



Maulana Azad Memorial Lecture

on

**Higher Education in India
Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow**

by

Aparna Basu

Chairperson, National Gandhi Museum, Rajghat, New Delhi
Former Professor of History
University of Delhi



NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION
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Higher Education in India Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

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*Chairperson, National Gandhi Museum,
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Higher Education in India

Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

Aparna Basu

I consider it a great honour and privilege to have been invited to deliver this year's Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Memorial Lecture. I am very grateful to the National University of Educational Planning and Administration for having invited me to do so.

It was after considerable thought and deliberation, that I decided to speak on higher education. The lecture is divided into five sections and the transition from one to the other may be a little abrupt. The first part is on Maulana Azad, his ideas on education and the initiatives taken during the years when he was Education Minister in the Union Government. The second deals briefly with the history of higher education beginning with the universities in ancient India. The third traces the beginning of higher education in India with the coming of British rule. The fourth depicts the post independence scenario

in Indian higher education. Finally, I refer to the challenges we face today.

Maulana Azad had a multifaceted personality. His stature, both as an intellectual and a Congress leader during the freedom movement, can be matched by only a few of his contemporaries. He represented the now all too rare types of Muslim savants who flourished in the Courts of Delhi. Deeply versed in the philosophies of the East and West, he contributed to the national movement in India by the power of his pen. Born in Mecca in 1888, on 11th November (so today happens to be his 129th birthday), his early education was at home and then at the famous Al-Azhar University at Cairo. At the age of 15, he had acquired a remarkable grasp over Persian and Urdu and was so learned in Muslim theology and philosophy that he was looked upon as something of a prodigy.

Azad was not a mass leader. He was a scholar by temperament and a lover of books. He loved the quiet of his library rather than the hectic life of the politician. He was essentially a man of letters. A voracious reader and a versatile writer, his command over the Urdu language was unsurpassed.

While all the numerous schemes which were formulated and implemented during the period when Azad was Education Minister may not have been initiated by him, according to Dr. Saiyidain, who was closely associated with him all through these years, in important policy matters leadership and inspiration always came from Azad himself.¹

In January 1947, Azad took charge as independent India's first Education Minister and in a press conference held in February, he defined the relationship between education and the problem of national reconstruction. "Nothing has a more important bearing on the quality of the individual than the type of education imparted. A truly liberal and humanitarian education may transform the outlook of the people and set it on the path of progress and prosperity, while an ill-conceived and unscientific system might destroy all the hopes which have been cherished by generations of pioneers in the cause of national freedom."²

After the first National Planning Commission was set up in 1950, at a meeting

¹ K.G. Saiyidin, *Maulana Azad's Contribution to Education*, M.S. University of Baroda, 1961, p.3.

² *Ibid*,p.30.

of the Central Advisory Board of Education in 1952, Maulana Azad said: "I consider that the planning of education on a national scale is perhaps even more important than national planning in economic and industrial development. Economic and industrial planning creates material goods. Education, on the other hand, trains the citizens and, if the training fails to inculcate the right attitude and ideals and encourages fissiparous tendencies, the security and welfare of the community is at stake. Our reconstruction of education must, therefore, aim at creating a unity of purpose among all our nationals and developing in them a common outlook which will transcend and harmonize the differences in history, background, language and culture that exist among various sections of the people."³

He explained this further by stating that the fulfillment of the Commission's plans will depend on the quality and character of our people which can be improved only by a system of creative education. "We want in India of the future men and women of vision, courage and honesty of purpose who will be

³ *Speeches of Maulana Azad: 1947-1958*, Publications Division, Govt. of India, revised ed. 1989 p. 208.

able to play their part worthily in every field of national activity".⁴ He urged the Planning Commission to increase the budget on education as he felt that not enough was being spent by the government on this.

Azad wanted to encourage the growth of science and technology at all levels of education. In his opening address to the Indian Institute of Technology at Kharagpur in 1951, he said "One of the first decisions I took on assuming charge as Minister was that we must improve the facilities for higher technical education in the country that we would ourselves meet most of our needs...I look forward to the day when the facilities of technical education in India will be of such a high level that people from abroad will come to India for higher scientific and technical training".⁵

Several new institutions were established during Maulana Azad's tenure as Education Minister. The Central Board of Education was strengthened in its coordinating role. The National Institute of

⁴ *Ibid.* p.209.

⁵ Prem Kirpal, 'The Educationist' in *India's Maulana, Abul Kalam Azad, Centenary Volume 1*, ICCR, Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd. 1990, p.187.

Basic Education was set up to impart advanced training and conduct research. The All India Council of Secondary Education was entrusted with the task of reviewing progress of secondary education. The Central Bureau of Textbook Research as well the Bureau of Educational and Vocational Guidance were established. The University Grants Commission was established in 1953 on the model of the British UGC to financially assist universities and maintain uniform standards. The All India Council for Technical Education was reorganized. The Central Institute of Education was established to upgrade teacher training. National Laboratories were set up.

In the cultural field the Sangeet Natak Akademi, the Lalit Kala Akademi and the Sahitya Akademi were started. The National Gallery of Modern Art was opened in 1954 and the nucleus of the National Museum started functioning. The National Archives of India and the National Library in Calcutta were developed. Azad laid the foundation of the Indian Council of Cultural Relations.

The question may well be asked as to what was Azad's own contribution to the educational development which on the whole followed the recommendations of the various

Commissions and Committees? According to Saiyidain, if Azad had not been "at the helm of affairs, the over-all pattern and spirit of education would have been different. I believe that his most significant contribution to education at this crucial stage of our history, has not been in the details of the new pattern that is gradually emerging but in the broad, humane and balanced vision which he brought to bear on the entire educational situation in the country and his decisive leadership in many matters of controversy".⁶

For instance, when the role of Christian missionary societies in education came under criticism, Azad took a very balanced view. He paid a generous tribute to their pioneering role in the field of education, medical and social services and reassured them that their humanitarian work would receive due encouragement and appreciation. Similarly, he recognized the value of 'public schools' which were being criticized for being elitist, but in a speech at Gwalior told them that they must adjust themselves to the new India which sought to give equality of opportunity to all. Democracy meant eschewing social exclusiveness.

⁶ Sayidin, *op.cit.* p.32

When English as a language of instruction was being attacked, Azad took a realistic view and advocated a policy of not weakening it immediately and of going slow in replacing it.

Maulana Azad subscribed to the highest human values – intellectual, moral, social and religious. He maintained a balanced position between the radicals who wanted extreme changes and the conservatives who wanted status quo.

Higher education has a history almost 2600 years old. Of these years, the first 1800 were dominated by India which had the oldest universities, the most ancient among them being Takshasila or Taxila (now in Pakistan) which was established in the 6th century BC. India had six other world class universities – Nalanda, Vallabhi, Vikramshila, Odantapuri, Jagadalala and Somapura which all existed between the 10th and 12th centuries AD. These were all Buddhist seats of learning. Some of the innovations we talk of today existed in these universities. These were global universities in as much as they attracted scholars from outside India. Chinese scholars came to Nalanda. When Hieun Tsang visited Nalanda

in the 10th century it had 10,000 students. The King of Java gave a handsome donation to it. Taxila was famous for its philosophers among the Greeks. From the romantic history of Apollonius of Tyana by Philostratus, it is clear that in the first century A.D. Indians and Greeks at Takshasila knew each other's philosophy. Alexander the Great is said to have spent some time at Taxila to interact with Indian philosophers. Taxila was the capital of the province of Gandhara and this may be one of the reasons why many renowned scholars from across India gathered there, prominent among them being Chanakya, Panini and Charak. These universities were residential and taught theology, law, medicine and liberal arts. There were strict interviews before students were admitted and peer review before they got their final degrees. Unfortunately, these universities were all destroyed violently by barbaric hordes who invaded India. Taxila was destroyed in 450 AD and the others in the 12th century.⁷ After their destruction the university system as such was not revived by

⁷ F.E. Keay, *Indian Education in Ancient and later Times*, Oxford University Press, 1956 ed.

Shailendra Mehta, Lecture given at MIT, Cambridge, Mass. On internet.

the Muslim rulers who could have drawn on the example of the great universities of their Golden Age in Europe and West Asia.

Universities in Europe were being set up when Indian Universities were being destroyed. The first university in Europe was at Bologna in Italy which was established in 1088 AD and then Paris, 1150 AD. Oxford came later in 1096 AD and Cambridge in 1209 AD. By 1499 AD, Europe, which had 60 more universities and for the next 700 years dominated the field of higher education, and unlike India, the European universities survive to this day. Wilhelm von Humboldt created the first modern university in Berlin based on the principle of the unity of teaching and research, whereas Napoleon established the *grandes ecoles* which were small, compact and highly selective institutions designed to give expression to the principle of 'careers open to talent'. Harvard was established in 1636 AD but American universities really started developing in the 20th century, particularly after the two World Wars (1914-1918 and 1939-1945) when a large number of scientists, economists and other intellectuals emigrated from Europe to USA. Gradually American universities became

more independent of state control and were governed by the alumni.

English higher education in India can said to have begun 200 years ago with the establishment of Hindu College in Calcutta in 1817, the first 'Europeanized' institution of higher learning. Here, as well as in similar colleges which sprang up in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, the language of instruction was English and the aim was "the cultivation of European literature and European science."⁸ The first three Indian universities at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, established in 1857, were modeled on London University, at that time purely an examining body, which admitted to its tests only students trained in affiliated colleges. Subsequently, whenever the government of India thought of reforming universities, the models sought to be emulated were always British. Never was any attention paid to India's ancient universities. But what officials in London or Calcutta and later Delhi formulated could not always be implemented. Lord Curzon on his arrival in

⁸ *Presidency College, Calcutta, Centenary Volume*, 1965, West Bengal Govt. Press, p.12.

India in 1898 was astonished to find how little resemblance the copy bore to the original.⁹

Independent India inherited a system of education where literacy was abysmally low (less than 15% of the population was literate); primary, vocational and technical education had been neglected; examinations dominated the system of teaching; the method of teaching was authoritarian and did not encourage students to think for themselves; the content was too literary and Western; there was an over emphasis on the learning of English; there were structural imbalances and serious inequalities in the system and government control over higher education was considerable.

The first sector of education to receive attention after Independence was higher education and a Commission was set up in 1948, while Maulana Azad was Education Minister, under the Chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. The Report submitted in 1949 made several general observations regarding the aims and objectives of university education. It also made some specific recommendations such as

⁹ T. Raleigh, ed., *Lord Curzon in India-Selections of his Speeches*, London, 1906, pp. 317-18, 320.

12 years of schooling before entering a college, large well equipped intermediate colleges in states; more occupational or vocational institutes; to avoid overcrowding the maximum number of students in a Arts or Science Faculty should be 3000 and in an Arts College 1500. The number of working hours should be increased; tutorial system should be introduced; there should be no prescribed text-books; there should be refresher courses for teachers and so on.

Indian higher education is today the second largest in the world, next only to China. It has expanded at a very fast pace since independence. According to the UGC, Annual Report, 2014-15, the number of universities has increased from 20 in 1950 to 677 in 2014. As per UGC data of September 2016, there are 47 Central Universities, 353 State Universities, 123 Deemed Universities, 74 institutions of national importance and 246 private universities. The number of colleges has increased 74 times, from 500 in 1950 to 40,760. The total estimated enrolment in all higher education institutions in 2014-15 was 3.3 crores.

In terms of the number of students enrolled in colleges and universities, India

ranks second in the world. The findings of Ernst and Young show that with nearly 140 million people belonging to the college going age group, one in every 4 graduates in the world will be an Indian.

The academic quality and standards of Indian higher education, however, are far from satisfactory. Standards and facilities for undergraduate teaching in many colleges are worse than in some of the better schools. India has nearly 700 universities but sadly there has been little focus on original research, innovations or breakthroughs in science. Not a single Indian university could make it to the top 200 universities that are part of the Times Higher Education world university ranking. No Indian university was even among the top 10 Asian universities.

“Indian higher education seems like an enigma enveloped in contradictions. Pockets of excellent teaching and research are surrounded by a sea of substandard colleges.”¹⁰ There is a wide variation in the quality of higher education in India. While at the top there are institutions of high quality such as the Indian Institutes of Technology

¹⁰ Philip Altbach and Suma Chitnis, ed., *Higher Education Reforms in India*, Sage Publications, 1993.

(IITs), Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), National Institutes of Technology (NITs), All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) and the Indian Institutes of Information Technology (IIITs) which have been globally acclaimed for their high quality of education. The National Law Institutes, the Tata Institute of Social Science, the Delhi School of Economics, the Indian Institute of Science are all institutions of excellence which have maintained high standards. A number of excellent new private universities have emerged in the last few years, mainly, through philanthropic initiatives.

These institutions function as prestigious centres, but unfortunately, universities have not grown into centres of advanced knowledge and learning. The older universities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras are in a bad shape. Only a very few central universities have managed to maintain their standards.

At the other end of the spectrum there are a large number of institutions mainly in engineering, IT and management which are of poor quality, ill-equipped, and operating with unqualified staff, primarily aimed at the market demand - their objective is to extract a

capitation fee and deliver a degree deserved or not. Hardly 20% of the engineering graduates are qualified enough to be given employment. A lax and corrupt environment has led to a proliferation of such institutions under the patronage of people with money and influence but little interest in education. Politicians recognize that one of the easiest ways to please the electorate is to open new colleges.

In between these two extremes are the majority of institutions which vary in terms of infrastructure, library and laboratory facilities, quality of teaching, etc.

After 160 years of the foundation of the first three universities, Indian universities have not been able to extricate themselves from their past. There is no dearth of diagnoses made and remedies suggested but problems still persist.

What are the challenges that Indian higher education faces in the 21st century? As Philip Altbach pointed out some years ago the reform of higher education is a difficult process in any country.¹¹ Most of the problems are well known but continue to

¹¹ Philip Altbach and Suma Chitnis, *op.cit*, p.13.

persist. And you will, therefore, forgive me for repeating them. They are (1) the problem of increasing social inclusion without lowering standards; (2) the dominance of the examination system; (3) reducing the number and gradually eliminating affiliating colleges and the need for autonomous colleges (4) paucity of funding which in turn leads to various problems; (5) need for more vocational institutions and skill training; (6) need for better secondary schools; (7) the inadequate use of information technology and on line teaching; and (8) political interference and lack of autonomy.

It is now widely recognized that universities cannot only be for the privileged few. Their doors must be open to the underprivileged and economically weaker sections of society. We have tried to do this by the policy of quotas and reservation. In the United States this is known as diversity. Many American universities have policies for increasing diversity. The initiative for this has come mainly from within the universities and not imposed by political authorities. Right from the primary school stage, private as well as public schools encourage the enrolment of

children from different ethnic, racial and economic backgrounds.

It is not possible to maintain a high academic standard and make our colleges more socially inclusive unless we provide good quality education to boys and girls of all castes and communities and from the economically weaker sections in our schools. As better equipped students go to colleges, it will enable universities to be socially more inclusive without compromising on academic standards too much.

The main objective of our education system is, unfortunately, to prepare children to do well in examinations which are based on rote memory; questions are asked from textbooks and students who are able to reproduce what is in the textbooks score high marks. Even the task of preparing students for examinations is taken over by coaching classes and bazaar notes. The focus of education should be on creativity, increasing the child's intellectual curiosity and critical thinking. The examination system should be geared to understanding, rather than the ability to reproduce the textbook script. This is not a new problem. The University Education Commission Report (1948-49) said:

“We are convinced that if we are to suggest one single reform in university education, it should be that of examination”.¹² The Secondary Education Commission (1953) repeated this sentiment by regretting that “Our system of education is very much examination ridden...The examinations determine not only the content of education but also the method of teaching-in fact the entire approach to education.”¹³

In 1957, a committee appointed by UGC with S.R. Dongerkery as Chairman, made several recommendations to improve the academic and technical aspects of examinations. UGC, as a follow up process, invited Dr. Benjamin Bloom from the University of Chicago to advise the Commission on examination reform. The Report of the Education Commission, 1964-66 lamented the lack of progress in examination reform. In 1988, UGC stated that the examination system should be less prone to manipulation and corruption. None of these reforms have been seriously implemented.

¹² *University Education Commission (1948-49)*, Ministry of Education, Govt. of India, First Reprint ed., 1962, p. 328.

¹³ *Report of the Secondary Education Commission, 1953*, Publications Division, Govt. of India, pp. 145-46.

There is an enormous wastage in higher education as nearly 50% students fail. As the Radhakrishnan Commission observed almost 70 years ago, leaving aside these failures, even the standard of teaching and examination is so low, with a minimum of only 33% required for passing, that even those who pass are ill qualified to be employed. There is much talk of India's demographic dividend but unless the young people get a proper education or skill training how can they contribute to the country's development?

The system of affiliating colleges to the university is another problem. This was introduced in 1857. Surveying Indian education in 1901 at the Shimla Conference, Curzon observed: "Here the universities have no corporate existence. It is not a collection of buildings, it is scarcely even a site. It is a body that controls courses of study and sets examination papers to the students of affiliated colleges."¹⁴ A few years later he said that the connection of student to the university was nothing beyond the sheets of paper on which were printed the questions which he answers.

¹⁴ Aparna Basu, *The Growth of Education and Political Development in India*, OUP, New Delhi, 1973, pp. 12-17.

Calcutta University and University of Rajasthan each today have more than 1000 affiliated colleges. It is impossible to manage so many colleges from one central authority and hold examinations for so many students. Universities are unable to hold examinations or declare results in time. Examination papers leak. There is extensive copying, often mass copying. The Report on the Standards of University Education, published by UGC in 1965, analysed the academic, technical and administrative problems of the affiliated colleges and held that colleges must become independent, framing their own curriculum and holding their own examinations and granting degrees. There will be problems and there are risks involved but the experience of independent degree granting colleges in the United States for over 300 years has produced no disastrous consequences. In fact, the system has worked rather well. UGC has proposed autonomous colleges but there have been very few takers. The Report of the Committee for Evaluation of the New Education Policy, 2016, has recommended that no university should have more than 100 affiliated colleges.

The number of vocational institutes needs to be increased so that students after completing secondary school are not compelled to go to colleges. This is of course not a new suggestion and has been repeated by every education commission. It was first mentioned in Sir Charles Wood's Education Despatch of 1854. The Education Commission of 1882 advised the introduction of a "modern" side of education in High Schools and suggested the starting of industrial schools. After the Shimla Conference, Curzon constituted a committee to go into the question of industrial education. Subsequent Education Commissions have all talked of the need for vocational schools. While these have been started, we need many more. These institutes must have the requisite workshops, trainers and industry linkages. Admission should not be restricted to those who obtain a first division in class XII.

Universities have been facing an acute financial crisis for many years. The system of financing higher education needs reform. The grants-in-aid system introduced by the British in 1919 continues to date with little change. While student enrolment has increased, government expenditure per student has

actually declined. Government budgets cannot adequately fund higher education as primary education is starved of funds and we do not have unlimited resources. All central universities have been affected by the slashing of funds by UGC. As a result all aspects of university life are suffering.

The appointment of ad hoc teachers instead of tenured faculty is one result of this. A large number of posts are lying vacant especially in state universities and colleges because there is a reluctance on their part to fill posts on a regular basis in order to save the outgo on salaries of full time faculty. Moreover, the recruitment process in states through the Public Service Commission is a time consuming affair. The absence of a permanent faculty adversely affects the quality of research and teaching.

Paucity of funds has also forced libraries to cut down on the purchase of new books and subscription to journals, especially foreign journals which are expensive. The condition of state universities is even worse where virtually the entire budget is spent on salaries and other establishment charges, with hardly any funds left for libraries or laboratories.

The higher education sector can greatly benefit from the use of Information Communication Technology. Access to lectures and course material and interaction with top educational institutions in the world through virtual classrooms, on line tutorials and tests present enormous opportunities for participatory learning and global networking. With all the information required available on the internet, the method of teaching has to change. Classes have to become interactive. Students must be encouraged to participate in seminars, discussions and write essays.

The colonial legacy of control and interference by the government has continued. Successive governments of every political party have unabashedly tried to control and manipulate the system when in power at the centre or in the states by appointing their own loyalists to academic posts or governing bodies based on merit if possible, but otherwise, without. Universities have become battlegrounds for the promotion of every kind of personal and sectional interest. In all universities each time the process of selection of a Vice Chancellor begins, campus politics has a field day. Interference by political parties in

appointments to administrative and academic posts as well as in the control of students' unions disturbs teaching, examinations and academic life and is responsible for the decline of universities. The Committee for Evaluation of the New Education Policy, 2016, admits that the present system of appointing Vice Chancellors has "become prone to manipulation, which militates against the appointment of competent persons as VC with vision and leadership". It wants the process to be depoliticized and recommends that "the central and state governments come together and agree on common agenda for appointing persons of academic eminence and leadership qualities..." Surely, the parties in power at the centre and in the states are bound to politicize this process.

A university in modern times is ideally conceived as a space for the free exploration of the many dimensions of knowledge and multiple points of views through research in the natural and social sciences, the humanities as well as education in their more practical dimensions. Scholarship cannot progress unless divergent views are given room for expression. But today in our universities disputes are not about academic matters but

about salaries, promotions and distribution of seats and posts among different castes, communities and factions.

With the establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885 and the increasing criticism of British policies by the educated class, the government felt that English education posed a hazard to its rule. As Lord Curzon declared the first and foremost cause of political unrest in India was “the education we have given to the people of this country.”¹⁵ As the educated class became more vocal in its criticism, earlier doubts about launching English education in its passage to India were reinforced and gave new point to its dangers in an Indian setting. Did it not produce men who were “ill-regulated, averse from discipline, and in some cases actually disloyal?”¹⁶ As the government had moved out of the field of higher education, Indians had moved in with dangerous political consequences. Curzon formally abandoned the doctrine that the state should not interfere in higher education. Instead he was for a policy where the state could have the initiative and control a planned system from

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.9

¹⁶ *idem*

the centre. He believed that government had to reassert “that responsibility which had there had been a tendency to abdicate.”¹⁷

Curzon’s university reforms were vociferously opposed by the nationalists “as a political manifesto in an academic guise”. Gopal Krishna Gokhale led the opposition and said that the proposed reforms would make the universities departments of the state.

Thus were laid the foundations of the tussle between government control and the demand for university autonomy.

These aspects of colonial legacy have remained with us for 70 years. No government has seriously tried to rethink the issue as successive regimes criticize the previous one for interference but continue to maintain control.

The Committee for Evolution of the New Education Policy, 2016, in its Report recommends greater autonomy for universities and colleges but at the same time suggests that there should be a national curriculum for all colleges and an All India Education Service. While the

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.11

Report recommends reducing the powers and functions of UGC, it suggests a new National Higher Education Promotion and Management Act and the setting up of new bodies such as a Council of Education in each state which will approve new courses which will be taught. The Ministry of Human Resource Development tries to pressurize IITs to admit more students and control the Governing Bodies of IIMs and the appointment of Directors. We cannot get rid of the mind-set of government control of higher education.

Adherents of opposed viewpoints believe themselves possessed of Truth and as righteous persecutors of Untruth. Maulana Azad passionately advocated tolerance as one of the basic values of life. He believed that truth is not the monopoly of any one person, that India is a pluralistic society where people of different religions, castes, creeds and languages could live together in mutual peace and harmony.

Academic freedom is a non issue in totalitarian regimes. Only democracy which is underpinned by pluralism and skepticism with regard to absolute truth can encourage and tolerate free expression of ideas. Mao's

call for a blooming of a hundred flowers was welcomed as a promise of plurality and freedom of thought: unfortunately it turned out to be a ploy for smoking out and crushing of those critical of his shibboleths and preconceptions. But his idea of a garden of many hues is an apt metaphor for the ideal condition of a university campus.¹⁸

¹⁸ "Let a Hundred Flowers Bloom" by Aparna Basu and Madhuri Sondhi, *Tribune*,

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Professor Aparna Basu



Dr. Aparna Basu was Professor of History at the University of Delhi and retired as Head of the Department. She obtained her BA (Honours) from Bombay University, BA (Tripos), MA and Ph.D from the University of Cambridge, UK, and also MA from George Washington University, USA.

Professor Basu is currently Chairperson of the National Gandhi Museum, Rajghat, New Delhi. She is also President of the All India Committee for the Eradication of Illiteracy among Women. She is a Patron of the All India Women's Conference and Managing Trustee of the AIWC Education Trust as well as a Trustee of the Sarabhai Foundation, Ahmedabad. She is on the Governing Body of Indraprastha College, DU and of Sardar Patel School.

Dr. Basu has published many books and articles mainly on the History of Education and Women's History. Among her publications are – *Growth of Education and Political Development in India, 1898-1920*, (OUP) *Essays in the History of Indian Education*, (Concept), *Women's Struggle: A History of All India Women's Conference*, (Manohar) *History of Delhi University (Delhi University Press)*, *From Independence Towards Freedom: Indian Women since 1947*, (OUP) *Mridula Sarabhai: Rebel With a Cause*, (OUP) *Breaking Out of Invisibility*, Abbas Tyabji: *A biography*, (NBT) *Kasturba Gandhi: A Biography*. She is on the Editorial Board of *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*. She has been a Fellow of St. Antony's College, Oxford, Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford, and Wolfson College, Cambridge.