



## Democratization of Education in India with Special Reference to Higher Education

**Dr. Sreeparna Bhattacharjee<sup>1\*</sup> & Priya Mondal<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, Dept. of Education, Assam University, Silchar; Teaching Experience:12 Years

<sup>2</sup>Research scholar (M.Phil)

### ABSTRACT

The higher education system is very essential to the country's entire growth, including industrial, social, and economic development. India's higher education system is the world's third largest and the word "democracy" comes from two Greek words: "demos" (meaning "people") and "kratos" (meaning "power"). As a result, we might argue that democracy refers to the people's power. The term "democracy" is no longer limited to a specific definition of government, social structure, or economic situation; rather, it is now seen as a way of life. Education and Democracy are intimately connected. To make education more effective, meaningful, relevant, and beneficial, democratic values are implemented. Individuals, on the other hand, can only learn about human rights and responsibilities through education. As a result, we might conclude that democracy and education are mutually dependent. Decentralization of power and education go hand in hand in a country like India. The huge demographic extend calls for this division whereby we can have better excess and quality education. The huge population brings about inequality in terms of gender, caste and religion. The dominance of majority over minority is often felt in a country like India. Thus, when government use approaches like decentralization of education a better education system with better access and quality is aimed and ensured. This approach to education brings vertical development in society. Although much more is yet to achieve to bring out the best results in decentralization of education. This study investigates how the Government, policymakers, local community members, teachers, and families can all play a major part in making decentralization of education a success. We need to improve teaching pedagogy and establish connections between research and teaching to strengthen the higher education system. This is important not only for economic progress, but also for social cohesion and the empowerment of the country's future. This paper also discussed the current status of higher education in India as well as the issues that it faces.

**Keywords:** Democratization, Democratization Of Education, Higher Education, Need of Higher Education, Higher education system.

**Citation:** Dr. Sreeparna Bhattacharjee & Priya Mondal (2022). Democratization of Education in India with Special Reference to Higher Education. *International Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Studies*, 4(3), 45-49.

### INTRODUCTION

The term "democracy" is derived from two Greek words "demos" which means 'the people' and "kratos" which means 'power'. So, we can say that democracy refers to the power of the people. The concept of democracy is no longer limited to a narrow meaning of government or social structure or economic condition, rather it is now visualized as a way of life. The modern concept of Democracy propounded by Abraham Lincoln implies that ruling power rests with the people without any discrimination based on caste, creed, colour or sex. It is based on certain basic principles. But most of the countries including India, adopted democracy as the guiding principle of political ideology. Democracy, according to Abraham Lincoln, is a "system of government of the people, by the people, and for the people." People are the core ingredient in all development, regardless of its form, and the emphasis of all development is fundamental to concepts such as individual dignity, liberty, equality, and fraternity[1].

Democracy has undergone several changes over the centuries. In modern times, the concept of democracy has acquired a much wider ideas and assumed new meanings. It is now not only used for a specific form of social, economic or political control but also to denote a certain way of life characterised by respect for the dignity of the individual regardless of their caste or economic background, encouragement of the uniqueness or individual differences in each human beings, development of progressive ideas etc.

Democracy has a very close relationship with Education. The principles of democracy like liberty, equality, fraternity etc, deeply influence education. Simultaneously, education at various stages also motivates and promotes a democratic way of life. Democratic values are applied to education to make it more effective, meaningful, relevant and useful. But it is only through education that the individuals acquire knowledge about human rights and duties. Therefore, we can say that democracy and education are interdependent on each other. Democracy in order to be a reality and a way

of life, has to be introduced from the very beginning of education and its values should be practised in schools and colleges.

### **Democratization of education in India**

Democracy is praised in the Rig Veda in India. Democracy has taken many shapes throughout history. "The end of democracy is the good life for the individual," said Jawaharlal Nehru. Democratization of education includes aspects like universalisation of education, freedom of choice of subjects/courses, freedom of creativity to students as well as the teachers, social security, easy access to any level of education, and many more measures that ultimately lead to better educational opportunities without any discrimination and sets free the potentials of all those individuals involved in the educational system or institutes. It also gives the students, teachers, parents and the community as a whole, the liberty to exchange ideas, equal access of opportunities to all, and freedom to express oneself, in order to achieve the need of the rapidly developing society. Often, when we talk about freedom in educational institutions, it is usually considered or misconceptualised as contrary to discipline. Discipline in an educational institution is closely related to the behaviour of both the teachers and students whereas freedom can be achieved only when one follows disciplined behaviour, orderliness and good conduct which is laid down through education. Freedom is a form of self discipline which is essential for democratic living. Similarly, equality and equal access to educational opportunities is essential to achieve democracy in education. It is so because each individual differs from each other and everyone is born with a potential to achieve excellence in one field or the other. An individual grow and develop with experiences which vary from person to person. Hence emphasis should be laid on quantitative equality of education irrespective of one's caste, creed, and cultural, social and economic background. In this matter, students, teachers, parents and even non-teaching staff should have sympathy, respect, understanding and fellow feeling towards each other. Fraternity has a fundamental significance in education. All members of the society are given the freedom to be an active participant in an educational institution, hence, cooperation as a principle of democracy has to be utilized in education in all its aspects. Students, teachers, parents etc should be cooperative. Especially the students and teachers must be given training on how to plan and work with others or in a group, how to promote team spirit and how to acquire the skills required for group activities. Education is a joint responsibility shared by all involved in the system in their own way and according to their own capacity[2].

Democratization of education in India or for that matter, in any other country is important because it ultimately relates and leads to democratization of society. It is so because all the values and principles which form the meaning of democracy are learnt through education. Thus, education is considered as one of the most powerful instruments of social change and through which ignorance, indifference, and narrow mindedness of human can be removed. It gives new direction for change and development, with new hope and aspiration. It also helps in the dissemination of new knowledge and experience for new invention and creation for the society. Both education and democracy are closely related as both are interdependent on each other. Democracy wouldn't have had enough relevance without education; similarly, education loses its meaning and effectiveness without the application of principles of democracy.

In order to successfully achieve democratization of education, there must be an effective system of education, the educational policies needs to be revised very often in order to make it progressive. It must not follow the old belief when education was viewed as a closed system. Instead, it must consider the fact that the world is changing and growing rapidly and hence, the society's needs has also changed drastically. Thus, the education policies at present must focus more on various ways of developing the education system in the country. But it is deniable that the education system had undergone changes in the past few years and it is more flexible now. The entire education system or the process right from its aims, curriculum, methodology, class/school management, etc. has to be democratized in order to make democracy as well as education a success[3].

At present there are number of schools and institutions opened which has led to greater numbers of people having access to education, but the concern is regarding the standard of education these institutions are providing, is it up to the mark or not. Thus, democratization of education should ensure the quality and quality of education that is being provided to the individuals.

The Kothari Commission (1964-66) suggested many measures for democratic education in India. The National Policy on Education, 1968 and 1986 also provided several methods and strategies for introducing democracy in education at various levels. As per the Programmes of Action, 1986, a National System of Education was developed and adopted throughout the country. The National curriculum was framed and implemented with emphasis on common core values like India's heritage, freedom struggle, democracy, socialism, secularism etc. Despite of all these policies, democratization of education in India is still lacking behind due to lack of proper or better planning. Education has not yet been properly and effectively reorganised to impart adequate knowledge, understanding, interests, and skills for success of democracy. Democracy can be considered as truly successful when it not only becomes functional as a part of state polity, but also gets reflected in the entire educational system. The Programme of Action stated that the state

governments were required to work on the details of education system and issue necessary guidelines for developing a multi-level planning model for its democratization. The involvement of the local community in the management of educational institutions at various levels was also suggested so as to ensure democracy right from the elementary to the higher education stage[6].

### **Democratization in context of higher education**

In order to provide lifelong learning opportunities to all parts of society, higher education systems must build more flexible structures. Given the rapid pace of globalization and internationalization, it should be obvious by now that a universal inclusion policy is required to completely democratize higher education globally and, as a result, to strengthen democracies globally.

Within the context of higher education, democratization is the process of making higher education available to anyone who wishes to acquire it. Democratization of higher education might differ from one nation to another based on their unique political system, economic, socio-cultural and historical context. But, the one thing common in all nations is that the goal or aim of higher education is to produce learning and skilled citizens. To have a sophisticated and effective higher education in India, the nation has to adopt new policies and must update the curriculum to meet the demands of the 21st century.

The Indian government's intervention in academic affairs of higher education, jeopardizes the making of a diverse team of academics in the everyday functioning of universities. Also, the Indian universities have taken democracy casually in the last few decades.

Modern Education, particularly higher education should have excellence, equity and efficiency of the system. Hence, the major concerns in higher education are the maintenance of quality, equalization of educational opportunity and improvement of efficiency and effectiveness in the system. These elements are essential for improving the quality of higher education in India in order to remove disparities existing at various levels, and for providing social justice to the deprived and disadvantaged sections of the society. In such a context, democratization of higher education is possible way to overcome the problems. Hence, the higher education policy must be strictly based upon the essential constituents of democratization such as freedom to choose, flexibility, continuity, integration and humanism etc[5].

Democracy has its impact on higher education structurally as well as functionally. Besides teaching, learning and research students are given the opportunity to go to the field, interact with the community and organize various co-curricular activities and social services as a part of their duties.

To make the planning and coordination of higher education at the state level more effective, a State Councils of Higher Education has been set up in all states. These councils prepare consolidated program of higher education to make educational institutions i.e. colleges and universities more democratic. They provide assistance and advice to the UGC in respect of maintenance of standards of education and monitor the progress of implementation of programs and also assess the performance of institutions.

IGNOU and UGC countrywide program in the field of higher education have led to wider access and better qualitative inputs. Even several in-service training programs are organized such as orientation and refresher course by SCERTs, Boards of Secondary Education for school teachers and by various universities and Academic Staff Colleges for College Teachers. All these efforts aim at both quantitative as well as qualitative development of education.

### **Impotence of Higher Education**

Higher education means different things to different persons. India, after China and the United States, has the world's third largest higher education system in terms of size and diversity, as well as the highest number of educational institutions. Following independence, India's higher education sector exploded. Furthermore, higher education provides knowledge, improves a student's abilities, and gives him or her a broader view of the world. Now let us take a closer look for why higher education is so crucial in today's culture. A number of factors contribute to society's need for higher education. The need for higher education in society is influenced by a number of factors. Participation in the economy, health, and civic life Personal development, better communication, and the realization of dreams: Some of the practical benefits of higher education in the twenty-first century include increased self-discipline and a sense of success[6].

As you can see, the advantages of higher education in the twenty-first century are not limited to career advancement. It's priceless to be able to grow yourself, and a higher education can help you do that for a better future, we should increase the number of opportunities available through higher education.

- Being a high school graduate no longer opens up as many opportunities to fulfilling careers as it once did. These days, the United States has transitioned from a manufacturing-based economy to a knowledge-based economy, and the value of a higher education can be likened to what a high school education brought 40 years ago: more opportunity and better employment alternatives.
- Going to college and acquiring a higher education is the shortest path to a happy profession for many, if not most, people. You may not know precisely what you want to do after college, but you do know that you want a job that is more rewarding, pays well, and gives you a sense of security and satisfaction. Many people invest both their money and their time in education because of these incentives.
- Higher education not only prepares you for your chosen field, but it also teaches you how to comprehend complex subjects, analyse critically, and successfully convey your thoughts. You'll also acquire crucial skills like organisation, self-discipline, and how to see a project through from beginning to end. Higher education assists you in becoming more professional and provides you with a variety of job-related abilities.
- You can find yourself in a field you didn't intend to study since you learn a wide range of abilities. This can lead to fresh and unexpected chances that you would not have had if you had not pursued a higher degree.

NEP-2020, which will replace the National Policy on Education of 1986, is a comprehensive framework that covers all levels of education from elementary to higher education in the country. The New Education Policy (NEP), which aspires to universalize education from pre-school to secondary school, was approved by the Union cabinet in July 2020. The National Education Policy (NEP) would alter the country's education sector because it focuses on making education more accessible, egalitarian, and inclusive, but only if it is implemented at all levels. NEP promotes trying to break down disciplinary barriers. This means that B Tech students, for example, would no longer be restricted to their engineering field of study. Instead, the arts and humanities will play a larger role in their programmes. "Arts and humanities students will strive to learn more science, and all students will make an attempt to include more vocational topics and soft skills," the policy adds. While multidisciplinary is the end goal, the NEP statement suggests a four-year undergraduate degree as a method to get there[7].

Undergraduate programmes in India, with the exception of professional degrees such as B Tech and MBBS, normally take three years, according to NEP. According to the new policy, degree programmes would be "adjusted" in duration to allow students to "enjoy the entire range of holistic and multidisciplinary education in addition to an emphasis on the chosen major and minors as per the student's choices." While the NEP does not advocate for the three-year structure to be phased out, it does indicate that the four-year multidisciplinary Bachelor's programme "should be the preferable alternative." While undergraduate students would have to study for an extra year, they will have the option to exit earlier with "proper certification." If you drop out after the first year, you will receive a certificate, a diploma after the second year, and a Bachelor's degree after the third year. If the student completes "a substantial research project" in her major areas of study after completing the whole programme, she will get a bachelor's degree "with Research"[8].

The new education strategy emphasizes the importance of education in supporting Indian languages, arts, and culture. One of the ways it proposes to do so is to encourage higher education institutions to use regional or local languages as the primary medium of instruction in the classroom.

A single university entrance exam administered by the National Testing Agency is another suggestion that could alter students' higher education experiences. Students will not have to take multiple entrance exams if this is implemented. "The high quality, range, and flexibility of the NTA testing services will enable most universities to use these common entrance exams — rather than hundreds of universities each devising their own entrance exams — reducing the pressure on students, universities and colleges, and the entire education system."

## **CONCLUSION**

India is a democratic country, where democracy is not merely a form of government but a way of life. It is the rule of the people, by the people, for the people. But unless the people are aware of their rights and responsibilities, democracy has no meaning rather endangering the freedom of the individuals. Education is necessary for making the citizens alert and aware of their rights, duties and responsibilities efficiently. Teachers in the most democratic classrooms should use creativity to involve students in activities that they choose. This could imply silent worksheets for some youngsters, but it's more likely that they'll be doing hands-on manipulative activities for the majority. Students should be able to choose a field of study, and the educational strategy should be centered on that field. For example, if the students are interested in space and decide to have a space unit, then all subject matter should be related to space. Democratic education inculcates in children the importance of being an active participant in their communities and ensuring that their voices are heard. This helps students prepare for a future in a democratic country. They can raise adults who believe that can change the world if they are willing to participate in the process by educating pupils that their voices matter and can make a difference.

## REFERENCES

1. Alcorn, B., Christensen, G., & Kapur, D. (2015). Higher education and moocs in india and the global south. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, 47(3), 42–49. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00091383.2015.1040710>
2. Allen, I. E., & Seaman, J. (2013). *Changing course: Ten years of tracking online education in the United States*. Babson Park, MA: Babson Survey Research Group and Quahog Research Group. <https://www.onlinelearningsurvey.com/reports/changingcourse.pdf>
3. Bates, T. (2014 October 13). *Comparing xMOOCs and cMOOCs: Philosophy and practice*. *Online Learning and Distance Education Resources*. <https://www.tonybates.ca/2014/10/13/comparing-xmoocs-and-cmoocs-philosophyand-practice/>
4. Blankenship, J., & Kubicek, P. (2018). Democratization and gender equality in sub-saharan africa. *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa*, 9(1), 27–50. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21520844.2018.1449458>
5. Blessinger, P., Dr. (n.d.). *Democratizing higher education*. <https://www.slideshare.net/patrickblessinger/democratizing-higher-education>
6. Democratic principles in education. (n.d.). In *EDUCATION*. <https://doi.org/https://egyankosh.ac.in/bitstream/123456789/46965/1/Unit-4.pdf>
7. Education and success of democracy in India. (January 2006). *Orissa Review*, 35–37. [https://doi.org/http://magazines.odisha.gov.in/Orissareview/jan2006/engpdf/Education\\_Success.pdf](https://doi.org/http://magazines.odisha.gov.in/Orissareview/jan2006/engpdf/Education_Success.pdf)
8. Mathur, T. (n.d.). *Democratisation of India's Higher Education System*. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/democratisation-indias-higher-educational-systemdr-tanuj-mathur>