FOUNDATION DAY LECTURE 2018

On Dilemmas in Reforming Higher Education in India

by

Jandhyala BG Tilak

Distinguished Professor, Council for Social Development
Former Vice Chancellor, National University of
Educational Planning and Administration

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University
Prof. G.Ram Reddy Marg, Road No. 46,
Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad (TS) 500 033

About Dr.BRAOU

The University, initially known as Andhra Pradesh Open University, was set up on 26th August 1982 through an Act of the A.P. State Legislature (APOU Act 1982). Subsequently the University was renamed as Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Open University on 26th October, 1991. The establishment of this University, the first of its kind in India, heralded and era of affirmative action on the part of the Government of Andhra Pradesh to provide opportunities of higher education to all sections of society to meet the changing individual and social needs. The University is providing services to the student community through a wide network of 213 study centres spread across both Telangana & Andhra Pradesh States, including 23 Regional Co-ordination centres and 11 centres exclusively meant for women students. Even prison inmates under life sentence also enrol themselves as students and pursue education through exclusive study centres at Central Prison – Cherlapally, Warangal, Rajahmundry, Visakhapatnam, Kadapa and Nellore. In all, the University offers Certificate, UG, PG Diploma and PG Degree and Research programmes including various Professional programmes. It has an enrolment of 1,42,436 in 2017-18.

FOUNDATION LECTURE

2018

On Dilemmas in Reforming Higher Education in India

by

Jandhyala BG Tilak

Distinguished Professor, Council for Social Development
Former Vice Chancellor, National University of Educational Planning andAdministration

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University
Prof. G.Ram Reddy Marg, Road No. 46,
Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad (TS) 500 033

Dilemmas in Reforming Higher Education in India

Jandhyala BG Tilak

I feel it a privilege to deliver this year's Foundation Day lecture of Dr B R Ambedkar Open University. I feel humbled to join the galaxy of illustrious speakers who delivered the Foundation Day lecture on the earlier occasions, who include eminent personalities like Professor Ram Takwale, Professor A M Khusro, Professor R V R Chandrasekhar Rao and many more. I thank the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor Professor Seetha Rama Rao for giving me this special privilege.

It is always a matter of pleasure to visit Hyderabad, an ever vibrant city. The pleasure is doubled when the visit is to this University, the first university of its kind in India. I had the opportunity of visiting this university earlier some 14 years ago, as a member of the high power committee constituted by the Government of the (then United) Andhra Pradesh, on rationalisation of staffing pattern in the universities in the state in 2004-05. At that time itself, I and other members of the Committee were impressed by the achievements made by the university. Having been established in 1982 by the visionary the late Dr G Ram Reddy, this university is today 36 years old. Three and half decades of fruitful years mean a long period with rich experience and great achievements. I learn that strong foundations were laid by the first Vice Chancellor Professor G Ram Reddy, the chief architect of distance education in India, whom I had the privilege knowing and interacting with on several issues relating to higher education, when he was in Delhi with the Indira Gandhi National Open University as its founding Vice Chancellor and later with the University Grants Commission as its Chairman. His passion and

commitment for and the visionary approach he had for higher education are well known. I also learn that the vice chancellors who succeeded him developed the university further, taking advantage of the firm foundations laid by Professor Ram Reddy.

Foundation Day is also an occasion to review the rich experience of the past, look into the future and make future plans to fully realise the objectives with which the institution was started. I am glad to learn about the remarkable achievements of the University in many fields. Achievements of the university mean obviously achievements of the faculty and the students. So congratulations to the Vice Chancellor, the entire faculty, students, administration and all of you. Let me take this occasion to wish a glorious future for the University.

***

Universities form the most important vital organs of a nation. India is on the path of all-round progress. 'The sleeping elephant is now up and running', as described by the Prime Minister in the 72nd Independence day address to the nation. India aims at becoming an advanced country, going much beyond becoming an East Asian tiger; it is already becoming a five-trillion dollar economy; it wants to emerge out of the 'developing economy' syndrome, achieving a sustainable and high rate of economic growth -- may be in double digits, reducing poverty and inequalities to minimum levels. It wants to be described as "Incredible India." It wants to play a major role not only at regional level, but also at global level; and there are many more dreams. Our universities and higher education system as a whole have an important role in realising these dreams. Though we ignored this aspect for a long period, we are recognising nowadays how important it is to have a strong, vibrant and wide- spread higher education system for the nation as a whole to prosper.

But our universities are facing daunting challenges from within -- forces from within the institutions, from outside within the country, and from global forces. The system needs major and somewhat pressing, if not emergency reforms. At the same time, we are confronted with a variety of dilemmas in reforming higher education. I have chosen to speak today on this theme "On Dilemmas in Reforming Higher Education in India" and I hope this will be a relevant theme for today's occasion.

At the outset, I request for your indulgence, as I draw for this lecture, heavily from my earlier writings. So I request you to be considerate, if you do not find much new in this lecture today. I also request you to bear with me, as I focus in this lecture mostly on general higher education, not on open and distance education, on which I have not done much work, though I recognise that a theme related to open and distance higher education would be more appropriate for this occasion. In fact, I would feel highly diffident, if I were to speak about open and distance education to the learned audience here. However, I venture to make a few references to the open universities in the lecture.

Let me first note that there are quite a few aspects of higher education in India that we can celebrate with pride.

First, the quantitative expansion. There has been a veritable explosion in numbers. From a small base of about 20 universities and a couple of lakhs of students, the system has grown to an enormous size with nearly 900 universities and 42 thousand colleges, with something like 35 million students. The student population in India is larger than the total population of many countries in the world. With such a large network of institutions, Indian system became the second largest higher education system in the world, second only to China. It is larger than the United States' system which used to be bigger than India's. The Indian higher system is about to enter the phase of massification of higher education. The

open universities have also an important share in this growth and in the march towards massification. We have the world's largest open university in the Indira Gandhi National Open University with an enrolment of about 35 lakh students. There are, as on 2015-16, as many as 15 open universities and 118 dual mode universities including the University of Delhi the first university in the country to start a school of correspondence courses in 1962. In 2010, according to UGC, there were 256 distance education institutions of higher education in the country. Open and distance education modes account for about one-tenth of the total student enrolment in higher education, which is rapidly rising.

The second largest system of higher education is able to ensure self-sufficiency in manpower requirements of every sector of the country. It helped in building the third largest reservoir of scientific and technical manpower in the world, and nowadays even to 'export' manpower to the west, without worrying anymore about it as brain drain. Today we proudly say that the Silicon Valley in the US is critically dependent upon the graduates of Indian higher education system. It is an important accomplishment, as still many countries that became independent almost at the same time as India, are struggling with serious shortage of manpower, and are critically dependent upon foreign manpower not only for advanced research and development, but also for preparing school text books to national policies and programmes and their implementation.

Second, there has been significant improvement in equity in higher education. Compared to the extremely restrictive higher education that we had at the time of independence, Indian higher education system is fairly democratised, with an increasingly large number of socially backward sections of the youth population entering into higher education. About one-third of the student population in higher education belongs to socially backward strata; and about half the total are women, meaning a fair degree of gender parity. A sizeable and increasing numbers of first generation learners

are seen nowadays in the university corridors. Again, the open and distance education system must be contributing significantly to this aspect, as one of its very core objectives is to cater to the socioeconomic backward strata of the society, who cannot afford to go to formal education for various reasons.

Third, on the front of quality and excellence, we could prove to ourselves and to the others, that a developing country can establish some high quality institutions of higher education, when we established quite a few Indian Institutes of Technology, Indian Institutes of Management, central universities etc. We also developed a few centres of excellence in state and central universities and even in colleges. We could also develop a good network of high quality research institutions in some specialised advanced areas of science and technology and also in humanities and social sciences. This is also not a mean achievement for a developing country.

The most important aspect relating to our higher education is its contribution to many socio-economic, cultural, political and technological spheres of development in the country. The high rate of economic growth that we could achieve in the recent years can at least be partly attributable to higher education. As increasing research evidence shows, it is not only school education, but also higher education that is related significantly to reduction in inequalities, poverty and improvement in human development and overall social progress. The widespread higher education with a high degree of student diversity also helped in the strengthening of democracy and ensuring of political stability. Despite several weaknesses of our democracy, at least it is a smoothly functioning democracy with wide participation of people. This is also clearly evident, as we note many countries with poor higher education systems in the neighbouring Asia and also in sub- Saharan Africa suffering from a high degree of political instability, frequent bloody coups, and weakened democracy. Higher education and research also has had a big role in technological advances we made in

several fields, including in medicine and space research - satellites and the proposed programme of Chandrayan. In short, the contribution of higher education to various facets of national development is enormous.

There may be many more plus points of our higher education system that we can be proud of.

But at the same time problems also galore.

Even though the higher education system has expanded very rapidly in terms of absolute numbers, we have only one-fourth of our youth (as a portion of the age group 18-23) are enrolled in colleges and universities, including in open and distance education. This 25 per cent enrolment ratio is regarded to be not adequate for high economic growth that we aim at. Available research has shown that at least a threshold level of 40 percent enrolment ratio is necessary to step into the next stage of economic growth -- 'take-off' stage in Walt Whitman Rostow's classic stages of economic growth. Such a threshold level is important particularly to ensure a sustainable level. I stated earlier that we are about to enter the phase of massification of higher education. But a system is said to have entered the phase of massification, if the enrolment ratio is about 40 per cent. So still we have a long way, but with rapid growth in enrolments and enrolment ratio, with the open and distance education playing its own role, the long way can be made a little short.

Second, while we have made remarkable improvement over the years in reducing inequalities in participation in higher education, as the enrolment in higher education suggest, between different social groups of population, between scheduled and non-scheduled population and between men and women. But rural-urban inequalities and inequalities between different regions and states in higher education are high and the improvement in such inequalities is modest. More strikingly, inequalities between the rich and the

poor have been the highest and widened further over the years in their participation in higher education. Even open and distance education institutions are found to be meeting the needs of the urban and middle and upper strata of the society, and not necessarily the poorest as the costs of open and distance education are also high and rising, though they are expected to be relatively less than the costs of attending regular system. All this should be a matter of serious concern.

Third, it is widely held that the quality and standards in higher education in India in general, are deplorably low and falling. There are very few institutions of high quality; and they have no effect on the rest of the system. The poor quality of our higher education is reflected in rising graduate unemployment -- open and under employment. Only about 25-30 per cent of our graduates are reported to be employable. Hardly one-fourth to one-third of the institutions accredited by the NAAC received A-grade. The research output of our universities is extremely small. The situation in case of open universities is not much different. Further, it is also being stated that after all, not a single university institution in the country can be described as a world class university; or not even one out of our 900 universities figures in the top 100 or 200 universities in the global university rankings, though I am aware of the fact that global/ regional university rankings have their own weaknesses. Small countries like Singapore or Sweden or developing countries like China have a good number of world class universities, not to speak of the USA and other advanced countries.

The sad state of higher education in the country is further depressing, as it faces daunting challenges. Rather the system is increasingly associated with a few detrimental features. A prominent one is the teacher shortage. The entire higher education system in the country, with no exception, faces a severe degree of shortage of teachers. It is reported that while the new central universities that are being set up since the past decade or so - in Haryana,

Gujarat, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Jammu and Kashmir and Bihar - are functioning with around 52 per cent of the sanctioned faculty strength, even some of the older ones, such as Allahabad University and Delhi University, have vacancies of 64.4 per cent and 47.7 per cent respectively. Overall, the total vacancy in new central universities is nearly 48 per cent; the older universities are marginally better off with a vacancy rate of 33 per cent. Even the Indian Institutes of Technology, all 23 put together, suffer from a vacancy of 34 per cent. It is not only the new IITs, but also old and established ones like those in Mumbai, Kharagpur and Kanpur are operating with a vacancy of 25 to 45 percent. Open universities are also no exception to this. They are also functioning with about 50 per cent vacancy rate. No need to speak about the problem in the colleges. A large number of institutions are functioning with, what I describe as 'para teachers' - under qualified, under paid teachers with poor service conditions; and no surprise, they are under performing.

Second, almost all our higher education institutions suffer from a high degree of inadequacy of funds, as the public budgets begin to shrink. Resource scarcity with the higher education sector can be explained partly in terms of government's fiscal capacity, but more importantly in terms of government's unwillingness to spend on higher education, as the government tends to believe that better the higher education system is left to fund on its own through student fees, loans, and increased involvement of corporate/private sector.

This is evident from the spiraling growth of private universities and colleges in the country. Compared to almost zero private universities and self-financing colleges until the late 1980s, as of 2017, we have 279 private universities; and 64 per cent of the colleges are private self-financing (unaided) colleges. These private institutions account for about two-thirds of the enrolments in general higher education and four-fifths of enrolments in professional and

technical education. Even in case of open universities, we already have one private university (in Kolkata established in 2014). Given the overall pro-private environment, perhaps many more may come up in the near future! In all, the relative size of private sector in higher education in India is probably the largest in the world and it tends to displace the public sector altogether. More importantly, the growth of the private sector has been highly unregulated. The unregulated expansion has its own effects on quality, equity and even access to higher education, the most important outcomes being vulgar commercialisation of higher education and loss of public good character of higher education.

The whole system of higher education is also characterised by ineffective governance. We have as many as sixteen regulating bodies in higher education, with no coordination among them, often confusing the higher education institutions. Both the National Knowledge Commission and also Yashpal Committee, have highlighted this. Though the two committees had different perspectives, they felt that the system is too much regulated and least governed. At the same time, we note that the expansion both in public and more importantly private sector has been unregulated. The regulating institutions are rarely able to make the universities and colleges to strictly adhere to the norms made, and other stipulations, directions and regulations, and if they could, rarely without being contested in the courts in the first place. This is particularly the case with private institutions.

Lastly, the higher education system in India is characterised by a conspicuous absence of a coherent long term policy and by poor or no planning. The system is managed by executive orders, and quick fix solutions. Since such moves are not seriously thought over from a long term and holistic perspective, often we find frequent ∩ turns and even zig-zag turns. Examples of the recent past include scrapping and reintroduction of National Eligibility

Test (NET), introduction and scrapping of four year degree programme (in the University of Delhi), moves and announcements regarding common entrance tests, programmes of open universities, including recognition - de-recognition – re-recognition of degrees offered through open and distance education mode, announcements on the validity of M.Phil and Ph.D. courses in these institutions, questions on the status of teachers in open universities, etc. They add a lot of confusion to every one – to the students, the parents, the teachers, the administrators, the employers and the entire society. I do not immediately add to this list more recent moves such as announcement of scrapping of the use of Academic Performance Indicators and their scores, granting of graded autonomy, according the status of institution of eminence (including to the institutions yet to be set up), setting up of Higher Education Commission in India in place of the University Grants Commission, relocating the funding responsibilities from the UGC to the Ministry of Human Resource Development, setting up of Higher Education Finance Agency (with an added feature of loans to public and private institutions), halting recruitment of teachers, the Rashtriya Uchhatara Shiksha Abhiyan, etc. We have to wait and see what shape and turn they take; some of them are in too preliminary stage. The lack of clear and coherent policy approach also gave scope for judicial intervention and not less frequently to contradictory judgements by the judiciary, whether it relates to private institutions, minority status, fees, admissions, reservations, or validity of degrees offered by the open universities on distance mode, etc.

All this suggests that the system needs reforms, badly and urgently, and well-thought-out reforms. But we face serious dilemmas in reforming higher education. I find that some dilemmas are redundant and some need a little bold thinking - drawing from traditional wisdom and contemporary world experience. I refer to these two types of dilemmas.

First, the redundant dilemmas. Policy makers often pose higher education against school education, particularly elementary education, arguing that given the Constitutional compulsions of universalisation of elementary education, higher education cannot be given any priority. Constrained by resources, it is also argued that developing countries like India cannot afford to, and hence should not, spend on higher education, as if we have to choose one of the two, and not both. I strongly feel that it is a misconceived dichotomy, as such a view does not recognise the strong inter-dependent relationship between elementary, secondary and higher education. After all, a country cannot have a strong higher education edifice built on a weak school education base, and vice versa; it is higher education that provides teachers, administrators, policy makers and planners for school education, and school education provides students to higher education.

A second misconceived dichotomy is quality versus quantity, or in higher education excellence versus equity. While some research (by Eric Hanushek and others in US on school education) has shown that quality of education determines the nation's economic growth, the research is not conclusive: research has also shown that even quantity has a good and significant effect on economic growth. Of course, a threshold level of quality and quantity are important. Both should at least be at meaningful and acceptable levels. In the words of Pranab Bardhan, education is both efficient and equitable at the same time. Efficiency in education is necessarily inclusive of equity. If a school is said to be known for excellence, but its doors are closed for the economically weaker sections, then there is a problem with our understanding of the very concept of 'efficiency' or 'excellence' in education.

In the same context, a dilemma is also posed between having more elite institutions or mass institutions. Again I feel that the dilemma is unwarranted; as both elite and mass institutions are necessary for national development. Elite institutions have an

important role in advancing knowledge frontiers; and mass institutions ensure greater diversity of student population in higher education and help in democratisation of the society, with raising level of participation of the people in national development activities. We need a careful balance between the size of elite system and the mass system. Even in systems of mass higher education (massification takes place), elite institutions not only exist, but also thrive. Even erstwhile communist countries like Russian Federation and China feel the need to have a few world class universities, along with a large system of mass institutions. However, as a bottom line, it is important that both offer good quality education that impart good knowledge, values, skills and competencies, and produce graduates who are employable and at the same time good citizens with values and character. Secondly, unfortunately we do not have much horizontal relationship between the elite and mass institutions, or vertical relationships between these institutions and others particularly the colleges, resulting in no effect of these high quality institutions on the overall quality of higher education in the country. The needed relationships have to be carefully forged. If the growth is steady and carefully planned, massification of higher education can also ensure high quality. Contrary to general misperceptions, even open and distance education models can offer high quality education. The Open University in UK, and even some of the material developed by Indira Gandhi National Open University demonstrate the potential of providing high quality programmes. Whether it is open or regular, or mass or elite, every university must necessarily strive for high quality. There is no meaning of producing cheap quality graduates, who are not useful either to the labour market or to the society at large.

Third, often questions are raised on having national considerations or global interests in the development of higher education. I feel that this is also a misconceived contrast at least in

the present context of the 21st century, where almost all societies are increasingly globalised - socially, culturally, educationally and economically. Today, higher education has to prepare youth not only for national development but also for global citizenship. Often, in practice, one may not normally find much conflict between national values and global considerations. One may have to carefully balance the two, in case of any conflicts between the two. National interests would serve better, if a global world order is ensured and vice versa. We may have to define national interest to include global interests; and global interests can go beyond, but not against national interests.

Fourth, academia as well as governments often refer to the issue of autonomy versus regulation. Academic institutions do require autonomy. As the Education Commission (1964-66) highlighted, only academic freedom to the teachers can help develop an intellectual climate in our country that can further go a long way in achieving educational excellence. It is not just 60 universities, a large number, if not all, higher education institutions require a high degree of academic autonomy. But we also need regulation; after all, a system which is unregulated will be chaotic. Complete autonomy to the private institutes may be dangerous; they are already *de facto* completely autonomous; UGC or others are not able to ensure adherence to many of their regulations in those institutions. Higher education systems require both autonomy and regulation. Of course, we need to define the degrees of autonomy and limits for regulation. As a baseline rule, all universities require a fair degree of functional autonomy to enable them to generate human capital for the knowledge era, as former President of India Dr A P J Abdul Kalam stated, and also to produce citizens of great character and values. Autonomy with accountability is the common cannon. So appropriate mechanisms of accountability need to be put in place, along with mechanisms of ensuring autonomy. While state has to regulate, it should desist from intervention. I feel

that most academic institutions require nearly full autonomy in academic aspects; they need a fairly high degree of administrative autonomy, and a somewhat less autonomy in case of financial aspects (such as in fixation of student fees, and payment of salaries). This holds true for open universities and distance education institutions as well.

Now the second type of dilemmas, which are somewhat valid.

Nowadays policy makers in higher education in India and in many other countries, particularly countries in transition, face newfangled dilemmas, which are not completely new, but are taking new shapes and dimensions. I may refer to one or two.

First major dilemma many face in higher education is the role of the State versus markets, or public or private higher education. With the origins in the neo-liberal policies that most countries, with very few exceptions, seemed to have adopted in recent years, along with declining fiscal capacity of the state and/or increasing unwillingness on the part of the state to accord due priority to higher education, the rise and growth of private sector in higher education has become an important issue of major concern in many societies. The dilemma for the state is to effectively take charge of higher education, which has been the traditional wisdom for a long time, or to leave it to the markets. The choice becomes tougher, as the markets are emerging stronger and stronger and becoming increasingly powerful, while state is becoming weaker and weaker (not to be confused with 'soft' state, *a la* Gunnar Myrdal) and highly vulnerable. But markets in general are imperfect everywhere; they are more imperfect in developing countries, as Joseph Stiglitz opined; and education markets are more imperfect; and education markets in developing countries are most imperfect. After all, market failures in areas such as education are well known. Education markets do not fit into classical text book theories on economics of (perfect) competition and markets. Education markets

are actually becoming cheap and corrupt 'Education Bazars' to use the phrase of David Bok, not only in developing countries like India, but also in advanced countries. Education markets have also entered open and distance education. 'Distance Learning Markets' are emerging strongly with several private key 'vendors' such as 'Edukart' and 'Schoolguru' taking the lead [Distance Learning Market in India 2016-2020, by technavio)].

A related dilemma refers to the methods of financing higher education. State financing out of general tax revenues has been the most common feature in higher education across the world. However, for obvious reasons, many countries tend to rely in varying degrees, on other methods of financing, generally known as cost recovery measures, particularly student fees and student loans, apart from financing by the corporate/private sector. So the dilemma the state faces is fees and loans or taxes. Maureen Woodhall puts the question as: grants, loans or taxes? Many raise the question in a different way: who should pay - people or government? I say that it is not people versus government: it is people to the government or people to education institutions. In either case people have to pay. They have to pay as citizens, higher levels of taxes if state is to continue to finance higher education, or they should pay as students, high level of fees and/or rely on student loans. While generally a mix is adopted, the question remains whether the mix should slowly tilt towards fees/loans or towards taxes. In the literature there are strong and valid reasons on both sides. The principle of taxation relies on Jean-Jacques Rousseau's moral philosophy of social contract: the present generation pays taxes for the benefit of future generation and the rich pay for larger society; while the principle underlying fees and loans is: one who benefits should pay. (In case of fees, generally the parents pay, while in case of loans, student her/himself pays for her/his education, as if education is a private individual good.) I feel that in this case, the 'beneficiary' of education itself is very narrowly identified, as if the

students and/or her/his family as the only beneficiary, forgetting the long held view that the whole society is the beneficiary of education. Taxation is, or have immense potential to be, efficient and equitable than any other measures like fees and loans. While there is a strong and sound rationale for taxation against other methods of financing of higher education, practical and immediate compulsions put the policy makers in a big conundrum, forcing them to choose not the best option from a long term point of view. With the government's unwillingness to finance higher education adequately, universities also feel compelled to raise resources through student fees. But the limits to raise fees should be understood. Quite a few years ago, Justice Dr Punnayya Committee has suggested that the fees can be raised to about 20 per cent of the costs of higher education institutions. It is not desirable to raise the fee levels beyond this proportion, even if it is feasible, as it would adversely affect the access of weaker sections to higher education. I wish all universities, including open universities recognise this.

I wish to close the lecture by referring to a couple of major dilemmas in planning university development.

Traditionally universities in India (from the ancient to the modern period) and in other countries have been comprehensive in nature and scope. BY 'comprehensive' I mean, a university offering teaching and research programmes in a large number of disciplines of study - humanities, arts, liberal arts, social sciences, sciences, medicine, law, engineering, technology etc., and not just one or two areas of study. It is only recently, particularly in India, single discipline based universities and university level institutions have come up, in the name of institutions deemed to be universities, in large numbers. Today we have universities exclusively meant for each discipline, not only for engineering and technology, but also for law, defence, petroleum, forensic sciences, education, even economics, for each language, and so on. Such single faculty

based universities are based on a truncated and fragmented approach to development of higher education; and they do not contribute to knowledge development, as Yashpal Committee has argued strongly, as much as comprehensive universities do, which provide opportunities for interactions among students and faculty from different disciplines and scope for cross-pollination of ideas. Universities that focus on engineering and technology or management, tend to refuse to recognise the loss of not having humanities and social sciences, liberal arts, etc., in producing all-round personalities so important for the development of a humane society, as Martha Nussbaum stated. According to critics like Amrik Singh and André Beteillé, these single discipline based institutions are not universities by any definition.

Second, good universities are also expected to be large and diverse ones in terms of enrolments, faculty, infrastructure and other facilities. Creative, imaginative and innovative thinking takes place in large open environments. Someone said jokingly, the level of thinking of people is conditioned by the height of ceiling of the roof of the room in which they live; or one can search for solutions out of box, only if they are placed out of the box-size environment. Large universities also provide scope for students and faculty to come together from various socio, cultural, economic and regional -- including beyond national borders -- backgrounds, providing a vibrant environment of learning of different cultures and how to live with people of different religions and cultures. Our ancient Nalanda University is an excellent example in this case. In the contemporary period, on average, the size of top 50 universities in global rankings, is around 25 thousand students living in a single campus. It is also reported that when China is planning for setting up new universities, it is planning for campuses that accommodate something like 70-80 thousand students to study in campus along with a large number of teachers. It is not only in terms of economies of scale, but also in terms of intellectual benefits, such large and

diverse universities perform much better than small universities with least diverse groups of students and faculty.

Third, many top universities in the world are both teaching and research universities offering undergraduate and graduate programmes. But in our case, all under graduate education is located in colleges, and many universities are devoted to teaching at post graduate level, and very few focus on research. As Yashpal Committee lamented this again reflects a disintegrated approach to planning higher education in the country. We need to think of a different model of university development in India.

Lastly, our whole approach to higher education development has to be grounded in the public good philosophy of higher education. Higher education is a public good that produces a variety of externalities that are widely recognised. In a limited sense, economists explained that productivity of even lower educated people would be better in high human capital environment (T W Schultz), mainly because of external effects of higher education (Robert Lucas). But the externalities are not just economic, in terms of productivity and wages. There are social, economic, political, cultural, dynamic and technological, externalities. They are also not confined to the boundaries of nations; hence, as Joseph Stiglitz and also the UNESCO observed, higher education and research are global public goods. Because of this very special characteristic feature, higher education has to be seen differently, requiring an approach distinct from other normal goods and services, and a high and special priority has to be accorded to it.

All these are not new. We can easily learn from our own experience of the past and the thinking of the Indian visionaries. The ancient universities of Nalanda and Takshashila are excellent examples embodying all these features. Even in modern India, philosophers and visionaries like Rabindranath Tagore or Madan Mohan Malaviya believed in such a model of university development. For example, there are four fundamental principles

in Tagore's educational philosophy; naturalism, humanism, internationalism and idealism. According to Tagore's perspective (as summed up by Manoranjan Mohanty recently in a lecture), all levels of education -- primary to higher (in higher education under graduate, post graduate and research) levels are important; all teachers teach at every level and are given equal status and respect; every aspect of life should form a discipline of study and all disciplines are inter-connected; indigenous knowledge is important, but knowledge should be sought from traditions, history and contemporary period from all over the world; and education includes living, learning, teaching and working - all together forming a fulsome experience interacting with each other dimension. Viswa Bharati aimed at producing *viswa manav* - universal citizen with highest level of human values. I feel that every university in India should aim at reaching these lofty and noble ideals.

With this in mind, we need to develop a long term vision and plan for development of higher education in India with liberal state financing. After all, the best higher education systems are those that were setup by the state, managed by the state and funded by the state; exceptions are few.

Thank you.

Professor Jandhyala B.G. Tilak

Professor Jandhyala B.G. Tilak, Former Professor and Vice-chancellor at National University of Educational Planning and Administration, is currently Distinguished Professor at the Council for Social Development, New Delhi. MA in Economics (gold medallist) from Andhra University) and Ph.D. in Economics of Education from Delhi School of Economics, Dr Tilak taught, besides in NIEPA, in the University of Delhi, the Indian Institute of Education, and as a Visiting Professor, at Centre for International Cooperation in Education, Hiroshima University, Virginia University, and Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. Prof Tilak was also on the research staff of the World Bank, and has been a consultant to many national and international bodies. In all Dr Tilak had 42 years of teaching/research experience.

Prof. Tilak has been felicitated with many awards and honours such as the prestigious Swami Pranavananda Saraswati National Award of the UGC in Education for his outstanding scholarly research (1999), Dr. Malcolm Adiseshiah Award for distinguished research contributions to development studies (2003), Inspirational Teacher of the Year Global Education Award 2012, and Devang Mehta Award for outstanding conurbations to education (2015). Among many other honours, he had the privilege of delivering a keynote address in a meeting of the Noble laureates in Barcelona in 2005.

Prof Tilak has authored/ edited over a dozen books and about 300 papers in the area of economics of education and development studies. His latest books are Higher Education, Public Good and Markets (Routledge, 2018), Dilemmas in Reforming Higher Education in India (Orient BlackSwan 2018), Education and Development (Academic Foundation 2018) in press, and Education and Development in India: Critical Issues in Public Policy (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

Prof Tilak served as the Editor of Journal of Educational Planning and Administration for 27 years and is on the editorial board of several professional journals. He also served as the President of the Comparative Education Society of India, and is on the Board of Comparative Education Society of Asia. Dr Tilak served on several committees on education and related issues constituted by the Govt of India, UGC, Planning Commission, State Governments (Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Kerala etc.), and many other national and international bodies.

"We may forgo material benefits of civilization, but we cannot forgo our right and opportunity to reap the benefits of the highest education to the fullest extent....."

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University

Prof. G. Ram Reddy Marg, Road No.46, Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad-500 033