HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

CRISIS IN MANAGEMENT

V C KULANDAI SWAMY

HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA
CRISIS IN MANAGEMENT

India has one of the largest systems of higher education in the world. Since independence it has enormously expanded in terms of quantity and diversity of fields of knowledge. However, it has remained relatively unchanged insofar as the structure, the system of management and even functional objectives are concerned.

As we enter the 21st. century, higher education in India is still in a state of flux. A dissatisfied and highly critical public, an uninspired academia, shortages in funding, progressively consumer driven market, entry of private enterprise, globalization and a variety of other concerns demand that the long pending reforms be addressed and a meaningful restructuring of our higher education system be taken up without delay.

This volume brings together critical perspectives on and valuable insights into, several issues concerning tertiary education that have not been examined so closely and comprehensively. Prof. V C Kulandai Swamy addresses some of the issues ranging from the macro management of the system to micro management of institutions. He argues in his wide-ranging reflections over a period of almost two decades that our higher education system is in need of far-reaching changes.

The chapters in the volume look at key issues concerning:

+ Systemic Changes; Curriculum Changes

+ Autonomy and Decentralization
+ Academic Leadership; the Vice-Chancellor; the Faculty
+ Consumer Demand; Privatization
+ Globalization; Assessment and Accreditation
+ A Vision of the Future.

This book would be a valuable resource for education administrators, policy makers, teachers and students of higher education.

Higher Education in India
Crisis in Management

V.C. Kulandai Swamy

Editors
C.R.Pillai
P.R. Ramanujam

It is not a rule or regulation that really establishes discipline: it is not law that maintains order. It is not government that sustains culture. What matters in human existence are the institutions that society has built; the traditions that it has established and a value system it has evolved over the years. The culture of a society is made out of these building blocks: if they are destroyed for short-term gains or for managing a fleeting situation, we forfeit the gains of generations.

PROF. V.C. KULANDAI SWAMY
Presidential Address
at the 65th AIU Annual Convention (1990)
Association of Indian Universities

Contents

Preface

This volume has not been written in the form of a treatise on the subject moving from one chapter to the other in a logical sequence. It is not also the outcome of any deep study, or scholarly investigation, in the area of management of education. It is the result of a discriminating choice from, and careful editing of, an array of speeches delivered by me in the form of keynote presentations in conferences and seminars and addresses at convocations.

I was blessed with opportunities to serve various policy-making bodies as Member, Vice-Chairman or Chairman both at international level (bodies such as ACU, ICDE and AAOU) and at national level (bodies such as UGC, AICTE, JCVET, NCERT, AIU and ISTE). I have also had the privilege of serving as Member of Boards of Management or Executive Councils of such institutions as IISc., Bangalore; IIT, Chennai; JNU, Delhi; IIMC. Delhi; IIPA, Delhi; ICCR, Delhi; NIEPA, Delhi; ESCI, Hyderabad; NAS, Allahabad; and IEI, Calcutta. I was also fortunate enough to be a Vice-Chancellor for nearly 15 years in three different categories of universities, namely, Madurai Kamaraj University, which is a general university of arts and sciences, Anna University, which is an engineering and technological university and Indira Gandhi National Open University, which is a mega institution in distance education. They have several features that are common, and many characteristics that are unique to each of them. In general, they represent a wide spectrum that comprises all the variables that go to make the complex system of higher education in India.

This book is essentially a record of experience gained, knowledge acquired, information gathered and insight obtained during a long career as mentioned earlier. It was a long journey in which I was a traveller over four decades; not just a traveller, but one who, in his own humble way, attempted to change the course of the journey, or alter its pace, with faint streaks of impact at the macro level, and perhaps, a more perceptible effect at the micro level.

Higher education in India represents one of the largest systems of tertiary education in the world. It has demonstrated an ability for rapid expansion: has grown, since independence, 12 times larger in terms of number of universities, 23 times in respect of number of colleges. 30 times in student strength (1999–2000). It has produced, in all disciplines, enormous trained manpower whose services even in countries abroad have shown remarkable versatility and levels of excellence, which, although in part, may be attributed to the

intellectual background of the people in general, the institutions they came from, and the highest level of motivation that inspired them to venture out to seek and obtain opportunities outside the boundaries of their own country.

The higher education system we inherited had been designed by a foreign Government to suit their requirements. A free democratic society needs to prepare its people in terms of objectives, approach and value system that are vastly different from and in some aspects even opposed to, the quality and nature of training in the colonial environment. We have not made systematic efforts to redesign and reorient the higher education system to meet the enormous task of economic regeneration, social transformation and political consolidation. Development of educational programmes substantially different in functional objectives demands that an appropriate policy framework is in place, suitable programmes are developed, they are tested on a pilot basis, their results are evaluated and modifications made in the design where necessary, and the models so developed are replicated. All these require a certain degree of professionalism on the part of those charged with the management of the system. Planning, development and administration of higher education has unfortunately not been in the hands of such experts as are capable of bringing about major changes. Shortage, or near absence, of professional talent, and dominance of generalist administrators has been, and is, the bane of management at all levels of the Government in India, and more particularly in education.

Academics who have a concern for the state of education, a considerable knowledge of developments elsewhere in the world, a vision of the future and some understanding of what needs to be done have pleaded for change but have failed to make any impact. As the system grew in size, numbers increased, complexities multiplied and vested interests became stronger, change became more and more formidable; the status quo continues and the system has been allowed to drift.

As early as 1903 Lord Curzon expressed dissatisfaction with the system of affiliation of colleges to universities, and voiced his concern. He feared that the practice of affiliation might continue for sometime. But it has continued over a century, survived in all glory, expanded continuously and remains the biggest anachronism in the world of higher education. All over the world higher education is in the universities; but we have it in affiliated colleges, nearly 12000 in number, and increasing at the rate of 50 per month. Programmes in higher education need adequate library, computer and laboratory facilities with advanced and sophisticated instruments and a healthy research environment that require a critical mass in staff and student strength. Most affiliated colleges do not have these facilities or the environment. Added to this, the fossilized practice of affiliation has reduced the teachers to tutors, the colleges to routine tutorial institutions and the affiliating university to a soulless examining body. The faint and half-hearted effort made to liberate at least some of these colleges from this stifling practice, by way of granting academic autonomy, did not succeed. We have not been able to introduce such simple reforms as semester pattern and credit system which exist all over the world. The standard of the 3-year undergraduate degree programmes, which account for nearly 80.0% of the total students enrolled in tertiary education is nowhere near what obtains in advanced countries. This unsatisfactory state of affairs is recognized; regretted but never remedied.

The Achilles' heel of Indian higher education is reforms and their implementation.

Considering the criticality of finance, an allocation of 6.0% of GNP for education was recommended by the Education Commission as early as in 1966; it was reiterated in the National Policy on Education in 1986; the Government of India expressed their commitment to do so more than once. But, in reality, the allocation never exceeded 3.5% in the last 30 years. Academic autonomy for colleges was recommended as a way out of the affiliating system in 1966; it was reiterated in the National Policy on Education in 1986. The Programme of Action 1986 promised it. Since the sixties till today, the number of autonomous colleges has not exceeded 135. Seminar after seminar, committee after committee recommended examination reform—continuous internal evaluation, semester pattern and credit system. None of these is yet an integral part of the national system. The National Policy on Education (1986) recommended, on a national level, a Board of Higher Education to coordinate the activities of the UGC, AICTE, ICAR, MCI, NCTE and other bodies. It has not been established so far. The Policy urged the establishment of a State Council for Higher Education in each state. So far only four states have acted on it, though not necessarily in the manner advocated by the UGC.

We have moved into the 21st century carrying on our shoulders the heavy burden of pending reforms and obsolete practices. It has now been a decade since we opted for liberalization of our economy. We have accepted the GATT and have become a member of the WTO. It follows that we have to be globally competitive for our economic survival. Our preparation for the competition war has to begin with the instruction in our classrooms, the training in our workshops, and the research in our laboratories. One hardly notices any major concern in our higher education system in directing its antenna towards the global market, and in managing the changes predicated by the processes of globalization.

We must increase our productivity many times to be competitive in the global market. We have over 90% of the labour force in the unorganized sector. We need to have massive facilities for training persons at craftsman and technician levels. We need trained manpower at these levels even for the promotion of high technology industries. But today we produce more degree holders than diploma holders in engineering; more doctors than nurses in medicine and healthcare; we have more degree institutions than sub-university level education-cum-training institutions.

The problem of higher education is not one of inadequate finance (though finance has the distinction of being universally less than adequate); it is not one of curriculum and syllabi; it is one of academic autonomy, expert planning and professional management. The content of this volume is essentially, as already mentioned, documentation of the experience and response of one who has been in the system for long; who climbed up the multistoreyed hierarchy not through lifts but along steps, staying in each floor long enough to have at least a glimpse of the prevailing state. Most of the problems discussed here were recognized and identified when the system was still smaller; they were then more easily amenable to solution. Action was also taken by way of appointing committees and commissions which produced valuable documents. They have not been acted upon; but allowed to remain on the shelves, often quoted, but mostly unimplemented.

The problem of higher education is the problem of management. A huge system with 240 universities, 11,800 colleges, 3,50,000 faculty members and 77,40,000 students badly lags behind the times. It is said that a society that fails to bring about mini-revolutions off

and on, is opting for a major revolution. We have failed to bring about mini-revolutions. We do not seem to have the will and the momentum to bring about a major revolution. The system now is too heavy and too large. Perhaps the inexorable progress of globalization, increasing internationalization and expanding privatization may bring about changes, which we have failed to do by our own decision and design.

The editors have sifted through voluminous material consisting of speeches and articles and have made their choice with great discrimination. They have with dexterity and discretion chiselled out such portions as may constitute a repetition in the collection though they may have been appropriate in individual addresses. If, in spite of the pruning, there are still some passages found to be repetitions, it may be that they have been deliberately retained for completeness, coherence and comprehensiveness. The entire task, though a challenging one, may not have been formidable to the editors since they are themselves authors and veterans in the field of writing and editing; they also have the advantage of being familiar with my outlook and approach, views and values. I am extremely grateful to them for this commendable contribution.

V.C. Kulandai Swamy

Editors' Note

When Prof. V.C. Kulandai Swamy made a suggestion that he would be happy if we could assist him in putting together the large number of speeches delivered by him on different occasions and weave them into chapters of a book, we gladly agreed because we were delighted to seize an opportunity to lend our little support to bring to the notice of all concerned the ideas, anguish and suggestions of a seasoned educationist who has been pursuing tenaciously some of his cherished goals of, and dreams about, Indian educational reforms which are so formidable that many would have easily given up saying "nothing can be reformed in this country." We thought that if we really believe in bringing any change in the existing social order, we should assist in whatever manner we can, all those who make sincere, meaningful and rational efforts in that direction. We thank the author for the confidence he has reposed in us.

Prof. Kulandai Swamy's long and varied career as a teacher, researcher, educationist, and above all, a senior educational planner and administrator for long has provided him with occasions to reflect on some of the key issues, the resolution of which is vital to the reform and rejuvenation of the Indian education system. The issues involved have been critically examined in great detail by Prof. Kulandai Swamy and the speeches have been prepared by him with a degree of deep reflection. Balancing and reasoning being the predominant and consistent traits of Prof. Kulandai Swamy, we had to take care to maintain them while handling repetitions in editing the speeches for a wider audience.

Speeches, when they are made live, have special impact on the audience who see and hear the speaker in person. The tone, tenor, style, modulations and, above all, the personality of the speaker do make an impact on the listeners, and especially when the speaker is effective and eloquent as the author. More or less the same content with some variations in details may be appropriate for another audience on a different occasion. But they cannot be reproduced as they are, if we have to use them to bring out a book. Much of the repetitions, which are quite acceptable in the form of speeches, have to be necessarily dropped. The sources, data, etc, quoted have to be laboriously researched, referenced and updated, and this perhaps is the most difficult part of the task.

The real reward for us, in our view, is the opportunity to join the author in the journey along the uncharted routes of educational reforms in India which, till today, remain as daunting as they were 50 years ago. While sharing the concerns of Prof. Kulandai Swamy,

we sincerely hope that in the years to come many of the issues and concerns so forcefully and clearly articulated by him in this volume would engage the younger generation of academics, educationists and political leaders in a serious dialogue leading to a happy resolution of the crises hitherto remaining unresolved.

C.R. Pillai
P.R. Ramanujam

Abbreviations

AAOU	Association of Asian Open Universities
ACU	Association of Commonwealth Universities
AICTE	All India Council for Technical Education
AIU	Association of Indian Universities
CLRI	Central Leather Research Institute
COL	Commonwealth of Learning
CSIR	Council of Scientific and Industrial Research
DEC	Distance Education Council
DST	Department of Science and Technology
ESCI	Engineering Staff College of India
GATS	General Agreement on Trade in Services
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
ICAR	Indian Council of Agricultural Research
ICCR	Indian Council for Cultural Relations
ICDE	International Council for Distance Education
IEI	Institution of Engineers India
IGNOU	Indira Gandhi National Open University
IIM	Indian Institute of Management
IIMC	Indian Institute of Mass Communication
IIPA	Indian Institute of Public Administration
IISc	Indian Institute of Science
IIT	Indian Institute of Technology
ISTE	Indian Society for Technical Education

JCVET	Joint Council for Vocational Education and Training
JNU	Jawaharlal Nehru University
MCI	Medical Council of India
MHRD	Ministry of Human Resource Development
NAAC	National Assessment and Accreditation Council
NAS	National Academy of Sciences
NBA	National Board of Accreditation
NCERT	National Council of Educational Research and Training
NCTE	National Council for Teacher Education
NIEPA	National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration
UGC	University Grants Commission
WTO	World Trade Organization

educationist as an academic who can administer, whose vision and purpose transcend the immediate environs of his subject specialization, and one who can command the respect of both teachers and students in the university. The qualities of leadership that he expects from a Vice-Chancellor are objectivity and impartiality, a capacity to see beyond group loyalties, a desire and willingness to enforce discipline among the entire university community, and, above all, a readiness to uphold the dignity and prestige of the office of the Vice-Chancellor. These are indeed rare qualities today, but in many ways, Professor Kulandai Swamy is a rare leader in education. His life and work have something for young academics to draw inspiration from.

Education Management

Management of education is a relatively new area of studies. It was in the United States that programmes of studies in educational administration were developed strongly in the 1950s and 1960s. In the early stages, of course, there was heavy reliance on the concepts and practices associated with business and industry in understanding the core principles on which the structure and organization of educational systems and institutions were built.

During the 1970s and 1980s, the Commonwealth and Europe saw the emergence of educational management as a new area for studies. The Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration, now renamed as the Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration and Management, was established in 1970; six years later, a European Forum on Educational Administration was founded. Both these organizations have affiliates from a large number of countries within their respective jurisdiction.

From its uncertain beginning, and the near total dependence on the principles and practices of business management for its survival, educational management has now emerged as an established discipline with its own body of theories, and adequate empirical data to test their validity. This evolution was the outcome of a lively debate about whether education could be regarded as an area of activity for the applications of general principles of management or whether it could be seen as a separate discipline with its own body of theories and practices.

The Changing Nature of Higher Education

In more recent times, especially during the last two decades, there has been an increasing awareness about the role and responsibility of education, and with it, a growing concern also about the manner in which educational systems in many countries were organized and administered. The beginning of this concern was, perhaps, the transformation of education from an elitist pursuit to a mass activity. With elementary and secondary education becoming universal in most developed countries, higher education also got transformed into a mass education initiative. The Robbins Committee in Britain (Committee on University Education, UK: 1963) advocated the view that universities should respond to social demand and that they should provide for the education of all those who wished to pursue it and were eligible. Following this, university education in Britain expanded rapidly; many more universities were established, and a much larger proportion of students passing out from the schools got enrolled in universities. The percentage of students belonging to the age group 18 to 20+ enrolling in universities went up quickly to 17 by mid-eighties and to 32 by 1995. According to the World Bank's World Development Indicators, 2001, the percentage of the relevant age group participating in tertiary

education in the UK was 52 while it was 88 in Canada, 81 in the US, and 80 in Australia, and 74 in Finland. The High Income countries, according to this Report, had a participation ratio of 62 per cent of the relevant age group in tertiary education in 1997. The Middle Income countries, in contrast, had a mere 12 per cent participation though the Upper Middle Income group among them had 22 per cent of the relevant age group in tertiary education. The corresponding figure for Low Income countries, which include India, was a mere 8 per cent (India's own share being 7 per cent).

It is this transformation of higher education into a mass education system that inevitably raised questions about the ways in which it was being organized and managed. In the first place, in most countries, higher education still depends on public funding. It was natural, therefore, to ask whether the taxpayers' money was being wisely spent, whether the institutions on which public money was spent were accountable to the society and the Government, and whether the resources allocated to these institutions were efficiently utilized. The search for answers to these questions naturally began to use the known management tools, and the concepts of performance, productivity, accountability, and so on, gradually, but surely, entered the field of educational administration.

These developments had two major consequences: first, it became imperative to bring about greater professionalism in the administration of education, and second, education began to look for good practices outside its own confines to improve its efficiency image. It is no surprise, therefore, that today, we find several aspects of modern management practices being progressively followed in the field of education. Planning, strategic development, performance measurement, quality improvement, professional development, institutional and cultural change, resource mobilization, marketing, public relations, have all become essential tool kits of today's education manager.

Management of Education in India

India cannot claim to have made any significant change in its approach to the management of education even at the beginning of the new millennium. We are still struck with the old concepts of educational administration. Our premier training institution is still the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration. Indian Universities or Management Institutes are not known to be offering any major programmes in education management. The Centre for Advanced Study in Education of the MS University of Baroda was offering some courses in educational planning in its Master's degree programme in education; the Indian Institute of Management at Bangalore, in its early days, offered some programmes in education management as part of its

endeavour to develop a professionally trained managerial cadre for public utilities, but had to abandon the efforts in favour of the more lucrative business management programmes; and the Indian Institute of Technology at Mumbai is known to be offering an M. Phil. Programme in educational planning and development in the last few years.

In fact, in India, we have not even been talking about management of education. It was not until the formulation of the National Policy on Education in 1986 that management of education became an area of concern. And this concern was expressed through an affirmation that an overhaul of the system of planning and the management of education will receive high priority. The Policy went on to add that evolving a long-term planning and management perspective and its integration with the country's developmental and manpower needs, decentralization and the creation of a spirit of autonomy for educational institutions, and establishing the principle of accountability would be the guiding principles in remodeling the management of education.

In the past, we had been content with looking at the question of university management as an issue of governance. Indeed, a high-powered committee appointed in 1969 under the chairmanship of Justice P.B. Gajendragadkar, a former Chief Justice of India, was called a Committee on Governance of Universities. The core issue addressed by this Committee, in its report submitted in 1971, was the preservation of the self-governing, autonomous character of the university, and not the issues related to the management of the universities as organizations concerned with accountability, efficiency, productivity, and so on. Naturally, the Committee addressed at great length such issues as who should sit, and in what combination between internal and external members, on various university bodies, and how they should be appointed to those bodies, whether such appointments should be through election or otherwise, and how Governments should keep a distance from the administration of universities.

The Programme of Action for implementing the National Policy on Education, 1986 called for specific initiatives for giving effect to it. As for the management of higher education, it was suggested that the existing patterns including the structure, roles and responsibilities of various university bodies should be reviewed in the light of the new demands on the university system, and with a view to promoting the evolution of new, efficient and more effective management systems. The Committee appointed by the UGC in pursuance of these directives in the National Policy, in its report submitted in 1990 dealt with a number of issues involved in the overhaul of university management. It also recommended certain alternate models of management for universities depending upon their type. For instance, a unitary university that has no colleges affiliated to it will have a two-tier structure consisting of the Executive Council and the Academic Council, large affiliating universities will have, in addition to the traditional bodies of Senate, Executive Council and Academic Council, a Collegiate Council to decide academic matters relating to the colleges. On the more fundamental issue, namely, the pattern of management of universities, the Committee noted "it should be recognized that the academic administration is very different from that in vogue in the governmental or in the corporate system and it should be based on the principle of participation, decentralization, autonomy and accountability". Surely, the Committee stopped well short of advocating any major overhaul of university management; at best, the report suggested a few variations to the existing models of governing structures, with marginal or incremental changes in the composition and functions of existing bodies of universities.

It should be admitted that a serious attempt was made to see that the 1971 Report on governance was given effect to; the incorporation of the recommendations contained in this Report in the legislation of new universities was made a mandatory precondition for declaring

implementation from time to time, should all be reckoned as pioneering efforts in the history of management of universities in India. While most of the universities were content with putting together disparate departmental proposals in an uncritical manner and presenting them to the funding agency (UGC), and leaving it to the latter's wisdom to accept, reject or modify them, Anna University was able, through systematic planning efforts, to see the establishment and development of several Institutes, Centres, and facilities in high-technology areas in a short period of less than a decade. That is what a dynamic, and pro-active planning function can achieve.

Self-Governance and Participation

At the heart of the university's constitution lies the tradition of self-government. This tradition was built over a long period during which higher education was perceived primarily as an elitist pursuit. Those who have had the privilege of university education prided themselves as members of an elite group, and held each other in high esteem. This esteem turned into collegiality while taking part in running the affairs of the university, which turned them into the elite class. However, as noted earlier, events in the last three decades or so, changed all the traditional notions about university education. It is no longer an elite pursuit. Today, the proportion of youth in the relevant age group participating in higher education is almost two-thirds in the developed countries, and their base is ever widening in the developing world. This widening social base of the university community, both teachers and students, now reflects a microcosm of the larger society, with all its stresses and strains, aspirations and frustrations, as well as divisions and frictions. This changing composition of the university community, and the anxiety of the newer and wider groupings in the universities, who have, or wish to have, a voice in academic and administrative affairs of their institutions, have brought to the campuses, a completely new dimension. Participatory and collegial form of governance that was expected to provide a strong and unifying force has come now under stress; factionalism and changing group loyalties play a major part in blocking or delaying difficult, but necessary, decisions.

Ideally, participatory management is at the root of the success of self-governance. Command-and-control management entails a hierarchical notion of "accountability" and a top-down initiative. Goals and values get settled from the outside, and the ways in which they are to be achieved, and the possible slippages in execution, are all taken into account, including sanctions against failures, while assigning tasks and responsibilities. In this model, dignity and authority are vested largely in the supervisory levels, and those at the working levels have virtually no say in deciding the ways in which the goals of the institution should be achieved. In the university environment, this approach often stifles intellectual and pedagogical initiatives and innovations, and even the most creative of pursuits get "routinised". But then, in today's complex world, ideals give way to practical wisdom, and the realities of life take precedence in running the affairs of institutions. Unfortunately, one of the biggest casualties of this trend is the notion of self-governance, and the concept of autonomy, both of which became concepts without content.

The Structure of University Management

The management structure of universities in India is laid down in the Acts and Statutes under which they are established. An enactment, by Parliament or a State legislature, is a necessary

precondition to establish a university. (The only exception to this rule is the provision in the UGC Act that enables the Central Government to notify an existing institution of higher education as an institution deemed to be a university, if the UGC so recommends after satisfying itself of the work and contributions of that institution). This enactment generally lays down, in great detail, the powers and functions of the university, which range from prescribing courses of studies, appointing teachers, organizing instruction, levying tuition and other fees, holding examinations, appointing examiners, and awarding degrees. While these are the primary functions, there is a more formidable list of functions that are incidental to the performance of the core functions. They include acquiring and holding property, creating and maintaining municipal facilities on the campus, seeking and accepting donations and gifts, maintaining accounts, providing for the welfare of staff and students, institution of scholarships, and so on. Broadly, all these functions could be grouped into two categories: one falling in the domain of academic matters, and the other in the domain of financial and general administration. According to the established pattern of university management, these two sets of responsibilities are divided between the Academic Council (all academic matters) and the Executive Council (all administrative and financial responsibilities). Although this diarchy is very well understood, the relation between the two bodies has always remained tenuous. The control over finances and administration has generally endowed the Executive Council with seemingly greater power and influence, and the Academic Council, though the ultimate arbiter on all academic matters, has to remain content with less visibility in matters that affect men and material on the campus. The Acts do prohibit the Executive Council from considering any issue that falls within the academic domain unless the Academic Council has considered and expressed its views on them; even those issues that are primarily within the jurisdiction of the Executive Council have to be referred to the Academic Council for its views before the former takes any decision, if such decision is likely to impact on any academic aspect. However, these reservations remained more formal than real.

Although, in theory, this division of responsibility is clear, and should normally not leave any room for ambiguity, in practice, there is considerable tension between the two bodies on most campuses. Firstly, all decisions of the Academic Council that have any impact on finances and administration, in terms of additional expenditure or staff, have to be approved and sanctioned by the Executive Council. This overriding power, in effect, means that the Executive Council can turn down a decision of the Academic Council. Secondly, this power of veto endows the Executive Council with perceptibly greater power. Although there are no known cases of Executive Councils transgressing their areas of responsibility and intervening in purely academic matters, the inherent unease in their relationship is palpable. It is not surprising, therefore, that in most campuses, this uneasy relationship manifests in the form of direct or indirect confrontation between the academics and the administrators. Possibly, there is another reason for this tension between the two bodies. The Academic Councils are generally constituted with a large number of teachers drawn from within the universities. The Executive Councils, on the other hand, are smaller bodies with a fair proportion of members drawn from outside (usually 40 per cent or more members of the Executive Councils are external). Perhaps, the conflict between the notion of self-governance and the reality of exercise of effective power by an external group is too apparent.

The Vice-Chancellor

It is in this context that the role of the Vice-Chancellor becomes all too important and critical.

As Professor Kulandai Swamy says, when one looks at the management structure of the university, there are no specific powers and functions assigned to the Vice-Chancellor. All that is mentioned is that the Vice-Chancellor is the Principal Academic and Administrative Officer of the university. With all the powers and functions of the university divided between the Executive Council and the Academic Council (and the Senate where there is one), the Vice-Chancellor is left with no formal powers other than merely executing the decisions of these two bodies. Even so, he remains fully accountable for those decisions. Unless the Vice-Chancellor also happens to be a leader in his own right, he will not be in any position to influence the decisions of these bodies, and in effect, he will remain a prisoner of these two bodies. That certainly is not an enviable position to be in. Professor Kulandai Swamy makes an interesting point in this context. And that relates to the loyalty of the group as a whole that constitutes the centre of power in a university. The Vice-Chancellor has no role in their selection or nomination; this group is a part of the Vice-Chancellor's "inheritance". And yet, in a formal sense, universities get identified with their Vice-Chancellors. They preside over both the Executive and Academic Councils and virtually all other Committees that matter in the universities. Even so, they have to compromise at every step to get their way in bodies whose members are not accountable for the consequences of their decisions on the working of the university. Then whom do they represent? And what role are they expected to play?

As noted earlier, the Academic Council, as a group, is essentially a body consisting of teachers in a university. They are known to be debating and discussing academic issues without ever coming to any conclusions on any issue. It takes years for any serious issues like course revision, curricular changes, launching of new courses, etc., to be considered and settled. Unless a Vice-Chancellor is too keen on fast-paced changes in academic matters, he is not likely to run into any serious difficulty with the Academic Council. And if indeed he does, it is always open to him to reduce the frequency of the Academic Council's meetings. After all, that will not hold up the current work of the university. But that is not the case with the Executive Council. For one thing, there is a strong presence of external elements on the Executive Council. For another, the internal presence, always stronger than the former, and far more informed and knowledgeable about the internal dynamics, can easily sway the views of the majority in its favour. Given the fact that neither group has any personal loyalty to the Vice-Chancellor, it will need a great deal of doing, and all the persuasive skill in the world, to direct the efforts of this group in achieving common purposes. If the Vice-Chancellor does not have it in him to do so, the only outcome can be his serving out the term of office, literally uneventfully.

A great deal also depends on the perception of the Vice-Chancellors themselves about what their role is, and should be. On this perception depends the range of management styles and modes of operation of the Vice-Chancellors. In some cases, they could see their roles quite clearly as providing leadership and exercising executive authority; in some other cases, they could be content with playing a role of chairmen seeking a consensus, or just carrying out the decisions of the dominant groups in the bodies they preside over. Tradition was that Vice-Chancellors were scholars first, and acting as chairmen of the Councils, they were able to carry these bodies with them rather than leading them strongly. Perhaps, in today's complex university environment, a shift to the style of a chief executive, bearing the responsibility for leadership and effective management of the institution, might be the right choice for the future.

That brings a major issue into focus. How is the Vice-Chancellor selected and appointed? The Indian University Acts provide for only one method; the Chancellor (Visitor in the case of Central Universities) appoints the Vice-Chancellor from a panel of names recommended to him

namely, the Indian Council of Agricultural Education and Research (ICAR). It has promoted the establishment of 28 Agricultural universities in India with liberal funding and continues to coordinate and strengthen their teaching and research activities. Though legally, UGC's writ should run over them, in practice, they are out of the Commission's net.

The case with technical education is different. There is a UGC-type body, known as the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), with more or less similar functions, established under an Act of Parliament to plan, promote and regulate technical education that comprises teaching and research in engineering, technology, architecture, management and pharmacy. The regulatory jurisdiction of this body runs over technical institutions only, that is, institutions that are not universities. But its functions have a direct impact on universities, since standards of technical education, whether imparted in the universities or other institutions, are determined by this body. And the Council has effective power too, since all funding for technical education is channelised through it. Even university departments running technical education programmes are funded by the AICTE, though these funds are routed through the UGC.

There is a third statutory regulator in education, the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE). Its statutory powers include planned and coordinated development of teacher education, determination and maintenance of standards of teacher education, and a more rigorous regulation of teacher training institutions and their programmes. The NCTE's prior sanction is mandatory for establishing new teacher training institutions and even for expanding or adding new courses in the existing ones. There is also a stringent provision in the NCTE Act under which teacher education institutions that fail to comply with the provisions of the Act run the risk of derecognition of the qualifications awarded by them. Interestingly, the NCTE, which is primarily a regulatory agency in the field of education, has no role in supporting and strengthening teacher education through provision of funds.

There is another class of statutory regulators at the national level. They are not primarily in the field of education; their turf is the concerned profession. These include architecture, law, medicine and dentistry, nursing, pharmacy, veterinary science and so on. These bodies are primarily concerned with the maintenance of standards of their respective professions. In doing so, they also prescribe the standards of professional preparation for their members, which essentially involves determining the curricula and syllabi, qualifications for admission to courses, qualifications of teachers, laboratory and library facilities to be provided, scheme of examinations, and similar other details, all of which legitimately fall within the area of responsibility of the universities. All these agencies have also the power to derecognise the relevant qualifications, and, therefore, there is no way that the universities can ignore them. What is worse, none of them provides any funding for strengthening education and training in their areas of concern.

Coordinating the Regulators

This picture of the regulatory structure of the higher education system provides an overview not just of its complexity, but more importantly, of its fragmented character. At the centre of all the pressures from all these agencies are the universities, which do not have any single agency to turn to for strength and support. It is this multiplicity of regulators, all of whom function in isolation, and with no regard to the impact of their writs on the universities that led to the feeling that some kind of a coordinating mechanism at the national level was necessary. Professor Kulandai Swamy was one among those who had been forcefully articulating the need for such a mechanism. Eventually, the establishment of a National Apex body for coordination among

the various national agencies was accepted, and a mention of it was made in the National Policy on Education in 1986. Thereafter, the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) initiated efforts in right earnest to get this body created. A token provision was made in the Ministry's budget. Since the establishment of such a body required the concurrence of several Ministries, especially, Agriculture, Health, Law, and Finance, and since there was no agreement on the composition, powers and functions of such a body, no progress was made on the implementation of this proposal. The token provision continued to be reflected in the MHRD's budget for over a decade, but beyond tokenism, there was no serious will to iron out the differences and get the mechanism in place.

It has to be pointed out here that while the 1986 policy was being formulated, the AICTE and the NCTE were not statutory bodies. Both were functioning as advisory bodies and, in that capacity, neither of them had any real power to force their views on the universities. The AICTE became a statutory body in 1987 and the NCTE in 1993. Both these bodies, as well as the UGC are functioning under the aegis of the MHRD. And yet, there was little joint or coordinated action among them. On the other hand, both the new statutory bodies began to show their teeth and the universities began to feel their pressure. One university in Tamil Nadu, in fact, challenged in the High Court the AICTE's competence in insisting that the university should not launch new programmes in technical education without getting its approval. The university lost the case in the High Court, but on appeal, the Supreme Court ruled that the AICTE Act did not apply to universities. In other words, the AICTE cannot insist that universities should seek its prior approval to initiate any new technical education programmes. But if the universities require any financial support, they have necessarily to approach the AICTE in advance and obtain their sanction; this procedure is quite understandable, and is very different from the position that legally, a university could not launch an academic programme without obtaining the prior approval of another agency. The moral of the story is that the more the regulators, the more is the pressure to create space for them to make their presence felt. If there was an integrated approach to all regulatory initiatives, possibly a good deal of tension and bad blood created by continuing conflicts and protracted litigation could be avoided.

Having said this, it needs to be emphasized that of all the educational regulators, the UGC still remains the single largest and most important among them. Its attention needs to reach out to the largest number of higher education institutions in the country; it has to provide maintenance and development grants to 15 Central universities, almost 220 State universities and institutions deemed to be universities, and nearly 12,000 colleges. There is no way such a large network of institutions can be served, their needs assessed, funds provided, their performance monitored, and their development coordinated by a single-point operation. For nearly two decades, there have been strong demands, especially from the States in the south that the UGC should reach out to universities and colleges in every part of the country, rather than those institutions contact the UGC at its headquarters in Delhi. Establishment of Regional Offices of the UGC was strongly advocated as an inescapable need. Professor Kulandai Swamy was a leading campaigner of this reform in the UGC's style of functioning, and after persistent efforts, of nearly a decade and a half, the UGC finally came to accept this need in 1994. Today, the UGC has seven Regional Offices, and perhaps two more are on the anvil.

State Councils of Higher Education

Another systemic reform that the author has been continuously canvassing is the creation of a

the various national agencies was accepted, and a mention of it was made in the National Policy on Education in 1986. Thereafter, the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) initiated efforts in right earnest to get this body created. A token provision was made in the Ministry's budget. Since the establishment of such a body required the concurrence of several Ministries, especially, Agriculture, Health, Law, and Finance, and since there was no agreement on the composition, powers and functions of such a body, no progress was made on the implementation of this proposal. The token provision continued to be reflected in the MHRD's budget for over a decade, but beyond tokenism, there was no serious will to iron out the differences and get the mechanism in place.

It has to be pointed out here that while the 1986 policy was being formulated, the AICTE and the NCTE were not statutory bodies. Both were functioning as advisory bodies and, in that capacity, neither of them had any real power to force their views on the universities. The AICTE became a statutory body in 1987 and the NCTE in 1993. Both these bodies, as well as the UGC are functioning under the aegis of the MHRD. And yet, there was little joint or coordinated action among them. On the other hand, both the new statutory bodies began to show their teeth and the universities began to feel their pressure. One university in Tamil Nadu, in fact, challenged in the High Court the AICTE's competence in insisting that the university should not launch new programmes in technical education without getting its approval. The university lost the case in the High Court, but on appeal, the Supreme Court ruled that the AICTE Act did not apply to universities. In other words, the AICTE cannot insist that universities should seek its prior approval to initiate any new technical education programmes. But if the universities require any financial support, they have necessarily to approach the AICTE in advance and obtain their sanction; this procedure is quite understandable, and is very different from the position that legally, a university could not launch an academic programme without obtaining the prior approval of another agency. The moral of the story is that the more the regulators, the more is the pressure to create space for them to make their presence felt. If there was an integrated approach to all regulatory initiatives, possibly a good deal of tension and bad blood created by continuing conflicts and protracted litigation could be avoided.

Having said this, it needs to be emphasized that of all the educational regulators, the UGC still remains the single largest and most important among them. Its attention needs to reach out to the largest number of higher education institutions in the country; it has to provide maintenance and development grants to 15 Central universities, almost 220 State universities and institutions deemed to be universities, and nearly 12,000 colleges. There is no way such a large network of institutions can be served, their needs assessed, funds provided, their performance monitored, and their development coordinated by a single-point operation. For nearly two decades, there have been strong demands, especially from the States in the south that the UGC should reach out to universities and colleges in every part of the country, rather than those institutions contact the UGC at its headquarters in Delhi. Establishment of Regional Offices of the UGC was strongly advocated as an inescapable need. Professor Kulandai Swamy was a leading campaigner of this reform in the UGC's style of functioning, and after persistent efforts, of nearly a decade and a half, the UGC finally came to accept this need in 1994. Today, the UGC has seven Regional Offices, and perhaps two more are on the anvil.

State Councils of Higher Education

Another systemic reform that the author has been continuously canvassing is the creation of a

State level mechanism for coordinated development of higher education in every State. By the 1970s, higher education has expanded considerably, and at the national level, there was a growing realization that a policy of containment, rather than unplanned proliferation, should be the ideal approach. However, in the absence of any effort at systematic planning, and still less of comprehensive statewide assessments of demands and needs for higher education institutions and facilities, there could be no rational plans for higher education development in any state. The purely ad hoc manner in which new universities and colleges were set up, more in response to local pressures than on the basis of any scientific assessment of the need, continued to play havoc with the orderly and systematic development of higher education. The result was obvious: ill-equipped institutions, universities and colleges with no buildings, laboratories, libraries, and many without the necessary complement of teachers. In the case of colleges, when once students were admitted, and the local university was pressurized to grant affiliation, it was assumed that the student community could be relied upon to bring enough pressure on the political system to provide a token support to legitimize the local initiative. This certainly was not planned development.

Professor Kulandai Swamy was acutely aware of the disaster that this anarchy could lead to. As Director of Technical Education in Tamil Nadu for four years, he had seen what a systematic approach to development could deliver. Immediately after he was appointed Vice-Chancellor of Madurai Kamaraj University, he set out to refashion the approach to development of colleges affiliated to his university by setting up a College Development Council. The success of this experiment, particularly in ensuring equitable development among a group of institutions, even in the context of scarcity of resources, has had a salutary lesson for planning. Quite obviously, the next question was: why not enlarge this experiment to the state level?

Towards the late seventies, and early eighties, senior educationists in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh were strongly advocating the establishment of a state level coordinating body. There were several reasons that supported this plea. Firstly, the number of universities and colleges was rapidly increasing. While the State Education Departments were able to deal with the universities directly, they could not handle the colleges which were running into several hundreds, Initially, a Directorate of Collegiate Education was set up, but it proved inadequate to meet the tasks. Secondly, it was not merely enough to do routine administration of state grants to the universities and colleges. It was even more important to see that institutions within the states were able to secure as much funding as possible under a large number of schemes that various Central Agencies were implementing. This required constant collaboration with Central agencies on the one hand and local institutions on the other ensuring constant flow of information and material that can facilitate funding support. It was evident that State Departments of Education, left to themselves, would not be able to deliver on these issues. What was worse, most of the Central Agencies involved were high-powered autonomous organizations like the UGC, AICTE, ICAR, etc., and unless there was a credible, non-bureaucratic and committed machinery at the state level, it would not be possible to do business with the Central Agencies on an equitable basis.

While the views in favour of a state level agency was gaining ground, Andhra Pradesh went ahead with the establishment of a State Commissionerate of Higher Education as statutory mechanism in 1986. Soon enough, the creation of this body was challenged by a group of teachers in the Andhra Pradesh High Court, which upheld the State Government's decision. An appeal was filed before the Supreme Court against the High Court's decision, and the Supreme Court quashed the State law on the ground that the State Government could not legislate to

create a body parallel to the UGC with broadly the same powers and functions. Apparently, the flaw was that the State Government wrote into the law that created the Commissionerate that it would coordinate higher education at the state level and also take steps to maintain its standards. Since this responsibility was reserved for the Central Government under the constitution, it was a forbidden territory for state legislation, especially when a Central law under which the UGC was created held the ground.

This was also the time when the nationwide debate on the formulation of a new policy on education was under way. Taking a clue from the Andhra Pradesh initiative, a consensus emerged in favour of a state level mechanism. Professor Kulandai Swamy was again in the forefront of the group that advocated strongly in favour of the establishment of a state level agency. Eventually, the UGC was persuaded to support this effort, and when the new policy took shape, it did call for setting up State Councils of Higher Education for planning and coordination of higher education at the state level jointly with the UGC and to keep a watch on standards. Soon after the new policy was adopted, an Expert Group was set up by the UGC to prepare the guidelines for establishing the State Councils and to recommend model legislation for the purpose. In less than a year, the guidelines were prepared, and when the Supreme Court judgment came, they were reviewed to remove any constitutional infirmity that the initial draft might have had. At the beginning of 1988, states were asked to take steps to set up the Councils for Higher Education modeled on the guidelines.

It was again Andhra Pradesh that seized the initiative and set up a State Council following the issue of the new guidelines. There was no great enthusiasm on the part of any other State Government. It was several years later, in the mid-nineties, that Tamil Nadu established a State Council. West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh followed suit and today, there are State Councils only in these four states. Development, as noted earlier, cannot happen; it has to be planned, designed and executed. In this conviction, unfortunately, Professor Kulandai Swamy is in a minority, strong enough to persuade the rest sooner than later

Universities and Colleges

Another major area at the system level that engaged the author's concern is the relationship between universities and colleges. When universities were first established in India in 1857, they were not designed to teach, but to test and certify the learning acquired by students who were enrolled in several colleges. This was the London University model of the 19th century. It was not until the beginning of the 20th century that Indian universities were designed as teaching institutions. The Indian Universities Act of 1904 sanctioned the creation of teaching departments and appointment of teachers in the universities. Universities thus became institutions that could be both teaching and affiliating. During the British period, a large number of private agencies and trusts established educational institutions to provide modern scientific education. Most of these institutions got their legitimacy as institutions of higher education through the process of affiliation with the established universities. At the time of independence, India had some 28 universities and about 700 colleges.

The Radhakrishnan Commission in its report in 1949 suggested that the more reputed among these colleges should be considered for conversion into universities. However, this advice was apparently not accepted, and the practice of converting colleges into universities did not get evolved as an instrument of policy. The last fifty years after independence thus witnessed a linear expansion of the system with no qualitative changes in the structural relationship among

the constituents of the system. What existed then continued to expand in just one direction; if we had about 25 colleges per university in 1948, we have about 48 in the year 2000 (about 12000 colleges and 250 universities). Everyone is agreed that this system has done no good either to the universities or to the colleges, and yet, nothing worthwhile was done to remodel this relationship or introduce any structural reforms in the system.

There were half-hearted attempts though, and one such was the experiment to grant autonomy to selected colleges. The major weakness of this proposal was that an autonomous college still remained an affiliated college though it could experiment with curricular content, teaching methods and examination patterns, independent of the parent university. The academic freedom and initiative that this experiment promised was not sufficient enough to enthuse the teaching community. It looked for excuses to resist this move, and it did so for all the wrong reasons. The teachers argued that the move would make the managements of colleges arbitrary, break the teachers' unions, and deprive teachers of their status and privileges. They also argued that their workload would increase through devolution of additional responsibilities involved in determining the course content, introducing new methods of teaching, and designing and implementing new forms of student assessment procedures. They also convinced the student community that the new reform would add to their learning burden as the course content increases and the assessment system becomes continuous. The reform did not get any worthwhile response and almost twenty-five years of effort saw just fractionally over one per cent of the colleges opting for autonomy.

This inadequacy of response was not because of lack of effort. It was the universities in Tamil Nadu that led the way in launching this experiment. There were two distinguished innovators who pioneered this experiment, Dr M. Adiseshiah, who was then the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Madras, and Professor V.C.Kulandai Swamy, who was the Vice-Chancellor of the Madurai Kamaraj University. Between them, they made eight colleges each affiliated to the two universities autonomous. It was a path-breaking decision. In fact, the procedures and patterns followed by the Tamil Nadu universities were the basis on which the UGC framed its guidelines to launch the experiment nationwide. Professor Kulandai Swamy's commitment to this initiative was total. His frustration with the teaching community's reservations about, in fact opposition to, this experiment is therefore justified and understandable. Though the experiment is languishing, he has not given up. In fact, he has gone a step further. He has suggested that autonomous status should be considered as a prelude to the eventual conversion of these colleges into institutions deemed to be universities, and those colleges that do not qualify to become autonomous should be converted into institutions offering sub-university level programmes. One can only hope that the system and its management have the necessary strength and the courage to press on with this bold initiative.

Academic Reforms

There are several other items on Professor Kulandai Swamy's reform agenda. He would like to see meaningful changes in the examination system. He strongly advocates introduction of the semester system, not because it is followed by the universities in the west, but because that is a sure means to keep the students engaged in their learning pursuit evenly during the period of their studies. The current practice that emphasizes passing the final course-completion examination as the ultimate objective of joining a course has deprived education of its real value. Learning

is no longer important; pass the examination by any means, and no means are bad for that purpose. Professor Kulandai Swamy firmly believes that this trend needs to be reversed, and the habit of learning must be restored to the process of education. In order to do that, it is necessary that assessment of student performance becomes a continuous and integral part of the teaching-learning process. What stands in the way of this urgent reform, in his view, is the lack of concern on the part of the teaching community.

The Role of Teachers

And that brings his views on the role of teachers into focus. He feels that, by and large, the teaching community has not done justice either to their profession or to themselves. He is unsparing in his criticism about the lack of any concern for productivity and accountability in the profession. He laments that the vast resources that we have created in our higher education system, both physical and intellectual, remain grossly underutilized. Effectively, the system works for about 150 to 180 days in a year, and that too for 6 to 8 hours a day. For the rest of the time of the year, the entire resources are idle. And that means less than one-third of capacity utilization. He argues that there is immense potential for this resource to be utilized for national development in a variety of ways, including the use of physical facilities and personnel for extending the benefits of education to a much larger proportion of our youth. At 6 to 7 per cent, the participation of the relevant age group in higher education in India is one of the lowest in the world, even among the developing nations, and the unused capacity of the system is a sad commentary on its skewed development.

Productivity, Performance and Accountability

But this is not the only concern about productivity. A teacher, he argues, is not merely a subject specialist preoccupied with the engaged classroom. He has to be an educationist, and a leader as well. For a traditional teacher, who is necessarily an individual performer to turn into an educationist, he has to involve himself with all aspects of working of the system, from surveying development needs, assessing demands and converting them into needs, keeping constantly in touch with the world of work to understand the emerging patterns of manpower deployment and the knowledge and skills demanded of the job-seekers to feeding these inputs into the processes of curriculum construction and design of new courses, and regular and systematic modernization and updating of current courses and their content, all of which are integral to the role of teachers. Unfortunately, our higher education teachers, all of 350,000 of them, do not inspire confidence as educationists. What is worse, they have acquired an image of a class that is grossly preoccupied with itself, focusing only on such issues as their pay and promotion. It is the total lack of concern for academic reforms that has made the teaching profession lose its credibility. Professor Kulandai Swamy has no doubt that if teachers were alive to it, several reform measures would have been implemented, and our higher education system would have acquired some vitality and dynamism.

One other issue that stands out in the discourse on Indian higher education in this volume is the question of accountability, both of the institutions and of the people who constitute them. Professor Kulandai Swamy is a strong advocate of performance audit of teachers. While discussing the conditions of service, remuneration and career advancement of teachers, he argues emphatically

in favour of linking all these with their performance. Perhaps, his insistence on performance appraisal did not always endear him to the teaching community in general; as an organized collective, they were against all attempts at subjecting them to the rigours of any discipline. But individually, and in small groups, many well-meaning members of the teaching profession had been supporting his efforts at professionalising the academic community and instilling in them a code of professional conduct and discipline. Despite all these efforts, the system as such has not responded to these calls, and a satisfactory performance appraisal of teachers across all institutions is still not in place; all that has been done is to put in place some perfunctory procedures, primarily to satisfy the statutory conditions of pre-promotion requirements in some universities.

Assessment of performance of institutions is a relatively new concept in the Indian context. Although the number and variety of universities and colleges multiplied, and the levels of teaching and research varied widely between institutions, there was no serious attempt at defining the national standards of teaching, research and examinations and measuring the performance of individual institutions against those standards. It was only in the mid-eighties, and especially during the debate on the formulation of the revised policy that the question of assessment and accreditation of universities and colleges began to engage attention. Once this concept found articulation in the policy document, efforts were initiated to concretize it. To begin with, the AICTE legislation of 1987 specifically mentioned accreditation as one of the many functions of the Council. The AICTE in fact set up a Committee to formulate a scheme of accreditation of institutions. This Committee suggested the establishment of a National Board of Accreditation (NBA). This recommendation was accepted and the NBA for technical institutions was immediately set up and it started functioning. Although there is no similar provision in the UGC Act, the Commission took the initiative in creating an autonomous structure under its auspices in 1994. The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) was registered as a Society and a fully funded instrument under the UGC Act. The UGC announced that, to begin with, accreditation of universities and colleges would be voluntary, and only those among them that volunteered for assessment would be assessed and accredited. The objective was to create a climate favourable to developing the culture of assessment among universities and colleges, and this objective, it should be admitted, was met very substantially. Initially, there were strong protests from teachers, and these protests continue even now in some universities, which decline to submit themselves to assessment by any external agency.

During the last two years or so, the Ministry of Human Resource Development has started asking universities and colleges to get assessed and accredited by NAAC so that in future, the funding regime could be institutionalized in terms of, among others, the performance criteria as well. As noted earlier, Professor Kulandai Swamy has been an ardent advocate of institutional accreditation, and was closely associated with the discussions leading to the preparation of the blueprint for the NBA as well as the NAAC. In a piece included in this volume, he has provided deep insights into the processes of accreditation of universities and colleges by the NAAC.

What this volume does is not just to highlight the perils and impediments that inhibit the reform agenda in higher education in India, but, more importantly, to establish how through determined efforts, some of the reform efforts can be pushed through. The rigidities in the system are so strong, and the accumulated inertia so ingrained, that even the most zealous reformer would find himself stonewalled at every step. And yet, all hope is not lost. And that, indeed, is Professor Kulandai Swamy's message and his legacy.

C.R. Pillai

1

Management of Higher Education

I may take the risk of saying that the country in general suffers from a management system that is totally inadequate, long outdated and unequal to the task. It is not capable of making full use of either the physical resources of the country or the immense human resource potential now available and developed at great cost and effort.

Introduction

When we think about higher education in India, we are faced with a dilemma: Where to begin? I have after a long thought, chosen to dwell upon certain issues concerning the management of higher education. They have no doubt been discussed in the recent years in more than one forum. A committee set up by the UGC under the Chairmanship of Prof. Gnanam has considered some of these subjects in all their details. On this occasion, I may not possibly say anything new, but will endeavour to focus attention on certain reforms long due and emphasize the need for initiating well-defined measures for early implementation. Rather than explore, we need to implement what is already known and agreed to. The Achilles' heel in our system has not been, and is not policies but performance. I shall confine my discussion to:

- the emerging role of higher education and research in developing countries; and
- the management of higher education in India.

Now and then we hear even from responsible quarters that higher education may not be given as much importance as has been done hitherto and attention may be concentrated on school education and more particularly elementary education. I may state as the first postulate that university education and school education may not be lumped together and much less pitted against each other for purposes of funding. It will be a distortion if we approach the problem

with the premise that the promotion of one is at the cost of the other. In the modern world, each has a role to play: *the highest education for a few is as important as basic education for all*[1]. The former provides competent leadership and the latter an enlightened following in all walks of life. It is like the superstructure and the foundation; however basic it may be, foundation alone does not constitute a building.

There seems to be a feeling that there are, in this country, too many universities and colleges and too many boys and girls enter the portals of higher education. It may be true that in comparison with our performance in literacy and elementary education, we have done better in the domain of higher education. But we have done nothing in excess: *we still fall short of the need, by whatever yardstick we may measure.*

As of 1988-89, we have 169 universities, 6912 colleges and 39.48 lakhs of students in the higher education system[2]. It is certainly an impressive number, but by no means too many. The boys and girls, receiving university education, constitute about 6% of the age group (1987) while many of the developing countries have a much higher percentage[3]. I may quote the percentage of age group receiving tertiary education in a few advanced and developing countries[4].

Table 1: Age Group in Higher Education in Different Countries

Tertiary Education in	U.S.A	60
Advanced Countries (%)	U.K	22
	FRG	30
	Japan	30
	France	31
	USSR	21
Tertiary Education in	Philippines	38
Developing Countries (%)	Egypt	20
	Thailand	20
	Turkey	10
	Brazil	11
	Panama	28
	Mexico	16
	Venezuela	27

Source: World Development Report, 1988. The figure is for 1985

1. In the 21st century, we have reached a stage when advanced countries are moving towards universal higher education
2. UGC Annual Report, 1988-89. Figures for 1999-2000 are 247 universities, 11831 colleges and 7.7 million students
3. World Development Report, 1990:World Bank 1990: The figures correspond to 1987. The figure for the USSR is for the year 1985 and is from the World Development Report 1988. In the case of India accurate figures are not available. It is quoted as 4.8% in the document entitled 'Challenge of Education', Ministry of Education (1985). The UNESCO puts it at 6% for 1987. The current figure is estimated at 7.0%.
4. Recent figures: According to the World Bank's World Development Indicators, 2001, the percentage of relevant age group participating in tertiary education in these countries in 1997 was: USA-81, UK-52, FRG-47, Japan-41, France-51, Russian Federation-43, Egypt-20, Thailand-22, Turkey-21, Brazil-15, Panama-32, Mexico-16 (Eds.)

It is realized that among the developing countries, India belongs to the low income group economies, while others mentioned above come under lower middle or upper middle income groups. There is no denying the fact that every country needs for development a critical mass of manpower with higher education and we must have an idea of the size of the critical mass for our stage of economic development.

It may also be mentioned that 88% of the enrollment in higher education in India is in the undergraduate classes, 1.4% in diploma and certificate levels and only 10.6% in postgraduate courses. Again such professional fields as education, engineering and others have a modest percentage of enrollment as shown below:[5]

Education	2.3	(2.3)
Engineering and Technology	4.6	(5.0)
Medicine	3.6	(3.5)
Agriculture	1.3	(1.0)
Veterinary Science	0.3	(0.3)

The problem of higher education in India is not intrinsically a problem of numbers: it is a problem of quality; a problem of relevance and a problem of matching the preparation with the needs of the economy.

Higher Education and Development

We have to make a critical study of the demands of the developing economy on university education, apply our mind to the question of percentage of the age group that needs to be provided opportunities for higher education and then comment on the adequacy or inadequacy of numbers. Assuming, for the sake of argument, that we stop expansion and maintain the numbers at the present level, which no doubt, will not be easy to do, we will still have to make significant investments to ensure quality and relevance in education, research and extension. It is my considered opinion that we need to expand higher education in India.

Those living in advanced countries constitute about 23% of the world's population and control 80% of the world's resources (1987). The remaining 77% have access to the balance of 20%. According to Prof. Abdus Salam, the Nobel prize winning scientist, the cause of this disparity is not the language, religion or nations. He says that the people in the advanced countries happen to be what they are because of one dominant factor. He says:

Today the Third World is only slowly waking up to the realization that in the final analysis, *creation, mastery and utilization of modern science and technology* is basically what distinguishes the South from the North. On science and technology depend the standards of living of a nation. The widening gap in *economics* and *influence* between the nations of the South and the North is essentially the science and technology gap[6].

---

5 UGC Annual Report – 1988-1989.

The figures in brackets are for the year 1999-2000 (UGC Annual Report, 1999-2000)

6 Abdus Salam: Notes on Science, Technology & Science Education in the Development of South; the Third World Academy of Science, 1988

When we take a look at the world scene, we realize that it stands divided into two camps:

- the advanced countries, and
- the developing countries.

We are aware that:

- the capacity of a nation to *create, master and apply knowledge in science and technology* depends on its level of higher education and research, and
- the capacity of a nation to *absorb science and technology* depends on its level of literacy.

Therefore, as I said earlier, both need attention. In the modern world, we cannot afford to pursue one to the neglect of the other. I make this observation while fully conceding the paramount role of universal education as a major determinant in the quality of life and conceding again that we in India, for inexplicable reasons, have failed to make appreciable progress in that vital domain.

Unplanned Expansion

When we plead for investment in higher education, we do not close our eyes to the deficiencies of the system. We are aware of the fact that university education in this country stands criticized strongly, perhaps condemned by all: political leaders of all parties, administrators and members of the public. It has not been spared by the teachers and the students either. It has met with deep dissatisfaction from all quarters. *One wonders as to who owns responsibility for a massive system, which, despite all the condemnation, has been expanding continuously and with hardly any major change.* In the five-year period from 1984-85 to 1988-89, we have added 1322 new colleges and 32 new universities which include 9 deemed universities and, may I add this impressive growth was registered, after our proclamations made more than once that there shall be no further expansion of universities and colleges. The State of Uttar Pradesh alone added 507 colleges out of the 1322.

How do we account for the expansion mentioned above after having condemned the system on all platforms in the strongest possible language? *I may mention that academics have played no part in this development.* The question ultimately is one of identifying the inadequacies in the system. It is not one of lack of policy. Starting from the report of the University Education Commission (1948) headed by Dr Radhakrishnan, and continuing through the reports of the Kothari Commission (1966), and the National Education Policies of 1968 and 1986 there are many recommendations that we accepted irrespective of differences on political and economic issues. The problem has been one of implementation. *We did not implement what we accepted. Often we do not seriously mean to implement recommendations that we accept.* Many may blame the non-implementation on financial inadequacy. Finance no doubt has been and is a constraint; but that has not been the main impediment. *The real weakness of the higher education system in India today is the weakness of its management. If there is one single aspect of higher education that deserves and warrants immediate attention, it is 'the management of university education'.*

University Grants Commission

I may take the risk of saying that the country in general suffers from a management system that is totally inadequate, long outdated and unequal to the task. It is not capable of making full use of either the physical resources of the country or the immense human resource potential now available and developed at great cost and effort. It is a larger issue and we shall, on this occasion, confine ourselves to 'management of higher education'. It was in 1857 that the first three universities in India were established in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. Since then, new universities were created; new colleges were started; but there was no statutory body for planning, developing, coordinating and maintaining the standards of higher education. It was in 1956, nearly 100 years after the establishment of the first three universities, that the UGC was established by an Act of Parliament. The higher education scene, in terms of numbers, programmes, complexities and challenges has undergone a great change since then, but its management system, including that of the apex body, the UGC, has remained unchanged.

The Parliamentary Committee on Higher Education (1964) known as Sapru Committee recommended changes in the composition of the UGC. The Committee suggested the appointment of a few full-time members and increasing the strength of the members from 8 to 15. The Estimates Committee of Parliament in its 102nd Report also recommended full-time members. The UGC Act was amended in 1970 providing for a membership of 12 of which three could be full-time members. However, the Act was again amended in 1972 and this amendment made provision for a full-time Vice-Chairman in place of full-time members. In 1977 a Review Committee appointed by the Government of India had made several recommendations for professionalizing the Secretariat of the UGC, but its recommendations have not been implemented.

The Commission today is saddled with responsibilities of diverse nature. It discharges the functions of a state directorate of collegiate education as far as the private colleges in Delhi and Delhi Administration colleges are concerned: it plays the role of a state ministry of education for the Central universities and assumes the responsibilities of a national body in the case of State universities, colleges and deemed-to-be universities in general. It has to deal with a massive number of universities, colleges and teachers and a host of numerous miscellaneous responsibilities that devolve on its shoulders. It has gradually, but steadily, distanced itself from the affiliated colleges which account for nearly 88% of the undergraduate students and 57% of the postgraduate students. Many of these colleges hardly know the details of the programmes of assistance and promotional schemes introduced and administered by the UGC.

There is another aspect to the administration and management of higher education. The UGC is not 'the Apex body' that many seem to think. We have the Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR) for agricultural education, the AICTE for technical education, the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) for distance education and numerous professional bodies like the Bar Council, Medical Council, Council of Architects, Pharmacy Council and others which do play a regulatory role on corresponding sectors of education. This multiplicity of regulatory bodies has created numerous problems for universities; more often than not, their advice and directions come in conflict with one another. Today,

- We need an apex body to ensure coordination, avoid conflicts and facilitate inter-disciplinary programmes and optimal utilization of resources available.
- The UGC needs a major revamping in the light of the quantitative and qualitative changes that have taken place since its inception. It should be relieved of the special

responsibilities it now has for the routine maintenance of the Central universities and colleges in Delhi.

- *The UGC must establish at the earliest, pending any other reform, regional offices which can take over many of the routine functions that are performed at the centre.* This need has been and is being voiced unanimously now in many forums and its implementation is a strongly felt need.[7]

Although education now is a concurrent subject, and coordination and maintenance of standards is the responsibility of the Government of India, performed though the UGC, the fact remains that major responsibilities for higher education substantially rest with the state Governments. The establishment of universities, colleges, appointment of staff members and regulation of their service conditions and provision of funds are under the purview of the state Government. Today, we have in some of the states more universities, more colleges and more students in higher education than what we had in the whole of India put together at the time of independence. But the states today have no institutional mechanism to:

- review the status of higher education in the State and identify weaknesses and inadequacies;
- coordinate at the state level the activities of the various universities and colleges within the jurisdiction of each university to ensure avoidance of purposeless duplication, utilization of facilities in an optimal way and cooperative efforts in instruction and research;
- plan for expansion, quality improvement and funding on short-term and long-term basis.

In the last four decades, there has been, as said earlier, an unplanned growth in the domain of higher education. It has essentially been a linear expansion. We have not been successful in implementing many of the reforms recommended whether it be examination reform, job orientation or industry-institute collaboration. The programmes and measures for implementation have to come essentially from the states and they do not have the necessary management structure, supported by appropriate institutions.

It may appear strange, but it is true, that in establishing new universities and starting new colleges, the academics or the educationists do not play any role. They are hardly involved in policy formulation or decision making at the state level. Consequently, developments in terms of colleges and universities did not have the benefit of the counsel and guidance of the academics. *Lack of academic leadership in the affairs of higher education is the single most important weakness that needs our attention today.* A forum for the training and development of educational leaders from among the academics does not exist.

State Council of Higher Education

It is with a view to meeting more than one requirement that the UGC has been pressing for the establishment of the *State Council of Higher Education.* It is discouraging that this extremely

---

7. The UGC has established Regional Offices in 1994. In 1999, it had Regional Offices at Hyderabad, Pune, Bhopal, Ghaziabad, Calcutta and Guwahati. More Regional Offices at Bangalore, Jaipur and Chandigarh have also been approved. (Eds.)

worthwhile suggestion, which is crucial for decentralization and promotion of autonomy in higher education has not been implemented except in two states[8]. An expert committee constituted by the UGC to prepare the guidelines for setting up the Council had stated as follows:

> The State Council of Higher Education would act as a link between the universities and colleges and the state Governments and work closely with the UGC in view of its statutory responsibility for the maintenance and coordination of standards of higher education at the all India level.

As regards setting up the Council, the Committee had recommended that:

> ... the Central Government may advise the State Governments for enacting legislation for setting up of the State Councils of Higher Education in the states.

> It may appear strange, but it is true, that in establishing new universities and starting new colleges, the academics or the educationists do not play any role. They are hardly involved in policy formulation or decision making at the state level. Consequently, developments in terms of colleges and universities did not have the benefit of the counsel and guidance of the academics. Lack of academic leadership in the affairs of higher education is the single most important weakness that needs our attention today. A forum for the training and emergence of educational leaders from among the academics does not exist.

Although it is one of the recommendations of the National Policy on Education (1986) and strongly advocated by the UGC for implementation, the Governments at the states and at the Centre have been somewhat hesitant to move ahead in the matter. I would like to stress at this point that the establishment of this body would go a long way towards bringing a professional approach to the management and promotion of higher education in the states.

Status of Vice-Chancellor

I may refer to two more subsystems in the higher education system, before I conclude; they are:

- the universities and
- the affiliated colleges.

Any objective evaluation would show that Indian Universities suffer from:

- progressively diminishing autonomy,
- chronic deficiency in funding,
- increasing numbers of students and colleges over which the university has very little say, and
- an inadequate management system represented by outdated University Acts.

---

8 As of 2001–2002, only four states have established this body: they too are not on the basis of the UGC model act. The only exception is Andhra Pradesh (Eds.)

In spite of all these limitations, and many omissions and commissions that may be legitimately laid at the doors of the universities, they have done well and given this country a reservoir of qualified manpower that the world acknowledges and that we can be proud of. But the system has reached its endurance limit and needs immediate attention. When we refer to progressively diminishing autonomy, which today is a major concern, *we do not mean autonomy for what the university wants to do: but autonomy as the guarantee of freedom to do without interference, what the universities are expected to do as per the objectives placed before them by the nation.*

The progressive diminution in the status and image of the Vice-Chancellor is perhaps by itself an indicator of the affliction of the system itself. Five times in the last few years, Vice-Chancellors have been removed en masse in a particular State in the country. The last occasion in the series was as recent as in June 1990. Another state Government promulgated an ordinance empowering the Chancellor to remove the Vice-Chancellor, giving three month's notice or three month's salary in lieu thereof without assigning any reason. These developments would certainly have not improved matters in university education in the states concerned, but have done great damage to the institution of the Vice-Chancellor.

Whether it is an advanced country or a developing country, a democracy, a dictatorship or monarchy, the office of Vice-Chancellor, variously designated as Rector or President, enjoys universally, an image and a status in the social and administrative set up. Nowhere has it been given this raw deal, to say the least. It is a matter for tears of blood to be shed.

It is not a rule or regulation that really establishes discipline: it is not law that maintains order. It is not government that sustains culture. What matters in human existence are the institutions that society has built; the traditions that it has established and a value system it has evolved over the years. The culture of a society is made out of these building blocks: if they are destroyed for short-term gains or for managing a fleeting situation, we forfeit the gains of generations.

In this country, the university system is invariably identified with the Vice-Chancellor. In the composition of such university bodies as the Executive Council, the Senate, the Academic Council and the Finance Committee over which he presides, he has hardly any say. His administrative, academic and financial powers are only those derived from these bodies, by delegation. In most universities, the Vice-Chancellor has no inherent powers as such: but all responsibilities gravitate to him. *I can think of no parallel office with so brief a term and so demanding in responsibility. It is an unenviable position from which already many senior academics of repute have turned their faces away. Even the modest status that the position enjoys now is sought to be devalued or even demolished.*

University Authorities

The authorities of the universities, in their composition, powers, functions and methods of operation have become outdated and unequal to the task. Their proceedings have become unacademic and they do not now provide a forum for any meaningful or serious discussion on planning, development, reform or new direction.

It may be asked as to what the Government of India can do, since the legislative powers are vested in the states. I may quote here the example of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), where education is essentially in the State sector. The Federal Government has framed what is called a 'basic law' (Grund Gesetz) which lays down the framework and the essential aspects

of a university. The states formulate the Acts within this framework. We may follow a similar approach towards regulating the governance of the universities in our country.

Autonomy for Colleges

I come now to the colleges which constitute the subsystem in a university. The colleges are the places where higher education is really concentrated, since 83% of all the students, undergraduate and postgraduate together, study. The affiliating system is peculiar to India and barring our neighbours, Bangladesh and Pakistan, it does not exist anywhere in the world. This system has reduced:

- our colleges to tutorial institutions; and
- our universities to examining bodies.

It should have long been discontinued: the harm done by this affiliating arrangement to higher education is incalculable. We have a large number of them and one does not know what to do to redeem the position. The recommendation of the Kothari Commission to grant autonomy to colleges on a selective basis was a modest, but innovative effort, partly to free the colleges so selected from the stifling constraints of affiliation. We have made a good start in the 7th Plan and have now over 100 autonomous colleges[9]. It is really disheartening that an extremely well meaning, well conceived academic reform is sought to be termed elitist by some and thus discouraged. If conferring autonomy selectively on the basis of the preparedness of the institution is adequate ground for calling it an elitist measure, let us explore what should be done to raise as many of them as possible to the level of autonomy. Those who do not meet the requirement by a stipulated reasonable deadline should opt out of the university system and offer suitable sub-university level courses. We need take some hard decisions in this regard and take effective steps-but very definitely towards enlarging the family of autonomous colleges and not abridging or abandoning the programme.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I may say that while we have somehow failed to assign proper priority to literacy and elementary education, we have done somewhat better in higher education. The need to pay greater attention to school education should not result in allowing higher education to suffer a setback. The investment and effort needed even to ensure that the existing institutions reach a modest level of quality will be enormous. Considering the increasing numbers of boys and girls that knock at the doors of the universities and realizing that many of them may be first generation candidates from rural families and backward classes, one does not know how even to check expansion.

Quality of education, relevance of content, problem of numbers and increasing emphasis on equity pose problems that are formidable. We need all the ingenuity and innovation to meet these challenges. In this effort, modernity and adequacy of management system deserve the highest priority and urgency of action among them.

---

9. The number of autonomous colleges in 2000 is 131 (Eds.)

2

Issues at System Level

The concept of affiliating system is an outmoded one: an anachronism. It does not exist anywhere in the world except in the Indian sub-continent. In all developed and developing countries, higher education is in the University. It is the academic who decides substantially the curriculum and syllabi that he teaches, sets the question papers in his subject, values the answer books of his students and announces the result. These are both the responsibilities and the rights of an academic. In the affiliating system, the academics — most of them — have no role in the admission policy, no role in the formulation of syllabi and curriculum. They teach in the classroom; but do not set the test; do not value the answer scripts. For all practical purposes, the teachers in our affiliating system are just tutors. In other words, the affiliating system has reduced our academics into mere tutors and our universities into examining bodies.

Ferment in Higher Education

Higher Education all over the world is in a ferment. There are debates and discussions; there are Committees and Commissions to inquire into several aspects of higher education development; there is increasing concern about higher education. From having been the privilege of a few, it is becoming mass-based in advanced countries. There is in recent years a trend of an obviously declining state support in the financing of higher education in some countries. A marked change in the environment of higher education is apparent at the global level and it is more pronounced in the developing countries. A few aspects appear common between the North and the South and they are:

- The expansion in higher education in the second half of the 20th century has been enormously significant. Perhaps, the number of universities established after 1950 is larger than the total number reached upto 1950 from the beginning of the university system.

- New universities have been, and are being established and the university system has been expanding at a faster rate in the last three decades than before.
- Government interest in higher education has been increasing and in many countries more funds are being made available; there are also instances of governments cutting back on the public funds for higher education.
- Governments all over the world have not learnt to show interest without interfering, and for them interest and intervention are indistinguishable. There is an attempt on the part of the Governments to have greater control over the university system. The abolition of the University Grants Committee and the establishment of the University Funding Council almost as a wing of the Government in the U.K. is an example of this trend.
- There is more stress on accountability and increasing emphasis on relevance, equity and quality.
- More than all these, higher education today is viewed not as social service, but as investment. Everyone is entitled to school education; but everyone is not necessarily entitled to university education; for that matter, everyone may not need university education. At the same time, it is recognised that opportunities for the highest level of education of a few are as important as basic education for all.

Investment in Education

It is easy to perceive the reasons for the sudden spurt in, and increased attention to, higher education.

- In the agricultural civilization, land and water were the major resources.
- In the industrial civilization, in addition to land and water, minerals and energy became the major resources.
- We are now in the high technology era or knowledge era, when human resources are becoming more important and more valuable than all others. Human resource does not mean either number or muscle power though they too count; it means trained, knowledgeable manpower.

In a recent document on economic development, the development strategy of the Government of China was stated as follows:

In handling the relationship between the exploitation of material resources and that of human resources, we have extricated ourselves from the set pattern of paying attention only to the construction of the material and technical bases and ignoring the development of human, particularly intellectual resources; we have turned to a strategy which stresses equally, exploitation of material and human resources. ...By making education and science the priorities of the economic construction, that is by attaching great importance to the development of intellectual resources, we will be able to effectively raise China's technical productiveness and managerial level and ensure a better development of its economy. We must see to it that the investment in the development of intellectual resources heads up all other efforts. Additionally, the development of intellectual resources is a course that does not require great amounts of funding, but yields enormous returns.

The above policy formulation meant a long travel from the days of Cultural Revolution. The

level of knowledge needed to sustain and carry forward economic progress in an age of high technology requires university level preparation. We should in this context, differentiate between literacy, training and education.

Literacy is like the foundation for a building. You cannot have any structure without foundation but foundation alone, however broad, however strong, will not make a building. We need a superstructure and that is provided by opportunities for training in skills, and capability for higher education and research.

Independent India started with a low percentage of literacy. While we accept the fact that education is the most important determinant in the quality of life that can be attained, recognise the paramount need of universal education, and concede the right of every child to have the opportunity and the facility to learn to read and write, we also realize that we cannot stop education in engineering, medicine or agriculture till every one becomes literate. An enlightened and pragmatic approach to education needs an appropriate emphasis on, and investment in, different levels of education and training especially in developing countries. It must be conceded that many states in India have erred in fixing the priorities and arriving at an appropriate weightage for each of these components. There are states that have literacy levels far below the national average but have made huge investments, standing much above the national average, in higher education. The reverse is true in certain other states. It is the result of ad hoc decisions and unplanned development.

Issues in Higher Education

There is still not much of a realization that the development and management of an educational institution needs professional preparation and approach. We have developed a large system of higher education including professional education. Unfortunately, institutions have been established, more often that not, on the basis of ad hoc decisions rather than on the basis of a systematic plan and design.

There is widespread and near unanimous criticism against higher education. Political leaders, administrators, parents, students and even teachers criticize it very strongly. Strangely every one vies with the other in condemning it; no one seems to own responsibility. At the same time, this much maligned higher education system keeps expanding in India. We have been establishing in the country on an average two new colleges every three days and nearly 5 to 6 new universities every year. This development was not based on any national design or state plan.

Between 1950 and 1993, there has been a tenfold increase in universities in India. One may say that it is natural for a country to develop educational facilities after independence. But it is true of developed countries also; if one takes a country like the U.K. which had been ruling supposedly over half the world till recently, the number of universities has almost trebled between 1950 and now. On a global basis, the number of universities established after 1950 will be more than the number for the entire period upto 1950. This is precisely because of the increased role that education has come to play in development.

The expansion of higher education in India has also raised several issues and concerns. These are:*

---

*Almost all these concerns are relevant even today (2002)

- A system that is universally condemned has an average growth rate of about 5% in the number of institutions during the last 5 years. We see the paradox of condemning a system and expanding it mechanically, year after year.
- The expansion is unplanned and is the result of ad hoc decisions.
- The expansion is not adequately supported in terms of funds.
- The academic community has not played any role in policy formulation or decision making in this development.
- The UGC has not been consulted in advance. Its concurrence and contribution have always been sought after establishing the institutions.
- Even the universities which have to give affiliation to the new colleges are approached only for affiliation but not for any advice on the wisdom of establishing these institutions.

It is not my intention to suggest that we do not need new universities and new colleges. They are necessary. After all, only about 6% of the relevant age group is in higher education today and this is low even in comparison with many developing countries. A look at the percentage of the relevant age group of the population in higher education in some of the developing countries is revealing[1]; Bangladesh-5; Pakistan-5; Indonesia-7; Philipines-28; Egypt-20; Turkey-11; Brazil-11; Mexico-15.

The issue here essentially is not so much the expansion *per se*, but the manner in which expansion is taking place, and the failure to sustain the institutions brought into existence.

It was mentioned earlier that higher education is being severely criticised. The deficiencies pointed out are many; but they broadly fall under four categories:

(i) Quality
(ii) Relevance
(iii) Efficiency of the system, and
(iv) Equity.

The last one is not strictly academic in nature, and we may not touch upon it. Quality and relevance may have to go together, because even the highest quality in an irrelevant field is of no consequence to society. Since higher education is thought of as investment, the manpower prepared by the university system should be related to the economic needs of the society. Today, it is complained that there is a mismatch between educational preparation and the manpower needs of the economy.

Very often, the phenomenon of educated unemployment is blamed on quality and relevance of education. It is not fully justified. Unemployment has many parameters such as the numbers produced, the rate of growth of the economy, mobility, recruitment procedure and the nature of education and training. The academic institutions are responsible only for the last item. The need to relate higher education and training to the manpower requirements of a society is realized and conceded. The problem is how does one achieve it? We hardly have reliable manpower data either at the state or at the national level. While the universities may help any

---

1. World Development Indicators, 1991, World Bank. The figures are for the year 1988. According to the World Development Indicators, 2001, the percentage of the relevant age group enrolled in tertiary education in 1997 in some of these countries were: Egypt-20; Brazil-15; Indonesia-11; Mexico-16; Philippines-29; Turkey-21 (Eds.)

state or a central agency like the Institute of Applied Manpower Research, no university on its own, nor even the UGC, can take up the task of manpower assessment. The lack of information on manpower needs and job specifications is a major deficiency; but there are other dimensions to the problem. The rapid change in technology and the need to educate and prepare people with good grounding in fundamentals to enable them to learn by themselves later in life and keep themselves up to date, preclude focusing too much on narrow specializations. Even in socialist countries with controlled economy, manpower planning poses formidable problems. In India, we made a beginning in the sixties, but hardly made any progress in this effort. In any case, it is not the direct responsibility of academic institutions. The academics have never been given, on any occasion, a glimpse of the jobs and job specifications; but have been liberally blamed for not meeting unspecified requirements.

The employers are quick to say that the products of the universities are not satisfactory; but when asked, the universities do not get any feedback regarding the nature of deficiencies of the graduates, excepting a vague and general denunciation. However, it is conceded that the academics should have their antenna directed towards the manpower needs of the country, and should be able to respond to these needs as far as possible. We must look into those causes which account for our failures.

Management: the Major Weakness

The education system in our country may suffer from many deficiencies; but the major ones are:

- The absence of appropriate management structure, and
- The lack of academic leadership.

It is really strange that in any analysis or critique of our educational system, these two aspects have never found mention. In this discussion we may concentrate on these issues.

The weaknesses and deficiencies that have been persisting in the higher education system over the years, in spite of the recommendations of many commissions, committees, and task forces, can be traced to the absence of adequate management structure for higher education. In 1857 the first three universities were established in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, and affiliation of colleges was permitted. New universities and colleges were established over the years. The system grew and became big, and the complexities multiplied. However, no change or significant improvement was made in the management of higher education. It was only in 1956, i.e. 100 years after the establishment of the first three universities, that the University Grants Commission (UGC) was set up, and thereafter again nothing significant happened to herald any further change or improvement in the management system of higher education.

The authorities of the universities like the Senate, the Academic Council and the Syndicate (Executive Council) have their constitution, powers and functions based upon the pattern decided in the initial stages of establishment of universities in the country when they were essentially examining bodies. Though attempts were made to suggest reforms and changes, nothing tangible came about.

In December 1961, a committee was appointed by the Government of India to consider broadly the organisational structure of the universities. The Committee submitted its report in January 1965, indicating a new pattern for the administrative set up for different universities. The state Governments did not do anything to bring about the changes. Again in 1969, the UGC

appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Justice P.B. Gajendragadkar to review the pattern of governance of universities and to make recommendations[2]. The committee made a comprehensive report keeping in view the recommendations of the Model Act Committee of 1961. The recommendations of these Committees also did not bring about any major reform since they were not adopted by the state Governments.

Many of the universities carry on their responsibilities with instruments designed for a period when tasks were very different from what they are performing today. It is said:

> You must do today's job with today's tools. If you do today's job with yesterday's tools, tomorrow you will be out of business.

The universities, as far as their management is concerned, are doing today's job very much with yesterday's tools. It is a great wonder that they are still in business. The education system in general does not have the kind of management structure needed to promote experimentation, innovation and change. We have only a management that can expand linearly the existing system in terms of numbers.

Our expenditure on education is the second largest, next only to that on defence. But we have not developed academic leaders who can guide the destinies of education in this country. We have eminent professors of arts, humanities, social sciences, sciences, medicine, engineering and technology; we also have eminent research scholars; but we do not have many educationists who could visualize and plan the development of education in the next 10 to 20 years. An educationist must be, or must have been, a good teacher or a good research worker; but a good teacher or a good research worker is not necessarily a competent educationist, a competent academic leader. There are certain additional qualities that make a leader in education. Unfortunately, there are no mechanisms in this country for leadership training in education. To use the market metaphor, if higher education is thought of as an investment, a teacher is neither the chairman nor the director of the enterprise in which the investment is made. At best, the teacher's position is that of the worker or the supervisor in the factory. Consequently, development projects of colleges and universities do not have the benefit of the counsel and guidance of the academics, and teaching as a profession does not enjoy the kind of social prestige that it does in advanced countries. No wonder, it does not attract talent.

> Many of the universities carry on their responsibilities with instruments designed for a period, and tasks very different from what they are performing today. It is said:
>
> You must do today's job with today's tools. If you do today's job with yesterday's tools, tomorrow you will be out of business.
>
> The universities, as far as their management is concerned, are doing today's job very much with yesterday's tools. It is a great wonder that they are still in business.

---

2. The Government of India accepted the recommendations made in the report of the Gajendragadkar Committee in 1971. All Central universities established since 1974 have followed the pattern of governance and the structure of organization recommended by the Committee. Several new State Universities, which were established in the 1980s and later, have also adopted these changes. However, most of the older universities, which were already in existence, did not have their Acts and Statutes amended by the state Governments to give effect to the Committee's recommendations (Eds).

We have today (1987-88) 53,165 university teachers and 1,88,800 college teachers[3]. This vast reservoir of highly qualified manpower is underutilized in this country. They could do, and will do, much more than what they are doing, if a systematic environment conducive to their involvement and participation is provided. The tragedy of the higher education system in India today is that academics with tremendous potential who are entrusted with the most valuable responsibilities, namely, human resource development, have been made to look at themselves as mere wage earners, doing a specified job for a salary paid to them. They are not part of the system; nor are they partners in the enterprise. No great goals are set: no high ambitions are entertained; no excitement of achievement is experienced: nothing more to look forward to, than the routine promotion which may be long in coming and demands nothing significant in performance, though the rules on paper may tell a different story. Many factors contributed to this state of affairs; among them, the most important is the university-college relationship.

Colleges in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh are not independent institutions of higher education. They need to get affiliated to a university to become part of the university system. This process of affiliation enables a college to admit students and teach them what the university concerned has prescribed as courses and curricula for their degrees and certificates, and present them to the university for its examination. This device, copied from Britain and continued here, long after Britain had given it up, has converted the universities into examining bodies, and the colleges into tutorial institutions. Higher education takes place all over the world in university campuses. If there are colleges, they are also the examining bodies for the students they teach. Teachers all over the world in the higher education system are deeply involved in the processes of:

  (i) prescribing the curriculum and syllabi,
  (ii) teaching the courses assigned to them, and
  (iii) evaluating their students and announcing the results.

In India, most of the teachers have no part to play either in prescribing the syllabi of the subjects or in evaluating the students they teach. In other words, they are tutors, and a large population of teachers in this country do not enjoy the privileges of the profession that their counterparts enjoy in other countries. They have no sense of participation in moulding the educational programmes and have a feeling that everything is decided elsewhere, and there is an all pervasive culture of remote control in higher education. As a small measure to improve the academic profile of colleges, the concept of autonomy was given some attention.

System Management : Institutional Level

It is to minimize, if not eliminate, the adverse effects of the affiliating system, that the concept of autonomous colleges was introduced and recommended by the Education Commission (1966). However, very little progress was made till the end of the VI Plan and the National Policy on Education (1986) contemplated that: '...autonomous colleges will be helped to develop in large numbers until the affiliating system is replaced by a fresh and more creative association of universities with colleges'.

---

3. In 2000, there were 78,885 teachers in the university departments and 2,71,779 teachers in colleges. This intellectual resource of the country remains grossly underutilized even today (Eds.)

A target of 500 colleges was fixed for the VII Plan: this target being 10 % of the number of colleges was never reached and the number of colleges that were declared autonomous was around 100 at the end of the plan period (1990)[4]. Still, it must be reckoned as a substantial progress in the existing circumstances.

The term autonomy has been misunderstood and its implications have not been fully and correctly comprehended. Members of the faculty, especially in private colleges, apprehend that their managements would turn out to be arbitrary and break free of the regulatory control of their universities leading to possible threat to the security of their jobs. They do not realize that the concept of autonomy, as contemplated now, does not include more administrative autonomy or more financial autonomy than what these colleges already have. What is intended is to confer on the colleges more academic autonomy which will promote the participation of college teachers in curriculum and syllabus formulation, involve the teachers in evaluating the students they teach, enable the teachers to continuously engage themselves in reviewing and revising the content of the courses to ensure greater relevance, and make it necessary for the students to work regularly since there is continuous evaluation. On the whole, it is a simple step that will bring about many desirable reforms.

Since academic autonomy confers on the colleges the freedom and the initiative to design and develop the curriculum, syllabi and method of continuous assessment and also conduct the final examination, students and their parents apprehend possible victimization and favouritism, and the public in general are hesitant to place full confidence in the managements to maintain standards. However, continued association of the colleges with their parent universities who, in any case, award the degrees, and the provision for periodic review of the performance of the colleges by the universities concerned are adequate safeguards against any possible misuse of this power.

More than a decade of experience in Tamil Nadu has created a favourable impression, and has proved these apprehensions wrong. One would normally expect the academic community to welcome this reform which confers on them the rights and responsibilities which are theirs and which their counterparts enjoy all over the world. The mixed response to the scheme from the teachers signifies a major weakness in the system that resists all attempts at change and innovation and what is worse, a pronounced reluctance to shoulder additional responsibilities in the exercise of their own rights and privileges as teachers. The scope of autonomy, perhaps, has not yet expanded beyond the domain of the management. It is imperative that teachers, parents and students play their role in ensuring the academic autonomy of institutions of higher education.

System Management: National Level

In the past, universities performed mainly scholarly functions. The motto was knowledge for its own sake. The university was a place of enquiry: a place of search for truth. It is so today too; but we have the additional requirement that our enquiry, our search for truth, our generation of knowledge has a relevance to the developmental needs of the society. In other words, the universities have today two major functions:

---

4. The number of autonomous colleges in 2000 was only 131 (Eds.)

    (i) The scholarly functions

    (ii) The developmental functions.

The developmental functions require that universities are in live contact with the policies, plans and implementation of programmes of the nation. The institutions should respond to the environment and adapt their objects and programmes to the changing needs of the society. Consequently, universities must specify the goals and objectives and develop themselves to meet those goals and objectives. The development of an institution to be capable of meeting the goals and objectives and its ability to utilize the infrastructure created to fulfil the objectives will both need an appropriate management system. Barring the cases of Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) and a few similar institutions of excellence, we have not clearly defined our goals and objectives and drawn up policies and strategies to achieve them. We have done reasonably well at the macro level; but we have failed badly at the micro level. For planning, policy making and implementation we have developed institutions at the national level, but we have not done a comparable job at the state level. But the fact remains that whatever the plan, policy or programme, the implementing agency is the state. What are the weaknesses?

- One of the major deficiencies in institutional development and management in education is the absence of adequate infrastructure for education.
- Second, while we have fairly elaborate and well defined macroscopic plan, our microscopic planning is poor and inadequate.

In general, we see the situation where we have, on our shelves, a number of unimplemented, but often quoted, reports of committees, commissions and working groups. Our weakness and failures are in implementing these reports. Let us see how we moved on from one recommendation to another, without implementing either, or seriously reviewing the earlier actions.

When the UGC was established in 1956, there were only 35 universities. As of 1987-88 we had 164 universities. There are several regulating and coordinating bodies in higher education, like the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) for technical education, and Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) for agricultural education, besides professional bodies like Indian Medical Council (IMC) for medical education, the Indian Council of Architects for architectural education and the Bar Council for legal education. The higher education scene in the country shows fragmentation and division in terms of regulation and control according to fields of specialization without a mechanism for meaningful coordination among the regulating bodies and for ensuring an integrated approach to development. This inadequacy was taken note of by the National Policy on Education (1986), which said:

> In the interest of greater coordination and consistency in policy, sharing of facilities and developing interdisciplinary research, a national body covering higher education in general, agricultural, medical, technical, legal and other professional fields will be set up.

What is envisaged is an apex body for higher education at the national level which coordinates and integrates the functions of other national bodies in the realm of policy making, planning and promoting interdisciplinary research and education. It will have to be a statutory body and its powers and functions will have to be such as not to interfere with or duplicate, or much less

encroach upon, the autonomy of the UGC, and other existing national institutions. It is necessary that the Government of India expedite the establishment of this autonomous apex institution.

System Management: State level

In each State, there are a number of universities and colleges. The state Government bears over 95% of the expenditure on higher education. There does not exist a State expert body to advise, guide and help the state Government in matters relating to higher education. Areas of weakness and deficiencies go unnoticed; when the state comes to know of these lapses, often it is late and enough damage has already been done. There are within the state itself, serious regional imbalances in the location of colleges, in the selection of colleges for starting new courses and allocation of resources. Planning for higher education in the state on a long term basis, taking into account all parameters that deserve consideration, has not received adequate attention. A competent body of experts to whom the state Government can assign more of its planning and development functions in education is long overdue. The National Policy on Education (1986) has already addressed itself to the problem and the following recommendation contemplates setting up of a state council:

> State level planning and coordination of higher education will be done through Councils of Higher Education. The UGC and these councils will develop coordinative methods to keep a watch on standards.

As per the guidelines prepared by the UGC, the areas of responsibilities of the state council are:

- Formulation of perspective plans for development of higher education in the States
- Preparation of consolidated programmes of development for specified periods in the sphere of higher education in the state(s) and forwarding them to the UGC along with its comments and recommendations
- Assistance and advice to the UGC in respect of maintenance of standards, and identification of remedial action wherever necessary
- Advising state Governments(s) in determining the block maintenance grants and laying down the basis for such grants
- Promotion of the programme of autonomous colleges and monitoring its implementation
- Monitoring the progress of implementation of development programmes
- Encouraging and promoting revision and updating of courses and syllabi in the universities/ colleges and introduction of application-oriented curriculum and employment-oriented courses.
- Establishment of state research boards to link research in the universities with that of the research agencies outside and also with research needs of state/Country
- Networking of educational institutions among themselves and with industry and other related establishments
- Promotion of examination reforms
- Training of teachers in colleges/universities
- Determination of the principles for location of new institutions to be set up in the states.
- Considering ways and means of augmenting additional resources for higher education

- Regulation of admission to universities and colleges on the basis of physical facilities and development of entrance examination for admission
- Promotion of publication of quality textbooks and reference books
- Development of programmes for greater academic cooperation and interaction between university teachers and college teachers
- Review of the statutes and ordinances in force in various universities in the State (excluding central universities) and suggesting modifications wherever required
- Preparation of consolidated annual reports on the working of the universities in the State with regard to the academic programmes, library/laboratory facilities, etc.

Andhra Pradesh has set up a state council and it has been functioning. The other states have yet to set up and are said to be seized of the problem.[5]

The state Governments organize, administer and substantially fund higher education and therefore, it is essential that they have the benefit of the advice and guidance of a body of informed experts who are endowed with an enlightened approach, competence for comprehensive long term planning for higher education, and the capacity for efficient implementation of the development, planned at the state level. The state councils for higher education are expected to meet this need.

Regional Offices of the UGC

The quantitative expansion of higher education in the last three decades has significantly enlarged the UGC's responsibilities. Its programmes have also grown in content and number. The UGC was supporting 164 universities and 6597 colleges through several clusters of programmes as of 1987-88[6]. A scrutiny of these programme clusters would indicate that many of them have several components, and each component has a pattern of support that overlaps with the support provided under other schemes. At the level of the secretariat of the UGC, there is enormous work involved in keeping the records of the flow of funds and their utilization. At the best of times, the Commission's secretariat has not been able to cope with this demand; quite obviously, it could not have given any attention to the task of monitoring the performance of the institutions in the implementation of the projects funded by the Commission, or its impact on the quality and standards of education.

It had become all too apparent that the UGC has not been able to deal efficiently with all the institutions it is supposed to support through the multiplicity of its programmes. There are delays in processing requests for development support; institutions wait for long periods to get approvals and still longer for funds; there is virtually no monitoring of the execution of programmes at the institutional level, and at the end for each plan, there is a long list of unfinished projects, unused grants and incomplete infrastructure. In order to make up this deficiency, several attempts at restructuring the UGC were made. Restructuring of the UGC consists of two components:

---

5. The states of Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal have also set up State Councils for Higher education (Eds.).
6. The position as of 1999-2000 is 247 universities and 11831 colleges

(i)   Revising the composition of the Commission itself[7], and

(ii) Restructuring the secretariat of the Commission.

In 1977, a review committee appointed by the UGC to review the functioning of its secretariat had, among others, recommended that the Commission's secretariat should be strengthened with academic and professional staff. These recommendations were examined and followed up from time to time. But no restructuring of the UGC's secretariat has been done so far. As it stands now, the Commission's secretariat is unequal to the tasks devolving on the UGC. It deals with a system that involves large numbers in every category of activity and at the same time demands the highest possible quality, modernity and great vision. With the announcement of the National Policy on Education (1986) the challenges have become formidable; the expectation has grown higher. The Commission has to deal with a system that is large, complex and distributed through the length and breadth of the country.

The inability of the UGC to reach out to institutions spread throughout the country has drawn considerable criticism from various quarters. Both Parliament and several state Governments have forcefully raised the issue of regional imbalances in the development of higher education in the country. During the 1980s, the conferences of Education Ministers of the Southern region repeatedly demanded that the UGC should set up regional offices so that more institutions in far-flung areas could gain access to information, programme guidelines and funds from the Commission. They also argued that the existing remoteness of the UGC from a large segment of the system was mainly responsible for the uneven development of higher education in the country. Similar demands were raised also by the States in the North-eastern region. Several educationists have also been supporting the view that urgent decentralization of the operations of the UGC is essential for its effective functioning and to remove the existing imbalances in the development of higher education in the country[8].

Institutional Development and Management

In advanced countries, the University is the unit for administrative, financial and academic purposes. In India, unfortunately the University is the unit for academic management and regulation; but the college is the unit for most of the teaching responsibilities. In that sense 'institution', in our context really means 'college'. We have a few university level institutions like the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) and Indian Institute of Management (IIM). They do not account for any significant number of students. The overwhelming majority of students is in the colleges[9].

---

7. The proposals made by a Parliamentary Committee to revise the composition of the UGC were discussed in Chapter 1, Management of Higher Education. The UGC Act was amended in 1970 to make provision for three full-time members. However, these amendments were soon modified to provide for the appointment of one full-time Vice-Chairman only.

8. The UGC has set up seven regional centres at Hyderabad, Pune, Bhopal, Ghaziabad, Calcutta, Bangalore and Guwahati till 2000. The Commission had decided to establish two more regional centres at Chandigarh and Jaipur. (Eds.)

9. According to Annual Report of the UGC for the year 1999-2000, the affiliated colleges accounted for 88.16% of all undergraduate enrollment, 54.86% of all postgraduate enrollment, 32.89% of all enrollment in diploma/certificate programmes and 8.5% of research enrollment (Eds.)

All of these are affiliated colleges except the very few autonomous colleges mentioned earlier. They have neither academic autonomy, nor administrative autonomy, nor financial autonomy. (The handful of colleges declared as autonomous colleges enjoy certain measure of academic autonomy but very little administrative and financial autonomy).

The concept of affiliating system is an outmoded one: an anachronism. It does not exist anywhere in the world except in the Indian sub-continent. For all practical purposes, academic environment is not conducive to the academic playing an active role in the totality of the educational process. He does not seriously think that he is responsible for the quality of the product; he thinks that some one from somewhere decides issues. When it comes to institutional development, he thinks that the management takes all decisions and that he is not part of the management. If we are to consider seriously institutional development and management, then the institution must have academic, financial and administrative autonomy. The faculty must be developed both in knowledge and status to deserve and avail itself of the autonomy. Whether private or government, every institution must be under a Board of Management. The board should set the goals and objectives. The head of the institution should prepare the necessary plans, strategies and policies in consultation with the staff. The main concerns are:

(i) Faculty development
(ii) Relevance of curriculum and syllabi to the needs of the manpower
(iii) Appropriateness of the instructional methods
(iv) Relevant research
(v) Industry-institution collaboration.

It is now well known that the half life of knowledge in science and technology is less than five years. The rate of obsolescence of both hardware and software is very high. We have to keep running to remain up-to-date. The need is more in the case of institutions of higher learning. An enlightened institutional management policy requires constant effort, faculty development and modernization of infrastructure.

It was Bacon who said that knowledge is power: but, knowledge is power only when it is relevant. If our curriculum and syllabi are to respond to the needs of the economy, the institutions must be in live contact with the world of industry. Engineering education is the responsibility of educational institutions and the industries. We have not, in the last 50 years, succeeded in involving the industries in the development of engineering and technological manpower.

As I survey the higher education scene, I find that the real desideratum is academic leadership. We have no doubt produced scholars, researchers and teachers, we have not produced great educationists. We have to consciously strive to develop leaders in the academic world. As a first step in this direction, we must start with the restructuring of our management system of higher education. The sooner we do so, the better it is for our higher education as a whole.

3

Towards Decentralization

As the system grows larger, the variables increase, the complexities multiply and the management aspects of the system assume a crucial role. In the Indian context, accountability, autonomy and decentralization are among the factors that should form the main objective and strategy for the development of the management system

Higher Education Management: New Perspectives

As we draw closer to the end of the 20th century, we find that higher education is gaining greater importance; it is drawing more attention and attracting higher investment in absolute terms than before from the governments all over the world. Questions have been raised on the role of higher education and research in the context of modern developments. Taking for instance, the United Kingdom, the 'University Grants Committee' which provided the model for the UGC in India, was abolished and a 'University Funding Council' was established. This body again is now sought to be replaced by independent funding bodies for England, Wales and Scotland. We must realize that 'providing grants' is very much different from 'providing funds'. Funding implies an accountability very different from *making grants*. Similar reforms are seen in some of the advanced countries as well as the developing countries of the world. The 'White Paper on Higher Education: A Policy Statement' (1988) of Australia, Learning for Life Proposals and the Education Amendment Act (1990) of New Zealand, the Education Reform Act (1987) of Zimbabwe and our own National Policy on Education (1986) reflect the changes in importance and emphasis that are witnessed in the field of education. In general, the system of higher education is in a ferment and many changes are in the offing.

During the sixties, the U.K. upgraded many well established colleges into universities on the basis of the recommendations of Robbins Committee. Now the Government of the U.K. is contemplating the upgradation of the polytechnics and the colleges which were under the umbrella of the Council of National Academic Awards (CNAA) into institutions empowered to grant diplomas and degrees on their own. Those institutions which already enjoy full academic autonomy will now receive the status of a university. The trend in general is towards more autonomy and decentralization.

The soul of changes that are either on the anvil or under implementation, centres on and emphasises the following:

- On the Academic Front, issues concerning
  (i) Relevance, and
  (ii) Quality.
- On the Managerial Front, issues concerning
  (i) Accountability,
  (ii) Autonomy, and
  (iii) Decentralization.

Since the Governments treat higher education not as a social service any more, but as an investment, there has been an increasing emphasis on relevance and matching education and research with the needs of the economy. This does not mean that the pursuit of truth as part of research is discouraged or abandoned: but the focus, however, is on the role of education as a means of human resource development. Even in the field of education, every pursuit must have a purpose. Excellence too must satisfy the test of relevance.

The modern developments in science and technology, the role they play in the socio-economic development and the increasing importance of research even for developing countries have made it necessary to ensure that more people seek higher education and more opportunities are created. In the context of expansion, emphasis on quality becomes important, more than ever before. The problem has been and is one of expansion and at the same time preservation of quality.

As the system grows larger, the variables increase, the complexities multiply and the management aspects of the system assume a crucial role. In the Indian context, accountability, autonomy and decentralization are among the factors that should form the main objective and strategy for the development of the management system.

UGC: The Apex Body

We are aware that the first university was established at Calcutta in 1857 and it was followed by the University of Bombay and the University of Madras in the same year. These were affiliating universities and the colleges established over the years were affiliated to them for academic purposes. New disciplines were started; new institutions were established and the student numbers continued to grow. Consequently, the universities increased in number; however, they continued to be administered by the concerned state Governments and the universities functioned within the framework of the autonomy given to them. There was no mechanism for coordination or maintenance of standards or for planning and development on a national level. It was only in 1951, based mainly on the recommendations of the University Education Commission under Dr S. Radhakrishnan that the establishment of the University Grants Commission (UGC) was thought of. It was in 1956, a hundred years after the establishment of the first university, that the UGC as a statutory body came into existence.

From 1956 to the present period, higher education system has grown enormously. It was realized that the UGC as it existed was unequal to the task and changes were needed. A Parliamentary Committee on Higher Education suggested in 1964 an increase in the strength of

the membership from 8 to 15 and recommended the appointment of a few full-time members. The Estimates Committee of the Parliament also made similar recommendations. The UGC Act was amended in 1970 to provide for three full-time members. However, the Act was amended again in 1972 to make provision for a full-time Vice-Chairman without any other full-time members. The functioning of the UGC has been reviewed by various committees set up by the Commission and the Parliament from time to time. Principal among them were the Jha Committee appointed by the Government of India and the Satish Chandra Committee appointed by the UGC besides the Estimates Committees and Public Accounts Committees of Parliament.

In 1977, the UGC appointed a committee for reorganizing its secretariat. But its recommendations have not been implemented. Again in 1987 the UGC appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Prof.A.Gnanam for recommending new models of management for higher education system as a whole of which the UGC is a part. The UGC has also invited the Administrative Staff College, Hyderabad to look into the reorganization of its secretariat. The Staff College has suggested not only the reorganization of the secretariat but the Commission itself including the establishment of Regional Offices[1].

In 1951, when the establishment of the Commission was thought of, there were 28 universities, 695 colleges, 20,264 teachers and 2.75 lakhs of students. There has been a phenomenal growth since then. We have today (1990) over 190 universities, 7000 colleges, 2.5 lakhs teachers and 4.5 million students[2]. The UGC has today vastly increased responsibilities and greatly complicated problems. The range and variety of the activities that the Commission has undertaken run into a formidable list, and the important ones are given in Annexure 1.

The UGC is not merely a funding body. Its functions, as stated clearly in the Act, are to take:

all such steps as it may think fit for the promotion and coordination of university education and for the determination and maintenance of standards of teaching, examination and research in universities...

From the sixties, there has been an apprehension that the Commission as composed of, and organized, may not be able to fulfil the above responsibilities and therefore recommendations have been made for changes and reorganization. So far, nothing significant has happened either in the composition of the Commission or in the structure of its administration. But its responsibilities

---

1. The following reports of various committees have dealt with these issues at different points of time:
    (i) Report of the Committee of Members of Parliament on Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Government of India, 1964
    (ii) 102nd Report of the Estimates Committee (1965–66); Third Lok Sabha
    (iii) 114th Report of the Public Accounts Committee (1969–70); Fourth Lok Sabha
    (iv) Report of the Review Committee on the University Grants Commission, 1977, Ministry of Education (Jha Committee)
    (v) Report of the Committee appointed by the UGC to review its programmes and their impact on universities (1977–79), UGC (Satish Chandra Committee)
    (vi) Report of the Estimate Committee (1988–89); Eighth Lok Sabha
    (vii) Reorganization of the UGC Secretariat, 1991, Administrative Staff College, Hyderabad
    (viii) Towards New Educational Management: Report of the UGC Committee, 1990 (Gnanam Committee)
2. In 2000, there were 247 universities, 11831 colleges, over 3.5 lakhs teachers and 7.7 million students (Eds.)

have multiplied; new tasks have come up; new problems have arisen; many formidable challenges have been posed. State legislatures have set up universities and state governments have started colleges without providing infrastructure facilities and ensuring adequate funds. Over the years, the ability of the UGC to fulfil the objectives for which it was established has become increasingly weak and a stage is reached when it is realized at all levels that certain structural changes are necessary and urgent if the UGC is to be effective even at a modest level in the field of higher education.

The UGC, as already said, has been established for coordination and maintenance of standards of higher education. In discharging this responsibility, it performs the following major functions:

(i) Provision of developmental funding to state universities

(ii) Provision of maintenance and developmental funding to, and broadly overseeing the management of, Central universities.

(iii) Provision of maintenance and developmental funding according to an agreed pattern to the private colleges in Delhi, the Delhi administration colleges and the Delhi University colleges.

The UGC is a national organization but it functions like a directorate of collegiate education of the state Government as far as Central Universities and Delhi colleges are concerned. Substantial part of its time and effort as well as its resources are diverted to these institutions and they exert undue pressure on the UGC which often yields to such pressures, always at the cost of state Universities. It is suggested that:

(i) The UGC should transfer the Delhi private colleges and Delhi administration colleges to the Delhi administration which should administer them like any other state Government.

(ii) The UGC should leave the maintenance funding and management of Central universities and their colleges to the Ministry of HRD which may establish a 'Council for the Management of Central Universities', as in the case of IITs and directly release maintenance grants to the Central universities.

(iii) The UGC may provide development grants to all the universities and colleges and monitor their performance.

(iv) The UGC should reorganize its staff structure, providing for greater academic orientation and academic leadership. Starting from the Estimates Committee Report of the Parliament to the recent Cadre Review Committee headed by Dr V.C. Kulandai Swamy, a number of reports are available. The UGC must implement at least some of these recommendations.

> The UGC is a national organization but it functions like a Directorate of collegiate education of the state Government as far as Central Universities and Delhi colleges are concerned. Substantial part of its time and effort as well as its resources are diverted to these institutions and they exert undue pressure on the UGC which often yields to such pressures, always at the cost of state universities.

Regional Offices

The National Policy on Education (1986) envisages an 'Overhaul of the system of planning and

management of education....' and 'decentralization'. The very first reform that is needed is that the UGC may have to initiate measures to ensure that it fulfils the following requirements:

- Get nearer to the institutions that it serves
- Make the institutions, especially the affiliated colleges, aware of the many programmes that the UGC has initiated
- Speed up responses from the UGC to enquiries from its clients
- Monitor closely the programmes sanctioned and funded
- Relieve the officers of the 'UGC headquarters' from the routine work and from attending to visits of numerous academics from affiliated colleges and allow them the time and the atmosphere for creative work.

There are a number of functions which are of a routine nature and are performed on well defined norms. It is possible to list a fairly long array of such functions as may not require decision making at the highest level. But these may be functions that may involve a very large number of institutions and academics. There is today, considerable scope for decentralization. The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) is a much smaller body compared to the UGC. It is concerned with Technical, Pharmaceutical and Management Education. It has almost from the beginning four regional offices. The UGC perhaps is the only institution of its dimensions that discharges its responsibilities from one central office at Delhi. A geographical distribution of its offices suggests itself as an obvious step towards decentralization. Starting from the conference of Vice-Chancellors of the Southern Region held at Madras, in the 1980s, successive conferences of Vice-Chancellors have emphasized this need. The committee on 'New Educational Management', under the chairmanship of Prof. Gnanam has made the following recommendation:

At least 4–5 Regional Offices of the UGC be established for ensuring decentralized functioning of the UGC with a view to promoting effective implementation and monitoring of the UGC's programmes throughout the university system in the country.

It may be necessary to emphasize the following:

- We are now considering only a reorganization of the office of the UGC and suggesting regional offices. We are not considering any reorganization of the UGC itself, however important it may be, and we are not suggesting any regional University Grants Commission.
- The regional offices must have well defined delegation of powers and must be able to take decisions, issue sanctions and pass orders at its level and should not become another processing station.
- Where policy decisions have been taken by the UGC, the powers for implementation of the decisions as far as the affiliated colleges are concerned must be vested in the regional offices.
- Many of the routine sanctions for the universities may be issued by the regional offices.

It is highly desirable that the UGC establishes four regional offices–one each in the South, North, East and West. We may not go into the composition and structure of the office. If it is accepted in principle, the details can be worked out.

The regional office may be headed by an officer at the level of Additional Secretary. The

staff pattern of the office is a matter of detail. Once the powers and functions are carefully listed, the quantum of work involved can be assessed and the staff structure can be determined. The establishment of the regional offices will bring the university departments and the affiliated colleges closer to the UGC and help them obtain information on projects and schemes and respond to any request made by the UGC and obtain sanctions and release of funds more expeditiously. Many colleges in the far off places have only an incomplete and dim view of the programmes of assistance of the UGC. They do not feel themselves to be a part of the university system. The establishment of regional offices will bring about a major change in the approach and outlook of the colleges regarding their relationship with the UGC.

State Councils for Higher Education

We are aware that till about 1976, education has been a State subject. It was only in 1976 that an amendment was made to the Constitution and education was brought under the Concurrent List. Even now the role played by the state Governments in education is significant and this fact can be seen even from the financial commitment that the state makes under Plan and Non-Plan expenditure.

Contribution of Centre and the States to 'Plan Expenditure' on Education in India in Percentage

Five Year Plan	Central Govt.	State Govt.	Total
First	25	75	100 (153)
Second	25	75	100 (273)
Third	26	74	100 (589)
Fourth	33	67	100 (823)
Fifth	30	70	100 (930)
Sixth	30	70	100 (2945)
Seventh	37	63	100 (6383)

Source: Five Year Plans
Note: Figures in brackets are in crores of rupees

The above Table would show that during the Fifth and Sixth Plans, Central share came down from the level of the Fourth Plan. Of course, during the Seventh Plan, the share has increased.

**Centre-State Partnership in Financing
'Non-Plan Expenditure' on Education in Percentage**

Five Year Plan	Central Govt.	State Govt.	Total
Second	14	86	100 (577)
Third	16	84	100 (1056)
Fourth	4	96	100 (4820)
Fifth	6	94	100 (8009)
Sixth	6	94	100 (23434)
Seventh	6	94	100 (44913)

Source: Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development.
Note: Figures in brackets are in crores of rupees

The above Table would show that the share of the Central Government in Non-Plan expenditure has come down to 6% during the Fifth Five Year Plan, the state Governments' share having gone up to 94%.

While the share of education in the revenue budget is reasonably high, on the capital side its share is almost negligible. The share of education in central budget as a percentage of revenue and capital expenditure is only 11.7%; in the budgets of states and UTs, the share is 18.9% (average).

It can be seen that the state shares almost the entire Non-Plan expenditure and close to two-thirds of the Plan expenditure. If we are to look at the management scene, we will find that the state has no institutional mechanism for assessing the overall requirements of higher education and for planning and developing higher education in the state. The Government departments are by and large busy with the routine administration. They do not have the necessary expertise for innovation and for ordering pilot studies, analysing the results and ultimately introducing new reforms on the basis of experiments made.

While the existing management is capable of handling linear expansion, it is not capable of bringing about major reforms. This is the main reason that some of the excellent recommendations made by the University Education Commission, and the Education Commission under Kothari and many other committees and working groups have remained unimplemented in the archives. It is necessary to bring into existence a planning and policy making body for higher education at the State level keeping in mind the role of the UGC. The National Policy on Education, 1986 recommended the establishment of State Councils for Higher Education. Since then, the establishment of this body has been recommended in every forum of Vice-Chancellors and educationists. The Chairman, UGC has written to the Chief Ministers of the state Governments. The Committee on New Education Management set up by the UGC has recommended it and the UGC has also accepted the recommendation. However, one discerns a lack of enthusiasm on the part of the Governments–state and Central. It is surprising that an important recommendation contained in a policy document approved by the Parliament, and strongly supported by the UGC and educationists of the country has not seen the light of the day, the exception so far being Andhra Pradesh. Apathy on the part of the Vice-Chancellors, unwillingness of the bureaucracy to part with certain powers and lack of application of mind by political leadership are by and large the causes of tardy or no progress in this regard. It is mentioned by some that a non-statutory Inter-University Board is adequate for the purpose. Such an arrangement is far from the objective of a statutory body like the state council recommended in the NPE 1986. The powers and functions of the State Council are defined in the Model Act prepared by the UGC (Annexure 2)

Academic Leadership

The establishment of state council will fulfil one more requirement in the domain of higher education. If we look at the total public expenditure in a year, education comes as the second largest sector. It concerns perhaps the most important activity in a society. But, surprisingly, we have no recognized and acknowledged leaders in education. If you ask any reasonably informed individual in the country about a few tall leaders in industry, he will have no difficulty in listing out the names. Similarly, if you ask the names of political leaders or leading persons in the field of art, in the field of literature or even in the field of science and technology, he will be able to

give an impressive list. But if you ask any one to give you a list of leaders in education, he will find it difficult to give a list of even a few. There is no recognizable academic leadership in the country. Our education system has not produced educationists of high standing. Unfortunately, the training ground for such talent does not exist. Only when you have institutions you will develop leaders. If the institutions are small, the leaders would also be small. The State Council for Higher Education would provide an opportunity for the development of leaders of higher education in the state and eventually in the country.

A National Framework for Universities

In a country like West Germany, education is essentially a state subject and the states establish and fund the universities. But the Federal Government have brought out what is called the *Grund Gesetz* i.e the 'Basic Law' that lays down the framework of the university structure. Similarly, the Government of India should bring about an 'Education Act' which should define the main authorities, the mode of appointment of Vice-Chancellor and the terms and conditions of their appointment. The unhappy situation that we now happen to see, where the Vice-Chancellor is appointed to hold office during the pleasure of the Chancellor with provisions for his removal, without assigning any reason, makes us feel small in the eyes of the academic world. Certain common norms without encroaching on the academic functions of a University are necessary and the Government of India can, and preferably should, formulate them through an Act.

Autonomous Colleges

If I am to point out one single curse on the higher education system in India, it is the system of affiliated colleges and affiliating universities. All over the world, whether it is in advanced countries or in Africa, higher education is in the University campuses. Only in the Indian sub-continent have we continued and expanded beyond redemption a system long given up in the country of its origin. The damage done by this outmoded concept is too well known to be discussed here. We are aware that 88% of the undergraduate students, 55% of the postgraduate students and 80% of the teachers are in the affiliated colleges. As long as we continue the present affiliating system, it can be safely assumed that quality in education and relevance in curriculum and syllabi are unattainable.

We cannot upgrade all the colleges into universities. Many are unfit to be called institutes of higher education. A drastic reform is needed. The following steps are suggested:

(i)   We may unhesitatingly and boldly give deemed university status to some of the well established colleges in the country provided they satisfy certain minimum requirements of library, infrastructure and staff.
(ii) We may give autonomous status to as many deserving institutions as possible.
(iii) Those colleges which may meet the requirement with marginal input may be identified and support may be given to improve the facilities to bring them to a level of acceptance.
(iv) The remaining institutions may be converted to offer vocational courses after 10+ and 12+.

These steps may appear difficult; but really they are not as formidable as one may think. I want to point out that between 1992 and 1993, the United Kingdom has upgraded 33 polytechnics into universities. What we need is fixing firmly our direction of change and taking bold steps to achieve the goal. If lack of 'direction' or absence of 'will' is our problem, none can help us.

Education to be above Politics

In a democracy, any progress depends on political decision making. Any reform in education will yield results only after a minimum period of time. Education is not a field for quick results or spectacular changes. Continuity of policy is a prerequisite for educational reforms. It will be desirable for the political parties to keep certain areas of education as a matter for common agreement and implementation.

Higher education represents, perhaps, one of the least efficient systems in India. The UGC has prescribed 180 working days for the colleges. In advanced countries students take courses in summer semester or take up some work. Our students have no such opportunities. The vacation is spent aimlessly. Many colleges work, perhaps, around 150 days or so; even during those days, between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., or an hour or so longer, for 5 days a week. As for attendance in classes, the less said, the better. Not even an advanced country can afford such under utilization of facilities. Surprisingly, no one seems to be worried about it. The tower of higher education has tilted too far. No management, no Vice-Chancellor, no principal can put it back. This needs political will.

Accountability, physical discipline, number of minimum working days, academic calendar and schedule of operations are not things that have political overtones. Barring extraordinary circumstances, the educational issues must be a matter of consensus and change in Government should not unsettle academic policies. If there is any thing that disturbs us rather badly, it is the kind of lack of accountability, absence of seriousness and the atmosphere of apathy that one sees in educational campuses. One cannot allow this to continue and further deteriorate. A national consciousness and consensus above politics are urgently needed to bring about any reform or restructuring.

ANNEXURE 1

Major Programmes of the UGC

    (i) Development grants under Plan
    (ii) Development grants outside Plan
    (iii) Department of Special Assistance (DSA)
    (iv) Department of Research Support (DRS)
    (v) Committee on Strengthening Infrastructure in S&T (COSIST)
    (vi) College Science Improvement Programme (COSIP)
    (vii) College Social Sciences and Humanities Improvement Programme (COSSHIP)
    (viii) Faculty Improvement Programme (FIP)
    (ix) Minor Research Programmes
    (x) Major Research Programmes

(xi) Academic Staff Colleges

(xii) Autonomous Colleges

(xiii) Examination Reform

(xiv) UGC INSAT Programme

(xv) Inspection of Universities for recognition or quinquennial evaluation

(xvi) Conduct of Examinations for JRF

(xvii) Administration of Central Universities

(xviii) Direct Funding of Delhi Colleges other than University Colleges

(xix) Inter-University Centres including Information Centres

(xx) Panels in several disciplines

(xxi) University Leadership Project

(xxii) Preparation of University level books

(xxiii) Cultural Exchange Programmes and International Cooperation, Student Fellowships and Research Associateships

(xxiv) Adult and Continuing Education

(xxv) Facilities for SC/ST.

Annexure 2

Powers and Functions of the State Council for Higher Education

(i) To prepare consolidated programmes in the sphere of higher education in the state(s) in the light of guidelines that may be issued by the UGC from time to time.

(ii) To forward the development programmes of the universities and colleges in the state(s) to the UGC along with its comments and recommendations.

(iii) To assist and advise the UGC in respect of maintenance of standards and to suggest remedial action wherever necessary.

(iv) To evolve perspective plans for development of higher education in a state.

(v) To advise the state Governments in determining the block maintenance grants and to lay down the basis for such grants.

(vi) To promote the programme of autonomous colleges and to monitor its implementation.

(vii) To monitor the progress of implementation of development programmes.

(viii) To encourage and promote updating of courses and syllabi in the universities/colleges.

(ix) To encourage and promote application-oriented curriculum and to help employment-oriented courses.

(x) To set up a state research board so as to link educational institutions' research with that of the research agencies and also with research needs of a state.

(xi) To promote networking of the educational institutions among themselves and with industry and other related establishments.

(xii) To take steps to improve the standards of the examinations conducted by the universities and bring out necessary reforms.

(xiii) To arrange for training of teachers in colleges/universities.

(xiv) To formulate the principles for location of new institutions to be set up in a state.

(xv) To devise ways and means of augmenting resources for higher education in a state.

(xvi) To promote publication of quality textbooks and reference books.

(xvii) To develop programmes for greater academic cooperation and interaction between university teachers and college teachers.

(xviii) To examine the statutes and ordinances in force in various universities in the state (excluding central universities) and suggest modifications wherever required.

(xix) To advise the state Government regarding the statutes proposed by the universities.

(xx) To prepare a consolidated report on the working of the universities in a state with regard to the academic programmes, library/laboratory facilities, etc. A copy of the report should be sent to the University Grants Commission.

(xxi) To ensure the implementation of the guidelines issued by the UGC from time to time.

(xxii) To regulate admission on the basis of physical facilities and to develop entrance examinations for admission to institutions of higher education.

(xxiii) To develop programmes to encourage academic interaction between academic institutions and facilitate migration of teachers from one university to another.

(xxiv) To perform other functions that may be necessary for furtherance of higher education in a state.

4

A System that Resists Change

Education is not a static phenomenon: it is an organic entity that recognizes the changes in the environment, responds to new demands and keeps developing with the society of which it is a part. The advanced countries have responded adequately to new demands and new challenges: their education system has incorporated such changes, effected such improvements, added such features and brought about such reforms as may be needed to meet the emerging requirements of a competitive world. One may naturally ask as to what our reaction has been and how well our antenna is directed to receive the messages of the modern world and respond appropriately. An assessment of our performance in this respect leaves us sad and somewhat perturbed.

Introduction

The 20th century, which is about to close, has been a period of momentous developments in human history. Notwithstanding its two major devastating wars, numerous conflicts all over the world and the display of wealth, poverty, crudeness, cruelty and a certain degree of vulgarity in the behaviour of individuals and nations that we witness and have witnessed, it has made enormous contributions towards civilizing, refining and facilitating human life. There have been many developments that represent a break from the past, or a radical departure from accepted traditions.

The concretization of human dignity, human rights, individual freedom, democracy, socialism and communism, in many forms, have brought about a metamorphosis in human society. Science and technology which was essentially a tool for economic development in the industrial economy has emerged as a major force and exerts an all pervasive influence in every sphere of human life. Possession of relevant knowledge, creation of new knowledge and capacity for its application have become the determinants in the strength of a nation. Consequently, education has come to the centre stage and is today the most important agent for change and development. The dominance of education and the emergence of the concept of human resource development are most significant developments of this century. The new role that education might play, the

new gates it might open, and the unknown world it might bring to light, are in the womb of the future. We need the highest of education for a few to master existing knowledge, as well as creating new knowledge, and basic education for all for the society to be able to absorb and apply knowledge to social, political and economic development.

Added to the general trend of the last century, certain policy changes of our Government in the early 1990s brought new compulsions to keep our education system in good repair. We in India have, with whatever reservations there may be, accepted liberalization and globalization of our economy. It means that we open our market to the world and we gain access to the world market. Employment opportunities have transcended the state boundaries as well as national boundaries and therefore we have to improve our competitiveness, which in concrete terms means excelling in productivity and quality. In this context, education faces three challenges: universalization, equity and ability to be on the frontiers of knowledge. Higher education, therefore, has a decisive and dominant role to play in keeping our competitiveness high in every sphere of activity.

Condemnation: not a Contribution

Higher education is a subject on which every one feels qualified to express an opinion, which unfortunately is often highly critical and damning. We seem to be developing in this country a culture of condemnation and a philosophy that seems to teach us that condemnation is by itself a contribution, complete and adequate. We have many rushing to demolish, but a few willing to build. Demolition of anything without replacement is no reform; it is vandalism.

We have made great strides in higher education since independence. We have today one of the largest systems of higher education in the world with over 230 universities, 9300 colleges, and 6.4 million students (Formal system) and over 300,000 teachers (1995–96)[1]. The country has produced scientists, engineers, technologists, managers and doctors who are in demand all over the world, both in developing and advanced countries, and who have distinguished themselves in every area of knowledge. The scientific and technological capability of India is far above that of any developing country, and is above that of some of the advanced countries as well. These and many other achievements bear testimony to the contributions of higher education despite many inadequacies. The system has today the necessary infrastructure, the tools and the manpower; it has a tremendous potential. We can certainly have faith and confidence in the higher education system we have developed and the potential it has. Having said this, we should now look at our failures in the past, the inadequacies that have developed, and the issues and challenges that we face today.

Higher Education: The Indian Scene

Education is not a static phenomenon: it is an organic entity that recognizes the changes in the environment, responds to new demands and keeps developing with the society of which it is a part. The advanced countries have responded adequately to new demands and new challenges: their education system has incorporated such changes, effected such improvements, added such features and brought about such reforms as may be needed to meet the emerging requirements

---

1. In 2000, there were 247 universities, 11831 colleges, 7.7 million students and over 3.50 lakh teachers in the higher education system in India (Eds.)

of a competitive world. One may naturally ask as to what our reaction has been and how well our antenna is directed to receive the messages of the modern world and respond appropriately. An assessment of our performance in this respect leaves us sad and somewhat perturbed. Let us examine the reasons based on facts that have led us to the paradoxical situation.

The facts are as follows:

(i) The system has expanded considerably in all aspects. We have drawn heavily from the experiences and curriculum models from advanced countries. However, we have not developed a management system capable of making such changes, as may be needed to relate education to the social and economic needs of the country, and even to bring about the necessary structural and pedagogic changes to keep pace with the reforms taking place in advanced countries. We have not reformed as much as we expanded.

(ii) The 19th century was known for transportation revolution and the 20th century for communication revolution. But the communication revolution, which has broken all geographical and national boundaries, did not enter for a long time, and even now has entered only partially, the classrooms in India. Any academic who might have retired half a century ago can enter the classroom and feel quite at home with the tools of instruction now in use in an average classroom. The curriculum no doubt has changed beyond recognition, but the methods, and practices of instruction remain the same.

(iii) Since the advent of industrial revolution, there have been continuous applications of science to transform every craft into technology and thereby increase productivity. The major difference between an advanced country and a developing country is ultimately in the productivity levels in every field. In India, productivity in education remains static. Modern tools and methods have not found any place in our instructional system. Our academics are not as advanced in pedagogy and educational technology as they are in the knowledge of their subjects.

(iv) A system, when it advances, sheds gradually its rigidity, increases its flexibility, and becomes increasingly capable of adapting itself to new developments. But the higher education system in India, has not only remained unchanged for a century, if not more, but has resisted consistently all attempts to bring about changes. When we think of the higher education system in India, we are reminded of an anecdote concerning a Chinese philosopher. A renowned philosopher in China was maintaining that the heart of the human beings is on the right of the body. A modern doctor discussed the matter with him and proved by appropriate demonstration that the heart is a little to the left. The doctor was immensely pleased that he was able to correct a grievous error in the knowledge of a great philosopher of his country. But when he met him next, he found, much to his dismay and disappointment, that the philosopher was maintaining the same belief as before. The doctor enquired about it and expressed great surprise. The philosopher calmly said:

> young man, big and small are comparative; far and near are relative; right and left are arbitrary. Your left can as well be my right. Your arguments were good; but they did not warrant any change in my position.

We have had numerous committee reports, commission documents and national policies. They made many valuable recommendations; but the higher education system like the Chinese philosopher remains unchanged, almost unaffected.

(v) In the age of knowledge that we are in, progress depends on innovation and its application. Services and contributions of persons with expertise and exposure to developments in the field are essential in the endeavour needed in any area of activity. It is more so when we have to transform a system designed by a colonial power to meet its needs of maintaining law and order and revenue collection, to one that can respond to the requirements of development—social, political and economic—in an environment of independent neighbourhood. But unfortunately, policy formulation and decision making have remained with the bureaucrats of the Government and outside the domains of academic leaders, especially in the states, which are entrusted with implementation of educational programmes. This is a major deficiency that has resulted in the continuation of a system, condemned uniformly on the platform, but entertained and expanded in practice. It may appear strange but true, that we do not have the category of persons who are acknowledged as academic leaders. We do have leaders in industry who are consulted: political leaders who are either in position of power or in the opposition, recognised leaders in art and literature. We have not established the necessary institutions that will help the development of leadership in education.

When we think of the higher education system in India, we are reminded of an anecdote concerning a Chinese philosopher. A renowned philosopher in China was maintaining that the heart for the human beings is on the right of the body. A modern doctor discussed the matter with him and proved by appropriate demonstration that the heart is a little to the left. The doctor was immensely pleased that he was able to correct a grievous error in the knowledge of a great philosopher of his country. But when he met him next, he found much to his dismay and disappointment that the philosopher was maintaining the same belief as before. The doctor enquired about it and expressed great surprise. The philosopher calmly said:

> young man, big and small are comparative; far and near are relative; right and left are arbitrary. Your left can as well be my right. Your arguments were good; but they did not warrant any change in my position.

We have had numerous committee reports, commission documents and national policies. They made many valuable recommendations; but the higher education system like the Chinese philosopher remains unchanged, almost unaffected.

Some Anachronisms

Since Independence in 1947, consistent efforts have been made as mentioned earlier, to bring about some desired changes in education. Many committees and commissions have gone into the issue. Our shelves are full of scholarly and comprehensive reports, often quoted, but never implemented. The Government brought out two National Policy documents on education, one in 1968 and the other in 1986. The National Education Policy of 1986 (NPE86) talked about heroic efforts to usher in changes. What we have achieved by way of changes in higher education is precious little. Some areas that need urgent attention are:

- The most objectionable feature of our university system is the affiliating practice. It has done and continues to do enormous harm to higher education in our country. It has changed the

university into an examining body, converted the colleges into tutorial institutions, and the academics into tutors. In many cases, even these roles have been further diluted, mismanaged or given up altogether. It has taken away all initiative, leadership and sense of participation from the academic community and rendered the academic atmosphere anaemic. All over the world, higher education is on the university campus. Since we could not convert all the colleges into universities, the Kothari Commission came up with the idea of autonomous colleges. The NPE 1986, set a modest target of 10%, i.e., 500 colleges as of that date to be granted autonomy. But even in 1998, the number was around 110, of which nearly 40% happen to be in the State of Tamil Nadu[2].

- The academic year concept is another fossil on our campus. The delay in starting instruction, leisurely drift over a major part of the year, near absence of seriousness in the campus atmosphere, slow and indifferent pace of instruction, intensive last minute hurried study, fear and nervousness on the eve of the examination (since the final examination is the only deciding factor) are the characteristics of the academic year system. These are mostly absent in the educational campuses of advanced countries and in some institutions of our own country. We must move over to the semester system which normally means a shorter academic term and continuous internal assessment and a final examination.

- Structural rigidity of our academic programmes cripples all initiatives for reforms. Modular approach has come to be accepted in every area of activity. It is a symbol of flexibility and provides scope for enormous manoeuvrability. Credit system in the choice of subjects is now a universal practice and is in vogue in some campuses in our own country. It makes mobility easier and gives the learner the freedom to acquire the kind of competence he chooses to acquire. If we adopt the credit system we can impart, in a single step, to our system enormous flexibility and end the stifling rigidity that we now suffer from.

- The administration and management of the universities are in the hands of university bodies like the Board of Management, the Academic Council, the Senate, the Planning Board and Boards of Studies. The composition of some of these bodies as well as their powers and functions remains, by and large, as it obtained in the pre-independence days. We continue with, and expand, a structure devised to meet educational objectives far different from those that we have now set before us. Attempts have been made since the sixties to devise a more appropriate structure, but nothing significant has happened in the state universities.

The university system is invariably identified with the Vice-Chancellor. Whether it is the fall of standards, poor performance in research, delay in publication of results or unrest on the campus, whatever the breakdown, the fall is attributed to the Vice-Chancellor who runs the university as the Chairman of bodies, in the composition of which he has no say. In some States, he holds office at the pleasure of the Governor who is the Chancellor. The position of Vice-Chancellor, because of external pressures, has been devalued gradually over the years and has lost the prestige it had even under the colonial rule.

As we stand at the end of the 20th century and are about to knock at the door of the next, we find that we carry on our shoulders the burden of arrears of reforms that we have failed to bring about in the second half of this century. There is an urgent need that we take bold and decisive steps to come level with the modern world in academic practices and administrative structures. They are intellectually, politically and economically well within our capability. What is needed

---

2. In 2000, there were 131 autonomous colleges in the country of which 47 were in Tamil Nadu

is the will and conviction to sweep off the obsolete and enter the race with the endowment of a system that is modern and has its antenna well directed towards the new challenges.

Inefficiency of the System

However good the curriculum, laboratories and syllabi, however rich the library, and however well equipped the college, they serve no purpose if the academics do not teach and the students do not learn. The UGC has prescribed 180 contact days in a year; less than 50% of the days in a year, certainly not an ambitious target. With our system of vacation, two weekly holidays, a large number of authorized holidays and interruption of work because of strikes, it has become difficult even to fulfil this modest target.

The Rajasthan Government, in consultation with the Vice-Chancellors and principals of colleges has officially, by a Government Order, fixed 153 contact days in a year. But discussions with officials concerned indicate that what is realized may not exceed 130 days. A survey conducted by the UGC Pay Committee covering 76 universities and 1095 colleges showed that 22.1% of the universities and 5.6% of the colleges report fewer than 100 contact days in a year[3].

The Working Group on Higher Education constituted by the Planning Commission (1996) for preparing the proposals for the IX Plan was headed by the UGC Chairperson and it states:

> New universities particularly suffer from infrastructure deficits as the grant formula is generally unfavourable to them. On the other hand, the physical plant is not utilized optimally.... some institutions barely work for 100 days to 140 days.

While the contact days are so limited in number, the question also arises as to how many classes are actually engaged on those days without being cancelled and how many students attend the classes held. The institutions mostly work between 10.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. and for the rest of the 17 hours on working days and all the 24 hours on holidays the classrooms and the laboratories remain idle, excepting the hours when examinations are held. Taking into account the fact that the minimum percentage of marks prescribed for a pass is only around 35 and the percentage of successful candidates is about 60, when all the additions and subtractions are made and if one reckons the net utilization of manpower resources and physical facilities relative to the availability and the performance of the system, the efficiency level leaves us sad and highly perturbed. Needless to say, the character of instruction and quality of learning under these circumstances will be wanting in many respects.

Since educational institutions have a long vacation, they must have their own regime of holidays that need not be the same as that of the general administrative system of the country. The unutilized facilities in the higher education system constitute a luxury that even the affluent countries cannot afford. The paradox of the situation is: we want more and better infrastructure, but when provided, we fail to use it.

New Institutions

We have come to realize that institutions play a major role in the developmental process. New

---

3. Report of the Committee to review pay scales of university and college teachers, UGC, 1997.

developments invariably require new institutions or reorganization of the ones that exist. In the domain of higher education, the National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 suggested, among others, the establishment of two new institutions, one at the state level and the other at the national level[4]. These are:

(i) State Council for Higher Education, and
(ii) National Council for Higher Education.

Although education is in the concurrent list, the responsibility for setting up universities and colleges, as well as funding, administering and maintaining them rest with the state Governments. While the Central Government have such bodies as the UGC, AICTE, ICAR, ICMR and NCTE for guidance in policy formulation and planning, there is hardly any expert body at the state level to take a comprehensive view of the higher education system in the state and its strength and weakness. To meet this requirement, the state council was recommended; but it has not been set up in most of the states, and even the few that have been established are not in accordance with the Model Act formulated by the UGC, Andhra Pradesh being one exception. At the National level, higher education remains fragmented since the UGC, AICTE, ICAR, ICMR and NCTE are independent bodies. In order to coordinate their activities the NPE suggested a National Council for Higher Education. This again has not been set up though the NPE and Programme of Action (1986) containing this recommendation have been approved by the Parliament.

Funding Higher Education

The Education Commission headed by Prof. Kothari recommended as early as in 1966 that allocation for education must be about 6.0% of GNP. This was reiterated in the NPE 1986. However, the allocation according to the IX Plan document stands at 3.2% of GDP. It is even lower than the average of the developing countries of the world which spend about 3.9%, while the world average is 5.1% and that of the advanced countries 5.4%[5]. There has been a

---

4. Chapters 3 and 4 contain detailed discussions on the roles and functions of both these bodies (Eds.)
5. According to the World Bank's World Development Report 1998–99, entitled 'Knowledge for Development', public expenditure on education as per cent of GNP during 1980 to 1995 was as follows (The data are from UNESCO's publication World Education Report, 1998):

	Public expenditure on education (% of GNP)	
	1980	1995
World	4.4	5.2
Low Income	3.4	5.5
Middle Income	4.1	4.5
Lower Middle Income	4.5	4.4
Upper Middle Income	4.0	4.6
Low and Middle Income:		
East Asia and Pacific	2.1	2.6
Europe and Central Asia	5.0	5.6
Latin America and Carrib.	3.9	3.9
Middle East and North Africa	5.0	5.6
South Asia	2.0	3.0
Sub-Saharan Africa	4.1	5.3
High Income	5.6	5.5

(Eds.)

sharp decline in the Plan allocation for higher education as can be seen from the following table.

Five Year Plans	Share of education in the total allocation %	Share of higher education in the Plan allocation %	Share of higher education in the allocation for education, %
I Plan	7.86	0.71	9.0
II Plan	5.83	1.02	18.0
III Plan	6.87	1.01	15.0
IV Plan	4.90	1.24	25.0
V Plan	3.27	0.52	22.0
VI Plan	2.70	0.49	18.0
VII Plan	3.70	0.53	14.0
VIII Plan	4.55	0.35	8.0
IX Plan	5.08	0.51	10

The world average of expenditure on higher education as percentage of total expenditure on education is 21.0; that of the developing countries is 18.0 and advanced countries 22.0 (1992)[6]. Lowering the expenditure on higher education in the VIII and IX Plans to 8.0 % and 10.0% respectively is an extremely unwelcome and unwise step. Increased outlay for universal primary education is stated to be the cause for this reduction. Failure to pay adequate attention to primary education in the past was a great blunder and a sad lapse. Cutting the expenditure on higher education to promote primary education will be another blunder at the other end of the educational spectrum. But the present policies hurriedly decided by bureaucrats and actively promoted by the state and the Central Governments clearly indicate the repetition of the same blunders of the past, reminding us of the Myth of Sycipwas.

We have adopted a policy of liberalization and globalization of our economy, which will demand higher competitiveness on our part. We see no tangible steps in the field of higher education to augment our competitiveness. On the other hand, there is a discernible trend towards an indiscriminate withdrawal from the domain of higher education, which can lead to disastrous consequences.

In a note on subsidies prepared by the Department of Economic Affairs of the Ministry of Finance (1997), higher education has been classified as a non-merit subject on which Government subsidies could be reduced (according to the note) from 90% to the level of 25% over a period of five years. The subsidy for higher education now is at the level of 90.0%. The argument of the authors of the note is that:

> .... benefits of subsidies accrue primarily to the recipients. A significant portion of subsidies in higher education is appropriated by the middle class and high income groups, because shortages of seats in this sector are cleared by quality based clearing in the shapes of entrance examination, interview, group discussion, etc, where the poorer sections of society are competed out.

It is the inference of many that the authors have been influenced by the thinking of the World Bank and its specialists. The World Bank generally has been against developing countries

---

6. Human Development Report, UNDP, 1996

investing in higher education. The developing countries need consciously to develop leaders in every domain and higher education is a prerequisite for developing leaders.

The presumption that benefits of subsidies in higher education accrue primarily to the recipients is unsustainable. Higher education produces the leaders in every area of activity, be they researchers, academics, designers, builders, administrators and entrepreneurs. This talent can neither be borrowed or bought nor imported. Without the assistance of the Government-subsidized institutions of higher education, even the richer sections of the society, not to speak of the middle class, could not have afforded higher education that has contributed to the current level and size of our manpower. If adequate number of boys and girls from the poorer sections do not gain admission to these institutions, we have to devise methods to remove whatever blocks that exist–social, economic, even academic. By diverting funds from higher education to primary education, we may have literates but no learned citizens. The nation needs both. It is common sense that when the ranks of primary and secondary levels of education swell, there will be greater demands on higher education, and hence greater need for higher investment in it. Moreover, higher education benefits the whole society, and not just one segment, though those who receive higher education inevitably reap some special benefits and enjoy privileges.

Some people hold the view that too many people in this country go for higher education; this again is an unsustainable presumption. Only 6% of the age group is in tertiary education in India[7], while the average age participation ratio for developing countries in the world, including African countries, is 6.8%, and the average for the advanced countries is 47%[8]. If we consider the S&T manpower (1992), the figure per 1000 in India is 3.5, against 9 for the developing countries; 85 for the industrial countries and the world average of 25[9]. There are strong grounds for opening up more opportunities for higher education in India. Any country that aspires to become a developed country must reach the world average of 25 per cent of the eligible age group in higher education, and if a country wants to become a 'super power', which India, as we believe, is in the making or wants to emerge as one, then our share in higher education must be much higher than what it is today. This truth, obviously, will not be palatable to the WB, the WTO and the bureaucrats who serve them. The problem of higher education in India is not the problem of numbers, but is one of quality and relevance.

While I plead for allocation of more funds, I must clarify that:

- There is room for enhancing the tuition fees with adequate safeguards for deserving poor students.
- Unless some of the academic and administrative reforms are carried out, additional funds may not produce commensurate results.
- The crisis in higher education is not merely the crisis of inadequacy of funds, but of anachronistic academic practices, unsuited administrative structure and total breakdown in accountability.

What is needed is a major change bordering on revolution and it warrants the earnest attention of all the political leaders, transcending party differences, as well as the academic leaders and enlightened members of the public.

---

7. The figure in 2001 is estimated at 7.0%.
8. According to the World Bank's World Development Indicators, 2001, the percentage of relevant age group in tertiary education in the Low and Middle Income countries in 1997 was 10 and for High Income countries 62. (Eds.)
9. UNESCO Statistical Year Book (1995).

Urgent Reforms

Before we can find a level ground in the 21st century for competitiveness based on knowledge, we must carry out the following reforms:

   (i) Granting deemed to be university status to as many good institutions as possible
  (ii) Granting autonomy to all good colleges
 (iii) Introduction of semester system and continuous internal evaluation
  (iv) Promotion of modularity and credit system
   (v) Revision of the existing pattern of holidays and vacation
  (vi) Establishment, in every state, of State Council for Higher Education under the chairmanship of an academic
 (vii) Introduction of a high degree of professionalism in policy formulation, planning and management of higher education
(viii) Conscious promotion of academic leadership.

A Vision of the Future

It is necessary to visualize the developments that may take place in higher education, in future. Considering the rate at which changes take place and progress is made in science and technology, and its impact on the content and conduct of education, it may not be possible to look far into the future. It may be desirable to aim at a period of 20 years. We already have VISION 2020 documents for many sectors though education explicitly is not one of them.

Whenever we consider the possible developments in education, we are often tempted to produce an impressive and all-embracing document, irrespective of the availability, or otherwise, of the institutional machinery, political will and resources for implementation. We do not also take into account the preparedness of the society to absorb and benefit by such developments. While higher education has a universal component, and employment opportunities are global, we prepare manpower to meet our needs and not the kind of people who complain that opportunities do not exist in India that match their expertise. The most important requirement that education and training must satisfy is to be able to substantially improve national productivity, starting with, and improving upon, whatever level of technology and management practices we may have. We need to produce designers or planners who could do the job with whatever data are available, or could be gathered, and not those who declare that they could make a beginning only if all the data to suit their theory are made available. It must be clearly understood that in every country the education system prepares manpower for its economy primarily. If we decide to prepare consciously a class of manpower, necessarily limited in number, for international market, or if the manpower we produce for our need has an international demand, it is a different issue.

There are two branches in technology that march forward incredibly fast, and they are: information technology and communication technology. There is a distinct possibility that there will soon be a congruence of these two. The impact of the possible future developments in information technology and communication technology may have to be assessed. We must remember, at the same time, that however fascinating, they by themselves, will not do the job of a plough on the field or the machine tool in the workshop. The two major sectors of the

economy, agriculture and industry, may continue to play their role. The farmer, the worker and their tools may gain in productivity, nevertheless they only have to produce. Access to knowledge will improve, dissemination of knowledge will be enormously facilitated, creation of new knowledge could be accelerated to the extent that one may command input to one's research work from many sources at an incredibly fast rate, but the creative mind has to be there, it can be neither replaced nor produced by any of these technologies. The limitations on the ability of a society with a high level of illiteracy as at present, to avail itself of these developments must also be borne in mind.

The rays of several developments could be seen on the horizon; some of these may evolve on their own, and some may have to be brought about by appropriate intervention and initiative. These are:

(i) **Networking:** Our institutions function as individual units in isolation from each other; the culture of horizontal cooperation for combining the strength of partners, complementing each other and ensuring better utilization of the existing resources, does not exist. Hierarchical set up is what we have been accustomed to; we look up and look below and never around or sideways. Even interdisciplinary studies are more praised and preached than practised. It is necessary to take concrete steps to promote networking either at the component level or at the institutional level as the case may be. A trend in that direction is emerging; it has to be nurtured and encouraged.

(ii) **Interaction with the Environment:** We, as a nation, are engaged in transforming an agricultural society into an industrial society. It is not a matter of establishing a few large industries; it is a question of developing an industrial culture which will enable the widespread use of technology to increase productivity in every activity. The productivity of every square centimeter of land, every cubic centimeter of water and every individual must increase. In achieving this objective, every institution of higher education must function as a resource centre; as a development agent. The academic community must interact with the world outside either at the national, regional or local level, depending on its competence; but interact it must. The potential available in an educational institution is much more than what has been realized either by the institution itself, or by the community around. Its capacity must be extended to the maximum. The Canada India Institutional Cooperation Programme (CIICP)[10] has demonstrated how a modest institution like the polytechnic can benefit the industries and the community around and derive benefit from them, provided the faculty is given appropriate training and the institution is given adequate autonomy. The models developed have to be replicated.

(iii) **Emergence of Distance Teaching and Learning:** Communication technology is finding increasing use in education and training. Distance mode as a method of instruction has come to be accepted and the open university as an institution is now well established. As of January 1998, there were 1117 open universities in 103 countries and they were offering 31000 courses[11]. It is neither a substitute for, nor a replacement of, the existing

10. Canada India Institutional Cooperation Programme (CIICP), Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India

11. At the beginning of 2002, there were over 1330 open universities and distance education institutions in about 130 countries offering more than 55000 courses: UKOU: International Centre for Distance Learning, CD-ROM, Database. (Eds.).

face to face system, but a new stage in the evolution of education to cater to the needs of certain target groups not served, or cannot be served, by the conventional system. We may set up more open universities in future. In addition, every conventional university will add a distance education component to meet its extension activity requirements. I foresee that every university may slowly start operating in dual mode using both face to face mode and distance mode. It will become possible for the students to move in and out of the campus and pursue the courses through face to face mode in some semesters and distance mode in some others. These have been happening in Australia, the USA, Canada, many Western European countries, the former USSR, GDR, China, and Cuba. The Governments and apex bodies like the UGC, AICTE, ICAR, IMC and NCTE must perceive the world trend and be prepared to accept, regulate and guide the transition along a healthy course.

(iv) **Globalization of Education:** Educational institutions will carry their programmes transcending the walls of their campuses and perhaps the boundaries of their nations. We have, today, multinational corporations in industry and business. We see on the horizon the emergence of multinational universities. We have today in a small city like Hong Kong, 18 universities from other countries offering some of their programmes and are operating their centres of study either independently, or in collaboration with local universities or educational institutions. The UK Open University offers its programmes in Europe and in countries in Africa and Asia.

In the past, students from developing countries were moving to universities in the advanced countries for higher studies; but today the universities in advanced countries are setting up their campuses in the developing countries. It is now possible through satellite communication for a university in the USA to offer its programme with the same lectures, assignments and discussions in China or Russia. Academics in India must prepare themselves for international competition right on our soil in the field of higher and continuing education. These developments appeared to be far away in time, but have suddenly exploded and descended on us. We need to remain prepared for all future developments.

(v) **Virtual Universities:** Information technology is another area that holds immense possibilities. Virtual classrooms and virtual universities may serve the needs of continuing education and further education at least for those who can afford to have computer facilities. Computers and use of CD-Rom for carrying lessons have already become popular, and will bring about revolutionary changes if we could tap their educational potential imaginatively.

(vi) **Education Markets:** So far, education has been treated as social service and expenditure on higher education was treated as subsidy. Recent studies by the World Bank have clearly established that expenditure on primary education is investment that ensures satisfactory return. Instructional materials in print form, audio-video cassettes and computer programmes have become marketable commodities. Continuing education programmes and many degree programmes in management, commerce, computers and certain areas of technology have become self-supporting or they yield marginal profit. The natural consequence of this development is the entry of private enterprise in the field of higher education, which remained for long as Government effort, or Government-aided.

(vii) **Private Enterprises in Education:** As mentioned above, there is bound to be increasing participation of private enterprise in higher education. We have had private colleges for

long, but they are Government-aided. What is now emerging is a category of private institutions designated as self-financing institutions. There have been and there are a large number of private colleges in advanced countries. The tuition fees there are high, but they yet have the protective hand of philanthropy. What we are witnessing in India is a class of institutions very different from what is obtaining elsewhere in the world. These institutions charge differential fees and the students from well-to-do families pay enough fees to subsidize the education of meritorious students, some of whom may be poor and disadvantaged. It is a case of practising a new and direct form of social justice on the campus.

The entry of private enterprise in higher education will bring in new initiatives, more enterprising and more innovative experiments and programmes. They are likely to be more responsive to market demands and meet student aspirations more effectively. Their course offerings may resemble a cafeteria with liberal scope for choice. It may become necessary for the university system also to be more flexible and to accommodate experiments and innovations without blocking them in the name of rules, regulations and statutes.

In certain states of the country, we already have arts and science colleges, medical colleges, engineering colleges and polytechnics, paramedical courses, law colleges and teachers training colleges–all mainly on self-financing basis. These will grow in number and spring up in other states as well. The Government may have to go in for legislation which will not stifle these initiatives by over regulation, or allow exploitation by unscrupulous elements by being indulgent. What is needed is regulation, not control.

(viii) **Private Universities:** The Government of India prepared a bill for the establishment of private universities. It was referred to the Parliamentary Committee on Education. It appears that the measure is not under active consideration; but it is bound to come sooner or later. It will add another dimension to higher education. I do not consider it a revolutionary measure since many of the deemed to be universities today are registered societies established by private effort. What is needed is to ensure that persons with appropriate background of service, interest in the welfare of the people and image in the eyes of the public alone are allowed to establish university level institutions provided they satisfy the requirements laid down for land, endowment, buildings and manpower resources. Quinquennial accreditation must be made mandatory and provision must be made for stopping admissions when certain minimum requirements are not met. While discussing private universities in India, it is relevant to mention that already corporate universities have come up in advanced countries.

(ix) **Continuing Education:** We have been talking about life long education since the publication of the UNESCO document, 'The Learning To Be.' (1976). We are not fully prepared today to meet the demands that would arise in future. We have made enough progress in science and technology and we have, long before, entered the domain of high technology. We will soon face in a big way the obsolescence of manpower. The policy of liberalization and globalization has made it inevitable that we keep our employed manpower adequately updated and, to that end, organize continuing education programmes. It is a massive task. We have to handle large numbers. Increased numbers to be handled will demand higher productivity in education. Catering to employed persons will require greater flexibility. Instructing employed professionals will need a different kind of competence on the part of the faculty to contribute to the economy of the nation through

continuing education. The institutions of higher learning will have to play in future a major role in continuing education as part of their extension dimension.

(x) **Education and Social Justice:** Development in the past meant, by and large, economic development. Today we recognize three aspects of development: social development, political development, and economic development.

Social problems have assumed great importance in all societies. Equity in every field, especially in education is one of the main demands. We do find in India that social justice has become a major factor in the manifesto of all political parties. In the past, we had been concerned with making opportunities available; but *availability* does not ensure *accessibility*. The main issue today is making the available opportunities accessible. Since education has come to be recognized as a popular vehicle for upward movement, demand for equity in educational opportunities is on the increase. The education system should adjust itself to reach as many target groups as possible. The higher education system must necessarily use a multimedia approach and the educational campuses must be endowed with facilities for using as many channels of communication as modern technology has provided. For this, the system must pay attention to appropriate training at all levels.

(xi) **Research and Innovation:** The universities have been the birthplace of research and creation of knowledge continues to be one of their main functions. In India today, of the total funds made available for research, the share of the universities is barely 2.0% while it is 19.0% in Canada. The universities have the unique advantage of a perennial flow of young minds capable of fresh and creative thinking. The established research stations in the public sector or private sector do not enjoy this unique privilege. Among the cascade of students who keep moving, even if there is one or two with a flash of genius, there will be a breakthrough.

It is not necessary that we should encourage research in advanced studies at Centres of Excellence only. The problems that we have in India represent a broad spectrum offering opportunities for research from the humblest of institutions to the most advanced centres of learning. For us, research in boeing is important; research in the bullock cart is also still important. We must endeavour to promote research and innovation in as many institutions and in as many forms as possible.

5

Global Imperatives of Change

We have, as a nation, accepted liberalization as an instrument of our economic policy. It follows that our markets are now open, and that our domestic products have to compete with those of the global economy for a share even in our own neighbourhood market. In the globalized economy, the competence of our manpower and the quality of our products have to meet world standards. Whether one accepts it or not, globalization is progressing almost inexorably. In preparing ourselves for the task, no other system of the society has as crucial a role to play as education. It is against this background that we take a look at our higher education system. It is obvious that our educational programmes, curriculum and syllabi have to be such as to meet national needs and global challenges. It is an ongoing process.

Introduction

The 20th century has seen many revolutions in social, political and economic fields—some in parallel and some in sequence. Science and technology emerged as the most dominant and powerful agent of change. As we move into the new century and the new millennium, we will be entering a new era, the era of knowledge. The society of the 21st century will be a knowledge society.

Knowledge is not a new invention as the tools, processes and products were. It has been part of human possessions and consciousness since time immemorial. That being so, why do we refer to the new millennium as the beginning of knowledge era? It is because of the advances made in the use of knowledge and the emergence of knowledge as the unique resource of a society.

In the agricultural civilization knowledge was an ornament, a cultural component, and it produced gentlemen. Knowledge had no economic application. It did not mean 'ability to do'; whatever really helped to do something was referred to as skill, which was looked down upon by gentlemen.

Application of knowledge for productive purposes began towards the end of the 18th century, when knowledge was applied to make tools. Knowledge was used to develop new tools, new

processes and new products. This step ushered in the industrial revolution. The approach was empirical and experienced technicians played a great role. It was around the middle of the 19th century that scientific knowledge was applied to tools, processes and products.

Towards the end of the 19th century, studies appeared on the use of knowledge to work. In Germany it was apprenticeship which combined practical training under a master with theoretical instruction in school. The U.S.A. improved on it and introduced the concept of training which drastically reduced the period of apprenticeship. The use of knowledge to work brought about what is called the Productivity Revolution. It was in a way the result of human resource development

The third phase began with the application of knowledge to knowledge itself. It is application of knowledge to create new knowledge; application of knowledge to study the effective use of knowledge. It has ushered in what we call the 'knowledge era' and the Management Revolution. According to Peter Drucker, knowledge has become not only *a* resource but '*the resource*'. The advanced countries have entered this phase. Peter Drucker gives a convincing account of this development in his book *Post-Capitalist Society*. The advanced countries have the competence to create new knowledge and the capacity to transform it to wealth. Theirs is becoming a world of 'Knowledge industry' and of 'Knowledge workers'. Every sector—economic, service, military, scientific research, etc.,—is dependent on knowledge and knowledge workers.

We may consider as to where we stand in the development process. We have not yet accomplished the productivity revolution. The productivity of our land and water resources is low; the productivity of our manpower is low. About 90% of our labour force is in the unorganized sector; it is mostly unskilled. UNDP's Human Development Index (for 1997) ranks India as 132 among 174 countries. Even in our organized sectors, the management revolution that has taken place in the advanced countries has not even begun, except in a few industries. The efficiency of the Government which is a major employer is very poor. Our universities represent one of the systems with low efficiency.

Higher education in advanced countries has become mass-based; the proportion of the relevant age group in tertiary education in advanced countries is on the average 51.0 %[1]. The higher education system in advanced countries has extreme flexibility. Mobility from one university to the other, provision for lateral entry, opportunities for moving between 'in campus' and 'off campus' study have all become a matter of routine. Innovative approaches to expand higher education have become part of the educational thought.

Distance education which started a century and a half ago with sending notes by post has evolved through use of radio, television, audio/video cassettes, computer, teleconferencing, CD-Rom and now the internet, into a major educational provision. A number of universities in a country like the U.S.A. have virtual campuses and virtual classrooms. Some universities have their centres in other countries—mostly developing countries. We see, on the horizon, the emergence of multinational universities like the multinational corporations in the economic domain.

The advanced countries have the advantage of being connected. About 20% of the world population living in advanced countries constitutes 93.3% of internet users. They have easy access to vast information and knowledge and have a favourable environment for creation of new knowledge[2].

---

1. Sixty-two percent in 1997 in High Income countries according to World Development Indicators, 2001, World Bank
2. Human Development Report, UNDP, 1999

Education at all levels has remained a social service in all countries and has been substantially subsidized by their Governments. But we find today that tertiary education is assuming the dimension of an economic service and there are people willing to pay for it. Private universities have come into existence in many countries and are being encouraged.

We have, as a nation, accepted liberalization as an instrument of our economic policy. It follows that our markets are now open, and that our domestic products have to compete with those of the global economy for a share even in our own neighbourhood market. In the globalized economy, the competence of our manpower and the quality of our products have to meet world standards. Whether one accepts it or not, globalization is progressing almost inexorably. In preparing ourselves for the task, no other system of the society has as crucial a role to play as education.

It is against this background that we take a look at our higher education system. It is obvious that our educational programmes, curriculum and syllabi have to be such as to meet national needs and global challenges. It is an ongoing process. But the system has to change to fulfil certain pre-requisites to qualify itself for manpower development in the knowledge era. In this discussion, I confine myself to the macro-level issues of vital importance. The first step that we need to take is to bring about certain reforms that are long due, which we have resisted all these years, in spite of recommendations made by a series of commissions, committees and policy documents. I would like to consider them under three heads:

(i) New Institutions
(ii) Remodelling Existing Institutions, and
(iii) Academic Reforms.

New Institutions

We have accepted in our republican constitutional scheme that education shall be a joint responsibility of the Central and the state Governments. The governments at the Centre and in the States play a major role in the development of education, in the formulation of policies and programmes, setting the goals and directions, organizing and implementing specific plans and activities and, above all, in providing the necessary funds for the purpose. In a vast country like India, it is inconceivable that the Governments, either at the state or the Central level, can directly assume these responsibilities. They will require appropriate institutional mechanisms and structures through which these responsibilities can be effectively discharged. The new institutions that I have in mind are the instrumentalities for the macro-management of the higher education system at the Central and state levels.

It is not that there are no instrumentalities at the Central level. We have the University Grants Commission that was established in 1956 by an Act of Parliament. The Act under which the UGC was established enjoins on the Commission the responsibility for the promotion of university education in India and overseeing the maintenance of quality and standards of university education. Apparently, the Commission's writ should run across all the universities offering programmes of studies in all subjects. Unfortunately, it is not so. The only instrumentality available to the UGC to enforce its recommendations and guidelines is its power to provide funds. However, in India, the UGC does not fund agricultural education, medical education and technical education. There are separate agencies for these areas of education. While the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, substantially, and the All India Council for Technical Education,

partly, provide the funding for agricultural and technical education respectively, the Indian Medical Council performs a different kind of supervisory role in medical education. This Council does not fund medical education at all; it has, however, the responsibility for prescribing the standards of professional preparation for medical practitioners. Any university or college which does not meet the standards of the Medical Council runs the risk of de-recognition of its degrees which may deny the graduates the license to practise. In the early 1990s, a similar body was set up in teacher education—the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE). This body, like the Medical Council, is not a funding agency; its domain is setting standards of teacher education which universities and colleges must follow; failure to do so would lead to derecognition of the qualifications for the purpose of engagement as teachers.

These organizations function independently of each other and consequently higher education remains fragmented. A single university has to remain accountable to as many as five national level agencies, besides the Governments. There does not exist a coordinating body. This deficiency has been realized long ago and in the National Policy on Education (1986), it has been stated that a coordinating body at the national level has to be established. More than a decade has passed, but it has not been established. This has to be done without delay. Institutional mechanisms play an important part in development and if we want to achieve something that has not been achieved so far, we must address the issue of creating the necessary instrumentalities without any delay. If we want to achieve results that have not so far been achieved, we have to create institutions that have not so far been created.

The absence of appropriate instruments for the macro-management of higher education at the state level is felt even more keenly. Though education is a concurrent subject and coordination and determination of standards in institutions of higher education and institutions of science and technology come under the central concern, it is the state Government which establishes universities, aids colleges and regulates their functioning through legislation or Government Orders as the case may be. But at the state level, there is no mechanism to take an overall view of higher education, study its strength and weakness and advise the government for necessary action. It is to meet this requirement that the NPE (1986) has recommended the establishment of State Council for Higher Education in each state. Many states have not done it and those who have established the Councils have not followed the UGC guidelines. A State Council for Higher Education must be established in each state to give practical shape to the UGC guidelines, with due regard for local needs and realities[3].

Remodelling Existing Organizations

Although there is a multiplicity of bodies and authorities at the national level for looking at one aspect or another of higher education, as we have seen earlier, the University Grants Commission continues to be, at least in principle, the most important umbrella organization in the field of higher education in India. But how strong and effective is this body? The UGC consists of 10 part-time members, a Vice-Chairman and a Chairman. Its responsibility as envisaged in the Act is more than giving grants. In order to ensure that the name is reasonably indicative of its mandate, it should be designated as University Education Commission. Since the beginning of

---

3. The State governments of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal have established State Council of Higher Education (Eds.).

the seventies, suggestions have been made for changing the composition of the UGC. The recommendations have mostly been for three or four full-time members in place of the Vice-Chairman to work under the overall guidance of the Chairman. A remodelling of the UGC should be taken up early. For the appointment of the Chairperson, it is desirable to bring into existence a Search Committee, in the composition of which the Government may not have any major role to play. The current practice of the government appointing the Chairman without any process of selection does not inspire much confidence and lends itself to possible political influences which are likely to undermine the prestige and credibility of the Commission[4].

The UGC has done well in establishing five regional offices. It is a step in the right direction and it is necessary to delegate most of the routine functions to the regional offices. While this effort at decentralization is indeed a very welcome step, there are still certain areas of operations from which the Commission could begin a meaningful disengagement for its own advantage. For instance, the UGC is administering the Delhi colleges and is almost functioning as the directorate of collegiate education for Delhi. This responsibility must be transferred to the Delhi state Government without any delay and the UGC must treat them as any other college in the country. According to the 1998–99 Annual Report of the UGC, there were 88 colleges in Delhi. The UGC was providing maintenance support to 54 colleges.

At the time of independence, there were three Central universities in the country at Aligarh, Banaras and Delhi which were established and maintained by the Government of India. The Constitution of India enjoined the continuance of this responsibility on the Central Government apparently to maintain the pan-Indian character of these institutions. Between 1950 and 1977, through central legislation, four more institutions were established as universities. These are: Vishwa Bharati, Jawaharlal Nehru University, North Eastern Hill University and the University of Hyderabad. With education becoming a concurrent subject, several new universities were established through Acts of Parliament. Till 1999, there were 15 Central universities, besides IGNOU, which came in this category. The government's administrative responsibility in respect of all these 15 universities is discharged through the UGC. These institutions claim a major share of the attention and resources of the Commission. In order that the UGC is enabled to address its statutory concerns in the field of higher education and also deal objectively with the whole university system in the country, it is essential that the Commission relinquish its administrative responsibility for the Central universities. These Central universities must come under a Central Universities Council as in the case of IITs and the UGC must give them only development grants as it does to other universities.

Significant structural reforms are also essential in the organization and management of all our universities. The composition of the university authorities like the Academic Council, Senate and the Board of Management of most of the state universities remains as they were formulated in the earlier part of this century, when the universities had mostly affiliating functions. They have almost become a burden on the universities and a drag on their functioning.

The Senate has no worthwhile function to perform and should be abolished. The Academic Council must be a compact body mostly meant for coordinating the activities of the Boards of Studies and must concern itself with maintaining standards and ensuring a desirable uniformity in the academic programmes of the university.

---

4. The MHRD has recently started the practice of appointing a Search Committee to recommend a panel of suitable persons for appointment as chairman, UGC. The Search Committee is constituted by the Ministry. (Eds.)

The university is a corporate body and the Board of Management must be a group of members with the common objective of ensuring the good performance of the university. On no account should it have members with conflicting interests. The membership may be by nomination or on the basis of eligibility depending on well-defined criteria. Elections among the staff for membership of university authorities must be totally avoided. The number of members may be between twelve and fifteen at the most and all relevant constituencies such as the students, staff, the public, etc, must be represented. This can be ensured without direct election.

It is my considered opinion that the existing structure has become outdated since long. It was recognized as early as in the late sixties and early seventies. But, as is the custom with us, we continue and expand what we condemn on the platform: we retain and multiply what we denounce.

Academic Reforms

There are certain anachronistic practices, unique to the Indian subcontinent that paralyse our universities. The higher education system in India has successfully resisted all attempts to bring about changes. Some of the practices which persist, in spite of uniform condemnation by committees, commissions and individual educationists, have grievously weakened the system. They are the affiliating system, the academic year practice, the year end external examination, and compulsory subject groups.

The affiliating system is a long outdated practice that has deprived the educational campuses of their atmosphere of inquiry, discussion and learning. As long as this system continues, higher education has no salvation. It may be mentioned that as early as 1904 Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of India deprecated the 'too slavish imitation of English models' and stated that it appeared the affiliating system might continue in India for some time. We must initiate steps to bring an end to this stifling practice within a time limit and with a time-table, by an Act of Parliament, if necessary. No meaningful teaching, learning, research, innovation or spirit of inquiry is possible in the present set up.

All over the world, the semester system has become synonymous with the educational calendar. Most of our universities, however, operate on the academic year pattern; the year begins leisurely; lessons are taught slowly, examinations wait for the year end; and students spend their time aimlessly, without any seriousness. One finds feverish completion of lessons and nervous preparation for examination in the last few months of the academic year.

> There are certain anachronistic practices, unique to the Indian subcontinent that paralyse our universities. The higher education system in India has successfully resisted all attempts to bring about changes. Some of the practices which persist, in spite of uniform condemnation by committees, commissions and individual educationists, have grievously weakened the system. They are the affiliating system, the academic year practice, the year end external examination, and compulsory subject groups.

The assessment of student performance is dependable, if the number of samples is large; but we depend on one year-end assessment which is less dependable, poor as a representative measurement of learning and is conducive to making the student inclined to postpone serious study.

Compulsory subject grouping is another fossil on our campus which denies the students the opportunity to make a choice; it prevents mobility and makes lateral entry almost impossible. How do we get over all these problems and create the conditions for introduction of academic reforms? Some possible solutions are:

- We must go in for grant of deemed-to-be-university status to well established centres of learning. All good colleges must be given autonomy. In the case of those that may not deserve autonomy, the university must allow only undergraduate courses and set up a Board of Examinations and free itself from the present responsibility of conducting examinations. Deemed to be university status and autonomy will, if implemented properly, go a long way to improve quality and relevance. The government and the UGC have recently adopted a very liberal approach to the issue of conferring deemed-to-be university status on higher education institutions. Because of this approach, the number of such institutions is rapidly increasing[5].
- All the institutions of higher learning must move over to semester pattern and credit system.

Unplanned Expansion

Opportunities for higher education have increased substantially in the last 50 years. The system has made significant contribution to manpower generation in all fields of knowledge. However, it is broadly recognized that with a few exceptions, its weaknesses in general are lack of quality, relevance and efficiency.

One among the many reasons for the existing weaknesses in higher education is the unplanned expansion. A few examples will suffice to prove the statement:

(i) The state Governments have not produced plan documents giving projections of manpower need and the new universities and new colleges to be established in each Plan period. For instance, in the year 1985–86 alone, the Uttar Pradesh Government established 402 colleges[6]. Between the period 1991–92 and 1995-96, the number of colleges started in 25 states and 7 union territories stands at 1517; but of this number, 1151 have been established in just four states[7]. This cannot be according to any rational or national plan. The Ninth Plan at the national level does not attempt at quantifying even remotely the projected enrollment and the new institutions to be established category-wise.

(ii) Between 1960–61 and 1995–96 the percentage of enrollment has decreased in sciences from 30.0 to 19.6; in agriculture from 1.3 to 1.1; and in veterinary science from 0.5 to 0.3[8]. One would normally expect an increase in the share of enrollment in these subjects; the decrease could not have been on the basis of any planning. We must consider whether this decrease in enrollment in these subjects, especially in sciences is because of lack of opportunities for studies in science or lack of student interest in terms of career options. Whatever the reason, we must initiate measures to ensure that basic

---

5. By 2000 close to 50 institutions have been declared as institutions deemed to be universities.
6. UGC Annual Report, 1985–88.
7. UGC Annual Reports, 1969, 1991–92 to 1995–96.
8. In 2000, the share of science was 19.10 % of the total enrollment and of agriculture 1.05% (Eds.).

sciences attract talented students. Without a strong educational base in sciences, there cannot be a sustainable knowledge society. It is significant that the percentage of students enrolled in sciences in tertiary education in China in 1995 was 37.0; it was 39.0 in Britain.

(iii) The quality and the extent of research in academic institutions depend on postgraduate studies. The percentage of post-graduate students has dropped from 12.33 in 1950–51 to 10.5 in 1995–96. This again could not have been the result of any planned intervention. As it happened, 56.5% of the P.G. students are in affiliated colleges, most of which are ill-equipped either in terms of laboratory and library facilities or quality of faculty. It is precisely for this reason that universities like Calcutta University and Mumbai University do not allow P.G. Degree programmes in affiliated colleges. Postgraduate education in basic sciences, social sciences and humanities requires a direction and perspective from the national level for quality and where necessary, for adequacy of quantity.

(iv) Planning, if any, and decision making, in the field of education have been done by the administrators and political leaders. Universities are established and colleges are started on the basis of ad hoc decisions taken arbitrarily to meet local demands. There is hardly any professional approach and academics have not been involved in the exercise. There is no academic leadership in the country; nor do we have institutions that will help the development of academic leaders.

If we have to make up these inadequacies in the planning and management of our higher education, we need to address the following issues urgently:

- Each state must produce a well defined plan for education during each 5-year Plan. The number of institutions to be set up must be proposed on the basis of reasonable forecast of manpower needs (economic criteria) and the percentage of the relevant age group for which higher education opportunities are to be provided (social demand criteria).
- The services of academics and professionals in the related fields must be obtained for the preparation of the Plan. Each sector of development in the Plan must have manpower projections and the new demands on education.

Extension

The classical functions of a university have been preservation, communication and creation of knowledge. To these has been added 'extension'. Every college, every university must become a resource centre for the community around; we have about 10,000 institutions for higher learning; i.e. one for every lakh (100,000) of the population. We do have 310,000 teachers in tertiary education; i.e. one for every 3000 persons of all age groups; one college student for every 150 persons[9]. The combined efforts of these vast resources in our country, which are inexplicably idle and unproductive can make significant contributions to the transformation of our society. Such a massive effort can also transform every institution into a change agent and a growth centre. Every final year student must work on a project with the people in the

---

9. These figures have been worked out on the basis of the data contained in the Annual Report of the UGC for the year 1996–97.

neighbourhood or elsewhere. What we are aiming at is not merely the establishment of industries, small, medium and large; but the transformation of an agricultural society into an industrial one. It needs the dimensions of a mass movement to take science and technology to people on a pervasive scale.

Centre for Counselling and Guidance

Access to higher education has been, till recently, restricted mostly to the well to do and the privileged. However, in the recent years, it has become mass-based in advanced countries which are moving towards universal higher education. It is now conceded that even for the developing countries, if they are to reach the developed status, at least 25% of the age group must be in the higher education system. We are aiming at reaching the developed status by at least 2020. In India, today, we have only about 7.0% or less of the age group in the universities. It would mean expanding it by 3.5 times, in percentage if you are to reach the developed state at least in the next 20 years. With the low productivity and high cost of the conventional system, this does not appear feasible. Fortunately, we have developed the distance education system in the recent decades. We can be optimistic about providing access to a larger percentage of eligible boys and girls in the coming years. This would mean a larger number of first generation learners entering the portals of the college and the university; neither their parents nor their relatives are likely to be in a position to give these young men and women necessary guidance, both with regard to their pursuit of higher education and later in their endeavour to seek employment. It is therefore necessary that every institution offering secondary education and higher education programmes have provision for counselling and guidance to the students concerning their future. *A centre for counselling and guidance* must become an inevitable component of an educational institution.

Research

The universities have been the birthplace of research. It has the advantage of a perennial flow of young and fresh minds. The share of universities in research expenditure in the country is hardly 2.0%. This has to be substantially augmented. The figure is 25% in the USA and 19% in Canada. The share of institutes of higher learning in research expenditure must be at least 10.0%. It is not necessary that we should confine research to centres of excellence. We have a spectrum of problems that can be taken up by the humblest as well as the most sophisticated of institutions. For us today, the boeing is important, and the bullock cart is also important. However, in each subject we must identify a few strong centres of research and develop them with adequate input and appropriate environment to enable them to reach levels of excellence comparable with the best of institutions in advanced countries. India has fortunately a large number of research institutions, but they need to be equipped, empowered and inspired to undertake world class research on a large scale in their respective areas.

In 1994–95, we had 360 Central Government research institutions, 817 state Government institutions, 171 public sector institutions, and 1167 private sector institutions engaged in research[10].

---

10. Source: Department of Science and Technology.

At present, there does not exist any interaction between the P.G. departments in educational institutions and these research centres. We must bring about a close cooperation between them. In China, every research institute of the National Science Academy is also a centre of postgraduate research leading to the award of university degrees. We should think of some such arrangement to make our research relevant and useful, and the degrees valuable. In general, we must so design our approach as to take full advantage of every available facility, to serve the nation.

Networking

There are certain cultural blocks to our development. We are accustomed to working in a hierarchical system, and, therefore, our capacity for horizontal cooperation is poor. Our institutions work in isolation. In the past, we advocated cooperation among various disciplines in the same institutions to promote research. Now we have to move towards cooperation among institutions to pool together the facilities available and to combine the strength of the institutions. The enormous developments in information technology would be of immense help in achieving these objectives. This may be done at three levels:

- Bring about a network of a cluster of institutions in a city
- Bring about a network of colleges affiliated to a given university
- Establish a national network of the universities.

A detailed report on setting up a network to connect all science and technology institutions in the country was made sometime ago by the Scientific Advisory Committee to the Cabinet. The report concluded that it is entirely feasible at a cost of about Rs. 130 crores spread over five years to link all the 230 universities, 8,000 colleges, Government research and development laboratories and industry R&D units. In particular, it was found that for a sum of less than Rs. 30 crores, it should be possible to maintain a network that will cover the North-East area completely[11]. We must prepare, without delay, a national plan, with time schedule, for networking all the universities, colleges and research centres. Networking has been mentioned as a project long back: it is financially and technically feasible without any major problem; but remains unimplemented for long.

Private Enterprise

It was mentioned earlier that certain sectors of higher education are fast emerging as economic enterprises driven by market forces. Instruction material, continuing education programmes and certain degree programmes are becoming self-supporting or even income yielding.

Consequently, private enterprise is entering the field of education. The initiative, imagination and the entrepreneurial virtues of the private sector may add newer dimensions and greater relevance to education. We have today in the private sector self-financing colleges in arts and sciences, engineering, law, medicine, education, pharmacy, management and for that matter, in

---

11. R. Narasimha: Information Technology in India's Future: Paper presented at the National Science Summit, Bangalore. 7, 8, August, 1999.

every discipline. They are on the increase. The Government must formulate a legislation for constructive regulation and promotion of these institutions. These are to be complementary to and not in place of Government efforts. Either the Government of India or the UGC should prepare a regulatory framework through legislation or otherwise for promoting and strengthening private initiatives in higher education. Private initiatives need not necessarily imply establishment of profit making commercial firms of education; the regulative mechanism must be in place to enforce, in time, the appropriate rules and norms.

The Government of India prepared a Private Universities Bill; it went through certain processing but there has been no follow up[12]. The role of private sector in higher education is now a global phenomenon; we can confidently allow it and ensure that it plays a positive role. It is not beyond the competence of the Government to prevent any abuse in an organized sector like education. But the necessary political will must be demonstrated.

An Offshoot of Communication and Information Revolution

The nineteenth century was a period of transportation revolution; the twentieth century, a period of communication revolution. The application of communication technology has made it possible to transform the methods of imparting education from craft to technology. Multimedia distance education is the gift of communication technology. Distance education contributes to a substantial increase in the productivity and flexibility in education; it also helps to meet the challenges imposed by:

(i)   demand for universal education,
(ii) the problem of equity, and
(iii) the challenge of continuing education.

The open university system makes use of multimedia distance education approach. It is based on the recognition that it is easier to transport knowledge to the place of learners than transport people to the place of learning. Distance education makes educational opportunities accessible to many who did not have access to them earlier. The effectiveness of distance education as a viable alternative can be seen from the rapid growth of this system; in less than three decades over 100 countries have adopted distance education as an integrated component of their educational provision. Over 1100 institutions in various countries were offering some 31000 courses through this mode in 1998[13]. Distance education has also become global and multinational in character.

In a small city like Hong Kong, nineteen universities from advanced countries are said to have established their centres. The U.K. Open University offers its lessons in Europe and Africa. Like the multinational corporations, we now find that there are rays of emergence of multinational universities. As in manufactured goods, we may soon face international competition

---

12. The Private Universities (Establishment and Regulation) Bill was introduced in Parliament in 1994. The Bill was referred to a Joint Select Committee of both Houses of Parliament. The Committee had after extensive discussions, submitted its Report which, however, is still to be taken up for consideration (Eds.)

13. By 2002, over 1300 distance education institutions in about 130 countries are known to be offering about 55000 courses (Eds.).

in education also. Dominance in the export of industrial goods would mean economic invasion; in education, it would mean cultural invasion.

Our universities that offer correspondence education should convert their courses into multimedia distance education mode. Gradually, every university should function on dual mode with students on campus and off campus. It should also be possible for a student to spend a semester as an 'on campus' student and another semester as 'off campus' student holding full or part time employment. Since extension is part of the responsibilities of universities, each university should create facilities for taking their instructional capacity outside the boundaries of the classes and campuses.

Knowledge doubles in fewer than 3–5 years in certain areas and in fewer than 6–8 years in most fields[14]. Scientists and technologists must go through an updating programme either continually or at discrete intervals. The requirements of continuing education for employed persons have many complexities. The S&T manpower now amounts to about 6.5 million. The educational institutions, in general, and universities in particular, must have continuing education programmes as part of their educational objective. They must make use of information technology and communication technology, and in general, adopt a multimedia approach to the design, development and delivery of their programmes. Distance education is eminently suited to continuing education and its potential must be fully exploited.

Information Technology

Information technology has seen a phenomenal growth; it is true to say that its development as well as speed of spreading amounts to I.T. bursting on the society. It helps carry nearly unlimited data, vast information and knowledge to all categories of users. We must prepare ourselves to build the hardware and create the software to use the fascinating new tools called personal computer, computer network and internet. Information technology can revolutionize distance education. It has great potential and holds enormous promise for revolutionizing education.

Talking about the trend in higher education, Peter Drucker, the management guru, has made the following observation:

> Thirty years from now, the big university campus will be relics. Universities won't survive… Higher education is in deep crisis. The College won't survive as a residential institution. Today's buildings are hopelessly unsuited and totally unneeded.

Here Peter Drucker is referring to the emergence of what is called 'Virtual University'. He and many like him believe that education will take place completely off-campus and online. I am not the one to buy this prediction completely[15]. The *guru* and *sishya* relationship will continue to be there in the educational scene. But the statement of Peter Drucker indicates the trend and the nature of changes that are already in evidence. We have to prepare ourselves to make full use of the 'internet' for learning and teaching.

---

14. Now it is believed, in advanced countries, that in certain disciplines knowledge doubles in 2–3 years.
15. The author is currently the Chairman of the Tamil Virtual University, established in 2000 (Eds.).

Efficiency

If there is one issue on which there is any unanimity among a large cross-section of our people, it is the inefficiency of our education system. I have mentioned elsewhere at some length the reasons for this perception among the public. It is the leisurely pace at which the system moves with no apparent sense of urgency on the part of those who teach, those who learn and those who organize and manage teaching and learning efforts. What view can we take about a massive system that is idle for more than 50% of its time in a year? Even when it is active for 50% of its time, there is no worthwhile productive activity for the major part of the day (18 hrs): surely, the society has a right to demand more, and the system has the duty to deliver.

It is not a formidable task to establish a mechanism for monitoring the performance and withdraw support and recognition from those institutions that fail to meet the minimum requirement, may be after a warning. An element of fear of consequences is desirable in any area of activity including education. But efficiency can be assured, only when we create an effective mechanism with adequate resources.

Funding

There is a tendency, of late, to suggest that higher education must pay for itself; while it is considered that beneficiaries in general, barring meritorious, but poor students, should bear a higher share of the cost of their education than what they are paying now, the role of Government in funding higher education cannot be minimized. All over the world, Governments are showing greater interest in higher education than before. In the VIII Plan for India, higher education was left with 8.0% of the total allocation for education. This is rather too low, since the average for the previous seven Plans worked out to 17.3%. The figure is 21.0% for the world average; 18.0% for the developing countries and 22.0% for the advanced countries. One of the reasons given for the low level of funding of higher education in India is the need to allot more funds to primary education. Failure to pay adequate attention to primary education in the past was a grave blunder; but to deny adequate support to higher education in order to meet the expenditure for primary education will be a greater blunder. We must provide around 20.0% of education budget for higher education. We must realize that the highest of education for a few is as important as basic education for all.

The main problem is that our allocation for education is low. Since 1966, it has been stressed that we must allot 6.0% of GNP. for education. As per IX Plan document, it stands at 3.2%. The world average is 4.8% (1993–96); developing countries 3.6% and industrialized countries 5.1%[16]. We must at least reach the world average, if not 6.0% by the end of the IX Plan (2001–2002)

There appears to be a general impression among many that too many are receiving higher education in this country. This is not true. At present the proportion of the relevant age group in higher education is 6.0%[17]. The average, even for the developing countries including the countries in Africa is 6.8%. It is 10.1% for Indonesia; 19.0% for Thailand; 22.8% for Philippines. The average for advanced countries is around 51.0%[18].

---

16. Human Development Report, UNDP, 1999
17. It has been estimated that the figures for 2001–2002 would be 7%
18. Updated information, as obtained from World Development Indicators-2001, are as follows: Indonesia 11%, Thailand 20%, Philipines 29% and the Average for Advanced countries is 62%.

The stock of scientists, engineers and technicians in India was 3.5 per 1000 of the population in 1991. But the average figure is 9.0 for the developing countries; the world average is 25. It is 82.5 (1984) for Israel, 112.8 (1987) for Japan and 8.36 for China (1988)[19]. We must consider the critical size of the manpower needed to meet the needs of our economy and plan to reach that number.

Most of the reforms suggested here will not involve heavy financial outlay. They are long pending ones and nothing radically new. They can be implemented in parallel and one need not wait for the other to be completed. Also they will not stand in the way of any other programmes at 'macro' or 'micro' levels that may be thought of for improving university education.

A society or a country must introduce mini-revolutions on appropriate occasions to avoid a major revolution. The university education system in India has successfully resisted all attempts to bring about reforms in the last 50 years. Consequently, it faces the need for a major reform. If we fail to do it, we will be entering the new century and the new millennium with a crippling burden of obsolete practices and unimplemented reforms. The urgency for reforms has never been greater. That in many ways is also an imperative in the emerging globalization of education.

---

18. According to World Bank's World Development Indicators, 2001, the participation ratio of the relevant age group in tertiary education in 1997 was 10% for the Low and Middle Income countries and 62% in High Income countries (Eds.).

6

Accountability

When we speak of accountability, mention is often made of academic autonomy and academic freedom and it is sometimes made to appear as though accountability is an encroachment on, or even denial of, academic autonomy and academic freedom; far from that: these two are enabling provisions to meet the demands of accountability. Then, society, or the Government representing it, is entitled to specify and assign certain tasks to a University system. Autonomy means that having assigned the tasks and having also defined the powers and functions through an appropriate instrument, the University is given the freedom to exercise its powers and perform its functions according to its own policies and decisions without any interference from the Government.

Categories

In recent years, accountability as applicable to institutions of higher education has become a major concern and is discussed in many forums. It is an aspect that has not loomed large in the horizon of higher education in the past and therefore, experience in defining and initiating measures for implementing any tangible scheme in this regard is confined to the last two decades or even less.

There have been rumblings of concern and discontent about the efficiency and effectiveness of the higher education system in responsible quarters and these are shared by educationists and members from other sectors of the society. The National Policy on Education (1986) and the connected documents preceding it and succeeding it, i.e., the Challenge of Education and Programme of Action, reflect these sentiments. The Challenge of Education Document observes:

.... This largely reflects the perceptions of the social responsibility of the University system in the context of the social expenditure on their establishment and management. Perhaps, it would be easier to strengthen the autonomy of the Universities if a viable system of account-ability of the University as a whole and various faculties and bodies within the University

could be established and a suitable system of incentives and disincentives could also be fashioned on the basis.

Again, the National Policy on Education contains the following observations as well as assurances:

... Teachers' performance will be systematically assessed... (para. 5.31)

The strategy in this behalf will consist of:

(a) a better deal to teachers with greater accountability... (para. 7.3)

A system of teacher evaluation—open, participative and
data based—will be created and reasonable opportunities of
promotion to higher grades provided. Norms of accountability
will be laid down with incentives for good performance and
disincentives for non-performance.... (para 9.2)

It has been stated in the Programme of Action (1986) that:

Methodologies will be developed for evaluation of teacher performance through self-appraisal, through peer groups and also by students. Career advancement of teachers will be linked with professional development and performance appraisal. (V.13)

It is against the background of these stipulations and decisions that we have to review critically the past performance and exercise our mind on measures to be considered for incorporation in the recommendations of the present Pay Committee. In order to focus attention on the issue proper, it is necessary to define clearly the kind of 'accountability' that we are concerned with in the present discussion. There are three aspects of accountability:

(i) Administrative accountability
(ii) Financial accountability
(iii) Academic accountability.

Functions of University

We are concerned essentially with academic accountability. Here again, accountability can be at the macro level and at the micro level. The macro accountability is that of the University system to the society as a whole in terms of fulfilling the expectations and meeting the needs of the society as set forth in the functions of the University at the time of its establishment and modified from time to time. The micro level accountability is that of every component or the authority of the University in order that the sum total of their contributions will meet the macro level accountability. While we realize the importance of the macro accountability which ultimately is what matters, the discussion relevant to the seminar falls within micro accountability and that too, with emphasis on the academics. Times were when academics and accountability were considered unrelated and mutually exclusive; today, the situation has radically changed; the

change borders on a revolution. It is now explicitly stated and clearly understood that, besides the three classical functions associated with the University, namely, preservation of knowledge, communication of knowledge; and creation of new knowledge, the Universities have to play a part in and contribute to development. In other words, the academe besides scholarly pursuits, has to involve itself in developmental functions also.

The Secretary-General, United Nations defines development as consisting of three components:

(i) Political development
(ii) Social development
(iii) Economic development.

The University system has to create new knowledge and generate qualified manpower to meet the developmental needs of the society in all spheres of activity. The academics are expected to perform such functions and discharge such responsibilities as may devolve on them in helping the system fulfil the task assigned to it by the society. The expectations are clear and the accountability is unambiguous.

In the context in which we are discussing the subject, one understands what 'accountability' means; no explanation is needed: however, for the sake of providing a basis for discussion, we may take 'accountability' in the case of academics to mean ensuring satisfactory performance with regard to teaching, research and related functions expected of them in the institutional environment. Wagner would again consider it in two aspects: moral and contractual.

(i) Moral accountability is based upon a sense of responsibility—a realization that one is responsible to one's clients, i.e., students and parents in this case, to colleagues and to oneself.
(ii) Contractual accountability requires that one is responsible to one's employer in terms of fulfilment of the terms of one's employment.

The latter could possibly be specified and measured in terms of certain quantitative criteria, but the former is not susceptible to quantification and easy assessment. One may perform one's teaching functions in so routine, mechanical and soulless a manner that it neither instructs nor inspires any. What we need is the fulfilment of the moral responsibility and that presents formidable problems. However, it may be safely said that in all average cases, the fulfilment of the contractual responsibility is a necessary condition, though not a sufficient condition to meet one's accountability.

When we speak of accountability, mention is often made of academic autonomy and academic freedom and it is sometimes made to appear as though accountability is an encroachment on, or even denial of, academic autonomy and academic freedom; far from that: these two are enabling provisions to meet the demands of accountability.

Then, society, or the Government representing it, is entitled to specify and assign certain tasks to a University system. Autonomy means that having assigned the tasks and having also defined the powers and functions through an appropriate instrument, the University is given the freedom to exercise its powers and perform its functions according to its own policies and decisions without any interference from the Government.

Academic freedom is intellectual; and it has nothing to do with such things as specifying reasonable norms for working days, working hours, punctuality and related matters of

administration and management. Academic freedom guarantees freedom to express, explain and publish one's findings in one's academic pursuits and investigations that form part of the academic programmes of the University.

It is assumed that when certain tasks are assigned to an institution or individual, the necessary infrastructure facilities and the environment needed for the performance of those tasks are ensured, and the issue may be approached on the basis of this premise. We need not elaborate further on it.

Review of Past Performance

1. To begin with, it is desirable to examine how far we have been able to implement accountability factors associated with the recommendations of the last Pay Committee and the recommendations of:

    (i) The UGC Task Force on performance appraisal of teachers
    (ii) The UGC guidelines regarding the minimum number of actual teaching days, programme of examination reform and work load for teachers in Universities and Colleges
    (iii) The UGC Task Force on code of professional ethics for University and College teachers.

2. It is necessary to review the difficulties met with, deficiencies observed and modifications, if any, made while implementing the recommendations in the above reports.

Particular attention may be paid to the following:

    (i) Working days excluding the preparation days and examination days
    (ii) Minimum programme of examination reform
    (iii) Work load norms for teachers
        a. Undergraduate Colleges
        b. Post-graduate Colleges
        c. Universities
    (iv) Performance Appraisal
    (v) Other aspects related to the UGC Reports.

Recommendations for the Future

The purpose of this seminar is to consider suggestions for enabling the Committee to incorporate, as part of its recommendations on emoluments and service conditions, certain reasonably well defined measures to ensure that accountability as a positive factor to improve academic performance, forms a natural and integral part of academic life. We may have to consider work norms, performance indicators, academic distinctions, peer recognitions, awards, incentives, motivation and other relevant aspects.

There are many suggestions and recommendations that are reasonable and appropriate. The problem really arises in implementing them. The task facing us is one of arriving at a scheme of accountability that is effective as well as realistic in the prevailing environment. We may consider the following among them:

(i) It has long been conceded that good teaching has not been given due recognition. How do we assess good teaching and in what way do we give credit to it?

(ii) It is often said that there must be incentives for good performance; no one disputes it; but how do we devise effective methods with reasonable reliability and credibility for both incentives and disincentives?

(iii) Students are clients; it stands to reason that client satisfaction is an important factor. How do we bring it into our scheme of things, so that it matters for a teacher?

(iv) All achievements are but the outcome of efforts expended and thought applied. There is an inescapable need to ensure that we work for a minimum number of days in a year and put in certain hours of work per day on an average. How does one monitor, assess and take into account these aspects in academic and financial management of institutions is a matter for consideration.

(v) What academic reforms and changes, if any, can make performance assessment and accountability assurance more convenient and less formidable?

(vi) What attributes go to make a good academic atmosphere, and how do we assess the contribution of individuals and groups to bring about and create such an atmosphere?

(vii) What factors do we consider in assessing one's research contribution? How do we take into account relevance to national needs, community interaction and pursuit of research against heavy odds vis-à-vis highly valued theoretical contributions—with emphasis on peer evaluation—by those favourably placed in a research environment?

> All achievements are but the outcome of efforts expended and thought applied. There is an inescapable need to ensure that we work for a minimum number of days in a year and put in certain hours of work per day on an average. How does one monitor, assess and take into account these aspects in academic and financial management of institutions is a matter for consideration.

(viii) Is there a possibility, or is it desirable to list indicators, assign weightage and arrive at values which will help the institution indicate grades in a five-point or ten-point scale?

(ix) Have we models from other countries that we can adopt or draw methods of approach from, to suit our needs?

7

Partners in Higher Education

The Government of India do not function from Delhi alone. Like the nervous system, it pervades the whole country. Its offices are located in all the States and Union Territories and are administered by the officers belonging to the central services. It will be conducive to healthy administration if these officers are drawn from all the States and Union Territories with reasonable representation from every part of the country. In the year 1991, among the successful candidates, in the Central Services Examination, 43.5% came from the Universities in Delhi and U.P. The trend seems to have been the same in the immediate years earlier and later. The imbalance created in regional representation will not be conducive to national integration in the long run. It deserves serious concern and consideration at the top level of policy formulation.

Knowledge as Resource

A society that wants to progress should be willing and ready to go through a process of introspection; analyse and identify its successes, failures, strengths and weaknesses; must have the courage to accept lapses and the vision to initiate measures to set right matters; become level with the rest and then move forward to excel. Higher education is one area where, Tamil Nadu has an urgent—very urgent—need to take up a critical, comprehensive and objective inquiry into the state-of-the-art and face facts with an open mind. My effort during the course of this brief address is to identify certain weaknesses that require urgent attention. The issue raised also has a national dimension.

The 20th century has seen many breakthroughs; changes bordering on mini-revolutions in some countries and major ones in some others. The most important of them all is the emergence of knowledge as a resource.

In the early stages, in the agricultural economy, knowledge was perceived as an embellishment, an ornament and not an economic force. In the industrial economy, it became a tool for economic development. In the era of high technology, which we see today, knowledge has

become a resource. It is a resource that can be renewed and augmented: what is more important, it can create resources that are not available as part of natural resources.

To give one example, the per capita income in the U.S.A. rose from $ 7500 in 1955 to $ 11,500 in 1980. The U.S.A. did not discover any new natural resource during this period. The prosperity was achieved through: mastery of knowledge in important disciplines, creation of new knowledge and application of knowledge for economic and social development.

We need higher education and research at a level of excellence to be able to master and create knowledge. We need universal education to be able to absorb the advances in knowledge and use the processes, tools and systems created. I have been saying as an axiom that the highest of education for a few is as important as basic education for all. They are complementary to each other for development and are not conflicting requirements. The few with a potential to gain mastery over relevant subjects and be able to achieve breakthrough in generation of new knowledge have to be chosen as we choose teams for the Olympics with competence as the main criterion. This, I assure, will not go against social justice or equity in the long run, since genius is randomly distributed and is found in every stratum of the society.

Tamil Nadu in Central Examinations

Tamil Nadu is not richly endowed with natural resources, whether it be land resources, or water resource, or mineral resources. We need to depend substantially on knowledge as a resource and we need to focus our attention on education and follow a strategy for development that is appropriate for a State that has scarce resources.

We are reasonably well off, comparatively speaking, in school education, in which we stand next only to Kerala, though the gap is wide. Our weakness is, and our failure has been, in higher education. Periodic reference is made to the poor performance of our candidates in competitive examinations for Civil Services. Some seem to think that the decline is a recent phenomenon. It started as early as the sixties. The following Table illustrates the position:

Table 1: Share of candidates from Tamil Nadu in the Civil Services examinations 1950 to 1974

Year	Total No. of candidates selected for IAS and other central services	Candidates from universities in Tamil Nadu	Candidates from Tamil Nadu as per cent of total (average)
1950–54	169	41	24.3
1955–59	287	89	31.0
1960–64	422	79	18.7
1965–69	534	43	7.4
1970–74	592	40	6.8

I have annexed a separate Table at the end of this address that shows the success ratio of candidates from some of our universities in Tamil Nadu and other universities in the country in the 1973, I.A.S. and other services examination, to show that the decline has started early and it is not a recent phenomenon.

There was a stormy debate in the Senate of the University of Madras as early as in 1969, attributing the decline in the number of successful candidates to fall in standards of education of the University of Madras. Since then, the debate continues; the number selected also continues

to decline as seen from the following Tables; but we have not so far succeeded in reversing the trend.

In the following Tables 2 and 3 are given the number of candidates selected in Civil Services examinations, 1988 and 1990.

Table 2: Civil Services (Main) Examination 1988

	Total No. of candidates	Candidates from universities in Tamil Nadu	Candidates from Tamil Nadu universities as %
No. of candidates appeared	9253	354	3.8
No. of successful candidates	897	40	4.5

From Delhi University alone 1104 candidates appeared and 173 were selected; from JNU, Delhi 238 appeared and 33 were selected; from I.I.T. Delhi 168 appeared and 50 were selected. These three Institutions in Delhi alone account for 256 successful candidates; $6^1/_2$ times the number from the whole of Tamil Nadu and nearly 30% of all the successful candidates in the whole country. Andhra Pradesh had presented 861 candidates and won 86 places, i.e., more than twice the number from Tamil Nadu. From Allahabad University alone 658 candidates appeared, which is twice the number of all those from the universities in Tamil Nadu put together; 29 among them were successful. U.P. had presented 1854 candidates and won 123 places. We call U.P. a backward state; fortunately, it is not backward in higher education.

In Table 3 is given data regarding Civil Services examinations of 1990

Table 3: Civil Services (Main) Examination 1990

	Total No. of candidates	From Tamil Nadu universities	Candidates from T.N universities as % of Total
No. of candidates appeared	10121	396	3.9
No. of successful candidates	940	63	6.7

Of the 63 successful candidates 12 are from I.I.T. Madras and the rest from other universities in Tamil Nadu. The overall percentage of successful candidates from institutions in Tamil Nadu declined from 4.5% in 1988 to 3.3% in 1990.

In the following Table 4 is given the number of selected candidates from institutions in Tamil Nadu in the Engineering Services examinations. (1990).

Table 4: Engineering Services Examination (1990)

	Total No. of candidates	Candidates from institutions in Tamil Nadu	Candidates from T.N institutions as % of total
No. of candidates appeared	17193	1209	7.0
No. of successful candidates	923	49	5.3

Of the 49 successful candidates, 13 are from I.I.T., Madras and 11 are from Anna University.

Even on the basis of population, as per 1991 census, the percentage of candidates appearing must be around 6.6. If we take the literate population, our percentage will be around 8.0. If we go by the literacy levels, Tamil Nadu is not even presenting candidates commensurate with our share in the country's literate population. Even at the stage of entering the competition, we are poorly represented, not to speak of our success percentage.

The Government of India do not function from Delhi alone. Like the nervous system, it pervades the whole country. Its offices are located in all the States and Union Territories and are administered by·the officers belonging to the Central Services. It will be conducive to healthy administration if these officers are drawn from all the States and Union Territories with reasonable representation from every part of the country. In the year 1991, among the successful candidates in the Central Services examinations, 43.5% came from the universities in Delhi and U.P. The trend seems to have been the same in the immediate years earlier and later. The imbalance created in regional representation will not be conducive to national integration in the long run. It deserves serious concern and consideration at the top level of policy formulation.

What are the causes for our poor performance? There are different perceptions about the reasons for it. Some would attribute the failures to the reservation policy; some others to change in the medium of instruction; yet others to decline in the standard of English. It is like the story of the five blind men and the elephant; the story has eternal validity. The five blind men are immortal: they will be found in every area of activity. I may also join this group of five and present my perception of the phenomenon. While there may be many minor factors, the main reason for our poor performance, in my view, is the low standard of postgraduate education in Tamil Nadu.

In general, the candidates who succeed in the competitive examinations are Master's degree holders. In the country as a whole, on the average, 45% of the Master's degree holders come from the University departments. In States like West Bengal, or a city like Delhi, the postgraduate courses are only in the university departments. In Tamil Nadu, the P.G. candidates come predominantly from the affiliated colleges. Those from the university departments may be around 15%, and certainly not more than 20%. We all know the kind of faculty, library and laboratory facilities available in an affiliated college in comparison with a university. The affiliated colleges do not have Professors; do not have Readers[1]. The funding is limited to staff salary. There is hardly any research. How do we expect a postgraduate student from these institutions to compete with those from such giant institutions like the Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi University or Punjab University or even a State University like the Osmania University?

Stagnation in University Development in Tamil Nadu

Unfortunately, we do not also have in Tamil Nadu large university campuses. The poor performance of Tamil Nadu is not because the standard of university education in 1994 is worse than the standard in the forties or fifties. It is because we have failed to develop the university campuses after independence in the manner that many states have done. I give below a picture of the growth of universities in India vis-à-vis those in Tamil Nadu.

The picture will be complete only when we also note the following facts:

---

1. The affiliated colleges had only different grades of lecturers. Positions of Readers have been instituted in some colleges following the revision of pay scales of teachers effective from January, 1996 (Eds.)

- These do not include IITs and IIMs.
- In 1940 Tamil Nadu had one out of every 8 Universities in India.
- In 1947 it was one out of every 10; it came down in 1970 to one out of every 28; it is only after 1977–78 that we woke up and started building our university system in numbers.
- As early as 1948, the University Education Commission under the Chairmanship of Dr Radhakrishnan pointed out that in the then Madras Presidency, the two Universities were inadequate for the Tamil region and one more was needed. We did not heed that advice.
- The Government of India took a policy decision to establish an Agricultural University in each State. The Agricultural College at Coimbatore was perhaps the best in the country and should have been upgraded to a University; but the first Agricultural University was established in U.P. in 1960 and we established one in 1971 in Tamil Nadu as the 13th Agricultural University in the country.

Table 5: Growth of Universities in India and T.N.*

Year	Universities		Deemed to be universities		Total	
	India	T.N.@	India	T.N.	India	T.N.
1930	15	2	...	...	15	2
1940	16	2	...	...	16	2
1947	20	2	...	...	20	2
1950	27	2	...	...	27	2
1960	45	2	...	...	45	2
1970	83	3	7	...	90	3
1980	112	5	10	01	122	6
1990	148	10	28	02	176	12

@ Includes only State universities established by an Act of Legislature.

A university is the nursery for the creative talent to sprout; it is the farm that provides fertile soil and favourable climate for one's talent to find the fullest manifestation; it is the environment where leadership develops; it is the place where expeditions into the unknown are initiated and encouraged: it is also the place where inventions and innovations germinate and blossom. No developing nation can allow its university soil to become arid without endangering the future of its youth and therefore its own future.

Allocation of Funds

We established a number of universities in the last 15 years; it is a commendable step. But we are not able to develop them for two reasons. An educational institution needs time; it cannot be established like a factory. The field of higher education is a matter of accumulation of talent and developing an appropriate atmosphere. It grows more like an organic plant. Secondly, and more importantly, we are not able to allocate adequate funds. The Government of India supported

---

* The author presented an unofficial report to the Government of Tamil Nadu in 1974, discussing in detail the stagnation in university development in Tamil Nadu. The report was published as a paper in the Annual Issue of the Tamil Nadu Academy of Sciences, Vol. No. 1, 1978.

university education liberally in the fifties, sixties and even seventies. We missed the opportunity. Now, the emphasis is not on expansion of higher education. This can be seen from the allocation made to higher education as percentage of total allocation for education in the Five Year Plans.

Table 6: Allocation to Higher Education as % of Total Allocation for Education

Plan	Allocation
First Five Year Plan	9
Second Five Year Plan	18
Third Five Year Plan	15
Plan Interegnum	24
Fourth Five Year Plan	25
Fifth Five Year Plan	22
Sixth Five Year Plan	18
Seventh Five Year Plan	14
Eighth Five Year Plan	8

We have established new universities and started making up for the earlier lapses at a time when higher education has a lower priority in funding.

We laid emphasis on school education and rightly so. If we ask for funds from the Government of India for school education, we are told that we are advanced in school education and priority is for backward states, like U.P. which invested heavy sums in higher education and neglected school education. We are backward in University development; if we ask for funds for university development, we will be told that there is low priority now for higher education. It appears that when we sell salt, there is rain; when we sell flour, there is storm.

> A university is the nursery for the creative talent to sprout; it is the farm that provides fertile soil and favourable climate for one's talent to find the fullest manifestation; it is the environment where leadership develops; it is the place where expeditions into the unknown are initiated and encouraged: it is also the place where inventions and innovations germinate and blossom. No developing nation can allow its university soil to become arid without endangering the future of its youth and therefore its own future.

The state of affairs in the universities in Tamil Nadu is a matter for grave concern. I give one example to show how Tamil Nadu universities compare with some other universities in the country in the matter of funding. For this comparison, I take eight universities in Tamil Nadu, namely,

University of Madras, Madras
Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar
Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai
Bharathiar University, Coimbatore
Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirapalli
Tamil University, Thanjavur
Mother Teresa University, Kodaikkanal
Alagappa University, Karaikudi

At the time of considering VIII Plan proposals for development funding, all these eight universities together had 404 Professors, 570 Readers and 709 lecturers. The Banaras Hindu University alone had 250 Professors, 515 Readers and 950 lecturers. In other words, all the eight universities in Tamil Nadu together had 1683 faculty members whereas, Banaras Hindu University alone had 1715 faculty members. Banaras Hindu University is one among more than 20 universities in U.P. I realize that B.H.U. has Engineering and Medical Colleges as well.

The Tamil Nadu Government had stepped up grants to universities. The block grant or maintenance grant, as per 1992–93 budget under 'grants to universities' was Rs.18.62 crores. This is certainly an improvement over the provision of Rs.11.70 crores in 1990–91, but provision for higher education was lower than the national average, much lower, indeed disturbingly lower, when we come to the universities. While our allotment of block grant for 11 universities in 1992–93 was Rs.18.62 crores, the Non-Plan grant to Banaras Hindu University in 1991–92 alone was Rs.45.6 crores and Plan grant Rs.6.1 crores. Another Central University, i.e. Aligarh Muslim University got Rs.36.7 crores as Non-Plan grant and Rs.4.0 crores as Plan grant. Both these universities are in Uttar Pradesh which has, besides, an IIT and an IIM and now another Central University named after Dr B.R. Ambedkar.

If we take colleges, we are not, in terms of numbers, among the leading States in the country. As of 1989-90, Tamil Nadu had six colleges per million of population. The figure is 16 for Karnataka; 12 for Maharashtra; 12 for Punjab; 10 for Orissa; 10 for Himachal Pradesh and 9 for Uttar Pradesh. The national average is eight.

Considering enrollment, we have 540 students per lakh (100,000) of population. The figure is 785 for Punjab; 723 for Maharashtra; 605 for Gujarat. The National average is 496 (1989–90). However, I am not discussing higher education in general; I am mainly considering University campuses. We need to develop major university campuses, each having at least two or three strong Centres of Excellence like the School of Life Sciences in Madurai Kamaraj University.

- To that end, we need to analyse comprehensively and with an open mind our university system and prepare a white paper setting out the measures to be taken for bringing about immediate changes and accelerated development.
- Tamil Nadu institutions should review the performance of their candidates in the various competitive examinations after 10+, after +2 and after the Bachelor's and Master's degrees. In the case of higher education, the performance of each university must also be examined.
- The findings must be made public. For this to happen without any inhibition, education must be kept above politics. If this is not done, no government, whatever the party in power, can publicize weaknesses and failures. Any reform in education needs a long time to bear fruits and continuity is a prerequisite. Linking educational policy with party politics will do a great harm.

We have nearly 2.60 lakhs teachers (1989–90)* in our higher education institutions most of whom have no involvement, no sense of participation, in the academic affairs of this country. *It is a situation that every self-respecting teacher should disapprove of and rebel against; it is a system that is so unfavourable; and so demeaning to the teaching community. We cannot convert all the colleges into Universities.* The Education Commission (1966) thought of academic autonomy for the well developed colleges as a part solution. I will deem it a Magna Carta for

---

* The number for 1999–2000 is 3.5 lakhs.

the teaching profession at the University level in India. It is somewhat intriguing that there is opposition to academic autonomy from the teachers themselves who should whole-heartedly welcome it. Their misgivings need to be addressed and steps initiated to prevent any possible abuse of the system. This is the only way in which we could bring the entire teaching community into an intimate involvement in the academic programmes and develop in them a deep sense of participation and pride in their profession. It is professional pride that guarantees excellence in performance.

We are living in a period of rapid advances in knowledge. The half-life of knowledge and skill in software engineering is less than 2.0 years; in electrical engineering it is less than 5 years; in mechanical engineering less than 7.5 years. Our universities take about 3–4 years to introduce new curriculum and syllabi[2]. The first batch of students will take a minimum of four years to complete a bachelor's degree programme in engineering. It will take about 4 or 5 years from the time the new syllabus is framed and introduced for a graduate to enter the market. By that time, the half-life of his knowledge is over. It is necessary that curriculum and syllabi for engineering and technology are reviewed every year. The same will be the case for job-oriented courses announced by the University Grants Commission. Without academic autonomy, and without the deepest sense of involvement of the academics, higher education cannot become relevant to meet the contemporary needs of the society.

The following reforms are inescapable; they should be implemented on a time-bound basis:

- Continuous internal evaluation must be an integral part of the teaching and learning processes.
- Semester system must be introduced in as many institutions as possible.
- The UGC and AICTE are drawing up guidelines for giving deemed to be university status to colleges on a selective basis. The deserving colleges must be recommended for Deemed to be University status.
- As many colleges as possible must be given autonomy.
- A time table must be drawn up for ending the affiliating system of the universities.
- All reasonable misgivings of the teachers concerning the reforms must be removed.

A major problem needs a major decision. From 1966 till today, for 28 years, we have only been discussing, and debating. We have consistently been avoiding all major reforms. We cannot any longer continue the *status quo*. The trend today is *globalization* of education in general, and science and technology education, in particular. The liberalization of economy will accelerate this process further. Like multinational corporations, multinational universities are on the horizon. Education has become a marketable commodity. A near revolution is taking place in the world of education. We must now be prepared for it.

Accountability is another significant issue that I would like to touch upon. All of us are accountable to the society that supports us. There must be some measure for reckoning what we give back to the society for what we get from it. Academic performance is not easily quantifiable. Yet certain measures can be developed. There is such a thing as levels of accountability. We have, for example,

---

2. The present practice in most of the universities is that students admitted under a given curriculum and syllabi continue under the same curriculum for the entire period of their study. Any revision is applicable only to the students admitted after the revision.

(i) the accountability of the institution as a whole,

(ii) the accountability of the management, i.e., the Government or the Board of Management, and

(iii) the accountability of the faculty as a profession and as individuals.

The society supports the institution and not the individuals. The policies and programmes of the institution must show concern for the common man and the institution must render account in terms of performance. The support is through the management and on the basis of the trust placed on it. The management must show evidence of initiative, leadership and involvement. No doubt, the real players are the teachers. Much depends ultimately on their contribution.

The UGC has prescribed 180 instruction days in a year. This is measurable, must be monitored and closely reviewed every quarter. The grant perhaps may have to be linked in some way to the number of instruction days in an academic year.

The UGC has prescribed a '40 hour week', and presence of the faculty on the Campus. Work must be allotted in a manner that one is kept usefully busy during these hours. The UGC has also prescribed a rough allotment of time for various activities.

A performance appraisal has also been contemplated; this is very important; it must be taken seriously and implemented sincerely. Though not quantifiable, these are verifiable and if not in numbers, in terms of measurable grades. We need to raise the following questions:

- Who is accountable for ensuring that the colleges complete at least 180 instruction days in an academic year?
- Who is accountable for ensuring that the performance appraisal is made regularly and reviewed seriously?
- Who is accountable for establishing a fair and reliable procedure of evaluation of the performance of a faculty member for career advancement?

The Government, the management and the staff have entered into a contract with the society which supports them. The society honours and fulfils the terms of the contract substantially. Do the other parties fulfil the terms on their side? If we are violating the contract, we are living parasitically on the common man. It is an unpardonable exploitation.

Tamil Nadu is a State, poor in natural resources; it has a population pressure above the national average. We need to adopt a development policy that is appropriate for a State with scarce natural resources. Fortunately, we have come to a stage of development in human history when knowledge has become a resource. Tamil Nadu is endowed with a population that has a great potential for advancement through education, innovation and training. Our future has to be designed and built on the foundations of education and training. The reforms and restructuring needed are fairly well known. They are within our competence to accomplish; within our means to sustain. These are imperative not for our prosperity, but even for our survival; what is needed is the will, not only on the part of the Government, but on the part of all of us including all political parties. I wish, hope and trust that we develop and demonstrate necessary firmness of determination, conviction, and the strength of will to act.

ANNEXURE

Success Ratios in IAS Examination (1973)

Name of the University	No. of candidates who took the exams	Success Ratio (rounded off)
Indian Institute of Technology	128	1:07
Delhi University	1311	1:11
Puna University	102	1:13
Kerala University	314	1:13
Allahabad University	795	1:14
Gauhati University	238	1:14
Nagpur University	109	1:16
Punjab University	1277	1:16
Calcutta University	585	1:16
Bombay University	134	1:19
Lucknow University	421	1:21
Ranchi University	253	1:21
Madras University	629	1:22
Benaras Hindu University	184	1:23
Rajasthan University	452	1:25
Patna University	566	1:31
Andhra University	223	1:32
Venkateswara University	100	1:33
Madurai University	105	1:10

Note: In their Annual Report, the Union Public Services Commission used to put out the analyses of the performances of graduates of different universities in the country in their competitive examinations. The UPSC gave up this practice quite sometime ago. A similar analysis of performance for any later years is therefore not possible (Eds.)

8

Academic Leadership—The Desideratum

In any society, in any area of activity, the performance in the present and the promise for the future depend on the leaders of the society in general and the individual sectors in particular. An institution or a profession is as great as its leader. We have not so far devised any system that can do away with the need for individual initiative and the impact that able, imaginative and competent leaders can make. A society must produce leaders in every walk of life. The base no doubt must be broad and strong; but there must also be peaks, tall and stately. It is only a desert that has a monotonously flat terrain. Every breakthrough in human history has behind it the flash of a genius; the touch of a leader.

Philosopher, Statesman

Dr Radhakrishnan is one of the strikingly glittering examples of India's intellectual tradition. He combined in him, in an amazing measure, the capacity for penetrating analysis, logical deduction and pervasive synthesis. He reminds us of those legendary teachers of yore who adorned the courts of emperors and rulers and advised them on all matters of State. Though he was a product of Western education, he symbolized some of the finest aspects of Indian culture and wisdom. There was in him the depth of a scholar, the perception and intuition of a statesman, the resilience and receptivity of a disciple, the dignity and decisiveness of a *maharishi* and a diction that was at once magnificent and arresting. The teaching community all over the world has produced, though very few in number, men and women, who blossomed as great leaders of nations. Dr Radhakrishnan is one among those few teachers who would shine as a star in the firmament of the world of education.

On an occasion like this, it is always a problem to choose an appropriate theme. The theme must be of general interest and also relevant to the occasion. After some deliberation, I decided to discuss, to the extent of my understanding, the need for leadership of the academic community of India, in matters of education and research. In doing so, I confine myself to higher education.

Knowledge the Resources

The quality of life of a nation ultimately depends on the human resources that the nation possesses. Contrary to traditional and popular thinking, it is not the area of the land, or the language, or the economic theory, or the physical resources of the country that guarantee happiness and prosperity in the modern world, though all these really matter and have a contribution to make. Barring air and water, it is possible today that a country could import, transfer, acquire by substitution, or create, for its use, everything it needs. What really matters today is the capacity that a country has for creation of relevant knowledge and its appropriate application. This, in brief, is the stage of development that humanity has reached as it draws closer to the end of the 20th century and knocks at the door of the 21st century.

If we survey the developments that have taken place during the course of this century and assess those contributions for which this century would be remembered, it will not be the achievements in nuclear science, or the spectacle of space adventure; nor even the invention of the computer or the breakthrough in biological sciences, that will stand out. The 20th century will be marked for the emergence of knowledge as the most versatile resource and dominant force in human affairs and in human society.

If area of land is a major determinant, Japan cannot be a prosperous State; if physical resources are decisive for the prosperity of a nation, Israel and Singapore must be rather poor. The economic organization or the political philosophy does not constitute either a path or a block to success though they do count as contributing factors. We may be able to find examples of rich and poor countries under every form of Government. It is not my endeavour to prove or present the thesis that natural resources and human organizations are unimportant; they certainly are important. I am only trying to focus attention on what is now the most decisive of the factors in the scheme of things, and that is 'knowledge'.

Francis Bacon said nearly 400 years ago that 'knowledge is power'. Even during his time, this was more a prophetic statement than a statement of fact. Much earlier, Thiruvalluvar made an even more categorical observation:

> Those who have knowledge have all that you need to have: whatever be their other possessions, those that do not have knowledge, do not have anything.

I do not suppose that even a divine poet like Thiruvalluvar could have perceived the pervasive potential of knowledge in its entirety which really turns out to be the phenomenon of the second half of the 20th century. The intuition of men of genius could see through the mist of time, things that would endure and emerge into focus as human progress continues its unending journey. Nevertheless, I really wonder whether the author of this remarkable couplet could have really visualized or comprehended what it conveys today to a 20th century reader.

Gradually, but steadily, emerged the era of information establishing the pervasive influence of knowledge as the most dominant human resource in the nature of things. Human resources lie, not in the muscle, but in the mind, though both are important for existence and survival. One is the container, and the other the content. The container by itself is of no consequence; similarly even if it be the divine nectar, it cannot be held and delivered in infinite space; it needs a finite container.

If mind is what matters, and knowledge constitutes its yield, education becomes the nourishment i.e. the air, the water and the manure. Somewhere in the middle of the 20th century, it was

realized universally that, in the modern world, a society must be able to absorb and use the tools of science and technology for economic development. A study by the World Bank showed that the benefits of economic development that took place in the decades immediately after the second world war have gone substantially to countries with a literacy level of 90% and above, and those with low levels of literacy could hardly claim any share in the global increase of wealth. A reversal in the relationship between education and prosperity of nations became slowly clear. In the past, only a rich nation could become educated: today only an educated nation can become rich.

Initially primary education was recognized as the threshold and the emphasis therefore was naturally on universal primary education. As we move along and survey the scene, the realization comes that while basic education does constitute the foundation, however broad and strong, the foundation alone does not constitute a building. We need the superstructure, whatever be the number of storeys, and higher education constitutes the superstructure. Time was when the importance of investment in higher education and research by the developing countries was a matter of dispute. While it was conceded that developing countries must have the capacity to make use of knowledge generated elsewhere, their own capacity to generate knowledge was not considered as of paramount significance. We now realize that in a world where knowledge is advancing fast, where changes are rapid, even keeping a watch over the advances in science and technology and adopting them for our needs in a knowledgeable way is difficult. A country that is not capable of creating new knowledge will not be able to use effectively knowledge generated elsewhere. It is stated that if you are to be capable of using an invention for developmental purposes, you must possess very nearly the capability to make that invention. Buying ready-made products in the market, or importing ready-made tools of production is different from buying know-how and technology and using them to suit our environment and meet our needs. All these factors have brought higher education into focus in the modern society. There are certain developments all over the world in the realm of higher education that deserve mention.

- There has been a growing emphasis on higher education in the recent decades both in advanced and developing countries.
- In the last 40 years which constitute most of the second half of this century, more universities have been established in the world, than all those put together, from the beginning of university system in history.
- Governments are coming forward to show greater interest in, and allot more funds for, higher education both in advanced and developing countries[1].
- The World Bank which has generally and rightly been stressing the importance of primary education in the developing countries has in recent years emphasized the need for higher education and research also in developing countries.

The present position in the realm of education can thus be summed up:

the highest education for some – at least for a few – is as important for development as basic education for all.

---

1. The fact that there is a tendency on the part of the governments to shift greater financial responsibility to the beneficiary does not contradict this statement.

Higher Education Scene

Against this background, we should take a look at the Indian higher education scene. There are three aspects that deserve consideration:

    (i) Quantity
    (ii) Quality, and
    (iii) Relevance.

We should consider our performance against each of these concerns. Though we may claim a long and a great heritage in learning, and have indeed had some of the world's greatest centres of learning, we must concede that the university education that we have today is of western origin. It was imported into this country by the British to meet certain objectives of their administration. When the country became independent, we inherited the system established by the British. We had in the higher education system of the country 22 universities, 695 colleges and 1,74,000 students[2].

We inherited a structure, a system and a tradition which we continued, expanded, and marginally improved upon, but neither discarded nor radically modified, though we have been highly critical of that inheritance all the time. We realized the need for developing a system to suit our genius and to meet our needs. Our intention in this direction can be seen from reports of the Committees and Commissions that we established and the policies that we formulated. The important ones among them are:

    (i) The Report of the University Education Commission, headed by Dr S. Radhakrishnan (1948)
    (ii) The Report of the Commission on Secondary Education headed by Dr A.L. Mudaliar (1952)
    (iii) The Report of the Education Commission under the Chairmanship of Prof. D.S. Kothari (1966)
    (iv) The Education policy statement of the Government of India (1968)
    (v) The National Policy on Education(1986).

The objective has been to develop an education system that would have an indigenous character and would address itself to the educational needs of the country in all their dimensions. These documents certainly contain valuable suggestions for changes, reforms, innovations and expansion.

We have succeeded in bringing about expansion and in terms of numbers, our performance is impressive as can be seen from the following figures[3]:

---

2. These figures are for the year 1951 (Eds.)
3. By the year 2000, the number of universities has gone up to 247, colleges to 11,831 and of students to 77,33,000 (Eds.).

Table 1: Higher Education in India (1950-51 & 1988-89)

	1950-51	1988-89
1. Universities	28	169
2. Colleges	695	6,912
3. Students	1,74,000	39,48,000

* Source: Moonis Raza, **Higher Education in India**, AIU Publication, 1991.

If one looks at the figures for postgraduate programmes and doctoral studies, the record is quite impressive. The number of doctorate degrees awarded in 1987-88, is 7,275[4], with 2,933 in Arts, 2,842 in Sciences and the rest in disciplines like Commerce, Education, Engineering, Medicine, Agriculture and others. We have today certain centres of learning and schools, departments and institutes that are as good as any in the world. We have men and women of learning who are recognized and respected in every world forum. Our research contributions do count in the world of creative work and advances in knowledge. However, on the whole, our performance is characterized by an achievement in the direction of 'more of the same'. It has been a matter of expansion. The reforms and innovations that we realized as needed, that we recommended as necessary were never carried through. The few peaks apart, the position in general can be summarized as follows:

- On the average, the quality remains poor.
- The relevance of the programmes to the manpower needs of the country leaves much to be desired.
- We have not succeeded in endowing the system with an indigenous character and there persists an uneasy feeling in our minds that the higher education system remains somewhat alien: it is not a part of the flora and fauna of the land.

Very often, all our lapses and failures in higher education have been and are attributed to lack of funds. It is true that inadequacy of funds is a constraint. But it has not been the cause for all our ills. Some of the important systemic changes recommended again and again concern the following:

    (i) Autonomy for the universities, the university departments and colleges
   (ii) Examination reform
  (iii) Introduction of semester system
  (iv) Introduction of credit system
   (v) Industry, institute collaboration
  (vi) Job-orientation of educational programmes.

Most of these measures really did not involve any heavy financial outlay that was beyond our economic capability. We failed because of other reasons. One of them was the lack of involvement of the academic community at the decision making and policy formulation levels and the lack

---

4. The number of doctorate degrees awarded in 1998 was 10,712 of which 3929 were in Arts, 3798 in Science and the rest in other disciplines (Eds.).

of academic leadership in the field of education. Surprisingly, this aspect has not been touched upon with any seriousness by anyone, though in my view it is to be reckoned, as a major factor and a grave deficiency which, if not rectified, can make real improvement in higher education impossible.

In the higher education system we have (1988-89)[5] 54,915 teachers in the universities, and 1,94,095 in the colleges. In all, we have about 250,000 academic men and women in the system of higher education and research. What role do they play in moulding the higher education system of the country? This question has not been seriously raised, surprisingly though. The following observations are for consideration and review:

- In independent India, establishment of colleges, and universities as well as planning for, and development of, higher education is decided upon by general administrators and political leaders.
- Universities are established and colleges are started on ad hoc basis and academics were not involved in these decisions. Academic considerations are not really dominant in decision-making.
- Even in such purely academic functions as curriculum and syllabus formulation, only a fraction of the teaching community participates.
- The position is about the same as above, when it comes to setting examinations and assessing student performance.
- The bulk of the members of the teaching community functioned as tutors in the classroom and laboratories and considered themselves and behaved as mere employees, believing all the time that higher education is somebody's domain and they are there just to teach what they have been asked to teach.
- The community of teachers has not developed a professional pride: tertiary level teaching has not really gained a professional standing.
- Notwithstanding the fact that education accounts for the second largest item of expenditure in the country, next only to defence, we have not developed academic leaders at the national level. It will be difficult today for any one in the field of higher education to list quickly some ten academics who are known and recognized as educationists in the country.
- The social esteem, and academic autonomy of academics like Vice-Chancellors, Principals, Directors, Deans and other heads of educational institutions have been gradually, but steadily, eroded over the decades. Today, academics of some standing are quite hesitant, even reluctant, to accept positions of administrative responsibility.

Potential of Leadership

In any society, in any area of activity, the performance in the present, and the promise for the future, depend on the leaders of the society in general and the individual sectors in particular. An institution or a profession is as great as its leader. We have not so far devised any system that can do away with the need for individual initiative and the impact that able, imaginative and competent leaders can make. A society must produce leaders in every walk of life. The base, no

---

5. In 2000, the total number of teachers was 3,50,000 comprising 78,000 in the universities and 2,72,000 is the colleges (Eds.)

doubt, must be broad and strong; but there must also be peaks, tall and stately. It is only a desert that has a monotonously flat terrain. Every breakthrough in human history has behind it the flash of a genius; the touch of a leader.

We have in India, political leaders of many hues and shades: we have leaders in industry; leading men and women in art and literature. We do have scientists of repute, doctors of high standing; but we do not have, comparatively speaking, educationists of national standing. A few men and women have emerged on the scene with some degree of recognition for their insight into, and understanding of, the problems and prospects of education; but they still do not constitute a body of specialists recognized as such, either by the Government or by the community, and they do not influence, much less guide, the course of development of higher education.

Academic Leadership

Education has been a state subject. It was made a concurrent one, a joint responsibility, in 1976. But still the role played by the Centre is not substantial. The initiative and perception of the State Governments are all important. At the State level, there has been no institutional set up that could help the development of academic leaders. Planning and policy making in education in the States were always done by the political leaders and administrators in the Secretariat. There has not been any, and there still is no, institution which brings educationists together on a regular basis to deliberate on issues of education concerning short-term and long-term planning. Directors of Collegiate Education and Directors of School Education are administrators who have come up the ladder in the hierarchy of the bureaucracy and most of them are not necessarily educationists in the strict sense of the term. The Vice-Chancellors of Universities are concerned with the programmes of the Universities they administer and they hardly are called upon to consider the needs of the State. Planning for higher education in the States has been treated essentially as a matter concerning the establishment of more universities and colleges, and enrolling more students; briefly stated, expansion of what exists, and therefore, more of the same.

In India, expansion of higher education in terms of numbers is really taking place in the affiliated colleges. Nearly 88% of the undergraduate students and over 55% of the postgraduate students are in the affiliated colleges. Of the total faculty, 80% are in affiliated colleges. Talking about affiliated colleges, Moonis Raza and Yash Aggarwal (1991) make the following observation:

> What made the situation with respect to the continued phenomenal growth of the undergraduate sector still more dysfunctional was the fact that the undergraduate base was structurally delinked from the rest of higher education by the continuance of mushroom spread on the academic scene of that rare species only found in the academically semi-arid lands of the ex-colonies designated as the affiliated degree colleges. It is not difficult to imagine the soulless ambience of 'bonded' institutions wherein the faculty was called upon to 'cover the syllabus' prescribed by external agencies and 'prepare' students for the end-of-term examination conducted by external agencies; and the learners searched for 'hints' about 'expected questions' rather than seek knowledge and concentrated on 'bazar notes' or 'made easy' type trash rather than on standard textbooks and recommended readings.

The academics in the affiliated colleges do not have the opportunity to participate in most of the academic functions in which their counterparts elsewhere in the world participate. Whether

it is admission or syllabus formulation, or examination or certification, participation is limited to a few, and teachers in general in this country have nearly no role to play in these crucial academic issues. They are less than their counterparts in other parts of the world in their academic responsibility and academic functions. The nature of work and the extremely limited participation confined to instruction in the classroom and the laboratories did not develop in them a feeling that they are partners in the entire activity.

Not many among our academics would have seriously read the many valuable reports of the Committees and Commissions that we speak about. Many of them often consider that these are matters for the Central Government to worry about, and many members of the teaching community do not have full knowledge of, and insight into, the full dimension of reforms and innovations contemplated in these documents. This indifference has been partly responsible for the estrangement of teachers from the reform process. Strangely, we have been endeavouring to implement polices and programmes in education which the teachers themselves did not fully comprehend and appreciate. The teachers did not have a comprehensive view of the intent and impact of the changes that we were trying to bring about. We were trying to bring about reforms through financial sanctions and government orders. Teachers' Associations too never showed real interest in these matters, as their major concerns had been pay scales and promotions.

An educational institution is not like an administrative organisation. All over the world, it is an autonomous, self-governing body, which decides its work norms, sets its standards and performs its tasks. Unfortunately in this country, an appropriate value system did not develop in our approach to managing education, and teachers, by and large, conducted themselves not as partners, but as employees and their associations and organizations were often preoccupied with salaries, service conditions, security and similar issues. This atmosphere naturally has not been conducive to the development of professional leadership in education.

Normally, one would expect that leaders in education would come from the ranks of heads of institutions, namely Principals, Deans, Directors and Vice-Chancellors. One of the greatest metamorphoses that happens in our education is that when an academic becomes an administrative head, he or she is identified immediately as part of the establishment and gets separated, in fact, alienated from the community, to which he/she belongs. The most respected of teachers becomes an object of condemnation by the students as soon as he becomes the Principal: the most popular teacher becomes the devil's advocate in the eyes of his own colleagues as soon as he wears the mantle of a Principal or Vice-Chancellor. In the field of education, democratization has often been interpreted by some as a leaderless state of organization. When you don't get acknowledged as a leader by your own colleagues, the question of your emerging as a leader at the national level does not arise.

While the heads of institutions are looked upon as representatives of the management by teachers and the students, the managements do not think of them as their representatives either. They face innumerable problems from the management, the Government, the political system and the community. They hardly please any: ultimately they do not even please their wife and children who feel that they have not been given the time due to them. The atmosphere in the country as it has evolved over the years, does not seem to be conducive to the emergence of academic leadership. The leaders, if at all they emerge, become victims of the very systems they are called upon to manage.

One may wonder whether some of the academics who are good teachers and researchers in universities could not emerge as educational leaders. We do have eminent men and women among academics: but they are subject specialists. To be a specialist in a subject is one thing;

but to blossom as an educationist is another. When I use the term 'educationist', I do not mean specialists in the discipline of education: I do not also mean individuals who have specialized in educational planning and administration. I have in mind academics who are leaders in their own discipline and who have, through experience and exposure, gained a perception of the short and long term needs of higher education and research and can formulate policies and programmes to meet such needs. Teaching and research provide opportunities for one to emerge as a specialist: but one has no opportunity, no training ground to blossom as an educationist in the country. As things stand today, the country does not seem to want such a category of people.

Status of Vice-Chancellor

The status of the Vice-Chancellor has been eroded gradually. This position is held in high esteem in all advanced countries and it is a position of respect and honour in all developing countries as well. Whatever be the political affiliation and economic philosophy of a nation, whether it is a capitalist democracy, a socialist democracy, a monarchy or a dictatorship, the head of the university occupies a place of honour. The position did enjoy a comparatively high status in pre-independent India. One would have expected that, after independence, things would have further improved. Unfortunately, the trend has been in the reverse direction. Five times in the last few years, Vice-Chancellors have been removed en masse without assigning any reason in one State. The last occasion in the series was as recently as in June 1990.

Following the footsteps of this State, another State Government promulgated an ordinance to provide for the removal of Vice-Chancellor from office, which fortunately was allowed to lapse and was not passed as an Act by the Legislature. In yet another State, the Chancellor has issued an order instructing the Vice-Chancellors to send monthly progress reports, apply for casual leave in advance and await sanction if they are to go on casual leave, and obtain prior permission of the Chancellor if they are to attend meetings, even those of the UGC, if it would mean an absence of more than 24 hours from the headquarters. The recent Universities Act of another State empowers the Chancellor to remove the Vice-Chancellors in position when the amended Act came into force, by constituting a search panel and appointing new incumbents. All these measures have not improved the administration of the universities or the cause of higher education in the States concerned. But they have done great damage to the image of Vice-Chancellors in the country.

The present status and the future development of an institution are in a way linked with the stature of the one who heads it. However well equipped and well staffed an institution may be, succession of leadership of poor stature will result in the institution suffering a fall in its standards. A damage done to the head of an institution is a damage done to the institution also. The continuous and consistent erosion in the image and status of the heads of educational institutions in independent India is one of the greatest causes of the unenviable position in which we find our campuses of learning today.

The choice of a Vice-Chancellor is made through a fairly elaborate procedure. Senior people nominated by the Chancellor and such august bodies as the UGC, the Executive Councils of the Universities and the Government are involved in the preparation of the panel of names for appointment as Vice-Chancellor. Due thought is given before choosing a person from the panel. In more than 90% of the cases, it is the Chancellor who makes the choice. He is also empowered to call for a fresh set of names if he is not satisfied with the panel. Can we not trust a person,

selected through so elaborate a course, to spend more than 24 hours outside the headquarters without prior permission of the Chancellor? Does not the head of the highest educational institution namely, the University, deserve the process of natural justice before being removed from office? What is surprising is that such harsh steps as these, taken not against an individual Vice-Chancellor, but against the class of Vice-Chancellors as a whole, in some states, did not attract any strong reaction from the academic community. The intellectuals of the country, who issue collective statements periodically on many issues of global nature have not thought it fit to exercise their mind over this phenomenon. The steady politicization of the positions of heads of institutions has gone on without attracting any comments, not to speak of a debate.

> The present status and the future development of an institution are in a way linked with the stature of the one who heads it. However well equipped and well staffed an institution may be, succession of leadership of poor stature will result in the institution suffering a fall in its standards. A damage done to the head of an institution is a damage done to the institution also. The continuous and consistent erosion in the image and status of the heads of educational institutions in independent India is one of the greatest causes of the unenviable position in which we find our campuses of learning today.

The Association of Indian Universities, at some stage, passed resolutions and made representations. It is a body of Vice-Chancellors, and therefore, its reaction is understandable. Even that was belated and feeble. But the academic community as such did not look at this development as something concerning their profession and react appropriately. Consequently, devaluation of the position of Vice-Chancellors merrily goes on and we have come to a stage when Search Committees find four out of five persons recommended for appointment, declining even in the case of well-known and prestigious universities. It is a vicious circle and we keep lamenting helplessly the gradual decline in the equipment and image of the Vice-Chancellors and heads of institutions in this country.

Development of Academic Leaders

Education is a specialized field. Planning for, and development of, education require specialists. As stated earlier, I mean by 'specialists' academics who have a long record of teaching and research in their field of specialization, and who have through involvement, exposure and experience, developed and demonstrated the ability for perceiving the short and long term needs in higher education and research and who can advise the Government and guide the nation in the development of education. Such a leadership must develop from a large group, not from a few men and women of rare flash, but a broad base of academics, many of whom have some level of competence in their field. Such a development requires institutions, which provide opportunities for the development and nurturing of the leadership qualities in academics. Leadership qualities may be inborn but leaders are made. If you divide India into 400 districts and administer them from Delhi, you will not have state level leaders. A panchayat cannot produce a Chief Minister; a district cannot produce a Governor. We need institutions at different levels to develop leaders.

Some of the steps that could provide opportunities for the development of academic leadership are:

(i) Autonomy for colleges in the true sense of the term.

(ii) Reorganization of the university bodies and enabling the university to function as a body that would keep a close link with the manpower and research needs of the economy, and be continuously responsive to the new demands and challenges.

(iii) Establishment of a State Council for Higher Education in every state.

(iv) Conscious efforts to provide opportunities for academics in all central educational bodies, statutory and otherwise, as well as planning and policy making bodies that may have education as one of the subjects to deal with.

Among the many documents generated in the field of higher education, the one that has addressed itself to institutional development is the NPE 1986. Whatever may be the other recommendations and one's approach to them, the recommendations concerning autonomous colleges, establishment of institutions like the State Council for Higher Education and National Council for Higher Education deserve the highest priority. The bodies mentioned above must include academics as members besides others and must serve as a training ground at the college, state and national levels for leadership in education.

I must turn my attention to the role of my own community, the teachers. It may be true that we were not offered opportunities by the Government for playing a meaningful role in decision making and policy formulation. It may also be true that we did not have the kind of environment to generate leaders in education. We cannot throw all the blame on others and absolve ourselves fully from our share of responsibility. It is possible that 'the fault lies not in our stars but in ourselves', that we happen to be what we are and where we are in the scheme of things. We must make a critical analysis and do some objective introspection. We must, as a matter of principle, accept the postulate that: 'in the ultimate analysis, we are responsible for what we are'. As a community, we have not made a systematic endeavour to make a contribution to change and improve the system of education as a whole.

Issues under Examination

Many of the reforms accepted and attempted in the field of education came through Government —appointed committees and commissions. Whether it is institutional development such as setting up of IITs, establishment of IIMs or starting of Agricultural Universities in each state, they were all generally and essentially developments that emanated from the Government. The academic community reacted to the agenda made by the commissions and committees but has not come forward with any comprehensive proposal of its own and pleaded for its acceptance. Schemes like autonomy for colleges, examination reform, job orientation and related suggestions often originated outside the Boards of Studies and Academic Councils. We have made very few experiments on our own, or even on the numerous suggestions made. Our contributions to educational innovation and reform have been very modest. There has also been some measure of agreement on identifying the deficiencies in our system. There has been agreement among many of us in our criticism against the measures proposed by the Government on the basis of recommendations made by the bodies set up by them, though such reaction has been sporadic and feeble, except in the case of the recommendations contained in NPE 1986. As an academic

community, standing on our own and uninfluenced by political affiliations, we hardly made our voice felt. We may have to realize and accept that our role had been modest in the past, and at least now we have to show an awakening and take a lead where it is our responsibility to lead. That way we shall serve the nation and also our profession.

There are many issues in which we lack clarity and need policy decisions. As a professional community, we need to take up studies to help make informed decisions and recommendations. Some critical areas for such studies are as follows:

- There is a perception that we have expanded higher education on a large scale, perhaps larger than what was needed. On the other hand, the proportion of the students enrolled in higher education is between 6% and 7% of the relevant age group though many quote the figure of 6%. The corresponding percentage of enrollment in higher education is substantially higher in many of the developing countries; Egypt – 20, Thailand – 20, Panama – 28, Brazil – 11. What needs to be done to expand the participation ratio in our higher education, and how do we achieve that objective?
- We find that boys and girls who are first generation learners knock at the doors of the universities. Ban on expansion will mean denial of opportunity to these students. Is there any relationship between the stage of economic development and the size of enrollment in higher education? What will be the impact on the economy if more people are given opportunities for higher education? What shall be the guidelines for decision-making in the domain of expansion?
- The state Governments are already spending about 23.3 per cent of their budget on education (1987-88). Any increase will be difficult without sacrificing much needed developmental projects. On an average, the share of higher education had been around 25% of all expenditure on education in the past. In recent years, it is stated to have declined to about 17% of the outlay on education. Some claim that this is inadequate: some others complain that this is too high and cuts into the outlay required for primary education. What shall be the philosophy for financing higher education? Can we consider devices for attracting contributions from the public? Can private enterprise and philanthropy be enabled to play a more significant role without compromising on quality of education?
- We find today there are colleges in engineering, medicine, law, commerce, arts and science that are self-financing. Some of them have also established a reputation for quality and standards. They supplement the opportunities provided by the Government. Such of those candidates who do not qualify by merit to enter aided institutions seek admission to these institutions. The State Governments and universities have recognized these institutions and regulated the admission procedure. How do we react to these developments? They increase in number and are becoming increasingly accepted. A stage has already been reached when authorities who matter concede that they cannot be wished away. Private institutions offering certificates and diplomas in job-oriented courses are becoming more widespread and popular. Do they not contribute to imparting relevance to the academic offerings available from institutions of higher education?

A High Power Committee on Self-financing Engineering Colleges appointed by the Government of Tamil Nadu in 1989, under the Chairmanship of Dr V.C.Kulandai Swamy, perceived even then the emergence of the trend towards self-financing colleges in higher education in all disciplines and recommended an appropriate legislation to regulate and promote these institutions on healthy lines. The Committee has observed as follows:

Self-financing colleges exist in arts and science, law, medicine and engineering. One sees a trend in higher education where such of those students who do not qualify for admission in aided colleges on merit pay for their educational opportunities in unaided institutions. If in principle this is acceptable, it may even be desirable to bring about a comprehensive legislation covering all these institutions.

- Continuous internal assessment is almost an integral part of the higher education system all over the world. While we advocate it in all the forums, we have hardly implemented it. Universities that have introduced reforms ceremoniously in the seventies have gone back and abandoned them unceremoniously in the eighties. How long do we helplessly cling to a system that is recognized and condemned as the bane of our education system? It is no credit to the academic community to confess that a method of assessment accepted as desirable and adopted all over the world cannot be implemented in our country. What are the urgent measures of reforms that we need to pursue, and what should be a realistic agenda for action? We need to answer these questions and follow them up with action.
- The University Grants Commission has prescribed a modest number of 180 contact days in a year. All of us are aware that many colleges do not meet this requirement. Some do not exceed 120 days or even a 100 days. Can we say that this does not concern the academic community? If we accept the responsibility, what measures have we indicated to bring about an improvement in the scene? We must concede that we have successfully resisted any curtailment of the holidays we avail ourselves of. We must concede that the coin has its other side too. The number of working days must also be insisted upon. At any rate it is important to study and analyse the implications of the idle capacity of the system in terms of unused intellectual and physical resources, for its productivity and effectiveness.
- Higher education is no longer a mere social service: it is in the domain of investment. If it is so, the society is entitled to expect tangible returns. It is a prerequisite that the programmes are relevant to the needs of the society. Have we made perceptible efforts to equip ourselves with the knowledge and information about the nation's problems and projects and to expose the students to the kind of problems that await solutions from the educated manpower? What success stories can we narrate in the filed of industry-institute collaboration (the term industry is used here in a broad sense to mean the world of work)?
- In all advanced countries, basic and applied research are carried out in a large measure in educational institutions. The strength of educational institutions engaged in research lies not so much in the expertise and creativity of the faculty, though it is a major factor, but in the fact that they have had a successive stream of young minds, that pass through the system like a flowing stream of fresh water; the probability of one coming across flashes of genius and creative talent is very high in the university environment. However, we have in India, a situation where university research accounts for a small fraction of the total allocation for research. There is tremendous scope for further development of the research potential in our universities. It needs again an enlightened research policy and the university community must provide the necessary guidance and grounds for a policy change. What are the critical factors that should inform the evolution of such a policy?
- A look at the growth of higher education and a review of the mix in terms of levels and disciplines present some useful but disturbing data.

From a close look at the level-wise enrollment, we find that in terms of percentages, the undergraduate enrollment has gone up; the postgraduate enrollment has declined and enrollment

Table 1:   Level-wise Enrollment in Higher Education*

Year	Undergraduates		Postgraduates		Research		Total No.
	No	%	No	%	No	%	
1950-51	145389	83.7	19992	11.5	1434	0.83	173696
1960-61	471658	84.7	58908	10.6	5083	0.91	556559
1970-71	1746090	89.4	161182	8.2	13311	0.68	1953640
1980-81	2401485	87.2	273337	9.9	3217	1.20	2752437
1988-89	3474171	88.0	375053	9.5	43427	1.10	3947922

Table 2:   Discipline-wise Enrollment in Higher Education*
(Percentage of the total enrollment)

Year	Arts	Sci	Com	Eng/Tech	Med	Edn.	Agri.	Law	Vet.	Others
1960-61	44.9	30.0	10.2	3.6	2.7	1.5	1.3	2.3	0.5	3.0
1970-71	44.3	31.7	11.5	3.0	3.3	1.8	1.4	2.3	0.2	0.4
1980-81	40.5	19.4	20.1	4.7	4.0	2.6	1.4	6.3	0.3	0.7
1988-89	40.3	19.7	21.5	4.6	3.6	2.3	1.3	5.8	0.3	0.6

* Source: Moonis Raza, **Higher Education in India**, AIU Publication, 1991.

in research has gone up by 0.27%. Postgraduate education and research contribute to creation of knowledge and indigenization. Is the present mix satisfactory? Has the trend over the years been in the right direction? What is our evaluation and what are our suggestions?

If we take the discipline-wise enrollment, we find that arts and commerce account for about 62.0%; science has declined from 30,0% to 19.7% and surprisingly agriculture remains the same at 1.3% between 1950-51 and 1988-89. What is more, the percentage enrollment in veterinary science has come down from 0.5% to 0.3%. A critical analysis of the present mix and the past trend is necessary to plan the future growth patterns. Is the present emphasis on general education as against relatively low priority for expansion in professional education a necessary and desirable instrument of our policies?

- As early as 1948, the University Education Commission under the chairmanship of Dr S. Radhakrishnan strongly criticized the affiliating university system and the examination procedure. We have increased the number of such colleges from a few hundreds at that time to nearly 7000 now (1990)[6]. The Education Commission headed by Dr D.S. Kothari recommended the establishment of autonomous colleges as a way out of this situation, but we have not done much in that direction either, even after a quarter of a century. What is our recommendation for a speedy improvement of the position in this regard? Endless debates, indecision and consequent continuance of a totally discredited system will do no credit to the academic community.
- I am of the considered opinion that the establishment of the State Council for Higher Education will be a decisively good step for planning and development of higher education. It is part of the National Policy on Education (1986) and the Programme of Action (1986)

---

6. Over 11,800 in 1999 (Eds.).

adopted by Parliament. Neither the Ministry of HRD at the Centre, nor the Departments of Education of the states, have done any serious exercise on the establishment of State Councils. Has the academic community a view on it?

- Distance education and open universities have emerged as a dominant factor in higher education. In advanced countries they meet certain categories of educational needs that the conventional system cannot meet. The open universities enjoy parity of esteem with the conventional universities and their role is gradually expanding. In India, as of 1988-89, the enrollment in distance education was 10.3% of the total higher education enrollment[7]. But there are significant variations in the share of distance education enrollment among regions and states. For instance, while the Southern Region accounted for almost one-half of the total distance education enrollment in the country, Tamil Nadu, within the region, claimed over 40% of the region's share. How do we go about removing these regional disparities? Promotion, funding, maintenance of standards and coordination of distance education systems in the country present formidable problems. Some of the correspondence courses are plain substandard and they keep growing. What should be our approach towards setting the standards of distance education and their maintenance, and coordination of the distance education system in the country? Has the academic community a view on the course of development of this system?[8]

One can list many more problems in the field of education and research where the academics as a community could seek solutions to problems and mould policies. We cannot remain either helpless spectators or followers of leadership from outside the academic world all the time. A thought often disturbs me: we have missed some opportunities, we have failed somewhere, but where?

Conclusion

I have been a teacher and a researcher and I continue to regard myself as one even now. The Vice-Chancellorship is a garb that a teacher wears and sartorial changes do not bring about any change in substance. I must also claim that I am proud to be a member of the teaching community. I shall not therefore be a party to anything that will adversely affect the image of the teaching profession. In this discussion, I have endeavoured to do some introspection. It is time we tried to make an objective analysis of the part that we as a community have played: we should understand our strength and weakness and identify the place we occupy in the scheme of things. I might have, in that process, made a wrong judgement; drawn a wrong inference, but I have tried to do as sincere and earnest an analysis as possible. Every profession must look inward: must cultivate the capacity for self-analysis and develop the courage to allow one's conscience to direct its searching light and present its members to themselves as they are. I am inclined to conclude that Academic Leadership has been a missing factor. We must endeavour to build up and provide one. It is both our right and our responsibility.

But are we conscious of our right and responsibility? If yes, can we think of some concrete ways of demonstrating them? Can we think of a few practical steps, even on a modest scale, that would make some contribution to change the present situation in terms of quality?

---

7. In 2000, distance education enrollment accounted for 22.0% of the total enrollment (Eds.)
8. Distance Education Council, established in 1992 under the IGNOU Act, has been assigned the responsibility for promotion and coordination of the distance education and Open University system in India, and is now performing these functions.

9

The Indian Vice-Chancellors

It is a strange phenomenon that when we have a number of authorities in the university system and among them an all powerful Board of Management or Executive Council, the Vice-Chancellor alone is identified with the university. Whether it is the fall of standards of education or poor performance in research or leakage of question papers or unrest on the campus, it is the Vice-Chancellor who is held responsible. Whatever breaks down, the debris falls on his head. There is no job in the country, comparable to that of a Vice-Chancellor whose tenure is so short, whose powers are so limited, whose security is so fragile, whose responsibilities are so diverse and from whom so much is expected; so much is demanded by so many with so little sympathy for his limitations.

Category of Universities

When we look at the changing role of Vice-Chancellors, we have to consider the developments that have taken place in the type and nature of institutions that the Vice-Chancellors are called upon to preside over. The university institutions themselves have gone through a period of evolution. The types of universities that have emerged are:

- Affiliating Universities (1857) based on Sir Wood's Despatch of 1854.
- Affiliating Universities with research and teaching departments based on Indian Universities Act of 1904.
- Unitary Universities based on Sadler Commission Reports of 1916.
- Deemed to be Universities
- Women's Universities
- Open Universities
- Professional Universities (Agriculture, Engineering, Medicine, Veterinary Science and Law)
- Language Universities (Sanskrit, Tamil, Hindi, Urdu, Telugu, and Kannada)
- Private Universities (in the offing)

Perhaps in no other country would one come across such variety and diversity in the university system itself. One could see that there has been, over the years, the emergence of a changing

pattern in the university family itself. We have brought these institutions into existence in such quick succession that we are not even clear about the main objectives of some of them. Their goals are not identical. The funding pattern is different; the target groups they are expected to serve are different. Even the motivation for establishing some of these universities has been different. However, teaching and research are common to all of them.

In this discussion, it may not be possible to consider the case of each category and the role of the Vice-Chancellors in each of them. We may only take note of the fact that, besides the changes in the role of the V.C., there have been vast changes and varieties in the institutions themselves. We may leave out special cases and consider the general university system that has common features.

Appointment of Vice-Chancellors

To begin with, we may consider changes in the method of appointment of Vice-Chancellors. Initially, the Senate, by and large, elected the Vice-Chancellor; a panel of three names used to be sent by the Senate to the Chancellor and he used to appoint one of them. Later came the practice of appointing a Search Committee, which would prepare a panel of names, mostly in alphabetical order, and send it to the Chancellor for making the appointment. The Chancellor in the case of State universities is the Governor; in the case of Central Universities it is sent to the Visitor who is the President of India. Questions have arisen as to whether the Governor, who is a constitutional head of the State, could make the appointment on his own, or he has to act on the advice of the Government concerned. This remains a grey area, and even now, there is difference of opinion; the victims of any disagreement are the institution and the Vice-Chancellor. The Chancellor is important as the head of the institution: the Government is important as the funding agency; also it is the Chief Minister or Minister for Education who represents the university in the legislature and remains accountable to it. There have been increasing cases of difference between the Governor and the Government and it is also part of the changing atmosphere in which the Vice-Chancellor has to function.

Role of Vice-Chancellors

The role of the Vice-Chancellor depends on the functions of the universities. The functions of the universities themselves have been changing in India over the years. In the initial stages, there had been affiliating institutions only. It is only after the Indian University Act of 1904 that teaching and research functions were added. The classical functions of a university were, for a long time, three, namely:

(i) Preservation of knowledge
(ii) Communication of knowledge, and
(iii) Creation of new knowledge.

It was during the second half of this century that the university is thought of as a centre for development and a change agent. A fourth function, namely Extension, has been added.

In recent years, in India and other developing countries as well, students are entering from families that have no background of higher education. Parents and relatives of these first

generation students could not provide them any guidance in their career options or information on the availability of opportunities. The University has to provide counselling and guidance to such students which eventually becomes one of the functions of a University.

A major development in the second half of the 20th century is that in the advanced countries higher education became mass based. The age-group enrolled in higher education in Canada in 1991 was 70%; in the USA (1991) it was 76.2%; in Finland (1992) it was 57.0%; in New Zealand (1992) it was 49.7%[1]. In general in all the countries, there has been an increasing demand on the part of the people for equity. The demand is that educational opportunities that are available must be made accessible to them. This brings in new responsibilities to the universities: responsibilities that must ensure that the university ideals and objectives are implemented in a manner that promotes social justice and equity.

We are in an age of knowledge – the 'Knowledge Era'. We witness rapid developments in the field of knowledge. As a corollary, obsolescence of existing knowledge is fast. Half-life of knowledge is shrinking continuously. Today, all knowledge workers need updating, upgrading and broadening of knowledge. This has cast a new responsibility on the higher education system and the universities have to provide for continuous upgradation of knowledge and its renewal through programmes of continuing education for professionals, working people and other adult learners.

In May 1997, the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance brought out a discussion paper on subsidies. The paper classified Higher Education as a non-merit service; i.e., a service that does not merit subsidies. This trend is noticed in some of the advanced countries like the US, the UK, Australia and others, where gradually students are made to pay the cost of education. This brings about another responsibility for the Vice-Chancellor. Whether students meet full or partial cost, government grants are continuously declining. This situation places a great responsibility on the Vice-Chancellor, that of fund-raising, by no means an easy task even in the best of times in India and in many developing countries.

It is the higher education system today that provides the manpower for top positions in every area of activity. With increasing developmental activities, the universities have to educate and train manpower to meet the social needs. The Governments have started taking greater interest in such training programmes. Welcome though these developments are, difficulties arise when Governments do not differentiate between interest and interference. It then becomes the responsibility of the Vice-Chancellor to protect and preserve the autonomy of the University.

In the last thirty years, we in India have been trying to introduce certain reforms in higher education. They are autonomy for colleges, semester system with continuous internal evaluation, and credit system. We have not so far succeeded in this endeavour. The Vice-Chancellor has to make necessary efforts for getting these reform measures accepted and implemented by the University community. It is evident that without the initiative from the Vice-Chancellor, no academic reform will get implemented.

We have been witnessing an increasing tendency on the part of both the faculty members and students to resort to strikes with a long charter of demands. The agitations tend to become violent. The Vice-Chancellor has to be constantly on the alert, foresee possible trouble and take

---

1. According to the World Bank's World Development Indicators, 2001, the participation of the relevant age group in tertiary education in 1997 was: Canada 88%, USA 81%, Finland 74% and New Zealand 63%. India had a participation of 7% (Eds.)

advance action to prevent all possible disturbances on the campus and maintain peace and a satisfactory working environment.

While the concerns discussed so far have all to do with the internal working of the University, there are significant developments in the external environment as well which no University can ignore. A major development affecting the external environment is the establishment of a large number of regulatory bodies by the Government of India. For instance:

- The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) was made a statutory body in 1987.
- The Indian Medical Council has been vested with enormous powers by an Act of Parliament. Today the permission of the Government of India is essential to establish a medical college; to start a new programme and to increase the admission strength in medical colleges.
- National Council for Teacher Education has been set up with vast powers and universities have to take note of them.
- Agriculture has already been taken out of the purview of general universities.
- Accreditation and Assessment mechanisms have been established (NBA; NAAC) for technical education programmes as well as general education institutions like universities and colleges.

There are overlapping powers between the universities on the one hand and the above mentioned central bodies on the other. There are jurisdictional problems; there are many grey areas. At times one wonders whether the role of the universities has been reduced to prescribing the syllabus and conducting the examinations. The Vice-Chancellor has to maintain a delicate balance between the powers and functions of the university on one side, and the central regulatory bodies on the other.

The role of the Vice-Chancellor has to be considered against the background so far enumerated. The Vice-Chancellor functions as the Chairman of a number of bodies created for the management of the University. They are:

(i) The Senate (abolished in new universities)
(ii) The Academic Council
(iii) The Syndicate or the Executive Council
(iv) The Planning Board (in the case of new universities).

He has the assistance of the Pro-Vice Chancellor(s), the Deans and/or Heads of Departments, the Registrar and Controller of Examinations and the Finance Officer. While the functions and the responsibilities of universities have changed as mentioned earlier, the organizational structure, the composition of the bodies, their powers and functions and the administrative system and its methods, procedures etc. have all remained unchanged. The Vice-Chancellor has the unenviable task of discharging many new responsibilities with the help of old instruments, some of them obsolete, unuseful and unsuited.

The responsibility of the Vice-Chancellor is somewhat unique – very different from that of the Chief Executive of most organizations. The most significant difference is that the Vice-Chancellor combines in him the functions and responsibilities of the academic head of the university as well as that of its administrative head. These two are two different worlds. The culture of one is quite different from that of the other. The qualities, preparation and equipment required for the former are different from those of the latter. If the Vice-Chancellor is to command the respect and acceptance of the academia, he must have scholarly attainments. But

he has also to administer a huge system as any other administrator. He must therefore be a good administrator as well. It is rarely that a single individual combines both these competencies.

Often questions have been raised as to which of the two is more important. It is a difficult question to answer; but if one has to make a choice, it is the academic standing that is more important. The main objective of the university is academic in nature; the atmosphere in the university has to be one of scholarship. Administration is only the means; academic excellence is the end. The head of a university has to be an academic of some standing, if not an outstanding scholar. In some of the universities in Northern Indian states and in some Central Universities where student indiscipline was rampant, where problems of law and order arose frequently, the Government appointed administrators, police officers and even men from defence services. The ultimate finding is that they have not been successful barring one or two exceptions that too in maintaining 'law and order' rather than promoting teaching, scholarship and research. It is my considered opinion that the Vice-Chancellor, therefore, has to be an academic with reasonable administrative competence.

The administrative responsibility of a Vice-Chancellor is extremely complex. It has really been said that no man can serve two masters. The Vice-Chancellor has to satisfy more than one source of power, more than one master. The Chancellor, the Government, the Syndicate, the Senate, the Academic Council, all these are institutions/authorities to which he is responsible. He is the Chairman of the Senate, the Academic Council and the Syndicate/ Board of Management/ Executive Council all of them can take decisions and expect the Vice-Chancellor to implement them. He can also be called upon to answer, to explain either by the Chancellor or the Government, though the Act makes no provision for them to interfere directly in the University's day-to-day administration. The Vice-Chancellor is asked to report even on anonymous petitions.

What powers does the Vice-Chancellor have, to discharge the many functions that I listed earlier? You will be surprised if I say that he has no powers of his own as per the Act. The powers are vested in the respective authorities of the university: mainly in the Executive Council or the Syndicate. Vice-Chancellor's powers are only those delegated to him by them either by statutes or rules or by resolutions of these bodies. In some cases they are liberal in delegating powers; and in some others the bodies expect the Vice-Chancellor to come to them for every thing. Much depends also on the stature of the Vice-Chancellor to command the respect of the members of the authorities, the academia and the students. The real strength is what is inherent in him.

Social Esteem of Vice-Chancellors

What has been the profile of the status of Indian Vice-Chancellors? The developments over the years since independence in 1947 tell a sad story. The status of Vice-Chancellor today is nowhere near what it had been in the days of the British rule. The position of Vice-Chancellor was one of honour and prestige. We may recall the days when persons like Dr R K Shanmugam Chetty, Dr Ashutosh Mukherjee, Dr C P Ramasamy Iyer, Dr S Radhakrishnan, Dr Zakir Hussain, Dr A L Mudaliar, Dr V.K.R.V. Rao and Dr K.N. Raj were Vice-Chancellors. The British had the model of Vice-Chancellors in their own country. Even today, the Vice-Chancellors in the U.K., Australia and Canada, the Rectors in Europe or the Presidents in the U.S.A. are positions of great prestige. Unfortunately, we have progressively devalued the position of the Vice-Chancellor and thereby done great harm to University education and the intellectual environment of our

country. Our political leaders have failed to recognize the basic fact that an institution is as big as its head. Pigmies do not build pyramids. These days, pigmies are often favoured to head universities in India.

In a country like Australia or the U.K. or, for that matter, in any part of the advanced world, the head of a university is held in high esteem and is, for all practical purposes, treated on par with the high court judges. In the U.S.A., and Latin American countries, men and women obtained on contract from the university system hold many high positions in the Government. We know of the U.S. Presidents and persons from very high offices going to universities to lecture and research. India could have accorded a position of importance for grooming talented persons to provide State and national Governments with leaders in science and technology, economics, agriculture, management, foreign affairs and planning and other fields. We have somehow failed to avail ourselves of the fertile soil in the farm of higher education for the preparation of high-level knowledge leadership.

It may appear strange but true that Vice-Chancellor is one of the few positions in our country that has no security of service and he holds office at the pleasure of the Chancellor, in other words, the Government. There have been instances where a number of Vice-Chancellors in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madya Pradesh and Rajasthan have been summarily removed with no notice whatsoever and ad hoc arrangements made for running the universities. There are instances where the Chancellor has issued orders stating that the Vice-Chancellor should obtain his prior permission to move outside the jurisdiction of his university, which is only a few districts in the case of State universities.

Invariably every one who seeks to speak about higher education in India, criticises it, and does so in the strongest possible language. Higher education in this country has been condemned almost uniformly by political leaders, administrators, journalists, parents, and what is worse, by the students and our teachers as well. Surprisingly, political parties which in this country hardly agree on anything among themselves, are unanimous in delivering an adverse and harsh verdict on higher education. Berating it has even become a fashion with many. Every one who passes by an educational institution stops for a while, picks up a stone, hits at it, making an already bleeding institution bleed more and walks ahead with the supreme satisfaction that he/she has made a great contribution to education. It appears that the Vice-Chancellor is the only person who owes responsibility to the huge university system that we have.

Powers of Vice-Chancellors

As mentioned earlier, while the responsibilities are varied and numerous, the powers of a Vice-Chancellor are extremely limited. Whether it is the Senate, Academic Council, or the Syndicate, there are no members chosen or nominated by him. They are there in their own right. The Executive Council or the Syndicate is the real management body. It has members drawn from many sources. Very often there is nothing that binds all the members together; and not surprisingly, many of the members of the managing bodies do not feel themselves as strong stake-holders in the affairs of the universities which they are expected to manage. They do not see the Vice-Chancellor as the first among equals; sometimes, the relations between the Vice-Chancellor and the members of the managing bodies can even turn out to be adversarial. The reasons are many:

- The management team is not chosen by the Vice-Chancellor
- In the case of a corporate body, you will find that the members of the Board of Management are a homogenous group. The members by and large stand by the Chairman. In the case of universities, it is a cabinet that the Vice-Chancellor inherits, not nominates; hardly any one owes any loyalty to him.
- One would expect that a member of the Executive Council will be willing to bear the responsibility for a decision that he advocates. But it is not necessarily the case in the university. A member may plead strongly for increasing the fees for valuation of answer books. Obviously, money has to be found for the additional expenditure: if the Vice-Chancellor suggests increase in examination fees to be paid by the students, the same member will oppose it strongly. He will not consider it his responsibility to suggest viable method of finding funds. It is for the Vice-Chancellor to find ways of raising funds.
- The membership of the Board of Management consists of a heterogeneous group with members having almost opposing convictions and agendas of their own. There may even be persons in the Board who have been unsuccessful aspirants for the position of the Vice-Chancellor and who would not like the incumbent Vice-Chancellor to have a successful tenure. It is, with the help of such groups that he has to take decisions and implement them.
- The Senate and the Academic Council are patterned after the legislature. In many universities you record verbatim the speeches; there is also the question hour and private resolutions. It is a place of interest for the press to report sensational debates and turbulent behaviours.
- Any improvement in academic standards might mean that the teachers learn more and the management improves the infrastructure. There are representatives of both these groups on the Board and both may oppose change. Later, one need not be surprised, if they themselves complain that the standards are low.
- The Board of Management in many universities is an unwieldy body with 20 or more members. The Board of Management of a university like Harvard, which is called a corporation, has only 10 members. Many of the corporate bodies employing thousands of people, and handling crores of rupees have Boards with not more than a dozen members.
- The Finance Committee again is not a body that will help the Vice-Chancellor in finding funds. It will only scrutinize and approve or disapprove of Vice-Chancellor's proposals.
- In general, the composition, powers and functions of these bodies are as decided upon when the responsibilities were very different and very limited. The Vice-Chancellor is obliged to perform a modern job with an ancient tool.

Invariably every one who seeks to speak about higher education in India, criticises it, and does so in the strongest possible language. Higher education in this country has been condemned almost uniformly by political leaders, administrators, journalists, parents, and what is worse, by the students and our teachers as well. Surprisingly, political parties which in this country hardly agree on anything among themselves, are unanimous in delivering an adverse and harsh verdict on higher education. Berating it has even become a fashion with many. Every one who passes by an educational institution stops for a while, picks up a stone, hits at it, making an already bleeding institution bleed more and walks ahead with the supreme satisfaction that he/she has made a great contribution to education. It appears that the Vice-Chancellor is the only person who owes responsibility to the huge university system that we have.

In recent years, the Governments have started reducing the funds for the universities. They insist that the universities should raise funds to meet part of their expenditure, and that universities can no more claim liberal subsidies. The Vice-Chancellors are therefore compelled to look for new sources that could contribute to the University funds. It involves innovative initiative, new activities and newer methods of doing things. All, of course, leading to acceptance of new responsibilities by the Vice-Chancellor, something that the Presidents of the U.S. universities do, but without their status and tenure. The President, Harvard University, is appointed for lifetime. In almost all universities in the west, the university heads are given normally 8-12 years or more to shape and develop the institutions.

Conclusion

The term of office of the Vice-Chancellor in India varies from 3 to 5 years. It is mostly three years in state universities and 5 years in Central universities. The three-year period might possibly have been decided upon when a Vice-Chancellor was expected just to carry on with the administration of an existing system. It coincides with the term of office in civil services where normally an officer is transferred on completion of 3 years in a particular position. When you have planning and development functions, a term of three years is too short. It has to be at least 5 years with no second term or two terms of four years each.

Administration is a tool to serve and enable the smooth progress of efforts to achieve an objective. Consequently, the philosophy behind administration has to be in keeping with the goals of the organization and the nature of the persons involved and activities performed. Administration of a Government department is not similar to administering an industrial venture. Research organizations or academic institutions cannot be governed by the same procedures followed in the Government. Unfortunately, we follow the same system of administration in the universities as in the Government. This is a major weakness inherent in the system. While the administrative responsibilities have considerably changed and increased, the Vice-Chancellor's office and the pattern of its organization remain the same excepting perhaps for horizontal expansion. The preparation of the civil service part of the university is becoming inadequate for the tasks that devolve on the university, and consequently, on the shoulders of the Vice-Chancellor.

While fund-raising is one of the important, if not the major, functions of the Vice-Chancellor, the Finance Officer whose services are normally drawn from the Government is not the person who could help in this effort. He has been trained to follow accounting procedures in incurring expenditure, and earning is not part of his concern; nor is he trained for the task. He could not even participate meaningfully in this effort.

Office administration has seen substantial modernization in recent times, because of the impact of technology. Secretarial approach and procedures are not applicable bodily to academic administration or administration of research. The qualifications prescribed for the Registrar remain almost the same during the course of the century. We have made some half-hearted efforts to provide them some training. It is not easy to change the administration since there are enormous vested interests and any change is always resisted. A Vice-Chancellor with 3 years at his disposal could hardly think of any major reform in the system. From the day he assumes office, he is busy with what may be called fire fighting operations and crisis management. He could hardly think of taking up any major reform. One must also remember that since the days of the Radhakrishnan Commission in 1948 till to day, herculean efforts have been made to bring

about changes in higher education. Some efforts that were made, but did not make any worthwhile impact, include:

- Efforts made to reform the examination system
- Efforts to change the academic year into semester system in universities – only the smaller, and residential universities have adopted this pattern
- Introduction of internal evaluation—no significant progress except unsuccessful attempts to introduce credit system.

The Vice-Chancellors are groaning under the burden of an obsolete system. We are long convinced that these must change: but we do not have the conviction to change it. A Vice Chancellor, in order to be successful, according to Dr Avasthi:

Should have a profound knowledge of the university system, a vision of the academic future, empathy with the members of the university community, a relationship of understanding with the Government, the support of the UGC, cordiality with the community, missionary zeal and a high level of integrity. A Vice- Chancellor should be able to withstand and respond effectively to the influence and pressures of a turbulent environment.

Herman B. Wells, former President of Indiana University has said:

A Vice-Chancellor should be born with the physical strength of a Greek athlete; the cunning of a Machiavelli, the wisdom of a Solomon, the courage of a lion if possible.

It is a strange phenomenon that when we have a number of authorities in the university system and among them an all powerful syndicate/executive council, the Vice-Chancellor alone is identified with the university. Whether it is the fall of standards of education or poor performance in research or leakage of question papers or unrest on the campus, it is the Vice-Chancellor who is responsible. Whatever breaks down, the debris falls on his head. There is no job in the country comparable to that of a Vice-Chancellor, whose tenure is so short, whose powers are so limited, whose security is so fragile, whose responsibilities are so diverse and from whom so much is expected, so much is demanded by so many with so little sympathy for his limitations.

10

Women's Education

Men and women are complementary to each other : together they constitute the whole. I am not a very religious person, nor am I well versed in our philosophical traditions; but I have always wondered at and admired, the concept of 'Ardhanareeswarar' where the spouse of Lord Shiva forms one half of him – not less, not more and not the same half. There can be no greater recognition of the place and role of women than what this concept proclaims.

Introduction

The twentieth century has seen many revolutions: some in parallel, some in series. Besides the breathtaking advances in science and technology, this century has seen a significant civilizing, refining and liberating influence on human life. Besides the political liberation of colonies, there has been social emancipation of disadvantaged groups. The largest disadvantaged group, irrespective of land, religion and language is the women folk, including those in the advanced countries. Women are handicapped in different degrees all over the world. It is claimed by some of our scholars that in ancient India, men and women were equal. This is inferred from the fact that we had in those days poets, philosophers and eminent women. However, since the Christian era, women have been by-and large relegated to a secondary position, mostly inferior position. The 20th century really marks the beginning of the process of educating, developing and empowering women.

Women got their right to vote only in this century: it was in 1920 in the USA; 1928 in the U.K and 1944 in France, the country of Voltaire and Rousseau, the country which stood for liberty, equality and fraternity. It was only in 1971 that women in an advanced country like Switzerland got the right to vote and stand for election.

When it comes to elected Govt. offices even the advanced countries present a very sad picture. Women in political offices constitute only 6.9% in the U.K.: it is 10.8% in France: 7.2% in Singapore and India with 5.8% compares favourably with the advanced countries. The highest is the USA with 33.1%. In general, the journey of women towards liberation and

empowerment truly began in this century only: women have to go a long way to gain equal political, social and economic status.

The consistent efforts taken in this century, to address ourselves to the problem of women can be seen from the number of world conferences organized.

- The United Nations General Assembly declared 1975 as the International Year of Women. In continuation it declared the international women's decade and organized a number of conferences
- 1975 World Conference at Mexico
- 1980 World Conference at Copenhagen
- 1985 World Conference at Nairobi. The Nairobi Conference laid out the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the advancement of women upto 2000 AD
- 1979 U.N Convention on the Elimination of All Types of Discrimination against women
- 1990 World Summit for Children with set goals for health, education and nutrition for Women
- 1995 Fourth World Conference held at Beijing.

There is in the human society, as now organized, an inherent block to women gaining equal status. The human society is hierarchically organized; the relationship is vertical; the ruler and the ruled; the boss and the subordinate; the senior and the junior; the one to order and the other to obey; even among equals one is accepted as more equal than the other. We have not yet developed the rules of the game for two equals to live in harmony. We have well defined tradition for the vertical relationship of unequals; but we have no legacy for the horizontal relationship of equals; it is still in the process of evolution. In those societies where 'the more equal' status of the husband is recognized, either implicitly or explicitly, the family atmosphere is free from tension and there is no breakdown. When women claim that they are equal, it is conceded in principle; not seriously disputed. Equal status for women is granted to them by men folk as a precious possession; it is meant to be cherished and preserved: not intended for routine use: but if they take it seriously, think of, and resort to, practising equality, there appear problems and breaking of families. The large number of divorces in advanced countries, in my opinion, only mark the pangs of transition and the birth of a new social order. It is like dancing or singing together; it needs long practice, understanding and mutual adjustment to attain harmony. In general, the solution to the social, economic and political problems of human society is to be sought through appropriate education.

In the domain of higher education, we do have many women's colleges; but there are not many universities either in India or elsewhere exclusively for women. I was one of the members of the Committee that prepared the report for setting up what is now the Mother Theresa Women's University in Tamil Nadu. One of the subjects debated among the members of the Committee at length was the nature of educational programmes that a women's university should offer and the kind of research it should undertake. The perception of the members was that the women's university, if established, should have educational programmes and research activities that have a unique character and must address to the problems that women as a class face in the present, and envisage the future that the society would like to design and mould for them.

Women's Education

I do not think that we need to spend time stating what is already known about the plight and place of women in the past, or in the present, either in India or in other countries. Their place in the family or in the society has been and is unenviable, rather pathetic. Men have been the law makers, the founders of religions, the arbiters of values and the rulers of the State. Apparently, in many societies, women were assigned the distinguished role of the sole guardians of all traditions and the possessors of all virtues; but this dubious distinction, in practice, resulted in their eternal dependence and loss of dignity, self-esteem and freedom. Even in the most advanced of countries where women are supposed to enjoy equality of status, if you ask a parent, 'given the choice that you have only one child, would you opt for a boy or a girl' a dominant majority will say, 'a boy'. We need to blame no one for that: either by chance or by design, culture, law and religion have over the centuries assigned to, and perpetuated for, women a position which is truly pitiable. I need not give you statistics to show the state of backwardness of women in India. You have them in any document dealing with women; but what seems to be really disturbing is the information given in some of the studies that modernization and mechanization tend to marginalize women in many sectors. One would expect that science and technology will be an agent for redeeming the plight of the distressed and the disadvantaged.

It has to be conceded that since independence, sincere and heroic efforts have been made by political leaders and planners of this country to improve the status of women – economically, culturally, socially and politically. We started initially with welfare measures; by the time we reached VI Plan, we moved from welfare to development and again in VII Plan, we progressed further to the concept of equity and empowerment. There have been many schemes to improve the place and position of women in all respects. There have been committees, working groups and short and long term development plans. In our search for steps and strategies for women's development and empowerment, we arrive at the conclusion that ultimately education holds the key. Saints like Vivekananda and poets like Subramania Bharati have almost a century ago realized it and advocated women's education in the strongest possible terms. Somehow we did not do much in this direction. The 'National Commission on Status of Women' (1975) states:

> ... denial of education and early marriage prevented the development of personality and nationality of women. Stunted and crippled personality affected the harmony of the family atmosphere, weakening the bonds of the family.

When we come to education, the question naturally arises as to what direction women's education should take beyond the general education stage? Is it to be the same as in the case of men? If the answer is 'no' what shall be the difference, either in emphasis or in the area of knowledge? Perhaps, it is here that a women's university has a significant role to play. Many have thought, written and spoken about the problems that humanity in general would face in the coming decades. Three areas, identified as important, are:

(i) Training and retraining of men and women
(ii) Ecology and sustainable development, and
(iii) Role of women.

For our discussion, the role of women is important. Women's education depends on the role

that they should play in a healthy society. It is argued that while we consider economic aspects like manpower development, productivity, rate of return, etc. in the case of men's education, we tend to emphasize home economics and related topics when it comes to women. We do not take a holistic view of the place and role of women in the society.

Development in Harmony with Nature

We need to take a realistic and enlightened view of the issue on hand. After two hundred years of experience in development, based on science and technology, we have come to the conclusion that all our efforts to take advantage of nature's resources have to be in conformity with nature. We must accept the fact that men and women are biologically different and perhaps, women are more basic than men for human progress and survival. There are functions in nature that women have to perform and women alone can perform them. Those very functions confer on them certain privileges and cast on them certain burdens. It is necessary to see how human ingenuity and innovation could ensure that women are truly equal and enjoy the benefits of freedom and dignity, performing at the same time the functions that are theirs not by choice but by nature ordained.

Men and women, no doubt, are equal; born equal and are entitled to live and work as equals; but they are not identical. Their role and responsibility are equally important; but they are not necessarily the same in all respects. One is not a substitute for the other; one cannot be replaced by the other. They are complementary to each other; one is incomplete without the other. They are two sides of the same coin: but different sides.

Equality does not mean that women should match men in muscular strength, physical height or weight. We do not think of striving for a state when men and women run the Olympic race together or fight in the boxing ring as equals. Women do not have to drive trucks and lorries to become equals of men.

Subramanya Bharati was perhaps one of the greatest champions of the cause of women. The women of his concept declare:

We are equal to men in our mental faculties
We shall rule the land
We shall take up making laws.

In the human domain, excellence is the excellence of the mind and excellence in performance, whatever the task; equality is equality of mental faculties. Freedom is a concept; dignity is a concept; self-esteem is a concept. These are matters of the mind rather than of the body. One must therefore look for equality in the world of knowledge, not in dress, not in habits, not in any external manifestation. Women must choose to maintain whatever feminine characteristics and qualities that nature has endowed them with and remain equal with men. They need neither imitate nor copy men.

The 'Sub-committee on Women's Role in Planned Economy' constituted by the National Planning Committee of the Congress Party, formed in 1939, observed as follows:

We do not wish to turn woman into a cheap imitation of man or to render her useless for the great tasks of motherhood and nation building. But in demanding equal status and opportunity, we desire to achieve for women the possibility of development under favourable circumstances

of education and opportunity... we would like to displace the picture so deeply impressed upon the racial imagination of man striding forward to conquer new worlds, woman following wearily behind with a baby in her arms. The picture which we now envisage is that of man and woman, comrades of the road, going forward together....

I mentioned earlier that men and women are complementary to each other: together they constitute the whole. I am not a very religious person, nor am I well versed in our philosophical traditions; but I have always wondered at, and admired, the concept of 'Ardhanareeswarar' where the spouse of Lord Shiva forms one half of him – not less, not more and not the same half. There can be no greater recognition of the place and role of women than what this concept proclaims.

We accept that motherhood is sacred; but it is this sacred responsibility that confines the woman to the home and makes her a dependent individual in comparison with man. The world that we seek to create must be such as to enable women to play their role as mother; bear, bring forth and rear children – and still be able to enjoy economic, social and political equality.

> In the human domain, excellence is the excellence of the mind and excellence in performance, whatever the task; equality is equality of mental faculties. Freedom is a concept; dignity is a concept; self-esteem is a concept. These are matters of the mind rather than of the body. One must therefore look for equality in the world of knowledge, not in dress, not in habits, not in any external manifestation. Women must choose to maintain whatever feminine characteristics and qualities that nature has endowed them with and remain equal with men. They need neither imitate nor copy men.

Women must remain women as nature made them; be proud of their state and claim, assume and enjoy equality of status in the society. Any mature contemplation will reveal that in the complementary role that the woman plays, she is not only one half, but is truly and not formally, the better half.

A survey of the human progress indicates that our society is moving more and more towards a state where emancipation of women from all their bondages is possible. Many speak of God the unknown; man is equally an unknown entity. In this and other statements 'man' includes 'woman'. We know very little of him; very little of his potential. He is like the *Vamana** of the mythology; his dimensions are enormously more than what they seem to be. While he has great achievements to his credit in understanding nature and the external world, his understanding of his own self is very limited. He is really his own puzzle. But one thing is certain: man is a combination of the muscle and the mind. The human progress can possibly be interpreted in terms of the increasing role of the mind in preference to the muscle. We find that there has been over the centuries a continuously increasing dependence on the contributions of the mind; an increasing superiority of the powers of the mind in comparison with those of the muscle. This change is reflected almost in every activity.

If you take the agricultural economy, man depended for his food, shelter and clothing essentially on physical labour. The contributors to creation of wealth were manual workers.

---

* Ardhanareeswarar—a form of Lord Shiva: half female and half male
* Vamana—One of the incarnations of Lord Vishnu in the Hindu Mythology. He appeared dwarfish but grew in size to reach the skies.

Man needed muscle power either of his own species or of animals to get anything done. In the beginning of this century, out of every 20 employees in the USA, 18 were hand-workers; of them more than ten were engaged on the farm. But today out of 20, fewer than five are hand-workers, and of them, not even one is on the farm.

The industrial revolution brought about certain developments which meant a transformation from craft to technology. Industrial development extended and enlarged the muscular strength. It became possible for man to perform, with the help of machines, physical tasks many times more arduous than what he could do otherwise. It was the application of the mind to invent tools that improved the power of the muscle. But still it did not very much help to permit a full manifestation of the power of the mind. Till about the middle of the 20th century, all developments enhanced man's physical capacity. There were and there are many tasks that he could assign to a machine very effectively. But still the work of the mind remained a domain of its own. He could hardly find a tool to enhance or improve its performance. It is with the invention of the computer that it became possible for him to delegate substantial part of his mental efforts to a machine. Since then the contribution of the mind to fulfil his needs underwent a sea change. This is also reflected in the shift in the economy of the world.

The agricultural economy depended on primary sector. The industrial economy in its initial stages depended on the secondary sector. But today, in the information age, we see the emergence of the third sector; i.e. services that occupy a commanding position and offer enormous scope for building the economy of a nation. In the past, marketing meant only marketing of manufactured goods or agricultural products or natural resources. Today a vast market is open for marketing of services and immense opportunities are unfolding. One could perceive in this development enormous job opportunities for women, quite in conformity with their natural abilities and inclinations.

As an example, electronics and information technology offer vast scope and have great potential. We are aware of the emergence of computers as the most versatile modern tool. The software industry offers almost unlimited employment opportunities, especially for women. The world market for software in 1990 was of the order of US$1,33,000 million. The countries that took advantage of this demand are the USA, Japan, the UK, Germany and Italy. They accounted for 78% of the total information technology market in 1990. All other countries accounted for a little over 20%. The software industry in India is growing; but as of 1990, we had a share of less than 0.1% of the world market.

There are today jobs that people abroad can do on part-time basis; or even sitting at home. You get paid for the services you render. Such opportunities may not be available in adequate numbers in India as of today. But the emerging trend is certainly in that direction and the nature of changes is already seen in the horizon.

Conclusion

The job opportunities that have started unfolding, no doubt, need education and training. Fortunately, we see a corresponding revolution in education to cater amply to the emerging needs of training and education. The growth of distance education can answer the need of the hour, particularly the needs of women. It can take education to the homes, offices and factories and can permit people to pursue training/education programmes of their choice, at a pace of their option, with little demand for any dislocation in their life or work. Thus it helps eliminate the traditional barriers standing in the way women's education such as time, place, age, marital and employment status.

All jobs are honourable and they are as good and as prestigious as the economic advantage they offer. No job is superior because men do it and no job is inferior because women do it. The universal yardstick ultimately will be what contribution one makes to the general welfare, development and the health of the society at large. Whether a woman stays at home and makes her contribution or does so in the world of work outside is not so material as the value of her contribution. The following report in the *Time* magazine of 23rd March 1992 is significant:

In 1985 given the choice between having a job or staying home to care for the family 51% of U.S. women preferred to work; by 1991 the number fell to 43%, and 53% said they would rather stay home. It is not a sign of weakness, but of strength: it is saying, 'I have many possibilities and this is just what I prefer'.

Women's studies should therefore concentrate on the nature of opportunities that now emerge for women to prepare themselves for playing an equal role—not necessarily identical role – with men in the affairs of the society. The research studies should consider the areas of disability, the handicaps, the impediments and the prejudices that women face and devise ways of educating and enabling men and women to remove them.

We are aware that the constitution of the country aims at ensuring equality for women. The law does not discriminate against them. All the political parties declare on every platform that they are for the development and empowerment of women. If the actual situation on the ground does not change in accordance with the declared intentions, our failure, as in many other areas, is in implementation. It needs a change in outlook and approach of both men and women. It also needs the preparation of women to be able to claim and maintain an equal status. It will not come to women as a gift. Education truly holds the key for such a change and preparation; science and technology offers the real chance for a life of freedom, dignity and equality for women consistent and in conformity with their biological differences and disposition.

Among the challenges that we face, and the responsibilities that devolve on our shoulders, some are common to both men and women; some are better done by women than by men while some others are better suited to women than to men; there are yet others where it is desirable to let the men do and in all these cases I would like to qualify each statement by the phrase 'predominantly' and not 'exclusively'. Both can teach; both can practise law or medicine; both can administer and manage; but it is better to leave men to do the job of a mine worker and women to dominate nursing than claim an equal share in both. Women need not work in the furnace to claim parity with men; they can better do typing and may even be earning more. They need not drive bulldozers to assert the equality with men; they can operate the telephone and FAX across and within the countries. They may prefer cleaning and sweeping to carrying luggage as porters on railway platforms: what I am trying to drive home is equality of opportunities and equality of status without any disregard to the biological differences.

In the second half of the 20th century, higher education has come into focus. The universities have increased manyfold. Their functions have assumed new dimensions. Initially, they were concerned with scholarly pursuits. Today, they also have to deal with developmental functions. In this the role of women and preparing them for the responsibilities that may devolve on them will be a major task for the universities in general and women's universities in particular. The new challenges that education and research in general and women's education and women's studies in particular will have to face are immense and I am sure women's universities will play a pioneering role in meeting them.

11

Assessment and Accreditation

With increasing globalization, and employment opportunities transcending national boundaries, it is becoming increasingly important that there is a reasonable, well-designed national standard for evaluating the university awards of one country by another. This will also help mobility of students from one university to another, within the country or outside. Accreditation is also a consumer protection measure. Total Quality Management and ISO criteria have come to be applied to the service sector. Education is emerging as a service influenced by market operations, and so, it has to meet quality requirements and expectation of stake holders for its survival.

An Emerging Requirement

The National Policy on Education 1986 proposed many measures to improve the education system in India and towards that end, suggested the establishment of a number of new institutions. Any new development of a major nature in a large system calls for the establishment of new institutional mechanisms and processes for carrying it through. One of the major new initiatives taken really in the field of higher education is assessment and accreditation of academic institutions for quality and relevance. The NPE (1986) and the Programme of Action (1986) recommended that:

> Excellence of institutions of higher education is a function of many aspects; self-evaluation and self-improvement are important among them. If a mechanism is set up which will encourage self-assessment in institutions and also assessment and accreditation by a Council ..., the quality of process, participation, achievement, etc., will be constantly monitored and improved.[1]

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) was established by the UGC under section 12 CCC of the UGC Act in July 1994 in pursuance of the above resolve articulated in the National Policy.

Inaugural Address delivered at the National Seminar organized by the UGC on Assessment and Accreditation of Institutions of Higher Education, at BITS Pilani in Sept. 1998.

1. Programme of Action, National Policy of Education – 1986, MHRD, Dept. of Education, Govt. of India, New Delhi.

Accreditation of either institutions like universities and colleges as a whole, or their departments individually, has its origin in professional fields like Engineering and Technology and that too in a few countries like the USA and Canada. It is still not a widespread practice, but is slowly gaining ground in professional fields. The American Board of Engineering and Technology (ABET) and its predecessor, Engineering Council for Professional Development (ECPD) are pioneering examples in this field. A recent development worth mentioning is the Washington Accord wherein the USA, Canada, the U.K., Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, Hong Kong and South Africa have come to an agreement that they will recognize each other's accrediting processes. The membership of the institution is bound to increase.

I would think that the practice of accreditation in the fields of arts, humanities, and basic sciences is still very limited. However, the process that we have started is an expanding one and the trend is that more countries may adopt it in due course.

Assessment and Accreditation

The question arises as to what we imply by the terms 'assessment' and 'accreditation'. We mean by 'assessment' the evaluation of the performance of an educational institution or its units on the basis of predetermined parameters that are relevant to higher education. 'Accreditation' refers to certification by a relevant Agency, in this case the NAAC, regarding the standing of an institution or its units on the basis of assessment and the certification is for a specified period.

Units for Assessment

The first step in the process is to specify the units for assessment. It may be :

   (i)   an affiliating university and its departments
   (ii) an affiliated or autonomous college
   (iii) a department of the university or college
   (iv) a deemed to be university or its departments
   (v)   a unitary non-affiliating university and/or its departments.

In the case of AICTE, a policy decision was taken to the effect that the National Board of Accreditation (NBA), a parallel body to the NAAC will only take up the accreditation of individual departments whereas the NAAC has taken a decision that it will consider only institutions like universities and colleges, as a whole for the present and take up department-wise review at a later date.

Institutional assessment, as far as the result goes, has one major weakness that it masks the performance of good departments and fails to expose the performance of weak ones. It is realized, no doubt, that the report of the Visiting Committees will contain details, but the result communicated with grades A, B, C, D and E or with stars i.e., stars one to five, is like an average which is not the measure of any single entity and is a fictitious quantity. Any average has the weakness of transforming a spectrum into a single point.

A college perhaps is mostly too small to merit departmental assessment; but in the case of a university, while many parameters are common, what matters is the academic parameters and they are mostly department-specific and grouping them together for performance assessment is

rather unconvincing. It may at the most be acceptable when it comes to a yes or no situation; i.e., accredited or not accredited. But when you resort to grading, averaging all the departments appears unconvincing and also unfair to the departments or units that perform well. Such an average also protects non-performing, undeserving units, which in the long run may turn the performers into non-performers. It will be unacceptable to give 'A' grade to the university as a whole if it has a very weak department and allow that department to bask under the glory of good departments. It will be equally unacceptable to deny A grade to a really good university because of the poor performance of one single department.

It is conceded and appreciated that the philosophy of NAAC is ameliorative and enabling rather than punitive so that all constituencies of institutions of higher learning are enabled to utilize their resources, opportunities and capabilities to the maximum. Nevertheless, once it comes to measuring performance, the average conceals more than what it reveals. It is at least permissible with 'some reservations for a college'; but not quite appropriate for a university. The earlier the NAAC assesses and accredits individual departments of the university in addition to an overall grading, the better it is.

Parameters

The classical functions of a university for long have been three, but in recent decades, a fourth function has been added. They are: preservation of knowledge, communication of knowledge, creation of new knowledge and contribution to development

The first component, i.e., preservation of knowledge is not given the importance that is due. We build our edifice of knowledge over the sub-stratum of what has been contributed by our forefathers and even by the present generation till yesterday. Storing, classifying and retrieving preserved knowledge is an important component of the activity of an institute of higher learning. It is not as though only a university library can do this job. Every college library can gather and store information peculiar to the region where it is located and preserve it. Teaching and learning contribute to communication of knowledge while research contributes to creation of new knowledge. Every institute of education is a resource centre for developmental activities in and around its environment. It must act as a change agent and a source of ideas and ideals to bring about social and economic change. All activities in performing these functions have to be carried out through an appropriate organizational structure with its own administrative system. This aspect must also be identified and assessed.

The ability of an institute of higher education to function effectively depends on the appropriateness of the organizational structure and the efficiency of its performance. Taking all these aspects into account, we may identify the following parameters: since it is the average of the parameters that has to be taken, one has to assign a weightage for each of them. The NAAC has assigned the weightage as given below in Table 1.

It can be seen that a weightage of 0.65 is given to academic aspects and 0.35 is given to administrative aspects irrespective of whether the unit is a university or college. This assignment is reasonable, but yet arbitrary since one cannot conclusively prove that any other ratio like 0.6: 0.4 or 0.7: 0.3 is not appropriate. The weightage given is based on intuitive assessment of relative importance of various parameters. It may be disputed and discussed; but any decision will inevitably have an element of subjectivity influencing it.

The orientation-wise judgment of performance and the weightage to parameters will be used for calculating the composite score as follows:

$$\text{Institutional/Composite score} = \frac{\Sigma\, W_i\, P_i}{\Sigma\, W_i}\ (i = 1, 2 \dots 10)^2$$

where W_i is the weightage of the ith parameter and P_i is the score of the ith parameter. The score will be further used to get the overall grade on a five point scale A to E, with the following values (upper limit exclusive)[3].

A – >= 75	C – 55-65	E < 45
B – 65-75	D – 45-55	

Table 1: NAAC's Parameters for Assessment of Higher Education Institutions

Parameter	Unit of assessment & weightage		
	University	Affiliated colleges	Autonomous colleges
I. Academic			
1. Institutional goals and objectives	05	05	05
2. Curriculum design and review	15	05	15
3. Teaching, learning and evaluation	20	40	30
4. Research and publications	15	05	05
5. Consultancy and extension activities	10	10	10
	65	65	65
II. Administration			
6. Organization and management	10	10	10
7. Infrastructure facilities	07	07	07
8. Support services	06	06	06
9. Student feedback and counselling	07	07	07
10. Generation and management of financial resources	05	05	05
	35	35	35

Studies for Assessment

We have so far discussed the basic formula for assessment. Now we should turn to the question of implementation. Any review that ultimately deals with adequacy or inadequacy of any component needs a yardstick for measurement. Arriving at this yardstick is done by what we call benchmarking which provides, in a way, quantitative standards for comparison.

Benchmarking is an increasingly popular tool in industry. It is measuring a performance against that of the best-in-class organization, determining how the best-in-class achieves those performance levels and using the information as a basis of goals, strategies and implementation. But to transfer this concept to higher education is a formidable issue.

---

2. Parameters for assessment have now been reduced to 7 (Please see Table in the Annexure)
3. The NAAC now uses 'Stars' from 5 to 1.

Activities and achievements in higher education are inextricably governed and controlled by human abilities. The techniques used in industry i.e., the input, the process of manufacture and the output are well defined and can fulfil certain specified quantitative requirements. This will not be possible either in the input i.e., the students or the process of teaching and learning or in the output i.e., the graduating students. The entire industry with regard to its environment, method of functioning and economic aspects could be standardized. This cannot and should not happen in an educational institution. Every institution of higher learning has its own culture and atmosphere which are defined by the community in which it operates, the people who work in it and the students who come to learn. So, when it comes to achieving quality in higher education, we have to:

> Benchmarking is an increasingly popular tool in industry. It is measuring a performance against that of the best-in-class organization, determining how the best-in-class achieves those performance levels and using the information as a basis of goals, strategies and implementation. But to transfer this concept to higher education is a formidable issue.

- Identify each and every facet of functioning of the institution and pick out different processes.
- Define the best and healthiest practices for each of the facets.
- Use these practices as guiding principles for benchmarking.

The ten parameters, that were already mentioned, constitute the facets for establishing healthy practices. The assessment consists of the following steps:

(i) Is there a gap between the performance of the institution and the performance as envisaged by benchmark statements?
(ii) What is the gap? Why is there a gap? Can the gap be bridged?
(iii) Are there potentials for achieving the healthy practices?
(iv) How can potentials be converted into advantages?

Steps in Assessment and Accreditation

The process involves these steps

(i) Preparation of a self-study report by the institution and its submission to NAAC,
(ii) Validation of the report by
    (a) In-house analysis
    (b) Peer team visit to the institution
(iii) Final decision of NAAC based on the report of the peer team.

The most rewarding component in the entire exercise is the self-study. In our existing system, it is rarely that the management and the faculty sit down seriously and carry out a self-study. If the faculty and non-teaching staff and the management representatives sit down calmly and assess the performance of the institution against the ten criteria, it will go a long way towards creating a healthy atmosphere for development.

Each parameter must be examined by an appropriate team and the teams must meet on different occasions to discuss and arrive at a final presentation. The evaluation by the visiting committee is done at two levels. The first, at a comprehensive level, the report will give the overall grade to the institution, clearly indicate whether the institution is functioning in 'quality way' and suggest macro-level remedial strategies to achieve 'quality in functioning'. The second, the parameter level, the report will show the strength and weaknesses as well as suggestions and approaches for achieving the healthy practice under each parameter.

The visiting team will give the overall grade and the qualitative reports.

Communication of the Decision

The Executive Council (EC) of NAAC would review the report. The Chairperson of the team and the Head of the Institution are invited to the EC meeting at which the decision is taken. When an institution gets D or E grade, it will be asked to come forward for accreditation after two years without announcing the results or given the option of withdrawing from the process. The Council will disclose the grades to the public and not the whole report. The report will be given to the institution. The Council will however make a copy of the report available on request to the UGC, the Government and the funding agencies. This is the present position.

I am of the opinion that one could understand the report being made available to the institution and on request to the UGC as well. Any other agency must get the report only from the institution. Only the information on accreditation need be made public. The report is meant only for the institution for taking up remedial measures. The UGC as the apex national body for the maintenance of standards may be given the report and the approval of the institution to do so should not be made mandatory.

Desirability or otherwise of Grading

In countries like the USA and Canada, which have a long tradition of assessment and accreditation the practice is one of declaring that an institution or a department qualifies for accreditation or does not qualify. It means that their main concern is to see whether an institution comes up to the minimum prescribed standard or not. Among the institutions that satisfy the minimum requirement, there will be difference in the quality of performance ranging from satisfactory to excellent. Do we enter into sub-classification of accredited institutions or just leave them as accredited and allow the rest for public judgment? Here we have to consider the dependability of our quantitative measurement. To what level of accuracy can we measure the quality of performance of an institution? A broad decision such as accredited or not accredited does not call for such finer measurement as is expected when you resort to a five point grading. The decision to use five point grading places too much reliance on our categorization of parameters and their measurement by peers.

An accredited institution may continue to maintain the accredited status without any extraordinary effort and with reasonable concern for quality. But for an institution to remain at level A, continuously, demands more than normal exertion. Many institutions that have secured A grade, may not come up for reaccreditation after 5 years and may still continue to use the grade obtained. It may not be a pleasant job for NAAC to go about making public announcements concerning non-renewal of accreditation by such institutions.

Even assuming that gradation is desirable, I would think that we must gain some experience in accreditation procedure and use merely 'yes' or 'no' for some years before we embark on grading.

Accreditation is voluntary. But there must be some incentive for one to seek accreditation. At the same time, I realize that we should not declare that accreditation is optional and try to make it compulsory in reality. A reasonable approach may be to prescribe accreditation as one of the requirements for applying for any special assistance or recognition by the UGC for special support. It may be desirable to examine this issue in some detail and arrive at certain decisions. In the USA, where accreditation is purely voluntary, Federal Government grants are available only to accredited institutions.

Conclusion

With increasing globalization, and employment opportunities transcending national boundaries, it is becoming increasingly important that there is a reasonable, well-designed national standard for evaluating the university awards of one country by another. This will also help mobility of students from one university to another, within the country or outside. Accreditation is also a consumer protection measure. Total Quality Management and ISO criteria have come to be applied to the service sector. Education is emerging as a service influenced by market operations, and so, it has to meet quality requirements and expectation of stake holders for its survival.

ANNEXURE

Weightage and Grades

Present Practice

Taking cognizance of the variance in the type of institutions, the various criteria have been allotted differential weightages. The weightages to be used for calculating the institutional score is given below:

Criteria	University/Deemed University	Affiliated/Constituent college	Autonomous college
Curricular aspects	15	10	15
Teaching-learning and evaluation	25	40	30
Research, consultancy and extension	15	05	10
Infrastructure and learning resources	15	15	15
Student support and progression	10	10	10
Organization and management	10	10	10
Healthy practices	10	10	10

The criterion-wise judgement of the team and the weightage to criteria will be used for calculating the composite score as follows:

$$\text{Institutional score} = \frac{\Sigma\, W_i\, C_i}{\Sigma\, W_i} \quad (i = 1, 2\, ..., 7)$$

where W_i = weightage of the ith criterion and
C_i = score of the ith criterion

The Grade

If the institutional score is 55 % and above, the institution will get the Accredited status and any score less than 55 % will lead to Not Accredited status. The institutional score will further be used to get the grade on a five point scale with the following scale values:

Grade	Institutional score (upper limit exclusive)
A *****	>= 75
A ****	70–75
A ***	65–70
A **	60–65
A *	55–60

The grade will also be supplemented by a qualitative report by the team that would highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the institution under various criteria.

12

The 21st Century: Challenges

In India, the age group in higher education system is around 6.50%. The advanced countries have reached universal primary education, universal secondary education and are moving towards universal higher education – at least some of them. If we are to become a developed nation, the critical mass for the age group in tertiary education has to be much higher than what we have now. Some put it at 40.0%. That may be too ambitious: we must endeavour to bring it at least to 25.0%. We will not be able to achieve it by using conventional methods. We must necessarily opt for alternative methods.

Preparation for the Future

The challenges of the 21st century are in the womb of the future. We may visualise them but still may not clearly see them. But we know fairly well the challenges of the present. Still we have not demonstrated our capacity to shape and mould an educational system that will meet these challenges effectively. The educational scene on the whole is discouraging, disturbing and is causing everyone great concern. I wonder how those of us who have been unable to plan our present and meet the challenges of the immediate future, could consider ourselves competent and qualified to plan for the distant future.

There is, no doubt, an advantage in being futuristic. You can allow your imagination full scope; you may not have to bother about answering any one, if things go wrong. In other words, it is an exercise that can be attempted without any great accountability for the accuracy of the prediction or any great sense of responsibility. Some may even wonder whether our concern for the future in what we call 'futures research', is but a clever device to escape from the very inconvenient realities of the present. However, there is no doubt that in the kind of 'knowledge era' into which humanity has entered, systems have become larger, problems have become complex, changes have become faster, and more than all, solutions to problems have alternatives. The problems of tomorrow cannot be solved on that day; the preparation has to start today.

Futurologists say, or rather claim, that theirs is not an attempt at predicting the future or forecasting the future. They are perhaps afraid that if they use words such as prediction or forecast, they may be construed, or misconstrued, as a new brand of astrologers. 'Futurology'

or 'Futures Research', they claim, aims at choosing among possible alternative futures and shaping it consciously. In a country like India, or for that matter, in any society that relentlessly moves on under the influence of innumerable, ponderable and imponderable forces, how much choice is left to us is a moot question. Anyway, theoretically and philosophically, a choice exists. If we have complete control over our affairs in the present, then we have the possibility to choose and mould our future. If in a society, the present is one of moving from one crisis to the other, the future will be 'what comes' and not 'what was designed'

Scope of the Discussion

It is useful to define the scope of this discussion. Though we use the expression 'Challenges of 21st Century', we have in mind, the beginning of the 21st century and the period immediately after 2001 A.D. Considering the rate at which changes occur, it is clearly not in our capacity to project into, and plan meaningfully for, any period beyond 20 to 25 years.

In the 1880's, the American Press Association made an attempt to visualize the probable developments in the 20th century. They brought together what they considered the best minds at that time to explore the shape of things to come. A brief evaluation of the predictions of the futurists is as follows:

(i) Among the predictions that turned to be true are widespread use of electricity, telephone, the opening of the entire world to trade and the emancipation of women.
(ii) Among the things they failed to foresee are birth control pill and the internet, development of chemical and nuclear weapons and the population explosion.
(iii) The prediction that proved naive is their expectation that people would live up to 150 years.

It is only appropriate that we limit our discussion to, at the most, two decades of the 21st century.

Secondly, we confine our discussion to education in India. Whether we like it or not, challenges that the developed societies face today and may face tomorrow are very different from those that we face in India. The major differences are:

- For the developed countries, the challenge is of educating for a society that is fully literate, whatever the word literacy may mean. In our case, even today, nearly half a century after independence, the problem is one of educating a society that is predominantly illiterate.
- The question before the developed countries is of educating themselves for the knowledge era which is emerging, and which they themselves are shaping. The challenge before us is to fully transform ourselves for an industrial era that dawned nearly 250 years ago and, at the same time, also endeavour to qualify ourselves for participating effectively in the information age.* We are really attempting to simultaneously cover the incomplete part of one epoch and prepare for a new era that has already begun.

---

* Peeping into the 21st century and beyond, the famous physicist Freeman Dyson identified in 1985, genetic engineering, artificial intelligence and space travel as the defining technologies of the future. On the eve of the new millennium he has reassessed his prediction and accordingly written his new tome, 'the Sun, the Genome and the Internet'.

- The issue before the developed nations is predominantly one of preparing themselves to ensure job satisfaction: the issue before us is one of desperately endeavouring to find jobs, irrespective of whether they are satisfactory or not.

The situation represents a wide gap: moreover, and that is worse, the gap is continuously becoming wider. The gap is that of an era between two stages of evolutionary development if we are to reckon the transition in terms of the western model. If we choose a new path, the position may be different. We have not so far chosen any path that is different from the western model.

Growth and Deficiencies

When we review the position in which we are placed today in the field of education, according to one view, two notable developments emerge:

(i) In terms of extending and expanding the educational system that was left behind by the British, we have done reasonably well
(ii) If it is preparing ourselves to usher in an industrial civilization, an industrial economy, nothing that is much better could have been done.

We are told that we started with a society that was massively illiterate: nearly 85% illiteracy. We began with an economic situation with pervasive poverty and an economy that was wholly agricultural. Given our numbers, our level of illiteracy, our level of poverty, and our choice of democracy as the way of life, no nation in history seems to have a better record of performance.

If I sound highly satisfied, complacent and appear to be congratulating ourselves, I would hasten to correct that impression. What I said is an evaluation in terms of one scale of measurement. On the other hand, if we reckon our needs today, and the needs as we foresee for the future, if we assess our present needs and the rate at which we are meeting the felt and identified needs, we see a yawning gap that keeps widening.

Among the systems in our society that face severe criticism and attract dissatisfaction, education seems to stand foremost. We must observe the fact that the politicians, both in position and in opposition, have uniformly condemned the prevailing system of education; the parents and students have expressed unqualified dissatisfaction; and educationists, as is evident from the contents of the successive reports, from the University Education Commission headed by Dr Radhakrishnan, the Secondary Education Commission headed by Dr A.L. Mudaliar, to the Education Commission headed by Dr Kothari, have all pleaded for drastic changes. Curiously, the system has remained the same; what is more significant, it has been expanded substantially, indeed very substantially.

The deficiencies in our educational system, very broadly, are:

- We have, over the years, expanded the system left behind by the British. A national pattern of education to suit our economic, social and cultural requirements has not yet been developed.
- The country still remains predominantly illiterate. We have not so far developed methods that would help spread education among the masses. When we are thinking of educating our people for meeting the challenges of the 21st century, we seem to forget that 'education

follows social change and educational policies and patterns are determined by the overall developmental goals'. ... Educational change cannot be viewed apart from the social, political, economic and cultural goals of the community which it must reflect and serve. The following observation from the UNESCO Report 'Learning To Be: The World of Education Today and Tomorrow, UNESCO, Paris, 1973' deserves mention.

> Any educational policy reflects a country's political options; its traditions and values; and its conception of its future ... Expounding an educational policy is the end result of a process of thought which consists in: a) ensuring that educational objectives comply with overall objectives; b) deducing educational objectives from aims approved in overall political policy; and c) harmonizing educational objectives and those adopted in other sectors of national activity..... We may then move from the policy phase to the strategic phase.... The object of strategy is to transcribe policy into a body of conditional decisions, determining action to be taken in relation to different situations which may arise in the future ... Drawing up a new strategy necessarily presupposes an overall diagnosis of the state of education.

We are still not fully equipped, either in terms of our organization or in terms of the preparation of manpower, for such systematic developments as envisaged by the UNESCO Report.

Need for Training

A massive 80% drop out at different stages of school education. Some kind of vocational orientation for these students to prepare them for life is equally important. It is felt that the work experience programme does not go far enough. The SUPW/WE* programmes may be oriented to give the students an opportunity for acquainting themselves with productive processes.

Even the term 'Vocational Education' at +2 means different things to different people. The NCERT at Delhi has a particular viewpoint. Each State has used its own interpretation of the concept for implementation. It has been my apprehension that there is a set view about this issue in NCERT and an open-minded approach is lacking. Any policy document on vocational education must indicate a broad, flexible framework for vocationalization of higher secondary education. We have the experience of countries like Germany. We may have to see what part of it will be relevant to us and adopt such of those elements that suit us.

In general, we need more opportunities created for skill development and training. We are rich in talent; poor in trained skill. We see exquisite pieces of wood work that qualify to become an enduring piece of art: we also have carpenters who make windows that do not fit and doors that do not close. The former shows the talent available; the latter the poor quality of training.

Skilled workers are important even for high technology. At times we do find that skilled technicians in some jobs are more difficult to get than learned professionals. We have more colleges that prepare candidates for university degrees than institutions that train skilled workers and technicians. Educational Policy may have to take due note of the need for trained manpower development at all levels.

---

* SUPW – Socially Useful Productive Work
 WE – Work Experience.

We must recognize that vocational preparation is relevant not only to higher secondary stage. It must run through, in an appropriate form, the entire educational system covering primary, secondary and tertiary levels. The term vocation needs to be interpreted and used in a wider sense.

It was A.N. Whitehead the great philosopher and mathematician who made the observation:

In the paths ordained by the Gods, he goes farthest whose talents are trained.
. . . In the conditions of modern life, the rule is absolute; the race which does not value trained intelligence is doomed.

We, in India, as a nation have not given due importance to training. We have undervalued it consistently; in the past, it was looked down even in the West as a low level activity not good enough for what they considered a gentleman. The following anecdote may be of interest and relevance:

We know Herbert Hoover, who was the 31st U.S President (1929-33). When he was on a morning walk, long before he became the President, a stranger joined him. They entered into conversation as they walked along. Hoover's new companion was inquisitive and he enquired of him:

Sir, what is your profession?

Hoover replied:

Sir, I am an engineer.

His companion was a little surprised and disappointed; he exclaimed:

Sir, you are an engineer! I thought you were a gentleman.

So, even about the first quarter of the 20th century, engineering was not respectable enough to be practised by a gentleman.

Even now, it is widely believed that training is needed only for handworkers and it is not so relevant to, or necessary for, knowledge workers; nothing could be more fallacious than this concept.

For any development today, we need knowledge and skill. Education in any field involves imparting knowledge and skill; knowledge will be useful to the society only when it is applied. Possession of knowledge by itself does not ensure capacity for its use: it is a necessary condition, but not a sufficient condition. To be able to apply knowledge in any area of activity, one needs appropriate training.

Increase in productivity is achieved by applying knowledge to activities that we are already performing. The following observation by Peter Drucker is significant:

If we apply knowledge to tasks that we already know how to do, we call it 'productivity'. If we apply knowledge to tasks that are new and different, we call it innovation.

Only application of knowledge makes it possible for one to achieve higher productivity or

make an innovation: but application of knowledge requires training. In the past, it took at least 50 years for a country to become developed. In the second half of this century, South Korea took only twenty years to become developed. It is the result of productivity revolution that the U.S.A started towards the end of the 19th century, later adopted by countries in the developing world.

> The following anecdote may be of interest and relevance:
> We know Herbert Hoover, who was the 31st U.S President (1929-33). When he was on a morning walk, long before he became the President, a stranger joined him. They entered into conversation as they walked along. Hoover's new companion was inquisitive and he enquired of him:
>
> Sir, what is your profession?
>
> Hoover replied:
>
> Sir, I am an engineer.
>
> His companion was a little surprised and disappointed; he exclaimed:
>
> Sir, you are an engineer! I thought you were a gentleman.

We have work force engaged in making and moving -manufacturing, farming, mining, construction and transportation – which we refer to as 'handwork': then we have knowledge and service work which may range from the work of research scientist to that of a manager in an establishment, normally designated as 'knowledge work'. We have to increase productivity by applying knowledge to both the areas and this needs both education and training.

The ancient society depended on slow evolution of family tradition for skill development; the Germans invented during the last century the programme of 'Apprenticeship': the invention of 'Training' which helps the development of certain skills in short periods goes to the credit of Americans. It is not as though skill is needed only in vocations like carpentry and blacksmithy; it is equally necessary for carrying out sophisticated research in a laboratory. The curriculum and syllabus of engineering programmes must be analysed and reviewed both for knowledge component and skill component which needs training.

Generation of new knowledge or acquisition of knowledge is important: both happen in a university environment. But knowledge is power only when it is relevant and the possessor of it can apply it. Training for application is an activity that has to take place partly in educational institutions and partly in industries. We must identify what educational institutions can do and incorporate them in our programmes. it is an area of weakness to which we must address ourselves.

Need of Expertise

As a first step, we must realize and accept that planning and management of education must be entrusted to specialists and teachers rather than the generalist administrators who have neither the skill nor the will to innovate. What we need is the development of a new education system.

It needs, not merely administration and management; but innovation, experimentation and development. An administrator, generally, is not an experimenter or an innovator.

We are yet to develop in this country an academic leadership. In the words of Prem Kirpal*:

> The broad and comprehensive education of the emerging future cannot now be the responsibility of the ministries and departments of education and the ruling establishments of universities as they are organized at present.

The emergence of a new national pattern of education needs the wider participation of many wings of the society. What is needed, as a prerequisite for 'Educating for the Challenges of the 21st Century' is a series of measures which should include:

(i) Formulation of a well defined educational policy, which must be national in dimension. Such a policy can be developed from the Kothari Commission's report and NPE 1986.
(ii) Fostering educational leadership that is capable of introducing well thought out steps of development, involving experimentation, innovation and change.
(iii) Ensuring a wider participation of the community in the development of education since 'education is no longer the prerogative of educational authorities alone; nor can the tasks of implementation be the sole responsibility of the educationists'.
   The teachers, students, parents, employers, potential users, social and political scientists, must all be involved effectively in the mission of educational development.
(iv) A plan of action specifying who would do what and when indicating also the resources available for accomplishing each of the specified tasks should be prepared as the guiding principle for initiating, organizing and monitoring performance at all levels. There must be a strong will to transform a system that is now very large and has accumulated tremendous inertia.
(v) It is important that the plan for education and its development also address the crucial issues of:
   a. Content of education, and
   b. Method of education.

The humanity is now entering an era of knowledge. Education has become the tool of development. When the western societies industrialized themselves, the threshold of education needed for one to participate in the process was very low. Today, science and technology has so advanced that a very high level of educational preparation is needed for one to be productively employed. The level of literacy in terms of percentage is still low: even among the literate, many have an educational preparation that is inadequate or inappropriate for the performance of today's jobs.

We face today a necessity where we need both mass education that will ensure basic education for all and also centres of excellence that will provide the highest of education for a few. We need to develop high technology; we also need our crafts which we should modernize as long as they are in vogue and utilize in a manner that our industrial development represents a broad spectrum bordering on modernized craft at one end and computerized modern industries at the

---

* Dr Prem Kirpal was the Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of Education during most of the 1960s.

other. In India, the boeing and the bullock cart must coexist for quite some time to come. Even assuming that we promote appropriate technologies, the productivity of every working individual cannot be increased, unless he or she is educated. The progress we have made in mass literacy is rather modest. With around 17% in 1951, we reached 36% in 1981, averaging an increase of about 6% in literate population every ten years[1]. We cannot afford to follow the same leisurely pace. The problem needs, for its solution, a decisive departure from the current methods that we follow in our education.

Evolution of Education

Methods of formal education have gone through two major stages. We are now at the threshold of the third stage. The earliest method was the *guru-sishya* system where one learned person had a limited number of students and they all learnt at the feet of the master. The schools of Plato and Aristotle in Athens fall under this category. Even today, Bharatanatyam, Carnatic music and certain other art forms are learnt through this method. But one cannot learn medicine, or engineering under one teacher, however gifted the teacher may be. The number needed also is large. So, the system of classroom instruction came into vogue. It served us well so far. But we have reached a stage when an extension and improvement of this system amounting to a new system is needed.

Accelerated growth and rapid obsolescence of knowledge has made continuing education a necessity. The concept of education as an activity confined to the earlier years in the life of an individual is no longer valid. When people engaged in various professions and occupations have to continually update and review their knowledge and skills, it will not be possible to bring them all the time to the classroom in an educational institute. Learning must take place in offices, workshops, factories and residences through appropriate arrangements. Therefore, the spatial restriction of limiting instruction to a classroom and the temporal restriction of confining it to the earlier years such as 6 plus to 23 or 25 are both disappearing. This requires that new technologies, new methods and new materials are used for instruction. Distance education, open and flexible learning and off-campus instruction are some of the emerging areas. These methods will be more in vogue and will become the normal patterns of education in the next twenty years.

In a country like India, there is one more reason for adopting continuing education and distance education methods. Ours is a problem of numbers. It is estimated that by the turn of the century, we may have 120 million children in the age group of 6-14. According to a rough estimate by Dr S.C. Seth*,

> If we follow a conventional teaching method, - a textbook, a teacher, a classroom – we may have to open a school every tenth minute for 250 pupils for the next 20 years. In addition, we have to mount a massive adult education programme to cover the large number of illiterate adults in order that they can participate in the modernization of our economy. We

---

* Dr S.C. Seth was an officer of the Department of Science and Technology in the 1970s and 1980s, and a specialist in Futurology (Eds.).

1. In 2001, 60% mass literacy has been achieved, marking an 8% increase every 10 years for the period 1981–2001.

have to necessarily look for new forms of education. The emphasis has to be on increase in productivity and enlarged flexibility.

With the advent of distance education, technology has entered in a big way into imparting learning. The entry of technology has brought about a number of chain developments as follows:

- Education has become an industry
- Educational materials have become marketable commodities
- Private enterprise has come in to offer educational programmes
- Universities and university level institutions have started exporting their courses by establishing campuses and centres overseas
- Like multinational corporations in industries, multinational universities in education are on the horizon
- The latest development of far-reaching significance are GATS and WTO.

In India, the age group in higher education system is around 6.0%[2]. The advanced countries have reached universal primary education, universal secondary education and are moving towards universal higher education – at least some of them. If we are to become a developed nation, the critical mass for the age group in tertiary education has to be much higher than what we have now. Some put it at 40.0%. That may be too ambitious: we must endeavour to bring it at least to 25.0%. We will not be able to achieve it by using conventional methods. We must necessarily opt for alternative methods.

Distance education has a great potential for high productivity and we must take advantage of it in a big way. Nominal changes and half-hearted reforms will not take us anywhere. We need a total overhaul. As a part of this effort, we need to go beyond the classrooms and use correspondence, radio, television, computer, newspaper and all other available media to spread education.

Conclusion

As we move towards the 21st century, we have to ensure the following.

- We have an economic model for our country that is comprehensively defined, and that should enable us to estimate the manpower needs, ranging from those educated and trained for high technology applications to those to be employed in modernized crafts.
- We have to massively reorganize the content of secondary and tertiary education to give it a national character and make it more relevant to our development needs.
- We must develop and adopt concepts and methods of teaching and learning that will transcend the boundaries of classrooms and educational campuses to enlarge the target groups.
- We must take cognizance of the increased emphasis on and growing demand for equity and accessibility and mould our instruction methods and educational policies accordingly.

With the advent of distance teaching, education has been transformed into an industry. Instruction and instructional materials have become marketable commodities. We must arm our education system to face and benefit by competition.

---

2. The current figure is estimated at 7%.

My Legacy: Measure of My Merit

If an educational institution is a temple, there are two gates that need to be considered and kept sacred—one is the gate through which you admit students and the other through which you admit faculty members to enter and move up. Occasional moments of discouragement and despair are inevitable depending on how close to the set path one would want the system to move: but sincerity, concern and true merit become irresistible and receive acknowledgement. The apathy of the many and the aggression of the few might drive one to wonder whether any struggle for what is right is worth it ; a little staying power certainly brings satisfactory results. Compromises bring short term comfort, but the long term costs are heavy: the choice is a matter of conscience.

Merit of Documentation

I was initially somewhat hesitant, even reluctant, to accept this assignment: however, documentation of the experiences of academic administrators, besides being a pioneering effort, has an intrinsic merit in itself. Universities have been in existence in India, for nearly 140 years: nevertheless, it will not be wrong to say that we do not still know how to manage a university. This was not a major problem till recently: but education being perceived as an investment has brought into focus several economic appeals, accountability of academic institutions as well as their organization and management, on which we do not yet have appreciable literature. The laws of life are derived from the experiences of those who have influenced the course of events, and one may get from a discriminating account of the Vice-Chancellors some insight into the delicate balance that exists or should exist among academic freedom, discipline, autonomy and accountability in higher education.

Having been the Vice-Chancellor of three universities, one different from the other, for nearly 15 years, it is rather difficult for me to make a choice of what is worth recording. I should perhaps focus attention on a few aspects that are of common concern. When I was appointed Vice-Chancellor, Madurai Kamaraj University (March 1978), I was Director of Technical Education, Government of Tamil Nadu, in which capacity I was an Ex-officio Member of the Syndicate (Board of Management), Senate and Academic Council of the University of Madras

and Madurai Kamaraj University. Participation in the deliberations of these bodies for four years gave me an understanding of the academic and non-academic aspects of university administration and the forces, internal and external, that operate and influence the processes of decision making. Since the term of office of a Vice-Chancellor is rather short, mostly three years in state universities, it is desirable that any one chosen for the post has some intimate experience in the functioning of universities. As part of human resource development, university authorities must enable academics with potential for higher responsibilities to serve on university bodies, especially the Board of Management. I should mention here that academic leaders have to be consciously developed: opportunities and environment help the emergence of educationists with competence for planning, decision making and development. We need to pay attention to this aspect since we find today that academic leadership is the desideratum.

A Chancellor's Choice

I took over as Vice-Chancellor in a situation when the then Governor Mr. Prabhudas Patwari refused to accept the preference of the Government and nominated me from the panel to the position in his capacity as Chancellor. The change in my responsibility was in the nature of a sudden development and the assignment was not even remotely in my scheme of possibilities. Though, at 48, I was considered young for the post, I was fortunate to enjoy a reputation for fairness, integrity and good administration. The difference between the Government and the Governor in choosing me did not place me at any disadvantage, though normally it could.

My emphasis has been on clarity about the rules of the game, discipline and development. My relationship with the staff had been excellent: I remained in office for less than a year and the period was perhaps too short for any adverse development. In one of the periodic meetings with the Professors, one of them raised an issue concerning my insistence on punctuality. His view was that strict adherence to office timings is not consistent with the university culture. I informed them that, if one does not leave the department by the clock, one may not have to come to the department by the clock. Academic freedom is intellectual: in physical terms it might be interpreted to mean flexibility consistent with healthy work atmosphere and work culture.

The Madurai-Kamaraj University had nearly 100 affiliated colleges; many of the communications from the University Grants Commission that come to the universities did not reach the colleges; more importantly, proposals received from the colleges for plan assistance and projects were not sent in time to the University Grants Commission. Many colleges were not even aware of the schemes of assistance available. We constituted for the first time an institution by the name, College Development Council consisting of principals of colleges as members for periodic discussions on development and created the post of Dean, College Development Council. Similarly, for the university departments, we created the post of a Special Officer for Research and Development. Each of them was given a compact office; the colleges and university departments had to deal only with these two academics for all developmental purposes. They were authorized to deal with the funding agencies, the colleges and university departments directly; even the Vice-Chancellor's approval was to be obtained only in very few cases. I should say to the credit of the Council and the Dean that Madurai Kamaraj University was among the few that made optimum use of the University Grants Commission programmes. My belief has always been that, if you want to achieve results that have not so far been achieved, you must create institutions that have not so far been created.

Autonomy has been an area of abiding interest for me; I believe that it is one of the most wholesome reforms recommended by the Education Commission (1966). The initial steps in this regard were taken by my predecessor; I pursued and implemented the scheme in four colleges in 1978-79. With four others in the University of Madras, these eight constituted the first set of colleges to be granted autonomy in the country. Tamil Nadu leads in the number of autonomous colleges; the initiative and momentum came from Dr Malcom S. Adiseshiah who was the Vice-Chancellor of Madras University at that time.

There are many events and moments that I recollect from my short stint at Madurai. I tried to visit as many affiliated colleges as possible; during one of the visits, it so happened that the students were on strike with a long charter of demands. While going round the campus, I saw a board put up by them. It read:

Teachers! Administrators! Political Leaders and Parents! Please consult your conscience and tell us: are you qualified to advise us?

In my career as a teacher, I have answered many questions from the students: to this question, I did not have an answer then: I do not have an answer now. However, it is clear that even two decades back from now, we ceased to be role models for them.

A few months after my taking over, the convocation was due. I was thinking of recommending to the Syndicate two among the three scholars, whose names I must mention, for the conferment of Honorary Doctorate. They were Thiru K.V. Jagannathan, Thiru Avvai Duraisamy Pillai and Thiru M. P. Thooran . The first two were scholars of great eminence and the third, a writer and a poet who made a monumental contribution by editing 10 volumes of General Encyclopedia and 10 volumes of Children's Encyclopedia in Tamil. A suggestion came that I might include a particular political leader who certainly deserved the honour. However, I strongly felt that Universities, in the normal course, should avoid conferring Honorary Doctorates on politicians in power. I gave up the idea of recommending Honorary Doctorate for any one that year. In my 15-year period, in 15 convocations, no political leader was conferred Honorary Doctorate: among others, the Honorary Doctorates numbered only six. I strongly feel that universities should not make the conferment of Honorary Doctorates a matter of routine or a strategy for conferring or seeking favours.

Choice for Economic Strength

Before I completed the first year, I got an offer from the UNESCO as expert in Hydraulics and Hydrology at the University of Moratuwa, Colombo. It was for me a great problem to decide whether or not to take it. Problems of life are problems of choice: it makes or mars one's career. I decided after due consideration and consultation to take up the UNESCO assignment. The final decision was based on my assessment that one could function in this country with independence and dignity in a position of responsibility and authority only if one is certain that if he vacates the chair, the problem of basic needs will not stare at his face. It is often the compulsions of minimum needs that deny man divinity and drag him down to a mundane living being. The 30-month assignment at Colombo would leave me with enough savings to meet my needs which anyway are modest; I would truly be economically independent. I took leave at an affectionate farewell organized by the citizens of Madurai and spent $2^1/_2$ years again teaching and building a postgraduate programme in Hydrology at Moratuwa.

Sense of Indebtedness

At the end of my term at Colombo, I got another assignment at Jakarta: I was strongly advised to take it since I would become eligible for UNESCO pension if I completed 5 years. Tempting though it was, I did not take it and returned to India, and after a brief interval, was offered the post of Vice-Chancellor, Anna University. I was, in general, never attracted by any assignment abroad. I could derive no satisfaction whatsoever, serving any country, any society to which I have no obligation and to which I have no attachment. Short assignments in terms of weeks are welcome for new experiences; but service abroad was never in my scheme. Colombo was an exception.

Ambitions: Accomplishments

My term at Anna University was about the longest: three consecutive terms of three years each. Just before completing the third term, I was appointed Vice-Chancellor, Indira Gandhi National Open University and I moved to Delhi.

As Director of Technical Education, Tamil Nadu, I played a significant role in the formulation of proposals and submitted one after another alternative proposals for the establishment of what is now known as Anna University. As Vice-Chancellor, I moved into an institution where I had worked and which I later administered. The University was named by the Government as *Perarignar Anna University of Technology*. Since the name was too long and *Perarignar* is a word somewhat difficult to pronounce, it was shortened to 'PAUT' in all press reports and also by the public. Anna, after whom it was named, did not find mention in any media. For a University to get recognition, one should first be able to pronounce its name. The name itself should not become a matter for formidable exercise. With some difficulty and some effort, I convinced the Chief Minister that if the purpose of naming it after Anna was to commemorate Anna, the University should be simply named Anna University: no one would abridge it. The Act was amended very much to the surprise of many and the name was changed to Anna University — now perhaps the shortest and simplest name for any university in Tamil Nadu. This set the model later for Bharathiar University and Bharathidasan University. No prefix was added to the names of the poets, after whom these universities were named. In general, Governments should avoid long names. If we are really naming a university after a person worthy of it, the last name should be adequate in most cases. Ambedkar University is much more elegant than Dr B.R Ambedkar University.

Another step I took could be considered controversial. The Syndicate (i.e., Board of Management) had two staff members elected from among the faculty. We need to have faculty representation on the Syndicate; but election should not be the means of choice. Election, whatever be the constituency and whoever the electorate, brings in all the bad elements that we witness in the world of politics. The right men do not contest; the royal route is never followed; divisive forces dominate; the atmosphere is never healthy. It need not and may not necessarily be so for ever: but the present environment is not conducive to any positive contribution. Therefore, proposals were submitted to the Government for amending the Act to provide for the nomination of one Professor, one Assistant Professor and one Lecturer by the Vice-Chancellor by rotation based on seniority. The staff members nominated are not obliged to any of their colleagues or to the Vice-Chancellor and could function really independently. It is somewhat

unfortunate that a belief has taken root that for any one to represent the employees, he must be anti-establishment. The teachers are the university and there is no management separate from them: their future is inextricably bound up with the future of the institutions: sadly, this is hardly recognized. Naturally, the amendment was termed reversal of democracy, anti-teacher and came in for inevitable criticism. But the system worked very well and no legitimate interest of the faculty suffered.

The student election was an event of great excitement; huge expenditure; occasional conflicts, and left behind two camps with a bitterness lingering long after the event was over. Our country being what it is, caste played a greater role than cause or conviction. Direct election of president, secretary and office-bearers at the College of Engineering, Anna University was abolished. Representatives were elected from each class, and from among them, the president, secretary and office-bearers were elected, subject to the condition that the president came from the final year, the secretary from the pre-final year and members from different branches of study. The system in the case of the faculty representation and the student association worked well, and during the entire period, the University did not lose a single working day due to student or staff strike.

When I took over as Vice-Chancellor of Anna University, there was a strike already going on, somewhat peculiar in character. A minority group of the non-teaching staff used to assemble, demonstrate and shout slogans in front of the Vice-Chancellor's office during the lunch interval every day. Efforts were made to reason, negotiate and persuade. When everything failed, and there was enough dissatisfaction among the rest of the community in the university over the determined perpetration of an agitation with demands that were utopian and meant only to help the survival of a few in leadership position, the University took steps to bring normalcy resorting to administrative measures. The leaders were suspended; a High Court injunction was obtained prohibiting the demonstration within a specified distance from the institution; when this was violated, the police arrested all the law-breakers and the Government took a firm stand on the bail issue and detained them. A prolonged agitation was brought to an end with the termination of the services of a number of temporary employees – a course of action resorted to very reluctantly and with a sense of sadness, but as an inevitable part of one's responsibility when a few have to be effectively prevented from hurting the many; goodness, after all, is not just harmlessness or being good to everybody; goodness demands fighting evil as well. The non-teaching staff associations in general maintained an excellent relationship with the management, which again took many steps to promote their welfare, including forming Co-operative Housing Societies, providing loans and buying land for their housing.

At the time I left, Anna University had a student strength of 5000, the largest University in Engineering and Technology in the country, and offering 20 undergraduate programmes, again the largest in options for the bachelor's degree, and 40 postgraduate degree and diploma programmes. The University followed a system of internal evaluation, excepting that some of the question papers for undergraduate courses were set outside. Whatever be the merit of complete internal evaluation, it lacks the component of peer assessment of the standard of questions, the coverage of the curriculum and the rigour of evaluation of answer scripts. We introduced a system of 'academic audit' which permits senior academics from outside to review every aspect of the evaluation process and record their impression of the standard as evidenced from the material placed before them. This procedure for an assessment of the quality of evaluation is practised in certain countries abroad; but we do not have anything comparable. Auditing is but a review whether the resources provided have been properly utilized to achieve

a set objective; with certain modifications, it could be used in the academic domain too. The Anna University experience, in the first year of its introduction, was satisfactory. I left the University thereafter.

As mentioned earlier, my main emphasis has always been on development. In every meeting of the Syndicate, the first regular item on the agenda after confirmation of the Minutes and action taken, used to be Vice-Chancellor's Report on Planning and Development. We created in the office of the Vice-Chancellor a post of Special Officer who was an academic to deal with proposals submitted to funding agencies and a post of Dean of Planning and Development for the preparation of development plans for the respective Plan periods; evolving implementation strategies; periodic review of progress and report to the Vice-Chancellor and the Syndicate. In general, the routine establishment in our universities is not adequate for planning and developmental activities. A number of Centres for higher level research or application of high technology were established. The Institute of Remote Sensing; Crystal Growth Centre; Centre for Bio-Technology; Centre for Human Settlement; Ocean Resource Development Centre; Centre for Renewable and Non-conventional Energy are among them. The Crystal Growth Centre blossomed into UGC-Anna University Inter-University Facility. The already existing Centre for Water Resources and the Centre for Environmental Studies were strengthened substantially. Among the many new programmes established, mention must be made of B.E in Printing Technology; B.Tech. in Plastics and Rubber Technology, B.Tech in Mining and M.Tech. in Footwear Design and Manufacture.

Science City

Anna University is located in an area that has an unusual congregation of institutions in science and technology, engaged in education and research. Perhaps this may be the biggest complex of science and technology institutions representing the largest congregation of academics and researchers in one part of a city. But still, Madras lacked decent facilities for international conferences and exhibitions. I submitted in 1989 a proposal for the establishment of a Science City which would have, besides the numerous institutions, an international conference and exhibition complex which may be developed and administered as an autonomous unit by Anna University, Government of Tamil Nadu and industries of the State. Very recently, the Government have set up a Science City with a city authority, very different from what I contemplated; other details are yet to unfold.

Club of Madras

Another attempt made, with Anna University as the base, was to establish a Club of Madras on the lines of 'Club of Rome'. A meeting was held under the chairmanship of C. Subramaniam, former Union Minister. Some of the tallest of men in the city were invited to attend. Somehow, the direction the discussion took and the views expressed by many as to what the club could and should do, did not encourage me to pursue the project.

Entrance Examination

In Tamil Nadu, admission to degree programmes in Engineering, Medicine and Agriculture

used to be made after +2 on the basis of the marks obtained and position secured in the rank list, in the following:

(i) Relevant subjects in +2 examinations
(ii) Personal interview for aptitude, conducted by a duly appointed committee for each branch.

There used to be widespread criticism against the performance of, especially, the committee in medicine and there were persistent charges of corruption and favouritism. The Chief Minister called for a meeting of the cabinet to discuss alternatives. Besides the Secretaries concerned, I was one of the invitees to attend the meeting. The discussion centred on introduction of entrance examinations. The opinion was divided among the ministers. Many were of the view that personal interview would help identify the socially and educationally disadvantaged. That they were already provided for by reservation of seats is another matter. I argued that from every point of view, including social justice, entrance examinations would be desirable. The socially backward candidates would write whatever they knew in the examination hall: but they hardly open their mouth and answer with confidence in an interview in the imposing presence of a committee. Also pressures on and recommendations to, the committee came only in favour of the privileged. I argued therefore that, if anything, the entrance examination, besides eliminating arbitrariness, would only be to the advantage of the backward class students. The Chief Minister ultimately decided in favour of entrance examination; he went a step further and announced that Vice-Chancellor, Anna University, would organize the examinations for all the branches and announce the results. The entrance examination was termed anti-backward classes by the opposition parties and they condemned it and strongly protested against it. A few of them identified me with the Government and dragged my name into the controversy. The question papers were despatched and examinations were conducted with police protection. The results of the examinations proved that all the fears expressed were unfounded: the entrance examinations have become the main yardstick since 1985, the year of introduction. Every political party that came to power later in the state has been following it. The main issue has been the change from personal interview to written examinations.

Member, UGC

During my Vice-Chancellorship of Anna University, I was nominated by the Ministry of Human Resource Development as Member, UGC, for two consecutive terms. In the Commission, besides other things, my consistent plea had been for: decentralization in general, promotion of autonomy for the colleges, creating a State Council for Higher Education in each state and establishment of regional offices for the UGC.

The Govt. of India under the Prime Ministership of Rajiv Gandhi decided to bring out a National Policy on Education. The Government requested individuals and institutions interested in education to submit proposals for consideration. The UGC was requested to make its recommendations. The UGC formed a high power Committee under the Chairmanship of Prof. Rais Ahmed, the then Vice-Chairman of the UGC. I was one of the members of the Committee. I moved the following resolutions in one of the meetings:

(i) A State Council for Higher Education must be established in each state

(ii) Regional Offices must be established for the UGC

(iii) At least 10% of the affiliated colleges must be given autonomy during the VII Plan period

After some discussion, though a few strongly opposed the formation of regional offices, all the three proposals were accepted and incorporated in the report. It may be a coincidence or may be due to the prestige of the UGC that the recommendations on State Council and autonomy for 10% of the colleges were accepted and incorporated in the National Policy, Programme of Action, 1986.

Membership in Tamil Nadu Planning Commission

During my Vice-Chancellorship of Anna University, I was appointed a Part-time Member of the State Planning Commission by the Govt. of Tamil Nadu (1982) and was reappointed for another term (1989) when there was a change in the Government. It may be mentioned that I was acceptable to both the political parties. During my membership in the Planning Commission, I informed the Members that the Minister for Planning, Govt. of India, in the early 70s had written to the Chief Ministers of all the State Governments suggesting to them to establish a Department of Science and Technology in the Secretariat of the State Government. While it had been done in many states, Tamil Nadu had not acted on it. I stressed the importance of setting up a full-fledged Department of Science and Technology, considering the dominant role of technology in development. The then Chairman constituted a Committee of the Planning Commission under his own chairmanship and I was one of the Members. The Committee recommended strongly the creation of a Department of Science and Technology. The recommendation was accepted, acted upon and a department was created in the secretariat with an IAS officer as secretary. Anna University lent the services of a senior professor for appointment as Special Officer. It was no doubt a good beginning.

The Govt. of India under the Prime Ministership of Rajiv Gandhi decided to bring out a National Policy on Education. The Govt. requested individuals and institutions interested in education to submit proposals for consideration. The UGC was requested to make its recommendations. The UGC formed a high power Committee under the Chairmanship of Prof. Rais Ahmed, the then Vice-Chairman of the UGC. I was one of the members of the Committee. I moved the following resolutions in one of the meetings:

(i) A State Council for Higher Education must be established in each state

(ii) Regional Offices must be established for the UGC

(iii) At least 10% of the affiliated colleges must be given autonomy during the VII Plan period

After some discussion, though a few strongly opposed the formation of Regional Offices, all the three proposals were accepted and incorporated in the report. It may be a coincidence or may be due to the prestige of the UGC that the recommendations on State Council and autonomy for 10% of the colleges were accepted and incorporated in the National Policy, 1986.

Another body by the name, Tamil Nadu State Council for Science and Technology was also created to work under this department. However, a decision was taken after a few years to merge the Department of Science and Technology with the Department of Education which was renamed as Department of Education, Science and Technology. While the name of Science and Technology survived, the department itself ceased to exist for all practical purposes. It was certainly a sad end. However, the Tamil Nadu Council for Science and Technology continues and is performing well.

An Ambition Unsupported

An area of my failure deserves mention. The pay scales of teachers were revised in 1973-74. Thereafter, for a record period of 12 years, nothing was done. The second revision was announced with effect from 1.1.1986. A number of posts in Anna University were lying vacant. I did not advertise them, initially awaiting the revision of pay scales and later, awaiting its acceptance and implementation by the State Government. The rationale for my delaying the recruitment was that we would get better candidates if we advertised with the revised pay scales. But this resulted in some of the deserving candidates among the existing faculty who could have got selected to the next higher position, stagnating since no recruitment was made for sometime. This created legitimate resentment and frustration.

Secondly, the AICTE announced one set of pay scales and qualifications for IITs and another for colleges and engineering universities. The prescribed qualification was reduced from Ph.D., to M.E., for Assistant Professors and from M.E., to B.E., for Lecturers in the case of colleges and engineering universities. It may be mentioned incidentally that I was a member of the AICTE pay committee under the chairmanship of R.N. Dogra and I resigned my membership on the issue of differential pay scales for IITs and engineering universities. Anna University which was on a par with IIT in scales of pay and qualifications got suddenly downgraded. I was representing to the Government that Anna University must be treated on a par with IIT and the qualifications and pay scales must be the same as in IIT. Some staff members spread the news that the Vice-Chancellor was recommending higher qualifications than what has been recommended by the AICTE for universities. They were not aware of the full proposal and even if they were, they would still be angry and unhappy that an advantage conferred on less qualified persons by the AICTE itself, was sought to be denied by the Vice-Chancellor. The Vice-Chancellor's ambition that Anna University must be on a par with IIT was of no great consequence to them. I realized that the Government in the Secretariat informed the teachers that they could not help them since the Vice-Chancellor insisted on higher qualification. I could gauge a genuine grievance and resentment. I could not, in the given situation, pursue my demand for parity with IIT, in pay and qualification, and agreed to the implementation of the pay scale with the revised qualification, after a long discussion with the Association, but still with the proviso that it would apply only to those already in service on a specified date and candidates from outside should meet the qualification requirement in vogue i.e., Ph.D. for an Assistant Professor and M.E. for a Lecturer. Roorke University[1] stood the ground and maintains today parity with IITs. Emotionally it was impossible for me to accept a second position in the hierarchy for Anna University, but one could do very little when both the Government and the community of staff were hardly exercised

---

1. Roorke University has been declared an IIT in 2001.

over it and the benefits of possible promotion for a few overwhelmed all other considerations. The lesson, however, is that whatever you may do to build up the infrastructure, tradition and reputation of an institution, the staff members would also ask the question, 'what has he done for us?' If you do not have a claim for positive response, it will detract from any recognition you may deserve for the contributions made, however impressive they may be. Whether one is an ordinary member of the public, or a community of scholars, the core running through the yardstick is the same.

Offer from Delhi

As my third term was nearing its end, I was preparing to settle down not in retirement, but in a life of freedom to do all that was close to my heart. A salaried job, however good, is a kind of bondage and somewhere in my sub-conscious self, I have always been longing for liberation. This cry for freedom was so private that only I could hear; neither the members of my family nor my relatives and friends. While I had been shouldering with full involvement the responsibilities that were assigned, many thought that I was enjoying the position. Power and authority are not endearing but alienating factors in the hands of a person who can neither favour nor patronize. It was at this stage that I received a phone call from the Secretary, Ministry of Human Resource Development, asking for my willingness to accept the post of Vice-Chancellor, Indira Gandhi National Open University. While I was aware that my name was in the panel, I did not seriously think that I had much of a chance against those in position in Delhi who might be aspirants for the post: nor was I very enthusiastic about moving to Delhi at the end of my career; however, the offer came, and I accepted.

An open university is a system of education that is still in its early stages and needs experiments, innovation and decision-making almost at every stage. We refer to it as a university; but while the conventional universities have an academic sub-system and an administrative sub-system, an open university has one more component—an industrial sub-system. The conventional universities with two components are complex enough; the addition of a third component—a vital one—converts it into a hybrid system lying somewhere between an industry and an academic institution. A balance between the conflicting demands has not been found yet. While this being so, IGNOU has an additional dimension: it is a parallel organization to the UGC insofar as distance education systems in India are concerned. IGNOU has the mandate for coordination and determination of standards. This is a model that does not exist anywhere in the world. The success of IGNOU will be the success of a new mode of education and the success of a new experiment in coordination and determination of standards in distance education. Its failure has implications and consequences far beyond its own future. I could in a short time comprehend the dimensions of the assignment and to the extent it lay within my power, I took it as a mission and regulated my role as an academic and administrative head. The founders have laid a base broad and strong: the superstructure was contemplated to be moulded after the U.K. Open University with necessary modifications. The modifications are such as to substantially change the model itself to suit the Indian environment as well as needs and dimensions of the target groups in India.

It is a large system but fully dependent on the efficiency and cooperation of a number of other agencies and numerous individuals over whom the institution has no control: suffice it to say that the variables are too many: the interaction among them is too difficult to be regulated; the dependence on others for services, infrastructure and support is too much—but inevitable.

The expectations of the academics concerning academic freedom, autonomy, opportunities for research on the one side and the industrial demands on the other could be reconciled only with great difficulty. The academics in the regional centres who are referred to as other academics in the sense that they are academics other than teachers could neither be treated on a par with teachers nor could they be considered as administrators. The intermediate position of a cadre having both academic and administrative responsibilities had to be established. It is new and unique to the distance education system.

It is generally believed and mostly true that democratization leads to dilution of quality; large numbers tend to bring down standards; excellence is an elitist virtue; in a modest way, we in IGNOU proved these postulates or popular beliefs wrong by claiming from the Commonwealth of Learning its recognition for IGNOU as a Centre of Excellence in Distance Education. I am aware that it has a long way to go to claim this credit for all its programmes; certainly it has demonstrated that quality is what an institution aims at, strives for and maintains and it is not inherent in any particular system—organizational or administrative.

Among the major developments in IGNOU, that we had been able to bring into existence during my tenure are:

(i) Telecast of IGNOU lessons nationwide from Delhi for three days a week.

(ii) Distance Education Council (DEC) to perform the apex role assigned to IGNOU, with regard to coordination and determination of standards.

(iii) Staff Training and Research Institute for Distance Education (STRIDE) to develop the manpower in the field of Distance Education for India and eventually for the developing countries in the region and beyond.

(iv) An extremely modern facility for audio-video production with building and equipment costing Rs. 48 crores provided by Japan as a grant.

(v) Approval of Master Plan and development of the permanent campus with the construction of over 264 quarters as the first phase as part of a campus development programme costing about Rs. 45 crores.

(vi) Establishment of a one-way video, two-way audio teleconferencing system as an ISRO-IGNOU joint project with a transponder in the satellite allotted for the purpose.

(vii) Establishment of the Commonwealth Education Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) with IGNOU as Headquarters.

(viii) Founding the Indian Journal of Open Learning to serve as a means of promoting research in distance education in India and disseminating Indian experience worldwide.

(ix) Framing service rules for most of the cadres, drawing up financial code and establishment of a cadre for Regional Services.

There are a few aspects of my approach and value system that created situations warranting my having to displease or antagonize the staff who were otherwise friendly, respectful and appreciative. I tend to totally identify myself with the institution and hence find myself unable even to place before the Board of Management proposals that in my judgement would harm the institution. Many in position would have thought it prudent to leave it to the Board of Management to reject the proposal. I should cite two demands of the Teachers' Association:

(i) Election of two representatives of teachers and other academics to the Board of Management in place of nomination by the Vice-Chancellor.

(ii) Appointment of Heads of Schools by rotation.

I have expressed even earlier my view concerning election of representatives. Coming to nomination of Heads of Schools by rotation, it is my considered view that nomination of Heads of Schools mechanically by rotation has completely reduced the effectiveness of the incumbent, and done great harm to the university system. Irrespective of its merits in the conventional universities, it is wholly unsuitable to IGNOU, considering the vital role of the Head of a School. Consequently, I could not go along with the Association. Secondly, I tend to stand by those I consider hard working and meritorious, even when I perceive that they have, for reasons unacademic and inconsequential, incurred the hostility of a section of influential colleagues. I have consistently stood by the hardworking and meritorious, in every institution though I know fully well that concerted tirade, aloud or in whispers, would give an air of acceptability to adverse allegations against the Vice-Chancellor and they might detract from the standing that the Vice-Chancellor may enjoy. It has been my considered view and unwavering conviction that an administration worth its name should stand by sincere and loyal workers.

During my term at IGNOU, I considered it desirable to monitor in whatever manner possible, my standing in the eyes of my senior colleagues in terms of their evaluation on a four point scale. I adopted from the world of management an instrument of evaluation consisting of 14 parameters, such as: Accessibility, Fairness, Receptivity, Innovativeness, Ability to Lead, etc., and arranged for an annual evaluation on a four point scale: Very Good [A], Good [B], Adequate [C], Needs Improvement [D]. The evaluation was done at the end of each financial year on a strictly anonymous and confidential basis. Giving a weightage of 4, 3, 2 & 1 for the grades, A, B, C, D, the Grade Point Average (GPA) obtained from the ratings of 19 Heads of Departments/Schools/Divisions/offices, answering against 14 characteristics, over a period of four years is 3.68. The average of all the 19, against each aspect in each year is given in Annexure.

Conclusion

As I look back and see before my mind's eye the events of nearly 15 years as Vice-Chancellor, I could say that I was fortunate to have enjoyed uniformly the goodwill and support of the Chancellors as well as the Governments besides of course my colleagues. In Tamil Nadu, I served under the Governments of two major but mutually very hostile, political parties and also under President's rule. Strange though it may sound, I have had no major complaints of political interference or intervention. The Delhi atmosphere was somewhat different: the sad aspect is the readiness on the part of major newspapers – especially the local language papers –to accept planting of damaging news items which are contrary to facts, without any attempt at verification. Anything that is anti-establishment is welcome and it is supposed to represent progressive forces; the ease with which M.Ps can be persuaded to ask questions which are reflections on defenceless individuals, in responsible positions, astonishes and leaves one sad. One sees the emergence of a culture in which condemnation by itself is paraded as contribution.

If an educational institution is a temple, there are two gates that need to be considered and kept sacred—one is the gate through which you admit students and the other through which you admit faculty members to enter and move up. Based on my experience, both as a teacher and an academic administrator, it is my considered view that the students, whatever be their background, love and respect teachers who are good at teaching and have concern for the students. It is necessary that a teacher must love his students. If he finds, for any reason, he is not able to develop affection and concern for the student community, he must change his attitude. If he finds it difficult to change his attitude, he must necessarily change his job.

Occasional moments of discouragement and despair are inevitable depending on how close to the set path one would want the system to move: but sincerity, concern and true merit become irresistible and receive acknowledgement. The apathy of the many and the aggression of the few might drive one to wonder whether any struggle for what is right is worth; a little staying power certainly brings satisfactory results. Compromises bring short term comfort, but the long term costs are heavy: the choice is a matter of conscience. Compromise with those who promote and instigate revolt under one pretext or the other, might at times appear to be an attractive alternative, but never the one to be opted for.

I should think that on an overall assessment, I belong to the group of fortunate Vice-Chancellors whose path was comparatively smooth; in whose case the hurdles were there, but not insurmountable; who did not have to face any serious hostility from those in authority: enjoyed throughout the support of the Boards of Management and other university authorities. I may say, in conclusion that a Vice-Chancellor should be judged not by what he did or did not do, but by what he has left behind as his contribution – facilities and programmes; manpower and leadership; precedents and traditions and in general, the image of the institution and the image of himself.

ANNEXURE

A – Denotes Very Good [4]
B – Good [3]
C – Adequate [2]
D – Needs Improvement [1]

Sl. No.	Item	Yearwise GPA* for 4 years			
		1991	1992	1993	1994
1.	Accessible	3.37	3.23	3.53	3.74
2.	Fair & just	3.93	3.73	3.57	3.50
3.	Rapport with colleagues	3.81	3.28	3.42	3.68
4.	Delegates responsibilities	3.68	3.55	3.42	3.68
5.	Conducts discussion effectively	3.87	3.86	3.80	3.95
6.	Prompt decisions	3.81	3.73	3.88	3.89
7.	Familiar with rules	3.37	3.59	3.73	3.74
8.	Helpful	3.75	3.59	3.50	3.74
9.	Systematic implementation	4.00	3.45	3.80	3.84
10.	Receptive mind	3.62	3.68	3.6	3.79
11.	Plans for the future	3.62	3.73	3.73	3.84
12.	Interest in job	3.93	4.0	3.92	4.0
13.	Innovative	3.50	3.45	3.61	3.68
14.	Leads ably	3.75	3.45	3.80	3.74
Total Average		3.71	3.60	3.66	3.76

*Each grade is an average of 19 ratings.

References

1. UGC Annual Reports: 1968–1969, 1988–89, 1991–92 to 1996–97,1999–2000
2. Five Year Plans, Department of Education, MHRD, Govt. of India, New Delhi
3. Kulandai Swamy V.C., 'I Stand on What I have Left Behind' a Chapter contributed in 1995 to the proposed book entitled *The Vice-Chancellors Remember – Vol. II*, Eds. M.V.Mathur and Ramesh K. Arora
4. Educational Despatch of Sir Charles Wood, popularly referred to as *Wood's Despatch*, 1854
5. Report of the Indian Education Commission, headed by Sir John Hunter, 1882
6. Universities Commission: Appointed by Lord Curzon, Viceroy, India, under the Chairmanship of Sir Thomas Raleigh, 1902
7. Universities Act 1904, based on the recommendations of Raleigh Commission
8. Govt. of India, Policy on Higher Education, Resolution dt. Feb. 1913
9. Report of the Enquiry Committee, headed by Sapru, 1934
10. Report of the Central Advisory Board of Education, prepared by J. Sargent, 1944
11. Report of University Education Commission headed by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, 1948–49
12. Report of the Secondary Education Commission headed by Dr. A.L. Mudaliar, 1952–53
13. Report of the Committee on Model Act for Universities, headed by Dr. D.S. Kothari, 1964
14. Report of the Committee of Members of Parliament on Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Government of India, 1964
15. Report of the Education Commission, headed by Prof. D.S.Kothari, 1964-66, Ministry of Education, Govt. of India
16. 102nd Report of the Estimates Committee, Third Lok Sabha, 1965–66
17. National Policy on Education, Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, Govt. of India, 1968
18. 114th Report of the Public Accounts Committee, Fourth Lok Sabha, 1969–70
19. Report of the Committee on Governance of Universities and Colleges, headed by Dr.P.B. Gajendragadkar, UGC, New Delhi, 1971
20. Report of the Review Committee on the University Grants Commission, referred to as Jha Committee, Ministry of Education, Govt. of India, 1977
21. Kulandai Swamy V.C., 'Urgent Need for More Universities in Tamil Nadu', *Annual Issue of Tamil Nadu Academy of Sciences*, 1978, initially written as a Report in 1974 for submission to the Tamil Nadu Government
22. Report of the Committee appointed by the UGC under the Chairmanship of Satish Chandra to Review its Programmes and their Impact on Universities, UGC, 1977–79
23. Report of the Committee to Enquire into the Working of Central Universities, headed by Mrs. Madhuri Shah, UGC, 1982
24. *New Models of University Administration*, NIEPA, New Delhi, 1985
25. *Challenge of Education:* Report published by the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, Govt. of India, 1985

26. UNESCO Statistical Year book—1985

27. National Policy on Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India, 1986

28. Programme of Action, Ministry of Human Resources Development, Govt. of India, 1986

29. Abdus Salam, *Notes on Science, Technology and Science Education in the Development of the South*, The Third World Academy of Sciences, Trieste, 1988

30. Kulandai Swamy V.C., Report of the High Power Committee on Self Financing Colleges, Government of Tamil Nadu, Chennai, 1989

31. World Bank: *World Development Report*, 1988–89

32. Report of the Estimate Committee; Eighth Lok Sabha, 1988–89

33. World Bank: *World Development Report* 1990

34. Kulandai Swamy V.C.: Presidential Address, 65th Annual Convention of the Association of Indian Universities, Ahmedabad, 1990

35. Towards New Educational Management: Report of the UGC Committee, headed by Prof. A. Gnanam, 1990

36. Raza, Moonis, *Higher Education in India*, A.I.U., 1991

37. Kulandai Swamy V.C.: Dr. S. Radhakrishnan Memorial Lecture, Govt. of Pondicherry, Bharathidasan Govt. College for Women, Pondicherry, 1991

38. Kulandai Swamy V.C.: Convocation Address, X Convocation, Nagarjuna University, Guntur, 1991

39. World Bank: *World Development Indicators*, 1991

40. Reorganisation of the UGC Secretariat, Report of the Administrative Staff College, Hyderabad, 1991

41. Kulandai Swamy V.C., 'Distance Education in Indian Context', *Indian Journal of Open Learning*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1992

42. Kulandai Swamy V.C., 'The Open University'—a chapter in the book entitled *Innovations in Higher Education*, Eds. Altbach and Suma Chitnis, Washington, World Bank, 1992

43. Kulandai Swamy V.C.: Keynote Address, National Seminar on Institutional Development and Management, Hyderabad, organised by the Indian Society for Technical Education, 1993

44. Kulandai Swamy V.C.: Keynote Address, Fifth Annual Management Education Convention, Trivandrum, 1993

45. Kulandai Swamy V.C.: Convocation Address, VI Convocation, Sri Padmavathi Visvavidyalayam, Tirupati, 1993

46. UNDP: *Human Development Report*, 1994

47. Kulandai Swamy V.C.: Report of the Cadre Review Committee, UGC, 1994

48. Peter Drucker: *The Post-Capitalist Society*, Harper Business, New York, 1994

49. UNESCO: Statistics Year Book, 1995

50. Kulandai Swamy V.C.: Theme paper presented at the workshop on 'Accountability' held at Chennai on 29–31 August 1995 on behalf of the UGC Committee to Review the Pay-Scales of University and College Teachers, 1994–97

51. Kulandai Swamy V.C: Theme paper in the Conference on Partners in Higher Education, Chennai, 1995

52. UNDP: *Human Development Report*, 1995

53. UNDP: *Human Development Report*, 1996

54. Dye Nancy, S: *Late Night Reflections of a College President; A Virtual University, Vital Speeches* of the Decoy, Oct. 1997

55. M M Ansari: *Higher Education and Economic Reforms; Industry and Higher Education*, London, December 1997

56. Kulandai Swamy V.C.: Convocation Address, IX Convocation, Alagappa University, Karaikudi, 1997

57. Report of the Committee to Review Pay Scale of University and College Teachers, UGC, 1997

58. Role of Vice-Chancellors, Keynote Address delivered at the Seminar on Higher Education at the

University of Madras, 1998

59. Kulandai Swamy V.C.: Inaugural Address at the National Seminar organised at BITS, Pilani on Assessment and Accreditation of Institutions of Higher Education, 1998

60. *State of the World 1999*, World Watch Institute, New York

61. Kulandai Swamy V.C.: Convocation Address, XI Convocation, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore, October 1999

62. Kulandai Swamy V.C.: Twenty Fourth Baikaka Memorial Lecture: 13th Indian Engineering Congress, Chandigarh, Institution of Engineers (India), 1999

63. Kulandai Swamy V.C.: Keynote Address, South Zone Vice-Chancellors Conference, Pondicherry University, 1999

64. Narasimha, R., 'Information Technology in India's Future' Paper presented at the National Science Summit, Bangalore, Aug. 1999

65. UNDP: *Human Development Report*, 1999

66. Bhagbanprakash: *21st Century-Development Challenges*, Tata Donnelley, 2000

67. World Bank: *World Development Indicators, 2001*