

## **When India will get its Educational Freedom?**

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Liberalization, Privatization & Globalization (LPG) process got a kick-start in India in the year 1991. We are witnessing favourable outcome of this process in every sector of the economy; except in education sector! Education sector is completely locked in License and Permit Raj. This sector has become rigid and static. It should become autonomous, dynamic and competitive. Academic Ranking of the World Universities (ARWU) by Shanghai Jiao Tong University (SJTU) in China underlines the fact that in the Top 500 universities globally, there are 151 American, 45 Chinese and only 01 Indian university. What does this indicate? Indian universities need to have complete financial, administrative and academic autonomy in order to improve their standards.

Today, apart from UGC, 16 apex councils are governing the higher and technical education sector. They should be merged together to create National Council for Higher Education & Research (NCHER) for single-window clearance. Education is a concurrent subject in the pervue and jurisdiction of the Centre and the State. In the State also, educational institutions have to cross the obstacles race created by Mantralaya, DTE, SSS, PNS, Social Welfare Department etc., in effect, university autonomy is at stake. State universities in Pune, Mumbai, Nagpur are bogged down under pressure of affiliated institutions. Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU), for example, has nearly 1000 affiliated colleges and recognized institutions, 10 lakh students in 3 districts of Western Maharashtra. As per NKC-New Delhi Norms, ideally there should be 1 university in each district & 100 affiliated colleges per university. Today's universities are overloaded due to examination work. In effect, teaching and research gets hampered. In order to sort out this problem, a separate examination board could be created on the lines of SSC Board & HSC Board. Today, we are having 800 universities in the country. We need at least 1500 universities in order to raise G.E.R. from 18% to 30%. Education sector needs to be re-structured based on 'Expansion, Equity and Excellence'. E.B.C. Scholarship appears to be the ideal way for giving financial relief to the needy but deserving students. We need corporate universities and foreign universities. Today, 6.5 lakhs bright students are going abroad for higher education by spending U.S. \$ 4 billion (Rs. 26800 Crores) annually. Moreover, it creates a brain drain. If we enrich and empower our own universities, it will surely create a reverse flow.

Indian universities should create I.P.R. Chairs & Patent Offices on campus so as to convert ideas into real start-ups for wealth creation and job creation. Teachers should do research and researchers should teach.

In order to make it happen, NDA Government should take a bold political initiative to conduct a joint session of Loksabha & Rajyasabha for clearing pending educational reform bills that have been recommended by NKC-New Delhi and Dr. Yashpal Committee. At the state level, new Maharashtra Universities Act needs to be passed.

Let us liberate 'Saraswati' on the lines of 'Laxmi'; as the superhighway to superpower status runs through the knowledge corridor. India got its political freedom in 1947, economic freedom in 1991. When will India get its educational freedom?

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