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Governance and Management of Higher Education Institutions in India

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CONTENTS

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Abstract

The governance and management of higher education institutions in India is becoming increasingly complex against the backdrop of the unparalleled expansion and diversification taking place. The paper highlights the changing relationship between the State, market and higher education institutions. The role of the State in this new and changed scenario globally has changed from direct control to 'steering from a distance', with the focus being on performance and outcome-based measures instead of being determined by inputs. This new form of 'managerialism' has implications for autonomy and accountability. A review of the prevalent trends shows that collegiality is giving way to greater centralisation within higher education institutions in India and reduced power of the professoriate. These trends have major implications for the governance of higher education institutions and the organisation of research and teaching in India.

Introduction

Higher education is the key to economic development and is an important input for achieving higher and sustainable rates of economic growth. However, the character of higher education institutions has been changing over the last decades. Traditionally, higher education was identified with universities which were considered to be scholar-centred institutions. They then transformed into teaching and training institutions during the industrialisation period due to the demand for skilled labour. Most recently, the advent of research universities has re-oriented universities into centres of knowledge production for economic development.

Countries are increasingly realising the need to expand higher education in order to succeed in the new knowledge economy and to gain economic competitiveness and higher productivity. Globalisation has also contributed to the increasing demand for skilled workforce and improving the quality of the workforce with higher educational qualifications. With the advent of knowledge-based production, economies are also becoming aware of the importance of research and development (Varghese and Malik, 2016). The capacity to innovate is directly linked with the quality of higher education provided in the country. The shift in employment prospects from the manufacturing to the services sector also reflects the higher qualification levels of employees. Thus, the increase in intensity of knowledge use in production has led to a growth in the demand for higher education graduates in the labour market, which, in turn, has increased the demand for higher education.

Universalisation of higher education in the developed countries has led to diversification of the education system. However, the expansion of the higher education institutions has not been a linear process. The diversification of the education system has occurred through the process of expansion from a unitary structure (universities) towards a system that is flexible and can accommodate the varying demands emerging from different groups and regions within a country. The systems that have diversified have expanded at a faster rate than those that have not. The growing demand for skills, which is different from those developed in traditional university study programmes (Grubb, 2003), has necessitated the creation of alternate modes of delivery, which, in turn, has led to the advent of many different kinds of institutions and a wide variety of providers and study programmes (Sharma, 2016).

Higher education is no longer identified only with a university structure and different terms like 'tertiary education' or 'post-secondary education' are used to describe it. While the role of universities in expanding knowledge continues,

institutional alternatives to them focus on the development of skills in areas that are directly linked to the market economy (Varghese, 2014).

This paper attempts to assess the governance and management of higher education in India in the above scenario while analysing the various dimensions of this unparalleled expansion. This new scenario of expansion and diversification is becoming increasingly complex, and is characterised by a change in the relationship between the State, market and higher education institutions. The role of the State has changed from that of exercising direct control to 'steering from a distance' and the emphasis has shifted to performance and outcome-based measures instead of being determined by inputs. There is a need to examine whether universities today enjoy greater autonomy than before in the context of the move towards greater centralisation, that is, within the offices of Vice Chancellors and the reduced power of the professoriate. This trend has major implications for the governance of universities and systems of research and teaching.

This paper is organised as follows: Section 2 analyses different models of governance while Section 3 examines international trends in governance. Section 4 focuses on the growth and expansion of higher education in India, while also examining the recommendations of various committees and commissions. Section 5 assesses the governance and management of higher education institutions in India, raising some important issues in the process.

Models of Governance

The concept of 'governance', which is considerably broader than that of 'government', is not new. It simply refers to the process of decision making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented). It can be used in several contexts such as corporate governance, international governance, national governance and local governance. Huisman (2009) tries to better understand governance in higher education by using the traditional approach and conceptual framework of governance, and also through departures from the traditional approach by highlighting various country experiences.

Governance involves structures and decision-making processes. It focuses on the rules and mechanisms by which various stakeholders influence decisions, how they are held accountable, and to whom. Governance refers to 'the formal and informal exercise of authority under laws, policies and rules that articulate the rights and responsibilities of various actors, including the rules by which they interact'. Thus it encompasses 'the framework in which an institution pursues its goals, objectives and

policies in a coherent and co-ordinated manner' to address the following larger questions: 'Who is in charge, and what are the sources of legitimacy for executive decision-making by different actors?' (Eurydice, 2008, p. 12).

Management implies the implementation of decisions, involves specification criteria for the allocation of resources to various activities, the allotment of responsibilities and tasks to various groups, and the evaluation of performance. Management refers to the implementation of a set of objectives pursued by a higher education institution on the basis of established rules. It answers the question, 'How are the rules applied?', and is concerned with the efficiency, effectiveness and quality of services provided to internal and external stakeholders. Although there is a distinction between governance (with its emphasis on the process of setting policies and long-term goals as well as the strategies for reaching these goals) and management (which is action-oriented), the links between these two concepts should also be appreciated (Eurydice, 2008).

The issues related to governance should be seen at two levels:

(i) Relation between the State and higher education institutions in terms of legislative authority, financial arrangements and in actual practice; and

(ii) Governance structure and functioning within the institutions of higher education.

Relation between State and Higher Education Institutions

Burton Clark's (1998) classic study of university organisation introduced the 'triangle' of coordination and discussed how higher education institutions in the U.S. were transformed into 'entrepreneurial universities' concerned with their 'bottom line' (Carnoy and Dossani, 2011).

Clark posits that some form of coordination by the academic oligarchy exists within all systems, and that certain systems further down the continuum from the state-organised ones may depend quite heavily on the stability of linkages that the oligarchy can provide. The oligarchy can be represented by a national education ministry, but in many countries, it appears in the form of intermediate bodies that operate in a space between the State and academic institutions. These intermediate bodies often take the form of coordinating boards, governing boards or other managerial entities. With the addition of the academic oligarchy to the State and the market, Clark delineated the three vertices required to construct his famous triangle of coordination (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Clark's Triangle of Coordination

State

Market   Academic Oligarchy
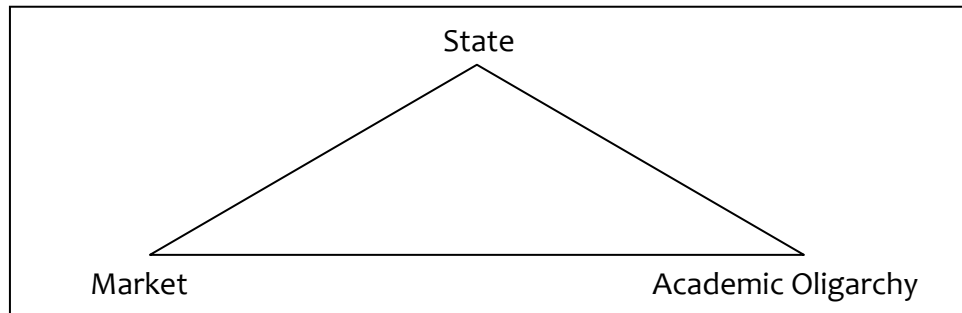
Source: Clark (1998)

Burton Clark's triangle depicting the market, State and the academic oligarchy can be re-interpreted in the present context as the market, State and higher education institutions. This is because of the decline in the absolute power of the 'professoriate'. New governance arrangements have clearly reduced the collective influence of academics over decision making in academic institutions. There is a marked movement from the State to the market in countries all over the world. Granting of autonomy is a step in this direction, representing a movement from state control to market. Federal and state governments, in particular, are gradually giving higher education institutions greater decision-making and spending power. In this context, greater autonomy is being granted to institutions to enable them to mobilise resources. This represents a move away from the erstwhile system of detailed government control over spending, teaching, and curriculum decisions, which required frequent approval from federal or state government officials. However the important question is whether this autonomy is being passed on to the professoriate or whether the power is getting centralised in the offices of the Vice Chancellor.

The established trends in higher education governance, including institutional autonomy and public accountability, have started having a long-term impact on the relationship between the State and the institution in the context of developing countries. Gradual changes in the mechanisms of education governance and governing structures of academic institutions have long been predicted by various scholars. Governments have centralised their powers in their relationships with the universities through performance-based accountability; research funding mechanisms; quality assurance; and various administrative mechanisms. These control mechanisms have assumed different forms from previous legal regulations, and exert a more intensive and stronger influence on the university than legal regulations. Although states deregulated universities under neo-liberalism, they continue to exercise control over the universities through indirect mechanisms. Managerialism is deeply entrenched in

university administration, and shared governance and collegiality are fading. As a result, universities are losing their institutional autonomy in their relationships with their external entities; and professoriate is losing their power on campus. These two dimensions represent the concept of '*decentralised centralisation*' (Shin, 2013).

The external dimension highlights 'institutional autonomy' in the university's relationship with the government. Institutional autonomy has a long-standing history since the emergence of the medieval university in the twelfth century when the university emerged as an independent entity. However, the relationships have seen ups and downs within the various political environments even for the modern university. State intervention in higher education has been diminishing under neo-liberalism, which encourages deregulation and institutional autonomy. In contrast, states are increasing their involvement in different ways such as evaluation, quality assurance, and funding mechanisms, among other things.

Governance Structure and Functioning within the Higher Education Institutions

The higher education literature focuses on the relationship between the government and university, which is an external dimension of higher education, but researchers also focus on governance within the university (Birnbaum, 2004; Shin, 2013). The notion of shared governance has been widely applied in higher education in the United States where state politics, managers, and professors (as also students sometimes) share the responsibility for university governance under the board of trustees or board of regents (Birnbaum, 2004). This arrangement is a tradition in the sphere of higher education in the United States, where most public university systems hold independent legal status as a corporation. Traditionally, professors are very powerful in university governance in the German system whereas they are relatively less powerful in the Anglo-American tradition where the university manager has greater power than individual professors. However, academics even in the German system are losing their power under neo-liberalism wherein managerialism is emphasised and consequently provides greater power to university managers. The same trend is found in other higher education systems that have adopted the German model, especially in European countries and Japan and Korea, where the German model was adopted during the early stage of development of higher education (Shin, 2013).

While the Clark model discusses the relation between the State and higher education institutions mediated by the market, the Lapworth model focuses on governance within institutions. A strengthened steering core seeking to 'operationally

reconcile new managerial values with traditional academic ones' (Clark, 1998), allows institutions to take advantage of the strengths of traditional collegiality, drawing on the expertise of the academic community and the loosely-coupled federal structure of universities.

A model of shared governance (Lapworth, 2004) portrays the interactions amongst the diverse groups to evolve governing process as a shared responsibility to achieve the university objectives within the legalised framework. Figure 2 shows the shared governance model. The public universities are functioning within a sphere of a legal framework though they have a certain degree of autonomy with visions and missions that have driven, shaped and influenced the core functions and activities of universities.

Figure 2: Flexible Shared Governance Model
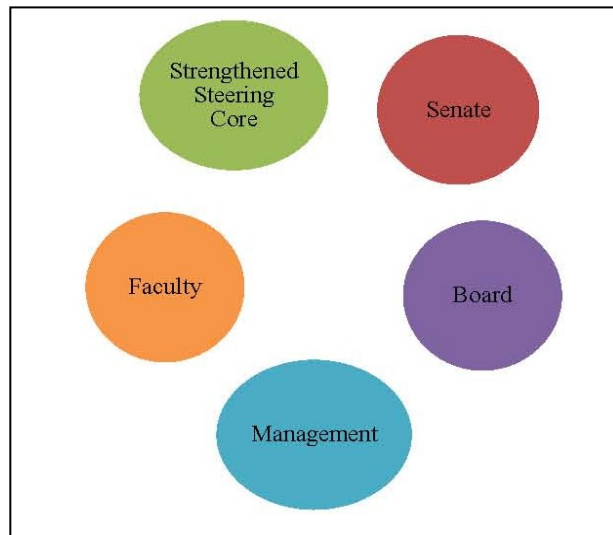
Source: Lapworth (2004)

Strengthening the steering core is one of the five mechanisms of achieving success for an entrepreneurial university. After the corporatisation of the public universities in 1996, universities, in principle, embraced the idea of an entrepreneurial university, reflected through their visions, missions and strategic plans. The salient feature that is needed for the steering core is a strong managerial capacity for the university to become quicker, more flexible, and especially more focused in reacting to expanding and changing demands. The steering core can be established as an independent instrument and is not directly subservient to the Board or the Senate. As an option, the membership of the steering core can be drawn either from outside the other core groups or from the core groups. The important point to be stressed here is

that the steering core is the creature of neither the Board nor the Senate, but is reporting to both.

International Trends in Governance

The collegial style of decision making in both Europe and North America has found it difficult to come to terms with the rapid changes in higher education (Hirsch and Weber, 2001). In the context of the rapid changes in society and its relationship with higher education, countries throughout Europe have responded in a variety of ways to the need to re-think and re-design the governance structures of institutions of higher education (Neave, 2003). As autonomous entities, the institutions are assuming many of the responsibilities of governance previously held by the government; however, institutions of higher education are still regulated by the government or governmental bodies. The institutions are now also held accountable for their behaviour in new ways: they need to show that they are responding appropriately to the needs of society; they should also demonstrate that the public funds they receive are being used responsibly; and they need to maintain standards of excellence in teaching and research (Eurydice, 2008).

Governance reforms in Asian countries are also indicative of a move towards greater autonomy. Cambodia and Vietnam are currently in the earlier stages of governance reforms in higher education. In Vietnam, the 2005 Higher Education Reform Agenda (HERA) contains three measures aimed at increasing autonomy for financial arrangement, human resource management, and curriculum adaptation. In Cambodia, the Royal Decree of 1997 created the possibility of transforming select institutions of higher education into Public Administrative Institutions (PAIs). In Indonesia too, the role of the government was slated to be shifted from regulating and controlling towards facilitating, empowering, enabling and aligning the development of higher educational institutions. Singapore also passed legislations in 2005 to make its three universities autonomous and 'corporatised'. In Japan, under the corporatisation policy, in 2004, universities became national university corporations with a new governance structure, increased autonomy over financial and human resource management, and decision making power over the organisational structure of the higher education institutions (Varghese and Martin, 2014).

The most significant governance trend internationally in the sphere of higher education has been the widening of institutional autonomy, both substantive and procedural, such as increased institutional discretion over the use of financial and physical capital as well as according greater authority over personnel matters

(Eurydice, 2008). Substantive autonomy includes the freedom to design the curriculum, evolve a research policy, determine student admission policies, and staff recruitment criteria and criteria for the awarding of degrees. Procedural autonomy involves the freedom to prepare and administer budget and financial administration, appoint non-academic staff, and procure and enter into a contract with others outside the institution (Raza, 2009). There could be further progress in the areas of staff management and recruitment, and with respect to student selection, whereas in the case of funding—payment of a lump sum instead of line item budgeting—institutions now make their own decisions. However, institutions cannot have unlimited autonomy and processes need to be put in place to hold key functionaries accountable for institutional performance.

While the trends prevalent internationally point towards the movement from State control to 'State supervision', Fielden (2008) points out that one of the key elements in higher education law is the definition of the legal status of public universities. There is a wide spectrum of positions, ranging from tight control over universities by the State to their enjoying full independence and autonomy. Table 1 depicts four possible cases though there could be many more.

Table 1: Four Models: From Control to Autonomy

Institutional Governance Model	Status of Public Universities	Examples in
A. State Control	Can be agency of the MOE, or a State-owned corporation	Malaysia
B. Semi-autonomous	Can be agency of the MOE, a State-owned corporation or a statutory body	New Zealand, France
C. Semi-independent	A statutory body, a charity or a non-profit corporation subject to MOE control	Singapore
D. Independent	A statutory body, charity or non-profit corporation with no government participation and control linked to national strategies and related only to public funding	Australia, United Kingdom

Source: Fielden (2008)

Australia, Denmark, and the United Kingdom have been placing emphasis on good governance. In Australia, protocols on good governance are a mandatory requirement for getting extra funding. In the U.K., a document called the Statement of Primary Responsibilities has been drafted, setting out the prime roles that the

governing body is expected to fulfil. This statement has been prepared by a body comprising the chairs of governing bodies on the request of the government. In Denmark, a committee has produced "a number of appropriate principles for discussion by the future members of university boards, which have concentrated primarily on the function and role of the board of the university" (Fielden, 2008).

Giovanna (2013) explores the connection between 'good practice' and 'good governance', while distinguishing between different models of university governance: University Governance by the academic staff, Corporate Governance, Trustee Governance, Stakeholder Governance, and Business Governance.

Academic capitalism is a form of response to the entrepreneurial university. It constitutes the form of the market and market-like behaviour by colleges and universities. It is defined as a situation in which the academic staff of publicly funded universities operate in an increasingly competitive environment, using their academic capital, which may comprise teaching, research, consultancy skills or other applications of forms of academic knowledge. Even though they are public employees, academics who pursue private sector funding by using market-like behaviour may start distancing themselves from the idea that they are public employees (Deem, 2001). Academic capitalism has become a key feature of higher education in the United States. There is a decline in collegial governance, and important decisions are being made at the central level to facilitate quick responses to external pressures. This has resulted in growing tension between academics and the central administration.

New Public Management

The bureaucratic system represents the traditional system of public management. It emphasises control from the top to the bottom in a system wherein policy is set at the top and carried out through a series of offices. The bureaucratic system is based on a set of rules and regulations flowing from public law; the system of control is rational and legal. The role of the bureaucrat is strictly subordinate to the political superior. The major characteristics of the traditional model were: i) An apolitical civil service; ii) Hierarchy and rules; iii) Permanence and stability; iv) An institutional civil service; v) Internal regulation; and vi) Equality (internally and externally to the organisation) (Weber, 1946).

The new public management theory was developed at the end of the 1970s in the wake of increasing discontent with the public sector. The reforms undertaken by the OECD countries have been theoretically classified under the concept of New Public

Management (NPM), emphasising the accountability of the public sector with a focus on results (Hood, 1995).

The New Public Management concept is centred around the proposition that a distinct activity—management—can be applied to the public sector in the same way that it has been applied to the corporate sector, and that it includes a number of elements, including adoption of corporate sector management practices in the public sector; an emphasis on efficiency; a movement away from input controls, rules and procedures towards output measurement and performance targets; a preference for private ownership; contestable provision and contracting out of public services; and the devolution of management control with an improved reporting and monitoring mechanism.

There is a shift globally from a 'regulatory' to a 'facilitatory' State, inspired by New Public Management (NPM), which entails the introduction of contracts, strategic planning, and performance evaluations. Thus, governments move from direct control to 'steering from a distance' in which firm beliefs in the virtues of detailed regulation, planning, and government coordination were replaced by the idea that the government's role ought to be confined to setting boundary conditions while leaving higher education institutions room to manoeuvre (Saint, 2009).

New Public Management has its origin in managerialism, which can be defined as a mode of governance aligned with neo-liberalism: it involves governing through the enactment of technical changes with market values. The nature of higher education has changed globally over the years. We see the transformation of universities into 'workplaces' and professors into 'managers'. Governments are intervening in universities more than ever before and a 'target culture' has emerged. New managerialism focuses on the outputs of service providers measured in terms of performance indicators and rankings while stressing the language of choice, competition and service users. Thus, it promotes the decentralisation of budgetary and personal authority among line managers, and project-led contractual employment arrangements rather than permanency.

Growth of the Higher Education Sector in India

The system of higher education in India was built by the British in response to the needs of an imperial administration, which wanted to produce a manpower pool capable of performing territory functions (Agarwal, 2009). The colonial higher education system enabled some to become aware of the nature of imperialism while many converted themselves into tools of westernisation. The academic system and the

fundamental ethos, comprising core principles, the professiorate, curriculum, teaching methods, and examination systems, was similar to that of the old universities in Britain (Agarwal, 2009).

India is facing significant changes in the governance structure and management practices in higher education. At the time of independence, like the other sectors, higher education too was the exclusive domain of the public sector. The government played an active role in planning, funding and managing institutions of higher education. However, after the fiscal crisis of the 1980s, many public institutions diversified their sources of funding. This also led to the growth of the self-financed public and private institutions, which, in turn, led to decisions being taken at the institutional level. There has thus been a tremendous transformation in the governance of higher education from the period following independence to post-globalized era.

The post-globalisation era witnessed shifts in higher education, leading to an increase in the role of privatisation and autonomy of the colleges, with education policies concentrating on improving the quality of higher education. Kapur and Mehta (2004) have described the evolution of privatisation in higher education in India as the transition "from half-baked socialism to half-baked capitalism." They argue that much of the massive privatisation taking place in the country has not resulted from the ideological commitments of key actors but is instead a result of a collapse of the state system, resulting in weak ideological and institutional foundations.

The goal of higher education is also changing in the era of massification of higher education. While during the previous decades, higher education was seen as a privilege for elitist families, now it is seen as a merit good for everyone who can either compete for it or pay for it. Also, in the new knowledge economy, there is need for higher order skills, which, in turn, engenders the need for higher education. Higher education is, in fact, no longer seen as an end in itself but rather a means to gain productive employment, thereby altering the expectations of the students who are going for higher education.

While there is rapid growth and expansion in higher education in India, there still exist several loopholes, which prevent the higher education sector from providing accessibility to all. Some of these problems lie rooted in governance and management practices (Koligudde, 2014). What is *good governance*? While there is no single generally accepted model of good governance, there are some key elements for a

good governance framework, such as accountability, transparency and effectiveness (World Bank, 1992).

The problems of governance and management are getting amplified in a globalised and knowledge-based environment (Carnoy and Dossani, 2011). Much of the common refrains of employers are that graduates from Indian universities and colleges are often unemployable. While it is debatable whether universities should be reduced to training centres and centres of skill upgradation or should perform their traditional role of knowledge generation, it is a worrying trend if graduates do not have the necessary skills to function in the workplace. There need to be more associations and collaborations between industry and universities so that potential graduates can do internships or be trained in the kind of courses that industry demands (Anandakrishnan, 2010).

However, the issue of employment and employability constitutes only one of the major problems. The major question remains that even though India has enjoyed double-digits rates of economic growth in recent decades, why has that not translated into comparable growth for the higher education sector? One of the reasons for this is the low public expenditure on higher education as a percentage of the GDP.

In this scenario, it remains to be seen what the prevalent governance and management structures and processes are and what, if any, changes would be possible in these that would lead to an improvement in the overall higher education system. The government needs to play a sensitive and less intrusive role in the governance and regulation of higher education than it does at present. In place of a uniform regulatory role in respect of all institutions, the government's role could be calibrated according to the type of institution involved. There should be a shift from inspection-based processes to autonomy and accountability through independent third-party validation, regulation by mandatory self-disclosures, and objective evaluation schemes (Planning Commission, 2012).

One of the most important areas is the strengthening of institutional capacity. With State support going down, expectations of performance and accountability from institutions have increased. Public institutions are trying to maintain competitiveness in the current times wherein the advent of the Right to Information Act, 2005, has led to increased transparency (Agarwal, 2009).

Massification

Higher education in India has developed in response to the demands from the market and has been a result of individual initiative and public demand. There have

been committees and commissions from time to time which have made significant recommendations impacting some segments of the universities but the general growth and direction have not been determined by these government reports. That is why despite pleas from the educational planners for a slower and more orderly pace of growth, its expansion has continued to challenge the system (Agarwal, 2012). Expansion in the last two decades has been more quantitative than qualitative as is seen by the steep climb in the Gross Enrolment Ratio from 8.1 per cent in 2001-02 to 24.3 per cent in 2014-15 by a surge defined as "massification of higher education in India (has become) becoming a market–mediated process facilitated mostly through private institutions and financed by households" (Varghese, 2015). In such a scenario, it is obvious that governance has got stressed due to various non-academic pressures. An objective examination of the entire growth period makes it apparent that on the substantive academic side, there have been no major changes in the curriculum or structure of the higher education. In fact Agarwal (2012) has gone as far as to call the growth *laissez faire.*

At this stage, it is important to understand the huge changes that took place in India during this period. Therefore, to be fair, it must be noted that the governing and managing bodies including the government of the day were swept away by the demand of the market forces after the opening up of the Indian economy in July 1991. The advanced economies, on the other hand, had a much calmer market climate economically all this while. Accordingly, they were able to gradually achieve universalisation of higher education over a much longer period. In developing countries, particularly India, on the other hand, we are witnessing moves towards massification in a comparatively short period due to the "catch up" phenomenon spurred by information explosion and globalisation. India is going through the initial phase of massification with around 34.2 million students, 1.47 million teachers, 760 universities, 38498 colleges and 12,276 stand-alone institutions. The GER in higher education in India in 2014-15 was 24.3, as calculated for the 18-23 year age group (MHRD, 2016). This rapid expansion and massification is placing a substantial fiscal burden on the State, leading to the withdrawal of funding by the State. There is a move towards "corporatisation" of public universities, that is, universities are being encouraged to become more managerial in approach and entrepreneurial in nature.

Post-Independence, higher education in India, while being characterised by close links between the university and the government, has experienced unplanned and random growth (Agarwal, 2012). The higher education sector in India witnessed steep growth during the 1950s and 1960s, followed by slow growth during 1970s and 1980s.

The growth momentum picked up from the 1980s onwards, following the introduction of the Education Policy 1986, permitting private sector entry into the higher education sector. The growth in the number of Institutions and enrolment has been phenomenal after 2000, which is mainly due to an increase in the number of private universities and colleges. The Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-12) accorded high priority to higher education, and consequently, there was a 4.6-fold increase in Plan allocation to the sector. Table 2 shows the expansion of higher education in India in terms of the institutions and enrolments.

**Table 2: Higher Education Expansion in India: Institutions and Enrolments**

Year	Central Universities	State Universities	Deemed to be Universities	Institutions of National Importance	Private Universities	Total	Colleges	Enrolments (in millions)	GER (%)
1950-51	3	24	-	-	-	27	578	0.2	
1960-61	4	41	2	2	-	49	1819	0.6	1.5
1970-71	5	79	9	9	-	102	3277	2	4.2
1980-81	7	105	11	9	-	132	4577	2.8	4.7
1990-91	10	137	29	9	-	185	6627	4.4	5.9
2001-02	18	178	52	12	-	260	11146	8.8	8.1
2005-06	20	205	95	18	7	345	17625	11.6	11.6
2011-12	42	299	40	59	178	621	34908	28.5	19.4
2012-13	43	308	49	61	201	665	35829	29.6	21.1
2013-14	43	322	50	68	229	712	36812	32.3	23.0
2014-15	44	329	48	75	264	760	38498	34.2	24.3

Source: Varghese (2015), AISHE (MHRD, 2016)

The number of universities in the country, which was 27 in 1950-51, more than doubled during the next two decades and reached 102 in 1970-71. However, the increase in the number of universities slowed down during the next two decades, reaching 132 in 1980-81, 185 in 1990-91, and 260 in 2001-02. The number of universities also more than doubled to 760 in 2014-15 (see Figure 3). A similar growth pattern is observed in the number of colleges, which increased from 578 in 1950-51 to 3,277 in 1970-71, to 6,627 in 1990-91, and to 11,146 in 2001-02. There has been a massive jump in the number of colleges since 2001-02, which reached 38,498 in 2014-15 (see Figure 4).

Figure 3: Number of Universities in India
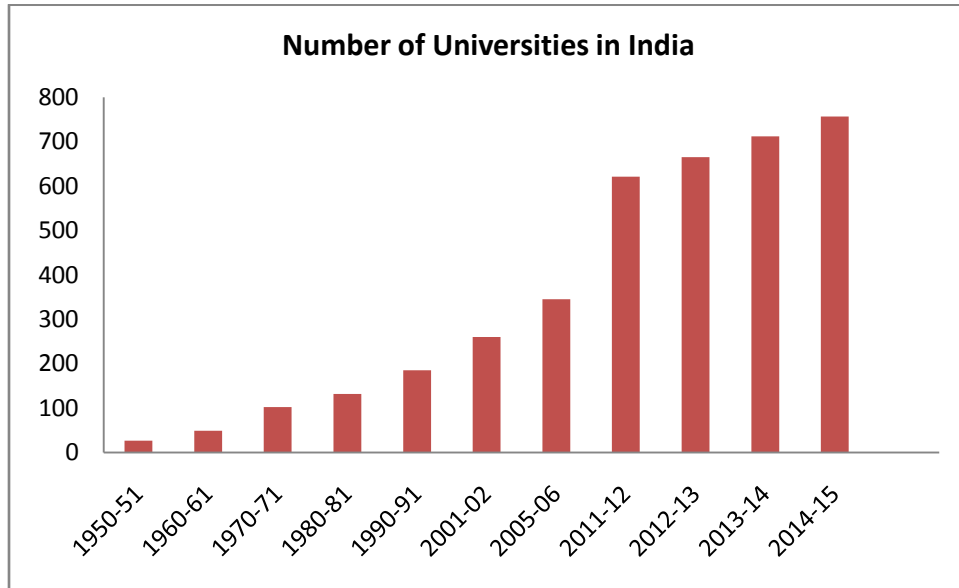
Source: AISHE, MHRD (several years)

Figure 4: Number of Colleges in India
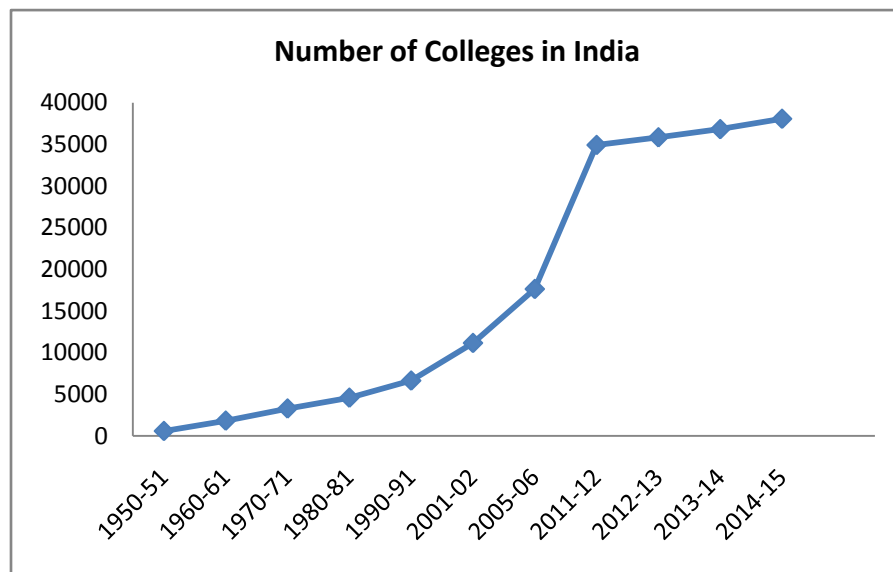
Source: AISHE, MHRD (several years)

Figure 5: Student Enrolment

Student Enrolment (in millions)
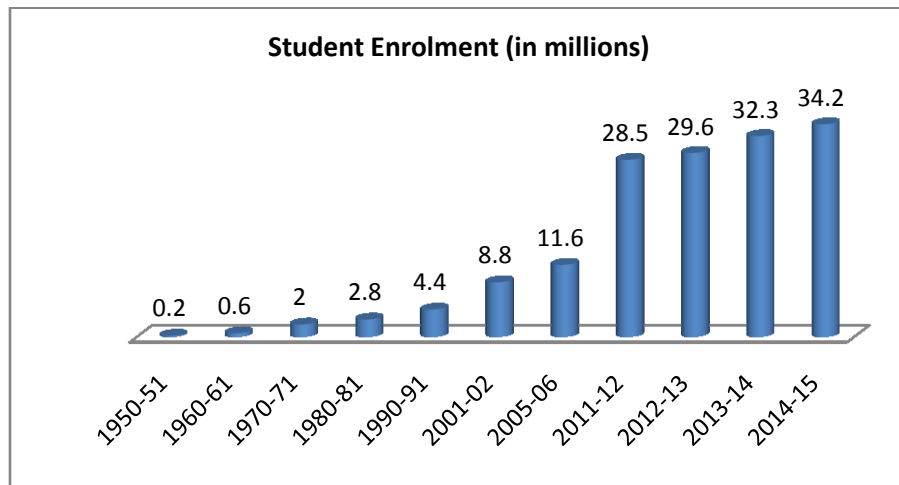
Source: AISHE, MHRD (several years)

Along with the increase in number of higher education institutions, the enrolment has also witnessed a sharp increase since 1950-51. Student enrolment increased from a low of 0.2 million in 1950-51 to 0.6 million in 1960-61, and there has been an addition of about one million every decade, reaching 2.8 million in 1980-81. The growth in enrolment gained in leaps and bounds reaching 34.2 million in 2014-15 (see Figure 5). Recent years have witnessed a particularly impressive growth in enrolment partly due to improvements in data collection from stand-alone institutions, and open and distance learning (ODL) programmes (Duraisamy, 2016).

Figure 6: Gross Enrolment Ratio

Gross Enrollment Ratio
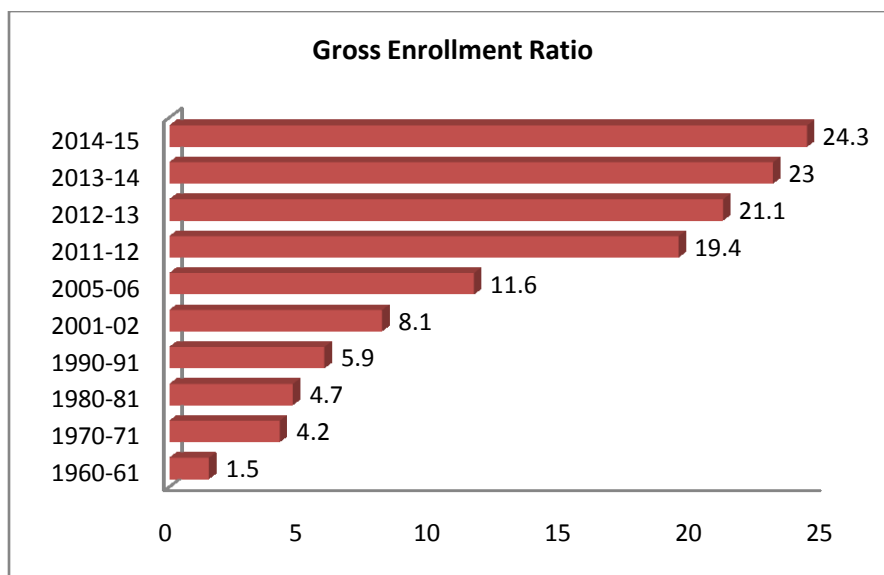
Source: AISHE, MHRD (several years)

The GER increased from 1.5 per cent in 1960-61 to 4.2 per cent in 1970-71, 8.1 per cent in 2001-02, and to 11.6 per cent in 2005-06. The GER increased from 11.6 per cent in 2005-06 to 19.4 per cent in 2011-12, reaching a high level of 21.1 per cent in 2012-13, which was the result of the push given to higher education in the Eleventh Five Year Plan. The GER in 2014-15 was 24.3 per cent, according to the latest estimates released (see Figure 6).

Figure 7: Growth in Different Types of Universities
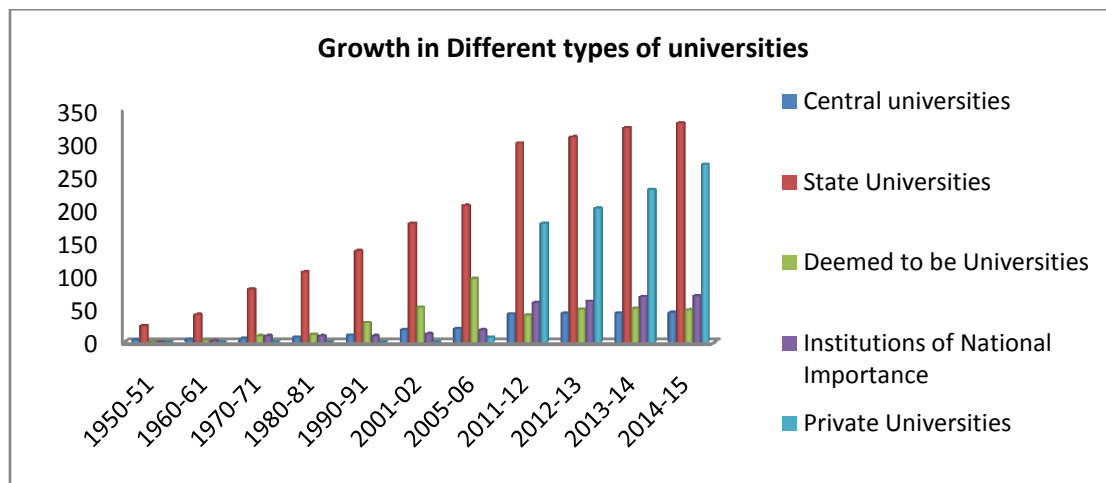
Source: AISHE, MHRD (several years)

The high growth in the number of Central universities is due to the push given in the Eleventh Five Year Plan wherein 15 central universities were established in 2009. The state public universities are of the affiliating variety and provide education through regular and distance mode. The number of state universities increased from 205 in 2005-06 to 329 in 2014-15. The recent period also saw a dramatic growth in the number of private universities, with the number of such universities having gone up to 264 now (see Figure 7).

Recommendations of Committees and Commissions on Governance and Management

In terms of its size and diversity, India has the second largest higher education system in the world. Before Independence, access to higher education was very limited and elitist, with the enrolment of less than a million students in 500 colleges and 20 universities. Since Independence, however, the growth in enrolment has been very impressive. The system is now more mass-based and democratised.

After Independence, the most significant action of the Government of India in the field of education was the appointment of the University Education Commission (UEC) under the chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan in 1948 (MoE, 1949). The Commission

was appointed to report on the state of education at the university level in India, and to suggest improvements and extensions that may be desirable to suit the present and future requirements of the country. The Radhakrishnan Commission of Education, 1948, stated the following on the setting up of new universities - *"....There are certain fundamental characteristics which should be inherent in any institution which is to call itself a university.... Institutions doing perfunctory or mediocre work should not be dignified by university status"* (MoE, 1949, p. 479). The Radhakrishnan Commission favoured a position of less interference from the Government and grant of greater autonomy to universities. It emphasised the importance of a legislative framework for universities to operate and a strong governing body with external members, thus leaving the universities 'free from interference'. Universities were supposed to be self-regulating entities, expected to adhere to the standards set by the University Grants Commission (UGC). According to the UGC, while higher education is an obligation of the State, State aid should not be confused with State control over academic policies and practices. Like all other citizens, teachers too should be free to speak on controversial issues. This atmosphere of freedom is necessary for developing the morality of the mind. The recommendations of the Radhakrishnan Commission, 1948, led to the establishment of authorities such as the UGC and the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), thereby helping shift regulatory authority to the Central Government.

The UGC was established as a statutory body by the Parliament 'for coordination and determination of standards in Universities' in 1956, but its origins lay in the 1951 draft when the Universities (Regulation of Standards) Bill was presented by the Ministry of Education to the Parliament. The original bill contained two provisions which got deleted when the matter was referred to the Joint Select Committee. One was the provision that after the enforcement of this Act, no university would be established unless it had been found acceptable both by the Ministry of Education and the UGC. The second such provision was that the UGC would have the power to de-recognise any university degree. When these two key provisions in the UGC bill were deleted and the bill was passed, it made the UGC into more of a recommendatory entity than a body which could lay down the law (Singh, 2004). The reason for taking this decision was that the Constitution required the Central Government or its agencies to discharge the function only of 'coordination and determination of standards' and not of 'maintenance' (Agarwal, 2009). Universities and colleges included under Section 2(f) and declared fit to receive Central assistance under Section 12(B) of the UGC Act, 1956, are eligible for financial assistance from the UGC under

various schemes. While development assistance is provided for the upgradation of existing facilities and subsequent expansion to universities at the Central and state levels, and to deemed universities, the financial assistance for the maintenance of those facilities is provided only to Central universities. Out of the Plan grants (Rs. 4178.46 crores) released during 2014-15, 57.25 per cent went to Central universities, 2.63 per cent to deemed-to-be universities, 12.33 per cent to state universities, 5.72 per cent to colleges of state universities, and 1.15 per cent to colleges of Central universities. Of the non-Plan grant (Rs. 5536.09 crores), 63.26 per cent had gone to Central universities, 28.45 per cent to colleges of Delhi , Banaras Hindu University (BHU) and other Central universities, 4.53 per cent to deemed-to-be universities, 2.56 per cent to state universities, and 0.04 per cent to colleges under state universities (UGC, 2015).

The Kothari Commission (1964-66) (GOI, 1966) emphasised the introduction of innovations and ensuring accountability in the higher education system. It highlighted the need to introduce autonomous colleges as the first step towards the introduction of innovations in higher education. According to the Commission, the sphere of autonomy lies in the selection of students, appointment and promotion of teachers, determination of courses of study, methods of teaching and selection of areas and problems of research. Also, university autonomy functions at three levels: (1) autonomy within a university, for example, autonomy of the departments, colleges, teachers and students in relation to the university as a whole; (2) autonomy of a university in relation to the university system as a whole, for example, autonomy of one university in relation to another, or in relation to the UGC and the Inter University Board (IUB); and (3) autonomy of the university system as a whole, including the UGC and the IUB, in relation to agencies and influences outside that system, the most important of which are the Central and the State Governments.

According to the Report of the Committee on Governance of Universities and Colleges (UGC, 1971), headed by Dr. P.B. Gajendragadkar, set up in 1969:

"The concept of university autonomy is often misunderstood. It is not a 'legal concept', not even a 'constitutional concept'... The claim for autonomy is made by the universities not as a matter of privilege, but on the ground that such an autonomy is a condition precedent if the universities are to discharge their duties and obligations effectively and efficiently as regards imparting and advancement of knowledge..." (UGC, 1971, p. 9-10).

To this end, the Gajendragadkar Committee made the following recommendations: (i) Expenditure on higher education and research should be considered, not merely as an essential social service, but as an investment for the future; (ii) The UGC should be effectively involved in advising state governments in determining the quantum of maintenance grants; (iii) The UGC, with its intimate connection with all universities in the country, should advise and assist the universities in upholding the dignity of the university system, and in safeguarding the autonomy of the universities in all its aspects; (iv) If any State Government intends to introduce new legislation with regard to governance of universities, and desires to make any other changes in the existing statutes, it would be advisable for it to consult the UGC and the respective universities on that behalf, before it reaches a final conclusion; (v) The three principal authorities of the universities already in existence in most universities, namely the Court/Senate, the Executive Council/Syndicate, and the Academic Council, should be continued, and where any one of these does not exist, it should be provided; (vi) Two new authorities, namely the Faculties/Schools and the Student Council, should be introduced; (vii) The Executive Council/Syndicate of a university, while being the principal executive body of a university, should not be deemed to be a governing council in a hierarchical sense; and (viii) The powers of the university should be shared between the different authorities—The Academic Council should be the principal academic body of the university, with the power to coordinate and exercise general supervision over the academic policies of the university. The statutes of each university should provide for the establishment of a Student Council.

The Gnanam Committee appointed in 1990 (UGC, 1990) reviewed the existing management and structures in the Indian higher education system and suggested alternative models of management. Some of the recommendations were as follows: (i) The Central Government should make a legislation mandating its incorporation in the Acts of all Universities to follow and adhere to the regulations issued by UGC from time to time; (ii) No new university should be established without the prior concurrence of the UGC, and with reference to the special needs, size of population, and size of an existing University; and (iii) New legislations for state universities should be referred to the UGC prior to their enactment (Mathew, 2016).

The Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) Committee on Autonomy of Higher Education Institutions was set up by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India (MHRD, 2005) to suggest measures for enhancing the autonomy and accountability of institutions of higher education. The Committee headed by Shri Kanti Biswas submitted its report in 2005. The report made many

recommendations relating to the academic, administrative, financial and general aspects on autonomy of Higher Educational Institutions. Some of these recommendations are as follows: (i) All universities and colleges should be given the autonomy to start self-financing courses, particularly in new and emerging areas where job opportunities exist; (ii) All universities should shift towards the adoption of choice-based credit courses along with the semester system; (iii) There should be a switching over to complete the internal evaluation of students over a period of time with individual teachers having full autonomy in matters pertaining to evaluation; (iv) Each institution of higher education should set up an *Internal Quality Assurance Cell*; (v) Institutions should make their output performance public to ensure accountability; (vi) Institutions should be encouraged by the apex regulatory and statutory bodies to subject themselves for external accreditation periodically through advocacy and a system of incentives and recognition; (vii) The selection committees should be so constituted as to ensure that they are not subject to any bias and favour and they should adopt objective and transparent mechanisms for selection; (viii) the selection of faculty members in all institutions of higher learning should be carried out on all-India basis to pick the best and the most meritorious teachers; (ix) The appointment of teachers on a contract basis should be discontinued; (x) Acts, statutes and ordinances of the universities should be reviewed for their better management as also for granting autonomous status to affiliating colleges; (xi) All bodies and authorities in the universities and colleges should have representatives from the concerned stakeholders with an appropriate mix of elected and nominated representatives from amongst academia; (xii) The selection of Vice-Chancellors of the universities should be done with utmost care through a search-cum-selection procedure; (xiii) The institutions should strive to achieve a ratio of 1:1.5 to 2.0 between the teaching and non-teaching staff including both technical and academic support staff; and (xiv) Efforts should be made for the training and development of academic administrators in the higher education institutions to improve the quality of governance.

The recommendations made by the CABE Committee, some of which questioned the present policies and went beyond examining only autonomy issues, went a long way in moulding public policy towards higher education.

In the view of the National Knowledge Commission (GOI, 2006), expansion of the system of higher education in India is not possible without enhanced levels of financing, which should come from both public and private sources. The Commission recommended that government support for higher education should be at least 1.5 per

cent of the GDP from a total of 6 per cent of the GDP allocated for education. However, at the same time, the Commission also argued for raising the fee levels in higher education institutions. In its view, on an average, fees constitute less than 10 per cent of the total expenditure in our universities. It, therefore, stressed the need for rationalising fees in universities and other higher institutions. It suggested that as a norm, fees should meet at least 20 per cent of the total expenditure in universities. In addition, fees need to be adjusted every two years through price indexation. Furthermore, the Commission recommended tapping such sources as alumni contributions, licensing fees, or user charges (for facilities in universities used by people from outside), and creating supportive institutional mechanisms that allow universities to engage professional firms for mobilizing resources. It also recommended stimulating private investment and public-private partnerships where the government provides the land and the private sector provides finances. Thus, it is clear from the report that the Commission strongly favoured autonomy for universities to set up fee levels and tap other sources, and also for the commercial use of university facilities. Noting that college education in engineering medicine and management is de facto privatised, the Commission favoured similar privatisation of university education by setting up private universities and enabling public-private partnerships (Tilak, 2007).

The Yashpal Committee (MHRD, 2009) viewed higher education from a different perspective. It stated that higher education is a means of overcoming caste and class hierarchy, patriarchy and other cultural prejudices, and also a source of new knowledge and skills, and a space for creativity and innovations. Higher education, therefore, was and continues to be considered as a national responsibility and the State has to make the necessary provisions to facilitate the realisation of its potential. However, recognising that the cost of providing quality education is increasing, it recommended that while the State cannot walk away from its responsibility of financing higher education, imaginative ways would need to be devised to find complementary sources of funds. Changes in regulatory systems are required to encourage philanthropy from society. Further, it stated that universities and other academic institutions should be able to hire professional fundraisers and investors to attract funding from non-government sources. The Committee also argued that the absence of differential fee has led to the subsidisation of a segment of a student body that can afford to pay for its education, and there is no reason as to why both these categories of students be placed at the same level when it comes to financing their education. Thus, following the popular discourse, the Yashpal Committee also opined

guaranteed student loans at low interest rates for those who can take loans. However, it also recommended free education for those who cannot afford it. The Yashpal Committee also discussed the need to develop expertise in "educational management", which can be achieved by universities starting programmes in the management of educational institutions. It also recommended that state governments should stop appointing civil servants as university administrators. It further recommended that the academic community should practise the autonomy given to it and help preserve it instead of being driven by ideological compulsions which make it easier for the bureaucracy to curtail the same.

Some of the recommendations of the Report of the Committee for the Evolution of the New Education Policy, 2016 (GOI, 2016) are as follows: (i) Universities should not have more than 100 affiliated colleges; (ii) A new National Higher Education Promotion and Management Act should be enacted to provide guidance and mentorship to institutions that wish to improve themselves; (iii) Full academic and management autonomy should be granted to institutions which are at the highest scale; and (iv) Institutions which fall below an accepted benchmark of performance need to be weeded out.

Governance and Management of Higher Education Institutions in India

Regulatory Bodies

The history of regulation of higher education in India started before Independence. In 1921, the Government established the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) to bring about a consensus among provincial governments on policy matters pertaining to education. The first regulatory body in higher education in India was the Medical Council of India (MCI), which was established in 1934. The MCI had the authority to lay down norms and standards, and recognise or derecognise courses and institutions.

The first commission on higher education, the Radhakrishnan Commission (1948) favoured less interference from the government and granting of greater autonomy to universities. It emphasised the creation of a legislative framework for the universities to operate and a strong governing body with external members. The recommendations of the Radhakrishnan Commission, 1948, led to the establishment of bodies such as AICTE and UGC, and helped shift the regulatory authority to the Central Government. Currently, there are multiple regulatory bodies in higher education in India (Varghese, 2015). Table 3 lists 13 regulatory bodies that are operational in the higher education sector. The regulatory bodies exist separately for general higher

education, technical education, and for professional education. The functioning of a few of these regulatory bodies is discussed in detail in Table 3.

Table 3: Regulatory and Statutory Bodies in Higher Education

Names of the Bodies	Expected Functions
University Grants Commission	• Co-ordination, determination and maintenance of standards in higher education. • Release of grants to individual institutions.
All India Council for Technical Education	• Proper planning and co-ordinated development of the technical education system throughout the country.
Distance Education Council	• Promotion of Open University and Distance Education systems in the educational pattern of the country for coordination and determination of standards of teaching, evaluation and research in such systems.
Indian Council of Agricultural Research	• Co-ordination of agricultural research and development levels with related organisations to enhance the quality of life of the farming community.
Bar Council of India	• Co-ordination, determination and maintenance of standards in legal education and profession.
National Council for Teacher Education	• Achieving planned and co-ordinated development of the teacher education system throughout the country, the regulation and proper maintenance of norms and standards in teacher education and for matters connected therewith.
Rehabilitation Council of India	• Standardisation and regulation of training of personnel and professionals in the field of Rehabilitation and Special Education.
Medical Council of India	• Establishment of standards in medical education to define medical qualifications in India and abroad.
Pharmacy Council of India	• Prescription, regulation and maintenance of minimum standards for the training of pharmacists uniformly in the country.
Indian Nursing Council	• Regulation and maintenance of uniform standards of training for Nurses, Midwives, Auxiliary Nurses-Midwives and Health Visitors.
Dental Council of India	• Regulation of the Dental Education, Dental Profession, Dental ethics in the country and recommending to the Government of India to accord permission to start a Dental College, start higher courses and increase the number of seats.
Central Council of Homeopathy	• Maintenance of the Central Register of Homoeopathy.
Central Council of Indian Medicine	• Maintenance of the Central Register of Indian Medicine.

Source: Varghese (2015)

University Grants Commission (UGC): Higher Education is the shared responsibility of both the Centre and the states. The coordination and determination of standards in universities and colleges is entrusted to the UGC and other statutory regulatory bodies. The University Grants Commission (UGC) came into existence on 28 December 1953 and became a statutory body of Government of India by an Act

of Parliament in 1956. In its formative years, the UGC was modelled on the University Grants Committee in the United Kingdom (UK). It would advise the Government on the funds to be made available from the Consolidated Fund of India for university education, to allocate and disburse them in a balanced and coordinated manner. The objective was to make it a fully free body like the British University Grants Committee whose activities were not subject to detailed scrutiny by the government. In 1956, there were 33 universities in India operating under Acts passed by the Central or state legislatures that were on the grants list of the UGC. Of these universities, Delhi, Banaras, Aligarh and Vishwa-Bharati were incorporated under Acts of the central legislature. The others were "State Universities" under the jurisdiction of the newly constituted states. Thus, the first decade ending with the Second Five-Year Plan and beginning with the Third Five-Year Plan saw attempts at expansion, diversification, streamlining and coordination. The decade of 1963-73 saw the UGC grow under the chairmanship of D.S. Kothari from primarily a grants-giving to a policy-making organisation with attempts at expansion, diversification, streamlining and coordination.

The UGC serves as a vital link between the Union and State Governments and the institutions of higher learning. It has two major responsibilities, one is to provide funds and the other is to determine the maintenance of standards in higher educational institutions. It also plays a role in advising the Central and State governments on the measures needed to improve the university education. The draft bill prepared for setting up of the UGC contained provisions for prior approval of the UGC for the setting up of a university and the power to derecognise a university degree. The UGC Act of 1956 has been amended from time and time as per the need of the situation, by Parliament under Act No. 27 of 1970. The Act was further amended as the UGC Act, 1984, and the UGC (Amendment) Act, 1985 (see Table 4 for recent UGC regulations).

The problem of scarcity of teachers is particularly acute in state universities and affiliated colleges but the problem also exists in Central universities as well as premier institutions like the IITs and IIMs. The UGC has from time to time adopted several measures to increase the supply of teachers for universities and colleges. The UGC set up a Pay Review Committee (PRC) with Professor G.K. Chadha as its Chairman in September 2007 to address the issue of scarcity of quality teachers in universities and colleges, their emoluments and service conditions.

While the UGC has grown with the education system, becoming a policy-making body in the process, it has not always been able to shape and implement policy. The passage of the diluted UGC Act, 1956, was a critical event in the history of higher

education in India. It resulted in the laissez-faire growth of universities and colleges while the UGC concentrated primarily on increasing infrastructural facilities such as buildings, equipment, libraries, and adequately qualified staff (Sharma, 2013).

Table 4: Recent UGC Regulations

Year	Recent UGC Regulations
1998	UGC Notification on Revision of Pay Scales, Minimum Qualifications for Appointment of Teachers in Universities and Colleges and Other measures for the Maintenance of Standards
2009	UGC (Affiliation of Colleges by Universities) Regulations
2012	UGC (Grievance Redressal) Regulations
2012	UGC (Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions) Regulation
2015	UGC (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal of Sexual Harassment of Women Employees and Students in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations
2016	UGC (Institutions Deemed to be Universities) Regulations
2016	UGC (Promotion and Maintenance of Standards of Academic Collaboration between Indian and Foreign Educational Institutions) Regulations
2016	UGC (Minimum Standards and Procedure for Award of M.Phil./Ph.D Degrees) Regulations

Source: UGC Website

All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE): The AICTE was constituted in 1945 as an advisory body for all matters relating to technical education. Despite not having statutory powers it played a very important role in the development of technical education in the country. There was large-scale expansion of technical education in the late 1950s and early 1960s and again in the 1980s. While the expansion in the 1950s was done with the approval of the AICTE and the Government of India, the expansion in the 1980s was mostly localised in the four states of Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, and was primarily concentrated in the self-financing sector without the approval of the AICTE and Government of India. It was during this period that the National Policy on Education-1986 (GO1, 1986) made a specific mention of the need to make AICTE a statutory body. The AICTE became a statutory body through an Act of Parliament, in 1987. The Council, that is, the AICTE was established with a view to ensuring the proper planning and co-ordinated development of the technical education system throughout the country, the promotion of qualitative improvement of such education in relation to planned quantitative growth, and the regulation and proper maintenance of norms and standards in the technical education system.

Medical Council of India (MCI): MCI was established in 1934 under the Indian Medical Council Act, 1933. The Council was later reconstituted under the Indian

Medical Council Act, 1956, which replaced the earlier Act. The Council strives to establish uniform and high standards of medical education in India. The Council grants recognition of medical qualifications, gives accreditation to medical schools, grants registration to medical practitioners, and monitors medical practice in India. Registration of doctors and their qualifications is usually done by state medical councils. The NITI Aayog has recommended the replacement of the Medical Council of India (MCI) with the National Medical Commission (NMC).

Distance Education Council (DEC): DEC is responsible for the promotion and coordination of the Open University and distance education system, and for the determination of its standards in India. The Council was constituted under the Indira Gandhi National Open University Act (1985). DEC is an apex body for the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system in the country. It is empowered, under Statute 28 of the IGNOU Act, to act as an apex body for the ODL system. It is responsible for the promotion, coordination and maintenance of standards of the ODL system. In June 2013, the UGC took over the DEC by establishing the Distance Education Bureau, which will govern the distance education programmes in India.

Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR): ICAR is an autonomous organisation under the Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE), Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare. Formerly known as the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research, it was established on 16 July 1929 as a registered society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. The Council is the apex body for co-ordinating, guiding and managing research and education in agriculture including horticulture, fisheries and animal sciences. There are 101 ICAR institutes and 71 agricultural universities spread across the country. The ICAR has played a pioneering role in ushering in the Green Revolution and subsequent developments in agriculture in India through its contribution to research and technology.

The higher education sector needs to be regulated to ensure planned and coordinated development, quality of education, equity and social justice and prevent unfair practices (Ayyar, 2013). The areas that need regulation are: permission to enter, permission to operate-decide on intake of students, introduction of courses, and monitoring of overall performance including issues related to governance and management. Furthermore, in a knowledge economy that is getting increasingly globalised, the need for governance and administration of higher education institutions is becoming critical. The Indian economy is considered to be over-regulated and under-governed. The existence of a large number of regulations inhibits rather than encourages innovation and creativity. Currently, there are 13 regulatory

bodies in higher education in India. There have been suggestions to set up a single regulatory body to prevent the prevalence of a multiplicity of regulators. The major issue to be addressed in regulation is whether the existing regulations are sufficient or whether there is a need for more regulations or effective implementation of existing regulations is more important (Varghese, 2015).

The recent reckless growth of higher education institutions in the private sector that have poor infrastructure and shortage of faculty, and charging high fees, is a matter of great concern. There are doubts about how many such institutions were granted approvals. Also, based on the Tandon Committee Report (UGC, 2009), the status of many deemed universities was recently withdrawn after a Supreme Court judgement found them lacking in facilities after a physical inspection was carried out (Varghese, 2014).

Many private institutions are eager to attain the status of deemed-to-be universities to attain the authority to award degrees. Although the deemed-to-be universities do not have affiliating powers, many of them have a number of campuses spread throughout the country. The Tandon Committee noted that the "unprecedented" and "uncontrolled" growth, particularly of private institutions, in the field of professional education, including engineering, medical and health sciences (dental, nursing, physiotherapy, pharmacy), and business administration, had increased the demand for 'deemed university' status, leading to commercialisation of education.

It is felt that the provision of a deemed university status has led many institutions of higher education in the private sector to view the status of a deemed university as a stepping stone to becoming a statutory university in some cases. The Tandon Committee Report noted that the deemed universities were engaged in the thoughtless introduction of unrelated programmes with a proliferation of degrees beyond the mandate of the original terms for grant of deemed university status. Having obtained the 'deemed university' status, for areas like dental or medical or engineering, some of them went on to create totally new, often unrelated full-fledged independent colleges in unconnected disciplines such as management, teacher education, hotel management, and so on. These were started not for promoting programmatic complementarity or achieving excellence or promoting interaction among different disciplines, but seemingly only for their lucrative value. There has been a tendency on the part of many institutions to multiply the total number of courses at the under-graduate and post-graduate levels manifold without achieving a corresponding increase in the faculty strength. The under-graduate and post-graduate

programmes offered in many of the deemed universities, especially in professional areas such as medicine and engineering, were not different from those offered in a large number of professional colleges, thereby making no noticeable distinction between a college and a deemed university. Many deemed universities ventured into the arena of distance education, launching innumerable programmes without experience and without the mandate for them. These programmes, though projected as a means of providing outreach services in the rural and remote areas, appear to be of dubious quality, offering education through a huge number of so-called 'study centres' spread across the country.
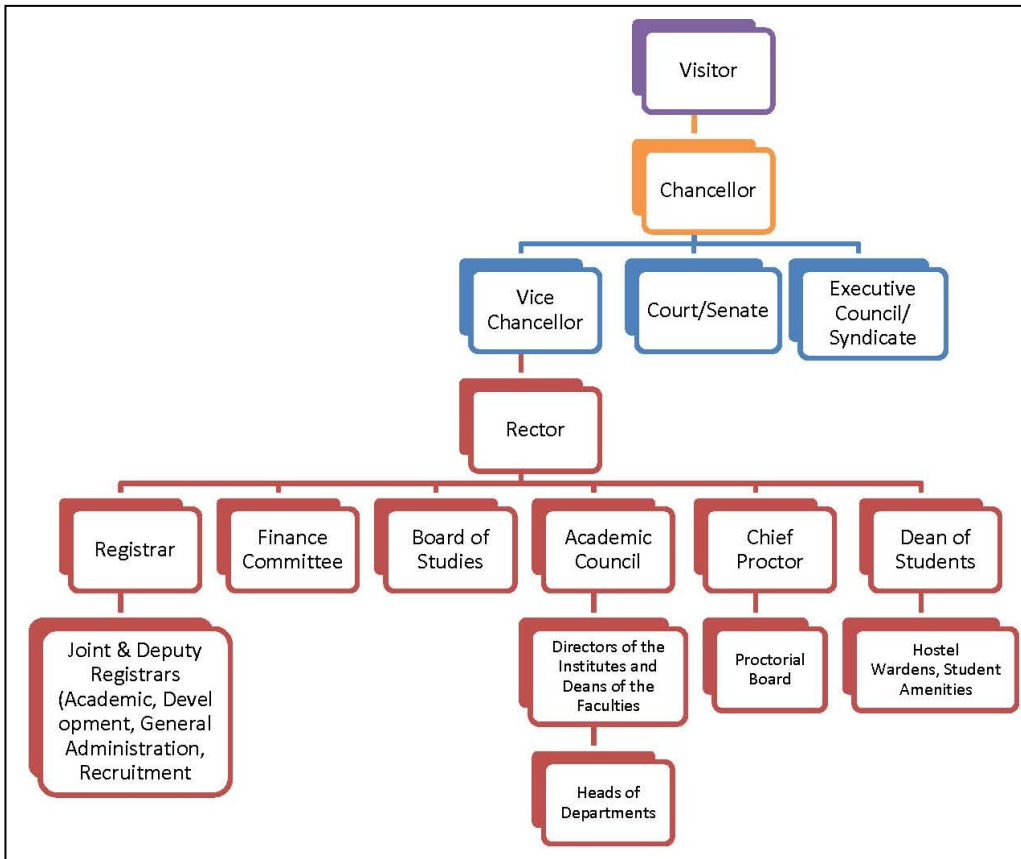
Governance Structure

In the Indian case, despite a tendency for the market axis of Clark's triangle to play a major role and an increased impact of the globalising economy on higher educated labour force, the Government still dominates in shaping higher education governance. The system has not evolved from State-control to a State-supervised model. Within the university too, a high degree of centralisation is observed in practice. The universities have a structure of governance defined by the Acts/Statutes of the university. Following is the list of Bodies of the University: The Senate; The Syndicate; The Academic Council; The Finance Committee; and The Board of Studies (see Figure 8).

The authorities within a University are the Executive Council or Syndicate, the Court or Senate, and the Academic Council. The Executive Council (or Syndicate) and the Court (or Senate) have the responsibility of framing statutes and regulations, and dealing with all matters connected with the organisation and administration of the University. The Academic Council handles academic matters and is mainly concerned with courses of study and the organisation of teaching and examinations. The Academic Council coordinates the work of several faculties, for example, those of the Arts, Sciences, Medicine, Law etc. The head of a faculty is the Dean, who is usually a Professor of the University. The Board of Studies helps the faculties to frame the syllabus and appoint examiners. The Faculties usually have a large number of departments, and each department has its own head. The Vice Chancellor is usually appointed by the Chancellor on the recommendation of the Syndicate or Senate. Often, a search committee is constituted but the practices differ in different universities. The Chief administrative officer is the Registrar, who, in many universities, belongs to the state civil service. Figure 9 shows the governance structure of autonomous colleges.
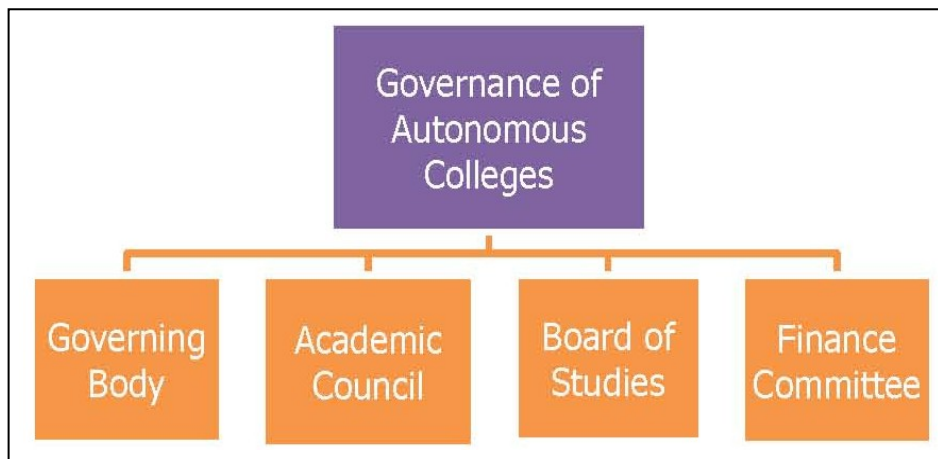
Figure 8: Governance Structure in Indian Universities

Source: Prepared by the author

Figure 9: Governance Structure in Autonomous Colleges

Source: Prepared by the author

Institutional Autonomy

As the structure of higher education in most countries has become increasingly diverse and complex, the need to decentralise authority and provide greater autonomy to higher education institutions has emerged as the right approach. As pointed out by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2005), autonomy is usually determined by the level of capability and the right of an institution to decide its own course of action pertaining to institutional policy, planning, financial and staff management, compensation, students, and academic freedom, without interference from outside authorities.

Granting autonomy is not a one-way process or simply a set of policies to achieve successful higher education management (Dahiya, 2001). It is not only about what freedom higher education institutions are going to obtain from the government but also about what freedoms the government is willing to give. This involves government provisions to adopt legal reforms, restructuring of public funding mechanisms, and personnel regulations (ADB, 2012).

Prakash (2011) discusses how during the last many decades, higher education institutions in India have suffered a loss of autonomy due to the prevalence of factors like interference, an over-assertive bureaucracy, money power, and the inability of universities to protect their autonomy. Revisiting acts and memoranda of associations, alumni representation, and strong institutional leadership would all go a long way towards increasing and protecting the autonomy of higher education institutions. Also, autonomy can be seen as something that needs to be earned instead of coming as a "gift".

Following are some of the specific proposals given by the Rashtriya Ucchhatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) (MHRD, 2013): carrying out legislation/amendments to legislations, ensuring the existence of State Universities as autonomous independent entities; withdrawal of the State from certain detailed control and management functions and the devolution of responsibility to universities themselves; creation of buffer bodies or agencies (State Higher Education Councils) to carry out some of the detailed policy, planning and supervision functions in the sector or to provide sector-wide services; adoption of funding models that give institutions greater freedom and that encourage them to explore new sources of income; development of new forms of accountability through reporting on performance and outcomes in achieving nationally-set targets for the sector, as well as institutionally-set targets; and gradual

withdrawal of the State from decisions on appointment of Chairpersons of the Executive Council or Vice Chancellor and members of the Executive Council.

Figure 10: Dimensions of Autonomy
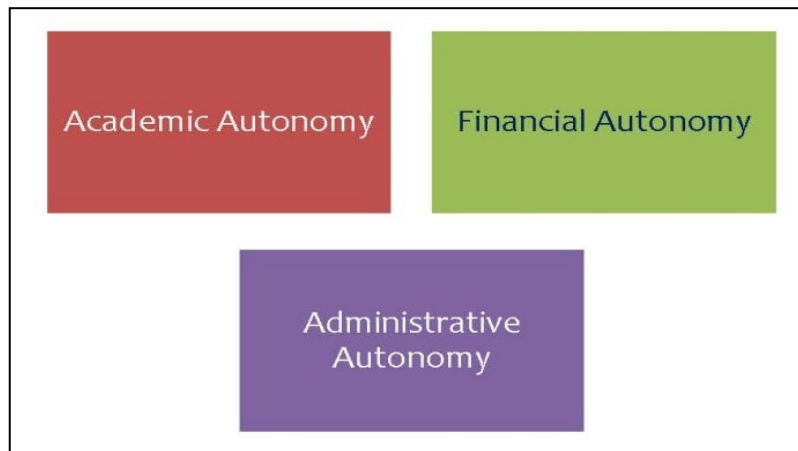
The granting of autonomy should not be viewed as escaping from the responsibility of providing public funding. This kind of approach adopted for the granting of autonomy will lead to a deterioration of quality since autonomy in such situations is a substitute for financial support. Thus, granting of autonomy should be accompanied by core funding of the institutions while maintaining the freedom of the institutions to mobilise additional funds. Autonomy with core funding will help in strengthening institutional initiatives and reviving the higher education sector as a whole. Autonomy should also be accompanied by capacity development efforts at the institutional level (Varghese and Malik, 2015). While Figure 10 shows the various dimensions of autonomy, Table 5 gives the different dimensions of autonomy in greater detail.

As regards the IITs and IIMs, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) treats them as institutes of national importance and plays a role in their management, including the provision of financial grants. Each IIT has a board, while the IIT Council is the apex IIT governing body, which has participation from the MHRD and all IIT Directors along with Central Government nominees. Each IIM has its own governing board, which is autonomous. The IITs are governed by the Institutes of Technology Act, 1961, while the IIMs are governed by the Society Registration Act. Thus, the Government controls the IITs more directly through IIT statutes. An IIT director is appointed directly by the MHRD, whereas an IIM director is appointed by the board of the respective society (which also has MHRD representation).

Table 5: Dimensions of Autonomy

	Aspects of Institutional Autonomy		
	Academic	**Administrative**	**Financial**
1	Designing Academic Programmes and Curricula	Management system in the university to encourage best practices of governance	Provision of funds to individual institutions in an untied manner to ensure a greater degree of freedom
2	Autonomy to decide own procedure for selection of research fellows	Head of institution to have autonomy to determine both the rank and the number of positions of professors, and associate and assistant professors	
3	Adoption of choice-based credit courses	Outsourcing of non-academic activities for efficiency and effectiveness	Mechanisms for deciding the fee structure
4	Autonomy of departments	Expeditious disposal of litigations - a case for Central/state higher education tribunal; grievance redressal mechanisms	
5	Setting up of internal quality assurance cells	Norms of accountability to be evolved which are open, participative and data-based	Scholarships to meritorious and deserving students from the lower economic strata
6	Switching over to internal evaluation	Charter of responsibility and devolution and delegation of authority defined for different levels within the higher education system	Undertaking consultancy assignments and sponsored research projects
7	Performance appraisal of teachers with adequate weightage for research work based on quantifiable parameters		
8	Autonomy to establish linkages for academic and research collaboration in India and abroad		
9	Transparency and objectivity in selection of faculty on an all-India basis		
10	Quality of research with a focus on international benchmarks such as citation indices, and patents		

Source: Prakash (2011)

The UGC has a scheme for granting autonomous status to colleges. Some of the objectives were to allow colleges to exercise freedom in framing courses of study and syllabus, devise appropriate teaching methods and conduct evaluation and assessment independently (George, 2011). The colleges recognised under Sections 2(f) and 12(B) of the UGC Act with sufficient academic and non-academic resources are eligible to apply for conferment of UGC autonomy (Rao, 1999; George, 2011). There are

575 colleges across 23 states and 100 universities conferred with autonomy status, of which 164 are government colleges and 411 are private-aided and private-unaided colleges. The largest number of autonomous colleges are presently situated in the state of Tamil Nadu, followed by those in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka (see Table 6).

However, the scheme of Autonomous colleges has not made as much progress as it should have (George, 2011). According to Kapur (1998), this lack of progress is due to the following reasons: (i) The state governments are not ready to give up their powers over government-run colleges; (ii) The managements of private colleges are concerned that they will lose their powers; (iii) Teachers are not fully willing to assume full responsibilities of autonomy and in many cases, there has been an increase in their workload; and (iv) There is concern as to whether a college degree will have the same status as a university degree.

Table 6: Current Status of List of Approved State-wise Autonomous Colleges Declared by University Grants Commission

State	No. of Universities Having Autonomous Colleges	No. of Autonomous Colleges (as of 1.8.2016)
Andhra Pradesh	13	130
Assam	1	2
Chhattisgarh	3	10
Goa	1	1
Gujarat	4	4
Haryana	1	1
Himachal Pradesh	1	5
Jammu & Kashmir	2	3
Jharkhand	2	5
Karnataka	11	65
Kerala	3	19
Madhya Pradesh	8	37
Maharashtra	9	38
Nagaland	1	2
Odisha	6	39
Puducherry	1	3
Punjab	4	8
Rajasthan	3	4
Tamil Nadu	12	172
Telangana	2	2
Uttar Pradesh	6	11
Uttarakhand	2	4
West Bengal	4	11
Total	100	575

Source: UGC website

Accountability

Accountability ensures that the actions and decisions taken are subject to oversight so as to ensure the government initiatives meet their stated objectives and respond to the needs of the community that they are intended to benefit, thus contributing to better governance (Pandey, 2004; Miri, 2010).

In India, there is a skewed allocation of limited funds to central universities while state universities face a paucity of funds. Moreover, the existing system of governance and regulation needs to be re-examined. The system of command and control does not promote accountability. The institutions are constantly subjected to governmental pressures and decisions are often made on the basis of non-academic considerations. This intervention starts at the highest level with the appointment of the vice chancellor. Also, University Courts and academic councils are usually large in size, which prevents dynamism in decision-making (Joshi, 2011).

In order to promote accountability, there should be complete transparency in the working of Executive/Academic Bodies and other Governing Councils of the Universities and colleges. University Acts in different states should be reviewed and new technologies should be utilised for ensuring administrative efficiency (Joshi, 2011).

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), set up in 1994, has many dimensions along which institutions are assessed, and while the process was voluntary earlier, now UGC funding is linked to accreditation. Some of the dimensions of assessment of universities is that of governance, leadership and management. Under this criterion, there are key aspects like institutional vision and leadership, strategy development and deployment, faculty empowerment strategies, financial management and resource mobilisation, and internal quality assurance system. However only a fraction of higher educational institutions has been accredited in India. It is, therefore, not a straightforward act to introduce and implement accountability measures (Varghese and Malik, 2015).

Institutional Leadership

Effective academic leadership in higher education is a function of several factors or characteristics. These include: leadership in teaching, leadership in research, strategic vision and networking, collaborative and motivational leadership, fair and efficient management, and the development and recognition of performance and interpersonal skills (Ramsden, 1998).

Vohra and Sharma (1990) discuss how non-academic considerations are increasingly becoming important in the choice of this functionary. While procedures

change from place to place, the initial choice of two or three names should be made by a Committee of three members, one representing the university, the other, a nominee of the Visitor/Chancellor, and the third, a nominee of the UGC. According to Powar (2011), the leadership provided by the Vice Chancellor in academic, administrative and educational policy matters is crucial. It is necessary for the Vice Chancellor to keep abreast of all activities taking place in the University and to maintain a decentralised decision-making structure, giving greater autonomy to faculty members.

However, increasingly we find that in Indian academia, there is a lack of strong leadership unlike during the post-Independence period, when visionaries and leaders built universities. Now in many cases, there is a flight of good academics to North America and Europe due to the strong pull factors in terms of better research prospects and higher global visibility (Chandra, 2012). Thus, there is an absence of leaders with vision and commitment, and many a times, the selection process of a head of an institution or Vice Chancellor too is based on considerations other than his or her academic credibility and standing. Many universities in India are "headless" or have not had Vice Chancellors for years together due to interference in appointments and lack of consensus.

Chandra (2012) highlights the leadership challenges faced by Vice Chancellors who struggle to run the university on a day-to-day basis. Also, any changes in the structure require changes in the University Acts, which require the approval of state or Central legislature. The crisis of leadership also affects the appointment of members of the Governing bodies, Deans, Heads of Departments, and Principals of colleges. There are instances of interference and nepotism, especially in state universities. Further, many a times members of the civil services are appointed instead of academicians. Bhushan (2016) discusses how impartiality can be invoked in the selection process of Vice Chancellors.

There is a need to sensitise leaders to management issues and the needs of students and teachers in modern universities. Universities globally offer leadership development programmes designed for higher education administrators—from directors, department heads and deans to vice chancellors. Similar attempts are being made by the IIMs to design modules for senior leadership.

Affiliation

The other cause of poor governance is the system of affiliating colleges to the university which yields revenue for the university through fees. As discussed earlier, only a fraction of the colleges are autonomous while the rest are affiliated colleges.

With large number of affiliated colleges, the Universities find it difficult to provide academic leadership to colleges. There is standardisation of curricula and examinations as also an absence of flexibility in response to the changing needs of students (Joshi, 2011).

The faculty members in the affiliated colleges are very often civil servants who are recruited and posted by the directorate of higher education instead of by the institutions. Thus, the head of the institution does not have full authority over them, and the faculty members are also transferable from one college to another. The principals of the colleges in many government institutions are appointed on the basis of seniority instead of a selection process. Due to the prevalence of these methods of appointing institutional leaders, the affiliated colleges enjoy less academic freedom than if they were to have strong leaders at the helm.

As mentioned earlier, one of the key recommendations of the Report of the Committee for the Evolution of the New Education Policy, 2016, is that universities should not have more than 100 affiliated colleges each.

Managing Teacher Shortages

Another important area of governance in India is teacher recruitment and teacher management. University and college teachers are not satisfied with the process of selection and appointment of teachers. They do not feel confident about the fairness of the selection process and instances of favouritism are commonplace. In some states, the Universities have ceased to recruit their own staff and the function is performed by the State Public Service Commission.

Also, many of the teachers in contractual positions are not actively involved in University governance process. They are not a part of the selection or screening committees and neither do they play any role in the setting of examination papers. They do not feel that they are an integral part of the university and are forever uncertain about their future. This leads to a considerable weakening of governance processes as without adequate representation, the voices of these teachers are not heard and their concerns are not addressed. This is also not good for teacher morale and motivation as teachers need to be attracted to the teaching profession. The situation is not any different for central and state universities. In many state universities, permanent positions lie vacant while teachers are hired on a contractual basis.

In many state universities, the appointments are made to the civil services and teachers are state government employees. Previously, teachers would spend their

whole working life in the college before retiring from the same college. However, now there is a freeze on recruitments in most state universities with permanent faculty seldom being recruited. Thus, colleges are increasingly relying on guest faculty to meet their workload needs, which creates an atmosphere of uncertainty.

Conclusion

While we have a large and massified higher education system, it suffers from various problems which can be linked to poor governance and management of higher education institutions. Thus, the issue of the governance of the higher education system is of particular relevance to the current framework of development in India. Although it represents only one aspect of a set of larger issues that the country faces, it does present a striking and powerful barrier to reform.

While the general understanding is that we should move towards greater autonomy for higher education institutions in India, in fact what we observe is interference at all levels, in particular, in the appointments of key functionaries in the decision-making bodies of universities. This leads to a compromise in the accountability of the institution. It is important to put in place a sustainable and independent framework to guide the senior management of the university in key decisions.

There should be greater decentralisation within the university hierarchy, including empowering university deans and giving more autonomy to departments. Also, the responsibility for course regulation, examinations and degree awarding should be given to affiliated colleges so that universities can focus on post-graduate programmes and research.

There is also a need to rationalise the number of regulatory bodies. Currently, the existence of multiple regulatory bodies is leading to greater inefficiencies. It would be better to involve the State Councils of Higher Education, which are operational in many states, to share powers with the UGC so that decisions can be made at the state level. Since a majority of the enrolment takes place in state universities and its affiliated colleges, empowering the State Councils could lead to greater devolution of powers to the states and encourage greater harmonisation and better coordination. Further, there should be greater efforts to recruit teachers on a permanent basis to alleviate the acute teacher shortages.

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➲ About the paper

The expansion and diversification of the higher education system have important implications for governance and management of the sector. This paper discusses the changing relationship between the state, market and higher education institutions. The role of the State has changed from direct control to 'steering from a distance', with a focus on outcome-based measures. The paper describes how public funding and regulations are impacting the autonomy and accountability of higher education institutions. A review of the trends in management shows that even with greater autonomy there is centralisation within higher education institutions and a decline in the power of the professoriate in India.

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