

Higher Education and the Role of Teachers

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The importance of higher education has been very succinctly expressed by our first Prime Minister Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru, in his address to convocation of Allahabad University in 1947 in the following words:

“A University stands for humanism, for tolerance, for reason, for the adventure of ideas and for the search of truth. It stands for the onward march of the human race towards even higher objectives. If the Universities discharge their adequately, then it will be well with the nation and the people”.

A basic character of education is that it informs a person and it enlightens her/him about things she/he does not know and thus initiates her/him into asking all sorts of questions about nature, about life, about society and its organizations. One is made capable of thinking for herself and finding answers to the questions which one considers important or significant for one's life. In this sense, education is said to be a 'liberating' force. It makes the individual free and capable of ordering his/her life according to one's own choice or playing a more active role in society either to preserve it or to change it. This basic feature of education has led, throughout history, to education being used as an instrument of struggle, for liberation or for suppression both by the individual and by the society. The system of Higher education is the outcome of a long socio-historical process of evolution. In a brief presentation such as this we can only highlight some important aspects of a character of education and its development; a fuller account can be found in the literature some of which is listed at the end of the unit.