standards. Collaborative efforts by colleges, which may not individually be viable units of post-graduate instruction but may be able to form viable units collectively, should also be encouraged. The University Grants Commission, Universities and State Governments will have to take concerted steps in this regard.

3.06 Other measures required for the development of higher education include the following:

(1) With the rapid increase in the number of universities, there is a need to ensure that all the University Departments themselves satisfy the norms as viable units of teaching and research.

(2) While inter-disciplinary courses should be introduced at the undergraduate level also, special efforts must be made in this regard at the post-graduate and research level.

(3) Individuals, groups and departments in universities and colleges should be supported, on merits, in carrying out high quality research. Special encouragement should be given to collaborative research efforts by a group, drawn from one or more departments, on the basis of pooled resources.

(4) High quality experimental research demands the development of indigenous instrumentation capability and culture. Efforts in this direction should be encouraged through support of research schemes and the creation of university instrumentation and service centres and regional instrumentation centres.

(5) While universities will continue to be involved in fundamental research, application oriented research, especially in collaboration with national laboratories and industries need to be specially encouraged in universities. Both fundamental and applied research require the highest intellectual qualities.

Fundamental discoveries in science lead to technological advances,

while progress in technology provides the scientists with sophisticated tools and instruments and enables them to make fundamental discoveries. As such, both in teaching and research, it is necessary to see that the best talent in the country is harnessed for the development of science and technology. Nor should we neglect the most modern and sophisticated technology which is very essential in certain areas such as heavy industries, defence, communications, transport, energy, etc.

(6) In order that universities may be able to contribute to the social development and change, they have to go outside the four walls of the classroom and get involved in a participatory understanding of some of the societal problems. Such research programmes as contribute to social development, especially to rural development, should be encouraged.

(7) While fostering knowledge of science and technology at the highest theoretical level and spreading it in the rural areas, there is a growing need to develop technology relevant to emergent national needs. Such a development would also demand appropriate interaction between the institutions of higher learning and the productive processes and organs of society.

3.07 Diversification: As enrolments increase and the student community gets larger, it is essential to diversify the courses and models of higher education, and to create new processes and models to suit the emerging needs. In fact, we should move in a direction where institutions of higher education represent a very wide spectrum of which the classical type is only one, although an important illustration.

3.08 Decentralization: It is equally essential to move away from the existing system of the affiliating university or centralization of academic authority and external examinations. The system as it works creates very dilatory procedures. The rigidity of the affiliating system also deprives the good teachers of the opportunity to take initiative for creative, imaginative and more fruitful action. It is, therefore, absolutely essential to decentralise authority and confer autonomy, from the university administration to the university departments and from the universities to colleges. The existing bureaucratic and centralised structures of the universities have to be radically altered to avoid delays, to evade attempt at rigid uniformities, to create an elastic and dynamic system and to promote innovative initiatives and reforms.

3.09 Autonomous Colleges: The concept of autonomous colleges is of special significance in this context. Autonomy for a college implies that the college and its teachers assume full responsibility and accountability for the academic programmes they provide, for the content and quality of their teaching, and for the admission and assessment of their students. Unless this basic condition is first met, it will not be possible to tackle the problem of *relevance* satisfactorily or to diversify and relate curricula to local needs and conditions, and what is even more important, to give greater individual attention to the students on the basis of their needs and aptitudes. This alone will make it possible for institutions of higher education to become communities of teachers and students engaged in an agreed and mutually satis-

factory joint pursuit of truth and excellence. However, it would be necessary to ensure that the terms and conditions of service for teachers prescribed by the Government and the University Grants Commission continue to apply to these institutions, and that the institutions continue to subserve the needs of national integration and development. The concept of autonomous college does not imply permanent categorisation of an institution under a separate label for a higher formal status. It requires an institution to be continuously subjected, in order to justify its recognition as an autonomous college, to periodic reviews and should be liable to lose its recognition if the conditions of higher academic excellence as well as its contribution to society are not maintained at the expected level. In short, such a privilege will have to be continuously earned and sustained through performance. Over the years, we should move in a direction where autonomy becomes, not a reward for excellence, but the minimum condition for the very existence of the college. It must also be emphasized that, in the interest of good education and in the larger interest of society itself, each institution has to seek its identity in its own unique fashion, consistent with its local situation and the academic perspectives of the local community.

3.10 As a step towards the development of this programme it is necessary to survey carefully all the colleges in a district and to identify one or two colleges which can become academically viable through guidance, planning and financial assistance. These colleges should be assisted to realize their potential and given autonomy to develop new courses in relation to the needs of the local region and its development. The programme can, over the years, be extended to other colleges as they show a desire and potential to develop on these lines.

3.11 *Academic Freedom:* To be an objective critic of society is an important responsibility of the university system. This can be discharged satisfactorily only if the academic freedom of the teachers and students to express their views freely and fearlessly is adequately protected. This freedom also deserves to be exercised more widely and ably.

3.12 *Extension:* If the university system has to discharge adequately its responsibilities to the entire educational system and to the society as a whole, it must assume extension as the third important responsibility and give it the same status as research and teaching. This is a new and extremely significant area which should be developed on the basis of high priority. As can be easily imagined, the extension programme of the university system will fall into two broad categories.

(1) *Extension Services to Schools and Colleges:* The universities should work with the colleges which, in turn, should work with the secondary and elementary schools in their neighbourhood and help them to improve standards by in-service education of teachers, sharing of facilities, provision of enrichment programme for students and discovery and cultivation of talent. The development of a proper Research and Development (R&D) programme for the education system is also a special responsibility of the universities.

(2) *Extension Service to the Community:* The university system also has

a great responsibility to the society as a whole. All universities and colleges should develop close relationships of mutual services and support with their local communities, and all students and teachers must be involved in such programmes as an integral part of their education. The National Service Scheme (N.S.S.) programme should be expanded and improved, ultimately to cover all students. The fundamental purpose of these and other student programmes should be to implant a spirit of cooperation and social commitment inter-related to moral development. It should be the obligation of the teaching community to give extension lectures to interpret recent trends in their fields to the community, to create scientific awareness, to participate in adult education and workers' education programmes, etc. Universities can also help in the preparation of developmental projects for the community around them, including the rural community. Such involvement will also help in bringing greater relevance into the courses at the undergraduate and the post-graduate levels and into the research programmes.

3.13 Standards: It will not be proper to continue to judge standards, as in the past, on the basis of academic performances only. In view of the new concept of the roles and functions of the universities and the acceptance of research, teaching and extension as equally important responsibilities of the universities, standards of higher education will have to be judged, not only on the basis of the academic achievements of its alumni and teachers, but also in relation to their social commitment and their contribution to social and national development. Moreover, attempts will have to be made, on the basis of the highest priority, to improve standards. The programmes to be developed for the purpose will include faculty development, provision of essential equipment, buildings and other facilities and organisation of an adequate programme of students services. These will need considerable investment in men, materials and money. But even more importantly, they need commitment and competence on the part of the teachers, high motivation in students who should be selected for their capacity, and a climate of sustained and dedicated hard work. A selective approach, proper planning and concentration of resources are also equally essential to achieve good results.

3.14 The problem of the medium of instruction is of special significance in this context. At the undergraduate stage, the process of transition from English to regional languages is already well under way. It must be expedited and assisted through the production of the necessary text books and other learning and teaching materials. At the post-graduate and research stage, where the process is mostly of self-learning, a medium of instruction is of less significance and what really matters is the capacity of the student to directly acquire the growing knowledge in the world in the field of his specialisation. It should be emphasized, however, that the growing use of the Indian languages increases, rather than decreases, the need to study English which will continue to have a significant place in our education. Obligatory passing in English should not be required at the undergraduate stage. Adequate

arrangements should, however, be made for specialised intensive courses in English in every college on an optional basis.

Learning of the English language should be promoted not by way of creating an impediment for any student for this or by further studies but should be available as a positive help in the form of reading service at every stage of education, including the post-graduate level or even after that. English should be used for building knowledge and not for building status. If this role of the English language as a positive instrument of knowledge is accepted, then facilities for its learning in various forms and content should be made available to each group of students according to their own needs. This type of an approach will be an approach of service rather than subjecting everyone to a uniform pattern, irrespective of need.

At the post-graduate stage, the student needs to have a good working knowledge of an international language so that he may have direct access to the specialised and growing knowledge in the world in his own or other fields. Passing a competence test in English may be required of a student seeking admission at the Master's level, depending on the needs of the field he wishes to study. Full encouragement should also be given to the study of foreign languages other than English.

Special groups may be appointed to examine the problem of switch-over to regional languages in the field of professional education.

3.15 *The Role of the UGC:* The coordination and maintenance of standards in institutions of higher education and research is a central responsibility. The UGC has been created by an Act of Parliament to look after this responsibility and empowered to take, "in consultation with the Universities and other bodies concerned, all such steps as it may think fit for the promotion and co-ordination of University education and for the determination and maintenance of standards of teaching, examination and research in Universities" (Section 12 of the UGC Act). To discharge this responsibility adequately, the UGC has to assume several roles and functions. For instance, it has a major role of providing leadership and impetus for reform and development. Towards this purpose, the Commission must continuously review the emerging problems of education, the status of teaching and research in different disciplines and the standards of teaching and research in the universities. It should through its committees and panels and other means evolve a consensus within the academic community regarding desirable changes in higher education.

3.16 It is the responsibility of the UGC to strive to provide leadership to the entire educational system and assist it to bring about the needed transformation. This can be done by encouraging the universities to play an increasingly active role in improving the quality of education in colleges and schools, by intensifying the R&D effort in education and by promoting the philosophy of extension whereby teaching, research, service of the community and the building of character become an integrated activity.

3.17 The UGC has to play an increasing role in promotion of high quality research in universities because of the symbiotic relationship between

teaching and research. At the same time it must promote applied research which has an immediate impact on the social and economic conditions of the people.

3.18 The UGC should strive to remove regional imbalances in the development of higher education in different parts of the country and to relate such development to the programmes of socio-economic advance and cultural growth of the people in the various regions.

3.19 The UGC should actively promote through the creation of an appropriate pattern of recognition and appreciation, the maintenance of values in the academic community so that its commitment to the pursuit of truth and excellence is enhanced and it is enabled better to discharge its responsibilities to society.

3.20 The leadership and catalytic role of the UGC has to be supported by the creation of appropriate organizations at the university and State levels. These would include a mechanism for surveys of undergraduate colleges in relation to well-defined norms and guidelines so as to ensure that further proliferation of sub-viable colleges is arrested, and for similar surveys of post-graduate colleges so as to ensure that they satisfy the UGC norms, and maintain certain minimum standards. It would also be necessary for the UGC to persuade the universities to establish academic planning, evaluation and implementation boards to look after the post-graduate and research programmes in a longterm perspective, and College Development Councils to advise and guide the colleges to improve their academic standards with the help of various UGC schemes.

3.21 *Conditions Essential for Success:* The system of higher education is now in a state of crisis, due to uncontrolled and unplanned expansion, inadequate inputs in terms of money, materials and talent, falling standards in a large proportion of institutions, weakening of student motivation, increase of educated unemployment, weakening of discipline and dys-functionalities created by the adverse effect of socio-economic problems, a lack of relevance, and significance, and because of undue political interference by subjecting universities to political and partisan pressures and lack of a national consensus in dealing with such situations. It is obvious that universities cannot function smoothly without adequate support from the Government. This crisis continues to deepen with the passage of time and spreads, not only to the entire educational system, but back again into the society itself. If this crisis is to be resolved quickly and successfully, three basic conditions will have to be fulfilled:

- (1) The Government should take hard decisions on delinking most of the jobs from degrees, provision of large additional investment needed to discover and develop talent, and to provide satisfactory conditions of work, revision of recruitment policies, etc. It should also support the universities in taking hard decisions in selective admissions, regulation of opening of new colleges, provision of satisfactory conditions of work and protection of university autonomy.

- (2) The teachers and students should carry out their part of the responsibility through intensive efforts to improve standards and the whole academic community should strive to serve society, through sustained, dedicated work, and commitment to the pursuit of knowledge, excellence, and national development.
- (3) A nation-wide effort should be organised to achieve a simultaneous break-through on the social as well as educational fronts.

The tasks of educational reconstruction thus require an intensive, co-ordinated and collaborative effort on the part of all the agencies involved, viz., the Centre, States, public, teachers, students and administrators. Instead of trying to blame each other (and each one of these has its own share of achievements as well as failures), all these agencies should work together for bringing about an educational and social transformation on a scale commensurate with the size and complexity of our problems. If this can be done, there is no doubt that we shall soon be able to create a new educational system and a new society.

