Dr. Radhakrishnan Commission Report on Higher Education

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Dr. Radhakrishnan, philosopher-scholar, produced the first Report on Higher Education in free India in 1948 which is considered a gate way to the expansion of Higher education. India achieved freedom on the 15th August and there were great changes that had taken place in the political and economic conditions of Indian society in the years that preceded the transfer of power on August 15, 1947. So the progress in education during that period was taken into considerations as education is one of the graet tools of progress of the nation. The academic problem has assumed new shapes. We have now a wider conception of the duties and responsibilities of universities to create leadership in every field. They have to provide leadership in politics and administration, the professions, industry and commerce. They have to meet the increasing demand for every type of higher education, literary and scientific, technical and professional. They must enable the country to attain development through scientific and technical knowledge. India is rich in natural resources and her people have intelligence and energy. It is for the universities to create knowledge and train minds of the youths who would utilize and bring together the two, material resources and human energies. The development of human rersourse is needed to raise our living standards and radical change of spirit is essential.

Salient Features of the Recommendations:

Universities as the Organs of Civilisation : University education has to be moulde in this way so that verything is being brought to the test of reason. Venerable theologies, ancient political institutions, time-honoured social arrangements, a thousand things which a generation ago looked as fixed as the hills which should be re-evaluated. If India is to confront the confusion of our time, she must turn for guidance by the Universities and its education. Men of letters, and men of science, to her poets and artists, to her discoverers and inventors. These intellectual pioneers of civilization are to be found and trained in the universities, which are the sanctuaries of the inner life of the nation.

Intellectual Adventure - The commission observed and submitted its opinion that we must give up the fatal obsession of the perfection of the past, that greatness is not to be attained in the present, that everything is already worked out and all that remains for the future ages of the world is pedantic imitation of the past. When we are hypnotised by our own past achievements, when all our effort is to repeat a past success, we become fetish worshippers. It is the opinion of the commission that if our cultural life is to retain its dynamism, it must give up idolatry of the past and strive to realise new dreams. The recommendations suggest that we should think with the young men in the Latin poem that nothing is done while anything remains to do. All that man has yet done is very little compared to what he is destined to achieve. The present which moves backwards and forwards, which is a summary of the past and a prophecy of the future, is hallowed ground and we who tread on it should face it with the quality of reverence and the spirit of adventure duly inculcated by the Universities. Universities are the homes of intellectual adventure.

An Integrated Way of Life – It is propounded by the commission that a life of strenuous endeavour for human betterment is not possible, if we are not persuaded that life has a meaning. Many of our popular writers today seem to be possessed by the one desire to escape from the world of meaning and teach us the essential purposelessness of life. They make us believe, with a good deal of cleverness and sophistry, that life is infinitely complicated and totally inexplicable. Many of our students are taught to assume that free will and personal responsibility are illusions, that human beings are conditioned almost wholly by their physical make-up and the society in which they live, and that the only sense that the religious statements make is emotional and subjective. The Commission belive that this is a generation which knows how to doubt but not how to admire, much less to believe. This aimlessness, this indifference to basic issues, is to no small extent, responsible for the decline of standards, for the fading of ideals, for the defeat of human endeavour. The purpose of all education, it is admitted by thinkers of east and west, is to provide a coherent picture of the universe and an integrated way of life which will be ensured by the Universities. We must obtain through it a sense of perspective, a synoptic vision, a samanvaya of the different items of knowledge. Man cannot live by a mass of disconnected information as S/he has a passion for an ordered intellectual vision of the connections of things. Life is one in all its varied manifestations. We may study the factual relations of the different manifestations but we must have knowledge of life as a whole which will be provided by the University education. The subjects we study must be taught as parts of a connected curriculum with integrated human life as a whole.

Provision of Wisdom and Knowledge - Our ancient teachers tried to teach subjects and impart wisdom in the Vedic period. Their ideal was wisdom (irfan) along with knowledge (ilm), *jnanamvijnanasahitam*. Wisdom is the higher dimensions of Knowledge . The members of the commission opined that we cannot be wise without some basis of knowledge though we may easily acquire knowledge and remain devoid of wisdom. To use the words of the Upanisad, we may be the knowers of texts (mantravit) and not knowers of self (atmavit). Plato distinguishes between factual information and understanding. No amount of factual information would make ordinary men into educated or 'virtuous' men unless something is awakened in them, an innate ability to live the life of the soul. The strength of the new 'faiths' among intellectuals is partly due to their claim to explain the universe. By professing to interpret all human activity in terms of a single thesis, they give to the modern educated men a sense of assurance and certainly formerly provided by religion. Since education is both a training of minds and a training of souls which will be ensured by the Universities and it should give both knowledge and wisdom.

An Ideal Social Order - We must have clear a conception of the social order following the Indian tradition for which we are educating our youth. We know what Hitler did in six years with the German youth. The future citizens should are in their minds about the kind of society for which they are educating and the qualities required in their citizens. Our educational system must find its guiding principle in the aims of the social order for which it prepares, in the nature of the civilisation it hopes to build. Societies need a clear purpose to keep them stable in a world of bewildering change.

Values cherished by the Individual – The value of labour, value of democratic principles such as equality,fraternity,justice, sense of duties and responsibilities and other democratic principles must be included in University education. The basis of democracy is the belief in the inherent worth of the individual in the dignity and value of human life. It repudiates the totalitarian principle in all its forms, viz., that the individual as such is useless and that he must be either destroyed or converted into an efficient unit in the power- machine of the State. Democracy affirms that each individual is a unique adventure of life.

Education as proper utilization of resources: - The University Commission opined that function of education is the guidance of this adventure to the realisation of the potentialities of each individual in the face of the actual world of men and things. It aims at the development of the individual, the discovery, training and utilisation of his special talents. Like all living organisms, the individual grows by the impulse of his own self-development. The natural tendency of the child is to grow into maturity. From complete dependence on others the child has to grow into relative independence. The function of the teacher is to assist the growth by stimulation and guidance. The growth is advanced by the acquisition of knowledge and skills. These later are intended to set free and develop the possibilities of human individuals. Education is not a discipline imposed from above on an apathetic if acquiescent nature. It is a process of leading up the inward nature to its fulfilment. All true development is self-development. The process of education as growth is continuous and lifelong. It is said that a pupil gets a fourth of his education from his teacher, another fourth by his own intellectual effort, a third fourth from his fellow students and the rest in course of time through life and experience. We learn from the teacher, by ourselves, from one another and from life or experience. Education is not always formal. Where we have a number of keen young men as members of an intellectual community, they educate one another through the daily give and take

Character of the Human Mind - The University Commission suggested that Human beings are not all built in the same way. They are of different types, reflective, emotional or active, though they are not exclusively so. They are distinguished on account of the dominance of emphasis of the one or the other. Cognition, feeling and will, though logically distinguishable are not really separable in the concrete life of mind. These three sides which answer to the familiar distinction of jnana, bhakti and karma, express themselves through theoretical contemplation, aesthetic enjoyment and practical activity. These are found in different proportions in different individuals. The true educator should understand the psychological make-up, and adapt his teaching to the mind of the pupil. The difficulty is to discover the true inward being of each individual

It is said that In a well-planned educational system, opportunities will be provided at every level to the pupils for the exercise of their reflective powers, artistic abilities and practical work. The sensitive teachers will be able to find out the mental make-up of the pupil, whether he has in him more of the reflective or the artistic or the practical bent. If he is reflective, he must find out whether he has philosophic or scientific, mathematical or linguistic talents; if he is artistic, he must discover whether he has taste for literature or music, painting or sculpture; if he is practical minded, he must notice whether he is a great experimenter or is mechanically minded. These varying tendencies can be discovered at the

Secondary School stage and if proper guidance is provided, much wastage at the later stages will be avoided. Secondary Schools are expected to offer many different kinds of vocational training. It is wrong to think that the more intelligent go to the universities and the less intelligent to technical schools. Success in a technical school requires as high an intelligence as success in a purely literary or scientific course. It may be of a different kind even as pupils are of different kinds, meditative or mechanical, scientific or artistic. Bookishness or the manipulation of concepts is not the only kind of intelligence.

Education as Initiation into a New Life – Life is Education and Education is life. According to the Indian tradition, is not merely a means to earning a living; nor is it only a nursery of thought or a school for citizenship. It is initiation into the life of spirit, a training of human souls in the pursuit of truth and the practice of virtue. It is a second birth, *divitiyamjanma*.

Education as Adjustment to Society - In 1852, Newman defined the function of the university thus: 'If a practical end must be assigned to a university course, then I say it is training good members of society.' No system of education could be directed to the weakening of the State that maintains it. But education is also an instrument for social change. It should not be its aim merely to enable us to adjust ourselves to the social environment. We must train people not merely to be citizens but also to be good individuals. The aim of education should be to break ground for new values and make them possible through education.

Flexibility of the Educational System - Commission suggested that the institutions of democracy must be flexible, capable of adaptation to the changing needs and conditions of men. We must make modifications whenever we feel that changes are necessary to realise more effectively the ends of individual development and social welfare. Educational systems are built for a time and not for all time. There are no changeless ways of educating human nature. A curriculum which has vitality in the Vedic period or the Renaissance cannot continue unaltered in the 20th Century.

Social Justice - We cannot separate the individual from society. Commission opined that Social justice is the foundation of States and it demands that we create a society which is freed from the evils of the society. Commission suggested that we must raise the material standards of life and increase national productivity by the larger use of scientific discoveries and technical applications.

Agricultural Education - The vast majority of our people are engaged in agriculture and our position in regard to food production is pathetic. In India, where 70 per cent of the people are engaged in agriculture. While we with 70 per cent of our population working on farms are unable to produce enough food even at the subsistence level for our population. Rural University will help to teach the pupils living in rural areas.

Technological Education – The Commission suggested that Our leaders have drawn up ambitious plans for the industrialisation of our country involving expenditure of crores of rupees. They wish to improve communications, develop systems of irrigation, distribute electricity to the villages. They have large schemes for the improvement of health and sanitation. If these schemes are to be realised, we

have to increase the number of professional colleges, agricultural, medical and engineering to produce the requisite number of graduates and set up throughout the country technical schools which will supply the much larger number of technicians needed for the purpose. For a fuller realisation of the democratic principles of justice and freedom for all, we need growth in science and technology. The presence of the suffering millions, tired, discontented, mentally inefficient is a challenge to us. Where human action can remove the evils, inaction has the guilt of vice.

Immediate Research Objectives- The commission suggested that If there are quick methods which will quickly assure adequate food resources they should certainly be discovered and most vigorously applied. However, before far-reaching plans for an agricultural programme are adopted they should have most competent and careful scrutiny. If, in fact the only road of real feasibility is a long and laborious one, it is the part of wisdom to recognize that fact, and to prepare to take that road. In actual fact, it will be found that some elements of a policy to meet emergency needs will certainly harmonize with any sound long- range policy. Therefore, the insistence that long-range policy shall accord with sound political ideals need by no means to result in inaction. But it does require that the whole results of a proposed programme be taken into account. Improvising or imitation is dangerous. 173 The following are some fields of research which might give quick returns. Agricultural research and experiment may find ways to increase greatly the speed with which improvements are adopted.

A Pattern for Agricultural Education-Only a very large, expansion of facilities for agricultural +education will meet the national need. For such expansion, so far as new institutions are concerned, the programme of rural high schools and universities, described in a later chapter of this report, would be directly suitable. Education in a rural setting, with part-time rural work for students, will tend to adjust the students to rural life and to correct the present condition in which not one agricultural graduate in twenty returns to the village and to agriculture. The system of agricultural education in the country will have to keep three definite objectives in view. The training of farmers' sons who will go back to their farms and work on them more efficiently. The training of a variety of persons for the important task of carrying the results of modern agricultural research to the peasant, persons who will be engaged in the work of agricultural education, extension and demonstration in different capacities and may be employed for this purpose by the state or by private agencies.

Aims of the first Degree Course-The aim or the first degree course in agriculture should, in our opinion, be to give students a broad general education with agriculture as the basis, to train them for actual farm management, to prepare them for rural leadership and to furnish the requisite background and foundation for research or teaching.

The Curriculum-The curriculum should be devised with these objectives in view and dealt with in courses outlined and arranged to give the desired material in its proper place. It will then consist of four main elements:

(1) General Education (2) Basic Sciences (3) Agriculture and Animal Husbandry (4) Practical work.

Flexibility of the Curriculum-In order to make the curri- culum flexible, in order, that is, to make it possible for the student to get a general over-all view of the essentials and to go into greater detail with regard to some particular branch for which he has special aptitude or use, it is necessary to divide the various elements of the curriculum into courses requiring, say, 20 to 25 hours of teaching every half year. Some subjects will be covered by one course, some by more than one. It may be made possible for a student to take at least one course in a number of subjects and more than one in his field of specialisation. We give in Appendix E a short account of how the curriculum for a degree in agriculture is devised and distributed at one American University.

Considerations in the Design and Revision of Curricula-If our older colleges are not to fall in a rut, and if our new ones, many of which, we hope, will soon come into existence, are not to begin in the traditional way, we would suggest that the problems of training and of the curriculum in our agricultural colleges should be made the subject of special study and periodical review. This can be fruitfully guided among other things by (1) a comparative study of the methods of education and the curricula in the countries which have shown significant progress in agriculture;
(2) by an analysis of the occupations of the agricultural graduates and former students of our own agricultural colleges;
(3) by a discussion of the specific objectives of agricultural education and their relative importance;
(4) by nalysis of the element of the basic sciences essential to an understanding of the technical courses;
(5) by an analysis of the requirements of the agricultural industries in the country; and
(6) by an enquiry into the causes of failure in agricultural vocation.

Practical Work-In our schemes of agricultural education we should never allow ourselves to forget that agriculture is an occupation to be practised. The practical aspect of agricultural training should never be allowed to become secondary. In order to make this training real laboratory work is not enough. Field trips and travel courses must be arranged so that students have an opportunity to visit various commercial enterprises throughout the country. Visits to farms, groves, processing plants, markets, fertilizer factories, and cattle shows can be of great use and should be systematically encouraged. Students may be required during their period or study to do practical work under competent superviSion in any recognised agricultural or related pursuit and render a satisfactory written report of honest work.

Students' Activities and Welfare: Regarding the students' activities and their part in the wellbeing of the nation, the Commission suggested the following recommendations:

- The students should undergo thorough physical examination at the time of admission and at least once a year thereafter.
- All universities must have hospital and health service.

- Sanitary inspection of the campus buildings, hostels, dining rooms, kitchens and off-campus residences must be undertaken in a university.
- Competent staff should be provided for compulsory physical training and a regular time should be assigned for the purpose.
- Social service should be encouraged and it should remain on a completely voluntary basis.
- All students should receive N.C.C. training.
- Students union should be free-form he political motives and activities.
- An office of the Dean of Students should be set up in colleges and universities.

Rural Universities and Colleges: Regarding Rural Universities and Colleges, the Commission said: "the general advancement of rural India will call for an ever increasing range and quality of skill and training. To supply these and to meet the requirement of an educated citizenship, a system of rural colleges and universities necessary". (Report of Radha Krishnan Commission)

- A rural university should include a ring of small, resident under graduate colleges with specialized and university facilities in the centre.
- The number of students for the undergraduate resident colleges should be not more than three hundred, and the overall maximum enrolment for colleges and university combined should be about twenty-five hundred.
- Each college of about three hundred students should have separate teaching staff and facilities.
- In the rural colleges, the general studies should be combined with the practical course, so that the students become cultured and educated men and women equipped with skill-oriented.
- Regarding the curriculum of the rural university, the Commission said: "a common core of liberal education may be assumed for the rural university as for any other, though the methods used in teaching and learning may be different. The Common core would include substantial introduction to the fields of mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, geology, Astronomy, Biology, Physical Education, Psychology, the Social Sciences, Philosophy and Languages and Literature." So the Commission recommended the Common Core consisting of Mathematics, basic sciences, social sciences and language and literature.

Conclusion: The Commission emphasized on the ancient values and morality as well as on the itellectual adventure through scientific temper.