

National Conference on Deemed Universities

UGC: 4,5 May 2006

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I am happy that the UGC has organised a National conference on deemed universities. Before we come to the subject of the panel, **governance** a few observations about the place of deemed universities in the future of Indian higher education is appropriate.

All over the world higher education is in university campus. In India higher education is in the compounds of affiliated colleges; most of them small, ill equipped and understaffed. If we want to be on par with the world trend, we have to move higher education from the affiliated colleges to the university campuses. I may incidentally mention here that 90 per cent of the undergraduate students, 66 per cent of the postgraduate students and 83 per cent of the faculty are in the affiliated colleges. They have converted most of the state universities into mere examining bodies.

The discontinuance of the affiliating system has been contemplated since the beginning of the 20th century. Government of India in its resolution on Indian Education Policy 1913 observed as follows;

“The day is probably far distant when India will be able to dispense altogether with the affiliating university”

It can be seen that the policy contemplated a time when the affiliated system would cease to exist. Again Kothari commission recommended autonomous colleges so as to find a part remedy for the affiliating system.

The National Education Policy 1986, assured as follows:

“In view of mixed experience with the system of affiliation, autonomous colleges will be helped to develop in large numbers, until the affiliating system is replaced by the freer and more creative association of universities with the colleges.”

The programme of action 1986 on national policy 1986 states as follows:

“It’s envisaged that about 500 colleges should be developed as autonomous colleges in the 7th plan and the existing affiliating system might be replaced in the long run”

If we dispense with that the affiliating colleges, we will be left with three categories:

1. Autonomous Colleges
2. Deemed Universities
3. Full fledged Universities

The autonomous colleges and the deemed universities will mostly be brought in by upgrading the deserving existing affiliated colleges. In other words we will have in future, large number of deemed universities in the country, if we really want to implement the national policy. In other words, we may have more deemed universities than regular universities in course of time.

Problems do not arise in the case of; universities in Arts and Science, but when it comes to professional universities there are certain problems. Taking for instance engineering colleges, the need for maintenance of standards arises; The problem that we are faced with is as follows:

1. All India Council for Technical Education as per the Act does not have any jurisdiction over the universities.
2. The University Grants Commission, as a tradition, does not have inspecting function. So we have to reconcile with the situation,
3. The All India Council for Technical Education has to be involved in reviewing the deemed universities.
4. The University Grants Commission being a parallel institution cannot by itself summon the AICTE to take up the inspection on its behalf.

I suggest that on the initiative of the ministry the AICTE and UGC be brought together; they sit together and arrive at solution. A joint committee appointed with appropriate representation for the U.G.C. and AICTE may inspect the programmes of the university, review the physical infrastructure and human

resources for approval by the UGC. Such approval must be published and declared as approval for the use of employing agencies.

The university is autonomous body; normally, a review is **undertaken only to study and approve the programmes. The problem of inspection does not behave well for the dignity of the universities; but unfortunately certain universities have so conducted themselves as to necessitate inspection. Taking into account the legal position and considering the need for maintaining standards a committee as mentioned has to be appointed. The committee may be referred to as the UGC - AICTE joint committee and its report may be submitted to the UGC with a copy to the AICTE. The AICTE as an organisation may be empowered to call for data and if any transgression is observed it may request the UGC to organise a joint inspection.**

Any discipline has to come from within and standards and excellence in academic performance cannot be imposed from outside. We have for the deemed universities a number of authorities. If all of them function well, there will be no necessity for external inspection. Unfortunately these bodies are not effective. In certain institutions, the promoters treat the universities as family property and because of that problems arise. There is a difference between an industry and an educational institution even though technical education has become a marketable commodity. If industry is mismanaged, it affects essentially the prosperity of the management only. If an educational institution is mismanaged it affects generations of students and therefore we must ensure that a deemed university is not managed directly by the promoters, but come under professional management. The present Board of Management, Finance Committee etc as constituted do not appear to be independent bodies. They do for what is desired by the promoters. As a first step to professionalisation: Deemed Universities must be established only by a public trust and not by a family trust. Secondly the funds of the deemed university must be managed by the officers and authorities of the universities and the trust may not have powers for direct operation. In other words the funds of the trust and the funds of the

university must be separate. The trust may provide funds to the university and if necessary have it reimbursed in course of time, but the promoters should not treat the university funds as belonging to them. The trust may have an auditor appointed in the university to have an overview of the management of funds. The trust chairman as chancellor may not operate university funds. These are some broad suggestions, but the composition and powers of university authorities especially the board of management and the finance committee must be looked into.

The appointment of the Vice-chancellor is very important: he must be the real executive authority. The search committee to prepare the panel for V.C. should not have a nominee of the president of the Trust, since the president is the appointing authority. One member not connected with the university may be nominated by the Board of Management.