

# University Education Commission (Radhakrishnan Commission), 1948-49

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## An Introduction to University Education Commission 1948-49

On Aug 15, 1947 India became independent. The process of reform and reconstruction began in every field including education. Our first attention went to the contemporary higher education. Its standard was also much below in comparison to other countries. The Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) and the Inter University Board of Education (IUBE) advised the Indian Government to appoint a University Education Commission to suggest reforms in the University Education. The Government of India on the advice of CABE and IUBE appointed the University Education Commission under the chairmanship of Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, on Nov. 14, 1948. The other members of this Commission were Dr. Tara Chand, Sir James A. Duff, Dr. Zakir Hussain, Dr. Arthur Morgan, Dr. A. Laxmanswami Mudaliar, Dr. Meghnad Saha, Dr. KarmNarayan Behl, Dr. John J. Tigert and Shri Nirmal Kumar Siddhanta. This Commission is also known as **Radhakrishnan Commission**. It was the first education commission of Independent India.

### Objectives and Terms of Reference

In the words of the Commission itself—the objective for the appointment of this Commission is—‘To report on Indian Universities and suggest improvement and extension that may be desirable to suit present and future requirements of the country.’

The terms of reference of this commission was also to study the prevailing condition of Indian Universities and to make recommendations to raise the standard of higher education. The terms of reference were—

- (1) To study the contemporary Indian Universities and to find out their shortcomings.
- (2) To give suggestions about their administration and finance.
- (3) To give suggestions about the administration and finance of the colleges affiliated to them.
- (4) To give suggestions about the restructure of higher education.
- (5) To determine the aims of higher education.
- (6) To suggest measures to raise the teaching standard of higher education.
- (7) To give its opinion regarding the medium of higher education.
- (8) To give suggestions regarding the appointment, pay scales and service conditions of the teachers of higher education.
- (9) To find solution to check the widespread indiscipline among the students.
- (10) To present plans for the welfare of students.

## **Report of the Commission**

The Commission prepared a questionnaire related to the condition of the contemporary Indian universities, their problems and remedies and mailed it to an approximately 1000 respondent related to higher education. Of these only 600 responded and returned back the filled in questionnaire. The Commission prepared a statistical description of these. The second step in this study was to study the Indian universities directly, to meet the Vice Chancellors, teachers and students of the universities to understand their problems, to listen to their demands and to know their ideas for reform. The Commission prepared a complete account of this study too.

Thereafter, on the basis of both these studies the Commission discussed and prepared an extensive report and presented it to the Government of India on Aug. 25, 1949. This report is a comprehensive document of 747 pages comprising 15 chapters.

## **Suggestions and Recommendations of University Education Commission, 1948-49**

Radhakrishnan Commission has basically given its suggestions related to the university higher education but for the qualitative reform in higher education it has also given some suggestions for the reform in pre- university secondary education. The recommendations of the Commission related to the university education may be presented in the following sequence—

### **Administration and Finance of University Education**

The Commission gave six major suggestions in the context of the administration and finance of university education.

- (1) Higher education should be kept in the Concurrent list. Its organisation should be the joint responsibility of the Central and the State Governments. The policies for higher education should be decided by the Central Government whereas the State Governments should organise higher education in their states in accordance with the policies laid down by the Central Government.
- (2) For the internal administration of the universities different committees should be formed, on regular basis, in every university. Their rights and duties should be clearly defined.
- (3) The administrative responsibility of the affiliated colleges should be on their management committees.
- (4) The financial burden of higher education should be jointly borne by the Central and the State Governments.
- (5) Grants should be given to the universities and colleges to organise building construction, laboratory, library, reading room, games and sports.
- (6) University Grants Commission in place of University Grant Committee should be established to bring about uniformity in the works of the universities and to provide grants to the universities and colleges.

### **Organisation and Structure of University Education**

The following recommendations were made in this context—

- (1) Higher education should be organized at three levels—graduation, post-graduation

- (2) The curriculum for graduation should be of 3 years, for post graduation of 2 years, and the minimum duration for research work should be of 2 years.
- (3) Higher education should be grouped into three categories—arts, science and vocational and technical.
- (4) Vocational and Technical education should be further classified into 6 categories, namely agriculture, commerce, engineering and technical, medical, law and teacher training.
- (5) Separate departments should be opened in the universities for arts, science and different vocational and technical subjects.
- (6) Independent affiliated colleges should be established for agriculture, commerce, engineering and technology, medical and teacher training.
- (7) For higher education and research work in agriculture separate agriculture university should be established.
- (8) For the higher education of villagers, rural universities and affiliated colleges should be established in rural areas.

### **Aims of Higher Education**

The Commission suggested that the universities should play a significant role in the changed scenario of India. The aims and function of higher education defined by the Commission may be presented as follows—

- (1) To produce such persons who are physically healthy and mentally intellectual.
- (2) To find out the hereditary qualities of the people and develop them through training.
- (3) To produce such persons who may provide leadership in the field of politics, administration, business, industry and commerce.
- (4) To produce such persons who are farsighted, intelligent and mentally superior and may contribute to social reform.
- (5) To produce such wise persons who may disseminate education to make democracy a success, make an incessant search for new knowledge, manage business and may make up the material deficiency of the country.
- (6) To produce such youths who may preserve the cultural heritage of the country and may further contribute to it.
- (7) To develop the character of the students.
- (8) To develop, preserve and refine the democratic values— equality, freedom, fraternity and justice among the students.
- (9) To develop the feeling of national discipline among the students.
- (10) To develop world fraternity and internationalism among the students.
- (11) Spiritual development of the students.

### **Curriculum of Higher Education**

The Commission gave the following suggestions in the context of the curriculum of higher education—

- (1) The curriculum of graduation should be of 3 years duration. Only Intermediate passed students should be admitted in graduation.
- (2) The curriculum of under-graduate level, in every stream— Arts, Science and Vocational should be made extensive. Students should have sufficient option to select subjects according to their need and interests.