

## 2.

*The route from La Martiniere College to the suburb of Mahanagar, approximately aligned north to south and covered a distance of some five to six kilometers. The presence of the university campus registered itself as an area of leafy calmness, expansive greenery and very well-proportioned pale yellow buildings, with cusped arches surmounted by a skyline of a variety of quite elegant onion-shaped domes. It was different from every other area in Lucknow. In fact the whole street, right up to Isabella Thoburn College, a distance of about two kilometers, I would imagine, had at that time a distinctively pleasing appearance and feel. It was an interesting event on the journey, anticipated for its visual delight it offered every day. It was, in a sense, an academic street, right in the middle of the city: Isabella Thoburn College at the end, Lucknow University on the eastern side of the street and the large campus of Colvin Taluqdar College opposite on the west."*

--Mahommad Shaheer in *Beyond Degrees*

## 2. Expansion, Governance, and Privatization

### **Outline:**

Many social, political and economic factors lead to the culmination of a moment in 2009 when an old education trust, with its roots in a pre-independence era, 1935 to be precise, decides, after a history of running highly successful grant-in aid, affiliated institutes of education for 44 years, to start a private State University in the heart of a rapidly globalizing city, Ahmedabad. This chapter is interested in both this moment of culmination and in the local and global contexts that facilitated this change. Even though the Indian system of higher education has been largely funded by public financing, fiscal constraints faced by the State and the Centre led the universities to look for alternative sources of funding. Education policies after the 1990s brought in the private sector to deliver higher education, resulting in the expansion of the system to meet the burgeoning demand. This chapter examines the neo-liberal turn in higher education policies in India. The involvement of the private sector in the field of higher education leads in more ways than one to many questions about changes in quality, assessment, competition, marketization, governance, autonomy, and values at the university level. It changes the way we traditionally understand the nature of the university, education, learning,, and the relationship of these with the world of work and society. In other words, the privatization of higher education is an issue that calls for an understanding and examination of in terms its origin and the implications. The word privatization is often used imprecisely and is widely misunderstood in education-related literature. Varghese differentiates between ‘private in higher education’ and ‘privatization’, in very much the way Ball distinguishes between ‘endogenous’ and ‘exogenous’ privatization (Varghese. 2013, Ball. 2008). ‘Private in education’ or what Ball calls the ‘exogenous’ aspects of privatization involve the entry of the non-state

sector and private companies into the field of financing, knowledge-making or service provision; while ‘privatization’ or the ‘endogenous’ aspect of privatization refers to the application of market principles in the operation and organization of educational institutions, including public institutions. While my use of the term ‘privatization’ throughout the study is largely consistent with the way Varghese or Ball define it, it also carries an awareness of the transformation of the space of higher education made possible by the presence of many private, non-state players in multiple positions of power. In an age where higher education is a site for reconstructing the social field of power in ways heretofore unknown to us, this chapter examines the various turns in the educational policy narrative of India. This makes it possible to imagine newer ways of delivering, financing, and envisioning higher education. Gujarat Education Society, the entity under study has metamorphosed significantly in the last twenty years and this chapter will map the specificity of this metamorphosis. While I am interested in the intended outcomes and unintended implications of these changes in the chapters that follow this one, I will limit myself here to a few of the easily observable dimensions of this change. The chapter is divided into two subsections: I) Policy direction after the 1990s, II) The growth story of the Gujarat Education Society (GES) through two moments that encapsulate its transformation.

## **I. Policy direction after 1990s**

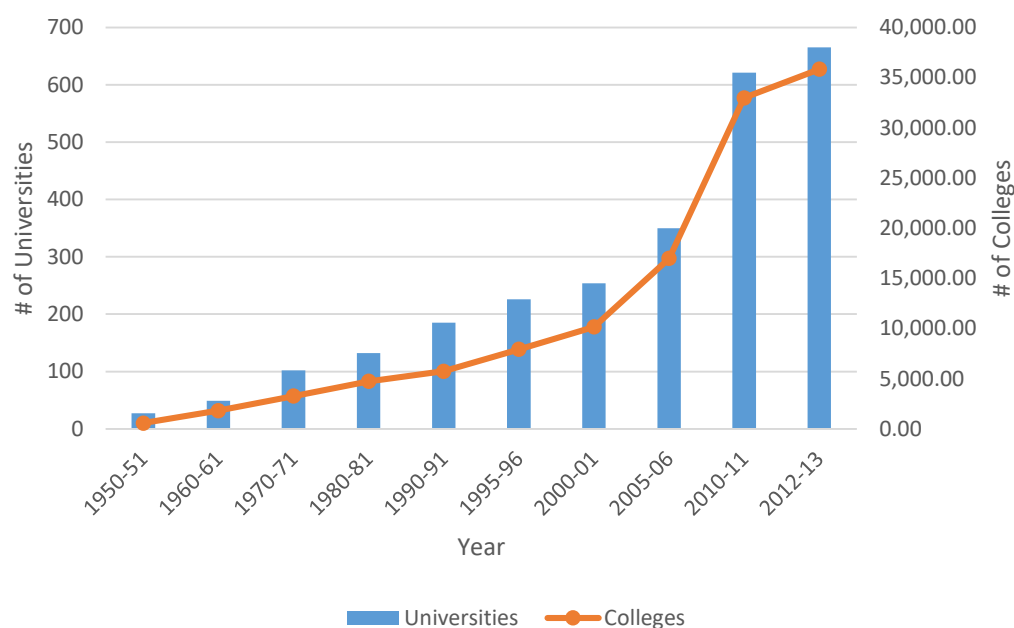
Policy reforms and public debates around higher education in India since the 1990s have rested on the shrinking role of the government, and the increasing role of privatization. The widespread and oft repeated discourse around reforms in higher education in India has brought about a hegemonic, apparently commonsensical notion of the state versus the private: where the state is incompetent, inefficient,

unaccountable, risk-averse, and bureaucratic and therefore a failure; while the private is competitive, efficient, accountable, innovative, result-oriented and therefore productive. Positions that would have been once considered untenable in independent India's discourse on higher education of the 1950s have come to be commonsensical in India after 2000. There has been a noticeable shift in, and a common agreement on, what needs to be taught, who needs to provide what is needed, as well as who should be setting the direction for educational policy formation. A host of factors are responsible for making such a neo-liberal shift appear to be the most rational and obvious. Among these are: an increasing gap between the growing demand for higher education and the government funding to support it; the poor quality of teaching/research in Indian universities; economic liberalization and the restructuring of the nation state; globalization and the move towards a knowledge economy; and the conspicuous presence of actors from industry as providers, funders, and policy-makers in the field of higher education.

There is a high degree of consensus among the various stakeholders-- policy makers, businessmen, corporate industrialists, educationists, international organizations, teachers, students, and education providers— that India needs to be a leader in a knowledge society. The challenges facing higher education in the recent reports are framed in the context of an urgent need to maximize India's 'demographic dividend' in the 'knowledge economy' emerging across the globe. In order to maintain economic growth in the global marketplace and rise in the 'knowledge economy,' India needs to double the Gross Enrollment Ratio of students in higher education; otherwise, "the demographic dividend of India" - the 550 million below the age of 25 – can turn into a social liability, "a demographic disaster" without proper access to education. (Dukkipati, 2010). There has been a growing resolve, therefore, to make higher

education a national priority, and to widen access to it so that the maximum number of eligible young people are included within its fold. In addition to a call for a rapid expansion of the system, there is also a call for a re-examination of the funding and governing mechanisms within higher education institutions.

The expansion of higher education in India after independence, captured in terms of pure numbers, shows an impressive trajectory (see Figure 1). India has 665 institutions of higher education in all, including State Universities (303 public and 122 private), Deemed Universities (52 Public and 79 private), as well as 66 Institutions of National Importance as of 2013. Scholars often divide the trajectory into three phases. The first phase of expansion between the 1950s and 1970s saw a great deal of public involvement in public universities, and government and private, grant-in-aid colleges. The second phase between the 1970s and 1990s was a period of relatively slower growth with public spending on higher education reduced to just a little above 1.2 percent of GDP. The third phase from 1995 to 2011 and thereafter has witnessed unprecedented growth both in institutions as well as in enrollments. The period also witnessed significant shifts in policy directions in India with liberalization and globalization. (Duraismy. 2017, Varghese and Malik. 2017, Tilak 2017)



*Figure: 1. Growth of Higher Education in India from 1950-51 to 2012-13*  
*Source: Indian Higher Education Report 2015 Edited by N. V. Varghese and Garima Malik)*

The greater involvement of the private sector in all areas of education (from primary school to college) in various capacities across the world happened because of changes in the financing patterns of Governments. A concurrent rise in the demand for higher education was precipitated across the world from 1980s onwards, the era characterized by “Thatcherism” in the UK, and “Reaganomics” in the US but spreading more or less across the globe (Glakas 2003, Leslie and Fretwell 1996). In many countries privatization has found a new popularity and legitimacy in the last twenty years as the result of a new social discourse, of policy- making and practices,

This shift in the attitude of the state is what Stephen Ball calls a shift from ‘welfare’ State to a ‘competition’ or ‘workfare’ State. The ‘competition State’, according to him, is interested in securing economic growth within its borders and a competitive edge across the border that relies on its capital advantage. The goal of the ‘competition State’ has been to promote economic and extra-economic conditions within its borders that are necessary for such competitive success (Ball. 2007). One of the main ingredients

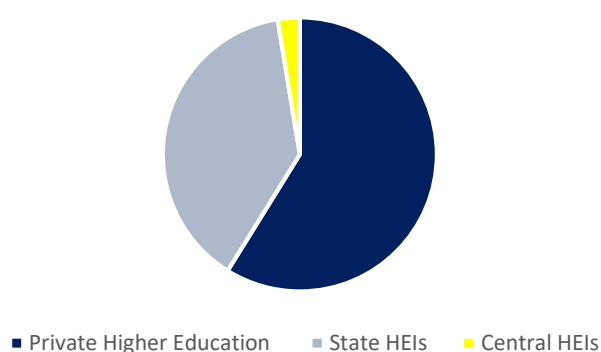
in the making of this ‘competitive nation’ is ‘higher education’ and thus it occupies a place of prominence in any discourse on public policy in any country today.

In this changed geo-political and economic climate ‘knowledge’ is not an essential requirement for building resources but a resource in itself (Gupta 2008). Education becomes a form of cultural capital, which, though invisible to the naked eye, is quite like property in terms of its tangible benefits, ability to be privatized, and transmitted from one generation to the next (Deshpande 2003). A demand for advanced levels of knowledge and skill across industries in the wake of technological innovations has given rise to a field full of choices and differentiated products in higher education. Private involvement in higher education is perceived as a matter of public interest, bringing a desired accountability and efficiency to the system, and at the same time reducing the burden on the government by allowing it to focus on its primary duties of ensuring literacy and basic education. (Gupta 2016). Asha Gupta writes about the multifaceted ‘entrepreneurial’ engagement of the private sector across the world:

Some of these ‘entrepreneurials’ are engaged in organizing science parks near prestigious universities to reap the advantages from the latest research in the fields of medicine, engineering, bio-technology, health and so forth. Others are involved in meeting the needs of public universities towards books, laboratories, the latest technology, catering, cleanliness, security and the like. Some of them are even listed at stock exchange. There are examples of traditional colleges and public universities in the United States investing into private universities for sure gains, such as Brown University, Dartmouth College, Johns Hopkins University, Washington University in St Louis, and Harvard University (Blumenstyk, 2003). Even the private equity funds are investing hugely in the US for-profit higher education due to increasing job markets and political acceptance of them. (Gupta, 2016, 358).

It is in the last twenty years that we have seen a pronounced intention on the part of the Indian State to expand higher education, to invite private players into higher education and make it a focus of its annual agendas (see Figure 2). The system has shown possibilities of fast expansion; of an improved share for higher education in the budgetary allocation; improved staff salaries; increased research funds, and improvements in

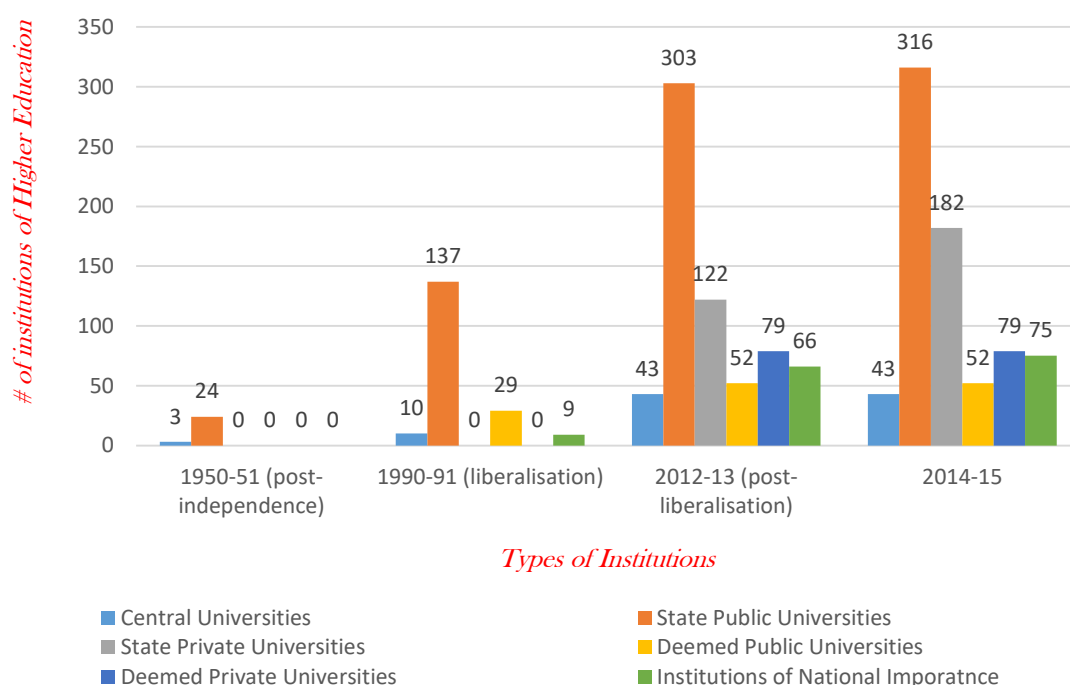
teaching and learning conditions. One attractive factor driving investment in higher education by the State has also been a changed perception about the economic value of higher education and its potential for contributing to national growth (Varghese. 2017, 4). The kindling of an interest in this sector stems from the perception of education as an instrument to foster faster economic growth. It comes as no surprise therefore that the 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan recommended the setting up of quality IITs and IIMs and Central Universities in many states of India. There was also a move to introduce the Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan to enhance gross enrolment rates (GER) and improve the quality of higher education in the country. The 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan allocation of funds to higher education was actually nine times higher than in the previous plan. This push led to the establishment of 22 IITs, 14 IIMs, and 16 Central Universities. Five institutes of Science Education and Research were established in 2016. In the same year the UGC amended its regulations to allow private deemed universities across India to establish six off- campus centres across India. The entry of private providers in higher education had a bigger share of the pie as far as student enrollments were concerned by 2012 (see Figure.2).



*Figure 2: Enrollment in Centre, State, and Private, 2012.*  
*Source: Government of India Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-17)*



Policy documents are replete with questions about how to raise the efficiency of the system; among them are: how to achieve a uniformity of processes and curriculum, how to ensure basic infrastructure parity among institutions, how universities should generate resources, how institutions of higher education are to be made innovative, relevant, and accountable, and what unbiased method we can use to assess quality in higher education. These concerns are not novel concerns. When India got independence in 1948 we were as much at the crossroads as we are today. We had inherited a readymade system of higher education designed and implemented by the British for their own purposes, comprising 20 universities, 496 colleges and 237,546 students.<sup>1</sup> It was concern about the efficacy of this system that gave rise to the first indigenous commission on university education popularly known as the Radhakrishnan Commission, set up to make recommendations for higher education appropriate for an independent nation.



<sup>1</sup> Many of these institutions were private, set up before independence by philanthropists to serve the interests of a community. It was under the grant-in-aid system that the government initiated in the 50s and 60s that these colleges became affiliated (Basu: 2001, 171).

*Figure 3: Growth of Universities by type in India*

*Source: Based on the data CBE (2005) and UGC Higher Education at a Glance–June 2013, AISHE (2015) for 2014-15*

The Radhakrishnan Commission was rooted in a situation of crisis as the newly independent nation strove to define itself. There were questions about uniformity of standards and curriculum across universities, salaries for teachers, criteria for promotion in a university, problems of access to higher education for the large part of India in rural areas, problems of quality of teaching, and of students who came seeking admission. One of the main arguments at that time was that the system we had inherited was far removed from the practical realities of India. There was a disjuncture between what the university taught and what India needed. The products of the colonial system had been shaped so as to serve a colonial imperial government and therefore not suited to an independent nation that needed engineers, doctors, professionals, artists, thinkers. There was a perception that the university had been a political instrument in the hands of the British rulers to produce an efficient, compliant workforce that would run the bureaucracy. The needs of Independent India were very different; the call was for creative and informed thinking that could take India upwards economically and politically, and this could not happen through a university seen as elitist and little connected with practice. Practice at that historical moment in our history was understood in terms of shaping producers for a nation, rural leaders for India, and the university was seen as an urban phenomenon that left the lives of rural India practically unchanged. The underlying assumption for this argument was that the university had to retain a balance between theory and the lived realities of a nation. The establishment of IITs, and vocational learning centers were important landmarks, but equally important was the need to establish rural universities for independent India.

Secondly, the products of the colonial system had been shaped so as to serve a colonial imperial government and therefore not suited to an independent nation that needed engineers, doctors, professionals, artists, thinkers. The university had been a political instrument in the hands of the British rulers to produce an efficient, compliant workforce that would run the bureaucracy. This is not what independent India needed or wanted. The Radhakrishnan Commission Report says:

We have now a wider conception of the duties and responsibilities of universities. They have to provide leadership in politics and administration, the professions, industry and commerce. They have to meet the increasing demand for every type of higher education, literary and scientific, technical and professional. They must enable the country to attain, in as short a time as possible, freedom from want, disease and ignorance, by the application and development of scientific and technical knowledge....If India is to confront the confusion of our time, she must turn for guidance, not to those who are lost in the mere exigencies of the passing hour, but to her men of letters, and men of science, to her poets and artists, to her discoverers and inventors. These intellectual pioneers of civilization are to be found and trained in the universities, which are the sanctuaries of the inner life of the nation (GOI 1950, 33-34).

This was a clear rejection of a university system that had been completely subservient to creating a workforce for the ruled nation. It must be noted here, however, that the system set up by the British to utilize and mould the Indian subject into an efficient workman for the colonizing power was the same system that introduced western literature, logic, philosophy, mathematics, history, and science. In other words the system had the potential to expand the uniqueness of the human mind: our ability to make generalizations, to think, to imagine, to conceptualize, to deduce. Our retention of many features of the British system points to a realization of the powerful potential of the system. Post -Independence India, while it emphasized the need for more institutions of vocational training like polytechnics, institutions of technology like the IITs, and institutions for professional training like the IIMs, also reinstated its belief in the pure sciences, maintaining that engineering cannot be excellent without pure science. This

understanding led to the creation of research institutions like ISRO, PRL, IISc. While we needed to strike a balance between pure sciences and technical sciences, we also needed to balance science with the fine arts, performing arts, culture studies, and literature. Such thinking led to the founding of the Lalit Kala Academy, Sahitya Akademi and Sangeet Natak Academy—all aiming to create an overall world of knowledge that was balanced and holistic.

What these facts underscore is the fallacy of the popular conception that our system of higher education is a replication of the British education system. Only its positive features were retained but in modified form to serve our own purpose of nation building. Retaining and simultaneously modifying Western thought and science, higher education in India evolved after a process of deliberation and debate among all its stakeholders. The fervor of nationalist sentiments was still in the air, guiding our vision and plans, and there was a ‘higher’ different goal different from the immediate one of creating primarily producers and consumers. It was still possible to imagine a system of education that engendered democratic citizenship, espoused ideals of scholarship, and nurtured humanism in the service of a democratic republic. Newman’s belief that if there has to be a practical end attached to higher education; it has to be that of training individuals to appreciate diversity and to think critically was retained. “No system of education,” we believed, “could be directed to the weakening of the State that maintains it. But education is also an instrument for social change. It should not be its aim merely to enable us to adjust ourselves to the social environment. We must train people not merely to be citizens but also to be individuals.” (GOI. 1950, 39). Newman’s idea of a university still spoke to that moment in the 1950s.

It is interesting to note that the moment of the 1990s, when once again the purpose and modality of education was rethought, had its counterpart in the 1950s and the

Radhakrishnan Report. There is a difference however. The earlier agenda had an element that went beyond the purely instrumental; the humanistic components were recognized as necessary at that time. But that was to change over the next two decades as the success of capitalism swept across the world calling for more and more economic development.

The 1990s saw India caught up in the rapid race to catch up with the rest of the globe. The dismantling of the post-colonial state and replacing of it by a neo-liberal state started happening in the 1980s. By 1985 the Ministry of Education, once headed by scholars like Maulana Azad, was changed into the Ministry of Human Resource Development. It declared that “the essence of Human Resource Development is education, which plays a vital role in balancing the socio-economic fabric of the country. Since citizens of India are its most valuable resource, our billion-strong nation needs the nature and care in the form of basic education to achieve a better quality of life” ([www.mhrd.gov.in/about-mhrd](http://www.mhrd.gov.in/about-mhrd)). But it was not quite the same as a separate Ministry of Education. The equation of education with means of maximizing human resources is telling in its dissociation of education from individual growth, which had been at the center of education as envisioned in the period that immediately followed Independence. The MHRD was now the prime actor in the policy-making arena of higher education in India, constituting committees to study, review and give recommendations and suggestions on higher education reform.

The paradigm shift was conspicuous when an increasing number of stakeholders began taking an active interest in higher education policy-making in the 1990s and thereafter. The international financing and regulatory organizations began heralding neo-liberal reforms in higher education as an inevitable and desired measure to encourage capacity building for a developing knowledge economy. In its reports on

higher education in 1986, 1994, 2001 the World Bank made a sustained argument for reallocation of funds across primary, secondary, and higher education sectors so as to make institutions of higher education more and more self-reliant, encouraging private institutions and re-defining the role of government in higher education. It encouraged targeted investments in the fields of advanced training and research in chosen areas of competitive advantage (WB 1986, 1994, 2001). “The leading options for improving tertiary education in the transition countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia include introducing more flexible and less specialized curricula, promoting shorter programmes and courses, creating a more adaptable regulatory framework, and establishing systems of public funding that encourage institutions to respond to market demands for quality and diversity” (WB 2001: xxix). Many of these ideas have been adopted in the policy documents/reports convened by MHRD since the 1990s. The changes were also to be seen on the ground with the setting up of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) by the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the National Board of Accreditation (NBA) by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) in 1994, with a view to assess the quality of institutions of higher education using an ‘internationally accepted methodology’. A development that made possible the quantification and measurement of quality in higher education ushered in a new regime of finance based on outcomes, performance, and accountability. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry started an India Brand Equity Foundation in 2003 with a view to create international awareness of Made in India labels. Included in the list of industries that appear on its website is also Education and Training, which gives you sector report, informatics, showcasing of some universities in India, and a presentation on sector advantages (see image 1). The image through the intent and prospect shows a clear and marked difference from the earlier vision of education.

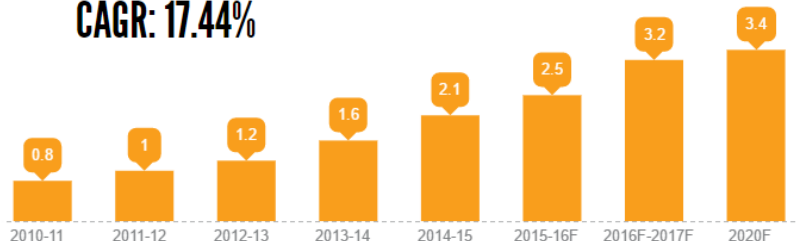
The Federation of the Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) began organizing higher education summits from 2004 onwards, supported by the MHRD and Government of India. These gatherings became a platform for deliberations on reforms and dissemination of knowledge at a national and international level that involved members from industry. Many corporate leaders and industrialists were also involved in the process of recommending policy initiatives by the government. An important example is the invitation extended by the Prime Minister's Council for Trade and Industry to prepare what is called the Birla Ambani report, under the guidance of industrialists Mukesh Ambani and Kumaramangalam Birla. Corporate involvement is also seen in the think-tanks convened by the Prime Minister like the National Knowledge Commission. The Indian Judiciary, especially after the 1990s, emerged as one more stakeholder in the policy-making in the Indian higher education scene. A number of judgments such as Mohini Jain v/s the State of Karnataka in (1989), Unnikrishnan v/s the State of Andhra Pradesh (1993), T.M.A. Pai v/s the State of Karnataka (2003), P.A. Inamdar & Others V/s the State of Maharashtra (2005) trace the important role played by the Supreme Court of India in guiding the policy as well as the context of privatization of higher education India. The court that had begun by calling education (at all levels) a fundamental right essential to build citizenship capabilities came to revise its stand to limit it to the age of 14, thereby freeing the space for the play of private institutions in higher education delivery and eventually granting them complete autonomy.

# EDUCATION AND TRAINING

## Sector Snapshot – Pre School Industry

Pre school industry in India (USD billion)

**CAGR: 17.44%**



## Key Policy Initiatives

FDI Policy 2002	100 per cent FDI is allowed in the Indian education sector
National Knowledge Commission (NKC)	It was mainly setup to guide policy and direct reforms on education sector
National Education Policy, 2016	The 2016 NEP majorly focuses on quality of education as well as innovation & research in the sector.

The share of the state private universities as part of total universities has been increased from 3.43 per cent in 2008-09 to 28.8 per cent in 2014-15

The number of recognised private schools in the country increased from **319,990 in FY14 to 328,845 in FY15.**

**The real estate market is estimated to grow to USD180 billion by 2020 from USD126 billion in 2015, driven by demand mainly from residential sector**

## Sector Advantages

Size of education sector in India is valued at USD97.8 billion in 2016

As per Union Budget FY17, Government of India (GOI) allocated USD149.37 million for setting up a higher education financing agency.

Size of education sector is expected to be USD144 billion by 2020F

Image: 1. Infographics: Education and Training

Source: <https://www.ibef.org/industry/education-sector-india/infographic>



The emerging ethos of privatization in higher education discussed above was initiated in the 1990s by structural adjustment programmes, which affected many public sector services including education. The committees appointed during this period, for example the Punneya Committee (1992-93) and the Dr. Swaminathan Panel (1992), set the tone by recommending privatization of public universities, asking the universities to find innovative ways to generate resources and thereby reduce the subsidies provided to public institutions. One of the outcomes was the introduction of a scheme of Career Oriented Courses by UGC within public universities that were to give an additional certification to the student along with a degree, and be an additional source of income generation for the university. In 2000 the ministry of HRD decided that universities and colleges must generate at least 7% of its maintenance grant through internal resources, raised through fees or other sources, with one percent increase every year till it reaches 15 percent. The Ministry also decided the fees should vary from course to course, 20% of the seat should be created by foreign or NRI students 75% of the recurring cost of library, laboratory sports and computer facilities should be immediately revised to recover actual recurring cost and a part of the capital cost (Sharma 2009). The Birla Ambani committee, National Knowledge Commission, and Narayana Murthy committee that followed went many steps further in recommending establishment of private universities and full cost recovery from students. Barring the notable exception of the Yashpal Committee, all the major committees set up to recommend changes in higher education in India after 1999 drew a sizable proportion of committee members come from industry. The logic of privatization began to seem natural and commonsensical when the field itself began to get populated with private players at various levels in planning, governing, and delivering education in the country.

Policy on higher education after 2001 pulled in two different directions: one towards privatization and the other towards social welfare, letting public institutions languish as they faced the pressure from the polity and society. Internal societal forces asking for greater access to quality higher education pulled in different directions, while external forces demanded better quality to ensure global competitiveness. This resulted in a significant revamping of the system. Public Private Partnerships emerged as a welcome policy initiative in the absence of insufficient State funding, as did decentralization, competition among providers, introduction of foreign institutions, and a system of assessment and accreditation to enhance standards and accountability among institutions. Since globalization is characterized by an intense struggle over knowledge acquisition and dissemination, institutions of higher education in a globalizing India have become prominent in the economy as catalysts of global power.

The Report on the Policy Framework for Reforms in Education of 2000, the Birla-Ambani report as it is popularly known, was instrumental in guiding the government's thinking on education at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As mentioned above, the Prime Minister's council on Trade and Industry appointed a committee headed by Mr. Mukesh Ambani and Mr. Kumaramangalam Birla to suggest reform in the Education sector. The committee, which submitted its report in the year 2000, advocated that the role of the government be restricted to the funding and delivery of free and compulsory primary education, and improvement of literacy rates rather than the provision of higher education. "Government must exercise its regulatory role to streamline higher education to ensure that it is meaningful, purposeful and cost effective. In essence, the Government's role should be maximum at the primary stage and minimum at the higher education stage" (GOI 2000. 6.14). Mukesh Ambani and Kumarmangalam Birla, two industrialists who considered education a very profitable

market, made a case for full cost recovery from students and immediate privatization of several segments of higher education. In the report the diversification of the sources of revenue for public institutions of higher education was advocated in the spirit of autonomy, international acceptance, and accountability. It said that if the users paid fees for the services they would be more demanding and vigilant than otherwise. The principle of students paying for their services would also incentivize the institutions to aspire for higher standards of accountability. It would bring in more competition, which is seen as an absolute good. “The practice of attracting resources from alumni and private industry is standard among private schools and universities, and is beginning to spread to public ones. In Chile, Indonesia, Thailand and Venezuela, private industry provides scholarships or subsidized loans for talented university students. Structured tax regimes can encourage such donations” (GOI 2000, 45). The report recommended legislating a private university bill in the country, which would encourage opening of many private universities in “the fields of science and technology, management and economics, financial management, and other *critical areas with commercial application*” (emphasis added. GOI 2000, 56).

The basis of the previous argument was the committee’s faith in the importance of business and industry in education. “Business and industry have a vital role to play in establishing world class institutes of higher learning. Leading business houses must be encouraged to establish such institutes and universities” (GOI 2000, 37). The private sector involvement in universities was seen to bring advantages to both sides: the industry and the academia. The university would have the availability of additional funds for teaching and research that in turn would lead to financial autonomy, access to the latest technology, improved employment prospects for students, continuous upgradation and adaptation of curriculum, and higher motivation in students. The

industry, on the other hand, would also save on its recruitment costs, have better communications with higher learning centres and prospects of collaborative research opportunities (GOI 2000).

This particular trend towards private participation in higher education gets more pronounced in the two reports that follow. The National Knowledge Commission (NKC), constituted in June 2005 by the then Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, was a high level advisory body to prepare, under the Chairmanship of Dr. Sam Pitroda, a blueprint for reforms in institutions of higher learning and infrastructure that would enable India to meet the challenges of the future. NKC in its special recommendation for higher education titled “Towards the Knowledge Society” proposes a four point expansion programme that includes creation of new private universities, a new funding and regulatory system for higher education, increased public spending, and the creation of 50 national universities. It stresses the need for public universities to find innovative ways to generate revenue. “Most public universities,” it says, “are sitting on a large reservoir of untapped resources in the form of land. It should be possible to draw up norms and parameters for universities to use their available land as a source of finance.” (GOI 2009, 55) The report suggested that universities should have the autonomy to decide the fees they want to charge and the fees should meet at least 20 percent of the total expense; the rest could also be generated through better asset management, rationalization of fees, philanthropic/alumni contributions, private investment, public-private partnerships, and international students. “India should nurture the tradition of philanthropic contributions through changes in incentives for universities and for donors. At present, there is an implicit disincentive in both tax laws and trust laws. These laws should be changed so that universities can invest in financial instruments of

their choice and use the income from their endowments to build up a corpus.” (GOI 2009, 56)

The report also brought in the vocabulary of public-private partnership into higher education policy.

It might be possible to leverage public funding, especially in the form of land grants, to attract more (not-for-profit) private investment. ...In principle, it should be possible to set up new institutions in higher education, not just more IITs and IIMs but also more universities, as public-private partnerships where the government provides the land and the private sector provides the finances. Such public private partnerships which promote university-industry interface would also strengthen teaching and research. (GOI 2009, 73)

Privatization in a broad sense has been present in the education sector in India, but this has been largely limited to what is often known as ‘soft’ services like equipment buying, building and other services related to education. The entry of the private as mentioned in these reports is something new and different, involving a more basic restructuring of the public space that now involve “private and not-for-profit companies and voluntary and community organisations and NGOs and parastatal organisations in income-generating activities inside the public sector” (Ball 2007. 13). The State, as Ball notes, in the present times is “increasingly re-positioned as the guarantor, not necessarily the provider (White 1998, 3) nor the financer, of opportunity goods like education. This is not a ‘free market’ in any simple sense; neither is it simply imposed by the state. However,...the state is very much a market-maker or broker in relation to the education service industry (ESI).” (Ball, 2007.13)

Another area in which industry can be involved as suggested in these reports is research. Since knowledge is beginning to be seen as more and more applied in nature, a significant investment in research that will promote such knowledge is also viewed as essential. A demand is being made therefore for more private investment (both material and conceptual) in goal-oriented, industry-guided research. In newly

independent India and for some time thereafter, the best research and teaching education institutions were set up outside the system of the university, a feature that many held responsible for the failure of Indian universities to offer quality education, or to take an active role in national reconstruction (Takwale: 2011). If the universities of the pre-independence period were largely affiliating, examination conducting bodies, the universities of the post-independence era for a long period remained largely teaching and affiliating institutions. The clear division between publicly funded research science and technology agencies on the one hand, and research laboratories on the other (often known as ‘Nehru – Bhatnagar effect’) led, under the leadership of Nehru, to a complete centralization of research efforts in these agencies and left the universities with a relatively weaker research base. (V.Krishna et al. 2000. Gillard 1997). Report after report from Kothari Commission (1964) to the National Policy on Education (2016) have echoed the need to strengthen the research base of our higher education institutions and universities. Drawing attention to the divide that exists between research and science agencies on one side and universities on the other, the Yashpal committee (2009) said, “over the years, there has been an increasing tendency to treating teaching and research as separate activities ....It should be necessary for all research bodies to connect with universities in their vicinity and create teaching opportunities for their researchers, and for all universities to be teaching and research universities. (GOI 2009, 14). While the recent policy turn in Indian higher education emphasizes the importance of good research in degree-granting institutions of higher education, it has failed to bridge the historical divide between the research institutions and the universities. With the single exception of the Yashpal Committee report, every other policy document of the last fifteen years projects research in universities as inclined towards production of materially applicable knowledge. In the period after

1999 the economic dimension of the knowledge society as outlined in these reports came to impact policy-making in India. In most policy documents ‘knowledge’ appears to be synonymous with skills and information and is always understood in terms of exchange value. Knowledge that could be applied was viewed as relevant, while research was legitimized on the basis of its relevance to the global market and its ability to transform the material world. Its importance as a component of the knowledge economy lay in its use as an instrument through which more capital can be generated. Policy documents are now articulate about the lack of a research base in many of the institutions of higher education and start advancing a new paradigm of research based on performativity. Discussing the need for setting up a culture of collaboration and co-operation between industry and university, the 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan of the UGC says,

Industry should be brought on board by setting up research parks and incubation cells on campuses. This should also include strategic research funding to promote research in areas of contemporary significance, like renewable energy, sustainable development, environment, computing modelling, stem cells, internal security, etc. . . . *Multi-disciplinary mission mode research and innovation programmes should be evolved in association with arts, humanities and social sciences which should directly benefit the society at all levels and contribute to economic development.* (UGC. 2011, 118. *Emphasis added*)

The NKC believes that public-private, university-industry partnerships, where the government provides land and the private sector provides finances, would strengthen both teaching and research in India. Many of its recommendations were included in the UPA government’s 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan. The Narayana Murthy committee on Corporate Participation in Higher Education was constituted by the Planning Commission of India in January 2011 to provide recommendations that would guide the formulation of the Twelfth Five Year Plan. The committee’s letter constituting the order says it is to give suggestions “on the potential and modalities for corporate sector participation in higher education in support of development of national education and innovation hubs and the

Institutions of National Importance/Centres of Excellence and models for industry-institute interaction to act as catalysts of innovation and sustainable and inclusive economic and regional development” (GOI 2012, 27). The report very clearly affirms the need and desirability of corporate participation in higher education. The logic is that the corporate sector is not only the direct beneficiary of the higher education system, but has also played, and still plays everywhere in the world, an important part in supporting universities. It appears reasonable therefore to let the corporate sector participate more fully in the higher education system in India. It can address the challenges of the Indian system by “bringing in financial resources, providing research support, and collaboration opportunities, helping in faculty development, supporting students through scholarships and offering opportunities to complement learning through internships.”

Within this perspective research was now seen as linked to financial activity, one more way for the institution to be self-reliant by setting up linkages with corporate establishments for research, and through royalties on books and research output. The Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) document proposes internationalization of higher education, establishment of research/innovation-oriented universities, and internationalization of education, while stressing the importance of private participation in higher education as the way forward for India. The RUSA report emphasizes the need to establish research/innovation universities across India so as to lift the research output in Indian universities to a global level. It begins on a high note when it says that a research university is an institution built on an idea. “At the heart of the research university is its academic staff, which must be committed to the idea of disinterested research—knowledge for its own sake.” The same document, however, effortlessly shifts from disinterested research to industry-oriented research as the hallmark of this new university.



The university should have demonstrated an aptitude for research and innovation through more than one Department whose work has been acknowledged globally. The institute should have demonstrated its research bent by having running collaboration with a few industries....Talented faculty can be drawn from the international pool of the Indian diaspora....They should have more exposure to industry and globally renowned institutions. (GOI 2013, 129)

The word that has invariably followed research in these policy documents has been innovation. A quantitative analysis showed a divide between research-based universities and other institutions of higher education in India measured in terms of their research output, as well as the number of PhDs awarded compared to the total enrollment ratios in higher education. The 12<sup>th</sup> Five year plan argues the need for Indian universities to contribute ‘to the national innovation agenda’. What came to dominate the policy and practice of higher education from the 1990s onwards is the idea of innovation and university-industry relations. Innovation came to be differentiated from invention as something more applied and relevant than invention. In other words, “when an invention finds its application in the market or is used by someone or by an institution, then only one can talk about innovation.” (V. Krishna 2012, 171). There has been an increased expectation from the universities to link up and transfer knowledge to industries, and thereby to create an innovation base with sponsored research, consultancy research, patents and spin-offs, and start-up firms.

Many institutions in India since the mid-1990s have institutionalized innovation. IITs, IISc Bangalore, IIMs as well as Central and Private Universities in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Calcutta, Hyderabad, Pune, and Noida have established innovation, incubation or entrepreneurship centres. They are setting up research coalitions with foreign and local multinational firms, or their Research and Development centres. The 227 percent growth in the value of sponsored research and industrial consultancy (SRIC) within IITs alone is a telling statement about the noticeable shift in the focus of many institutions of

higher education. IITM is a classic example of the ‘Triple Helix’ of university-industry-government that is characteristic of what has come to be known as entrepreneurial universities (Etzkowitz 2008). It has been the first to start a university driven Research Park (IITMRI) “Our own database for the year 2013 indicate that 23 out of 700 (3.2 per cent) universities published 50 per cent of total research output of universities; 35 universities out of 700 (5 per cent) universities published 60 per cent of total research output and 52 universities out of 700 (7.4 per cent) universities published 70 percent of total research output of universities” (V Krishna V. & Patra, 2016, 179). Another example is a for-profit company run by the government of Maharashtra called Maharashtra Knowledge Corporation Ltd. (MKCL; [www.mkcl.org](http://www.mkcl.org)), which has been established to address the digital divide in the State. The for-profit company outside the system of university and the government is to fulfill the educational and social goals of the State. The company has created a new paradigm in e-education. It is also supported by many social and community development programmes with public-private partnership. It follows company norms and practices and maintains its competitiveness in the IT industry. A striking success story, it is being replicated in other states of India (Takwale 2011, 243).

By the time we come to the 21<sup>st</sup> century this seamless weaving together of privatization and innovation, industry and research, foreign collaborations and local reputation has become a characteristic of policy-making. In other words, the establishment of ‘knowledge’ as intellectual and economic capital that began with the early articulation in OECD (1996) and World Bank (1998, 1999) has crystallized and is now taken as a given in national policy documents by the year 2010. What began as the most important development of the 21<sup>st</sup> century --the ‘rise of the knowledge society’ --

changed the relationship between education, learning, society and work in a significant way.

The section that follows is the story of one private university in Ahmedabad which, in more ways than one, represents the institutional response to the new policies.

## **II. Growth story of Gujarat Education Society:**

I began this chapter with an epigraph from Mahommad Shaheer. In the essay from which the epigraph is taken he affectionately reminisces about Lucknow in the 1950s and 60s, when the university lived as a distinct city within an ordinary city, defined not only by its peculiar arrangement of spaces and architecture, but also by its own rhythm of life and of scholastic and cultural activities. This space with its own culture and life was connected in a very literal sense with the world outside. It was not situated on the fringes of the city but was, rather, an institutional anchor, a civic landmark at the heart of the city. The universities of the present times, he mourns, flanked by knowledge parks and industrial zones, have become the heart of the economy, but have lost their place at the core of a metropolis. No longer is the image of a university inseparable from the image of a city. Shaheer believes that if Lucknow University was part of the imagination of an ordinary city dweller it was simply because it was situated, not as a gated community but as a well-connected space that allowed for pedestrian movement, social interaction, community life; all with implications for access and inclusiveness. This section deals with the story of a new university at the heart of another city, Ahmedabad. It is the story of a trust established in the pre-independence era, which went on to rule the social imagination of the city, a Trust whose relationship with the city of Ahmedabad goes back 83 years and marks its

geographical landscape. It is the story of a trust and of a university both trying to balance their relationship with the city and the globe.

India was still a part of the British Empire and Gujarat of the Greater Bombay Presidency, Gandhi had already started his experiments in education with a nationalist institution like Gujarat Vidyapith, and many education societies and colleges had already started functioning in the 1930s. It was a time when the Civil Disobedience movement was gathering momentum and political agitations for Indian independence were sweeping across the campuses of government colleges. In Ahmedabad many students had suffered for their active involvement in politics at the hands of Principal George Findley Shiraz of Gujarat College. Social and political leaders of Gujarat were reluctant to leave the reins of education in the hands of British officers, especially after the government took harsh action against students participating in nationwide political protests. The idea of starting a non-government educational institution in Gujarat was seen as a clear need and was discussed among educationists like Balubhai Diwan, Jivanlal Diwan, and Balvantrai Thakore, and political stalwarts like Dadabhai Naoroji and Sardar Patel. At a meeting called by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, to which he invited G.V. Mavlankar, later to become the first speaker of the Lok Sabha, Amrutlal Hargovandas, a leading industrialist, and Seth Kasturbhai Lalbhai, a mill owner and philanthropist of Gujarat, the seeds for the first college to be established by a new education trust were already being sowed. G. V. Mavlanker drafted a constitution for a new society in 1934 and it was after a prolonged period of debates and discussions that on 15 May 1935, according to the 1860 Act, the Gujarat Education Society (GES) came to be registered.

In its 83 year long history GES remains noteworthy as not only the oldest institution of higher education in Ahmedabad, but as a trust that assumed the task of

education independently of the state then under British rule. The country in the thirties was seething with nationalist fervor; many of the leaders of the Freedom Movement were Gujaratis. They understood that the colleges set up under British Rule were meant to serve British interests, as envisaged by Macaulay in his famous Minute, and that they were playing their role well. A GES document records the following about the reason it was set up:

The compelling reason for its (the society's) immediate establishment was **a national urgency to institute an educational organization that would foster positive national aspirations in the young generation.** At the time of its establishment there was only one college in Ahmedabad, namely Gujarat College, which was run by an alien Government. Naturally therefore the administration was indifferent to the National yearnings and aspirations of the youth of the country. The friction of Gujarat College students and staff with its British Principals during the twenties and thirties has become a chapter of our national movement that cannot be elaborated here. Enlightened and patriotically minded citizens of Ahmedabad lost no time discerning the need for a college institution that would fulfill the educational needs of the young while fostering at the same time their sense of patriotism. Chief among them were the late Shri **G. V. Mavlankar**, Shri Balvantrai Thakore, and Shri Jivanlal Diwan, greatly assisted by Seth Shri Hargovandas and Shri Harilal Vadilal Kapadia. Through the indefatigable efforts of these five great patriots and educational workers and their friends as well as financial and other kinds of support from the citizens of Ahmedabad, the Society came to be established with the specific objective of promoting higher learning devoted to the cause of national service. **Sardar Vallabhai Patel** blessed it and the late **Anandshankar Dhruv** inspired it. Thus it was that the [Gujarat Education Society] was registered as a public trust on the 15<sup>th</sup> May 1935”.

GES appointed a Governing Body with popular support from industrialists and philanthropists, where Bhaskarrao Motilal Medh was its first chairman and Balvantrai Thakore, Jivanlal Diwan and G.V. Mavlankar were active members. Office bearers were formally elected in 1936: Anandshankar Dhruv was President, and Bhaskarrao Medh Vice -President. Kasturbhai Lalbhai was elected Chairman of the Governing Body. These names have become legendary in Gujarat. “Donations to build the new educational institutions would have poured in merely for the asking. But instead, these elite men took to the streets with a bag in hand, and made pleas to the wealthy

Amdavadis, asking them to open their purse strings and donate freely. Kasturbhai went from donor to donor and spoke intently to each one of them. He did not just want their money. He wanted to convert philanthropists into passionate social reformers to change the face of Gujarat through education” [Ref?] It was believed that since the intention of the society was education, the people involved in the administration should also be educationists. It aspired to give a special space to teachers who were dedicated to the profession for a lifetime. “The society did not intend to stop after opening a couple of colleges,” reminiscences Indravadan Thakore, “but rather they aspired to organize the higher education sector by starting many institutions in different knowledge streams and even a university. Therefore, instead of buying ten twenty acres of land the society in the first couple of years bought hundreds of acres of land.”<sup>i</sup> The same story is proudly displayed on the homepage of GES website today.

**as far as your eyes can see...**

When the time came to purchase land for setting up new institutions, Kasturbhai was asked how much land ought to be purchased. "As far as your eyes can see..." was his historic reply. Such was the vision and passion of those who rooted for the spread of education and academic excellence in Gujarat. He went on to buy 700 acres of land when only ten acres were needed.

The first college that the Society established was GES College of Commerce, popularly known as GESCC in 1936. A donation of Rs. 50,000 by Sheth Amritlal Hargovindas was instrumental for setting up the college. It was inaugurated by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. In 1937, two years after the GES was established, a donation of Rs. 2 lakhs from the family of Sheth Kasturbhai Lalbhai made possible an Arts College in the name of his father, Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Arts College, popularly known as GESAC. A science division was included in the college soon after its opening. The idea of a special university for Gujarat was being prepared during the early years of the Society's existence but the outbreak of the Second World War and thereafter the 1942 Quit India

movement meant that these plans had to be put on hold. In 1946 the science division of the college went on to become the Mafat Gagan Science College or GES Science College after a generous donation of Rs. 7 lakhs received from Seth Navinchandra Mafatlal. In 1947 with a donation of 3 lakhs from the family of Seth Ramanlal Lallubhai, Ratanlal Lallubhai and Seth Narsinhlal Lallubhai, the GES College of Pharmacy was opened, the first in the country to offer a degree in Pharmacology. Apart from donating money to the colleges that were being built by GES, Kasturbhai also gave support to other educational initiatives in the city. His friendship with the younger visionary Vikram Sarabhai resulted in the founding of some prestigious national institutions: Ahmedabad Textile Research Association (ATIRA) in 1947, Physical Research Laboratory in 1947 (first housed in M.G. Science College), and later the Indian Institute of Management in 1961. In 1948 Kasturbhai gave Rs 25 lakhs and 31.2 hectares of land to realize his dream of an engineering college in Ahmedabad. The college is named after his father Lalbhai Dalpatram College of Engineering.

There were times when Kasturbhai's involvement with education was questioned by some in Gujarat, and an issue indirectly related to the subject of this thesis arose -- the famous and prolonged argument between the poet, educationist Umashankar Joshi and Kasturbhai Lalbhai between 1948 and 1949 described by Achyut Yagnik in his book titled *Ahmedabad* (Yagnik, 2011). The poet Umashankar Joshi had started a monthly journal in 1947 called 'Sanskriti' to which he himself contributed, short articles, little opinion pieces and news stories. In the issue of June 1948 he sets down his opinion of the direction that higher education in Gujarat was taking at that time. His article is a response to one written by the textile magnate Kasturbhai in another monthly called "Akhand Anand," where he emphasized the need for Ahmedabad to develop beyond the textile industry. He maintained that the city could

diversify into chemical, pharmaceutical and engineering industries, given the fact that three out of the four essential requirements for these -- capital, entrepreneurs, workforce, and expertise -- were available easily at its doorstep. As for the shortage of the experts he had solutions to offer. He had started a science college and a pharmacy college and had played a pivotal role in the establishment of an engineering college in the city that was about to start functioning. He also had thoughts on city planning in the context of future industrial development. Umashankar quotes from Kasturbhai's article:

‘હું માનું છું કે નજીકના ભવિષ્યમાં સાબુ, દવા, રસાયણ તથા એન્જિનિયરિંગનાં કારખાનાંઓ સારી રીતે ખીલી શકે તેમ છે. તે ખિલવણીને અનુકૂળ વાતાવરણ કરવા જુદાજુદા વિષયોના નિષ્ણાતોની ઊણપ દૂર કરવા અમદાવાદના અગ્રેસર શહેરીઓએ આજે જુદાજુદા વિષયોમાં તાલીમ આપવા સારુ એક પછી એક કોલેજોની સ્થાપના કરવાની શરૂઆત કરી દીધી છે. છેલ્લાં ત્રણ વર્ષમાં મોટા પાયા પર એક સાયન્સ કોલેજ અને બીજી ફાર્માસ્યુટિકલ કોલેજનું કામકાજ શરૂ થઈ ગયું છે. જ્યારે એન્જિનિયરિંગ કોલેજના પાયા નંખાઈ ગયા છે. આ કોલેજો અમદાવાદમાં સ્થાપવાથી અમદાવાદને મોટો લાભ થવાનો સંભવ છે....’

[“I believe that in the near future we can easily open factories for soap, medicine, chemicals and engineering. In order to create a ground for such blossoming and to address the lack of experts in different areas, leading citizens of the city have already started establishing many colleges. In the last three years work has already begun on a science college on a grand scale and the foundation for an engineering college has already begun. Ahmedabad is going to reap the benefits from the establishment of these colleges in the city.” (translated from Umashankar: 1978, 41)]

Umashankar Joshi's response to this was unequivocal. He was extremely critical of Kasturbhai for considering the opening of colleges as a step forward in the direction of producing experts to serve the industries. He felt Kasturbhai was eager to establish ‘factories of education’ for the ‘benefit of industrialists’ and not for the city of Ahmedabad. As the plan to establish Gujarat University was being discussed and finalized during that period, Umashankar asked a pertinent question at the end of his comment, ‘Are we establishing a university for Kasturbhai and company?’



નવા ઉદ્યોગો સ્થાપવામાં ખૂટતી એક ચીજ-નિષ્ણાતો તે પેદા કરવા માટે કેળવણીનાં કારખાનાં ઊભાં થાય એની અગત્ય ઉપર વિદ્વાન ઉદ્યોગપતિએ ભાર મૂક્યો છે, તેમાં એ ઉમેરવાનું રહે છે કે 'નિષ્ણાતોની ઊણપ દૂર કરવા અમદાવાદના અગ્રેસર શહેરીઓ'ના જે મંડળે સંક પછી એક કોલેજોની સ્થાપના કરવા માંડી છે તે અમદાવાદ એજ્યુકેશન સોસાયટીના કદાચ તેઓશ્રી પોતે જ પ્રમુખ છે અને એક બાજુ અહીં અમદાવાદમાં કોલેજો નીકળી તે સાથે બીજી બાજુ વલસાડમાં એમનું રંગોનું કારખાનું પણ નીકળે છે.

તો, સાહસિક ઉદ્યોગપતિઓને કેળવણીના નિયોજનમાં-વિશ્વવિદ્યાલયપ્રવૃત્તિમાં રસ લેવાને કારણ છે. (અમદાવાદમાં એક શિક્ષણસમારંભમાં થોડાક કરોડપતિઓએ રંગમંચ શોભાવ્યો હતો. વિદ્યા સાથે સંબંધ હોય એવાં એક ત્યાં શ્રી વિદ્યાગૌરી નીલકંઠ હતાં.) અંગત આર્થિક મહત્ત્વાકાંક્ષાઓનો માર્ગ અનુસરવા માટે વિશ્વવિદ્યાલયપ્રવૃત્તિનું—એટલે કે કેળવણીના ઉદ્યોગનું એક પૂરક ઉદ્યોગ તરીકેનું મહત્ત્વ તેઓ સમજે છે. શ્રી કસ્તુરભાઈના વિચારોનો પરિચય કર્યા પછી એ બાબતે શંકા રહેતી નથી. અમદાવાદમાં સાહિત્યપરિષદના પ્રમુખપદેથી ગાંધીજીએ સાહિત્ય અંગે જે પ્રશ્ન કર્યો હતો કે આપણે સાહિત્ય 'કસ્તુરભાઈ એન્ડ કંપની માટે' રચવું છે તેનો જ પડઘો આજે બાર વરસે પાડવાનો રહે છે કે અમદાવાદમાં વિશ્વવિદ્યાલય 'કસ્તુરભાઈ એન્ડ કંપની માટે' રચવાનું છે?

[The learned industrialist emphasizes the importance of starting up education factories to produce the experts needed to establish new industries. One only needs to add that he himself is perhaps the president of Ahmedabad Education Society, the society of 'leading citizens of India' that has started building up one college after another 'to address the lack of experts in different areas'. If he starts colleges in Ahmedabad on one hand, he starts a chemical factory Valsad on the other.

So there is a reason why these enterprising industrialists are interested in the organization of education and in the activities of the university...They believe that the importance of the activities of a university are in pursuing the path of personal financial ambitions -- in other words the role of the education industry is to be a subsidiary of other industries. There remains little doubt about this matter in the light of Kasturbhai's views. Once when Gandhiji was in Ahmedabad, speaking at the Sahitya Parishad he had posed a question about literature that do we need to create literature for 'Kasturbhai and Co.' Today after twelve years we only have to echo the same, that in Ahmedabad do we want to build a university for 'Kasturbhai and Company'? (Translated from Umashankar. 1978. 42.)

The differences between the mill owners and the poet continued over the nature and the function of the proposed university in Ahmedabad. As early as 1938 Anandshankar Dhruv, President of the GES had been dreaming of a university (“Colleges are the limbs of a university and our ultimate aim is the Gujarat University” is known to have said; and again, “A university in Gujarat has not remained a mere dream with me. It reflects my conscious state.”) The members of the GES, foreseeing the day when there would be a Gujarat University independent of Bombay University, had the sagacity to purchase 100 acres of land in the Navrangpura area with the idea of locating institutions of learning in a large campus with extensive playing fields and room for expansion. Towards this end, the GES bought 525 more acres; the cost of Rs70 lakhs was borne partially by the Government (then the Government of Bombay). With independence in 1947, B.G. Kher, who was chief minister of Bombay State and also Minister for Education, succumbing to the pressure from people of Gujarat, declared that three regional universities would be established in Gujarat, Maharashtra and Karnataka. The committee to advise the minister on Gujarat was led by G.V. Mavlankar, an active member of the GES. By 1949 the Gujarat University Act was passed accepting the Mavlankar committee recommendations’ and the Gujarat University Trust was formed. Under the Chairmanship of Sardar Vallabhai Patel, Rs 42 lakhs were collected and the dream was realized. The Government of Bombay State made no financial contribution towards the establishment of Gujarat University. The chief minister of Bombay had introduced the bill for Gujarat University Act with a comment that ‘Gujarat was “lakshmipujak” [worshipper of wealth] and not “saraswati pujak” [worshipper of knowledge]. Umashankar Joshi was upset at his remarks and he wrote an article in ‘Sanskriti’, pointing out the control of the mill owners on educational institutions. He wrote, “લક્ષ્મીનું વાહન ધુવડ છે. આજ સુધી ગુજરાતમાં હંસવાહિની સરસ્વતી ધુવડવાહિની હતી તે ચાલ્યું. હવે એ

વિકૃતિનો અંત આવવો જોઈએ.” [The carrier of Lakshmi is the owl. Till today Saraswati has been riding an owl instead of a swan in Gujarat and it was accepted. But this abnormality has to end now] (Umashankar. 1978. 93). Umashankar’s stand notwithstanding, Kasturbhai retained his prominent position in establishing the new university as he had been with the colleges. It was the GES College of Commerce that housed the Gujarat University in its very earliest years and the Gujarat University Trust received a donation of 6.64 lakhs from Kasturbhai. GES surrendered about 400 acres of land adjacent to its existing colleges to build the academic complex, teacher’s housing and the hostels of the new university. In the next ten years GES worked consistently for the development of many aspects related to the education sector by starting up schools and colleges for teacher training, for example H K Primary Training College (1956) as well as a higher secondary school GES High School (1960), and a teachers training institution GES Teachers’ College (1952).

The period of the 1960s onwards saw little activity within GES; in fact the CA classes which were run by the PG centre at GESCC were taken away and added to the mix of a few diploma courses in supply chain management. This had something to do with sharp competition from others aspiring to set up educational institutions as Gujarat saw phenomenal growth after the creation of the separate state in 1960. The student enrollment in higher education saw a ten percent rise from 16,800 in 1950 to more than 162,000 in 1971-72. The number of colleges affiliated to Gujarat University saw a thirteen percent rise as the number increased from 31 to 235. The colleges were no longer limited to urban areas. There was increased accessibility geographically and also linguistically, as the university had switched from English to Gujarati as the principal language of instruction and administration (Spodek. 118). The spread of, and desire for, higher education now brought more people from different caste groups into

the field, earlier populated by upper castes and *Mahajans*. Many caste groups saw the setting up of educational institutions as an opportunity to gain power. Establishing an educational institution put the founder in the powerful position of patron, able to provide employment (appointing principals, faculty and staff members) and admission into colleges to members of their own community. This in turn would allow upward social mobility, possibilities for migration, wealth accumulation, and more political support. The power also afforded chances to make contact with political leaders, businessmen and bankers of the city. It was no small thing to be in a position to influence admissions and policies at the level of the institution, as well as at the level of the university through the principals of one's own institutions (Spodek 184-88). The entire educational project, in other words, meant consolidation of many forms of social capital. In the period after 1960s GES had many more competitors from different caste groups vying to find a place in the academic arena. It is difficult to say whether GES was silent because they had done all that they could have; or because they were focusing on quality over quantity, or because the competition from various caste groups had intensified; or there was a lack of leadership; or because the Government's voice in faculty appointments and other related areas had increased; or because there were periods of political unrest in Gujarat and India; or because the reduced role of the management in institution building had left them slightly more indifferent. All or some of these factors left the GES in the doldrums for forty odd years. Then in 1999, in the wake of policies connected with globalization, education became important again and relevant to the growth of the nation. As the state started announcing its insolvency in its capacity to sustain a huge and ever-growing network of higher education and the political climate shifted to allow self-financed colleges to be established in Gujarat, there was more room for many players.

Many at GES felt that the time had come for the Society to once again seize the day. Mrs. I, then a faculty member at GESCC, believed that the way forward was through self-financed colleges; these would mean ‘less interference’ from the Government in faculty appointments and admissions. For many long years the Principals of colleges had lost complete freedom in the management of their institutions. “During faculty appointment, for example” she says, “there would be one person from GES and a clique of other people including government representatives, university representatives, external experts etc. who would push their candidate through” (excerpt from an interview with Prof. I). Retired Prof. R, the then principal of GES. College of Commerce, was instrumental in convincing the management to take a step in this direction. He remembers the days when he expended much energy in setting out a convincing case. “In 1998 the self-financed era started. Principal W was the vice chancellor and shri L was the pro-chancellor of the University. The proposal came from the university people, with many of whom I was in touch, that self-financed colleges were about to open, and GLS and Som-Lalit were trying to form these institutions. At GES we earlier believed that the government needed to give the grant for student support; there was practically a philosophy that it should. So I had to speak a lot to Priyakant Shah and Shrenikbhai and other members about how you need to change with changing times. There is also this question of competition and if you do not do it now you will be a late starter and there will be problems”(from an interview with retired Prof. R). Government grants for books were also entirely insufficient, not to mention a host of regulations related to selection, recruitment and admissions, according to retired Prof. R. It seemed meaningless in this situation to rely on government, especially when grants that came from the government were not enough even to pay the rental/opportunity cost of the buildings. He got the management to

concede to the idea, and after some political turbulence in 1999, the Society was granted the permission to operate three self-financed colleges from its existing campuses: GES Institute of Business Administration (GESIBA), GES Institute of Commerce (GESIC), and GSE. Institute of Computer Applications (GESICA), later to be renamed GES Institute of Computer Studies GESICS by 1999. The management was pleased, says Prof. R, as they got a lot of funds from the self-financed colleges., GESIC, for example, in the very first year got 1.5 crore surplus because the fee regulation had not yet come into effect in its very first year. GES ran four institutes in one building-- GESCC building for the first few years. In the morning the GESIC ran its self-financed undergraduate programme in commerce; in the afternoon the second self-financed programme of BBA, with a lower student strength, operated in the same building along with GESCC's grant-in-aid B.Com. College. GESBCA functioned in the morning from a hall in the annex that was converted into a computer lab. A few years later the society gave money from the B.K. Majumdar fund for a new, separate building for GESIBA, and the institute was renamed as GESIBA. During 2003-04 the Society experimented with a Centre for Professional Education, the GES. Centre for Professional Education. The GESCC had a PG center for many years and within it they had, at some point, added coaching classes for CA students. In 2003 they delinked the CA coaching from the PG centre and started an autonomous center for professional education that offered diploma courses in International Business, Supply Chain and Logistics Management, Practical Accounting, Financial Management and many other areas. After retiring Prof. R took over the leadership of the centre that functioned first independently and later as part of a new university that the Society set up before winding down in 2014.

The period between 2000 to 2013 was a very active period for policy making in the area of higher education.. The Centre had taken up higher education in its list of

priorities and was determined to engage in a complete overhaul of the system, beginning with building institutions of national importance and setting up Central universities.

The state of Gujarat, ruled by Narendra Modi from 2001 to 2014, saw many initiatives in the field of education. It has been one of the important sectors represented in every biennial investors summit called Vibrant Gujarat held by the government of Gujarat. Gujarat Education Minister Bhupendra Chudasama said at the beginning of the 2017 summit, "Out of 185 proposals received by us, a record-breaking 157 MoUs will be signed during the 'Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit' this year, which is around 170 per cent more than what was signed in 2015," the minister said. "Of these, 16 MoUs are for investment intentions ranging between Rs 100 crore and Rs 1,500 crore, 6 MoUs for investments between Rs 50 crore and Rs 100 crore, and the rest below Rs 50 crore," he said (source: <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/education/story/vibrant-gujarat-global-summit/1/852893.html>).

Private Universities have been a reality in Gujarat since 2003. Even when the 1995 Private Universities (Establishment and Regulation) Bill was pending, the state was marching ahead into a new era by establishing universities through state legislation. The DAIICT, one of the first private universities to be established in 2003 by an act of the Gujarat Legislature that conferred on it the status of a university (Gujarat Government Gazette Volume XLIV, Thursday, 6 March, 2003), calls itself the product of the fourth wave of educational innovation in Gujarat, the first being the nationalist wave led by Gandhian experiments, the second with private institutions, the third led by Kasturbhai Lalbhai and Vikram Sarabhai and the fourth the wave of privatization.

It was in Wave 4 when the focus shifted to higher education and private participation. One of the institutes created during this period is DA-IICT. It is a University under the State Act of Gujarat. The DA-IICT

was established in Gandhinagar in 2001. It is the only advanced institute named after the Late Dhirubhai Ambani, the founder of Reliance Group. (source: [http://www.daiict.ac.in/daiict/institute/about\\_daiict.html](http://www.daiict.ac.in/daiict/institute/about_daiict.html))

Under the leadership of the then chief minister Narendra Modi and the Commissioner of Higher and Technical Education, Jayanti Ravi, Gujarat was actively involved in reforming the sector by introducing multi-level reforms (to be discussed in the next chapter). Though the rising demand for university education from the middle class had led the government to acknowledge the need for private education it took seven years from 2003, when the first private universities were established, for the state to pass the Private University Act of 2009.

### ***ANACT***

**to provide for establishment and incorporation of private Universities in the State of Gujarat, with emphasis to provide for qualitative and industry relevant higher education and to regulate their functions and for the matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.**

The trustees of the Gujarat Education Society proposed a plan for setting up a state private university in 2009 called the University of Western Gujarat. The Society got the permission and in 2009 UWG came into existence with its three self-financed institutions under its umbrella. The statutes of UWG passed by the state assembly allowed the transfer of all institutions, school and colleges run by GES to the new umbrella of UWG. Once transferred, it was assumed that these colleges would automatically turn into self-financed colleges. One of the members of the GES Governing Council spoke to the Times of India News Agency in 2009 about the aspiration of the society to turn the Ahmedabad Area into an education district:



Eleven colleges and six schools in the city are currently affiliated with GES, most campuses within the periphery of about 3-5 km in the Navrangpura-university area. Though we have requested more land, to begin with, campuses for the new courses will be developed on the existing property of GES. With this, the Navrangpura area will be perhaps the country's largest cluster of educational institutes in such proximity - qualifying for an educational district status....Some of the 11 colleges run by GES currently still affiliated with Gujarat University, will be pulled into UWG, while some others will get affiliated with Gujarat Technological University” (<http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-aes-members-aspire-to-transform-a-bad-into-india-s-first-education-district-1235132>).

GES asked for five of its oldest and most reputed colleges to be transferred to UWG, one of which is affiliated to Gujarat Technological University and four affiliated to Gujarat University. But in the event things did not turn out quite as planned as many of the grant-in-aid colleges were unwilling to join the upcoming UWG on account of perceived uncertainties about their jobs, pensions, and provident fund. There were widespread protests from students and teachers of major grant-in-aid GES run colleges, namely, GES Arts College, GES Commerce College, GES Science College, GES Pharmacy College and GES Teachers' College. This situation led to an amendment in the Private University Act of the state by September 2011, following a two-day session in the state assembly. The new law mandated that none of the colleges receiving a financial grant from the government can seek affiliation to a private university. UWG had to start with just four institutes offering undergraduate programmes in commerce, management, and computer application and two masters programmes in management and computer application (GESIBA, GESIC, GESICS, and Post Graduate Institute of Management - PGIM) all clustered under Amrut Mody School of Management after a Rs. 15 crore donation from the Amrut Mody family. Gradually the university expanded to establish an Institute of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in 2011 with a huge donation of Rs 50 crore that came from GICT towards a School of Engineering and Technology; an Institute of Life Sciences in 2012 as part of a School

of Science and Technology; a Venture Studio, a Centre for Innovation in Business Design with Rs. 13 crore from Bombay Investors; several integrated masters programmes in 2014, and a Centre for Heritage Management in 2015 that offers masters programmes in heritage management. In 2015 the university went through a change of guard with people in the top management resigning after five years of service. The university from this point enters into what the Chancellor of the University calls the ‘second phase of institutional building’. A significant amount of effort from this point onwards had been towards restructuring of schools and programmes, realignment of syllabi, increasing standards of excellence, instituting processes performance of evaluation at multiple level, articulating policies for faculty development and promotion, reducing the number of students and increasing the quality of interaction, and in all these building of a single university identity rather than multiple institutional identities. An identity of a university that is liberal in its approach and research oriented in its practice.

UWG is a private, non-profit university dedicated to rigorous academic pursuit with a focus on building enquiry as a value through interdisciplinary learning.

We provide liberal education that prepares students to think deeply and creatively across fields and emerge as independent thinkers and compassionate leaders who can innovatively engage with the complex challenges of our societies. As a research university, we are committed to the discovery of ideas that enhance our understanding of the issues that face our society.

(source: <https://ahduni.edu.in/>)

GES has just begun to engage the changing 21<sup>st</sup> century through this latest establishment. The university has big plans. It has already built a sports complex and is planning to have a center for performing arts. It has aspirations to start schools of law, biomedical sciences, as well as a school of arts and sciences.

UWG was born out of a desire to be free of the clutches of the government that were confining, a desire to experiment, to excel in an environment of freedom; a kind

of freedom that was not possible in grant-in-aid colleges. But are there any challenges inherent in the very concept of privatization of education that are yet to be answered? Does privatization change the contours of higher education inside a university campus, inside a department of English? What does privatization mean to departments of the Humanities? The next two chapters address these questions.

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<sup>i</sup> Quoted in “Ahmedabad-Gujaratna Shaikshanik Vikasma Ahmedabad Education Societynu Pradan (1934-1948 A.D.) – Ek Abhyaas.