COLLABORATIONS IN EDUCATION IN INDIA: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Education is of crucial importance for development. It empowers the underprivileged and vulnerable sections of the society. India with its rich ancient heritage of imparting education created institutions of higher learning which were of international repute. The curriculum followed in these magnificent institutions was extremely multi and inter-disciplinary, with subjects such as grammar, philosophy, ayurveda, politics, warfare, astronomy, music and dance. Hence, the ancient Indian Education system can be seen as a model for developing trans-disciplinary, inter-institutional, inter-segmental collaborative efforts in India. Building on this premise, this article provides an overview of the current situation and recent trends in the area of educational partnerships in India. It highlights some principles for collaborations derived from the ancient 'Gurukul' system, and offers a critique of the prevalent educational system followed in our country.

THE CURRENT SCENARIO

The twentieth century is characterized by a massive expansion in the field of education. There has been an unprecedented growth in the mushrooming of educational institutions in our country in the recent decades.[1] With the emergence of India as an important member of the twenty-first century world order, this exponential growth in the number of institutions is not enough. It is true that we need far more educational institutions than we already have for about 500 million young Indians in the age group of 5-24 years, but what we also simultaneously need is an efficient, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary education network that can expand the knowledge and increase the employability of our youth in response to the changing globalizing world. In light of this urgency, the *India Skills Report* of 2018 maintains that "with the changing nature of work and workplaces, business activities . . . Cognitive Abilities, Systems skills, Complex Problem Solving, Content skills, and social skills are . . . likely to be a growing part of the core skills requirements for many industries" (Brar 2019).

In spite of being at the receiving end of the ongoing criticism, the Indian education system, since the Independence, has achieved considerable growth in various areas such as literacy rate, gross enrollment ratio, number of institutions, and so on. In this regard, the importance of education in our country can be recognized from the Indian Supreme Court's "historic interpretation of the right to life enshrined in the Indian Constitution (Article 21) to include the right to education" (Sharma 2018, 201). Since the Independence, various committees and commissions have been appointed and formed to

deal with the issues related to education so that the demands of a significant portion of our population can be satisfactorily met.[2] But despite the constant efforts of our educationalists and policy makers to improve the quality of education, the concurrent scene continues to be afflicted by "inconsistencies, resource scarcity and problems of streamlining". Furthermore, in recent times, our educational institutions have become increasingly isolated pointing towards the "inter-segmental gaps between the various levels of education (school, college and university)" thereby emphasizing "lack of interaction" and connectivity (Sharma 2018, 201-202).

Considering this context, there is a growing recognition that schools and institutions of higher education should work together to solve the problems that trouble both. As noted by Sharma, the schools and higher education institutions are tied together in an "organic relationship", that:

> ***". . . the school sector and the higher education sector are closely linked and depend on each other in multiple ways. One of the key objectives of school education for a vast majority of students is to prepare for a college or university admission and the college/university system depends on the school sector to feed them with competent students. Thus, given this organic relationship, it is only natural for them to interact and collaborate with each other in a substantive manner."*** **(202)**

Hence, in order to address the growing demand for innovations in student learning, teacher education and research opportunities, it is crucial that institutions "engage with each other in a constructive and mutually beneficial manner" (ibid, 201-202).

While, on one hand, collaborations among colleges and universities have become increasingly common in the recent decades in India, on the other, nothing substantial has happened as far as educational partnerships are concerned on our native soil, neither in practice nor in research. Even the very recent *Draft National Education Policy* 2019 has not been able to offer any collaborative schemes or programs between schools and colleges/universities, let alone implementing the same at various levels. When collaborations between schools and higher education institutions already exist in the form of Professional Development Schools, Training Schools and Links Projects in countries like the USA, the UK and Australia; in India, it is still hard to find school-university tie-ups at any level. Though our economy has accomplished substantive growth over the decades, nothing can be more surprising than observing other countries that are far behind in terms of their GDP than ours, which have already started taking advantages of such collaborations in order to improve the state and quality of education in their own territories. Considering our achievements in the field of education since Independence, the opportunities in the area of educational partnerships for a country like India are limitless, and it is on this premise that our study revolves around.

RECENT TRENDS

Though the state of existing literature on the theme of school-university collaboration points towards dearth of partnerships in India, however there have been some initiatives undertaken in this direction in the past few years. These initiatives fall under the broader theme of collaboration, i.e. these partnerships are not specifically between schools and higher education institutions, but between institutions from different levels and spaces. It is arguable that why should we look at collaborations other than the ones between schools and colleges/universities, but the motive here is to shed light on any form of existing educational collaboration in our country, however different or small it may be. In India, as in other parts of the world, the potential of collaborative efforts between schools and higher education institutions has not been fully recognized (as mentioned in the earlier section), but recently, many institutions in our country have acknowledged or/and are

acknowledging the growing trend towards working and partnering for mutual benefits and to prevent "underutilization of available resources" (Sharma 2018, 201). In the wake of this collaborative awakening, the development has been small, but steady, and the initiatives discussed below can be considered as the flagship programmes which showcase our nation's increasing preoccupation with the idea of working together. These schemes, regulations, programmes or initiatives show our propensity towards cooperation and connectivity, marking a major shift in the way the relationship between different institutions is now perceived. Some of these collaborative efforts fall under the range of different types of partnerships, while some do not fall under any, but any tangible progress in our times of isolation is worthwhile.

Partners are increasingly relying on the idea of co-funding to initiate programs so as to reduce the overall costs, and lessen the financial burden both parties would have to face if they were to work individually. A good example in the direction towards collaborative practices between two organizations is the scheme that the government of India came up with in the year 2010, through which it planned to establish secondary schools in "public-private partnerships (PPP)" in order to "set standards for quality education in smaller and far-off areas" across the country (Dhar 2010).[3]

The impetus to form co-funded collaborations like such in recent years "has been (due to) the transformation of the world economy under conditions of globalization" (McCulloch & Crook 2008, 427), and this transformation has led the government to amend its policies and form regulations in a way that it can attract the investment from the private sector in the education sphere.

Considering this attempt by the government to review its policies measures, in 2016, the UGC had "amended rules to encourage collaborations between Indian and foreign institutions" (*Tribune 2016*).[4]

A programme "to adopt a fix number of schools" (Sharma 2018, 208), and provide assistance and support has been in constant practice in some parts of the country. In particular is the "School Adoption Programme (that) was initiated in March 2015 at the Central University of Gujarat" (Sharma 2018, 208). Another adoption scheme that was followed in the same state, though not between a school and an institution of higher education, but between schools, was the one started by the Gujarat Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Board (GSHSEB) in the year 2014 (Ritu 2015).

The terms of the scheme laid down by the GSHSEB under its adoption policy involved giving the schools scoring below 30 percent results in the 2015 board examinations over to those scoring 100 percent results. This type of programme introduced a major role which directly relates to the function assigned to a college or a university in a collaborative tie-up with a school. Adoption schemes are based on the idea that an institution is supposed to 'look after' its 'junior' institution and help it improve the current state of education by offering assistance and resources. In the history of collaborations between schools and higher education institutions, such parental roles have been characteristic of 'senior' or higher education institutions, but in the case of the GSHSEB, this role has been fulfilled by a school, classified on the basis of its good performance. This effort shows a positive inclination towards the broader collaborative principle, as the programme directly addresses the needs of the 'junior' institution. Based on this idea, a total of 646 secondary and higher secondary schools with 100 percent results in the 2015 board examinations had to adopt their nearby schools till Class X, having results below 30 percent (Ritu 2015).

The adoption scheme was initially started at a low scale in 2014 with seven schools of the Bhavnagar district by its District Education Officer (DEO), S. L. Dodiya (ibid). Out of these seven schools, results were seen to improve within a year in four of them (ibid). Prior to the scheme, all these schools had recorded a result of below 30 per cent, but as a result of the programme, there was a significant

improvement in their results later noted by the GSHSEB (ibid). Because of its success, it was later proposed that the programme would be replicated on a larger scale across the whole state. The working of the adoption scheme was similar to the way higher education institutions help schools in a collaborative relationship, as the GSHSEB mandated that teachers and students would "have to make regular visits to the one which has adopted their school", while the Science, Mathematics and English teachers would "have to visit the adopted schools" (Ritu 2015).

In the wake of school-university collaborations on the international front, India is slowly but steadily exhibiting a strong tendency towards forming ties with other countries like the USA and France for improving education quality through cooperation. Some such initiatives include:

- the US Agency for International Development's (USAID) task of helping Union ministry of human resource development (MHRD) in setting up IITs (Ravi 2017);
- the In-STEP project (India Support for Teacher Education Program), comprising "three-month customized (teacher) training programmes for over 100 Indian teacher-educators at the Arizona State University" (ibid);
- the "21st Century Knowledge Initiative, to support research and teaching collaboration in the fields of energy, climate change and public health" (ibid);
- the "Fulbright-Nehru Programme" to "support(s) more than 300 scholars between the two countries" (ibid);
- the US government's "Passport to India" initiative, in partnership with the Ohio State University", which aims to "work with the private sector to increase internship opportunities, service learning and study abroad opportunities in India" (ibid);
- the India-US Higher Education Dialogue, which intends to "create(s) opportunities for student mobility and faculty collaboration across the two countries through initiatives such as the Global Initiative of Academic Networks (Gian) programme, where the MHRD creates a channel for US professors in science, technology and engineering to teach in Indian academic and research institutions on short-term exchanges" (ibid);
- And the Indo-French agreement "to facilitate Mutual Recognition of Academic Qualifications between the two countries" (Brar 2019).

It is due to these initiatives that we can enlarge the possibilities for future collaborative efforts and keep in pace with the changing dynamics of the modern world. India is a diverse nation, which is a repository of diverse and multi-faceted history. It would be wrong to admit that our proclivity for collaboration never existed, since the principle prevailed both in the form of an abstract idea and practice in ancient India. The coming sections are homage to this ancient collaborative tendency manifested in the *Gurukul* system of the ancient Indian education. In this regard, we can turn to the past in order to derive inspiration as it contains desirable tactics for the functioning of an educational system and for the dissemination of knowledge along with imparting profound and invaluable wisdom.

COLLABORATIONS IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Indian history is mainly characterized by events of massive social, economic and political unrest. The centuries of wars, conquests, invasions along with change of reigns and short glimpses of peace here and there, greatly affected the mundane existence of the people from all walks of life. Education has been no less susceptible to change in this regard, since the ongoing shifts in power resulted in the formulation of different systems and various educational practices over the course of centuries.

From a historical perspective, the principle of 'collaboration' can be traced as far back as the system of tutelage followed in ancient India. One of the main aims of any educational collaborative

enterprise is to smoothen the transitional phase between the abrupt end of school education and the tedious start of college or university life for the students. This is especially true for a country like India, due to the issue such as drop-out rates and scarcity of resources that we are already dealing with. The idea is to form a productive bridge connecting the two sets of institutions - school and college/universities, to help school students prepare better for the challenges that they will face in the initial years of their pursuit of higher education.

The general framework of education followed in our country[5] is mainly an adoption of the model originally introduced by the colonizers to suit their imperial interests. The colonial education was primarily meant for the Indian elite, so that the tyrannical regime could be sustained incessantly. Important in this regard is Macaulay and his Minutes (1835), through which he wanted to "form a class (of elite Indians) who may be interpreters between us (the colonizers) and the millions (the natives) whom we govern, a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect." Due to his recommendation, many educational institutions for different levels of learning were established by the colonizers to perpetuate their autocratic rule and exploitation of the native population. This new form of colonial education gradually uprooted the traditional forms of education and teaching (the *Gurukul* system) in the colonial India to the point that the impact of the same can be witnessed even today.

Contrary to this increasingly institutionalizing trend of education that began in the colonial period and has achieved its peak now, the *Gurukul* system in the ancient period was characterized by continuity, progression, and a smooth transition from childhood to adulthood. Hence, there is a marked difference between the way education was imparted in ancient India and the way it was continued to be disseminated in the later periods. Moreover, the process of education in the modern era comprises inter-segmental gaps at various levels of education pointing towards disconnectivity and discontinuity (Sharma 2018, 202). We cannot expect our teachers and students to abandon their homes and make an institution like *Gurukul* of their own, but we can at least look at the various characteristics associated with the system and practices of education followed in ancient India that are noteworthy from the point of view of school-university collaborations.

ANCIENT INDIAN EDUCATION

Approximations on how long our species has been walking on this planet range from 30,000 years to 200,000 years. Marvelously enough, we have managed to survive this long despite the same neuron structure that was characteristic of our ancestors, *Homo sapiens* thousands of years ago. Our conscious efforts to derive understanding and our continuous intellectual development have been the key factors in our strength to outlive and outlast many of our fellow species from the primitive past. In this regard, the cumulative attempts made by our earliest human species, such as hunting, building equipments, and so on, to evolve and adapt show our initial preoccupation with the concept of learning. As Thomas notes:

> ***The only reason we are better at thinking and doing things now – the only reason that Aristotle, Michelangelo, and Einstein blazed into the intellectual firmament in the last couple of thousand years and not 30,000 years ago – is that we accumulate knowledge and pass ideas and information from one generation to the next. With the accumulation, we get better. And better.*** **(Thomas 2013, 1)**

Thus, with time our ancestors must have realized that it is crucial to pass on this essential knowledge and necessary skills to ensure the continued existence of the community, and perforce developed the master-pupil relationship, thereby proving that education was an indispensable part of our existence then, as it is now. Education in this sense can be defined as the process through which knowledge about concepts and ideas is shared and acquired. It is no surprise that the earliest form or method of

imparting knowledge was verbal in nature, as it was this "ability of our species to crystallize and store knowledge in specialized sounds and language" (ibid) that facilitated the smooth transfer of information through learning from one generation to another. In this way, the oral tradition with time was therefore ossified as the dominant form of not only passing knowledge, but also, values, ideas, customs, habits and behaviors. The ancient India was the direct inheritor of this prehistoric tendency towards learning, which was both experiential and pragmatic.

The rich tradition and achievements in advancing education and other forms of learning in ancient India cannot simply be overlooked. The British Educationalist, Sir Philip Hartog (1864-1947) summarized the popular opinion on ancient Indian education of the time, and which is still perceived this way, in the following words:

> ***"Picture to yourself a group of some twenty or thirty men and boys in Indian dress, in a large room in the University of Calcutta; all are seated on the ground except two small boys who stand, and with rhythmical movement up and down of their outstretched palms, chant by heart verses from the Veda, with intonations that, I imagine, go back for 3000 years or more. That is one of my earliest impressions of Indian education."*** **(Chauhan 2004, 9)**

Contrary to that popular impression, the ancient period was a high point in the history of Indian culture and heritage, as is reflected by the number of best-known places of higher education[6], such as Takshashila[7], Nalanda[8], Vikramashila, Vallabhi, Nadia, Kanchi, and Benaras, which were high seats of learning, and soon became symbols of enlightenment and productivity. The curriculum followed in these magnificent institutions was extremely multi- and inter-disciplinary, with subjects such as "grammar, philosophy, ayurveda, surgery, politics, warfare, astronomy, commerce, music, dance," (Brar 2019) and so on. The importance and prestige of these educational institutions can be ascertained from their famous graduates - Takshashila's graduates included the Indian teacher, Chanakya; the father of *Sanskrit* grammar, Panini; and the Chinese traveler and Buddhist scholar, Hiuen Tsang.

Learning has always been an integral part of our lives, and even more so in ancient India. In ancient times, education not only "meant self-culture and self-improvement", but also "instruction and training". In this way, education was a path to achieve the highest ideal and a means to achieve self-realization. Education was mostly formed around the study of religious scriptures along with the emphasis on Yogic and Vedic practices. Though the primary aim of education "was to achieve illumination through knowledge", the 'earning an honest wage' aspect associated with education was also not untouched. "Infusion of a spirit of piety and religiousness, formation of character, development of personality, inculcation of civic and social duties, promotion of social efficiency, and preservation and spread of national culture" can be noted as the prime aims and ideals of ancient Indian education (Chauhan 2004, 2-4).

The society in the ancient times was divided into four castes - *Brahmins*, *Kshatriyas*, *Vaishyas* and *Shudras* - and it was this "institution of caste" that "was the main vehicle of professional/vocational education" in India. Due to this division, the *Brahmins* were therefore "assigned the pious duty of acquisition, conservation and transmission of knowledge for the benefit of coming generations", and were thought to devote their entire life for the pursuit of learning and teaching (Chauhan 2004, 4).

A further division that is important to understand the system of ancient Indian education is that considering an individual's spiritual existence, irrespective of the caste or background, the lifespan of a person was divided into four stages or *ashramas* - *Brahmacharya* (student life), *Grahastha* (married life), *Vanaprastha* (retired life) and *Sannyasa* (life of detachment and renunciation). Of these four *ashramas,* the *Brahmacharya* or student life was considered the most important, because it was in this stage that an individual would develop good practices which would remain with him for the rest of his life. Thus, *Brahmacharya* comprised

"childhood (aged 5-13 years) and adolescence (aged 14-18 years)", and "was a period to be devoted to education" entirely (Chauhan 2004, 4).

Therefore, in ancient India, education was divided into two main stages – "lower and higher", where the lower stage included education in the "knowledge of Vedas," considered as "necessary for everyday social interaction", and the higher stage included education in "subjects like history, mythology, mathematics, grammar, logic, polity, astronomy, science (of war and worship), and fine arts". Similarly, education also had "two-stage objectives": "immediate and ultimate". The immediate objectives "included preparation of individuals for their caste-based vocations" relating to "their immediate need," while the ultimate objectives were "self-realization" and "liberation of the soul" (Chauhan 2004, 6).

THE GURUKUL

Gurukul is a *Sanskrit* word formed by joining two separate words, *guru* (which means teacher or mentor) and *kul* (which means home), and together the words stand for 'teacher's home'. In *Sanskrit*, the word *guru* has an even deeper meaning. It signifies the one who dispels darkness, darkness in the form of ignorance of a *shishya* or the student. *Gurukul* is the oldest form of institution for imparting and gaining knowledge, as a result, it is hard to argue for any other form of learning that may precede the *Gurukul* system. The "rich tradition of sages and scholars orally imparting education to students through the *Gurukul* system" is a marked and blissful feature of our prosperous civilization (Sharma 2018, 204).

During the period of education, the teacher constituted a student's universe, since a student's life would literally revolve around the teacher himself. The student would receive education at his teacher's place for a period of twelve years or so. Because of the time it would take to make a good student out of an individual, "it was necessary for the student to stay away from his home," and "live with his teacher, as a member of his family or in the boarding house under teacher's supervision, till the end of his education" practicing celibacy and abstaining from any sort of pleasure (Chauhan 2004, 5). The student would also perform other mundane household duties apart from the educational training. After the completion of education, the student would offer his teacher *gurudakshina* or 'the gift for the teacher', in order to show his acknowledgment, gratitude and deep respect to the efforts put in by his master in giving direction to his life.

Due to the nature of their relationship, "both the teachers and students were held in high esteem by the society including the kings". The "teachers were revered even more than parents in ancient Indian society as it was believed that parents gave a child physical birth, but teacher gave him intellectual birth in terms of knowledge and wisdom" (Chauhan 2004, 6). In ancient India, people perceived teachers as a 'sea of knowledge' for their sagacity, vast learning and deep spiritual insight, and were therefore like an independent educational institution. The *Gurukul* was the only form of educational 'institution' prior to the setting up of the ancient centres of learning like Taxila and Nalanda. These institutions were home to famous scholars, who would also impart education in their own capacity like a *Gurukul*. The "corporate educational institutions" that "were first evolved in ancient India in connection with the Buddhist monasteries" were "developed into big establishments from the time of (the emperor) Ashoka onwards". Later, these same establishments "naturally developed into centres of education", and became counterparts of the still very common place, *Gurukulas* (Chauhan 2004, 5).

LOOKING BACK & MOVING FORWARD

Coming back to the broad theme of school-university collaboration, the larger issue is this - what can we borrow from our traditional practices to initiate successful and effective educational partnerships? Since the major impetus behind this study is to explore the idea of incorporating collaborative

practices in our education system, looking at the main features of the *Gurukul* system can really expand the scope in the current field. Some of the salient features of the *Gurukul* system related to the concept of collaboration are as follows:

MONITORIAL SYSTEM

"Monitorial system" was a "characteristic feature of ancient Indian education". Through this process, the teachers would take the assistance of advanced and highly intellectual disciples in the management of teaching-learning processes at the *Gurukul* and in the ancient universities as well. "An advanced student, designated as Monitor, guided the studies of their juniors or less advanced students under the general supervision of the teacher" (Chauhan 2004, 8). This system thus has the benefit of being called the earliest form initial teacher training, since it provided students with an exposure to the world of teaching, and would provide them with ample opportunities to understand the art of teaching. In this regard, the function of the advanced students in ancient India closely emulates the initial training of pre-service, novice and student teachers in today's advanced teacher training institutes. This system was later adopted and experimented by the Scottish educationalist, Dr. Andrew Bell (1753-1832) at the Male Military Orphans Asylum, near Madras (1787), who went on to publish a book (1797) on the same experiment, as a result of which, this system was later tried and adopted in selective schools in England.

CONTINUITY

The process of learning in ancient India meant a gradual progression from one phase to another for the students. The one-size-fits-all approach that characterizes our system nowadays, which requires the students to complete their education in a stipulated amount of time, stands in stark contrast to the ancient Indian education. In ancient India, students spent all the years of their student life with the teacher which provided ample time for the students to deal with the difficult concepts and only then move on to the more complex ideas. This meant that all the doubts and perplexities would have to be resolved and cleared first before moving further, pointing towards continuity and connectivity in the process of education. Incorporating this 'continuity' in our education system through school-university collaboration will ensure that the "university space does not remain alien to learners when they first go there (higher education institutions) and this familiarity will also ensure that the learners are able to choose their courses carefully", which would as a result "help overcome several long pending problems of Indian education like drop-out rates and can potentially lead to better use of available resources" (Sharma 2018, 203).

Moreover, the current curriculum framework forces students to work according to the system rather than the system catering to their needs, since the structure, which is characterized by "inter-segmental gaps", requires students to move from one level to another. As a result, there is lesser time for students to adapt and the gap between the average performer and the bright student continues to widen. Therefore, it is by "taking some inspiration from such ideas" as "continuity in learning" that collaborations between school and higher education institutions can be proposed (ibid, 204).

FINANCE

Another characteristic feature of ancient Indian education with regard to the concept of collaboration is the way funds for education were managed in the *Gurukul* system and in other ancient institutions. In addition to the usual donations by the Kings and wealthy people, the funds were received from the public in the form of *vidyadana*, which actually "meant donation for the cause of education". Because of its motive, "*vidyadana* was pronounced to be the best of all gifts having a higher religious efficacy than even the gift of land". The act had a "profound religious appeal on the public as well as the rulers who donated money for the cause of education, which was sufficient to support free

education at least to all poor students who wished to benefit from it". Moreover, "the very idea of charging fees was vehemently condemned by one and all" (Chauhan 2004, 6). The way funds were managed in ancient India highlights a very important point, that how the system of education was dependent on the mutual collaboration of every individual. Without the contribution from people the system of education would have collapsed since many would not have been able to afford the kind of education that they sought. This type of co-funding is already being practiced in many partnerships nowadays.

Thus, the salient features of the *Gurukul* system described above have some deep insights to offer to the modern collaborative initiatives in India. It is important to note that the *Gurukul* system was later replaced by a really institutionalized form of learning, which had its foundation in the policies introduced by the colonizers in the colonial period. Hence, after having analyzed the system of ancient Indian education, particularly the *Gurukul* system, it is important to have a look at our present system of education to better understand the inter-segmental gaps in our current curriculum framework as opposed to continuity exemplified by the ancient Indian education.

CONCLUSION

We thus conclude that the education system needs to adapt and be more collaborative in tandem with modern times. The existing framework designed on "the colonial system of specialized education, set up to serve a specific need, is no longer adequate for those who are in a race to be future-ready and acquire 21st century skills" (Brar 2019). There is a growing need for our knowledge system to be now characterized by continuity at various levels of education through collaborative efforts. The present system of education requires a fundamental shift to equip us better for the changing needs of a globalised world. In this regard, it is worthwhile to learn from our ancient heritage and culturally diverse history. This task is challenging but can be achieved by positive government policy measures.

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[1] According to the *Educational Statistics at a Glance* Report (2018) by the Department of School Education & Literacy Statistics Division of the Ministry of Human Resource Development as of 2015-2016 itself there were 15,22,346 recognized schools, 39,071 recognized colleges, 11,923 recognized stand-alone institutions and 799 recognized universities for the educational needs of an ever-growing youth population in our country.

[2] Such as, University Education Commission (1949), University Grants Commission (1956), National Education Commission (1964), National Knowledge Commission (2005) and so on.

[3] The scheme was based on the plan that the various costs involved in setting up the schools would be borne together by both the government and the private partners - "the capital cost of such schools would be borne by the private partners, (while) the Centre would pay for the recurring expenses of 40 percent of the students it will sponsor in each school," along with "20 percent recurring cost towards infrastructure facilities for the sponsored students" (Dhar).

[4] Prior to this, the UGC "did not have a framework to facilitate foreign collaboration in higher education," except for the All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE), that had "regulations for collaboration with foreign institutions of technical education" (ibid). In April 2016, NITI Aayog proposed "three routes to permit the entry of foreign education providers: a new law to regulate such operations; an amendment to the UGC Act of 1956 to let foreign universities in as deemed universities; and facilitating their entry by tweaking the UGC and AICTE regulations on twinning arrangements between Indian and foreign universities to permit joint ventures" (ibid). As of 2016, about 600 foreign institutions were working in India "from their home campuses through their liaison offices, mostly providing distance education" (ibid). The proposal to let foreign universities open their campuses in India was anchored on the belief that "a new law can help meet the growing demand for quality higher education, increased competition and subsequently improve standards of domestic institutions" (ibid).

[5] The system of formal education in India comprises at least ten years of school education, two years of higher secondary education and three years of higher education or college education to obtain one's first degree. The school education comprises two major divisions: Elementary education, which consists of two stages, primary (i.e. classes I-V) and upper primary stage (i.e. classes VI-VIII); and Secondary education, which consists of classes IX -X, and classes XI-XII of the higher secondary stage. A person is eligible to enter a higher education institute only upon successful completion of higher secondary education.
(Patel, 83)

[6] Ancient Indian universities were not as structured and managed as today's modern universities are, but those were residential in nature. The teachers and students would live and work together in small clusters in the "pursuit of knowledge and its creation, conservation, and dissemination." Students were admitted through admission tests, which were difficult, more so because the education that they received was free of cost. (Chauhan, 6)

[7] Takshashila, also known as Taxila, was established in Peshawar (now in Pakistan) 2700 years ago, and had around 10,500 students who studied Vedas, sciences, medicine, surgery, archery and so on as part of the curriculum. It was named after the ruler of Kandahar (then Gandhar). Being a great seat of learning, it attracted students from far off places. The institution was destroyed by Huns, who invaded India in 455 AD. (Chauhan, 7)

[8] Nalanda was a Buddhist monastery founded during the Gupta period by a disciple of Nagarjuna near the old capital of Magadha about 40 miles away from Patliputra (present day Patna) in Bihar. It had students not only from India but from other parts of the world too - China, Burma, Tibet, Java, Sumatra, Japan and Turkistan. Nalanda had about 1500 teachers, and about 8500 students who studied philosophy, logic, linguistics, yoga, grammar and medicine besides religious studies as part of the curriculum. It was a large institution with 8 big halls and 300 small blocks, and admitted students on the basis of an admission test. It is believed that Gupta kings had donated 100 villages to maintain the institution. Bakhtyar Khilji destroyed Nalanda University at the end of 12th century AD, during the period of Mohammed Ghauri. (Chauhan, 7)