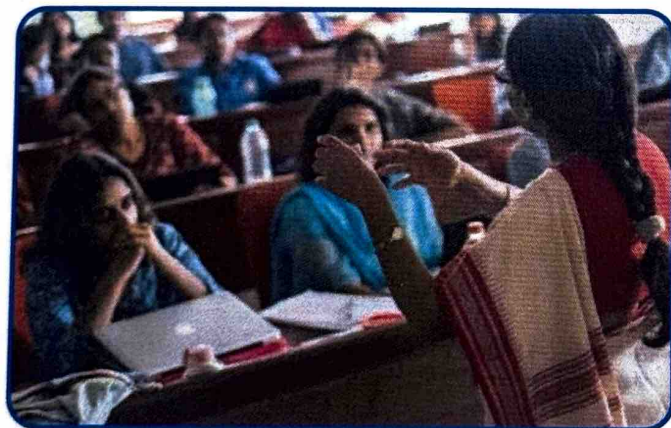


**THE PROBLEM OF EQUITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION:
GOVERNMENTAL INTERVENTION****D. Adeppa****Asst. Prof .In Economics , Govt.Degree College Armour ,
Nizamabad Telangana.****D. Adeppa****ABSTRACT**

Although there have been challenges to higher education in the past, these most recent calls for reform may provoke a fundamental change in higher education. This change may not occur as a direct response to calls for greater transparency and accountability, but rather because of the opportunity to

reflect on the purpose of higher education, the role of colleges and universities in the new millennium, and emerging scientific research on how people learn. These disparate literatures have not been tied together in a way that would examine the impact of fundamental change from the policy level to the institutional level and to the everyday lives of college and university administrators, faculty and students. Now the time has come to create a second wave of institution building and of excellence in the fields of education, research and capability building. We need higher educated people who are skilled and who can drive our economy forward. When India can provide skilled people to the outside world then we can transfer our country from a developing nation to a developed nation very easily and



quickly.

KEY WORDS: Higher Education , Problem of Equity , fundamental change , emerging scientific research .

INTRODUCTION :

Education is recognized as one of the critical elements of the national development effort and Higher education, in particular, is of vital importance for the nation, as it is a powerful tool to build knowledge-based society of the 21st century. Improvement of access along with equity and

excellence, the adoption of state specific strategies, enhancing the relevance of higher education through curriculum reforms, vocationalisation, information technology, networking and distance education are some of the main policy initiatives of the higher education sector. The other important policy initiatives in higher education are programmes for general development of universities and colleges; special grants for the construction of hostels for women; scholarships to students, scheme to provide interest subsidy on educational loans for professional courses to ensure that nobody is denied professional education because he or she is poor and making interventions to attract and retain talent in the teaching profession in the higher and technical education. Emphasis has been laid on expansion with equity, use of ICT and promotion of quality education.

Higher education is increasingly viewed as a major engine of economic development. Public funding cannot keep pace with rapidly rising costs of higher education. The expansion of student numbers has presented a major challenge which combined with the goal of inclusivity has aimed to provide access to all sections and thereby operate a highly subsidized tertiary education. In financial terms, this has become an unsustainable model. Traditionally, education has been seen as a public good, contributing to society through educating citizens, improving human capital, and boosting economic development. There is an increasing pressure to view higher education as private good, largely benefiting individuals, with the implication that academic institutions, and their students, should pay a significant part of the cost of higher education. Funding shortages due to "massification" have also meant that higher education system and institutions are increasingly responsible for generating larger percentages of their own revenue. This debate has intensified due not only to the financial challenges of massification but also to a more widespread inclination toward greater privatization of services once provided by the state.

There are many basic problems facing higher education in India today. These include inadequate infrastructure and facilities, large vacancies in faculty positions and poor faculty thereof, low student enrolment rate, outmoded teaching methods, declining research standards, unmotivated students, overcrowded classrooms and widespread geographic, income, gender, and ethnic imbalances. Apart from concerns relating to deteriorating standards, there is reported exploitation of students by many private providers. Ensuring equitable access to quality higher education for students coming from poor families is a major challenge. Students from poor background are put to further disadvantage since they are not academically prepared to crack highly competitive entrance examinations that have bias towards urban elite and rich students having access to private tuitions and coaching. Education in basic sciences and subjects that are not market friendly has suffered.

OBJECTIVES

- 1.To examine the disparities in the enrollment and achievements at higher education in India.
- 2.To critically analyze various measures of Union and State Governments to provide opportunities of higher education to socially deprived communities and remove disparities by promoting the inclusion of women, minorities and differently-abled persons.

EQUITY ISSUES

Imperfections in capital markets limit the ability of individuals to borrow sufficiently for tertiary education, thereby hindering the participation of meritorious but economically disadvantaged groups. Hence, a large scale expansion of student financial assistance, so that all aspiring learners to be provided an opportunity to take up higher education irrespective of his or her economic status. In other words, no potential learner/student must be denied access to higher education because of his/her

inability to afford it. Large scale expansion of student financial assistance through several interventions, such as, creation of a credit loan guarantee authority to provide student loans & guarantees thereof, subsidy on interest loans, student driven scholarships with a means-blind approach are multi-pronged strategies needed.

Establishment of Equal Opportunities Cells (EOCs)

To make colleges and universities more responsive to the needs and constraints of the disadvantaged social groups, the UGC has initiated a scheme viz. Establishment of Equal Opportunity Cell in Colleges and Universities to oversee the effective implementation of policies and programmes for disadvantaged groups and to provide guidance and counseling in academic, financial, social and other matters. The cell also takes up programmes of sensitizing university/college community on problems faced by SC & ST students in higher education during the Eleventh Plan (2007-2012). It will run specific schemes of coaching for SC/ST/OBC (Non creamy layer), women/minorities students and persons with disabilities to enhance the employability and success. One time grant of 2.00 lakhs will be provided for establishing office of EOC.

As this scheme is one of the merged schemes, the release of grant is being done by the UGC Regional Offices in the case of colleges and the Head Office in the case of universities. During 2010-11, an amount of Rs.4.09 crores was released to the eligible colleges by the UGC Regional Offices.

Education of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Minorities and persons with disabilities

The share of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes enrolment as a percent to total enrolment in higher education has been steadily increasing over the years. However, their enrolment share in higher education is still lower as compared to their total population. The enrolment of SC and ST students as a percentage of total enrolment in higher education (Including Open Universities & Polytechnics) is 11.6% and 9.8% respectively. At the doctoral level the enrolment share of SC and ST is 11% and 4% respectively. Besides, their enrolment in science courses both at the masters and bachelors levels are also low.

Several schemes of UGC support the education of Scheduled Castes and scheduled Tribes e.g. remedial coaching at UG and PG level, coaching classes for preparation for National Eligibility Test (NET), coaching classes for entry in services, postgraduate scholarships, establishment of centres in universities for study of social exclusion and inclusive policy. Every University has also been requested by the UGC to create an Equal Opportunities' Cell in order to ensure equity and inclusion.

Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowships for SC/ST

The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment and Ministry of Tribal Affairs have entrusted and funded the UGC for implementation of the scheme of Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowships for SC and ST candidates by providing 2667 slots per year i.e. 2000 for SC category and 667 for ST category. The number of slots for SC has been increased from 1333 to 2000 w.e.f. 2010-11.

The main objective is to minimize the social disparities in the field of Higher Education.

The Central Government through UGC provides 2667 Research Fellowships for SC/ST candidates to undertake advanced studies and research leading to M.Phil/Ph.D. degrees in Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences including languages and Engineering & Technology. The tenure of the fellowship is for five years. A total of 4,041 and 2,036 candidates were selected under SC and ST categories respectively. An expenditure of `137.86 crores (for SC candidates) and `60.65 crores (for ST

candidates) respectively was incurred during the year 2010-11 under the plan scheme.

Post-Doctoral Fellowships for SC/ST

The objective of the fellowship scheme is to provide fellowships to SC/ST candidates, who have obtained a doctorate degree and have published research work to their credit, for doing advanced research in their chosen areas. For this purpose, the UGC has been providing 100 slots every year for them. During the financial year 2010-11, 100 SC/ST candidates have been selected out of 100 slots for the year 2009-10. An expenditure of Rs.4.17 crores was incurred during the year 2010-11 towards payment to the fellows selected for the year 2009-10.

Post-Graduate Scholarships for SC/ST Students in Professional Courses

Keeping in view the social background of the candidates from deprived sections of the society, the scheme has been initiated to provide them an opportunity to undertake postgraduate level studies in professional courses. The tenure of the scholarship is for two/three years depending upon the duration of Degree course. The number of slots made available to them is 1000 every year. During the financial year 2010-11, 935 SC/ST candidates have been selected out of 1000 slots for the year 2009-10. An expenditure of Rs.12.40 crores was incurred during the year 2010-11 towards payment to the scholarship holders under this plan scheme.

Persons with Disabilities

The Department of Higher Education has taken several initiatives to promote higher/professional education among the persons with disabilities. UGC has integrated schemes such as Teacher Preparation in Special Education (TEPSE) and Higher Education for Persons with Disabilities (HEPSN) to support differently abled persons in higher education. All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) also has a scheme of tuition fee waiver for physically challenged. UGC has furthermore issued several guidelines to the universities including 3 percent reservation for PWDs, relaxation of marks etc.

Under the scheme for Upgrading Existing Polytechnics to Integrate the Physically Disabled in the Mainstream of Technical and Vocational Education, 50 existing Polytechnics in different locations of the country have been selected for up-gradation so as to enable them to introduce technical / vocational and continuing education programmes for the persons with disabilities. The Scheme is targeted to benefit around 1250 disabled students every year in formal diploma level courses and 5000 students in short duration technical / vocational courses.

Educational Advancement of Minorities

For inclusive development of higher education, educational advancement of students belonging to minority communities is a point of focus. New Model Degree Colleges being established in districts with Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) lower than the National average in higher education include 62 districts having minority concentration. Under the Sub-Mission on Polytechnics, the Government of India provides Central financial assistance to the State Governments / UTs for setting up of polytechnics in the un-served and underserved districts during the XI Plan. As per the Scheme criteria, 57 districts out of 90 Minority Concentration Districts are eligible for consideration under the Scheme. Academies for Professional Development of Urdu Medium Teachers have been set up at three Central Universities viz. Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), Aligarh, Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI), New Delhi and Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU), Hyderabad. Two new campuses of AMU are being established at

Murshidabad in West Bengal and Mallapuram in Kerala.

National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions (NCMEI) has been established by an Act of Parliament with the key objective of ensuring that the true amplitude of the educational rights enshrined in Article 30 (1) of the Constitution is made available to the members of the notified religious minority communities. In order to make the procedure of giving minority status hassle free and protect their autonomy, National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions (NCMEI) has issued elaborate guidelines to be acted upon by the State Governments.

OBC Reservation:

The policy of reservation is recognized as an important instrument of affirmative action in India. As per the directions of the Government of India, the UGC has been striving for implementation of reservation policy for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in teaching, onteaching and in admissions. Instructions have been issued to implement 27% reservation for OBCs in all the Grant in Aid institutions funded by the Central Government except minority Institutions under Article 3(1) of the Constitution of India.

The Higher Education Department has enacted the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Admissions) Act, 2006 and has made special provisions for reservation of seats for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in admissions to Central Educational Institutions. Reservation of 27% seats for the OBCs was implemented in all Central Educational Institutions covered by the Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Admissions) Act, 2006.

To oversee the effective implementation of reservation policy in Universities, the Standing Committee on SCs/STs was reconstituted by the UGC in 2007. The Committee is represented by academic Experts, Ex-Vice- Chancellors and distinguished persons in the field of higher education. The Sub-committees of the Standing Committee have so far visited Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, Allahabad University, Allahabad and affiliated colleges of Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Lucknow (receiving maintenance grant from UGC) to review the implementation of reservation policy for SC/ST in teaching, non-teaching, admissions, Hostels and staff quarters.

Education of Women

Gender parity index has shown continuous improvement over the years as a result of Government's efforts to increase women participation. Women enrolment in higher education for the year 2007-08 is highest in the faculty of Arts followed by Science and Commerce/Management. Women representation is increasing, though still low in faculties like, law, medicine, education, veterinary science etc. UGC have launched a number of schemes to achieve gender parity. Day care centres in universities and colleges provide day care facility on demand basis for children of 3 months to 6 years of age. UGC is also implementing Indira Gandhi Scholarship for single girl child for pursuing higher and technical education. Construction of girls' hostel for colleges is supported by UGC. There is also a scheme for the Development of Women's Studies in universities and colleges. The primary role of these centres is to promote knowledge simulation and transmission through teaching and research.

The Women's Studies Programme which was initiated in VII Plan Period, was promoted, strengthened and given direction to over various plan periods by establishing Women's Studies Centres in the University System. These Centres have contributed significantly to the promotion and expansion of Women's Studies in teaching, research and field action. As on 31.03.2011, as many as 159 Women's

Studies Centres (83 in universities and 76 in colleges) including 28 centres set up in 2010-11, have been functioning in the University system.

Special Scheme for construction Hostels for Women

With a view to providing hostels and other infrastructural facilities in the colleges to achieve the goal of enhancing the status of women, the Commission had introduced a special scheme for the construction of Women's Hostels during the year 1995-96. The Colleges which come within the purview of the UGC and are fit to receive central assistance under Section 12B of the UGC Act, are eligible to receive financial assistance. The financial assistance from the UGC is on 100% basis, subject to the ceiling. During 2010-11, a total grant of Rs.118.68 crores had been released to 599 state colleges by the UGC Regional offices for construction of Hostels for Women. The colleges of Delhi have been paid to the extent of Rs.1.30 crores by the UGC Head Office for the purpose of constructing hostels for women during the year under report.

Interest subsidy on educational loans

In order to ensure that talented students are not deprived of access to technical and professional education for want of financial resources, a scheme is in operation since the year 2009-10 to provide full interest subsidy during the period of moratorium on educational loans taken by students belonging to economically weaker sections, whose parental income is less than Rs.4.5 lakh per annum. Loans availed from Scheduled Banks under the Educational Loan Scheme of the Indian Banks' Association to pursue technical and professional courses of study are covered under the Scheme of Interest Subsidy.

SUGGESTIONS

- 1.The country will have to prepare itself to invest more and more on higher education and, simultaneously, measures will have to be taken to refine, diversify and upgrade higher education and research programmes.
- 2.Skill building is really very crucial to ensure employability of academia to understand and make sure good jobs.
- 3.Efforts are required to improve the country's innovative capacity, yet the efforts should be to build on the existing strengths in light of new understanding of the research innovation- growth linkage.
- 4.Effective measures will have to be adopted to mobilize resources for higher education. There is also a need to relate the fee structure to the student's capacity to pay for the cost. So that, students at lower economic levels can be given highly subsidised and fully subsidised education.
- 5.Methods of teaching through lectures will have to subordinate to the methods that will lay stress on self-study, personal consultation between teachers and pupils, and dynamic sessions of seminars and workshops. Methods of distance education will have to be employed on a vast scale.

CONCLUSION

To attain and sustain national, regional or international quality, certain components are particularly relevant, notably careful selection of staff and continuous staff development in particular through the promotion of appropriate programs for academic development, including teaching/learning methodology and mobility between countries, between higher education institutions and the world of work, as well as student mobility within and between countries. Internal self-evaluation and external review must be conducted openly by independent specialists, if possible

with international experts.

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