Origin and Development of Higher Education in Ancient India

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**ABSTRACT:** Education is the most crucial input for empowering people with knowledge and skills and in giving them access to productive employment in future. Education is the single most important instrument for social and economic transformation. Higher education is directly linked with the economic transformation of the society. Education, in general, and higher education, in particular plays a key role in the development of knowledge based society. The main role of higher education, in the modern times, is to create new knowledge and thereby to produce competent professionals, thinkers, teachers, researchers and knowledge workers essential for emerging knowledge society. This paper related with origin and development of higher education in ancient period.

**Key Words:** Schiff base, 3-nitrobenzaldehyde, p-phenylenediamine, antibacterial antifungal.

**ANCIENT PERIOD** – Indian education system is rooted in vedasand vedangas, when Sanskrit was the medium of instruction. In ancient period, Brahmanicalmaths, Jainapallis and Buddhist viharans were centres of higher learning. In Middle Ages Muslim rules propagate madrasas for religious and moral learning. Along with it, the ancient education system of gurukul, pathshales and tols prevailed. Britishers transformed the whole education system into modern and scientific. Some two thousand years ago, there was the great university of Takshashila, near modern Peshawar (in Pakistan), which was pre-Buddhist university and a seat of Brahminical learning. Nalanda University near modern Patna (in Bihar) was most famous as a centre of Buddhist learning. It is not clear when this university began functioning. During those days there was another university at Vallabhi in Kathiawar (in Western India). These two universities (Nalanda and Vallabhi) are compared by ItSing (Chinese traveller of that time) to most famous educational institutions of China. There was yet another famous institution, the Vikramshila University near modern Bhagalpur (in Bihar). During the period of Guptas, the Ujjaini University rose into prominence and in the south, there was Amravati University. A college was established at bahir (near Pondicherry) where provision was made for the study of Vedas, Vedangas, Mimasa, Nyaya, Puranas and DharamShastra. These Universities are some of the important and well-known universities of ancient India and they occupy a special place in the history of higher education in the country. These venerable institutions, some of which were the oldest ones in the world and had a glorious record as centres of higher learning, attracted scholars from not only many regions of India, but also several parts of the world, particularly China and Central Asia. Their nature and ideas would make them ‘first-generation’ universities.

**PRE-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD** – Education policy in India has been framed long before independence. The colonial British government set out on a number of policies for higher education in India as early as 1813. It is true that these policies were geared more towards consolidating their power than with any altruistic intentions. Lord Elphinstone, Lord Macaulay and Sir Charles Wood were the early pioneer of modern system of education in India.

The ‘Magnacarta of Indian Education’ was the ‘Wood’s Despatch of 1854’. The Wood’s Despatch (1854) and Hunter Commission (1882-83) were the first policy measures regarding higher education. The Wood Despatch recommended constitution of three universities namely Madras, Calcutta and Bombay (1857) on the model of London University, by an Act of the Legislative Council of India.

The **Hunter Commission** separated primary education and higher education with the objective that the university will have to manage the affiliated colleges. Lord Ripon appointed the first Indian Education Commission on 3rd February 1882. Sir William Hunter (a member of viceroy’s Executive Council) was appointed as the chairman of the commission. The commission was popularly known as Hunter Commission after the name of its chairman. The commission was appointed to enquire the manner in which effect had been given to the principles of the Despatch of 1854. The commission made certain recommendations about colleges but it failed to give a concrete shape to higher education. Due to implementation of recommendations of the commission of 1882 the number of affiliated colleges rose from 68 in 1882 to 192 in 1902.
Calcutta University Commission (1919) – The main recommendations are –To make the duration of degree course three years after the intermediate stage, English to be made the medium of institution studies. The recommendations of this commission were primarily intended for the Calcutta University. However, it could not be affected as it got bogged down in financial controversies between the university and government.

After 1921, when education was transferred to the Indian control, by the Government of India Act 1919, the development of universities was much faster and during the next 26 years nine more universities were established. Introduction of Diarchy of the Government of India Act 1919 promoted the entry of provincial government into reserved and transferred subjects. These issue limiting the control of the central government. Under this Act the Indians obtained control of the education department. Once education entered the prudential list, the central government found itself with no mechanism to co-ordinate with the provinces.

To resolve the situation the Central Advisory Board on education was set up in 1921. Further more the universities were persuaded to form an Inter University Board in 1925. The former body had the minister of education from each stage as its members while later the body was represented by vice-chancellors of each university.

The table shows the Development of University in India before Independence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of The University</th>
<th>Year of Establishment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calcutta University</td>
<td>1857</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bombay University</td>
<td>1857</td>
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<tr>
<td>Madras University</td>
<td>1857</td>
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<tr>
<td>Panjub University</td>
<td>1882</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lahore University</td>
<td>1882</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allahabad University</td>
<td>1887</td>
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<tr>
<td>Banaras Hindu University</td>
<td>1916</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mysore University</td>
<td>1916</td>
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<tr>
<td>S.N.D.T. University</td>
<td>1916</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patna University</td>
<td>1917</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hyderabad University</td>
<td>1918</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lucknow University</td>
<td>1921</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deccu University</td>
<td>1921</td>
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<td>Aligarh Muslim University</td>
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<td>Delhi University</td>
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<td>Nagpur University</td>
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<td>Rangoon University</td>
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<td>Andhra University</td>
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<td>Agra University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annamalai University</td>
<td>1929</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trivancore University</td>
<td>1937</td>
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<td>Utkal University</td>
<td>1943</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saugarh University</td>
<td>1946</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sindh University</td>
<td>1947</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rajputana University</td>
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India had a bad time in the field of education due to political domination of Mughals, British and other communities. Under the British rule higher education was institutionalized to some extent but its main objective was to serve the British Empire by developing an army of educated youth to supply the blue collar workers.
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