

Series Editors  
Pradeep Kumar Misra and Jinusha Panigrahi

2024

corhe research papers **18**

**Governance and Management of  
Higher Education Institutions in India  
An Empirical Analysis**

Garima Malik



**Centre for Policy Research in Higher Education**  
**National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration**  
17-B, Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi-110016 (INDIA)

---

# Governance and Management of Higher Education Institutions in India

## An Empirical Analysis

---

Garima Malik \*

### Abstract

The governance and management of universities has been important from the earliest times when universities were seats of higher learning. However, the complexity of these governance and management structures has increased in recent times due to the changes in the role of universities from pure centres of learning to institutions which provide an avenue for employability and finally employment. Moreover, against the backdrop of the expansion and diversification taking place globally and in India, there is a move to strengthen higher education institutions and all efforts are being made for developing institutions with strong governance and effective leadership. The three players influencing governance decisions in higher education are the state, the market, and the society at large. Changes in the governance imply changes in the way the relationship between the state, the market and the civil society are structured and monitored. The present paper based on a CPRHE study attempts to examine the governance and management of eight institutions through a three-layered framework of Government-University, Within-University and University-College relationship and finds that along different dimensions of autonomy, namely student admissions, teacher recruitment and promotion, financial management and curriculum development, the Central Universities are more autonomous than the State Universities.

---

\* Assistant Professor, Centre for Policy Research in Higher Education, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, 17-B Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi- 110016.

## Introduction

India is facing significant changes in the governance structure and management practices in higher education. At independence, like other sectors, higher education was the exclusive domain of the public sector during the 'commanding heights' of the Indian economy. The government played an active role in planning, funding and managing higher education institutions. 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 led to decisions being taken at the institutional level. There has been a tremendous transition in governance of higher education from the period following independence to post-globalised era.

The post-globalisation era witnessed shifts in higher education through several reforms, and the role of private sector has increased, with greater emphasis on the autonomy of the colleges. Education policies are now concentrated on the importance to improve the quality of higher education, funding, importance of professional courses, increasing private universities and deemed to be universities. Kapur and Mehta (2004) described the evolution of privatisation in Indian higher education using a phrase, "from half-baked socialism to half-baked capitalism." They argued that much of the massive privatisation has not resulted from ideological commitments of key actors but is instead a result of 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 higher education was seen in previous decades as something for elitist families, it is now seen as a merit good for everyone who can either compete for it or pay for it. Also, in the new knowledge economy higher order skills are needed for which higher education plays an important role. Higher education is no longer seen as an end in itself but rather as a means to gain productive employment therefore altering the expectations of the students who are going for higher education (Mok & Neubauer, 2016; Varghese & Malik, 2016).

While there is rapid growth and expansion in higher education India, still there exist several loopholes preventing the higher education sector to provide accessibility to all. Some of these problems lie rooted in governance and management practices. What is good governance? While there is no one generally accepted model of good governance, there are some key elements for a good governance framework: autonomy, accountability, transparency and effectiveness.



Among all these, the issue of autonomy is the most controversial issue in the higher education sector. As the structure of higher education has become increasingly diverse and complex in most countries, decentralising authority and providing more autonomy to higher education institutions has emerged as the right approach (Varghese & Martin, 2014). As pointed out by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 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 the interference of outside authorities.

Granting autonomy is not a one-way process or simply a set of policies to achieve successful higher education management. It is not only about what freedom higher education institutions are going to obtain from the government but also about what freedom the government is willing to give. This involves government provisions to adopt legal reforms, restructuring of public funding mechanisms, and personnel regulations (Capano et al, 2015; Enders et al, 2013).

A major problem is that states are micromanaging universities. This has adverse effects for quality of institutions. What is instead needed is more autonomy for universities with built-in accountability mechanisms. Some specific proposals given by Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) included the following:

- a. Carrying out legislation/amendments to legislations ensuring existence of State Universities as autonomous independent entities;
- b. Withdrawal of the state from certain detailed control and management functions and the devolution of responsibility to universities themselves;
- c. 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;
- d. Adoption of funding models that give institutions greater freedoms and that encourage them to explore new sources of income;
- e. 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;
- f. Gradual withdrawal of the state from decisions on appointment of chairpersons of the Executive Council or Vice-Chancellor and members of the Executive Council (Malik, 2017).

Governance of higher education is critical for improving the higher education system in India. Universities are transforming from institutions into organisations driven by accreditation, rankings, and controlled by professional managers. What is needed is reforms of the university governance system wherein institutions are self-governing entities. It is important to view these governance structures and processes through a classification of State-University relations; Within-University relations and University-College relations as done in this paper.

The plan of the paper is as follows. The next section discusses the massification of higher education and governance and management in Indian and international context. Section 3 discusses the types of Governance models and Section 4 analyses the empirical evidences related to governance and management in higher education. Section 5 discusses the Government-University relationship while Section 6 discusses the Governance structures in higher education. Section 7 deals with the Within-University relationship issues in terms of student admissions, teacher recruitment and promotion, financial management and curriculum development. Section 8 focuses on the University-College relationship. Section 9 and 10 examines key takeaways for governments and higher education institutions while the final section draws conclusion from the analysis in the paper.

### **Massification of Higher Education**

India is in the initial phase of massification with around 41.3 million students, 1113 Universities and 43, 796 Colleges (see Table 1). There has been a steep rise in gross enrolment ratio from 8.1 per cent in 2001-02 to 27.3 per cent in 2020-21 by a surge defined as massification of higher education in India (Varghese, 2015; MHRD, 2021). This rapid expansion and massification is placing substantial fiscal burden on the state leading to the state withdrawing funding. There is a move towards “corporatisation” of public universities, i.e., universities are being encouraged to become more managerial in approach and entrepreneurial in nature.

**Table 1: Higher Education Expansion in India: Institutions**

Year	Central Universities*	State Universities**	Deemed to be Universities***	Institutions of National Importance	Private Universities****	Total	Colleges
1950-51	3	24	-	-	-	27	578
1960-61	4	41	2	2	-	49	1,819
1970-71	5	79	9	9	-	102	3,277
1980-81	7	105	11	9	-	132	4,577
1990-91	10	137	29	9	-	185	6,627
2001-02	18	178	52	12	-	260	11,146
2005-06	20	205	95	18	7	345	17,625
2011-12	42	299	128	59	105	621	34,908
2012-13	43	308	127	61	122	665	35,829
2013-14	43	322	127	68	154	712	36,812
2014-15	44	329	122	75	182	760	38,498
2015-16	44	342	122	75	198	781	39,071
2016-17	45	358	122	100	234	864	40,026
2017-18	46	365	123	101	263	903	39,050
2018-19	47	385	124	127	305	993	39,931
2019-20	49	400	126	135	328	1043	42,343
2020-21	52	417	124	149	366	1113	43,796

Source: Varghese, 2015; MHRD, 2021

\*Central Universities and Central Open Universities

\*\*State Public Universities and State Open Universities

\*\*\*Deemed Universities (Govt.), Deemed Universities (Govt. Aided) and Deemed Universities (Private)

\*\*\*\*State Private Universities and State Private Open University

Along with the increase in number of HEIs, the enrolment has also witnessed a sharp increase since 1950-51, as seen in Table 2. 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 took place in leaps and bounds, reaching 41.3 million in 2020-21. The recent years have witnessed a particularly massive growth and the impressive growth in enrolment is partly due to growth of the private sector.

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

Year	Enrolments (in millions)	GER (%)
1950-51	0.2	
1960-61	0.6	1.5
1970-71	2	4.2
1980-81	2.8	4.7
1990-91	4.4	5.9
2001-02	8.8	8.1
2005-06	11.6	11.6
2011-12	28.5	19.4
2012-13	29.6	21.1
2013-14	32.3	23
2014-15	34.2	24.3
2015-16	34.6	24.5
2016-17	35.7	25.2
2017-18	36.64	25.8
2018-19	37.4	26.3
2019-20	38.5	27.1
2020-21	41.3	27.3

Source: Varghese, 2015; MHRD, 2021

### **Governance and Management in Higher Education**

Higher education has been facing dramatic changes over recent decades as participation rates of over 50 per cent are becoming the norm for countries as they achieve universalisation. There is diversification of provisions as new institution types have emerged, educational offerings within institutions have multiplied and private provision has expanded. Also new modes of delivery, i.e., more flexible ways of provision such as distance learning and e-learning have developed. Student bodies are more heterogeneous than before as female participation has increased and there are more mature students enrolled in higher education. Student bodies are also more diverse in terms of socio-economic background and ethnicity.

Further, there is growing internationalisation of higher education and also institutions are making a major contribution to research and innovation by creating new knowledge through scientific and technological research. A number of trends are also evident in funding arrangements as institutions have been under pressure to diversify their revenues and reduce their dependence on public funding. Also, knowledge production and dissemination are no longer self-contained activities carried out only by universities. Universities are only one amongst many actors involved in the production

of knowledge (Gibbons, 1998). International rankings have contributed to the pressure on university governance. Salmi links high-ranking universities to three connected factors: concentration of talent, abundant funding and appropriate governance (Salmi, 2009; Altbach & Salmi, 2011).

Autonomy is not sufficient to establish and maintain world-class universities. Other crucial governance features are needed, such as leadership, a strategic vision of institutional direction, a philosophy of success and excellence and a culture of constant reflection, organisational learning and change. Institutional governance therefore becomes a vital element that will permit them to anticipate, design, implement, monitor and appraise effective and efficient policies. Countries are recognising the importance of institutional governance arrangements which reflect the increasingly diverse interests being served.

Indian higher education too is going through major changes in the initial stages of massification. In such an environment of massification and diversification governance and management is becoming ever more complex. There is a vast literature on governance and management, internationally, and numerous case studies of countries and their institutions. However, we find that when we come to the Indian context the literature is fairly limited. Thus, this study hopes to make a contribution to the existing literature. This paper describes various concepts like governance, good governance, global governance and new public management. It clearly analyses the origin of all the concepts and their traditional linkages not only in the case of India but also in the world in general. It also develops a conceptual framework for the study.

### ***Government and Governance in Higher Education***

Governance means 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.

Since governance is the process of decision making and the process by which decisions are implemented, an analysis of the governance focuses on the formal and informal actors involved in decision making and implementing the decisions made and the formal and informal structures that have been set in to arrive at and implement the decision.



The terms governance and good governance are increasingly being used in various literature dealing with developmental studies. The concept of governance describes the process of decision making and the process by which decisions are implemented or not implemented. But the concept good governance means proper implementation of decisions essentially without abuse and corruption, by adapting values and regulations with the State at its core. However, under the current ethos of privatisation, these norms are gradually being replaced by more market-oriented values such as efficiency, productivity, profitability and competitiveness. In India too, purposive and development-oriented administration has become a priority issue. In order to cope with the emerging challenges of society and economy, a high level of organisational effectiveness has become a must. A growing consensus seems to be emerging towards achieving the goals of accountability, citizen friendly government, transparency, right to information and improving performance and integrity of public services at the central and state levels. Decentralisation of power, participation of citizens in local decision making and implementation of schemes affecting their livelihood and quality of life are essential aspects of good governance.

Good governance is not something that the government can achieve or do by itself. It depends on the cooperation and involvement of a large number of citizens and organisations. These requirements are considered not only essential for good governance but are important for Sustainable Human Development. In nearly every successful governance model, the governing body will be responsible for the following:

- Creating a vision,
- Securing resources,
- Defining clear roles and responsibilities,
- Establishing benchmarks for performance and monitoring them, and
- Being accountable to key stakeholders

### ***Governance in International Context***

In terms of external governance structures there are new relationships emerging and the relation between state, market and higher education institutions has also evolved over the years. Dobbins and Knill (2017) deliberate on three questions in the European context: How does the state react to transnational pressures for change? How is transnationally inspired policy change 'digested' by the pre-existing country-specific governance structures? Also, to what extent have national higher education (HE) systems converged on a common governance model? Their empirical findings reveal that while general HE governance and financial governance is moving towards the market-oriented model such is not the case with personnel autonomy.



Moreover, while France seemed to have deviated substantially from its dominant state-centric model, Germany did not alter its orientation toward the Humboldtian ideal type even while making incremental changes. Neither did Italy change due to the presence of strong academic players and a strongly involved state bureaucracy. In the Portuguese case, the work by Magalhães et al (2013) tries to analyse the governance reform in Portuguese higher education by examining the consequences of its implementation on governance bodies, structures and processes. In doing so the new governance narrative has been in the light of a European trend rather than simply the implementation of the Legal Framework of Higher Education (Regime Jurídico das Instituições de Ensino Superior (RJIES)) in 2007 influenced by 'new public management' (Amaral & Magalhães, 2007). Donina & Hasanefendic (2019) looked into the supranational pressures on national systems and consequently institutional governance in Netherlands, Portugal and Italy and their major findings indicate that since a large number of alternatives on the features of central university institutional governance are legally admissible to universities in Portugal and Italy than in the Netherlands, it leads to a more heterogeneous implementation there.

Kwiek (2015) explored how selected university governance models developed in specific national contexts, for instance in Western Europe and the USA, are applicable to other national contexts like Poland, in this case particularly the applicability of the collegial model. The findings suggest that Poland could perhaps be one of the last of the remnants of the collegial model as we know it, however they are being increasingly subject to national and supranational pressures of reform.

In the main findings, Hoare (2007) concludes that the governance structure, i.e., the relationship between the government of Belize (via the Ministry of Education) and the higher education system, is more of a state control than a state supervisory, using the Neave and Van Vught (1994) model of governance. Thus, the absence of a buffer entity in the form of a council of higher education creates a situation in which higher education institutions interact directly with the Ministry of Education, politicians and government officials in Belize.

In a review carried out by Frølich and Caspersen (2015) and comparisons between Europe, North America, South America, Australia, Africa and Asia, New Public Management (NPM) reforms are viewed as the main driver of institutional governance reforms in higher education. The functioning of governing boards are major themes when university responses are examined in Europe and in North America and Australia. In sharp contrast, privatisation and financial constraints seem to be the main types of policy reform tools in Asia. However, in South America, Africa and, to some extent Asia,

the drivers of reforms appear to be more specifically related to the local political situation (Abugre, 2018; Hayden & Thiep, 2007).

University governance has been given less attention in the higher education research literature. Moreover, what has been written on the topic is not based on empirical research. The relatively small numbers of research studies that have been published focus on governing boards or on governance mechanisms associated with finance/resource allocation issues (Dobbins et al, 2011). In fact there are few empirical studies of academic governance in any system, including the United States, and none in Canada except for surveys of senate composition in the early 1970s (Jones et al, 2004).

Gul et al. (2010) reviews the main trends, changes and challenges in higher education, and goes on to understand the responses developed by European Union and Turkey. Also, the changes in the landscape of higher education and the roles and autonomy of HEIs are analysed. In the case of China, Han and Xu (2019) investigate the state's changing governance of higher education between 1978 and 2018 with a proposed analytic framework. The study reveals that the logics of HE governance in China have moved from direct controls to indirect supervision, with the state adhering essential powers over HEIs. Thus, when it comes to curriculum and university appointments state exercises control over these aspects.

### **Types of Governance Models**

Governance involves structures and decision-making processes. 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. Governance focusses on the rules and mechanisms by which various stakeholders influence decisions, how they are held accountable, and to whom. In the context of higher education, 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.' In other words, governance encompasses 'the framework in which an institution pursues its goals, objectives and policies in a coherent and co-ordinated manner,' in order to answer the questions: 'Who is in charge, and what are the sources of legitimacy for executive decision-making by different actors?'

Management, on the other hand, 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 for internal and external stakeholders. Despite the 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 the two should not be overlooked.

The role of governance on college and university campuses is described as three functions. First, there is organisational governance. Second, there is faculty governance. Third, there is shared governance. Organisational governance consists of four models: (a) collegial institutions, (b) bureaucratic institutions, (c) political institutions, and (d) anarchical institutions.

Bureaucratic model is associated with the work of Weber who argued that in formal organisations bureaucracy is the most efficient form of management. A bureaucratic institution is referred to as a hierarchical control system where decisions are made through divisions of labour, rights, and responsibilities according to rules and regulations. It emphasises the importance of formal chains of command in the hierarchical authority structure. Those holding office positions are responsible to superordinate to conduct their duties satisfactorily.

The Bureaucratic model stresses the importance of goal orientation of the organisation. Institutions have goals which are determined by the heads and senior functionaries in the system. Further the model indicates a division of labour where staff teach different subjects according to their disciplinary specialisation. The bureaucracies have rules and regulations governing instead of personal initiative. Bureaucratic models also have impersonal relationships with staff and with clients. Through this kind of neutrality, it's possible to isolate the effects of individuals on decision making. In Bureaucracies, the recruitment and career progression of staff is based on merit. Appointments are based on qualifications and experience and promotion depends on expertise demonstrated in previous positions.

A collegial institution is described as a community of individuals with shared interests where decisions are made by consensus. Collegiality is a collective process of decision making in which academics play an integral role. One of the main assumptions underlying collegiality is that conflict can be eliminated through consensus-based discussions. Collegial models are normative in orientation and idealistic in nature.

Its advocates are of the firm belief that decision-making should be based on democratic principles but it is not necessary that these principles determine the nature of management. Thus, it is more of an idealistic model than one founded firmly in

practice. Collegial approaches to decision making are slow and policy proposals require approval of several committees.

Collegial models have the basic assumption that power is shared among members of the organisation and they are thought to share a common understanding. Collegial models are particularly well suited for schools and colleges with a significant number of professional staff. These models also assume that professionals have a right to share in the decision-making processes. Such shared decisions have a better chance of being better informed and implemented in a more efficient manner. Such models also assume a common set of values which emerge from the socialisation during training and beginning years of professional practice. Such values guide the managerial activities and lead to a common set of shared educational objectives.

A political institution is a system of coalitions and interest groups where major decisions are based on whichever group is in power according to the timing and type of issues. While the bureaucratic approach focusses on formal authority and rules the political perspective examines how groups further their interests through formal and informal interactions. Thus, the political model examines governance through the coordination of conflict while the bureaucratic model emphasises vertical coordination and the collegial model emphasises horizontal coordination.

Political models assume that policies and decisions emerge through negotiation and bargaining. They are often described as 'micropolitics' as the interaction and political ideologies of social systems of teachers, administrators in schools and colleges. Thus, we observe that national and local level politics affect the context within which schools and colleges work.

Political models focus on group activity instead of an institution as a whole. They concern themselves with interests and interest groups. There are personal and professional interests and being part of interest groups comes out to be a major way in which individuals seek and achieve their aims.

Political models are descriptive and analytical while others are more normative in nature. However, political models have their limitations as they underplay the importance of organisational structure as a constraint on the type of political activity. They focus too much on interest groups and less attention to the institutional level.

An anarchical institution pertains to colleges and universities as organised anarchy where decisions tend to be a result of the system rather than clearly controlled structure. Universities are anarchical in that they have problematic goals, unclear technology and fluid member participation. Sometimes the confusion and complexity



surrounding actual decision-making is undermined by theorists. The features of such a model are (i) ill-defined goals, problematic preferences and inconsistent identities, (ii) unclear technology: Its unclear how to solve problems as the solutions lack evidence and (iii) fluid participation and (iv) quasi-independent streams of problems, solutions, participants and choice opportunities (Austin & Jones, 2016; Bush, 2003).

There are significant weaknesses associated with both managerial and collegial forms of governance. Not all scholarship represents collegiality and managerialism as dichotomy – some argue that blended models exist. Collegiality and Managerialism are often projected as polarising cases (see Table 3), however recent research shows that these concepts are not as dichotomous as argued (Tight, 2014). Moreover, there have been points in history when one of these models dominated. Up until the 1960s and 1970s, elite education dominated the collegium, was seen as more prevalent and was, due to the small size and numbers, an effective model with democratic decision-making. Bringing in management models in public organisations, including universities, was argued for in reaction to what was seen as too much of bureaucracy (Sahlin & Eriksson-Zetterquist, 2016)

**Table 3: A Comparison of Three Models of University Governance**

	<b>Political Model</b>	<b>Bureaucratic Model</b>	<b>Collegial Model</b>
Basic image	Political system	Hierarchical bureaucracy	Professional community
Basic Theoretical Foundations	Conflict theory Interest group theory Open-systems theory Community power theory	Weber's bureaucratic model Classical formal systems model	Human relations approach to organisations Literature on professionalism
Conflict	Viewed as normal; key to analysis of policy influence	Viewed as abnormal; to be controlled by bureaucratic sanctions	Viewed as abnormal; eliminated in a "true community of scholars"
Social Structure	Pluralistic; fractured by subcultures and divergent interest groups	Unitary; integrated by the formal bureaucracy	Unitary; united by the "community of scholars"
Legislative Process (i.e., decision making)	Negotiation, bargaining, and political influence processes	Rationalistic, formal bureaucratic procedures	Shared, collegial decisions
Policy	Emphasis on formulation	Emphasis on execution	Unclear; probably more emphasis on formulation

Source: Baldrige, 1971

### **Governance and Management in Higher Education: Empirical Evidences**

This paper is an outcome of a comprehensive research study based on field visits, interaction with various stakeholders and review of literature in the subject. The objective of the study was threefold, first to investigate some policy considerations regarding governance, second to analyse current practices, and third to recommend some “best practices” to the universities’ governance. The paper is based on the CPRHE research project focussing on the issues and problems related to universities governance in India. India has central and state universities. Most public universities have affiliated colleges few of which are private aided colleges while others are government colleges. To understand the governance and management of higher education in India it is important to study different categories of institutions. The research studied one central university, i.e. Banaras Hindu University and three state universities i.e. Savitribai Phule Pune University, University of Rajasthan and Bharathiar University, and their affiliated colleges.

The universities were selected partly on the basis of geographical regions in order to create an All-India representation. Another criterion was to have some central and some state universities to give a comparative picture. We also have some affiliated government colleges, aided and unaided colleges.

This study has followed a collaborative research model by constituting a research team in each of the case study institutions. CPRHE organised three methodology workshops for the research team during three important stages of research. It helped to develop a collective understanding about the core objective of the study, data collection, analysis and writing of case study reports. Additionally, the author visited each of the case study institutions and took part in the data collection process as given in Table 4 and 5. The study utilised a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods for the collection and analysis of data/information. The empirical findings are derived from the results of a questionnaire-based survey administered to students and faculty members<sup>1</sup>. Based on the empirical study, the author of this paper and the research team members from the 4 case study states involved in the study have prepared one synthesis report and four state research reports.

---

<sup>1</sup> Principal component analysis was carried out to test the questionnaire scales of the teacher questionnaire used in the research and the measures found the scales to be adequate in measuring the underlying constructs. Also, reliability and validity was checked and found to be adequate.



**Table 4: University and Affiliated College**

S. No	University	Affiliated College
1.	Banaras Hindu University	Vasanta College for Women
2.	Bharathiar University	Government Arts College
3.	Savitribai Phule Pune University	S. M. Joshi College
4.	University of Rajasthan	Kanoria College for Women

**Table 5: List of University Departments**

University	Departments
<b>Banaras Hindu University</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Economics</li> <li>2. Education</li> <li>3. English</li> <li>4. Health Science</li> <li>5. Geography</li> <li>6. Home Science</li> </ol>
<b>Savitribai Phule Pune University</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Botany</li> <li>2. Chemistry</li> <li>3. Economics</li> <li>4. English</li> <li>5. Political Science</li> </ol>
<b>Bharathiar University</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Business Administration</li> <li>2. Economics</li> <li>3. English</li> <li>4. Management</li> <li>5. Physics</li> <li>6. Zoology</li> </ol>
<b>University of Rajasthan</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Business Administration</li> <li>2. Chemistry</li> <li>3. English</li> <li>4. Physics</li> <li>5. Political Science</li> </ol>

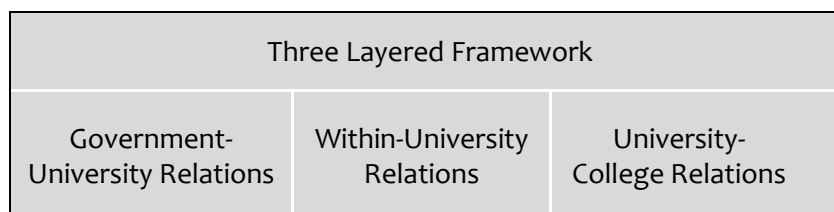
Field visits were conducted to provide support to the research teams and also develop a common understanding by conducting interviews and focus group discussions; i) Interviews with the key institutional leaders: a) Vice-Chancellor; b) Registrar; c) Controller of Examinations; d) Dean; e) Finance Officer; f) Department Head; g) Governing Body; h) College Principal, ii) Focus group discussions with the teachers; iii) Focus group discussions were conducted with the students.



### **Conceptual Framework**

In India, higher education system has massified and there has been a diversification of higher education institutions. This diversification is in terms of courses, mode of delivery and providers. In this expanded and diversified system governance is becoming increasingly complex. It's important to view these governance structures and processes in the Indian context through a three-layered conceptual framework (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**



#### **Government-University Relations**

HEIs exist in different environments from market-led to state controlled, and of varying degrees in between these polar positions. This research focussed on public universities in India which are funded by the government. However, there are variations in the funding of Central and State universities. While Central universities get their funding from the UGC and Ministry of Education thus have one layer of control. In comparison, State universities get funding from the state government and therefore have multiple layers of control.

The fundamental issue is whether the state is able to finance public higher education institutions in light of its unavoidable further massification and constantly rising costs of advanced research activities. What is important in terms of State-University relations is how the university interacts with the Ministry of Education, Directorate of Collegiate Education and State Councils of Higher Education in the case of state universities. For Central universities it is their relationship with MHRD, UGC. There is a difference in the funding pattern for State and Central Universities and it is seen that in general Central universities have adequate funds relative to State universities which are facing a fund crunch.

The new policies in higher education institutions consist of a mixture of: reduced direct control of administration and use of financial resources; development of semi-structured interventionist policies, where a relatively tight frame exists, within which institutions enjoy freedom to make decisions; establishment of a system of

positive and negative sanctions based on criteria and procedures whereby goals are partly defined by the government, partly left to academics, institutional policies, or to the market. If they lived up to expectations, institutions were given more autonomy. The new governmental steering philosophy thus opened the door to more pronounced competition. Universities were expected to display more competitive and managerial behaviour. There is also a shift from input based models to more output and performance based models.

New governance arrangements have clearly reduced the collective influence of academics over decision making in academic institutions. There is a marked move from the state to the market in Indian higher education. Granting of autonomy is a step in this direction, a stage between the state and market. Thus, in this context more autonomy is being granted to institutions to mobilise resources. University autonomy can be substantive or procedural. Substantive autonomy involves freedom to design curriculum, evolve research policy, determine student admission policies, staff recruitment criteria and criteria for the awarding of degrees. Procedural autonomy implies freedom to prepare and administer budget and financial administration and procure and enter into contract with others outside the institution. The manifestation of this autonomy is in terms of strategic plans, targets, visions and objectives. We are basically examining autonomy in major areas like student admissions, teacher recruitment and financial management.

Autonomy is, however, not the absence of regulations and is often seen by decision makers as a way of reducing public funding. But it is also true that Central universities which are more autonomous in functioning have higher public funds while State universities experience less autonomy, more frequent interference and also enjoy less public funding. Granting of autonomy should be accompanied by core funding of the institutions while maintaining the freedom of the institutions to mobilise additional funds. It should not be seen as a way to withdraw public funds. If that happens it will lead to lower quality. It is important to also have capacity development efforts at the institutional level. Prioritisation of activities, preparation of institutional plans, mobilisation of resources, monitoring of plan implementation become key elements of institutional governance and management.

### ***Within-University Relations***

What is essential to understand is not just the grant of autonomy but how such autonomy is to be implemented. In terms of within university relations what we examined is the nature of internal governance structures, i.e. level of

centralisation/decentralisation. We are interested to know whether decision making is centralised or participatory, i.e., how much of the autonomy given to the universities is passed on to the teachers or is it highly centralised in the office of the Vice-Chancellor.

Grant of autonomy is also accompanied by efforts towards increasing accountability measures. Thus, performance evaluation, performance based contracts, performance based funding, competitive funding, external quality assurance agencies and internal quality assurance processes are indications of accountability measures. Accountability involves moving towards more output and outcome based measures from being input based.

We also examined various governing bodies and their composition. i.e. how many internal members are there and how many external members. Also, whether these external members are from government, academics or industry.

### ***University-College Relations***

In the University-College relations it is important to know what is the level of autonomy the colleges have and what is the nature of that autonomy. Also how are teacher recruitments made. In government colleges teachers are often recruited to the system, i.e., they are civil servants and are transferable as compared to being recruited by the university. This has implications for how teachers are managed and also for how much autonomy can be exercised by the college.

Another important aspect is that of leadership, i.e., how is the appointment of Vice-Chancellors is made. Is there any interference in these appointments or are they made by independent search committees? This is true of other key functionaries as well, such as Deans, Heads of Departments, Controller of Examinations. We want to know how the appointments are made at the university level and also at the college level, i.e., Principals and Heads of Departments.

### **Government-University Relations and Governance Structure**

There have been major transformations in recent times in the relationship between Universities and the State, thus impacting internal governance structures as well as the way institutions function and adapt in India. European and Japanese scholars argue that those reforms which enhance autonomy strengthen leadership and increase competition introducing an external element into governance as an outcome of New Public Management theory. On the other hand, U.S. and U.K. scholars find them as steps to create more competitive institutions (Shattock, 2014).



Thus, there are differing views and some claim that it is necessary to increase the government's role in higher education governance, while others support opening higher education to competition and market forces and reducing the power of the political and government element.

The governance of the Indian higher education sector is undergoing massive changes. Just as the Indian economy underwent liberalisation in the 1990s, the education system is gradually being opened up for change and decentralisation. In particular, the federal and state governments are gradually giving higher education institutions more decision and spending power. This represents a move away from detailed government control over spending, teaching, and curriculum decisions, which required frequent approval from federal or state government officials. However, the important question is that whether this autonomy is being passed on to the professoriate or the power gets centralised in the offices of the Vice-Chancellor.

During the last two decades there have been significant changes in the interactions between governments and universities. There have been many theories applied in analysing issues related to change in strategic policy and the relationship between the government and universities. Agency Theory has emerged as a useful and important theoretical framework in the discipline of strategic management (Ahmad, Farley, & Naidoo, 2012) and in empirical research on policy change in higher education (Kivistö, 2008). There are two agency problems, namely, moral hazard and adverse selection. Adverse selection occurs when the principal is incapable of obtaining sufficient information about the background, motivation and capabilities of the agent/s before entering the contract. Moral hazard occurs when both parties enter into a contract to achieve some goals but it is difficult in reality for the principal to closely monitor the activities of the agent/s and measure the outcomes. Universities are aligning education activities to institutional strategy, monitoring productivity and profitability. The size and complexity of organisations contribute to the agency problem of goal conflicts.

The relationship between government and university is crucial in influencing the outputs of government educational policy as well as the university productivity. Governments have made dramatic changes to the size, structure, funding arrangements and focus of the HEIs so that they can better address public demand and compete as profitable organisations in the global market. In recent decades, public expenditure on education has actually declined and this confronts the HEIs with added pressure in achieving institutional goals and government objectives at the same time.

The concern about autonomy of the university and academic freedom has been an ongoing one, often forming the basis of public discussion in India. Much of the debate has focused on the external interference in the functioning of the university – the political onslaught on academic freedom; governmental monitoring, financial controls, and similar other interventions from outside the university system. In the next chapter we focus on the internal dimension of relations within higher education institutions, but here focus on government-university relations.

In interviews with the institutional leaders, the following points were highlighted:

*Vision is to make the university a leading centre of excellence.*

*Best quality education has to reach the masses at an affordable cost.*

*Issue of access and equity has to be addressed while keeping in mind rankings.*

*There is a perception that nothing can be done in state universities. However, experience tells otherwise. If there is a will it can be done and people must know leadership cares for them.*

*There is very limited autonomy. Academic Council should take all decisions on academic matters. It should not be imposed. More autonomy should be granted.*

Autonomy relates to the self-governance of the university without external interference (Aithal & Kumar, 2019). Academic freedom entails the freedom of an individual academic to hold whatever views, without penalty. Although academic autonomy and freedom are critical to the academic function, they are not beyond dispute. There is always a continuous debate on what are the proper boundaries of legitimate academic autonomy and freedom. These boundaries are not fixed and keep on shifting. The shifting is often caused by government intervention into university education by way of subsidising it. Academic freedom of any university teacher depends on the autonomy of that university although even an autonomous university may nonetheless restrict the academic freedom of its staff members. This underscores that university autonomy is a necessary though not a sufficient condition for academic freedom. Academic freedom is therefore distinguishable from university autonomy.

The main mission of the university is to pursue academic excellence through teaching and research for the benefit of the community. The university staff and students also form part of the community so that the university is involved in a complex relationship that includes society, the government and the community. The university is also dependent on the financial resources from the state. The autonomy of the university is therefore not absolute but limited because the university is not only dependent on the state for the subsidy, but it also has to act within the law. The very

fact that universities are subsidised by the government have led people to believe that a university cannot claim full autonomy from the government.

The university is generally regarded as autonomous in relation to matters such as the appointment of some members of the governing body; the composition of its academic bodies (the senate and the faculty boards); the determination of priorities in research and teaching; generation of funds and the allocation of funds received; the appointment, dismissal and conditions of service of academic and other personnel; admission to, selection for and refusal of registration; recommendations on the establishment of faculties; the creation of degrees and the designing of curricula; the determination of the contents of curricula; the examination for and conferment of degrees; and the general internal management administration and discipline.

There is a definite link between academic freedom, university autonomy and university governance. In order to perform all these functions effectively, and to justify autonomy, the university has to have an effective and efficient management and administration. It has to have organs and officers to perform its powers and functions. The university governance provides the framework, the authorised mechanisms for the realisation of university autonomy. It is necessary to outline these structures of governance so as to determine what role they play in effectively upholding university autonomy.

University Autonomy is not a static concept. It is changing all the time. In order to circumvent excessive and unnecessary government intervention into universities, universities themselves will have to insist not only on their autonomy and academic freedom, but also on accountability and responsibility. It is not always easy to say when government intervention is legitimate and when excessive and unwarranted. But it can be said that government involvement in universities is legitimate if it is aimed, not at imposing a particular ideology on the university, but to ensure accountability. University autonomy and academic freedom should not be used to attain goals for which they were not meant, but rather for the effective attainment of the functions of the university, which are teaching and learning.

### **Governance Structures in Higher Education**

The present research was undertaken to study the governance structures in the four case study universities and affiliated colleges as compared in Table 6 and 7. The Central University (BHU) is characterised by having a BHU Court which acts as an advisory body and its functions are to advise the Visitor in respect of matters which may be referred to it for advice.

In the case of the three state universities (Bharathiar, Pune University and University of Rajasthan) there is a Senate, Syndicate and Academic Council (Standing Committee on Academic Affairs in the case of Bharathiar University). If we look at the composition of the decision making bodies, we can see that except in the case of BHU there is political representation and high levels of bureaucratic control in all the state universities. If we see University of Rajasthan we find that there are two members of the State Legislature nominated by the Speaker. This is true for Bharathiar University and Pune University as well. There are also Directors of Higher Education; The Director of Technical Education; The Director of Medical Education all represented on the Senate.

The Executive Council in BHU is the executive body of the University and has charge of the management and administration of the revenue and property of the University and the conduct of all administrative affairs of the University. The Academic Council is the academic body of the University and, subject to the Act, the Statutes and Ordinances, has charge of the organisation of study and research in the University and the Colleges, the courses of study and the examination of students and the conferment of ordinary and honorary degrees. In the case of University of Rajasthan there is an Academic council as well as the Senate and Syndicate. Academic Council has control and regulation of and is responsible for the maintenance of the standards of teaching and examination in the University. It advises the Syndicate regarding the institution of teaching posts; proposes to the Syndicate Ordinances regarding admission to the University; advises the Syndicate regarding the institution of Boards of Studies.

In the case of Pune University, there is a Management Council as well as the Senate and Syndicate which is the principal executive authority to formulate statutes and forward the same to the Senate for approval and make Ordinances to administer the affairs of the university. Pune University additionally has the Board of College and University Development which is responsible for planning development of the university, both physical and academic, and conducts academic audit of the university departments, institutions, colleges and recognised institutions. It also plans, monitors, guides and co-ordinates undergraduate and post-graduate academic programme and development of affiliated colleges. It also has a Board of Examinations which is the authority for conducting the examinations and making policy decisions in regard to organising and holding examinations, improving the system of examinations appointing the paper setters, examiners, moderators, and also prepares the schedule of dates of holding examinations and declaration of the results.

**Table 6: Governing Bodies in Case Study Universities**

University of Rajasthan	Savitribai Phule Pune University	Bharathiar University	Banaras Hindu University
			Visitor-President
Chancellor	Chancellor	Chancellor-Governor of Tamil Nadu	Chancellor-elected by BHU Court
Vice-Chancellor	Vice-Chancellor	Vice-Chancellor	Vice-Chancellor
			BHU Court-Advisory body
Senate	Senate	Executive Council-Senate	Executive Council
Syndicate	Syndicate	Academic Council-Syndicate	Academic Council
Academic Council			
	Management Council		
		Standing Committee on Academic Affairs-Advises Syndicate	
Board of Studies	Board of Studies	Board of Studies	Board of Studies
	Board of Examination		
Board of Inspection	Board of College and University Development		
Finance Committee	Finance Committee	Finance Committee	Finance Committee

Source: The Author

**Table 7: Governing Bodies in Case Study Colleges**

Kanoria Mahila Mahavidyalaya (Private Unaided)	S.M. Joshi College (Private Aided)	Government Arts College (Autonomous)	Vasanta College for Women (Private Aided)
Management Committee	Management Committee	Governing Council	Management Committee
Manager		Academic Council	Manager
Principal	Principal	Principal	Principal
Finance Committee	Finance Committee	Finance Committee	Finance Committee
Staff Council	Staff Council		Staff Council

Source: The Author



The degree of university autonomy is most important in the relationship between universities and government. Universities should have more freedom and independence to realise their goals and that in turn, meant giving them more autonomy. However, there are challenges in what is meant by autonomy, what are the forms that best meet the needs of governments and institutions and other stakeholders. There was a highly regulated system in the period post-independence even while commissions like the Radhakrishnan Commission stressed on university autonomy.

In India, universities should have autonomy of administration with minimal interference from the government or UGC. Currently the UGC, Central and State Governments have near full control over the functioning of universities in India. From time to time they interfere in the decision-making of universities. Often the government appointees are sitting on the boards of the universities. Universities need to seek prior approval before introducing academic programmes and disciplines. Faculty hiring is subject to interference from the government and judiciary.

The governance of higher education in India moved from state control to a model based on state supervision. Since independence there has been a move towards granting more autonomy to higher education institutions in India and such has been highlighted in various committees and commission reports. Thus, in the context of new public management there have been moves to steer from a distance instead of direct control.

The neo-liberal thinking as well as structural adjustment programmes of the 1980s questioned the rationale for continued state investment in higher education. They made an argument for a reduced public investment in education in general, and a diversion of public investment from higher to primary education in developing countries like India. Moreover, market-friendly reforms and globalisation further paved the way for expansion of higher education without placing strain on the government funds. More recently universities in India are being encouraged to be more entrepreneurial and raise their own finances instead of depending solely on the government.

In India, organisations like the University Grants Commission introduced performance monitoring, and the use of external and internal quality assurance mechanisms became common with the inception of National Assessment and Accreditation Council. These buffer bodies redefined the relationship between government and institutions. These buffer institutions provided policy support,

ensured quality control, regulated the growth of private institutions, and implemented many accountability measures to ensure better performance.

However, as recent trends in UGC regulations on graded autonomy have shown, not all higher education institutions benefit from autonomy in the same way. In fact better performing institutions are given more academic and financial autonomy to run their affairs. In order to understand this phenomenon better we need to go deeper into what is academic and financial autonomy. In India autonomy itself is often misunderstood to be complete freedom but in fact autonomy must be accompanied with greater accountability otherwise it defeats the very purpose for which it was introduced. Moreover, there is a need for core funding of public higher education institutions. Autonomy should not be a way to withdraw government funding and encourage institutions to mobilise own resources.

In higher education institutions, more autonomy should in fact lead institutions to adopt more democratic processes and heads of department and deans should be elected in institutions and committee systems should be introduced. Thus, institutional management style should become more transparent, accountable, participatory, and inclusive. These would also necessitate changes in financial management and budgetary initiatives.

The studies in the eight higher education institutions demonstrates that government intervention in the form of regulations can be deemed necessary to enforce accountability measures. Thus, we can even ascertain that with the introduction of market principles the role of the state is being redefined not reduced. The role is redefined in terms of developing a framework for operation and regulating of the system instead of its traditional roles of financing, managing, and controlling institutions of higher education. The higher education governance indicators are given in Table 8.

**Table 8: Higher Education Governance Indicators: Public Universities in States**

Case Study Institution States	Merit-based recruitment and promotion	Formal or informal censorship: curriculum, content, research, academic expression	Institutional autonomy: programme offerings, accreditation, programme management, student admissions, graduation requirements	Institutional autonomy: budget, professorial remuneration	Institutional autonomy: academic recruitment, promotion and retention	Research productivity requirements as condition of employment/promotion	Professorial autonomy: research and teaching	Earned PhD required for appointment to academic posts (ranks of assistant professor and above or equivalent)
Uttar Pradesh	There is no clear and objective system in place. Posts are declared falling under reserved category or are withdrawn from reserved category at the will of those at the top (in most cases this is an issue of lack of information).	Freedom to conduct research. Curriculum decided by teachers approved by Board of Studies. In practice the difficulties in getting approvals discourages genuine researchers thus making it difficult to do research projects.	All India entrance test for student admissions. Autonomy in student admissions.	Centrally funded by UGC, MHRD	UGC guidelines on CAS	UGC guidelines on API	Yes	Yes
Maharashtra	Faculty members said that the promotions were not conducted in a fair manner.	Freedom to conduct research. Curriculum decided by teachers approved by Board of Studies	Autonomy in student admissions	Centre and State government funding. Funding is adequate	UGC guidelines on CAS	UGC guidelines on API	Yes	Yes
Rajasthan	Promotions are not conducted in timely manner. There is dissatisfaction with promotion and retirement benefits.	Freedom to conduct research. Curriculum decided by teachers approved by Board of Studies	Autonomy in student admissions	Centre and State government funding. Funding is not adequate.	UGC guidelines on CAS	UGC guidelines on API	Yes	Yes
Tamil Nadu	No direct incentives are provided for contribution to teaching or research. Policies related to considering past service is ambiguous and inconsistent.	Freedom to conduct research. Curriculum decided by teachers approved by Board of Studies	Autonomy in student admissions	Centre and State government funding. Resources are scarce.	UGC guidelines on CAS	UGC guidelines on API	Yes	Yes

Source: Adapted from Jarvis & Mok, 2019



## Within-University Relationship

Governance in higher education is linked to university autonomy and academic freedom. Right from the beginnings of the university and down to the present century, autonomy or self-government has been the key component of the ideology of institutions of higher learning (Sifuna, 1998). Increasingly we find the trend in governance is that governments are 'steering from a distance' and moving away from direct control.

Universities were always autonomous entities but with massification taking place there have been immense pressures from the state for accountability from higher education institutions. It is argued that high levels of autonomy might lead to higher education being unresponsive to the larger needs of society while, on the other hand, too much accountability might be counterproductive.

The new mechanisms have brought dramatic changes in higher education governance as pointed out by Shin (2013): Funding has become the major policy tool in the relationship between government and university; Managerialism and efficiency have become the main concern of university administrators; Formal forms of governance are moving toward private corporation status; and academics are evaluated by external evaluators, e.g., research funding agencies.

'New managerialism' has permeated the working of universities globally. The ideas of NPM began to take shape in the 1980s and 1990s with the rise of neoliberalist governments around the world. The New Public Management is the form of management paradigm in which private sector principles are adopted by the public sector to increase efficiency and greater output orientation. It involves the introduction of market reforms and grew popular in the face of increasing discontent with the public sector. However, despite the decentralisation of power, universities are more controlled by government agencies and their indicators. This is a form of decentralised centralisation. Under managerialism a target culture is emerging and we are witnessing the growth of the academic-manager. Thus, although the university appears to be in a sense deregulating the state has strengthened its control through evaluation and funding mechanisms and we need to question whether the university has more institutional autonomy under neoliberalism (Shin, 2013).

Higher education institutions in India created governing bodies to take decisions, develop staff recruitment and management policies, and new study programmes and courses, define institutional strategies, and regulate student admissions. Institutions diversified their sources of funding, mobilised resources, and allocated them internally

based on widely accepted and objectively verifiable criteria. The areas of changes in governance and management include domains like student admissions, curriculum development, financial management and teacher recruitment.

### **Student Admissions**

Central universities, like the BHU in the sample, have more university autonomy which has brought about major changes in the management of the university system, especially with regard to admissions and student-related issues. Undergraduate and Postgraduate admissions though managed manually earlier are now managed electronically, using the internet and online platforms.

Majority of the teachers and institutional leaders noted that there were some improvements in student admissions at the Banaras Hindu University since they had facilitated the process of online admissions. They were of the opinion that admissions were well-controlled and more transparent and the introduction of the computerised system and enhanced public education has shortened the wait time. Though the University has of late improved the admission process significantly, still the present process is very lengthy and stretches over two months. This has negative impact on teaching and other administrative works. Teacher's involvement in administrative work is excessive. Students coming from remote areas also faced difficulty with the online admission portal. Therefore, while the admission system is being managed well and in the last couple of years changes have been brought that has further improved the system, yet there is scope for improvement.

The University's system of taking admission through all India entrance test is indeed effective and can even be followed as a model for other Universities. Thus, one can conceive of a Common Admission Test for all Central Universities or for those located in UP to begin with. However, it's also critical that the University should make its online system more interactive so that queries and confusions of applicants could be smoothly handled.

In the state universities such as Bharathiar University, University of Rajasthan and Savitribai Phule Pune University students in both the university and the affiliated college report that the admission procedure followed are transparent and they are satisfied with the admission process. Students in the university and college perceive admission process system to be transparent and fair. All three state universities follow similar process with minor variations. The admission to the under graduate programme is based on the marks obtained in the pre-degree or higher secondary or studies that constitute 10+2 years and the marks obtained in the interview conducted at the time of



the admission. In case of postgraduate programme in the university department, the admission occurs as per the percentage or the percentile score obtained in the under-graduation, the performance in the entrance test and the interview with the candidate. The admission process for research-based courses is based on the marks scored in the entrance test and the interview conducted with the candidate. This admission policy also holds good for the affiliated colleges.

### ***Teacher Recruitment and Promotion***

The BHU, being a Central university, follows the rules, regulations and guidelines declared by the UGC for promotion of teachers under Career Advancement Scheme (CAS). The Recruitment and Assessment Cell of the University is given the responsibility of recruitment as well as promotion. The Cell is headed by a Joint/Deputy Registrar rank official. The promotion policy as declared by the UGC and approved by the Executive Council is enforced with the Heads of Departments, Dean of Faculties/Directors of Institutes and Vice-Chancellor playing the role designated by the UGC.

Transparency in promotion of teachers is lacking as told by faculty members of a particular department of the University. BHU also has a Quality Score in its recruitment process which takes into consideration academic qualification, research guidance, publications, prizes and awards won at state/national level, etc. In promotion, the teachers overwhelmingly wanted API score to be scrapped. One of the suggestions was to take into account three aspects in promotion of the teachers: student feedback, peer group review, and self-appraisal form. To bring in transparency in the recruitment, it was suggested to make public the proceedings of the Selection Committee.

Recruitment of university teaching staff in state universities like Bharathiar University is done by the syndicate through a selection committee that consists of the Vice-Chancellor, a nominee of the Chancellor and a nominee of the government. It prescribes the age, qualification, etc., required to apply for the post. This is done in accordance with the UGC norms. The syndicate is entitled to recruit all the three categories of teaching staff of the university namely, the assistant professors, readers and the professors. In the case of University of Rajasthan the state government regulates the academic affairs through their restriction on appointments on even sanctioned posts. The University has to seek approval for filling of the vacant posts. There is sometimes inordinate delay and on others the approval is not granted to start the recruitment process. The interference of the government in the appointment of VC, Registrar erodes the institutional autonomy of the University.

### ***Financial Management***

The disadvantage of centralised control systems, like the one at BHU, is that they rely on the central operating extensive, time consuming processes of approving, and vetting planned expenditure in institutions. Inevitably this is cumbersome, unresponsive, and inefficient in that it reduces flexibility and gives no incentive to institutions to manage resources well. As higher education systems expand, it also becomes unsustainable in terms of public sector workload and staffing. Thus, the system of financial control should be decentralised to the extent possible.

At state universities like Bharathiar, the statutes bestow upon the Vice-Chancellor the power to sanction in consultation with the Syndicate grants-in-aid to researchers and fellowships from the fund, and funds placed at the disposal of the University by the Government or by other Agencies for the said purpose, such as seminars, conferences, delegate fees, etc.

The major funding of the University of Rajasthan is through the block grant provided by the state government and income from exam fees. Due to uncertainty of block grant and also rising expenditures, the University has been forced to make efforts to generate income from self-finance scheme (SFS) courses. The teachers shared in the group discussion that it is difficult to get financial clearance from the university. The rules followed in the accounts section are often archaic and do not allow for any flexibility. It is seen that the university follows the finance rules of the government of Rajasthan. The RAPSAR Act of 2003 prohibits the university from taking any decision having financial implications without the concurrence of the State government. This has severely limited the financial autonomy of the university and its decision taking power.

### ***Curriculum Development***

The university system in the case of Central universities like the BHU enjoys a high degree of autonomy and freedom to select its students and staff, set its standards, design its curriculum, decide its spending priorities and award degrees. However, the way the system is practiced depends on the Head and Policy Planning Committee (each department has one in which the Head and two most senior teachers are members) of the Department. If they are not convinced/not interested, teachers are discouraged from introducing programs/courses. Around 48.9 per cent of the faculty members interviewed said that they have only to a limited extent control over program and courses, 20 per cent felt that they do not have any say. Moreover, the whole process of introduction of a new programme and change in content is lengthy and time

consuming, and often intervention and control by the seniors or higher authority (Faculty board of Studies/Academic Council) negate the proposal. This proves very discouraging and the autonomy given is proven to be of no consequence.

The BHU, like some other universities, has not given complete autonomy to teachers to teach any course that he/she finds fit, fix an evaluation system and pedagogy. The important point however is that the demand for complete autonomy can also be seen as somewhat impractical for such a huge university where without some regulation on the part of the Department/Board of Studies maintaining quality standard would be difficult.

At Bharathiar University, however, the heads and faculty members participate actively in the Board of Studies (BOS), committees, councils, senate, syndicate, etc. depending upon the duties allotted to them. In the BOS their collective wisdom and expertise in the particular field are taken into account for academic enhancement. The faculties have the freedom to introduce changes in the curriculum during BOS meeting. However, participation of faculty in governance and actual administration is minimal. Participation of faculty in governance is the mere namesake; decisions are already made. Authority is primarily vested with the syndicate and senate.

### **University-College Relationship**

The main governance functions of the universities – vis-à-vis the affiliated colleges – are related to affiliation, admission, examinations, curriculum management and teacher recruitment and development. Public colleges are administered through the government service rules while affiliated private colleges are governed by their Governing Bodies. The research identified a number of governance practices in colleges which require attention if they are to achieve their full potential. These include: (i) the governance structure which makes government colleges suffer from lack of autonomy; (ii) the acute shortage of teachers due to teacher recruitment practices; (iii) issues regarding the internal governance of many affiliated private colleges; (iv) weak accountability and monitoring mechanism.

The main difference between the colleges and universities is in the institutional and academic management structures. While universities enjoy considerable freedom in terms of institutional and academic affairs, and management, the public colleges function as typical government organisations bound with rigid administrative and financial regulations. While private colleges, possess some administrative autonomy compared to government colleges they still have to follow government financial management rules.



In all the four colleges in the sample, the focus is on teaching, not on research. The facilities are also not conducive to conducting research. Students feedback is not taken into account in assessment of teaching. Also, in most cases there is absence of teaching awards or any recognition of good teaching. This emerged from the focused group discussions (FGDs) held with teachers. Students in some of the colleges responded that there are delays in getting Transfer Certificates and mark sheet, and also felt that the teaching staff are not friendly and non-teaching staff are not cooperative. There is no institutionalised mechanism to check the accountability of the offices and faculty/staff.

There is complete transparency in recruitment and promotions of teachers in the Government Arts College. The recruitment is done by the government and so is transparent. Promotion is based on seniority list published by the Teacher Recruitment Board. Similarly, students' admission is also transparent. Single window system is followed in students' admission.

There is a very limited budget allocated to the Government Arts College by the government, creating a financial constraint. There are limits also on the budget available for each department. There is no TA/DA provided to teachers for attending conferences. Principal and the heads of departments play the most important role in governance by being an integral part of the governing council. However, the participation of other faculty members in governance is non-existent and the Heads communicate council meetings' decisions to teachers. There is no students' council for the past ten years in some of the sample colleges and the students' council that was once present was derecognised.

There is only top-down communication and bottom-up communication is completely absent in Government Arts College. The information is circulated to staff and students by placing on the notice board. In the case of teachers, the circular is kept in the department attendance register that they sign and the notice is put on the notice board that is exclusive to teachers. All the information relevant to students is given in the calendar and notice board.

There is monthly health insurance available for all the staff but there is no provision for TA or DA provided to faculty members or students to participate in conferences. In the focus group discussions, it came out that such a policy of providing support for attending seminars and conferences is much needed.



### **Key Takeaways for Governments**

Based on this empirical study, the following takeaways to the governments (Central and States) are proposed:

- Move from government control to academic self-governance model: We find that all the state universities are tightly state controlled and even if there is academic autonomy in theory, in practice there are various hurdles to practicing autonomy. Thus, there needs to be a move from state-controlled to academic self-governance model where HEIs have independent governing boards.
- State supervision should be made more effective and buffer organisations like State Higher Education Councils need to be made fully independent, instead of an extended arm of the government.
- The criteria of government funds allocation and investment should be based on a balance between equity and efficiency, and state universities should receive adequate funding.
- There should be greater autonomy on the selection and election of university leaders with no interference from the government.
- The implementation of the concept of autonomy necessitates participation of the students, teachers and management in the education process. Thus, a system of academic audit at every step of the implementation of the concept of autonomy should be acceptable to all stakeholders.
- There also remain frequent gaps between formal autonomy – autonomy on paper – and a university's actual ability to act independently. Heavy accountability measures curtail university autonomy, highlighting the importance of striking a balance between institutional freedom and adequate accountability tools.

### **Key Takeaways for Higher Education Institutions**

The following takeaways are proposed at the institutional level:

- Senior managers of universities should focus on building an independent governing body which strengthens links with society. This body should therefore include representatives of various external stakeholders including industry and alumni.

- Within institutions, there is a need to further transfer authority over issues of personnel and resource allocation from the central administration to various departments. Thus, departments should be given more autonomy in matters that pertain to them
- In order to create an atmosphere of shared governance senior administrators should include individual academics in the workings of the Senate on academic and personnel matters. This should include not just senior faculty but faculty at all levels to make it democratic and participative governance.
- Decision making should be participative and democratic for all processes, procedures, and implementation, to enhance transparency and democracy in institutional management.
- Innovations in curricular content, systems of examination and evaluation, teaching methods not only need more financial resources but also continuous training and upgradation of teachers.

### **Concluding Observations**

The present paper examined the governance and management in central universities, state universities and their affiliated colleges. The framework developed and relied on by the study was to analyse: (a) Government-university relations; (b) Within-university relations and (c) University-college relations. The study relied on interviews with institutional leaders, administrators, and questionnaire based information collected from teachers and students.

The study shows that government university relation has evolved over time from direct control and monitoring to steering from a distance and devolving authority to institutions. While Central universities enjoy relatively more autonomy, the State universities are subject to more control and enjoy less autonomy. Even the funding given to Central universities is at a higher level, as compared to the share of funding from state government to State universities. Hence State universities face the resource crunch more intensely than the central universities.

Further, the study finds that the universities, in general — Central universities — enjoy more autonomy in academic matters and less of administrative and financial autonomy. Thus, designing academic programmes and curricula are done by the universities and approved by their Board of Studies.



Additionally, the governing bodies in the State universities have government officials and representatives from the concerned Legislative Assemblies and Legislative Councils. For example, in the Universities of Rajasthan, Bharathiar University and Savitribai Phule Pune University one finds these trends. This pattern of representation has important implications for the way control is exercised by these functionaries on the University.

Institutional autonomy is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for decision making within the university. It is observed that in Central and State universities there is over centralisation of power and decision making at the level of offices of Vice-Chancellors. It shows that the autonomy enjoyed by the university has not necessarily translated into decentralised and participative decision making process within the university.

It can be concluded that there is a decline in the bargaining power of the 'professoriate'. New governance arrangements have clearly reduced the collective influence of academics over decision making in the institutions. It is observed that a move to outcome - based measures from being purely input - based measures need to be strengthened. Internal Quality Assurance cells need to function effectively. Governance structures are in need of reform and there is a sense that a form of "managerialism" is gripping the institutions under study. Recruitment of teachers has not taken place for several years in some cases so there is an excessive reliance on ad hoc and guest teachers.

The study also shows that the universities are not in a position to provide academic leadership to colleges due to the large number of affiliated colleges in case of the State universities. Finally, reforms in the field of governance and autonomy will not be successful unless they are accompanied by measures aimed at building institutional capacities.

## References

- Abugre, J. B. (2018). Institutional Governance and Management Systems in Sub-Saharan Africa Higher Education: Developments and Challenges in a Ghanaian Research University. *Higher Education*, 75 (2), 323-339.
- Ahmad, A. R., Farley, A., & Naidoo, M. (2012). Analysis of Government-University Relationship from the Perspective of Agency Theory. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 3 (6), 12-21.
- Aithal, P. S., & Kumar, P. M. (2019). Autonomy in Higher Education: Towards an Accountability Management Model. *International Journal of Management & Development*, 6 (10), 166-175.
- Altbach, P., & Salmi, J. (Ed). (2011). *The Road to Academic Excellence: The Making of World class Research Universities*. World Bank.
- Amaral, A., & Magalhães, A. (2007). Market Competition, Public Good and Institutional Governance: Analyses of Portugal's Experience. *Higher Education Management and Policy*, 19 (1), 1-14.
- Austin, I., & Jones, G. A. (2016). *Governance of Higher Education: Global Perspectives, Theories, and Practices*. Routledge.
- Baldrige, V. J. (1971). *Models of University Governance: Bureaucratic, Collegial and Political* (Research and Development Memorandum No. 77). Stanford Centre for Research and Development in Teaching.
- Bush, T. (2003). *Theories of Educational Leadership and Management*. Sage Publications.
- Capano, G., Howlett, M., & Ramesh, M. (2015). Bringing Governments Back in: Governance and Governing in Comparative Policy Analysis. *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice*, 17 (4), 311-321.
- Dobbins, M., & Knill, C. (2017). Higher Education Governance in France, Germany, and Italy: Change and Variation in the Impact of Transnational Soft Governance. *Policy and Society*, 36 (1), 67-88.
- Dobbins, M., Knill, C., & Vögtle, E. M. (2011). An Analytical Framework for the Cross-Country Comparison of Higher Education Governance. *Higher Education*, 62 (5), 665-683.
- Donina, D., & Hasanefendic, S. (2019). Higher Education Institutional Governance Reforms in the Netherlands, Portugal and Italy: A Policy Translation Perspective Addressing the Homogeneous/Heterogeneous Dilemma. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 73 (1), 29-44.
- Enders, J., De Boer, H., & Weyer, E. (2013). Regulatory Autonomy and Performance: The Reform of Higher Education Re-Visited. *Higher Education*, 65 (1), 5-23.
- Frølich, N., & Caspersen, J. (2015). Institutional Governance Structures. In J. Huisman, H. Boer, D.D. Dill, & M. Souto-Otero (Eds.), *The Palgrave International Handbook of Higher Education Policy and Governance* (pp 379 – 397). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gibbons, M. (1998). *Higher Education Relevance in the 21st Century*. World Bank.
- Gül, H., Gül, S. S., Kaya, E. & Alican, A. (2010). Main Trends in the World of higher Education, Internationalisation and Institutional Autonomy. *Procedia-Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 9, 1878-1884.
- Han, S., & Xu, X. (2019). How Far has the State 'Stepped Back': An Exploratory Study of the Changing Governance of Higher Education in China (1978–2018). *Higher Education*, 78 (5), 931-946.



- Hayden, M., & Thiep, L. Q. (2007). Institutional Autonomy for Higher Education in Vietnam. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 26 (1), 73-85.
- Hoare, O. R. (2007). *A Case Study of Governance of Higher Education in Belize: Implications for Finance and Curricula in Higher Education*. Graduate Theses and Dissertations. <http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/etd/2217>
- Huisman, J. (Ed). (2009). *International Perspectives on the Governance of Higher Education. Alternative Frameworks for Coordination*. Routledge.
- Jarvis, D. S. L., & Mok, K. H. (2019). The Political Economy of Higher Education Governance in Asia: Challenges, Trends and Trajectories. In D. S. L., Jarvis & K. H. Mok (Eds.), *Transformation in Higher Education Governance in Asia: Policy, Politics and Progress* (pp. 1-46). Springer Singapore.
- Jones, G. A., Shanahan, T., & Goyan, P. (2004). The Academic Senate and University Governance in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 34 (2), 35-68.
- Kapur, D., & Mehta, P. B. (2004). *Indian Higher Education Reform: From Half Baked Socialism to Half-Baked Capitalism* (CID Working Paper No. 108). Harvard University.
- Kivistö, J. (2008). An Assessment of Agency Theory as a Framework for the Government University Relationship. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 30 (4), 339-350.
- Kwiek, M. (2015). The Unfading Power of Collegiality? University Governance in Poland in a European Comparative and Quantitative Perspective. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 43, 77-89.
- Magalhães, A., Veiga, A., Amaral, A., Sousa, S., & Ribeiro, F. (2013). Governance of Governance in Higher Education: Practices and Lessons Drawn from the Portuguese Case. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 67 (3), 295-311.
- Malik, G. (2017). *Governance and Management of Higher Education Institutions in India* (Research paper series 5). Centre for Policy Research in Higher Education, NIEPA.
- Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD). (2021). *All India Survey on Higher Education 2020-2021*. Government of India.
- Mok, K. H., & Neubauer, D. (2016). Higher Education Governance in Crisis: A Critical Reflection on the Massification of Higher Education, Graduate Employment and Social Mobility. *Journal of Education and Work*, 29 (1), 1-12.
- Neave, G., & Van Vught, F. A. (1994). *Government and Higher Education Relationships across Three Continents: The Winds of Change*. Pergamon.
- Sahlin, K., & Eriksson-Zetterquist, U. (2016). Collegiality in Modern Universities – The Composition of Governance Ideals and Practices. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy*, 2016 (2-3), 336-40.
- Salmi, J. (2009). *The Challenge of Establishing World-Class Universities*. World Bank.
- Shattock, M. (Ed). (2014). *International Trends in University Governance: Autonomy, Self-Government and the Distribution of Authority*. Routledge.
- Shin, J. C. (2013). Higher Education Governance under Neoliberalism. *Higher Education Forum*, 11, 37-52.
- Sifuna, D. N. (1998). The governance of Kenyan Public Universities. *Research in Post Compulsory Education*, 3 (2), 175-212

- Tight, M. (2014). Collegiality and Managerialism: A False Dichotomy? Evidence from the Higher Education Literature. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 20 (4), 294–306.
- Varghese, N. V. (2015). *Challenges of Massification of Higher Education in India* (Research Paper Series 1). Centre for Policy Research in Higher Education, NIEPA.
- Varghese, N. V., & Malik, G. (Eds). (2016). *India Higher Education Report 2015*. Routledge.
- Varghese, N. V., & Martin, M. (2014). *Governance Reforms in Higher Education: A Study of Institutional Autonomy in Asian Countries*. International Institute for Educational Planning.

## **cprhe** Research Paper Series

- Research Paper 1: N. V. Varghese (2015). Challenges of Massification of Higher Education in India
- Research Paper 2: A. Mathew (2016). Reforms in Higher Education in India: A Review of Recommendations of Commissions and Committees on Education
- Research Paper 3: Nidhi S. Sabharwal and C. M. Malish (2016). Student Diversity and Civic Learning in Higher Education in India
- Research Paper 4: William G. Tierney and Nidhi S. Sabharwal (2016). Re-imagining Indian Higher Education : A Social Ecology of Higher Education Institutions
- Research Paper 5: Garima Malik (2017). Governance and Management of Higher Education Institutions in India
- Research Paper 6: Jinusha Panigrahi (2017). Resource Allocation and Innovative Methods of Financing Higher Education in India
- Research Paper 7: Vani K. Borooah and Nidhi S. Sabharwal (2017). English as a Medium of Instruction in Indian Education: Inequality of Access to Educational Opportunities
- Research Paper 8: N.V. Varghese, Garima Malik and Dharma Rakshit Gautam (2017). Teacher Recruitment in Higher Education in India: An Analysis of National Eligibility Test (NET) Results
- Research Paper 9: Sayantan Mandal (2017). Teaching-Learning in Higher Education: Evolution of Concepts and an Attempt towards Developing a New Tool of Analysis
- Research Paper 10: Nidhi S. Sabharwal and C.M. Malish (2018). Student Diversity and Social Inclusion: An Empirical Analysis of Higher Education Institutions in India
- Research Paper 11: N.V. Varghese, Jinusha Panigrahi and Anubha Rohatgi (2018). Concentration of Higher Education Institutions in India: A Regional Analysis
- Research Paper 12: N. V. Varghese, Nidhi S. Sabharwal and C.M. Malish (2019). Equity and Inclusion in Higher Education in India.
- Research Paper 13: Jinusha Panigrahi (2020). Fees in Private Higher Education Institutions: A Study of Deemed to be Universities in India
- Research Paper 14: Mona Khare (2020). Graduate Employment and sustainable Employability Skills in India.
- Research Paper 15: Garima Malik, Nidhi S. Sabharwal and William G. Tierney (2021). The Political Economy of Indian Higher Education Understanding Systemic Challenges for Delhi.
- Research Paper 16: N. V. Varghese and Nidhi S. Sabharwal (2022). The Future of Higher Education in India: From Massification to Universalisation.
- Research Paper 17: Pradeep Kumar Misra (2023). Digital Technology Integration in Teaching and Learning in Indian Higher Education: Influencing Factors, Policy Directions, and Government Initiatives.



## ➔ About the paper

In India there is a move to strengthen higher education institutions and all efforts are being made for developing institutions with strong governance and effective leadership. Governance decisions in higher education are influenced by the state, the market and the higher education institutions themselves. Changes in the governance imply changes in the way the relationship between the State, the market and the higher education institutions are structured and monitored. The paper closely examines the governance and management of eight institutions through a three-layered framework of Government-University, Within-University and University-College relationship, and finds that along different dimensions of autonomy, namely student admissions, teacher recruitment and promotion, financial management and curriculum development, the Central Universities emerge as more autonomous than the State Universities.

## ➔ About the author

**Dr. Garima Malik** is currently an Assistant Professor at the Centre for Policy Research in Higher Education (CPRHE) in the National Institute of Educational Planning & Administration (NIEPA), New Delhi. She holds a PhD in Economics from Ohio State University, U.S.A. She is co-editor of the books "India Higher Education Report 2015" and "Governance and Management of Higher Education in India". She has led an UNESCO-IIEP collaborative research study on Flexible Learning Pathways in Higher Education in India as well as a study on Assessment and Evaluation in Telangana's Higher Education. Her current research focuses on governance and management in higher education and new managerialism in higher education institutions.

**cprhe**

Centre for Policy Research in Higher Education

[www.cprhe.niepa.ac.in](http://www.cprhe.niepa.ac.in)

