



Extension in Higher Education: Distinctive Features

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Introduction:

Education is always looked as a process of bringing about expected change in human beings by imparting certain information, catering useful skills & imbibing positive values. Education consists of three streams namely formal Education, non-formal Education and informal Education. Nevertheless, the formal education which is given through schools and colleges is considered as 'real education'. Lagging behind in Education: It is said that, India is having long tradition of Education. Examples of reciting holy books, functions in that regard etc. are given. However, we must accept a fact that, our country was far behind in modern Education. The causes for it can be stated as follows ; * Ours was a vast country having disruption, variations in several aspects. *Geographical unevenness was prevalent.

Key words- UGC, University Extension, Education.

The society was agriculture based and rural in nature ,where all people were having certain professions based on their castes . These professions were carried out hereditary. The knowledge and skills of such professions were transferred to next generation by informal mode. Every person was engaged in such assigned caste profession. The need of formal, modern education was not felt. The Education which was available in olden days was restricted for certain social groups.Even female individuals from those groups were not allowed to take education. This type of obstruction was supported by religious beliefs too. The Education in olden days was not relevant for day to day life. Instead of Mathematics, Geography, Agriculture etc. knowledge regarding God,methods of worshipping Him,emancipation and world after

death...such aspects were included in religious books. All such aspects put our society in dark. The Literacy status (which is a base of Education) indicates this dark status([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File ;Literacy_India_1901_2011_Detail.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Literacy_India_1901_2011_Detail.png)) Literacy situation was very worst in the beginning of 20th century(i.e. in 1900).It was 5.3% initially. Till 1920,it did not reach upto 10% also. Literacy rate among females was quite disappointing(i.e.below 5%).In 1930,the Literacy rate was 10% .In 1940,there was some rise in Literacy rate. At the time of Independence, it was 12%.The rise in Literacy is seen considerably fast from independence .It is as follows;

18.33%(1951).

28.30%(1961).

34.45%(1971).

43.57%(1981).

52.51%(1991).

68.84%(2001).

74.04%(2011).

The British raj started modern Education. However, it was not propagated nor promoted on extensive scale unto the masses ,as the British government imparted Education to produce clerks & administrators for running it's rule properly. Hence the modern Education which was initiated by British rule, was not expanded much. This picture started changing from the Independence. After attaining Independence ,we accepted democratic pattern,in which a common man is considered ' important '.How we can proceed further by keeping him ignorant ? With this consideration, we initiated concrete measures such as forming of certain commissions/ committees, established relevant institutions, strengthened Education in different five year plans.The Union Government, in 1948,appointed a University Commission under the chairmanship of Dr.D.S.Radhakrishnan, with the objective of examining the possibilities for reconstruction of University education. On its recommendations, the University Grants Commission (UGC) was created. It was set up 'for the purpose of allocation and disbursement of grants to universities in India '.In 1964,with an ambitious plan ' to advise the Government on the general principle and policies for development of education at all levels that would lead to the evolution of a national system of education ' ,an independent commission was appointed at national level. Dr.D.S. Kothari was the chairperson of the commission. This popular commission is recognized as 'Kothari Communication ' in history. In 1966,this commission submitted its report which has suggested several important & innovative measures for meeting new challenges

before India. This report (the recommendations from it) has given directions to Education in India. There are also some other landmarks so far Education is concerned such as, First National Education Policy in 1968, Ishwarbhai Patel Review Committee in 1977, Malcom Adisheshaiah Committee in 1977-78, New Education Policy in 1986 (University of Pune Department of Adult, Continuing Education and Extension(2001) - Extension; the third Dimensions of Higher Education, Pune ,pp.30-57). The Higher Education: The higher education is primarily recognized as important Education after secondary education. Some of the characteristics of Higher education can be stated as ;

- 1.The age group is involved in it is youth which is physically & psychologically sound and creative. It can play an important role in social construction along with self- development.
- 2.Education in this category is of Higher level, in-depth and critical.
- 3.At this level, the foundation of education is fixed, It is to develop certain skills and values along with information.

Introduction of Extension:

Conventionally, teaching and research are considered the prominent dimensions of Higher Education .After the Independence, social orientation got focused through different documents ,aspirations of people and directions of government. It reflected in Introduction of 'Extension ' as one of the dimensions of Higher Education equal to teaching and research. The policy statement of UGC (which considered as the apex body of Higher Education in India),1977 reveals it in following words (Policy statement of UGC-1977); '...If the University system has to discharge adequately its responsibilities of 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...The University system also has a great responsibility to the society as a whole...' Regarding Extension; Extension concept has been derived from west. Considering its importance, in the case of strengthening ties with society and getting enriched too. It has been accepted in Higher education in India. Many thinkers and practitioners both in higher education and Extension have described Extension in different ways. Dr.Madhuriben Shah,then chairperson of UGC ,had strongly put forth the role of higher education in the prestigious Dr.Zakir Husain Memorial lecture held in Patna in 1981.In the same lecture she says (Shah Madhuri:1981) "...Universities can no longer remain isolated from the larger society. If we admit that education will be a primary need of each individual, the Educational system, and more so

Universities will have to broaden their educational functions to the dimensions of society as a whole. Universities are the creation of society and must serve the community of which they are part. Educational system cannot now afford to remain a closed circuit. The functions of the university, according to modern thinkers, is to help the social economic, educational and cultural growth of the community, which it serves. That the Universities should be closely involved in the life of the society is imperative both for the society and for the universities themselves. The aim of the Universities should be not only to produce mere specialists, rather cultivated men and women needed for the development of the country. Dr.Chitra Naik, an eminent educationist and veteran social thinker opines regarding Extension as, " Extension would mean the creation of opportunities for students and to validate the knowledge gained while simultaneously developing their competence for analysing and finding solutions to the problems of real life. (Naik Dr.Chitra : 1982)". views of experts, policies of UGC & expectations clarifies the concept ' Extension' as follows, "Extension is looked after as people oriented and socially useful activities only, it is also more than it. In Higher Education, it is expected to teach prescribed syllabus (prepared by academic board of study).It is done in a prescribed time and prescribed teaching methodology.The examination of students is mandatory. One thing should be remembered-knowledge of computers is prescribed for science students .However other (students of other faculty) need to know it.The information of economic transactions need to be known to the students of science too. In such cases, all prescribed aspects should be modified according to needs .In view of imparting 'computer knowledge ' to non-science students, timing patterns, teaching methodologies should be changed as per the needs of target population. Even the subjects which are taught in colleges/universities can be taught in communities. All the pedagogical arrangements need to be modified according to target population. The subjects other than syllabus need to be sensitized and taught to college students. In those cases, pedagogical arrangements need to be modified. 'Extension can be described as, imparting and disseminating information,skills & imbibing values as well as providing resources by transcending the conventional boundaries by Higher Education institutions. It should be done in a Non-formal way,wherein the convenience of target population is preferred rather than the organizing institution. The higher Education institutions can participate in the development process of people. One can simplify this concept as follows, Any subject can be taught in a specific Class (of a college or university)as per prescribed syllabus prepared by particular academic body in a prescribed manner. It can be recognized as teaching. The same subject can be

taught to other needy groups(whether it may be from same organisation or outside).For that, different methodologies need to be adopted based on requirements of target population & the mission. Following are some aspects related to Extension(University of Pune, Department of Adult ,Continuing Education and Extension :5);

Features of Extension :

1.Flexibility.

2.Non-Formality.

3.simplicity.

4.Meaningfulness.

5.Relevance to life .

6.Activities based on needs of target population and not only on convenience of Organizing institution .

There are eighty Universities in India which are marching on the track . Extension-principle is common rein; however local diversities differentiate activities such as, some Universities run courses regarding different aspects of Extension. Discipline Development is considered important in those Universities. Academic activities are geared around Extension. Some Universities are engaged in conducting programmes for the population which is absent in formal Education. Field outreach activities are considered prominent in some Universities. Emphasis is given on downtrodden, deprived, socially weaker groups. Skill Development activities are carried out by some Universities.Material Development is done at some places,while taking welfare programmes into the people is carried out by some Universities.Local issues, priorities of Universities and concerned departments, time to time changes in UGC directives etc.affect on such variations.Whether the extent of success may ,these Departments have succeeded in inculcating 'Extension Culture ' in Higher Education.

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