

**DOES THE NATION NEED A NEW NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION  
FOR  
HIGH QUALITY HIGHER EDUCATION?**

**Sunil Behari Mohanty**  
*P.O. Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry- 605 002*  
[sunilmohanty@hotmail.com](mailto:sunilmohanty@hotmail.com)

The country had its first National policy on Education in 1968. In 1979, a Draft National Policy on education was printed by the Central Government and was circulated, but there was no Policy. In 1985, the central Government brought out a document-Challenge of Education and circulated it among various levels of functionaries so as to get suggestions for formulating a new Policy. In 1986, a new National Policy on Education was formed. After passing of National Policy on Education 1986, change in Central Government brought in Acharya Ramamurti Committee in 1990 with an eye on modification of the policy. Again change in Government brought in Reddy Committee in 1992 that resulted in carrying out a few modifications in the Policy in 1992. For a few years. Central Government brought out Programme of Action documents, which were dropped after a few years giving the notion that the Government has been failing to implement the Programme being stated in the document. There have been change in the Central Government, but there has not been any modification in policy. The NPE 1986 stated that "The implementation of the various parameters of the New Policy must be reviewed every five years. Appraisals at short intervals will also be made to ascertain the progress of implementation and the trends emerging from time to time." (Art. 11.5). The process of change in education takes place at a high speed. Hence, there should be appropriate changes/modifications made in the National Policy from time to time. There have been certain aspects, of NPE 1986 which are yet to be implemented and there are a few new areas that need consideration.

**Post 1986 Developments in Higher Education Necessitating Formulation of a New National Policy on Education for India**

A number of international reports have pointed out importance of higher education and various new roles that it has to play. The International Commission on Education for 21<sup>st</sup> Century stated that "Higher education is at one and the same time one of the driving forces of economic development and the focal point of learning in a society. It is both repository and creator of knowledge. Moreover, it is the principal instrument for passing on the accumulated experience, cultural and scientific, of humanity" (Delors-1996, p. 130). The Recommendation Concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel (Resolution adopted on the Report of Commission at the 26th plenary meeting, on 11 November 1997) stated that

"At all appropriate stages of their national planning in general, and of their planning for higher education in particular, Member States should take all necessary measures to ensure that: (a) higher education is directed to human development and to the progress of society; (b) higher education contributes to the achievement of the goals of lifelong learning and to the development of other forms and levels of education; (c) where public funds are appropriated for higher education institutions, such funds are treated as a public investment, subject to effective public accountability; (d) the funding of higher education is treated as a form of public investment the returns on which are, for the most part, necessarily long term, subject to government and public priorities; (e) the justification for public funding is held constantly before public opinion." (UN 1997, Art 10)

The World Declaration on Higher Education 1998 Adopted by the World Conference on Higher Education organised by UNESCO in October 1998 in its preamble stated the importance of higher education in the following manner:

"...Without adequate higher education and research institutions providing a critical mass of skilled and educated people, no country can ensure genuine endogenous and sustainable development and, in particular, developing countries and least developed countries cannot reduce the gap separating them from the industrially developed ones. Sharing knowledge, international co-operation and new technologies can offer new opportunities to reduce this gap. Higher education has given ample proof of its viability over the centuries and of its ability to change and to induce change and progress in society. Owing to the scope and pace of change, society has become increasingly knowledge-based so that higher learning and research now act as essential components of cultural, socio-

economic and environmentally sustainable development of individuals, communities and nations. Higher education itself is confronted therefore with formidable challenges and must proceed to the most radical change and renewal it has ever been required to undertake, so that our society, which is currently undergoing a profound crisis of values, can transcend mere economic considerations and incorporate deeper dimensions of morality and spirituality." (UNESCO- 1998)

According to the said document, the mission of higher education is to educate, to train and to undertake research. It stated that the core missions and values of higher education, in particular the mission to contribute to the sustainable development and improvement of society as a whole, should be preserved, reinforced and further expanded. A follow up Seminar on above WCHE Declaration on the situation in Asia and Pacific stated that:

"Current economic and social changes provide higher education with a variety of major challenges. Increasingly it is being recognised that, in the future, higher education must have enhanced but somewhat different roles. Adjustments will need to be made within institutions, especially in access and admissions policies, course delivery, student learning strategies and curriculum content, while in many cases national policy frameworks and overall planning approaches will need redirection. Major challenges include finding sufficient resources to facilitate expansion, the quantity and quality dilemma, increasing pressure for more and better higher education in order to cope with the rapidly developing information and knowledge society, the increasing role of ICT as a driving force and its impact on higher education, increasing trade in higher education services and the pressures for increased mutual recognition in qualifications between Member States. Rapid change and new challenges clearly are putting higher education under considerable strain. In a number of Member countries, student enrolment demands cannot be met, public financial support is not expanding or is in decline, and infrastructure often is inadequate. There are many cases of unfortunate and increasing gaps in provision and quality, especially between developing and developed countries and between cities and rural areas. On the other hand, universities have tremendous capacity to innovate and help determine the future of their societies, as well as their own futures. Examples of recent innovations and experimentation of international significance include major open universities and distance education provision, the extensive use of new technologies, the location of more than half of the world's mega-universities in Asia and the Pacific and the extensive use of private higher education" (UNESCO Bangkok, 2003, pp. 1-2).

The UNESCO Report on Towards Knowledge Societies stated that "Institutions of higher education are destined to play a fundamental role in knowledge societies, based on radical changes in the traditional patterns of knowledge production, diffusion and application." (UNESCO-2005, p.87) The document outlined the new missions of higher education in the following manner.

"Higher education differs from primary and secondary education not only in the age and level of the students but also in terms of the production and development of new knowledge in the cultural, social and economic spheres. Deprived of these functions of research, discovery and innovation, institutions of higher education are reduced to "tertiary education" establishments, mere extensions of the primary and secondary levels. The semantic confusion between "higher education" and "tertiary education" can have serious consequences in many developing countries, which run the risk, as the result of a kind of international division of labour, of limiting to promoting tertiary education while believing them to be promoting higher education. This pitfall needs to be sedulously avoided, which involves developing research activities as a matter of priority, starting with disciplines that do not require heavy and costly equipment." (p.95).

The above said document reported about flow of many foreign students to developed countries. The percentage of foreign students was highest 25% in USA. It was followed by 1.1 % - UK; 10% - Germany; nine per cent - France; eight per cent -Australia; four per cent - Japan; three per cent - Russia; two per cent - Belgium, Canada, Italy, and Spain; and one per cent Austria, Malaysia, Sweden, and Switzerland. India, in order to take advantage of this trend of study in foreign countries has to improve quality of its higher education. The NPE 1986 highlighted importance of higher education as follows: "Higher education provides people with an opportunity to reflect on the critical, social, , economic, cultural, moral and spiritual issues facing humanity. It contributes to the national development through dissemination of specialised knowledge and skills. It is therefore a crucial factor for survival. Being at the apex of educational pyramid, it has also a key role in producing teachers for the education system."Art.5.25) "In the context of the

unprecedented explosion of knowledge, higher education has to become dynamic as never before, constantly entering uncharted areas." (Art.5.25)

### **Trade in Higher Education and GATS**

UNESCO (2004 pp. 19-20) reviewed the position in the following manner:

"Several new developments have taken place recently, which tend to change significantly the nature of higher education provision across national borders. Now, it is not only people, but institutions, programmes and teaching/learning tools that move sometime physically, but mainly virtually - to provide services abroad, in the form of branch campuses, franchise arrangements, e-courses, etc. Cross border supply of higher education is driven primarily by economic motives. The volume of e-learning provided by the corporate sector grew by 68 per cent in 1999, and its business turn out is estimated at 365 billion dollars for the year 2003. A whole array of new providers (corporate universities, for-profit, institutions, media companies) often of unclear status and quality seized the opportunity and imposed a prevailing business approach. This is a matter of concern for many governments, for institutions of higher education and for the academic community in general. Trade in Transnational higher education is currently an issue of heated debate. The World Trade Organization (WTO) initiated the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) as a means to provide a framework for rule-governed trade in the broad sphere of services. This is in keeping with the 8th UN Millennium Goal, which calls for partnerships to develop an open trading and financial system that is rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory. Several states have argued in favour of extending GATS to education, more especially to higher education. GATS is already producing different responses and is likely to have different impacts. Critics focus on the threat to the role and responsibilities of governments in higher education provision. They insist on the 'public good' aspect of higher education, and on the need to safeguard quality. It is also argued that there are considerable dangers in education policy issues being-- increasingly framed exclusively in terms of trade and economic benefits. Economists themselves point out that this might turn out to be counterproductive in purely economic terms. Supporters of free trade in education service, on the other hand, highlight the potential benefits that it brings in terms of wider access and innovation. "

The impact of GATS has to be seriously viewed and appropriate strategies to be decided and included in the new National Policy.

### **ASPECTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN NPE 1986 YET TO BE OPERATIONALISED**

A few aspects of higher education that need be considered while formulating a new NPE may be as follows:

#### **Should there be Indian Education Service?**

The NPE 1986 stated that "A proper management structure in education will entail the establishment of the Indian Education Service as an All-India Service. It will bring a national perspective to this vital sector. The basic principles, functions and procedures of recruitment to this service will be decided in consultation with the State Governments."(Art 10.3) Although nearly four decades have passed, no Indian Education Service has been created. The necessity of Indian Education Service for at least higher education stage becomes a crucial issue, when one comes across teachers, working in Institutes of Advanced Study in Education and similar institutions affiliated to universities, getting salary as per the scale of pay of school teachers.

#### **How to Improve Investment on Education?**

The NPE 1968 stated that the investment on education be gradually increased to reach a level of 6 per cent of the national income as early as possible. The NPE 1986 stated that "While the actual requirements will be computed from time to time on the basis of monitoring and review, the outlay will be stepped up to ensure that during the Eighth Five year Plan and onwards it will uniformly exceed six per cent of the national income" (Art 11.4) Although four decades are going to pass since formulation of 1968 Policy and two decades since 1986 Policy, investment in education has not been stepped up appreciably.

#### **How to Make States have Advisory Boards of Education?**

The NPE 1986 stated that "State Governments may establish State Advisory Boards of Education on the lines of C.A.B.E. Effective measures should be taken to integrate mechanisms in the various State departments concerned with Human Resource Development."(Art. 10.4)

How to have such Boards in all States?

#### **How to Ensure De-linking Degrees from Jobs?**

The NPE 1986 stated that "A beginning will be made in de-linking degrees from jobs in selected areas."(Art.5.38) "The proposal cannot be applied to occupation - specific courses like Engineering, Medicine, Law, teaching, etc. Similarly, the services of specialisation with academic qualifications in

humanities, social sciences, sciences, etc. will continue to be required in various job positions" (Art. 5.39) "Delinking will be applied in services for which a university degree need not be a necessary qualification. Its implementation will lead to a re-fashioning of job-specific courses and afford greater justice to those candidates who, despite being equipped for a given job, are unable to get it because of an unnecessary preference for graduate candidates."(Art. 5.40) It seems the nation has forgotten about this aspect. How to achieve progress?

### **How to Provide Training for Educational Planners, Administrators and Heads of Institutions?**

The NPE 1986 stated that "Special attention will be paid to the training of educational planners, administrators and heads of institutions. Institutional arrangements for this purpose should be set up in stages."(Art 10.5) How to work out the Strategy? Should there be State Level Training institutions as subsidiary of NIEPA?

### **How to Improve Network Arrangements?**

The NPE 1986 stated that "In the areas of research and development, and education in science and technology, special measures will be taken to establish network arrangements between different institutions in the country to pool their resources and participate in projects of national importance"(Art.3. 9) Has the nation done enough? If not, what should be done?

### **How to Improve Evaluation Process and Examination Reform?**

The NPE 1986 stated that "Assessment of performance is an integral part of any process of learning and teaching. As part of sound educational strategy examinations should be employed to bring about qualitative Improvements In education. (Art 8.23)

"The objective will be to re-cast the examination system so as to ensure a method of assessment that is a valid and reliable measure of student development and a powerful instrument for improving teaching and learning; in functional terms, this would mean: The use of grades in place of marks; The elimination of excessive element of chance and subjectivity; The de-emphasis of memorisation; Continuous and comprehensive evaluation that incorporates the scholastic and non-scholastic aspects of education, spread over the total span of instructional time; Effective use of the evaluation process by teachers, students and parents; Improvement in the conduct of examination; Introduction of the semester system from the secondary stage in a phased manner, and the use of grades in place of marks."(Art.8.24) "The above goals are relevant both for external examinations and evaluations within educational institutions. Evaluation at the institutional level will be streamlined and the predominance of external examinations reduced. A National Examination Reform Framework would be prepared to serve as a set of guidelines to the examining bodies, which would have the freedom to innovate and adapt me framework to suit me specific situations. (Art 8.25)"

Because of various factors in the field of higher education, it has not been possible to have majority of examining bodies: (1) continue to prefer Marking-101 point scale of assessment than Grading- evaluation in a smaller scale of 5, 7 or 9 points of assessment; continue to have choices in question papers that allow excessive element of chance and subjectivity; continue to have questions that emphasise testing of skills of memorisation; (4) have not introduced semester system, as it requires speedy evaluation strategies which are not accepted not only the affiliating universities, but also teaching universities, institutions deemed to be universities and autonomous colleges; and (5) continue to give have only external examinations. Although two decades are going to pass, no national examination reform framework is available. Is there now a necessity for it? If yes, how to proceed?

### **How to Introduce Comprehensive and Continuous Evaluation?**

Most of the examining bodies do not bother to have continuous and comprehensive evaluation that incorporates the scholastic and non-scholastic aspects of education, spread over the total span of instructional time. Even autonomous colleges and institutions deemed to be universities also do not bother to have continuous and comprehensive evaluation. There should be stress on not only continuous evaluation but also on comprehensive evaluation. Comprehensive evaluation covers various aspects other than traditional achievement evaluation. These include attitude, interest, aptitude, regularity, industry, etc. Continuous evaluation is more reliable than the traditional single examination conducted at the interval of one or two years. If the nation shifts to such a practice, the time wasted in conducting external valuations shall be saved. Again, a huge amount is spent on conducting external examinations. This can be saved. Of

course, this shall lead to curtail in power of distribution of favours for appointment of examiners and extra income through external valuation of answer scripts and practical work, etc. Since a large number of job givers generally do not rely on the Degrees and Diplomas but conduct their own evaluation, there should not be any difficulty because of sub-standard colleges or irresponsible teachers, if any.

### **How to Make Higher Education free from Higher Secondary Education, in Certain States?**

The NPE 1968 pointed out the necessity of a common educational structure. It stated that higher secondary stage of two years could be located in schools, colleges or both according to the local conditions. (Art. 17). The NPE 1986 stated that "Efforts will also be made to have the +2 stage accepted as a part of school education throughout the country" (Art 3.3). Although nearly four decades have passed, there are many States, where +2 is part of higher education. This affects the quality of functioning of higher education institutions. Continuance of higher secondary classes is neither beneficial to school students. It is also not beneficial to degree class students as their Principals are unnecessarily burdened in managing higher secondary classes.

### **How to make States form Councils of Higher Education?**

The NPE 1986 stated that "State level planning and co-ordination of higher education will be done through Councils of Higher Education. UGC and these Councils will develop coordinative methods to keep a watch on standard. "There are some States that have State Council for Higher Education. But there are still many States where such Councils are yet to be formed.

### **How to Improve the Working of the System?**

The NPE 1986 stated that

"It is obvious that these and many other new tasks of education cannot be performed in a state of disorder. Education needs to be managed in an atmosphere of utmost intellectual rigour, seriousness of purpose and, at the same time, of freedom essential for innovation and creativity. While far-reaching changes will have to be incorporated in the quality and range of education, the process of introducing discipline into the system will have to be started, here and now, in what exists." (Art. 7.1)

"The country has placed boundless trust in the educational system. The people have a right to expect concrete results. The first task is to make it work. All teachers should teach and all students study." (Art.7.2).

"The strategy in this behalf will consist of (a) a better deal to teachers with greater accountability; (b) provision of improved students' services and insistence on observance of acceptable norms of behaviour; (c) provision of better facilities to institutions; and (d) creation of a system of performance appraisals of institutions according to standards and norms set at the National or State levels." (Art. 7.3)

The NPE 1986 referred to national as well as State norms and Standards. There are large numbers of instances, where, the States seem to follow their own practices (Not created Norms) although these contravene to a large extent with national norms and Standards. The national bodies set up to enforce national norms and standards get confused and create inertia in the system. The case of teacher education programmes affiliated to universities have fallen victim of this syndrome.

### **How to make National vs. State Quality Control Bodies follow a Common Set of Norms and Standards?**

There have been many instances when the institutions at the national level have differed from national yard sticks and have even ignored them. For more than a decade, National Council for Teacher Education has been functioning as a statutory body. It has not come out with Norms for programmes of Regional Institutes of Education of NCERT, an autonomous body under MHRD. Regional Bodies of NCTE have been permitting these institutes to administer pre-service programmes although the Principal of a RIE may not possess a Master of Education (M. Ed. ) or Master of Arts (Education) degree. There is no rule that every Principal of a RIE has to be a Professor of Education. In spite of this fact, MHRD treats every RIE Principal as expert in teacher education. There are many State Governments take a clue from this strategy and appoint persons without M. Ed. or M. A. (Education) degree as Principal of their teacher training colleges. Although NCTE norms do not allow this, these colleges have been able to get recognition from Regional Committees of NCTE. In one State, the only Government Training College that has been given the status of College of

Teacher Education by MHRD has been in existence for many years although more than 90% of its faculty is not qualified to teach B. Ed. as per NCTE norms. Should not NCERT or State governments follow the same Norms as applicable to private teacher education institutions? Principal in charge is a convenient term that has diluted the system and has allowed sub standard teacher education programmes. Unfortunately, as State Government institutions are full of these Principal in charges, the private institutions follow the trend. Perusal of such scenes might have made the University Vice Chancellors to go for large scale money making B Ed distance education programmes. At present although either M Ed. or MA (Education) is the minimum qualification for a lecturer in education in a B Ed Course, there is Norms for M Ed (Distance Education) but not for MA (Education).

### **How to Improve Quality of Teachers?**

The National Policy document suggested a better deal for teachers (Art 7.2). It also stated that

"The status of the teacher reflects the socio-cultural ethos of a society; it is said that no people can rise above the level of its teachers. The Government and the community should endeavour to create conditions which will help motivate and inspire teachers on constructive and creative lines. Teachers should have the freedom to innovate, to devise appropriate methods of communication and activities relevant to the needs and capabilities of and the concerns of the community." (Art.9.1)

"The methods of recruiting teachers will be reorganised to ensure merit, objectivity and conformity with spatial and functional requirements. The pay and service conditions of teachers have to be commensurate with their social and professional responsibilities and with the need to attract talent to the profession. Efforts will be made to reach the desirable objective of uniform emoluments, service conditions and grievance-removal mechanisms for teachers throughout the country. Guidelines will be formulated to ensure objectivity in the postings and transfers of teachers. Xxx Teachers will continue to play a crucial role in the formulation and implementation of educational programmes." (Art.9.2)

"Teachers/ associations must play a significant role in upholding professional integrity, enhancing the dignity of the teacher and in curbing professional misconduct. National level associations of teachers could prepare a Code of Professional Ethics for Teachers and see to its observance." (Art 9.3)

It is a well known fact that proliferation of private colleges and private higher education institutions has lowered average salary received by a teacher. There are States, where the teachers have to pay to get jobs and also do their job with a meager salary of one thousand rupees per month hoping for increase in salary amount after receipt of Government grant by the institution. In most of the cases, there is no rule for payment of salary by cheque.

### ***Peer Feedback for Improving Teaching Quality***

A number of developed countries have introduced the system of peer feedback for improving quality of teaching. Bell (2002) has reported about peer feedback of teaching as an established procedure for improving teaching skills of higher education teachers. Should such a system be introduced?

### **How to Improve Assessment of Performance of Teachers?**

The NPE 1986 stated that "Teachers' performance will be systematically assessed. All posts will be filled on the basis of merit" (Art.5.31). It also stated that

"A system of teacher's evaluation - open, participative and data-based - will be created and reasonable opportunities of promotion to higher grades provided. Norms of accountability will be laid down with incentives for good performance and disincentives for non- performance. Teachers will continue to play a crucial role in the formulation and implementation of educational programmes." (Art.9.2)

In most States, the teaching skill and level of knowledge of a teacher is not taken into consideration in assessing performance of a teacher. Generally, the qualifications, programmes attended and papers presented and publications are taken into consideration. Unfortunately, skill in teaching has been overlooked at the time of selection of higher education teachers of different categories or at the time of promotion to a higher post.

### ***How to Improve Consolidate and Expand Facilities in Existing Institutions?***

The NPE 1986 stated that ". In view of the need to effect an all round improvement in the institutions, it is proposed that, in the near future, the main emphasis will be on the consolidation of, and expansion of facilities, in the existing institutions." (Art 5.26). The nation has seen creation of a large number of Universities in a particular State, some of which also functioned in rented buildings. It is only the judiciary that came to rescue of higher education, otherwise the State would have allowed them to continue. Education is a Concurrent subject. In many States there are now a number of engineering colleges that have vacant classrooms. Similarly, there is now mushroom growth in teacher training colleges, whose classrooms will remain vacant after two three years. The private bodies can get back their funds in the first year of creation of infrastructure. But the quality of products no doubt is going to be poorer and affect on the whole the general quality of higher education.

#### ***How to Check Substandard Institutions and Substandard Programmes?***

The NPE 1986 stated that "Urgent steps will be taken to protect the system from degradation" (Art. 5.27). In many States, a large number of colleges have been functioning without Posts of principals being filled up on regular basis. How to make States realise the danger involved in such a practice?

#### ***How to Improve Performance Appraisal of Institutions?***

The NPE 1986 suggested that "creation of a system of performance appraisals of institutions according to standards and norms' set at the National or State levels" (Art.7.3). Some of the issues in this connection are as follows. At present NAAC grades the Universities. It is actually a Grading of teaching departments of the concerned University. The human and material resources may vary from one Department to another. Should not the Grades indicate grades for individual Teaching Departments? Should not similar strategy be employed for the colleges? Quality of teaching is the most important aspect of the institutional quality. While grading the teaching departments and college departments, should not NAAC assess quality of teaching through video recording of teaching and its subsequent assessment?

#### **Should Autonomous Colleges and Autonomous Departments Scheme Continue?**

The NPE 1986 stated that

"In view of mixed experiences with the system of affiliation, autonomous colleges will be helped to develop in large numbers until the affiliating system is replaced by a freer and more creative association of universities with colleges. Similarly, the creation of autonomous departments within universities on a selective basis will be encouraged. Autonomy and freedom will be accompanied by accountability."

UGC and some Universities and State Governments are happy to grant autonomy. Has assessment of functioning of autonomy been free from mechanical and unrealistic procedures? For instance, one college was given autonomy at a time, when there was rampant malpractice. The academics considered as a step taken by the university to get rid of the student problems taking place due to scratching of examination papers etc. Hence, granting of autonomy is not always based on merit. It has been observed that there are a number of non - autonomous colleges that have got better NAAC Grades than autonomous. colleges of the concerned University to which they are affiliated. Should there be a debate over the necessity of granting autonomy?

#### **How to Ensure Flexibility in Curricula?**

The NPE 1986 stated that "Courses and programmes will be redesigned to meet the demands of specialisation better. There will be increasing flexibility in the combination of courses." Although nearly two decades are going to pass after formulation of National Policy on Education in 1986, many Universities continue to have rigidity in course structures. In what way flexibility can be ensured? Will the Universities allow even single subject degrees?

#### **How to Improve Quality of Physical Infrastructure?**

The NPE 1986 stated that "Provision will be made for minimum facilities and admission will be regulated according to capacity." A number of State Governments and their Universities allow self-financed colleges. Although, there are regulatory bodies to take care of adequate material resources, corruption found among visiting team members make a large of such institutions deliver their programmes without adequate material resources. Even there are many government colleges that function wither adequate material resources. This results in delivery of programmes poor quality. How to improve the situation?

### **Should there be Rural Universities?**

The NPE 1986 stated that

"The new pattern of the Rural University will be consolidated and developed on the lines of Mahatma Gandhi's revolutionary ideas on education so as to take up the challenges of micro - planning at grassroots levels for the transformation of rural areas. Institutions and programmes of Gandhian basic education will be supported." (Art.5.42)

Madhya Pradesh has Chitrakoot Gramodaya Viswavidyalaya and Tamil Nadu has Gandhigram Rural Institute (An Institution Deemed to be University). Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad has a few courses oriented to rural situation. But most of the States do not have Rural Universities.

### **How to Improve Assessment of Performance of Students?**

The NPE 1986 stated that: "Concomitant with de-linking, an appropriate machinery, such as National .Evaluation Organisation, will be established to conduct tests on a voluntary basis to determine the suitability of candidates for specific jobs, to pave the way for the emergence of norms of comparable competencies across the nation, and to bring about an over-all improvement in testing and measurement."(Art.5.41) This Organisation is yet to take shape.

### **How to Improve Improved Students' Services?**

The NPE 1986 stated that "provision of improved students' services" (Art 7.3) A large number of institutions do not have reading room facilities. They need also to have Internet facilities for use by students. The Government colleges are also sub- standard in respect of reading room facilities and open access system in library and Internet facilities.

### ***How to Improve Quality of Instructional Materials?***

The NPE 1986, while referring to the evaluation process and examination reform stated that "The introduction of concomitant changes in instructional materials and methodology." (Art.8.24). It is a common knowledge that there is no speedy updating of instructional materials. Even the course materials supplied by a Central University like IGNOU contain data which are 10 years old at the time of issue to the students. In a Computer age, when International Institute for educational Planning organises Virtual programmes on Open educational Resources, the reason for supplying poor quality of instructional materials may be ascribed only to lethargy of the-concerned University. Methodology of delivery continues to be dull. Note dictation still is a practice found in large number of cases as this takes care of non-availability of required books with students and also it takes care of taking of class without much time being spent by teachers in their any preparation. Unfortunately, skill in teaching has been overlooked at the time of selection of higher education teachers of different categories or at the time of promotion to a higher post.

## **A FEW OTHER ISSUES THAT REQUIRE DEBATING**

### ***Should there be Modification in University Acts regarding Chancellors of Universities***

In case of most of the Universities, the chancellors are the Governors of the Concerned States. It has been observed that where such Governors cum Chancellors have experience as teachers and are academicians, they take interest improvement of quality of higher education and even are in a position to give directions to Vice Chancellors. Hence, there may be a debate on the necessity of qualifications and experiences of Chancellors.

### ***Should Pre-Service Teacher Training and Medical Training be Made Free?***

The medical institutions need to attract students of good quality. Failure of Government to establish medical institutions of good quality have closed the doors for many bright students. No doubt the medical students coming out of high fee charging medical institutions will be more money minded that service minded as they have to get back the amount invested by them soon. Similar is the situation in case of teacher training. These types of institutions need to be free. There is instance of a State where an act was brought out that closed all private teacher training institutions. The Government should take provide adequate aid to these institutions so that pre-service teacher training programmes and medical training can be provided free.

### **Should there be Modification in Funding Pattern for giving Stress on Establishment of Central Government managed Excellent Institutions?**

The NPE 1986 referred to establishment of Navodaya Vidyalayas. These are residential schools meant for rural talented students. There is a necessity for establishment of pace setting institutions



in every category of higher education in every State of normal size and for a group of small States. The Central Government has been providing funds directly and through agencies like UGC etc to higher education institutions directly and also to State Governments. In many cases, these go waste. There is no proper mechanism for verification of data that has formed the base for deciding grant. For instance, it was found that a State government college got UGC grant meant for its PG Classes by providing a list of teachers for PG classes that contained names of persons who are dead or retired and were not even drawing lecturer scale. The concerned State University Director of College Development Council did not bother to countersign such data. In case of visit by a NAAC team the concerned Government College also got a temporary hotel function in the campus. The NCTE or other types of Norms are found being violated by State Governments. For instance a Govt. Training College that has been functioning-as a College of Teacher Education with financial assistance from MHRD of Government of India was found having a Principal who was not qualified to be a Lecturer as per UGC/NCTE norm, possessing no M Ed, or MA (Education) qualification. Two year B Ed. Course is found in all the four Regional Institutes of Education run by NCERT of MHRD of Government of India. No State Government has yet started such courses. Hence, in order to provide better quality of higher education, the Central Government needs to establish more numbers of its own institutions in different States. Improvement of the quality of higher education has been an important area of activity of the Central Government. Although there are schemes of s funding, when it is operated at State level, in many cases, there is increase in physical infrastructure sans quality. For instance, a number of States have received funding from the Central Government and have changed names of certain training colleges to Institutes of Advanced Study in Education, but there are no professors and even in some cases no readers/associate professors in Education. Should the Central Government stop the scheme of upgrading colleges and establish more colleges and universities of its own so that at least the desired norms of operation of these higher education institutions are not diluted by the States?

***Should there be Teaching Skill Test in Selection of Teachers?***

Many years ago, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore had suggested teaching skill test for selection of higher education teachers. The NET conducted by UGC needs to reconsider its strategies for there may be a good scholar but that scholar may be and communicator and a bad teacher.

***Should Utilisation of Regular Teachers in Coaching Classes be Banned?***

The present schemes utilises the services of regular teachers for the purpose. The teachers are also paid extra amount for this work. Since, the teachers are required to undertake self study and to develop instructional materials for students and to carry out correction of submitted home assignments, they should not be engaged in coaching classes. The heads of institutions need not be paid also for managing these classes.

***Should non Teachers instead of Regular Teachers be utilised in SC and ST Coaching Classes?***

The present schemes utilises the services of regular teachers for the purpose. The teachers are also paid extra amount for this work. Since, the teachers are required to undertake self study and to develop instructional materials for students and to carry out correction of submitted home assignments, they should not be engaged in coaching classes. The heads of institutions need not be paid also for managing these classes.

***Should Utilisation of Teachers in Service by Open University and other Distance Education and Self-Financed Programmes and Coaching Programmes be Banned?***

At present, there are many schemes under which a teacher in service in the field of higher education is engaged for programmes being conducted by Open Universities, Distance education programmes of conventional universities, private coaching centres, coaching centres run by institutions for SC and ST students, self-financed programmes being run by university departments and colleges, etc. The teachers are also paid extra amount for this work. Since, the teachers are required to undertake self study and to develop instructional materials for students and to carry out correction of submitted home assignments, they should not be engaged in coaching classes. The heads of institutions need not be paid also for managing these classes.

### **Should Private Coaching by Regular (With Proper Salary) College and University Teachers be Banned?**

Although a small number of college and university teachers are engaged in private coaching on payment, it affects the system. The rich students generally go for these classes accentuating the gap between the rich and poor. There are instances of favouritism owing to such practice. The income of a few limited numbers is mistaken-as income of every college and university teacher. Hence, in order to ensure effective utilisation of teachers in their work, the private coaching has to be banned.

### **Should there be Maintenance of Daily Record of Activities of Teachers?**

The office of the institution should maintain a register of daily activities of the teachers. Normally, in big colleges, the Principal depends upon the Head of the Department. The HOD may be a truant. The Heads of departments do not get extra amount for their supervision work. Hence, in many situations, they do not want to earn displeasure of their colleagues by reporting about their absence. In some States, attendance register is in vogue for teachers. The institutions may examine the possibility of introducing it to ensure the availability of teachers for specified hours in the institution for his/her engagement in extension work.

### **Should Universities Ensure Payment of Adequate Salary to Higher Education Faculty and Ban Part Time Appointment in Regular Posts?**

The colleges, especially private and unaided colleges suffer from payment of appropriate salary. There are lecturers who get less than thousand rupees per month. They continue like this for many years. During these years, they do not take their classes regularly. The college principal, on humanitarian ground ignores the truancy of such teachers. The students of such colleges are under taught and are prone to malpractice in examinations. Such teachers, even after getting regular salary become habituated to teacher truancy. This also affects the regular system and fully paid teachers. There is no system of checking payment of appropriate salary in each college. Until, this is achieved, the amount of funds utilised in aided and government colleges cannot be fully implemented.

### **What Strategies are needed to Facilitate Development of Higher Education Teachers?**

The Higher Education Academy ([http:// www.heacademy.ac.uk/.](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/)) is owned by Universities UK (UUK) and the Standing Conference of Principals (SCOP). Its aims and objectives are: To be an authoritative and independent voice on policies that influence student learning experiences; To support institutions in their strategies for improving the student learning experience; To lead, support and inform the professional development and recognition of staff in higher education; To promote good practice in all aspects of support for the student learning experience; To lead the development of research and evaluation to improve the quality of the student learning experience; and To be a responsive, efficient and accountable organization. It has developed UK Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education. Should there be some Academies of this type by upgrading certain Academic Staff Colleges? Should Association of Indian Universities establish such an Institute? Training and learning through Internet is in practice in many developed countries (Kandlbinder-2003). Is it time to go for this?

### **Should there be Provision for Regular Assessment of Teaching and Relate Assessment to Salary Scale?**

Quality of teaching can be improved only when, teachers get feedback regarding their teaching. This can be ascertained only through inspection of classes. Inspections are to be carried out by Directors and Principals. The author, during his years as principal, found the necessity of inspection even for experienced teachers. In one such inspection, a teacher was seen writing miss-spelt words on the black boards. During this inspection, there were two colleagues of the teacher as observers. They had recorded their observations. There was a discussion session after observation. The experienced teacher had not realised before discussion following inspection about possibility of such wrong words written by him on the blackboard. Principals need to give stress on regular inspection of classes to ensure effective teaching and by that effective utilisation of financial resources.

### **How to Make Institutions and University Departments Ensure Appropriate Utilisation of Human Resources?**

Quality of an institution depends on efficient utilisation of available human resources. The quality is affected by shortened academic year, student absence from the class for appearing at entrance tests for professional courses, etc. What strategies are to be employed for such types of problems?

## **CONCLUSION**

There is a need for developing a publication like challenge of education that was brought out in 1985 to raise a debate over various issues in higher education. A few points have been raised above. When debates are organised more issues may come up and also more suggestions may be there for improving quality of higher education.

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