

# QUALITY HIGHER EDUCATION: CHALLENGES & POSSIBILITIES

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# 1857 Milestone Year

- In Indian Political History we recognize the importance of the year 1857 as largely being the beginning of Indian resistance against British imperialism. There are disputes over the nature and composition of the uprising
- In the context of today's deliberations, the year is important as it saw the advent of the 'Other Revolution', that was in the field of higher education.

# The Other Revolution

- There is no debate on the issue that ‘other revolution’ was progressive in nature and looked forward to the time when the white man would leave the sub continent
- It saw setting up of three universities of – Calcutta, Bombay and Madras
- Andre Beteille says these universities opened new horizons both intellectually and institutionally

# Crucible of Modern India

- Ramchandra Guha says that these centres went onto become the centres of nationalism.
- Gandhi and Ambdekar were alumni of Bombay, CR Das and Bose came from Calcutta and Rajaji from Madras
- While prejudices relating to caste and gender did not immediately disappear here but they came to be questioned and so was questioned the logic of British rule

# Centres of Education and Research

- In the colonial period the Indian universities were not just promoted as centres of higher education but also those of research
- Another high point of the pre-Independence era was the effort of educationists like Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee and Madan Mohan Malviya to give diverse social composition to these universities



# Challenges Post Independence

- If pragmatism and pluralism were hallmark of the pre-Independence period, post-1947 the campuses slowly got overtaken by concerns of parochial and other patronage
- The other major challenge which was faced by the university was the erosion of its research base with the creations of CSIR and similar institutions in the humanities and business studies

# Emaciation of Universities

- The creation of parallel Centres of higher education emaciated the universities both in matter of human and financial resource
- The university teaching further suffered, what Max Weber had deplored, by the professors trying to inculcate their belief and ideology in their students and discouraging a sense of enquiry among the pupil.

# Present State and Dilemma

- Faced with the challenges of private universities – loss of merit is a major concern
- Faced with the challenges of the market and lack of employability of the pupil
- Faced with a caste system among the universities and colleges
- The dilemma to whether seek catharsis or continue with status quo



# The Road Ahead

- For the resurrection of Indian Universities as centre of excellence, innovation and research has to find place of primacy
- Sustainability of the university system by encouraging investment in terms of both human and financial resource
- India can achieve a consistency in growth rate only by resurrecting its centres of higher education



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