The Current Themes of Indian Higher Education

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1 Introduction

During the last two decades India has undergone rapid and substantial structural, economic and political changes which have connected the country with the world economy in a completely new way. Before Independence, India was a colony of Great Britain. Britain's conquest of India had begun a few hundred years earlier, but officially India was under British governance for almost 90 years from 1858 to 1947. Shortly after it was founded in 1885, the Congress begun to push for Independence. It succeeded in 1947. The economic development of the Post-Independent era is frequently divided into three phases. From 1947 to 1975 India was protectionist and emphasized self-sufficiency. The regulation of the economy was alleviated during the years 1976–1991. Still as late as 1990 goods suitable for international trade were protected by export restrictions and the export tariffs were extremely high (Mattoo & Stern 2003, 15). The economy has gradually opened up, especially after the economic policy reforms led by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, transitioning from a planned economy to a market-based economy (Tamminen 2008). Although, according to Amartya Sen (2005 100, 232) the liberalization of the international trade is incomplete, success has been significant especially in the fields of the implementation and the development of information technology. The Indian republic is often perceived as a developing state, which rich history and culture function as a base for current and future development. India's historical achievements in science, philosophy, mathematics and astronomy are value arguments which are constantly brought forward in discussions on India's development. India was a late participant in the industrial revolution, where Western Europe and the United States thrived (Dahlman & Utz 2005, 21). India's industrialization remained incomplete. In the United Nations Development Program statistics India is categorized as a lower middle level state. India's foreign policy leaders often use the term "developing country", emphasizing at the same time, that it will not remain as such. In recent years India's yearly gross national product per capita growth has accelerated at a rapid pace (OECD, 2007, 2).

It is generally considered that India has preconditions for developing into a modern society. In addition to the new economic policy India has a huge domestic market, the development of the working age population is favourable and its middle class is growing rapidly. It has been estimated that the middle class increases yearly with approximately 40 million individuals. Currently approximately 350 million Indians belong to the middle class. A third of them have risen from poverty during the last ten years (Ray 2009, 81). Furthermore India's new foreign policy,

geographical location, regional cooperation and the democratic political system all contribute to the development efforts. According to the Planning Commission (2001), a government organization that makes India's Five Year Plans, additional factors that positively affect development include the existing science and technology infrastructure, domestic companies research and development activities, English language higher education and the large diaspora are additional examples of factors which positively effect development (Dahlman & Utz 2005, 3-4, Raj 2007, 63). In addition, India has plenty of both uneducated and highly educated affordable labour (Cameron 2009, 221). India's enormous size and its heterogenic cultural- and religious traditions make the country exceptionally diverse (Nussbaum 2007, 8). However the enormous size brings with it several unpleasant effects such as population growth, poverty and huge regional differences. For example caste oppression and the farmer's suicides are problems that mock the country's development (Basu 2007). According to Tapio Tamminen (2008), when looking at India it is good to keep in mind that it can, above all else, be described as huge, diverse and segmented.

According to B.P. Sanjay (2002) the development of societies can be seen as a development from agrarian to industrial and further to service- and knowledge societies. Agriculture was clearly India's principal industry till the end of the colonial era when three-fourths of the population worked within agriculture. The share of the working population working in the sector of agriculture has not shown a substantial decline (Parpola 2005, 209). In 1999–2000 agriculture employed 57 percent of the labour force (Singh 2008). According to Gupta (2002, 4) it has been predicted that the share will decline substantially within twenty years because of mechanization. India's industrial structure changes slowly and partially, while services have become an even more important field of production. The growth of the service sector has been fast and it is responsible for a growing part of economic activity (Nissam 2009). The largest growth potential is conceived to be in financial services, software engineering, medicine, bio- and nanotechnology, shipbuilding, aviation, telecommunications and tourism. New jobs are created especially in the fields of health care and education. Despite that among others the medicine- and the car industry have thrived, India's export is still based on relatively basic technological products that compete with price (Kumar & Joseph 2007, 21).

Several developing countries that are liberalizing their economy have expressed their devotion to knowledge-based economic development (Smitha 2006, 56). Behind the Knowledge for Development (K4D)-discussions is an ambition to become part of the global economic integration without investing in traditional industry. As the significance of knowledge has grown the meaning

of higher education and knowledge production are considered strategically everywhere. Higher Education has been lifted up as a political priority of both developed and developing countries as knowledge and know-how are seen as central tools and motors of development. The developed countries stress their edge in knowledge production and developing countries invest in the improvement of their higher education systems. The higher the country's standard of living, the more focused it uses higher education for economic growth and development (Linna 2006, 15). At the moment India's most important East Asian competitors invest in the improvement of their educational systems and especially in high quality universities. Not one South Asian country improves the skills of their population at a rate that would in the near future enable them to catch up with the East Asian countries.

China and India's educational development are often compared with each other. While China has developed education in a comprehensive way, India has invested in higher education at the expense of basic education (Parpola 2005, 7, 10). India has more university students than China, but approximately 35 percent of the Indian population are analphabetic. In India the significance of higher education and the increasing of the amount of master- and doctoral level students are emphasized amply even though countries that strive to become modern societies should invest in both basic and higher education (Tilak 2006). Simultaneously as the meaning of education is emphasized in India, is the education system is one of the most acute challenges for the country's development. Both basic and higher education are criticized plenty as they do not work appropriately (Béteille 2001). After Independence, free compulsory education for all 6 – 14 year olds was set as a goal by 1960 in the constitution. For decades the government has delayed the draft bill that would enforce the right to basic education (Kumar 2009, 212). On the 1st of April 2010 the parliament accepted the "Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act" –law which enables the enforcement of the fundamental right (The Times of India 2010). Enrolment to elementary school has grown during the last decades, but enrolment to secondary school has not. The dropout rate is large, reaching up to 52 percent in secondary school (Mehrotha 2009). After five school years approximately 60 percent of the children can read at an adequate level. According to the population census of 2001 the literacy rate of the total population aged seven and above was 64,8 percent (Census of India 2001). The state of Kerala has the highest literacy rate while the state of Bihar has the lowest. The same states still have the highest and lowest rates in the newest census of 2011. During the last decade there has been a marked improvement in the proportion of literates. Literates in 2011 constitute 74 percent of the total population aged seven and above as compared to 65 percent in 2011 (Census of India 2011).

Currently the Indian basic education system is in a crisis (Kehälinna 2009, 49). The reasons for the crisis are the poor quality of education, poor learning results, the expensive charges of private schools, large class sizes, the absenteeism of teachers, the teacher's lousy wages, incompetent teachers and inequality. The well-off children attend the best English language schools, the middle class children the state supported English language schools and the poor children the municipal local language schools (Summiya, 2004). According to Nandan Nilekani (2009, 90) the English language is seen as the language of hope, future and a better job. The demand for English language education is growing enormously fast and English language schools are established especially on the countryside and in the slums of the metropolises. Approximately one third of the rural kids attend English language schools and in the slums there are more English language schools than local language schools. Due to the unequal education system, the youth's possibilities to continue their studies to upper secondary school and higher education diverge largely.

The Indian higher education system is one of the largest in the world and in Southern Asia India has the largest amount of students in tertiary education (Siddiqui 2007, 83). To the two levelled tertiary education belong almost 400 universities and approximately 18 000 colleges. India annually uses slightly below 1 percent of the gross national product for higher education (Bikchandani & Sinha 2009). This number is low. The Indian higher education system has been described to have developed from halfway between socialism and capitalism and as something that is as divided as the society at large. On one side there are the world class elite institutions of higher learning, and on the other side the universities that comprise of lecturers that do not even hold a lower higher education degree. Matters that negatively influence the quality of higher education are the states´ and its offices overlapping and excessive regulation, the affiliating system, financial issues, ways of teaching and learning, the skills of the graduated, questions of class and inequality and the quality of research. The weak and old fashioned higher education system is the Achilles heels of the Indian development ambitions (Altbach 2005).

1.1 Research Questions, Methods and Materials

Globalization creates new challenges for knowledge and science and strongly affects their development and furthers the need to understand what is happening in the rapidly developing countries (Academy of Finland 2005). Currently India is one of the most interesting of these countries. Several countries governments strengthen the bilateral higher education- and scientific

cooperation with India for example by building partnerships between the universities, by creating educational programs, networks and by founding research centres focused on South Asian studies. Recently record amounts of representatives from western universities have visited India and signed joint exchange-programs and research project agreements with Indian universities and research centres (Gohain 2008). Considerable interest has been directed towards institutions of higher learning where cooperation has been enthusiastically strengthened and developed.

The report at hand offers a current review on the structure and themes of Indian higher education. According to Wankhede (2007, 585) three traditional research themes of Indian sociology of education are education and society, education as a social system and the school as a social system. In light of globalization and the privatization trend of institutions of higher learning it is also necessary to look at more current themes such as the quality of higher education and equality. This research clarifies what the Indian higher education system is like and what the current themes of Indian higher education are. The research material consists of literature, reports and policy documents and interviews. The ten interviews were conducted by the author of this report in 2009.

2 The Indian Higher Education System

Southern Asia is the cradle of the ancient Indus Valley Civilisation. In India, the roots of scientific and intellectual learnedness are strong. The blossoming of Indian science, especially in the fields of geometry and mathematics came to the surface in the Gupta Empire period. The development of the Indian higher education system can be divided into five eras which are ancient, medieval, colonial, post-colonial and modern. In the ancient, so called Vedan era, India had two education systems; the Brahmanian that was regulated by religious values and the Buddhist undenominational system. The ancient Nalanda, Taxila and Vikramsila universities were among the world's oldest religious and philosophical centers of learning. Students from all over the world came to these universities, especially from neighboring countries Korea, China, Burma, Ceylon, Tibet and Nepal. Later medieval Islamic Madrasahas alias colleges and universities appeared alongside Nalanda, Taxila and Vikramsila. In the Hindus and Muslims religious and philosophical schools the literature was Sanskrit, Arabic or Persian, while the western education was introduced by the British. The first institutions of higher learning that offered western style teaching were Hindu College, established in 1817 which the name was later changed to Presidency College as well as Serampore College established in 1818. In the Indian higher education system colleges have existed before the

universities. The first university that started offering master's degrees was Calcutta University. The Calcutta University model was followed by universities older than Calcutta such as Bombay University, University of Madras, Panjab University, University of Allahabad, University of Dhaka, Banaras Hindu University, Andhra University, University of Mysore, Lucknow University, Osmania University, Patna University and Annamalai University (Singh 2004, 131).

At first neither the government nor the people supported western education, but little by little the urban elite began to take an interest in western education as it became a route to the prestigious places of employment in the British Raj. The traditional Indian institutions of higher learning were experienced as old-fashioned, monopolized and religious whereas the new British institutions of higher learning were considered modern, secular and scientifically oriented. The ideology of Indian higher education has changed in the passing of time. During the colonial period, the higher education was thought to have educated "good citizens". The following, post colonialist period emphasized the rebuilding of the state with the help of science and technology and the argument was "social good for the state". Education was one of the most important factors for societal development, something that advanced the goals of freedom, socialism, secularism, democracy and equality (Planning Commission 2006). The current higher education discourse is "educating youth with skills that respond to the requirement of the markets". Higher education is seen both as something that strengthens the individuals´ knowledge, skills and values and also as a means of social change (Powar 1995, 43).

2.1 Policies

When looking into the theme of Indian higher education, it is important to be aware of the historical and political documents that have affected its development (Interviewee 4, 2009). The most significant documents are the Mountstuart Elphinstonen memo, the Lord Thomas Macaulay memo, the Sir Charles Wood report, the Sergeant report, the Radhakrishna Commission report and the Kothari Commission recommendation on education. The roots of the modern Indian higher education system can be found in the Mountstuart Elphinstone memo from 1823 (Choudhary 2008). In this memo the establishment of English language high schools that teach European sciences were encouraged (Scharfe 2002, 319). The debate between the orientalists and anglisists on whether to build the higher education system according to British or Indian traditions ended in the decision to modernize it in the British way according to Macaulay's memo. Lord Thomas Macaulay was the

director of the Council of Education. Macaulay's memo of 1835, also called Minute on Indian Education, has often been criticized. In addition to that it emphasized that English language higher education is better than the Persian and the Arabian language higher education, it also stressed that learning occurs better by rote learning than problem-solving. Thirdly it stressed that within educational content, a distance should be kept from indigenous learning. Consequently western knowledge was emphasized and Indians were adapted to the British interpretation of India's history and traditions. According to Suma Chitnis (2002) this resulted in the long term dependency of European and North American knowledge. In the colonial era higher education was to serve the British economic, political and administrative interests and the institutions of higher learning were to produce English speaking graduates, an elite to lead the emporium (VijayRaghavan 2008). Macaulays goal was to create a class that would function between the ruler and the ruled in other words between the Raj and the people. A class that would be Indian by blood, but English to its intellectual education. Young graduates whose parents were Indian but to their attitude were like the colonialists were called Macaulay's children (Hemming 2009).

The Sir Charles Woods report from 1854, which has been called the Magna Carta of India's English education, recommended the realignment of higher education. This led to the founding of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras universities according to the London university model in 1857. Along with these universities British influences were blended with the local scientific culture and the changes of the higher education system suggested in the report brought the controversial affiliation model from London University to India. The affiliation model is a way of organizing higher education where the universities formulate the curriculum, organize exams and announce the results, but do not offer teaching. Teaching takes place in the colleges which are affiliated to the universities (Altbach 2009c).

When India gained Independence the country's new leaders began to renew the colonialist higher education system they had inherited. The Indian government and the University Grants Commission have appointed several commissions and committees to work on educational matters. The first attempt to formulate a national education policy was the Central Advisory Board of Educations Sergeant report of 1944. The following report drafted in 1948 by the Radhakrishnan Commission, also called the University Education Commission, stresses that education should be based on Indian cultural heritage and values and that it should be scientifically based (Powar 1995, 38, 39). The Radhakrishnan Commission report recommended a reconstruction of the higher education system in a way that it would respond to the county's scientific, technological and socioeconomic needs. In

1948 the Central Advisory Board of Education accepted most of the Radhakrishnan Commissionin report's recommendations and proposed the establishment of the University Grants Commission. That said, it was not officially founded until 1956 (University Grants Commission 2009). The third and the most important document was drafted by the Kothari Commission also called the Education Commission. In 1964 the central government nominated the committee led by Dr. D. S. Kothari to establish new definitions of the education policy. Kothari Commissions "Recommendation on Education" is still considered the most thorough paper on India's basic and intermediate level education and it has been called the bible of Indian Education (Interviewee 10, 2009). It sets the Common School System as a goal. The Common School System is a system that is independent of the parent's financial standing, a system that incorporates all children and offers everyone an education of uniform quality.

India's first National Policy on Education was drafted by the Ministry of Human Resources Development in 1968 and it is based on the Kothari Commission report. The renewal of the educational system, increasing of the educational possibilities, improvement of the quality of education, development of science and technology and advancement of the moral and social values and the development of the feeling of community are examples of the themes presented in the National Policy on Education (Government of India 1968, 38). According to Mohanty Jagannathi (1993, 55), the National Policy on Education covers 17 central themes of Indian education. These are free and compulsory education, enhancement of the status and serving conditions of teachers, development of both the regional languages and English, balancing of educational possibilities, identification of talent, working experience in national service, scientific education and research, agricultural and industrial education, production of books, the exam system, second-level education, university education, part-time studies, adult education, improvement of students´ physical health as well as minority education and the strengthening of cooperation between universities and research centres (Government of India 1968, 43).

In 1985 it was experienced that the execution of the year 1968 education policy had failed and the country was in such an economical and technological development stage that a new national education policy was needed. The new education policy was drafted in 1986 and according to it the most significant achievement of the education policy from 1968 were the 10 + 2 + 3 school structure (described in detail on page 13) and the founding of research centres for postgraduate students and researchers (Government of India 1986, 3). Also in the year 1986 education policy, as well as in the previous policies, the realignment of higher education and the advancing of equality

are brought forward. In addition it proposes a demolishment of the affiliation system, added autonomy to the colleges and support to research made in the universities. The advancing of equality refers to the catering of the needs of those groups which historically haven't had the possibility to educate themselves as for example women, analphabetic adults and people belonging to certain castes and tribes. The focus on the year 1986 education policy was on the development of the skills and the values of the workforce. The education policy from 1986 is the newest one and it is India's current official education policy. In 1990 the Ramamurti Committee was founded in order to examine the education policy of 1986. The results of the analysis of the Committee were evaluated by the Janardhana Committee, which also made its own recommendations. The Central Advisory Board of Education finalized them and rewrote after that the education policy of 1986. This improved education policy, published in 1992, is called the "Revised National Policy on Education". It focuses on the enhancement of the educational institutions´ infrastructure, the reshaping of study courses, teachers education, strengthening of research, improvement of efficiency and creation of new nation and state level higher education coordination structures (Sharma 2002, 47).

According to Sujit Kumar Choudhary (2008) important problems were identified especially in the year 1986 policy, but the enforcement of the reforms was unsuccessful. For example the Common School System, which was proposed already in 1964, has not been followed. On the ideological level the idea of the Common School System has been supported for decades, but the establishment of it has failed. For the failure fingers point at the lack of will of political leaders and the middle class resistant to change (Summiya 2004). Education is one of those political questions that belong to the Concurrent List. This means that both the central government and the state governments have to create policy through common negotiations. This policymaking is very challenging as different parties rule central and state governments. There exists neither no clear, coherent long term policy for education nor a broad overall view on the issue. The lack of reliable information on higher education makes policy- and decision making challenging (Agarwal 2009, 404, 449). The newest political thinking about higher education is based on the reports drafted by National Knowledge Commission, the Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012) and the Yash Pal report published in 2009. Currently higher education is a subject of major political controversy (Nilekani 2009, 8).

2.2 Governance

The Indian federal republic is made up of 29 states and six federal areas. In order to facilitate the governance federal areas have been changed to states, as was done with Delhi in 2009 (Haub & Sharma 2006). The states and the federal areas are further broken up to approximately 600 areas, under which further exist 5500 areas. The governance of India is made up of Union or Central-, State- and Local Council Governments and the villages´ Panchayati Rajs. In this federal state system the governments' activities are divided to central and state levels (Palekar 2008). The federal legislative power is used by the bicameral parliament that is made up of Lower and Upper Houses (Kehälinna 2009, 9). In addition to the federal parliament the states have their own legislative and executive bodies that are chosen in elections. Many developing counties´ higher education governance works according to a so called postcolonial model. According to Maria Pinto (1995, 4), India's particular cooperative federalism can be seen in the governance of higher education. According to Jagannath (1993, 55), before 1976 education issues were only under the states administrative responsibility but after the constitution reform of 1976 governance responsibility were divided between the central- and state governments. After the economical reforms of 1991 the states´ policymaking powers have added on, which has resulted in that the states political development has started to diverge from federal rule (Kehälinna 2009, 9). Several national level policy questions are increasingly led rather from the state than the federal level and the major parties are becoming even more dependent on the states decisions. The differences in ways of thinking between the states can be extremely large, especially on questions related to education (Käkönen 2008).

The Ministry of Human Resources Development has the most significant and extensive responsibility of education and higher education governance and planning. Its Bureau of Planning functions closely with the Education Division of the Planning Commission (Pinto 1995, 6). The Education Division of the Planning Commission sends the Five Year Plans´ education themes to the Ministry of Human Resources Development and to the state's education departments that work on them before they send them back again. Also an organization founded in 1920 called the Central Advisory Board of Education, has an advisory role in the development of the actions and programs. The experts belonging to the Central Advisory Board meet yearly and evaluate the central and state governments´ education policies and give development proposals.

Also University Grants Commission that was formally inaugurated in 1953, is an important agency responsible for higher education governance. The University Grants Commission Act – law which was accepted in 1956, defined it to have a central standing in higher education matters. The Ministry of Human Resource Development and the University Grants Commission engage in cooperative measures on a regular basis. University Grants Commission acts as a link and an advisor between the Ministry of Human Resources Development, Planning Commission and the states´ institutions of higher learning. The University Grants Commission has the central governments constitutional mandate to coordinate higher education and define its standards (Sabharwal 2007, 45). It's steering extends from administration steering to steering that relates to syllabuses and literature. Even if its basic function is to coordinate development of higher education and define and maintain standards, it has thought the years become the central governments aid in evaluation of financial needs and fund allocation. In addition it formulates the higher education policy documents for the Planning Commission Five Year Plans. The University Grants Commission is different from many other countries similar bureaus as it has two kinds of power; coordination power and the power to distribute funds. It has been criticized for being responsible for too many of issues that belong to the institutions of higher learning themselves.

The country's tertiary education is ruled, in addition to the above mentioned bureaus, by fifteen federal-level professional councils. These statutory professional councils, which are founded by the central government recognize courses, promote interest for professional education and grant scholarships. The biggest of these professional councils is the All India Council for Technical Education which has been functioning since 1945. Its position was strengthened in 1988 by a special enactment, by which it got the rights to plan, develop and expand the technical and commercial education and to supervise its norms and standards (Kehälinna 2009 51, 53). All India Council for Technical Education has been criticized for being a corrupt and politicized organ which actions do not evoke trust (Singh 2004, 55). The other fifteen professional councils are: Bar Council of India, Indian Nursing Council, Medical Council of India, National Council of Teacher Education, Pharmacy Council of India, Distance Education Council, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Dental Council of India, Bar Council of India, Central Council of Homeopathy, Central Council for Indian Medicine, Council of Architecture, Rehabilitation Council, National Council for Rural Institutes and Distance Education Council. In addition to the above mentioned federal level actors every state has a State Council of Higher Education (UNESCO 2008).

Several of the Indian higher education regulation mechanisms are a legacy of the colonial era and have not been modernized (Ministry of Human Resource Development 2009b, 45). According to Philip Altbach (2009c) the structure of higher education administration is confusing as it has not been developed according to any plan. The administration of Indian higher education is described as centralised, multi-layered, stiff and uneven. In the multilayered administration system the responsibility is divided among several actors. The coordination is complex and challenging due to the involvement of so many ministries, bureaus, councils and organs that consult them. Different bureaus often have diverging views on the regulation and development of higher education. In addition to that there are too many administrative bureaus, do the bureaus´ ways of regulating differ largely. The regulations have been formulated at different times by different legislators. For example the University Grants Commissions areas of responsibility do not become legalized in the statutes of the other regulative bureaus statutes. In addition, the regulative bureaus do too little cooperation. This means that, for example, the admittance mechanisms and exam lengths differ greatly in different fields. None of the bureaus are responsible for the cooperation between the actors.

According to the Ministry of Human Resources Development (Ministry of Human Resource Development 2009b, 55) the labyrinth-like and bureaucratic regulation system should be amended to a more appropriate one. According to Altbach (2009b), discussions have been raised about the possibility that the old, regulating organizations will be dismantled and replaced by one new bureau. The University Grants Commission and the professional councils could be replaced by one single bureau that would connect the different fields and enable an overall view on higher education. Such a super body functioning under the Ministry of Human Resources Development, which would be called the National Commission for Higher Education and Research, would be a united and transparently working organ solely responsible for the governance of higher education. National Knowledge Commission has recommended that an independent organisation, an Independent Regulatory Authority for Higher Education, should be established for higher education issues. An expert on Indian higher education, Professor Jandhyala B.G. Tilak, who is working at National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, regards with suspicion the National Knowledge Commissions´ proposal on founding an Independent Regulatory Authority for Higher Education, as this would mean that the already existing regulatory authorities University Grants Commissions´ and the Professional Councils´ role would be reduced. He thinks that instead of establishing new organizations the existing one should be strengthened (Tilak 2007).

2.3 Institutions of Higher Learning

The roots of modern Indian higher education can be found in the Anglo-American tradition. The system is built according to the British Model, where the structure of degrees and curricula is three-stepped BA, MA, and PhD. Some of the graduate schools, especially in the technical and economical fields, have been built according to the American elite school system. The models for them have been Harvard and Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In the British system you get a bachelor-level degree in three or four years after the Twelfth Standard. The masters´ degree equals two years and the doctoral degree at least three years of additional studies (Grundström & Lahti 2005, 73). It is possible to apply to the institutions of higher learning after the Twelfth Standard. The county's school structure is 10 + 2 + 3, where primary education takes eight years, secondary education two years, senior secondary education two years, higher education two or three years and postgraduate education two years. In India undergraduate studies refer to bachelor level studies and postgraduate studies to master level studies.

The amount of institutions that offer higher education has grown during the last 50 years. In 1951 there were 28, in 1992 150 and in 2007 369 universities. In 1951 there were 578, in 1992 5000 and in 2007 18 064 colleges (Government of India 1986, 18; Choudhary 2008). The 1950´s and 1960´s were exceptionally thriving decades for higher education. India strived to become a welfare state and the government established new universities and took responsibility for the maintenance of the private universities. During 1960–1980 India was in a state of financial stagnation. The government could no longer establish new universities and ever since, the growth of the amount of public institutions has been insignificant. In India higher education consist of colleges, universities and research institutions. Some also place the polytechnics belonging to higher education, but officially they are categorised as not belonging there. The colleges are responsible for the lower higher education (Altbach 2009c). They are educational units that function under an affiliating university that recognise the degrees. The activities of a college can be either financed by the central government (aided) of the state government (aided) or self-financed (unaided) (Planning Commission 2008b, 22, 33).

According to the Planning Commission (2008b, 22), there are approximately 380 universities. According to some sources there are up to 430 universities. The universities can be categorized into six categories which are State Funded University, Institution Established under State Legislation, Deemed to be University, Central University, Private University and Institute of National

Importance. According to Santosh Mehrotha (2009) most of the universities function under state governance. There are 216 state governed State Funded Universities. The dependence of state funding makes the State Funded Universities vulnerable. They can also receive funding from the University Grants Commission. Another type of institution of higher learning under state responsibility is the Institution Established under State Legislation. They are institutions of higher learning that serve the needs of special groups such as youth living in geographically backward areas.

There are 110 universities that have gotten the Deemed to be University status. Deemed to be University is a certain kind of self-government status, which has been granted to high-level institutions that fulfil certain standards (Kehälinna 2009, 51). Most of the Deemed to be Universities are one faculty universities or specialized research centres which have a relatively small amount of students. They have the same academic status and the same privileges as other universities. The activities of a university can be either financed by the central government (aided) by the state government (aided) or self-financed (unaided). Approximately one fifth of these institutions get support from the University Grants Commissions and the rest have different ministries and foundations as sources of finances. When the Deemed to be University -status was introduced some thirty years ago, it was admitted only to exceptionally superb education- and research institutions. In the 1980´s the policy was slightly modified and the usage of the term was multiplied. The original idea behind the usage of the term was noble, as successful higher education institutions got the same privileges as the universities without losing their special character and autonomy (Ministry of Human Resources Development 2009, 36). Little by little and especially in the recent years the criteria for receiving the status have changed. The usage of the status has multiplied enormously and the new Deemed Universities do not get the status for the original reasons. Somewhat like at one time the brilliant universities were granted Deemed University statuses, there are currently discussions on making excellent colleges to universities (Interviewee 4, 2009).

The esteemed Central Universities, which amount to 24, have good frameworks for activity as it is funded by the central government. Their function is, among others to decrease the regional imbalance and advance national integration. Government plans to develop them into universities oriented towards postgraduate studies and research and to elevate the status to become so called Centres of Excellence –institutions (Planning Commission 2006, 19). There are also private universities, which can be further divided into the subcategories Private Deemed Universities,

Private Universities Under State and Other Private Universities. The network of open universities is constantly under development and at the moment there are about ten of them.

Institutes of National Importance – type,"nationally important" institutions of higher learning are not classified as universities. They are smaller and higher level institutions of higher learning where research is made (Murigendra et al. 2007, 567). The activities are financed by the central government. The Institutes of National Importance category belong the Indian Institutes of Technology, Indian Institutes of Management, Indian Institute of Science, Indian Institute of Information Technology, National Institute of Technology, National Institute of Fashion Technology, National Institute of Design, National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research, Indian Statistical Institute, Medical Institutes and some other institution of higher learning. They are self-governing organs into which syllabuses and finances that neither University Grants Commission nor other higher education administrative authorities can interfere into. They are the Crown Jewels of the country's higher education system with the aim to offer world class higher education (Choudhary 2008). It is extremely difficult to get admittance to them, approximately only one percent of the applicants are admitted. A study place cannot be bribed. Of the Institutes of National Importance higher education institutions most internationally renowned are the fifteen Indian Institutes of Technologies, the nine Indian Institutes of Managements and the Indian Institute of Science.

The first Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT´s) and Indian Institutes of Managements (IIM´s) were founded in the 1950´s and 1960´s in cooperation with the best German, Russian, British and American technical institutions of higher learning. Every institute was supported by a different country and their personnel was comprised of staff from both the partnering country and India. According to Pawan Agarwal (2007) the International Institutes of Technology and the International Institutes of Management cooperation with foreign institutions of higher learning brought new syllabuses and teaching cultures to the institutes, which unfortunately did not spread to the country's other universities. The quality of these institutes was not allowed to decline even if the rest of the higher education system fell into decay (Friedman 2007, 136). They have remained as centres of academic excellence among mediocre institutions of higher learning and they have had a decisive role for the development of labour force and research programs (Gupta 2008). For a few decades the amount of postgraduate students has increased (Krishna & Chandra 2009, 40). In most of the briefs on Indian higher education and research the International Institutes of Technology and International Institutes of Management act as examples of institutions of higher learning which

offer high-quality researcher education and where quality research is made. Even though they are labelled as the best, and the activity described as top-level, it is not to say that the quality is like this in reality. The quality may, in reality, range from excellent to insufficient. That said, according to Kirsten Bound (2007, 16) the institutions have succeeded largely because of the high quality of the students.

There are 15 Institutes of Technology (IIT) in India. They are situated in the following cities (year of foundation in parenthesis): Kharagpur (1950), Mumbai (1958), Chennai (1959), Kanpur (1959), Delhi (1961), Guwahati (1994), Rorkee (2001), Bhubaneswar (2008), Gandhinagar (2008), Hyderabad (2008), Patina (2008), Punjab (2008), Rajasthan (2008), Indore (2009) and Mandi (2009). The foundation of them was based on the idea that India's future prosperity would be more dependent on technology than capital. The current success of India's information technology industry is seen to originate from a long-term investment in technical education. The International Institute of Technology students have the possibility to get postgraduate education in the fields of technology, information technology, economy, medicine, city planning, law, design and shipping. All studies include the study of humanistic and social science subjects. In the International Institute of Technology institution of higher learning –model, quality teaching, strong scientific foundation and hands-on experience are combined. Participation in regional development and industrial cooperation belong to the Institutes activities, there are also Industrial Research and Consultancy-offices founded in connection to them. Four International Institutes of Technology have an idea hatchery on campus (Krishna & Chandra 2009, 13). The International Institutes of Technology are extremely esteemed both nationally and internationally and they have given attention to Indian technical talent. In the past, the International Institute of Technology education was seen as a ticket out of India, but nowadays a larger amount of the graduated stay (Smitha 2006, 15). Earlier, approximately one out of four of the Institutes graduates´ left for work abroad, especially to the United States (Friedman 2007, 136).

Another famous institute, under the Institute of National Importance – category is the Indian Institute of Management (IIM). There are 9 International Institutes of Managements in India and they are situated in the following cities (year of foundation in parenthesis): Ahmedabad (1961), Kalkutta (1961), Bangalore (1973), Lucknow (1984), Koznikode (1996), Indore (1998), Shillong (2008), Ranchi (2010) and Rohtak (2010). The purpose of the International Institutes of Management is to educate leaders for different areas of the Indian economy. The IIM´s offer masters-level education equivalent to the internationally known Master of Business Administration

(MBA)-examination and fellowship –programs equivalent to doctoral studies. The third famous Institute of National Importance-type of institution is the Indian Institute of Science (IISC) founded in 1909 and situated in the city of Bangalore. It has been categorized as a Premier Research Institute of Higher Learning -institution, as the research carried out is considered to be of high quality (Altbach 2005). Indian Institute of Science has about fifty institutions which range from molecule biology to leadership. Its faculty structure is divided into natural sciences and engineering. At the faculty of natural sciences it is possible to study for example biochemistry, micro biology, mathematics and physics and at the faculty of engineering it is possible to study for example leadership, space research and computer science. Indian Institute of Science provides only doctoral training, approximately 2000 research students work there with about 400 teachers and professors (Bound et al. 2006, 22 - 25).

3 Current Themes of Indian Higher Education

The challenges related to the Indian higher education system are generally well acknowledged and it is widely criticized (Altbach 2009a; Ministry of Human Resource Development 2009b, 48). The higher education system has been renewed since the first Five Year Plan (1951-1956). Several different expert committees have analyzed the state of higher education, compiled reviews on it and made recommendations on changes, but have not succeeded in the execution of the reforms. The reform proposals have often crashed because of resistance from politicians, bureaucrats and university people. The higher education system is seen to be in a quiet crisis, where roots go deep. Despite the positive steps taken, higher education is still as divided as the whole society. India's middle class grows fast and their expectations on their children's future and education have grown enormously and the higher education system does not match up to their expectations. The development and improvement of the higher education system and its standards is extremely challenging as many of the much needed basic reforms have been neglected (Basu 2006 & Stella 2002, 1). Next we will continue with current themes of Indian higher education. These themes are financing, expansion, quality, commercialism, internationality, equality and research.

3.1 Financing

Financing, which poses a number of questions, is one of the current themes of higher education. The first question related to financing concerns the amount of resources the government spends on higher education. The central government uses under 1 percent of its gross national product to higher education, even though it is responsible for 80 percent of the higher education financing. The demand is much greater. The financing of higher education is described as insufficient, uneven, irregular and stiff. Approximately half of the institutions are entitled to central government financing, but almost one third don't receive any, while on the other side some central institutions receive an unjustly large amount of financial support (Agarwal 2007; Chitnis 2002). According to Nandan Nilekani (2009, 320), during the last five decades, the growth of the amount of institutions of higher learning "hides more than it shows", as the public finances for higher education were substantially low for many decades. Tuition fees have not been raised and research was relocated to the research centres that are not part of the universities. Lately the idea of the adding of resources from non-governmental sources has often been brought forward. Several experts on Indian higher education do not underwrite the idea but instead wish for more public financing. After the National Knowledge Commisions recommendations more funds than before have been budgeted for higher education. In The Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007–2012) there has been a larger financial investment in higher education than in any earlier Five Year Plan (Mehrotha 2009). According to Nilekani (2009, 326) the adding of funding is just a temporary plaster, as investments without reforms are useless.

Another theme related to the financing of education, is to which level the scarce resources are allocated. In the postcolonial era finances have mostly been allocated to tertiary education even though there was a period when focus was on basic education. At the moment the significance of both basic and tertiary education are emphasized (Abrahan 2000, 1). According to Sen (2005, 393), in a country like India, the neglect of basic education and investment in higher education is, apart of being unjust, also a reason for that India haven't been able to seize economic possibilities as many East Asian countries have. The quality of higher education suffers because of the uneven elementary school. The third theme related to financing is the huge differences in the level of financing between the states. Even though there is a uniform higher education policy that covers the whole country, the states have been given the autonomy to develop their higher education according to their needs. The capacity to receive national definitions of policy varies greatly depending on the level of development of the state and the amount of bureaucracy and corruption. The finances used

on higher education of the states´ total budget vary greatly. In the backward states, where the amount of analphabetic people is high, there is a greater investment on basic education and the developed states have developed their higher education as much as possible.

3.2 Expansion

The expansion of the higher education system and the increasing of the amount of highly educated is a current topic of discussion. The amount of institutions of higher learning is small compared to the country's population. Since the 1990´s the demand for higher education has increased and the amount of private, especially technical and vocational education service providers has increased. There has been a growth in the amount of institutions of higher learning despite that the newest higher education policy of 1986 still emphasizes, as did the 1968 version, rather the expansion of the existing institutions of higher learning than the founding of new ones. The growth of the amount of institutions of higher learning, which is on the agenda of the current government, is based according to J. Thomas Ratchford & William A. Blanpied (2008) on the National Knowledge Commission's recommendations on education made during the time period of 2005–2008. The Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007–2012) has set a goal of founding more centrally financed institutions of higher learning (Mehrotha 2009). That would mean founding of thirty new Central Universities, three hundred seventy colleges, eight International Institutes of Technology, seven International Institutes of Management and two Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research. Besides of founding new institutions of higher learning, the government plans to remodel the existing ones and add their capacity (Rediff 2008; VijayRaghava 2008; The Hindu 2008). The idea of increasing the amount of institutions of higher learning has been criticized plenty. In the critics´ opinion the miserable basic education system should be invested in first.

In addition to multiplying the amount of institutions of higher learning, the objective of multiplying the amount of higher educated is also presented in the Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012). There are too few 18–23 year olds participating in higher education (Aruchami 2003, 17). At the moment 11 percent of the age group 18–23 participate in higher education (World Bank 2008a, 1). The aim is to raise the number to 15 percent by 2015 (Mehrotha 2009; National Knowledge Commission 2006, 4; Rediff 2007). For example in the European countries the figure varies from 40 percent to 60 percent and in the Asian Tigers, where South-Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan, the figure varies from 33 percent to 55 percent. According to Phil Baty (2009, 32) Minister Kapil Sibal

plans three operations for raising the number of highly educated. The first operation is the supporting of poor adolescents into higher education, the second operation is the amending of the legislation more attractive for foreign, private higher education services providers. The third operation is the creating of such a brain-gain policy that attracts foreign students and researchers to India.

3.3 Quality

As India strives to compete in the globalized economy the quality of the higher education system; of the colleges, universities and research centres is even more important. So far the country has managed with a mediocre higher education system, because the amount of the educated is large (Altbach 2005). When quality is the theme of discussions, reference is made to the unworkability of the affiliating system, to how the government control affects the quality of the activities of the universities, to the quality differences between the institutions of higher learning and to the old-fashioned ways of teaching and learning that affect both the quality of teaching and of the graduated. The central or the state governments' tight control over the institutions of higher learning is regarded to have a negative impact on the quality of their activities and especially the universities. The central or state governments' political interference on the universities faculty and personnel choices, curriculums and research is commonplace (Pylee 1999, 61). Little by little the universities have developed from self-governing units to units functioning under central or state governments' bureaucratic control. They have become targets of politicization suffering of the lack of autonomy. Generally speaking those universities, with which activity the central government interferes in as little as possible, function better (Interviewee 3, 2009).

Another theme linked to the quality of higher education concerns the affiliating system. Most of India's institutions of higher learning function in the affiliating system. The affiliating system connects the universities and colleges. The affiliating university decides on the content of the studies, organizes examinations centrally and grant certificates. The affiliated colleges are responsible for teaching. The largest affiliating universities can have up to one hundred affiliated colleges (Stella 2002, 1). The affiliation is done on geographical grounds. For example Bangalore, situated in the South Indian state of Karnataka, has approximately 35 colleges, which all are affiliated to Bangalore University (Interviewee 6, 2009c). The rest of the Karnataka's colleges are affiliated to universities that are geographically close to them. The great majority of the students at

the institutions of higher learning study at the affiliated colleges, of which several are chaotic places (Pylee 1999, 62). The original idea behind the affiliating system considered the colleges as representatives of the activities of the universities, however this system has failed in every way. The system has a negative impact on the quality of activities of both the colleges and the universities and it is seen as old-fashioned, stiff and because of the lack of academic autonomy like a suffocating bottleneck (Agalwal 2008, 14). The system has said to have led to the politicization of higher education, which has brought corruption, nepotism and political opportunism with it and which effects extend to for example admissions processes and choices of personnel. Typical shapes of academic corruption are bribery related to admissions and degree granting. Lately the University Grants Commission has made a suggestion, that the maximum amount of affiliated colleges should for example be fifty (Rediff 2007). For decades the demolishment of the affiliating structure has been a topic of discussion, but nothing has happened.

The third theme related to the quality of higher education is the huge quality differences between the institutions of higher learning and especially between the universities. In the higher education system there is an unusually small high-level layer on the top of the pyramid and the rest of the institutions of higher learning are quality wise unpretentious. In the other extreme are the well functioning, high-quality elite schools and in the other the universities, where the lecturers don't necessarily even have a lower higher education degree. There is a huge demand for quality higher education and the best institutions of higher learning regulate entrance tightly. For example the national Joint Entrance Examination of the Indian Institutes of Technology is done by approximately 300,000 youngsters of whom approximately 3,000 get accepted to the institutes' through the country (Ghosh 2006). Generally speaking the challenge with the entrance exams, as for example the nationwide All India Entrance Exam or other similar exams ones is, that they do not test intelligence, knowledge or skills, but only the ability to answer the questions. Youngsters from families with more limited means have few possibilities to prepare for these exams (Agarwal 2007). One way to relieve the challenges related to discrimination is for example the University Grants Commission Remedial Coaching Scheme, within which the language and academic skills of youngsters belonging to the scheduled castes (SC) and scheduled tribes (ST) minority groups are improved and within which they are coached for the exams. The fact that the degree has gotten a stronger emphasis in the entrance requirements to the quality institutions of higher learning, has led to that children and youngsters even more than before are educated privately (Interviewee 6, 2009).

The quality of education and the standard of the students that graduate from the institutions of higher learning are other themes related to quality. The customary oral tradition of Indian education is still visible in the modern education. Traditionally the teacher was a source of information and the search for information from other sources was not encouraged. Traditionally the search for knowledge has been passive, based on learning by rote (Scharfe 2002, 321). Even today and even at the university-level the view on learning can be rote learning and the students are not encouraged to autonomous thinking, creativity and understanding. The curriculum has remained unchanged for decades (Mehrotha 2009). The administrative and teaching staff of the institutions of higher learning are many times described as unmotivated, ineffective, reluctant of change, surrounded by bureaucracy and distanced from reality, but at the same time politically influential (Agarwal 2008). The field of education is strongly perceived as a ”state action” and the teachers experience themselves more as bureaucrats than teaching professionals. The teaching staff are criticized of that they are not interested in openly communicative and interactive teaching. The improvement of the capabilities of the teachers and the modernizations of the teaching methods are two current topics related to the quality of Indian higher education (Interviewee 6**,** 2009).

Besides the quality of the teachers, also the quality of the graduated is a challenge (Kumar et al. 1997). Several sectors suffer of labour shortages, but the skills of the graduated do not correspond with the needs of the working life. For example only one fourth of the graduated engineers are capable of working in the modern IT-companies without re-education (Nousjoki 2007). Also inadequate knowledge of the English language is a challenge, as many talented youngsters, especially from the lower social classes, start learning English only at college. Almost 90 percent of the students at the institutions of higher learning study only at bachelors’ level, which means that it is challenging to find personnel for creative development tasks.

Traditionally Indian higher education has had a humanistic focus (Professor 7, 2009). This traditional stress is breaking down and especially technical vocational education is appreciated more than before. Martha Nussbaum (2007, 298) is worried that the recent ideological development has led to middle class parents resistance to direct their children away from humanistic education choices. A narrow focus on technical education and a simultaneous disregarding of humanistic, social and artistic subjects can become a problem, as a broad education and a critical thinking ability are founded by multidimensional education entities. According to Nayyar Deepak (2007) the traditional Indian liberal intellectual tradition is disappearing as youngsters direct their interest to more practical main subjects. Still most of the publicly funded colleges’ teach only traditional

subjects and there are very few study places for vocational and technical subjects in them (Agarwal 2009, 432). Demand and supply do not meet and the system is unfavourable from the viewpoint of the youngsters from the lower stratum.

According to Arvis Panagariya (2008, 1) the Indian higher education system needs a comprehensive transformation in order for it to generate quality labour. In addition to that the skills of the graduated do not correspond with the needs of the labour market. What makes the situation even more challenging is that the unemployment of the highly educated is very common (Kehälinna 2009, 27). Even though many sectors lack suitable and eligible personnel, not even the best youngsters get employed; this has resulted in that many leave the country. The connection between higher education and the job market is not a functioning one. Several experts on Indian education wonder why there are plans to establish more universities when there are not enough jobs for those who graduate from the existing ones.

3.4 Commercialism

In several developing countries the amount of private institutions of higher learning has grown since the 1960´s. In India the amount of private institutions, which function without public financing, has grown since the 1980´s. From 1990 onwards, the government has made some structural changes that have enabled the growth of the amount of private actors (Jayaram 2004). Usha Devi (2009a) suggests that the increase in the amount of private institutions of higher learning has been at a rapid pace during the last decades even though the system is not completely open to private funding. There is a need for a policy that restricts growth and yet no appropriate system of supervision has been developed. The individual states have the right to allow the activities of the private institutions of higher learning, but they have to function under the supervision of the University Grants Commission (Kehälinna 2009, 54). According to Mehrotha (2009) private universities have been founded especially in the states of Maharashtra, Andra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. New private institutions are mostly vocationally oriented institutions in the fields of technology, leadership and medicine (Agarwal 2007). It has been evaluated that up to 85 percent of the bachelor level engineering education takes place at private institutions (Froumin et al. 2007, 143). According to Pawan Agarwal (2007) almost 30 percent of the enrolment is enrolled at private institutions of higher learning.

The growth of the amount of the private institutions of higher learning brings with it both possibilities and challenges. Firstly private institutions of higher learning are seen to correspond with the growing demand for higher education and the studies offered often better correspond with the needs of both students and labour markets (Agarwal 2008). This is important as India for a long time suffered of brain drain. Secondly the private schools create competition on the higher education service markets. Competition can lead to a growth of academic autonomy and further the quality of higher education when more talented youngsters are expected to stay and study in their native country. The biggest challenge related to private higher education is that it doesn't reach youngsters from different backgrounds. Private institutions do not have to accept reservation quota students and their tuition fees are often quite high (Kannan 2008). The collecting of high tuition fees is against the national education policy, which stresses social equity. Some states have rules on private institutions of higher learning tuition fees, for example that they should not surpass a certain sum. In the future minority reservations will most likely concern private institutions of higher learning (Interviewee 6, 2009c). There is a concern as to which direction higher education and its content, research, ideologies and motives develop with the commercialization of higher education.

3.5 Internationality

In addition to commercialization, internationality is a subject which is often connected to discussions on globalization and higher education. In India the discussion can be loosely divided into two themes: the mobility of students and the increasing of international cooperation and India as the focus of interest of international education services providers. India is along with China the largest exporting country of students and the brain drain is a huge challenge for India. Traditionally Indian upper class youngsters have left abroad for their master's and doctoral studies, but lately this has become more common also for bachelor level studies. According to Mehrotha (2009) the reason is the dissatisfaction with the quality of higher education. In 2008 approximately 200 000 Indians studied abroad (Altbach 2009c). Traditionally Indian students, postgraduate students, researchers and newly graduated have left for exchange studies and work in Great Britain, Canada, US and Russia. Recently Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and China have also become popular destinations. Master level students tend to go to the United States while the most popular destination for students at the bachelor level is Great Britain (Cameron 2009, 221). As the quality of life begins to look brighter in India, the attraction of the United States has reduced. There have even

been talks on reversed brain drain as thousands of highly educated Indians are moving back to India (Wadhwa et al 2009).

In the 1970´s foreign students were interested in studying in India, and then the interest faded for a while. That said, lately the increase of foreign interest is on a rise. The goal of both the government and the institutions of higher learning is to multiply the amount of international linkages and the amount of foreign students as internationalisation is seen to enrich the academic milieu and enhance the economy of the institutions of higher learning (National Knowledge Commission 2007a, 41). As the Indian higher education system is old-fashioned, bureaucratic and inflexible, the multiplication of the amount of foreign students is challenging. In 2008 there were approximately 20 000 foreign students in India. Over 95 percent of them are from the Asian and African countries. The largest amounts arrive from Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan (Altbach 2009c). In addition to Asia and Africa students arrive from Russia, China, United States and the Middle Eastern Countries. They prefer to study in metropolises as Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Pune and in the western and southern parts of the country where the social and cultural atmosphere is most pleasant (Bhalla 2005). Foreigners study in India mainly because of the affordable English language education. English is the language of the best institutions of higher learning and the countries scientific publishing activity is mainly done in English (Tenhunen & Säävälä 2007, 155). The English language in higher education is seen as the single most important possibility for the strengthening and increasing of the international connections.

With the help of the Promotion of Indian Higher Education Abroad –program and the Indian attachés specialised on education the country is marketed as a profitable country for studies (Planning Commission 2006, 15). The target countries of the Promotion of Indian Higher Education Abroad –program are situated mainly in the Middle East, Africa and Southern Asia. From the Indian perspective significant councils that facilitate international cooperation are the Indo-French Council, the Indo-Japan Council, the Indo-Brazil Council and the Indo-US Forum for Science and Technology. As for the excellent Indian students, also for the researchers and experts the competition is hard and several countries have special exchange programs just for Indians. Especially the British have ambitious plans for strengthening cooperation between the countries by creating shared research projects, providing hundreds of Indian researchers the possibility to work in England and English researchers to work India and supporting the student exchanges. India’s export of its higher education services is growing especially to Nepal, Malaysia and Dubai. Of the Indian institutions of higher education for example Indira Gandhi Open University, which is the

worlds fourth largest institution offering higher education, has activities in some Middle Eastern and Eastern African countries. In the everyday of India's top universities and research institutes the effects of globalization and the opening up of the country's economy and have started to show in that they get more enquiries on expanding institutions and founding campuses abroad, especially to the Far East and to the Middle East (Interviewee 3, 2009). In addition, the amount of the enrolled exchange students continues to grow.

The second theme of the internationalization of Indian higher education, which is often linked with discussions on globalization and higher education, is the international higher education service providers' interest in India. India is the world's largest single market for higher education with a huge demand for quality higher education. Lately the market-driven transnational actors that provide higher education services have grown their activities especially in Asia. In India the growth of the activity of these actors is a relatively new phenomenon. According to Philip Altbach (2008) there are a few reasons for why international higher education service providers are out for the Indian higher education market. One reason is their desire to internationalize and in this context India is a central cooperation partner both educationally and economically. Secondly many actors want to maximize their profits by minimal investments. This is possible in a country where there is a large demand for English language higher education. Thirdly, some countries national definitions of policies, such as for example England, Australia and the United States suggest that they should get profit from higher education services export. According to Stella (2002, 2) the British, Americans, Australians, New Zealanders and Canadians are most active in promoting the export of their education services to India.

For years discussion on the opening up of tertiary education to international competition and allowing the activities of international higher education service providers has been raised. Earlier the entering obstacles to the higher education market were much higher. At the moment their activities are more acceptable as they are seen to supplement the local supply (UNESCO 2004, 13; Froumin et al. 2007, 143). In 2008 approximately 150 foreign institutions had common, mostly professional programs with Indian institutions (Altbach 2009c). Even though foreign international higher education service providers have been allowed to establish campuses in India since 2006, not a single one has been founded. Only two foreign institutions of higher learning function there, both on a franchising-basis. There are several reasons for this. There is no system that guarantees or authorizes the quality of the activity of the foreign actors, nor is there a system that offers political guidelines, regulations or laws. The foreign actors are expected to follow the governments' salary

policy and this is one reason for the scantiness of them (Nousjoki 2007). The best foreign actors value autonomy. Many seek suitable plots from interesting areas while they wait for the Indian higher education policy to change and become more permissive.

Often the challenge of developing countries is that not even education offered by the most prestigious foreign institutions of higher learning is necessarily as high quality as in their home country. Some of them do offer high quality education, but the competition is expected to come from quantity rather than quality. So far commercial products as courses protected by copyrights are mostly imported. In some cases the foreign institution of higher learning sells the franchising right of its degree to a private Indian institution. Even as examinations like this are not officially recognized in India, there is a huge demand for them. In spite of these challenges, the amount of students at foreign degree programs is growing, one reason being, that their programs are market oriented and flexible. In addition their distance learning programs and virtual studies are popular.

The political viewpoints of the former governments have been sceptical towards international higher education service providers, but the Union Minister of Ministry of Human Resources Development Kabil Sibal has promised to open up the market for foreign actors. University Grants Commission and National Knowledge Commission have different views on transnational higher education cooperation. The view of the University Grants Commission is that the focus should be on the foundation of new national institutions and the increasing of public funding. National Knowledge Commission stresses that India needs both new, politically expedient entry definitions of policy and a less regulated frame which would encourage many more, both Indian and foreign private institutions of higher learning to found new institutions (National Knowledge Commission 2006a, 5). Also the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (2007,11) sees that the Indian higher education markets could open up to several actors, as long as the activities are regulated appropriately and the student loan programs are diversified. The internationalization of Indian higher education is in a developmental stage and there is a huge need for regulation mechanisms (Prakash 2008, 283). According to Philip Altbach (2009a; 2008) India needs a transparent policy and a strong regulatory frame for foreign actors in order to internationalize its higher education without giving up its academic independence. Simultaneously he reminds that there are other ways to internationalize than letting foreign education service providers to enter the country, as for example joint programs and student and researcher exchange programs. According to Deepak (2007) the developing countries should form a shared internationalization agenda by which they could avoid dangers and take command of the possibilities.

3.6 Equality

India's complex, broadly outspread and tightly intertwined social and economic discrimination of the society's disadvantaged has endured modernization and the economic and political changes. The discrimination still continues to be even more complex and associated with structural shapes of inequity which are connected for example with economic and educational possibilities. As the importance of knowledge-work grows, education and especially higher education are seen as even more central means of enhancing socioeconomic status. This is why discussions about positive discrimination, non-discrimination, reservations and quotas are ever more current (Ghosh 2006). The term inclusive, which means non-discriminatory, is used amply in societal discussions, also in discussions related to education. It is connected with the principles socialism, pluralism and democratic principles which are also pursued in an era of economic growth (Interviewee 8, 2009). The term inclusive refers to inclusiveness, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice and to that everything is connected. The holistic viewpoint is highlighted as a cohesive key in a politically, economically, socially, culturally and religiously diverse society (Deshpande 2009). According to Krishna Kumar (2005, 108) the policy of positive discrimination is based on an idea of uniform possibilities, which in the Indian context is an expression of the governments commitment to equality. The discussions on the higher education policy stress that higher education should be non-discriminatory. Non-discriminatory refers to the enhancing of the possibilities of participation of the disadvantaged. This definition of policy supports the traditional view according to which everyone's admittance to an institution of higher learning is more important than the quality of education.

Reservations is a format, set in the constitution, of enhancing participation of the society's disadvantaged such as people belonging to the lower castes, some tribes and backward classes, in education and working life. The purpose of the reservations is to boost social diversity. Reservation means that a certain percentage of the study places and places of employment are reserved for disadvantaged persons. The reservation is adapted in all government offices and institutions of higher learning functioning under the responsibility of the central or the state governments except the so called minority institutions. The usage of the reservations varies slightly by state, but an upper limit of 50 percent is set. Who belongs to which population group varies from one state to another as do which advantages a specific minority groups get (Interviewee 7, 2009). This means that certain minority groups can be eligible for certain benefits in one state, but not in another.

In higher education the reservation is put into action with the help of quotas. In the 1950´s provisions of 22,5 percent reservation quotas were proposed in publicly financed institutions of higher learning for the scheduled castes (SC) and scheduled tribes (ST) group members. Originally the reservation quotas were supposed to be valid for ten years but the reservation practice still continues to this day. A short-term political corrective operation has become a patent solution and its use has been extended to more and more objects (Gupta 2008). In 2005 the Ministry of Human Resource Development proposed, according to the recommendations of the Mandal Commission a 27 percent additional reservation for the other backward classes (OBC). It became valid in central government financed educational institutions in June 2007 (Sabharwal 2007, 354). At the moment the reservations, which cater to all three groups aka SC (15 %), ST (7, 5 %) and OBC (27 %) rise to altogether 49,5 percent. SC and ST quotas are often announced as an aggregate number of 22,5 percent. Reservation quotas mean, that persons belonging to certain groups have the possibility to study at institutions of higher learning even though their grades would not fulfil the admittance requirements. The reservation quotas, which are numerical and created in proportion to the amount of members of a disadvantaged group, are used in all institutions of higher learning that receive public funding. Also in cases where the government owns a portion of a private school a quota is used in relation to amount of economic aid. Earlier the reservation quota concerned only students, administrative personnel and the lowest academic level or the so called entry level, which means the ones that aspire to become teachers or assistants. From 2008 onwards the reservation quota has been extended to the naming of lecturers and assistant professors. In some research institutes only about 35 percent of the appointments are freely applicable, while the rest are quoted for representatives of different minority groups. In practice, when a vacancy opens, the administrative personnel of an institution of higher learning decides if a post is announced in the quota reservation category or the so called open category (Interviewee 4, 2009).

The politics of positive discrimination are criticized abundantly. The problematical relationship between education and quotas is the single most important theme related to quota discussions. The comprehensive school system, where the better off children attend private English language schools and the more unfortunate ones public vernacular language schools, is not equal and a reason for the usage of the quota in higher education. For example not many youngsters hailing from the countryside from a poor state can compete of a study place with an urban middle class youngster. According to André Béteille (2007) the usage of quotas at institutions of higher learning and especially at universities and at research institutes strongly divides opinions. Some see that merits, not the social structure should be given priority in student-, and personnel choices. Others think that

the universities should be even more non-discriminatory and that the quotas should be extended to more minority groups. One of the biggest challenges of the Indian universities and research institutes is how to combine these two different goals, i.e. how to create tight standards for academic activity and at the same time make the activity not just principally, but truly socially non-discriminatory (Béteille 2007). The quota system opposes quality and justice. The idea of helping the weaker groups of the society is fine, but in the long run the current system can be harmful for example because the quality of the students has an effect on the quality of research (Interviewee 2, 2009).

According to critics the quotas are one of the reasons for the unsatisfactory performance of higher education, the decline of academic standards and the brain drain. Even if offering same quality basic education to all is the key to enhancement of the quality of higher education and further research, has the direction of development been the extension of the non-discriminatory policy to more and more institutions of higher learning. For example the Indian Institutes of Technologies, which are administered by the central government, have both reservation quotas and a relaxation of minority group member certificate requirements (Ministry of Human Resource Development 2009a). In the Indian Institutes of Technologies the quota reservations have been used for the scheduled castes (SC) and scheduled tribes (ST) since 1973 and since 2008 the reservations have been extended to apply to the other backward classes (OBC). According to Asha Gupta (2008) the personnel of the International Institutes of Technologies and present and past students are concerned about this development as quotas that are extended to an ever more advanced level are seen to weaken both the quality of teaching and research.

What also makes reservation policy challenging for the institutions of higher learning is that external political authorities determine its usage. The universities and research institutes cannot contribute, only react to the governments' student admittance and the personnel appointment to office requirements, which are a result of political trade-offs. Instead of numerical quotas Béteille (2007) claims for alternative, more flexible and independent ways to prevent social displacement and advance social diversity at the institutions of higher learning. The quota system also awakens different feelings of unfairness. The unfortunate ones feel that it is unfair that the quotas are not in use in the private institutions of higher learning, where the focus of the studies is often more hands-on than at the publicly financed institutions (Interviewee 4, 2009). Other kinds of feelings of injustice are experienced by those who are not entitled to special treatment. From their direction there have been requests that the quotas would be changed to family-specific and one-off. Family-

specific refers to the original idea of supporting only one family member and one-off suggests that a person should only get one chance. For example currently one person can initially get a quota study place and later gain a quota workplace. The fact that the reservation is lifelong has been criticised. It has been argued that once a representative of a minority has, for example, improved their education level with the help of a reservation, they should be able to stand on their own (Interviewee 7, 2009). It is also possible to abuse the quota system, even if this tends to be an uncommon trend. A person could for example register themselves as a member of a minority just to get reservation benefits.

Two expert members resignation from the National Knowledge Commission in May 2006 raised the topic of quotas in higher education to the centre of discussions. Both experts opposed the governments' proposal to expand the quota system and the extension of the other backward class (OBC) reservation to well functioning quality Central University – universities. The first expert who resigned from the National Knowledge Commission was the Director of Delhi Centre for Policy Research Dr. Pratap Bhanu Mehta. He thinks that the quota politics is a politics of illusion, a system prettifying system, with which is not really possible to affect the situation of the marginalized groups (Mehta 2006). He opposes the multiplication of reservations as the quotas are challenging from the viewpoint of social justice, economical wellbeing and the development of the knowledge-based society and they make the higher education system politicized. The other expert that resigned from the National Knowledge Commission is Dr André Béteille, researcher on social inequality and Delhi University sociology professor emeritus. He opposes the adding of reservations because he sees that it is not possible to simultaneously improve both the academic quality and add quota students (Béteille 2006). Whether the politics of positive discrimination is a justified and powerful way to elevate the status of the weaker societal groups, is a widely discussed issue (Altbach 2009c; Interviewee 9, 2009). Critics of the reservation system emphasize that it has strengthened the caste differences and that without it the differences would already have disappeared and also that it ultimately does not reach the poorest citizens. In spite of all this, the reservation quotas are still seen as the best means to improve the minorities´ opportunities to participate in society, in education and in employment as they are transparent and affordable to execute and supervise. According to Ghosh (2006) the reservation quotas are still necessary in higher education, even if they are not the perfect instrument for repairing long-time discrimination. In the future a balance should be found between justice and quality. On the other hand the deactivation of the system would cause large social tensions and these kind of supporting systems are seen to make possible the survival of India.

3.7 Research

Under this title, research at the universities, the quality of research and the academic career will be discussed. Research universities are often defined as universities in which the activities of teaching and scientific research are combined. The significance of the research universities for a society's economical and social advancement, for the internationalization of science and for the knowledge society development is huge (Altbach 2009d). The research universities are an important topic of social discussions especially in those countries which have declared their desire to develop into knowledge societies (Collins & Sanyal 1995, 263). Globally there exists a relatively small amount of research universities and there are even less of them in the developing countries. There are several different models for organizing higher education and academic research but all over the world the research universities are seen as a leading and a strong type of institution of higher learning. The research intensive universities developed in Western Europe and in those North American universities, which had a British background. In the greater part of the developed countries research centres are tightly part of the universities because the interaction of students, teaching staff and researchers is seen to be of primary importance for the academic culture (Dadhich 2004). The Indian model is different.

Structurally in the Indian higher education system the college, university and research institute are created to work separately and they seldom have strong connections to each other (Centre for Study of Culture and Society 2009). The bachelor level studies are done in the affiliated colleges and the universities and research institutes function independently. After Independence it was thought that research should be done outside universities and several national, independent research institutes were created. Most of the national research institutes have originally been founded by private foundations. Usually the private foundation was actively involved in the forming stage, for example donated the estate and arranged the necessary infrastructure for the institute. As the institute normalized its activity the responsibility of financing was moved to the appropriate ministry or the University Grants Commission. The universities have concentrated on teaching and the national research institutes, founded mainly during 1950–1970 national, on research. There are a few exceptions. For example some Central Universities both teach and do research and according to some estimates in twenty percent of the universities some kind of research is done (Interviewee 3, 2009). The greater part of the countries academic researchers work at the national research institutes (Dahlman & Dutz & Goel 2007, 74).

The second theme related to research is the quality of research. The dividing of teaching and research to different institutions has according to Mehrotha (2009) been one of the most current topics of discussions of Indian higher education. There has been a great deal of criticism on the role of universities. When the making of research was moved away from the universities, the fact that teaching and research enrich each other, was ignored (Banerjee 2007; National Knowledge Commission 2006a, 4.) In this differentiated model both bachelor and master level students are left without the influence of more experienced academicians. The differentiation of bachelor, master and doctoral level studies has led to an intellectual undernourishment of the country's higher education system and to an academic decay (Ministry of Human Resources Development 2009b, 25). The weak standards of academic teaching and research are one of the largest challenges of the Indian higher education system. They have not developed since independence in the same way as in many other countries (Heitzman & Warden 1996, 366).

In addition to the differentiation of teaching and research to separate institutions, there are loads of other factors that have a debilitating effect on the quality of research. These are for example the backwardness of the scientific research methods, bureaucracy and complex rules that complicate research work, politicized recruitment, the bad wage level of researchers and the lack of accountability and financing (Sharma 2002 99–102). Academic freedom is an official policy that passes the academic system, but in reality bureaucracy and religious and ethnical issues influence everything strongly (Altbach 2009c). The positions are appointed rather on political than merit grounds and for example when hiring a Chancellor the applicants religious background can have a significance (Gayathridevi 2009). The right to stay in office leads to that academic competition and mobility is small. A promotion is more dependent on the amount of years in office than for example teaching skills or contribution to the development of a subject (Gore 1994, 153). There is a huge shortage of good and motivated teachers and researchers; no less than 20–30 percent of the lecturer- and professor appointments are vacant. The focus of the research programs is often on themes which are only locally relevant (Powar 1995, 44). The weak research capacity reflects larger institutional constraints and India has only a few research centres that have an internationally strong status (Dougherty & Herd, 2008, 19).

Several organizations that govern Indian higher education have manifested their opinion on this structural challenge. University Grants Commission wishes to promote research making at the universities and according to National Knowledge Commission (2006a 4) the universities should be made the centres of research once again. The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human

Resources Development recommends the incorporating of research and teaching and strengthening of the scientific base of the universities (Planning Commission 2006, 12). Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has manifested his desire to restore research as a part of the activity of the universities and encourages them to reserve a part of the growing investments on education for research (Gill 2008). Despite planning and talking, it is unlikely that anything will be put into practice as there are no concrete plans for change. Experts have estimated that the current model will not be altered because the change would be so large and expensive (Interviewee 1, 2009; Interviewee 3, 2009a). Altbach (2009c) sees that it is highly unlikely that India would develop internationally competitive research universities in a few decades time.

The third theme related to research is the academic career. In India higher education usually begins with a three-year bachelor degree at a college and after that continues with the master's degree at a university. Some universities have launched an "integrated program", where a student can within five years do both bachelors and masters. Usually the writing of a master's theses is not obligatory. In other words one getting a master's does not require writing of a master's thesis. In some universities it is possible to write a master's thesis, but it is not that popular. The ones that are interested in writing a thesis can participate in a so called M. Phil Program, which has spread quickly to the country's universities during the last decade (Interviewee 6, 2009c). The M. Phil Program was founded for the reason that the quality of doctoral theses suffered as the doctoral students didn't have enough experience in conducting research. Within the one-year M. Phil Program the student writes a thesis and the idea of the program is to improve research culture by exposing the student to research methodology and academic writing before the doctoral studies. The ones who participate in the M. Phil Program are usually interested in research and an academic career.

Some of the youngsters who graduate as masters from the universities pursue for doctoral studies without a masters thesis or the M. Phil Program background. A career at a research institute can also begin with a one-year orientation to research methodology, which is quite equivalent to the M. Phil Program. In the former case the doctoral students begin with the doctoral thesis during the second year. There are also exceptions from the above described alternatives. For example to one of India's most prestigious universities, Jawaharlal Nehru University, one cannot apply for doctoral studies if one has not written a masters thesis. There are also some universities where it is possible continue studying from master to doctor as a so called Direct PhD. Even though the research institutes do not generally offer lower higher education degrees, the Indian Institute of Science

Bangalore and SN Bose National Centre for Basic Science Kolkata started to educate promising bachelor level students with attention to a possible research career. Generally the best of the university graduates, who are interested a career in research, direct their eyes abroad (Indian Academy of Sciences 1994). This is why approximately half of the post-graduate programs of the elite universities accept as poorly educated students from lower quality institutions. The quality of the doctoral theses is controlled in very different ways at different institutions. From one institution it is possible to get a doctoral degree in one and half year when it can take up to five years or even longer to graduate from other institutions (Agarwal 2009, 279).

University Grants Commission and the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research are responsible for the National Eligibility Test at the national level. With the help of this test it is decided who gets the governments Junior Research Fellowship – grant, with the help of which it is possible to study at a research institute or a university. The research institutes are often built so that the full-time doctoral students both study and live on campus (Interviewee 5, 2009). The government grant barely covers these expenses. It has been estimated that approximately 25–30 percent of the doctoral students are not really interested in doing research (Interviewee 8, 2009). Some apply for doctoral studies because they cannot get the job they want elsewhere. Another motivation is based on financial security that government grants give while others are motivated by the social status that a doctoral degree gives (Interviewee 5, 2009). If a person who gets a doctoral degree starts working at a university as a lecturer or assistant professor, his or her tasks consist largely of teaching. If the workplace is a research institute, conducting research is generally the main task. Approximately 35 percent of the academicians working full-time at the colleges and universities have a doctoral degree (Altbach, 2009c). Generally their wages are modest, but it enables a middle-class lifestyle. The employment is often full-time and permanent. The lack of skilful research and knowledge producers is evident as a low amount of production of high-quality research. India lacks almost entirely a post-doctoral culture, where central research is done by doctors (Indian Academy of Sciences, 1994).

4 Ending

India is a country of contrasts. Life in the countryside can be extremely traditional and in the big cities people live like in any of the world's metropolises. Parts of India develop fast, but at the same time the country has for example the world's largest amount of elementary school dropouts. India's

economic growth has been rapid, especially after the opening up of the economy in 1991. The growing importance of the knowledge based society or economy has led to that the populations´ skills, higher education and the meaning of knowledge production are considered all over the world. Lately higher education has been upraised as a political priority in India as it is considered as an important motor of development. Higher education is seen as something that both strengthen the knowledge, skills and values of the people and as an instrument of social change. Education and especially higher education are seen to be even more central means to enhance a person's socioeconomic status. This is why discussions on positive discrimination, reservation and quotas are politically extremely current. One of the most remarkable future challenges of Indian higher education is how to enhance the quality of education without sacrificing equality.

Some has been written on the history and current state of Indian higher education, often with a critical tone. An important challenge for the development of modern higher education was the shifting languages from Sanskrit to English. When "good citizens" were educated before, is the current discourse to "educate youngsters so that their skills respond to the needs of the market". The Indian higher education system is one of the largest in the world, but it is mostly criticized everywhere. The higher education system has been renewed since the first Five Year Plan, but the execution of the proposed reforms has failed. In addition to the history of the higher education system, this report viewed its administration, politics, structure and current topics of discussion. Seven different themes arose as the most current topics of Indian higher education. They are financing, expansion, quality, commercialism, internationalization, equality and research. According to experts Indian higher education is a theme that has not been researched nearly enough. The report at hand opens possibilities to continue further with any of the topics. For example the huge and complex growth of private higher education is an issue which it would be of primary importance to understand. The most current themes of Indian higher education are commercialism and internationalization ambitions.

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