



## Renovation & Rejuvenation of Higher Education

M. Guru Pratap Reddy, Lecturer in English, Sir C R Reddy (A) College, Eluru

***Abstract:***

*National knowledge commission in its latest reports has categorically stated that atleast 19.75% of the total population should be in a position to enjoy the fruits of higher education in order for the country to achieve sustainable economic growth. Unless and until the youth are uplifted empowered and granted their due share in the process of nation building India's Rosy dreams of becoming a knowledge super power will not materialized. In the recent past particularly in the last decade or so, concern for quality of education in India has been on the raise. The unease is no longer limited just to educationalist and educational institutions. The parents employers government and many others are becoming just as concerned. Defective curriculum, attitude of teachers routine and rotten teaching techniques, lake of job competence, lake of coordination between curriculum designers and class room teachers lake of basic infrastructure and learning resources etc. are some of the problems facing tertiary education in India today. Finding solutions to these problems can renovate and rejuvenate higher education. In the recent past, particularly in the last decade or so, concern for quality of education in India has been on the increase.*

***Abstract:*** Defective curriculum, government,

**Introduction:**

"Study is delight, ornament and ability". Education is looked upon as a potential tool that can bring about societal transformation wealth generation and rural prosperity. It can effectively be used as an instrument that can Ironout social inequalities. National knowledge commission in its latest reports has categorically stated that atleast 19.75% of the total population should be in a position to enjoy the fruits of higher education in order for the country to achieve sustainable economic growth. Unless and until the youth are uplifted empowered and granted their due share in the process of nation building India's Rosy dreams of becoming a knowledge super power will not materialized. In the recent past particularly in the last decade or so, concern for quality of education in

India has been on the raise. The unease is no longer limited just to educationalist and educational institutions. The parents employers government and many others are becoming just as concerned. Defective curriculum, attitude of teachers routine and rotten teaching techniques, lake of job competence, lake of coordination between curriculum designers and class room teachers lake of basic infrastructure and learning resources etc. are some of the problems facing tertiary education in India today. Finding solutions to these problems can renovate and rejuvenate higher education. In the recent past, particularly in the last decade or so, concern for quality of education in India has been on the increase. The unease is no longer limited Just to educationists and educational institutions. The parents, employers, Government and many others are becoming just as



concerned. An increasingly competitive global context, knowledge gaining preeminence in all aspects of life, effects of information, communication revolution, increasing role of market in education and massification of education are some of the factors contributing to this deepening of concern on quality education. In his recent writings on Indian education, Philip G Altbach, a noted educationist, avers that a world-class country without world-class higher education is India's 21<sup>st</sup> century dilemma. Higher education needs to be renovated rejuvenated and reform so as to cater to the needs of our students.

#### Objectives

- To provide meaning and definition of education
- To present detailed history of education
- To discuss different stages or levels of education
- To access the role of teachers in building knowledge society
- To identify some of the problems of higher education in India
- To suggest some remedial measures

#### Meaning and Definition of Education

Education is the process of facilitating learning. Knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits of a group of people are transferred to other people, through storytelling, discussion, teaching, training, or research. Education frequently takes place under the guidance of educators, but learners may also educate themselves in a process called autodidactic learning.

Any experience that has a formative effect on the way one thinks, feels, or acts may be considered educational.

Education is commonly and formally divided into stages such as preschool, primary school, secondary school and then college, university or apprenticeship. The methodology of teaching is called pedagogy. A right to education has been recognized by some governments. At the global level, Article 13 of the United Nations' 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recognizes the right of everyone to an education. Although education is compulsory in most places up to a certain age, attendance at school often isn't, and a minority of parents choose home-schooling, sometimes with the assistance of modern electronic educational technology (also called e-learning). Education can take place in formal or informal settings.

#### Etymology

Etymologically, the word "education" is derived from the Latin *ēducātiō* ("A breeding, a bringing up, a rearing") from *ēdūcō* ("I educate, I train") which is related to the homonym *ēdūcō* ("I lead forth, I take out; I raise up, I erect") from *ē-* ("from, out of") and *dūcō* ("I lead, I conduct").

#### History

Education began in prehistory, as adults trained the young in the knowledge and skills deemed necessary in their society. In pre-literate societies this was achieved orally and through imitation. Storytelling passed knowledge, values, and skills from one generation to the next. As cultures began to extend their knowledge beyond skills that could be readily learned through imitation, formal education developed. Schools existed in Egypt at the time of the Middle Kingdom.



Plato founded the Academy in Athens, the first institution of higher learning in Europe. The city of Alexandria in Egypt, established in 330 BCE, became the successor to Athens as the intellectual cradle of Ancient Greece. There, the great Library of Alexandria was built in the 3rd century BCE. European civilizations suffered a collapse of literacy and organization following the fall of Rome in AD 476.<sup>[6]</sup>

In China, Confucius (551-479 BCE), of the State of Lu, was the country's most influential ancient philosopher, whose educational outlook continues to influence the societies of China and neighbors like Korea, Japan and Vietnam. Confucius gathered disciples and searched in vain for a ruler who would adopt his ideals for good governance, but his Analects were written down by followers and have continued to influence education in East Asia into the modern era.

After the Fall of Rome, the Catholic Church became the sole preserver of literate scholarship in Western Europe. The church established cathedral schools in the Early Middle Ages as centers of advanced education. Some of these establishments ultimately evolved into medieval universities and forebears of many of Europe's modern universities. During the High Middle Ages, Chartres Cathedral operated the famous and influential Chartres Cathedral School. The medieval universities of Western Christendom were well-integrated across all of Western Europe, encouraged freedom of inquiry, and produced a great variety of fine scholars and natural philosophers, including Thomas Aquinas of the University of Naples, Robert Grosseteste of the University of

Oxford, an early expositor of a systematic method of scientific experimentation, and Saint Albert the Great, a pioneer of biological field research. Founded in 1088, the University of Bologna is considered the first, and the oldest continually operating university.

Elsewhere during the Middle Ages, Islamic science and mathematics flourished under the Islamic caliphate which was established across the Middle East, extending from the Iberian Peninsula in the west to the Indus in the east and to the Almoravid Dynasty and Mali Empire in the south.

The Renaissance in Europe ushered in a new age of scientific and intellectual inquiry and appreciation of ancient Greek and Roman civilizations. Around 1450, Johannes Gutenberg developed a printing press, which allowed works of literature to spread more quickly. The European Age of Empires saw European ideas of education in philosophy, religion, arts and sciences spread out across the globe. Missionaries and scholars also brought back new ideas from other civilisations — as with the Jesuit China missions who played a significant role in the transmission of knowledge, science, and culture between China and Europe, translating works from Europe like Euclid's Elements for Chinese scholars and the thoughts of Confucius for European audiences. The Enlightenment saw the emergence of a more secular educational outlook in Europe.

In most countries today, full-time education, whether at school or otherwise, is compulsory for all children up to a certain age. Due to this the proliferation of compulsory education, combined with population growth, UNESCO has calculated that in



the next 30 years more people will receive formal education than in all of human history thus far.

### Formal education

Formal education occurs in a structured environment whose explicit purpose is teaching students. Usually, formal education takes place in a school environment with classrooms of multiple students learning together with a trained, certified teacher of the subject. Most school systems are designed around a set of values or ideals that govern all educational choices in that system. Such choices include curriculum, physical classroom design, student-teacher interactions, methods of assessment, class size, educational activities, and more.

**Informal learning** is one of three forms of learning defined by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Informal learning occurs in a variety of places, such as at home, work, and through daily interactions and shared relationships among members of society. For many learners this includes language acquisition, cultural norms and manners. Informal learning for young people is an ongoing process that also occurs in a variety of places, such as out of school time, in youth programs at community centers and media labs.

Informal learning usually takes place outside educational establishments, does not follow a specified curriculum and may originate accidentally, sporadically, in association with certain occasions, from changing practical requirements. It is not necessarily planned to be pedagogically conscious, systematic and according to subjects, but rather unconsciously

incidental, holistically problem-related, and related to situation management and fitness for life. It is experienced directly in its "natural" function of everyday life and is often spontaneous.

The concept of 'education through recreation' was applied to childhood development in the 19th century. In the early 20th century, the concept was broadened to include young adults but the emphasis was on physical activities. L.P. Jacks, also an early proponent of lifelong learning, described education through recreation: "*A master in the art of living draws no sharp distinction between his work and his play, his labour and his leisure, his mind and his body, his education and his recreation. He hardly knows which is which. He simply pursues his vision of excellence through whatever he is doing and leaves others to determine whether he is working or playing. To himself he always seems to be doing both. Enough for him that he does it well.*" Education through recreation is the opportunity to learn in a seamless fashion through all of life's activities. The concept has been revived by the University of Western Ontario to teach anatomy to medical students.

He is the right person who can locate the talent, unearth it at the right moment, refine it and mould it so as to make it a complete product for the benefit of the mankind. Only the merchant of gems can pick out the most precious stones and leave the useless pebbles behind. It is Prof. Hardy who discovered Sreenivasa Ramanujan for the World. We would have missed the sparkling wit and gentle irony of R.K. Narayan, had Graham Greene not introduced him to the world. Similar is the case with Sir C V Raman and Sir S Chandrasekhar.



### **Problems of Tertiary Education:**

The situation in higher education in India is unsatisfactory and even alarming in some ways that the average standards have been falling and that the rapid expansion has resulted in lowering quality. The examination results, the report of public service commission, the views of employees and the assessment of teachers themselves, the results of research all seem to support this conclusion. Some problems of higher education are discussed below.

***Attitude of the Teachers*** There is an immediate need for improvement of teaching personnel at all levels of education. A majority of teachers teach mechanically and listlessly. The subjects in which they lecture do not often involve their intellectual passion. They do not usually have a part in the formulation of syllabus which they are required to teach, nor are they willing to make any experiments in the methods of teaching. The blatant criticism levelled against teachers of higher education is that they become teachers by chance not by choice.

Some reluctant learners have become teachers

To tax the tender minds of the learners

Yet, they call themselves gazetted officers

Tired of learning and devoid of yearning

Are they makers or else breakers?

Learning is in a sorry state

Parents would weep over this cruel fate

Madly after money never care for honey

Proper methods of selection and recruitment of the staff must be devised. Impartial and expert committees for selections should be appointed. The financial, Social and professional needs of the teaching community have to be attended to properly with adequate emphasis on teachers' accountability. Learning is a life long process. Teachers should have a great deal of quest for learning. Mere mechanical toil gets us nowhere. Yearn to learn-yearn more and more knowledge should be the guiding principle. Teachers should have a passionate love for their profession. There is a need to ask as to what the purpose of a university is, especially at the undergraduate level, and then use the answers to develop the curriculum.

### **Role of Teachers in building knowledge society:**

Ancient India was an advanced knowledge society. Invasions and colonial rule destroyed its institutions and robbed it of its core competence. It's people have been systematically degraded to lower levels of existence. By the time the British left, our youth had lowered their aims and were satisfied earning an ordinary livelihood. India is essentially a land of knowledge and it must rediscover itself in this aspect. Once this rediscovery is done, it will not require much struggle to achieve the quality of life, strength and sovereignty of a developed nation. The process of rediscovery can only be made possible with the initiative and industry of the dedicated and diligent teachers.

Knowledge has many forms and it is available at many places. It is acquired through education information, intelligence and experience. It is available in academic institutions with teachers, in libraries, in research papers, seminar proceedings etc. University is the



epicentre of all these intellectual, innovative and imaginative activities. University is a place where new ideas germinate, strike roots and grow tall and steady. It is a unique space which covers the entire universe of knowledge. It is a place where creative minds converge, interact with each other, construct visions of new realities and established notions of truth are challenged in the pursuit of knowledge.

Knowledge has always been the prime mover of prosperity and power. The acquisition of knowledge has been the thrust area throughout the world. Additionally in India there has been a culture of sharing it not only through the traditions of guru-shishya but also by its spread to neighbouring countries through travelers who came to Nalanda and other universities drawn by their reputation as centres of learning. India is endowed with natural and competitive advantages as also certain distinctive competence. But these are scattered in isolated pockets and the awareness of these is inadequate. It is the onus responsibility of the teachers to create awareness in the public in general and the student folk in particular.

The ability to create and maintain the knowledge infrastructure, to enhance skills and increase productivity through the exploitation of advances in various fields will be the key factors in deciding the prosperity of this society. Whether a nation qualifies as a knowledge society is judged by how effectively it deals with knowledge creation and knowledge deployment. The knowledge society has two very important components driven by societal transformation and wealth generation.

#### **Defective Curriculum:**

At present, the design of curriculum and syllabi are reflective of the existing examination system under which the student is asked to face a question paper at the end of the year, or in some universities, at the end of the semester. This archaic examination system is ostensibly used as a means of certifying the ability of students. Unfortunately it does not really test the kind of skills they require to be successful either in the pursuit of pure theoretical knowledge or in the practical real world situations.

If the syllabi were to be designed with a view to inducting the student into a community of participant citizens, a new kind of institutional culture and ethos can be created in our general and professional colleges. For this to happen, all syllabi should require the teachers and students to apply what they have learnt in their courses, on studying a local situation, issue or problem. There should be sufficient room for the use of local data and resources to make the knowledge covered in the syllabus come alive as experience. There must be a proper coordination between the teachers and syllabus designers.

#### **Routine and Rotten teaching techniques or methods:**

Connected with the unbalanced curricula, are the wrong methods of teaching in our colleges and universities. Lecture work predominates and instruction is examination-ridden. Even lecture work cannot be properly done because the courses are so rigid that a lecturer cannot develop the theme of his lecture in his own way. Textbooks are prescribed rather than recommended. Sometimes teachers dictate only notes and this makes the matters worse as the students commit them to memory and reproduce them in the examinations and thus they



are deprived of acquiring the habit of original thinking. Personal contact between teacher and the taught, the clash of mind with mind, tutorial and library study are absent.

Through out the university course teacher should expect some written work from every student periodically, preferably, once a week or fortnight. Routine and Rotten teaching and learning techniques are done away with at the prestigious institutions like EFLU (English and Foreign Languages University) Hyderabad, JNU (Jawaharlal Nehru University) Delhi and Viswabharati University Calcutta. They set a good precedent for other Colleges to follow. The learners are asked to present papers on the topics selected. Library service should be integrated with the student's work so that everyone acquires the library-habit. Field study, study projects, Data collections, Sample Survey, Creative writing, Mock Interviews, Group discussions, Should be encouraged to achieve the spirit of discovery and self-sufficiency.

**Learner centric approach:**

Tell me – I forget

Show me – I remember

Involve me – I understand

The learners have greater say than the teachers in the modern educational system. In the traditional classroom, the teacher is In-charge and controls the learning. The teacher gives knowledge and the students receive knowledge. The teacher speaks and the students listen. The teacher is active whereas the students are passive. This is called "Teacher centered model of education". In the modern education system, on the other hand, the learners are much more

active. The amount of "student talk-time" in the class increases while the amount of "Teacher talk-time" decreases.

The teacher serves more as a facilitator setting up activities that require students to communicate with one another. The teacher may also act as a co-communicator, participating in two-way exchange with the students. Finally the teacher encourages students to express their own ideas and opinions, thereby stimulating their interest in the topic. Manifold use of multi-media is more instrumental in empowering the learners with job competences such as communication skills, soft skills, problem-solving techniques, time management, decision-making capacity etc and thus produce employable graduates. "What though the field be lost all is not lost, the unconquerable will, steady of hope and the desire never to submit or yield. What else is not to overcome?" Loss of vision plunged us into the world of darkness. A glimmer of hope propelled us into the kingdom of knowledge. The lore for learning strengthened our minds and we happened to choose this noble profession. As our quest for learning never comes to an end, this profession can only satiate our hungry hearts. We lovers of language and literature, we always look for versatile teaching and learning techniques to enrich the subject.

We use pocket cards to improve vocabulary of our learners. We use audio cassettes to teach our learners phonetics. We fabricate enthralling stories to teach grammar and comprehension (language through literature). Once I was asked by one of my fellow-teachers 'how can you teach without using black board?' and I replied, 'well, when I can write on the mind – slates of my learners, what is the



need for black board and chalk?’  
“Nothing tantamounts to experience. Experience is the best lesson. Arch is an experience where through gleams the untravelled world.” The quality of Indian mind is equal to that of any Teutonic, Nordic or Anglo-Saxon. India is capable of producing world-class scientists, renowned educationalists, techno-crafts and visionary leaders. India needs teachers who are gifted with intuition and intelligence coupled with renovation and rejuvenation to realize the rosy dream of the nation to become a knowledge super power by 2020.

***Vision without action is a day –dream.  
Action without vision is a nightmare.***

**References:**

01. Seven steps to quality by Dr. D.Prasad, Former director of NAAC
02. Ignited Mines by Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam, Former President of India
03. Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher Education in India by Prof. S Paul Committee
04. Ready for Sale by Sri. K V Subba Rao
05. Dewey, John (1944) [1916]. Democracy and Education. The Free Press
06. Occupational Outlook Quarterly. Bureau of Labor Statistics
07. Porter, Eduardo. "A Simple Equation: More Education = More Income."
08. "Of studies" by Fransis Bacon