

Sixty Years of the University Grants Commission

Establishment, Growth, and Evolution



KAVITA A. SHARMA



ज्ञान-विज्ञान विमुक्तये

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Apart from teaching, Kavita Sharma has written several articles and books. She published *Ongoing Journey: Indian Migration to Canada* (1997). Her academic excellence has seen her invited to read papers in a number of conferences.

She has deep interest in education and has written *Internationalization of Higher Education: An Aspect of India's Foreign Relations*. On the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the University Grants Commission, she wrote *50 Years of University Grants Commission*. She was called upon to update the book on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee. Her other books are *Queens of Mahabharata*, *Windmills of the Mind and Birds, Beasts, Men and Nature in Mahabharata*. Besides these, she has edited several books and contributed to several multi-author books. She has also been a prolific contributor to leading publications in the country on subjects ranging from education and literature to women's issues and religion. Apart from that she has made presentations on higher education in various seminars and conferences.

Outside her official work, Kavita Sharma likes to keep herself busy with Indian classical music and flower arrangement. Being the academic that she is, she has undertaken and completed specialized courses in these fields. She has also completed a correspondence course in freelance journalism from the London School of Journalism.

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FOREWORD

Sixty years in the life of an institution is a significant landmark. Over the years, since the UGC Act, 1956 was passed by the Parliament, the UGC has grown and evolved in the midst of emerging concerns crucial to the future of Indian higher education. During this period, the UGC has been increasingly noticed both for its good work and achievements and also its limitations to achieve the maximum in addressing the concerns of higher education. Expression of its limitation is actually a pointer to the high expectations of the leadership role expected of the UGC in shaping Indian higher education in the context of national development.

The UGC has brought out, on the momentous occasion of its Diamond Jubilee, a book entitled “Sixty Years of the University Grants Commission”. This book captures the milestones covered by the UGC since its inception in shaping higher education in the country during the last six decades. Chapter 1 deals with the backdrop of the establishment of the UGC while Chapter 2 describes the formative years of the organization including the foundational years before it was conferred statutory status in 1956. The subsequent chapters highlight the growth and development of higher education largely, decade-wise, culminating in the achievements during the period 2003-13. A chapter entitled “The New Initiatives and Discourses” deals with the developmental agenda in higher education as deliberated in the Reports of some Commissions/Committees on higher education set up by the Government of India during the last decade. These documents may provide new directions for the future of Indian higher education.

It is relevant to mention that a similar publication was brought out on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the UGC. A few Chapters included in the earlier volume have remained essentially the same in the present publication but they have been retained only after due revision and editing. I am grateful to Dr. Kavita Sharma for undertaking the task of preparing this volume for the Diamond Jubilee of the UGC. She has painstakingly compiled this volume, based on

the materials made available to her by the UGC. I am also grateful to Prof. A.K. Sharma for his invaluable suggestions in finalizing the manuscript of the book and also filling some gaps in Chapter VII.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the contributions of all those eminent academics and officials, both within and outside the UGC, but for whom the UGC would not have achieved its present status. I trust that people engaged with educational endeavours would find this volume both informative and useful.

Ved Prakash

Chairman
University Grants Commission

New Delhi

28th December, 2013

PREFACE

Sometime in May of this year, I got a call from Prof. Ved Prakash, Chairman UGC, asking me to visit him in his office. Since it is always a pleasure to meet him, I readily agreed only to hear his persuasive voice requesting me to update the book, *50 Years of University Grants Commission* that I had written ten years ago for the Golden Jubilee of the Commission. While it had been a privilege to do so at the behest of Prof. Nigavekar, the task had been overwhelming. I was then principal of Hindu College, Delhi University and was required to finish the book in record time, in just about seven months if I recall from beginning to completion for release. I could not take leave and so this work had to be done in whatever time I could squeeze out of my regular work schedule. I would not have picked up the courage but for Prof. Amrik Singh, the noted educationist, and a father figure to me who reposed his confidence in me and insisted that I should give it a try. I could not let him down. Prof. Amrik Singh and Mr. R.K. Chabra, former Secretary UGC, another person who has had a lot of affection for me since my childhood painstakingly read everything I wrote, giving advice and guiding. I had two young scholars with me, Shri Chandrachur Singh and Smt. Henna Singh, and all three of us worked very hard to collect documents, summarise them and get the meat out of them.

The task of updating the book this year seemed equally daunting. If the work at Hindu College was heavy, the work in my present assignment, that of Director, India International Centre is near to being all consuming. However, I could not say no to Prof. Ved Prakash. Also, over the years UGC and I have established deep bonds and in the process I have learnt a lot about higher education. Another driving force to do the book is my deep love for institutional histories. I find that many of our finest institutions do not have any institutional memory and so often meander or lose their way. Anyhow, whatever may have prompted me, I found myself once again undertaking the task.

The book, *Sixty Years of the University Grants Commission*, marks another landmark occasion in the life of the University Grants Commission,

its Diamond Jubilee. UGC is a unique institution being the only educational body in the country charged with the responsibility of maintenance and coordination of standards of higher education throughout the country together which it combines with its grant giving function. Its contribution has to be acknowledged because whatever may have been the ups and downs, it has led the country in establishing one of the largest networks of higher education in the world in the sixty years of its existence. While this is an admirable achievement, far more needs to be done and the UGC itself is more than aware of it, if the changes it has made or facilitated and the activities it has undertaken in the last ten years are any indication.

This book is only an update of the previous book, *50 Years of UGC* which had sought to see the growth and evolution of UGC through each decade since its establishment. The same principle had to be obviously maintained. The previous writing has been revisited to tighten the language and to remove some discrepancies. Two new chapters have been added together with the Epilogue. They cover the activities undertaken by the UGC during the Golden Jubilee year with the eight Golden Jubilee public lectures delivered by some of the best minds of the country during that year and the regional seminars organized by the UGC dealing with some of the most significant issues confronting higher education in India today. All this has contributed to putting higher education in the forefront of public discourse. The intense activity that has taken place in the last ten years in higher education both in the fields of policy and resource allocations so as to raise enrolments provide equitable access and improve standards has also been elaborated. Apart from the Five-Year Plan documents and Annual Reports of the UGC, there were significant reports like those of the National Knowledge Commission, Yashpal Committee, the Pay Review Committee and others that needed to be looked at. An attempt has also been made to give some indication of what the future trends in education might be and what role the UGC could play. However, gazing at the crystal ball is precarious in the best of times.

The book tells the story of the establishment, growth and evolution of UGC. Some of the best minds have invested their time and energy in this organization that has led from the front to develop one of the largest highest education systems in the world. It has also tried

its best in the difficult circumstances to provide equitable access and maintain reasonable standards. The time has come for UGC to consolidate what has been achieved and to give it a further push so that India achieves about 30% GER and improves on the quality of higher education. Such an effort would enable India to develop the capacity to take advantage of the demographic dividend that the country has and to harness its creative energies in all fields to build a just and equitable society, able to compete with the best in the world.

Kavita A. Sharma

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

A part from the debt of gratitude that I owe to all those who made the earlier book possible, I would like to express my sincere thanks to Prof. Ved Prakash, Chairman UGC for having reposed the faith and confidence in me to update the story of the University Grants Commission. I would like to thank Dr. Diksha Rajput for her help in co-ordination and Prof. A.K. Sharma for his guidance. I am grateful to Ms. Jehanara Wasi, Ms. Asha Verghese and Ms. Indu Ramchandani for their magnificent editorial work and assistance in all aspects of publishing to enable this work to come to fruition. Thanks must go to my Executive Assistant, Mrs. Nirmala Hari for her excellent secretarial help and to Shri Sunil for providing assistance as without them, the book would not have been possible. Once Mrs. Hilary Clinton is said to have remarked that it takes a village to raise a child. It certainly takes a village to produce a book, which after all, is a child of one's mental endeavours.

Kavita A. Sharma

Contents

CHAPTER I

<i>Establishing the University Grants Commission</i>	3
Higher Education before 1956	3
Curzon's Role and After	6
Private Initiative	10
The Need for a University Grants Commission	12
The Radhakrishnan Commission	16
The Central Council of University Education	18
The Interim Commission	22
Early Years	24
The UGC Bill in Parliament	27
Discussion in Parliament	30
The UGC Act	39
The UGC Today	42

CHAPTER II

<i>The Formative Years (1953-1963)</i>	46
Universities of India	47
Medium of Instruction	48
Expansion of Higher Education	49
Student Indiscipline	52
Improvement in Higher Education	54

Three-Year Undergraduate Degree Course	55
General Education	57
Examination Reforms	58
Bridging Disparities in Higher Education	59
College Education	64
Autonomous Status	67
Classification of Teaching Faculty	67
Centres of Advanced Studies	68
Area Studies	69
Libraries	70
Position of Teachers	70
Impact of UGC	73

CHAPTER III

<i>The First Wave of Expansion (1963-1973)</i>	77
The University Education Commission	77
Impact of the Recommendations of the Education Commission	84
Student Enrolment and Colleges	87
The Role of Teachers	88
Central Universities	88
Undergraduate Colleges	89
Postgraduate Colleges	89
Governance of Universities	92
Expansion of Higher Education and Maintenance of Standards	96
Examination Reforms	98

Implementation of Examination Reforms	100
Student Welfare Measures	103
Reducing Regional Disparities	104
Centres for Advanced Study and Research	105
Scientific and Technical Education	106
International Collaborations	108

CHAPTER IV

<i>The Initiatives for Consolidation (1973-1983)</i>	111
The Fifth Plan	112
The Sen Committee	115
Review Committee on the UGC	119
Development of Higher Education in India: A Policy Frame	122
Review Committee on UGC Programmes	124
Autonomous Colleges	126
Affiliated and Other Colleges	128
Distance Education	131
Adult and Continuing Education	133
Women's Education	135
Strengthening of Existing Programmes	136
The Reservation Policy	139
Journal/Bulletin of Higher Education	142
The Sixth Five-Year Plan	142
Review of Central Universities	144
Delhi Colleges	149

CHAPTER V

<i>The New Policy Initiatives (1983-1993)</i>	151
The Mehrotra Committee	153
Teacher Training	156
Orientation Programmes	157
Academic Staff Colleges	158
National Policy on Education (1986)	158
The Seventh Five-Year Plan Guidelines	159
Autonomous Colleges	161
Decentralization	162
Accreditation	162
Restructuring of Courses	163
Inter-University Centres	166
Media and Educational Technology	167
Science Education	169
Research Scientist Scheme	173
Physical Education and Sports	174
Women's Studies	177
Role of Teachers and NET	177
Gnanam Committee	178
State Council of Higher Education	184
The Eighth Plan	185
Vice-Chancellors' Conference of 1991	186

CHAPTER VI

<i>Golden Jubilee and Post-Policy Interventions (1993-2003)</i>	189
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Punnayya Committee	189
Grants to Delhi Colleges	192
Implementation of the Punnayya Committee Report	194
Ninth Five-Year Plan	195
Autonomous Colleges	196
Libraries	196
Universities with Potential for Excellence	197
Training of Educational Administrators	197
Subject Panels and Emerging Areas	198
Courses Pertaining to Indian Tradition	199
Science Education and Inculcation of the Scientific Temper	200
Undergraduate Education	202
Vocational Courses	204
Community Colleges	205
National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)	206
National Eligibility Test (NET)	209
Rastogi Committee	210
Promotional Avenues of University and College Teachers	214
UGC Observers in Career Advancement	215
Professor of Eminence	216
Superannuation and Reemployment	217
UGC Concerns about Academic Discipline	218
Fake Universities	220
Resource Crunch	221
Resource Mobilization	222
Students' Fees	222
Students' Welfare	223
Self-Financing Universities	223

Internationalization of Education	225
Diaspora Studies	228
Reorganization in the UGC	229

CHAPTER VII

<i>The Second Wave of Expansion (2003-13)</i>	231
The Golden Jubilee: An Overview	231
The Role of UGC	232
Launching New Schemes	233
Golden Jubilee Lectures	234
Major highlights of the lectures	236
Golden Jubilee Seminars	240
Overview of Seminar presentations	242
Public/Private Partnership	242
Governance	243
Access and Equity	244
Policy Planning for Export	245
Economics of Higher Education	247
Reorientation of Higher Education	247
Health Consciousness and Physical Fitness	248
Professional Ethics and Value Education	249
Evaluation and Assessment Systems	250
Quality Assurance in Higher Education	251
Sustaining Quality	251
Assessment and Accreditation	252
Initiatives in the Tenth Five-Year Plan	254
Expansion of Higher Education	260

Eleventh Five-Year Plan : “Education Plan”	261
Issues of Quality	265
Mandatory Accreditation	265
Burden of Affiliation	265
Guidelines for Deemed Universities	265
Meeting Faculty Scarcity	266
Pay Review Committee	266
Enhancing GER	266
Faculty Shortage	267
Enhancing Budgetary Provision	268
Teacher Accountability	268
Faculty Designations	269
UGC’s Other Initiatives	270
Encore	270
Task Force on Faculty Shortage	272
Academic Initiatives	274
Clearing the backlog of scholarships	274
Innovations and Reforms in the National Eligibility Test	274
Experimentation on Animals	274
Singh-Obama Knowledge Initiative and UK-India Research Initiative	274
Basic Scientific Research (BSR)	275
Innovation Universities	275
Joint Appointments	276
Setting up of Electronic Repository of Research Thesis and Synopses	276
e-PG Pathshala	276
Administrative Reforms	277

Guidelines on Students' Entitlements and Obligations, 2012	278
Restoration of the autonomy of Universities for seeking timely allocation of grants during the Twelfth Five-Year Plan	278
Anti-ragging Measures	279
Facilitating Participation of Socially Disadvantaged Groups in Higher Education	279
Financial Reforms	281
Miscellaneous Reforms	281
Regulatory Reforms	282
Proposed Initiatives for the Twelfth Five-Year Plan	283

CHAPTER VIII

<i>The New Initiatives and Discourses</i>	306
Areas of Discourse	306
National Knowledge Commission	307
Sachar Committee	310
Renovation and Rejuvenation of Universities (Yashpal Committee)	312
Recommendations of the Yashpal Committee	316
Restructuring Universities	318
Narayanamurthy Committee	319
Recommendations of the Committee	321
<i>Epilogue</i>	325
Growth and Development	325
Expansion and Autonomy	326

Challenges of Higher Education	328
UGC in the Tenth Five-Year Plan	328
UGC in the Eleventh Five-Year Plan	330
Reforms for the UGC	332
UGC in the Twelfth Five-Year Plan	333
Challenges of Globalization and Democracy	335
Internationalization of Higher Education	337
Teaching and Research	340
Empowerment through Productive Employment	341
Upgrading Skills	342
Models for Private Higher Education	346
Conclusion	347
APPENDIX	349
INDEX	353

Establishing the University Grants Commission

CHAPTER I

Establishing the University Grants Commission

The University Grants Commission (UGC) came into existence through an Act of Parliament in November 1956. However, the idea of the creation of the UGC to regulate the standards of higher education can be traced to the University Education Commission (Radhakrishnan Commission) (1948), better known as the First Education Commission, which in its report had initially recommended its establishment. To a certain extent, the efforts towards expansion of higher education in the colonial period also pointed in that direction. The system of higher education in independent India as well as its regulatory mechanism evolved in a way as a continuation of the colonial system. Hence the challenges of the higher educational system that the UGC had to confront, as it began its work, have to be looked at in the context of the colonial set up.

Higher Education before 1956

The modern period of higher education in India can be traced back to 1781, when a petition was presented to Governor General Warren Hastings “by a considerable number of Mussalmans of credit and learning” that led to the establishment of the Calcutta Madrasa. From that year onwards, several agencies established a number of educational institutions with varying motives. But there was no clear policy of higher education up to 1854. The influence of the British model was natural as it developed in the 19th century. Not only did Britain rule India but also, by 1815, had emerged as the political leader of Europe. Anglicist policies reflected the power and self-confidence of Britain at this time and were designed, in Macaulay’s words, to create, “a class who would be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern, a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but

English in tastes, in opinions, in moral and in intellect,” who would be consumers of British goods, provide recruits for the subordinate ranks of the East India Company’s civil service and be loyal to the Raj.

English higher education in India can be said to have begun with the establishment of the Hindu College in Calcutta in 1817 with the efforts of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and David Hare. It was the first ‘Europeanized’ institution of higher learning in India. After this, several similar colleges were set up — the Mission College at Serampore by Carey, Marshman and Ward in 1818; Bishop’s College at Sibpur, in 1820 by the Church of England; General Assembly’s Institute in 1830 by Alexander Duff, which soon became a college. English replaced Persian as the official and court language in 1837 and, in 1844. Lord Hardinge’s government announced that those receiving English education would get preference in all government appointments.

After the victory of the Anglicists over the Orientalists, the government also established many colleges — the Hooghly College in 1836, Dacca College in 1840, and colleges at Behrampur and Agra in 1853. Education in the new schools and colleges became a passport for entrance to government service and the professions. Thus the British rule gradually supplanted the pre-colonial indigenous system of education and imposed a new language and curricula. The purpose of education, too, altered. In traditional Indian institutions, education had mainly a religious and cultural aim while the new English high schools and colleges were degree-granting institutions that enabled students’ access to power in the colonial political and economic system.

As early as 1845 attempts were made to establish a university in Calcutta but did not succeed. In Madras, there was an institution curiously styled as ‘Madras University’, but in reality it was only a high school. In 1852, it developed into the present Madras Presidency College. By 1855, there were 281 high schools and 28 colleges but the need was already beginning to be felt for regulating their work, holding examinations, and establishing a common standard.

In the strictest sense, however, modern higher education in India started in 1854 with Wood’s Dispatch which wanted the government to undertake the duty of “creating a properly articulated system of education from the primary school to the University,” and which also recommended the institution of universities at Calcutta, Madras

and Bombay modelled after London University. The preliminary spadework was considerable and naturally took some time; but as early as 1857, the Government of India passed Acts of Incorporation of all three universities. Mirroring, as it were, London University, they were purely examining and affiliating bodies and undertook no research or teaching. The actual teaching was done in colleges but the university laid down the syllabi and conducted the examinations. The Acts of Incorporation of the Universities mentioned the degrees by name that the university might confer. It was afterwards found desirable to add others to the list and hence, in 1860, the Indian Universities (Degrees) Act was passed, empowering the universities to confer such diplomas or degrees as had been or might be approved by the bylaws or regulations.

Following the Indian Universities Act of 1860, it was proposed to establish a university in Punjab, especially for oriental learning and instruction through the medium of the vernacular language of the province. It was eventually established in 1882 by a special Act of Incorporation. A university college was established at Lahore in 1869 and it achieved university status in 1882. The Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh was established in 1875. This institution started with a few school classes but later developed into Aligarh Muslim University. The Government of North-Western provinces submitted proposals for establishing a Central College at Allahabad that would form the nucleus of a university for resident undergraduates in 1869 and then in 1879. It was finally established by a special Act of Incorporation in 1887.

The Government of India appointed an Indian Education Commission in 1882 but did not give it the right "to enquire into the general working of Indian universities." The Commission, therefore, contented itself with making only a few observations in connection with the improvement of affiliated colleges. While drawing the attention of the local government to the need for "providing or extending the means of collegiate education" at several places, it recommended that "the rate of aid to each college be determined by the strength of the staff, the expenditure on its maintenance, the efficiency of the institution, and the wants of the locality." Special grants were also to be made "whenever necessary, for the supply and renewal of buildings, furniture, libraries and other apparatus of instruction."

The recommendations of the Indian Education Commission of 1882 were of minor importance. Nothing was said about the relation of the collegiate courses of study to the practical needs of the students and of the community. The benefits of properly organized residential facilities were mentioned but no suggestions were made for their expansion. While recognizing the value of the “system of instruction becoming more thorough and more scientific,” the Commission had no concrete proposal to offer. Its recommendations however, led to a rapid multiplication of high schools with regard to secondary education. As a consequence, there was a great increase in the number of students appearing at the entrance examinations of the different universities and subsequently seeking admission to colleges for higher education.

Curzon’s Role and After

Higher education in India was so chaotic and had such poor standards that Lord Curzon had to turn his personal attention to its reform at the beginning of the 20th century. For this purpose, he appointed an Indian Universities Commission on January 27, 1902 to inquire into the condition and prospects of the universities established in British India and to consider and report on proposals for improving their constitution and working. The Commission submitted its report in the same year and adopted the model of London University, as modified by the Act of 1898. It made five important recommendations: first, the reorganization of university governance; second, a stricter and more systematic supervision of colleges by universities and the imposition of exacting conditions of affiliation; third, closer attention to the conditions under which students lived and worked; fourth, the assumption of teaching functions by the university within defined limits; and fifth, substantial changes in curricula and in the methods of examination.

Lord Curzon’s analysis of the effects of higher education in India identified the monstrous and malefic spirit of cramming as one of its chief drawbacks. The main aim of the students was to pass examinations and to qualify for employment. The teachers, too, did not care for the moral and mental development of the students but

were only concerned with the percentage of passes. Lessons were imparted in a mechanical manner and discussions and seminars were not encouraged. There was great stress on information gathering and little done to develop the student problem-solving ability or critical faculties. The tutorial system followed at Oxford and Cambridge was introduced in some universities but was unsuccessful because of the poor teacher-student ratio that made it difficult for teachers to cope and individual discussion became impossible. Also, students were not interested as they were obsessed with preparing for examinations and their results.

Curzon's attempt at reforms created more problems. The new regulations for affiliation were considered a hindrance to Indian private enterprise in the field of higher education. The immediate result was that the number of colleges declined from 192 to 170 in 1912. However, the public demand for higher education could not be curbed, as the restriction on the raising of new colleges only led to an increase in the enrolment in the existing colleges.

Higher education in India was alien in character but the response to it was eager, especially in the metropolitan cities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras where there were opportunities for Indians to find jobs in the government or in the professions. Between 1855-1856 and 1921-1922, the number of general colleges increased from 21 to 172 and pupils in them from 4,355 to 58,837. By 1947, there were 19 universities and 496 colleges with 2, 37,546 pupils. The growth was mainly in privately managed colleges. It is well known that Indian education had a predominantly literary bias. The number of 'arts' colleges and pupils in them far surpassed the professional colleges. In 1901-02, while there were 140 Arts colleges with 17,655 pupils in them, there were only 46 professional colleges with 5,358 pupils. Between 1886-87 and 1946-47, the number of Arts colleges increased from 86 to 420 but the growth in professional colleges was much slower.

From 1911-12, onwards, there was growing disillusionment with the model of affiliating universities. The first university to deviate from the affiliating model was Banaras Hindu University (BHU) set up in 1916. It was a unitary, residential and teaching university. It was also different from the usual universities in its basic philosophy — it

was established by Annie Besant and Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya to uphold Indian values and ancient traditions. The University of Mysore, established in the same year as BHU, was the first university in a princely state. Osmania University, established by the Nizam of Hyderabad in 1918 undertook the experiment of teaching through Urdu.

The Calcutta University Commission was appointed in 1917 under the chairmanship of Sir Michael Sadler. It made a thorough assessment of the entire university system in the country, Calcutta only serving as an example, and submitted its report two years later. One of its major recommendations was the need for unitary teaching and residential universities. If the first three universities of the country were modelled on London University, the Oxbridge model inspired Sadler and his colleagues. Of the universities set up, in the decade or so after the Sadler Commission report — Aligarh (1920), Lucknow (1921), Dacca (1921), Delhi (1922), Nagpur (1923), Andhra (1923), Agra (1927) and Annamalai (1929), may be mentioned. Out of them, only Nagpur, Andhra, Delhi and Agra were affiliating. The rest were all teaching and residential. The Great Depression of 1929 was a watershed. Between then and Indian independence, only one university was founded in the princely state of Travancore, which, after Mysore and Hyderabad was the third university in a princely state. Also three universities were set up in British India — Utkal (1943), Sagar (1946) and Rajasthan (1947).

Neither London, Oxford or Cambridge could be replicated in Indian conditions. The form could be taken but the spirit was missing. For one, unlike in Britain, Indian universities were under official control. To begin with, they were legislative creations whether of the Centre or the Provinces unlike the universities in Britain. Then, the key offices of the Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor belonged to the government. The majority of the Members of Senate were nominated. Lord Curzon was very clear that India and Britain were different and that in India, government control was necessary both on educational and political grounds.

University autonomy in Curzon's view was educationally unwise and politically dangerous. Besides, he felt that the government alone could remedy the ills that plagued higher education. These were identified

as falling standards, the curse of examinations, young, immature striplings rushing to enter college, and education a mere means of earning and not of learning. Higher education in India was an exotic transplant introduced by the English based on English models. The government alone could ensure that universities followed the latest advances in European learning. In any case, to expect the government to pay for higher education and to divest itself of all powers was to ignore the elementary obligations of the state.

Of course, British universities enjoyed considerable autonomy but it must be remembered that in India their primary function was conceived as the diffusion of Western culture. Naturally, therefore, priority was given to the study of English language and literature. This added to the ills of a system where most students found it hard to understand these texts and, therefore, tended to blindly memorize their lecture notes without comprehending their content. The curriculum was skewed towards the West and ignored Indian history, culture, philosophy and India's contemporary needs and problems. Resolutions and reports repeatedly recommended the introduction of oriental studies, classical Indian languages and vernaculars in the curriculum. The 'Indian' component in the university curriculum increased somewhat after 1921 but Western learning still continued to be emphasized.

Not only was the content too Western in its orientation, it also tended to de-emphasize scientific, technical and vocational education. Although Wood's Dispatch made specific reference to the spread of Western science and the Indian Education Commission (1902), the Calcutta University Commission (1917) and the Sargent Committee (1944) suggested the inclusion of natural sciences and of vocational and technical subjects, yet these recommendations remained mostly on paper. The bias was very much in favour of general and liberal education. This was true of British education too in the pre-First World War period. In 1916-1917 nearly 80 per cent of the total enrolment in Indian universities was in general education. Instead of training scientists, technologists or agronomists, Indian higher education was engaged in producing mostly clerks.

Some Indians were dissatisfied with this state of affairs. They felt that schools and colleges were imparting education that did not inculcate

either patriotic sentiments or pride in one's own country. The Deccan Education Society was founded in 1880 in Poona to facilitate and make education cheaper by establishing schools and colleges. The first institution started by it was the Ferguson College in 1885 where the young were educated to serve their country. Mahatma Gandhi founded a series of national universities during the first non-cooperation movement in 1920-1922. These included the Gujarat Vidyapeeth, Kashi Vidyapeeth, Bihar Vidyapeeth, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth and Jamia Millia Islamia. Hindi or the vernacular languages was the medium of instruction in these universities. Mahatma Gandhi found the British system of education an "unmitigated evil". He felt it was impractical and destructive of the Indian imagination. It ignored everything that India had discovered in its educational experience. But even the national universities did not perform the true functions of instruction of higher education, because they were more concerned with character formation and building the national movement to fight the Raj than with cultivating the intellect.

Rabindranath Tagore tried a different kind of educational experiment at Shantiniketan where he founded the Vishwa Bharati in 1921. He did not think of it as just another university but one that attempted to synthesize Asian and Western culture. He respected Western knowledge but his concern was that English education had alienated the intelligentsia both from the common people and from its roots. He believed that India, while it had to cherish its past, could not also cling to its traditional orthodoxies.

Private Initiative

Educational institutions were also established by the socio-religious reform movements of the late 19th century, partly in response to the Christian Missionary colleges that were first in the field. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan established the Oriental College at Aligarh in 1877 to popularize English education among Muslims in North India. The Arya Samaj tried to modernize and strengthen Hinduism through educational institutions, particularly in Punjab and the then United Provinces. The Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College (DAV) was founded at Lahore in 1886. Subsequently more such colleges sprang up. These

colleges were affiliated to universities and followed the prescribed curriculum but emphasized the study of Sanskrit and the Vedas. The Sikhs in the Punjab started the Singh Sabha Movement in 1873 and also the Chief Khalsa Diwan established Khalsa schools and colleges. They, too, followed the curriculum prescribed by the universities to which they were affiliated but laid greater stress on the study of religion and the language of the community.

All these institutions played an extremely useful role but could not provide a viable indigenous alternative to the system that had already got established. Moreover, there was a growing demand for higher technical education since the 1880s. Jamshedji Tata, one of India's pioneering businessmen, and an icon of the early 20th century, was fully aware of the shortcomings of Indian universities. He saw that they examined but did not teach, and was particularly concerned about the lack of scientific teaching. Tata initiated a scheme in 1898 that finally led to the founding of the Tata Institute of Science at Bangalore in 1911. The leaders of the Swadeshi Movement in Bengal established a college of engineering and technology in 1907. It was later shifted to Jadavpur. D.K. Karve started a women's university, the first of its kind, in 1918 at Poona, which later developed into the SNDT Women's University, now located at Mumbai.

The higher education scene in post-independent India was one of inequality and uneven spread. Higher education remained largely concentrated in and around the metropolitan towns. Thus, English education was only theoretically available to all. Some regions were more advanced than others and even within one region there were disparities — not only of availability but also of access to different groups of people. Everywhere, it was more widespread among men than women, in cities than in villages and largely among higher castes. Thus, there were serious inequities.

The study of English brought about an intellectual revolution but only to a minority of the population that imbibed new ideas such as liberty of thought and expression, responsible and objective criticism, tolerance of different opinions, government by discussion and the importance of the individual. These ideas did not filter down to the masses and traditional Indian society remained hierarchical and feudal. Western education initially only widened the gulf between

the privileged who got this education and the masses, who did not. India was certainly enriched by Western education but at the cost of disregarding its own culture. It compelled students to study subjects culturally alien to them in a language not their own. Poverty and economic backwardness added to the problem.

Government service and professions such as law were the only openings available to the educated youth. Understandably, they rushed into colleges not to acquire knowledge but to get a degree for a job. Out of a total population of 350 million people in 1947 about 2,50,000 were students in colleges and universities. More than 80 per cent of them were in undergraduate arts and science colleges and the rest in the few professional colleges that existed at that time.

The Need for a University Grants Commission

The idea of establishing a University Grants Committee was conceived in England. It would be responsible for estimating grants from the government to the universities to supplement their income from tuition fees and other sources. Several ad hoc committees of a similar nature had been formed in England for this limited purpose as far back as 1831, till a permanent body came into existence in 1919.

The President of the Board of Education held a conference of the representatives of the British universities immediately after the First World War and promised aid to them. Consequently, a Standing Committee of the Treasury was appointed "to enquire into the financial needs of university education in the United Kingdom and to advise the government as to the application of any grants that may be made by Parliament towards meeting them. Thus, a University Grants Committee was created to enable the Parliament to make an informed decision on the allocations needed for higher education and to distribute the available grants to the various universities.

The first Indian universities to be established were Calcutta, Madras and Bombay in 1857. They were really examining bodies and their main source of income was the fee paid by the candidates. They initially functioned for all practical purposes like departments of the government. In Calcutta, for example, the Governor General was the

Chancellor of the University and the Governor General in Council nominated the Vice-Chancellor. This body appointed all except the ex-officio fellows, whom it could also dismiss. Bylaws and regulations needed its approval; it controlled the general fee fund; and it received from the university an annual statement of accounts. Local governors and governments had similar roles in respect of the universities in Madras and Bombay. However, in practice, the government did not interfere too much in the internal affairs of the universities; the British followed the tradition of university autonomy as in their own country. Consequently, as the years passed and the number of universities grew, they were largely left to their own devices. This, in turn, sowed the seeds for a mechanism to coordinate their work and standards.

The first effort to establish an All-India university organization was made in 1924 when the Government of India called a conference in Shimla of the representatives of the fourteen universities in India. Inaugurating the conference, the Viceroy, Lord Reading referred to the, “financial stringency affecting the complete execution of projects,” the need “for mutual help and for cooperation between universities,” for “a united front” and “a joint effort to develop higher education in India to the highest standards”. He also said “there is not the slightest disposition in any quarter to interfere with or detract or subtract in any manner whatsoever from the autonomous or self-governing powers possessed by the various universities.” From this conference developed the Inter-University Board of India, which today is known as the present Association of Indian Universities (AIU). Its main concerns were the coordination of standards, mutual recognition of degrees, and safeguarding the autonomy of universities.

What constituted ‘coordination’ was always subject to often varied and sometimes contentious interpretations, making it difficult in practice to do anything about it. But one thing was clear — the universities needed autonomy not only to grow but also to develop and improve their mutual relationships. This needed greater funds than were available to them from the fee of various kinds paid by students. Hence, it was felt that a grant-giving body along the lines of the UGC of Britain should be established.

The proposal for such an institution was first mooted by Dr. Amarnath Jha in a resolution at a meeting of the Inter-University Board in 1936.

However, he did not really think of a national body but rather a grant-giving body for each province or region. Nothing came of the proposal, however, because the university representatives who were present at the meeting could not evolve a consensus amongst themselves.

In 1943, the Central Advisory Board of Education drew up a national plan for the post-war development of education, popularly known as the Sargent Plan. Through it, the Inter-University Board once again revived the idea of a "Central Grants Committee". It was also realized that a national plan of development of education could not be implemented without central financial aid. The Board, however, was at the same time anxious that the Government of India should not exercise any powers of "control and inspection." The Sargent Report observed that there had been a "a general lack of planning in University education," and that "both the Central and Provincial Governments had yielded to popular pressure in bringing universities into existence without providing the necessary resources to enable them to function on sound lines."

Further, there appeared to be a need for an authority to coordinate university education in the interests of the country as a whole. Accordingly, it suggested that such a body be created somewhat on the lines of the University Grants Committee in Britain. The idea was to set up the Indian University Grants Committee as a statutory body consisting of a few eminent individuals, which would neither directly connect with the government, whether central or provincial nor with any particular university. However, they were to be eminent people preferably with considerable experience of university administration. The main function of the proposed Indian University Grants Committee was supervision over the allocation of grants to universities from public funds and to ensure that they had enough resources to meet the demands that might be made on them. It was envisaged that such financial assistance would be given as block grants for a certain number of years, to enable the universities to plan ahead. Also, all grants to universities for new developments would be made by the central government through the Grants Committee.

The Report further recommended that in addition to its main functions, the proposed Grants Committee should also be empowered to encourage private benefactions; coordinate university activities so as

to avoid overlapping, and to adjust, as far as possible, the output of the universities to the economic needs of the country; prevent undesirable competition amongst them, ensure periodic visits to the universities in order to ascertain their needs; establish cultural contacts; remove all international barriers and arrange for the exchange of teachers and students with foreign countries.

The Government of India appointed a University Grants Committee in 1945, vide the late Department of Education, Health and Lands Resolution dated June 4, 1945 consisting of four part-time members to advise the government on the grants to be given to the Central Universities. The constitution of the Committee was amended and its scope enlarged by the Department of Education Resolution dated July 27, 1946, and the Ministry of Education Resolution dated December 16, 1947. It was also empowered to deal with the other universities. Neither the Committee's chairman nor its members were full-time and its functions were restricted to being basically advisory. It functioned as an intermediary body between the government and the universities. Its job was to advise the government on the allocation of grants from public funds to the central universities and to any other universities whose case for such grants the government might refer to it. It was also supposed to advise universities with respect to any question or matter that might be referred to them by the government. However, the Committee could not be very effective and was kept in abeyance till 1950, once the Government of India accepted the recommendations of the University Education Commission.

There were several reasons for the inadequate performance of the University Grants Committee. One, both its personnel and powers were limited. Also, since neither its chairman nor its members were full-time they found it difficult to find the time that the Committee's effective functioning required. Moreover, their resources were limited and so it was hard for them to familiarize themselves in detail with all the universities requiring their assistance. In any case, even with regard to allocation of funds to universities, the Committee had no funds of its own and could only make recommendations to the Ministry of Education, which, in turn, forwarded them to the Finance Ministry.

Here lay the genesis for the future University Grants Commission. From the functioning of the first Committee, the advantages were seen and

the need was felt, for a body that could itself allocate both recurrent and central grants to universities from the Centre. However, it was also thought that states should retain the responsibility for undergraduate courses and even bear fifty per cent cost of postgraduate courses and research. One idea was that such a Committee or Commission should be a large body in which all subjects should be represented. On the other hand, it was realized that this would make it very unwieldy and so it might be better for the Commission to be a small body but have a panel of experts in each subject or a group of cognate subjects who could, then, visit the universities and report to the Commission. These experts should work in an honorary capacity, being only paid their expenses for visiting universities or attending meetings. For the Commission to be able to command respect, it was necessary for it to have people of high reputation both for wisdom and integrity.

The Radhakrishnan Commission

With the advent of India's independence from British rule, a University Education Commission was set up in 1948 under the chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. Its mandate was to report on university education and to suggest improvements and extension that was desirable both for the present and for the future requirements of the country. The University Education Commission recommended in its Report (1948-1949) the setting up of a Central University Grants Commission / Committee which, working through the Ministry of Education, would allocate sums made available by the central government in accordance with the special needs and merits of each university. It also considered it absolutely necessary to establish a greater coordination between the central and state governments.

Traditionally, education in India had been a provincial concern, but Article 246 of the Constitution of India gave the central government the responsibility of coordination and determination of standards in institutions for higher education or research including scientific and technical institutions. The Radhakrishnan Commission felt that while good governance of institutions for higher learning was possible only if wide powers were given to the state governments, yet initiative in public education needed to be taken by both the provincial and

the central governments. However, coordination had to lie with the Centre to ensure that all states and union territories acted within certain limits and observed certain minimum standards. It was also necessary to ensure that gradually a coherent national policy would emerge on education. Joint planning by the Centre, states and the union territories was needed in several areas.

Therefore, it suggested that education should be placed in the concurrent list in the Constitution. Coordination was not only needed between the Centre and the states but also amongst the universities themselves. Since research and advanced teaching had become extremely expensive, all universities could not specialize in every field. The only solution was to give the recommended University Grants Commission the task of coordination along with the sanction of giving or withholding grants. Further, national laboratories, had to be established and scientific surveys carried out. These, it was felt, should be coordinated with the corresponding departments of the universities to prevent wasteful duplication of efforts. The Radhakrishnan Commission also recommended a two-way recruitment — that is, from the universities to laboratories and other research institutions and vice versa. The UGC was given the function of securing the cooperation of various agencies for this purpose through the means of sanctioning or withholding grants.

Analysing the shortcomings, difficulties and challenges faced by the universities at this time, the Radhakrishnan Commission was convinced that universities needed to be autonomous. At the same time, they also had to be sensitive to enlightened public opinion and be free of nepotism, factionalism and corruption. In addition to this, the universities had a positive role to play in society and nationally by providing leadership on issues of grave national concern, they were the main source from which the country would inevitably have to draw not only public leaders but also high grade national officials. It was argued that each university needed to have the best possible constitution to enable it to fulfil its role. Also, the members of its governing body had to be chosen wisely and then the university should be allowed to function freely without interference. The Radhakrishnan Commission found the university administration unsatisfactory, pointing to the procedural standards, which it felt, could be suspect. Since this was likely to damage the university's national prestige, its constitution

had to provide the scope for achieving and maintaining necessary improvements. The Commission recommended that the President of India, who would also be the Visitor for all the universities, must ratify all the Acts of different universities.

The proposed size of the University Grants Commission was five members — with at least three full-time members appointed by the Government of India. The three full-time members were to be the Chairman, the Secretary, and the Ministry of Finance and the Secretary, Ministry of Education; the latter two being *ex-officio*. The membership could be increased to seven, five as non-officials and the two Secretaries as officials. The recommended term of the Commission was six years, with the first three officials retiring in two years and the last four after four years. The positions of the officials had to be secure and safeguarded, and their responsibilities similar to the members of the Public Service Commission.

The Radhakrishnan Commission, expected the UGC to be an expert body and it was most essential that it should have the powers to allocate grants, within the total limits set by the government instead of merely recommending them to the Finance Ministry. While it was for the government to decide how much money the universities could spend, the detailed allocation of money had to be left to the non-political expert body, free from outside pressures. Only the audited accounts of any university receiving money from the UGC should be subject to scrutiny by the auditors of the Finance Ministry. The duties of the UGC would include, among other things, visiting the universities and providing them with consultation and advice.

The Central Council of University Education

Following the publication of the report of the University Education Commission, the Government of India proceeded to adopt more systematic measures for the coordination and determination of standards in universities. However, it took no immediate action to establish the recommended University Grants Commission. The existing University Grants Committee, too, was allowed to fade away. Instead of constituting a regulatory body, the government, after the adoption of the Constitution of India, attempted to regulate

the universities through a Universities (Regulation of Standards) Bill (1951). The Bill provided for the setting up of the Central Council of University Education for the coordination and determination of academic standards in institutions of higher education in India. It was felt that neither coordination of institutions nor determination of their standards, which under the Constitution (entry 66 of List I) lay within the exclusive authority of Parliament, was possible unless the central government had some control over the establishment of new universities, the definition of their territorial jurisdiction, and the determination of the standards of teaching and examinations in universities, both old and new. The problem, it was realized, had become more acute on account of the tendency to multiply universities.

In order to achieve this objective, the Bill put forward some significant proposals. It envisaged that no university established before the proposed Act by or under a State Act would be deemed to be a university unless the central government by notification made a declaration to that effect. The central government could declare any institution for higher education other than a university also to be a university. Further, no institution other than a university would have the right to confer degrees. The Central Council of University Education would be established with at least one-third of its members as vice-chancellors who would be responsible for the coordination and determination of standards. It could ask for information about any aspect of university work from a university and would have the powers to direct the executive authority of any university to take such action as may be specified. If any university failed to comply with its directions within a reasonable time, it could advise the central government to de-recognize any degree conferred by such a university for the purpose of employment under the central government or for any other purpose.

Significantly, the Central Council of University Education envisaged in the draft Bill was not proposed to be given any financial responsibility in respect of the universities. Its only concern was conceived to be with matters relating to coordination and maintenance of standards in the sphere of university education. The draft Bill was circulated to the state governments as well as to the universities for their opinion. As Humayun Kabir stated at a conference of Vice-Chancellors and

representatives of universities in India held in September, 1952 (approximately one year after the Bill was circulated), no state government except for one, had opposed it. However, the universities were strongly and persistently against it. They had three main objections. One, it was for the universities themselves to regulate, maintain and coordinate their own academic standards. Second, if an outside agency undertook this job, it would amount to violating the university autonomy. Third, standards were low because of lack of funds and once adequate funds were made available there would be hardly any problems.

Speaker after speaker at this meeting waxed eloquent on how the central government was planning to take away the autonomy of the universities. Out of approximately twenty-five universities in India at this time, more than twenty universities were represented at this meeting and some of the celebrated luminaries of the time spoke on the occasion. All voiced their strong apprehensions with regard to the establishment of the Central Council of University Education. They raised some pertinent issues in the process.

Sir N.J. Wadia, Vice-Chancellor, Bombay University maintained that no outside body should tell a university how to coordinate its standards and how to determine the courses of study. The Central Council might do some good but only if it was a purely advisory body and it consisted almost entirely of Vice-Chancellors and other representatives of the universities.

Prof. R.K. Shanmukham Chetty, Vice-Chancellor, Annamalai University wanted the government to establish a University Grants Committee and define its powers and functions. He was apprehensive that once the central government became the source of finance to the universities, it would naturally have a voice and that would impinge upon university autonomy.

Sir Ramaswamy Mudaliar, Vice-Chancellor, Travancore University accepted that standards varied from university to university but blamed the political parties for this. He observed that they constantly tried to lower standards, revise examination results to have a higher percentage of passes than the university authorities thought desirable and even interfered with how many would get first or second divisions. They tried to influence the universities unduly but the Inter-University

Board could tackle these problems, he felt, if only it had a little more power. Besides, he thought, that the Bill, as proposed, would create a clash between the existing authorities and the proposed one to the detriment of higher education.

Hansa Mehta, Vice-Chancellor, Baroda University felt that there was no point in all the proposals unless funds were forthcoming. She had been a member of the defunct University Grants Committee and knew from experience that this had happened because there were no grants to distribute.

Prof. Hadi Hasan, Vice-Chancellor, Aligarh Muslim University, also mentioned the paucity of resources.

Prof. V.K.R.V. Rao, representing Delhi University, vehemently opposed even a whiff of government interference. He felt that a University Grants Committee should be established to distribute grants and advise universities in all matters. But he also felt that the universities should refer their proposals and problems to a committee of Vice-Chancellors to be established by the Inter-University Board or to the Standing Committee of the Inter-University Board, which could act as a liaison between the grants committee and the universities.

Humayun Kabir vigorously defended the proposed setting up of a Central Council for University Education. In his reply he gave the assurance that the government did not for a moment want to encroach upon the autonomy of the universities and if the Inter-University Board could suggest some other machinery for improvement in standards, it could be considered. All that was desired was uniformity in standards and attainments and not necessarily uniformity in courses and syllabi. He assured the Vice-Chancellors that if this Bill was passed, the central government would not assume these powers but would set up an autonomous statutory body whose members would command the confidence of the universities which themselves would be fully represented.

The Ministry of Education, however, did not immediately agree to drop the Bill. Perhaps the government had a two-fold anxiety. One was that while the Constitution had made education a 'state' subject, it had placed the responsibility of coordination and determination of standards in higher education on the Centre. Thus education

having become a state subject, the Centre could not carry out its responsibility without some kind of legal machinery. This was the purpose of the proposed Council. However, after another conference of Vice-Chancellors and State Education Ministers in April 1953, the central government agreed to set up a University Grants Commission which would have some of the powers that had been envisaged for the Council in the earlier Bill together with grant-giving functions. The body was to be called a 'Commission' rather than a 'Committee' to indicate that it had more autonomy than a committee would have. Thus, after a series of conferences and consultations, the idea of setting up a Central Council of Education was abandoned and a University Grants Commission was agreed to be set up as had been prescribed by the University Education Commission, presided over by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan.

The Interim Commission

The Government of India set up an interim UGC by a resolution to advise it on the allocation of grants-in-aid from public funds to the central and other universities and also to advise the government on the allocation of grants-in-aid to other universities and institutions of higher learning whose case for such grants might be referred to the Commission by the government. It was to advise universities and other institutions of higher learning in respect of any questions referred to it by the government. It was inaugurated by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the then Education Minister, and began to function from the last week of December, 1953 with the noted scientist Dr. Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar as its Chairman, together with eight other members. Samuel Mathai, Secretary of the Inter-University Board, was appointed as Secretary of the Commission.

The newly appointed UGC held its first meeting on December 28, 1953. Addressing the Commission, Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad gave an assurance that the government would treat its recommendations as binding and would be guided by its advice. He said that as the budget for the year had already been approved, the Chairman would be informed of the amount available for university education and the Commission would be free to allocate amounts among the universities.

At its inaugural meeting, its first chairman, Dr. S.S. Bhatnagar, said that the success of the Commission would depend entirely on the autonomy it enjoyed and on the effect its advice had not only in university circles but also on those who were actively involved in the university and educational activities.

Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru inaugurated the Commission. His wide-ranging address covered almost all the educational issues that confronted higher education at that time. Addressing the meeting in Urdu, he said that the establishment of the Commission marked a revolutionary step in the field of higher education in the country. He urged the Commission to keep pace with the changing times and to suggest major policy decisions that would catalyze progress in the educational field. He said that he had given anxious thought not only to the establishment of the Commission but also to the developments leading to its formation. A Grants Commission with the powers that had been given to the new body should have been set up years ago, he added. The older generation could then have kept in touch with the problems of the young in universities and could have also observed how men of their own generation were running educational institutions.

New factors had come into being that swept aside the old order. Jawaharlal Nehru expressed the hope that the University Grants Commission would evolve a policy that would bring about a complete reorientation of university education. India's independence had released forces, for good or for evil he could not say. It had revolutionized the thinking of young men in particular. There was a keen demand for education from all over the country even in its distant and interior parts. The villagers were even prepared to construct school buildings provided the government was willing to run them. That showed how earnest they were about learning. On the other hand, a question had also arisen, whether there was any use opening more schools when the utility of the present educational system itself was in doubt.

Referring to the numerous colleges and the overcrowding of students in classes, he wondered whether students learnt anything at all in such conditions. They might be better off with private tuitions and learning. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru affirmed that in a changing world,

decisions taken today became outdated after two or three years. However, basic education alone seemed to stay as the fundamental article of faith in the education system. Of course it had to be modified to suit the circumstances. It was heartening that the Government of India had at last woken up to the responsibility given to it under the Constitution and set up an independent Commission to act both as guide and guardian to the universities. He praised Maulana Azad for having assured the Commission at the very outset of non-interference by the government. Unhampered by day-to-day official control and certain in the knowledge that its recommendations would be binding on the government, the Commission could do a great deal to help universities to revive and reform themselves.

Focusing on a vision for the universities, the Prime Minister said that they needed proper direction and fresh funds. They must cut out waste and duplication and each institution should have a character of its own instead of being mere manufacturers of degree holders, as so many of them had become. They must be placed in the hands of those who understood the meaning and aim of education and not careerists using universities for the fulfilment of their own ambitions. The Commission, in this context, had an immensely important and responsible role to play. With the purse strings in its hands it would be the final arbiter in educational matters. Quick results could not be looked for, but the Commission would at least be able to improve the educational atmosphere so that universities could no longer be in a state of chaos or going through a perpetual crisis.

Early Years

Entrusted with these awesome responsibilities and daunting tasks, the Commission started its work with surprisingly few resources, facilities and infrastructure. To begin with, accommodation for the Commission and the first group of office staff had to be found. A retired former Assistant Secretary in the Department of Education was appointed as the Assistant Secretary of the Commission. The Ministry of Education was very co-operative and gave the services of a few officers. At first, the office of the Commission was in Mandi House and later some rooms were built for it on the top floor of the

building of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) at what was then called the Old Mill Road. Later the Commission constructed its own building and moved into it in 1963.

The Chairman, Dr. S.S. Bhatnagar died at the beginning of 1955. He had very little time to devote to the Commission in the few months in office, because he continued to hold the office of the Secretary of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Scientific Research and also that of the Director General of the CSIR. The other first members of the Commission were also very distinguished people. Apart from K.G. Saiyidain and K.R.K. Menon who were Secretaries in the Ministry of Education and Finance respectively, the other members were Dr. A.L. Mudaliar (Vice-Chancellor, Madras University), Acharya Narendra Dev (Vice-Chancellor, Banaras Hindu University), Nevroji J. Wadia (Vice-Chancellor, Bombay University), Dr. J.C. Ghosh (Vice-Chancellor, Calcutta University), Dr. Zakir Husain (Vice-Chancellor Aligarh Muslim University) and Pandit H.N. Kunzru, MP. The Commission, therefore, began its life prestigiously but no one seemed to have a clear idea of what the Commission was supposed to do. There was also no clear indication of the funds that would be available to the Commission.

Before the first meeting of the Members of the Commission, Dr. Bhatnagar wanted to do something 'dramatic' that would catch the attention of the universities. So it was considered that, to begin with, the salaries of the teachers should be raised by twenty-five per cent immediately. However, the Commission had not been allocated any funds yet and the then Finance Minister, C.D. Deshmukh, strongly opposed the proposal on the grounds that it would lead to limitless increase in expenditure. Nevertheless, the measure was implemented and became the first step in what was to become one of the major activities of the Commission – the periodic revision of salary scales of university and college teachers.

The Commission began its life in the middle of the First Five-Year Plan, and in the first year of its existence, its main concerns were really to secure adequate funds, recruit staff, establish contacts with universities, and identify their urgent needs for development. It had several meetings with the Planning Commission for determining the funds that should be made available. This was a rather difficult

exercise since there was as yet no clear enunciation of either the principles according to which funds would be allocated or the purposes for which funds would be needed.

The Planning Commission tended to think in terms of “targets” to be achieved during a plan period and only “allocated” funds for them. The development of education, the raising of standards, the improvement of quality of teaching and the encouragement of research, could not always be expressed in financial terms or quantitative targets. The situation was not made easier by the procedural arrangements by which the funds allocated for the UGC were doled out in instalments by the Ministry of Education. Although the Commission was expected to operate in Five-Year Plan periods, it could never be sure that the ‘plan funds’ would in actual fact be available to it. This led to some difficulty and dissatisfaction later on, as all grants of the UGC to the universities for ‘development’ purposes had to be limited to one Plan period and no guarantee could be given that the grant would continue into the next Plan period.

For a year or so after Dr. Bhatnagar’s death, the Commission did not have a full-time Chairman. Humayun Kabir, Secretary, Ministry of Education, succeeded Dr. Bhatnagar as Chairman and discharged those duties in addition to his own duties in the Education Ministry from January 2, 1955 until he resigned on February 22, 1956. H.N. Kunzru, who was a member, then took over as Chairman between February 23 and August 28, 1956. C.D. Deshmukh succeeded him as Chairman on August 29, 1956.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education had been working on a Bill for setting up the UGC as a statutory body. There were some discussions in the Commission on the provisions of the draft Bill. The commission’s main anxiety was that the Act should not make the UGC a purely advisory body and that it should have autonomous powers to determine and disburse the grants that could be paid to the universities. While the UGC was to be modelled on the British University Grants Committee, care needed to be taken so that the universities in India did not lose their autonomy. The Chairman of the University Grants Committee in England, Sir Edward Hales, had seen a copy of the draft Bill of the Indian UGC and commented that the provision of three vice-chancellors as members was “ a cardinal

blunder". This issue also arose in Parliament later during the course of the discussion on the Bill.

The UGC Bill in Parliament

Dr. M.M. Das, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Education introduced a Bill in Parliament on September 30, 1954 to make provision for the coordination and determination of standards in universities and for that purpose, to establish a University Grants Commission as a statutory body. Earlier Maulana Azad introduced the statement of object and reason on September 24, 1954, which read as follows:

The Constitution of India vests Parliament with exclusive authority in regard to coordination and determination of the standard in institution for higher education or research and scientific and technical institutions. It is obvious that neither coordination nor determination of standards is possible unless the central government has some voice in the determination of standards of teaching and examination in universities, both old and new. It is also necessary to ensure that the available resources are used to the best possible effect. The problem has become very acute recently on account of the tendency to multiply universities. The need for a properly constituted commission for determining and allocating top universities funds made available by the central government has also become more urgent on this account. It is, therefore, proposed to establish a University Grants Commission as a corporate body, which will enquire into the financial needs of universities for any general or specific purpose. The Commission will also have the power to recommend to any university the measures necessary for the reform and improvement of university education and to advise the university concerned on the action to be taken for the purpose of implanting such recommendations. The Commission will act as an expert body to advise the central government on problems connected with the coordination of facilities and maintenance of standards in universities. The commission in consultation with the university concerned will

also have the power to cause an inspection or an enquiry to be made of any university established by law in India and to advise the university on any matter, which has been the subject of an enquiry or inspection. The Commission shall also advise, whenever such advice is sought, on the establishment of new universities.

The Bill also seeks to restrict the use of the word 'University' or the power to confer degrees, etc., to institutions as such by law in India or to institutions, empowered to do so by an Act of Parliament and provides a penalty for contravention of these provisions by an individual or a corporate body.

While the provisions of the Bill do not apply to institutions of higher education which are not universities, power is vested in the central government to declare any institution for higher education to be a university for the purposes of this Bill by issuing a notification in the Official Gazette.

The motion for the reference of the Bill to a joint committee of the Houses was moved by Dr. M.M. Das on December 18, 1954, and was discussed the same day in the House, as well as on February 22 and 28, 1955. It was adopted on February 28, 1955. The Rajya Sabha discussed the motion on the March 15, 16 and 21, 1955, and concurred in the said motion on March 21, 1955. The message from the Rajya Sabha was read out to the Lok Sabha on March 22, 1955.

A lively debate ensued on the motion of referring the Bill to the Joint Committee that lasted for about six hours. Not only the broad principles but also the objects and the reasons of the Bill were debated, and each and every provision of the Bill was subjected to a detailed scrutiny by several Members of Parliament. The first sitting of the Committee was held on April 2, 1955, to draw up a programme of work. At this sitting, the committee also had a general discussion on the provisions of the Bill, which was continued at the second sitting held on April 18, 1955. The Committee took up clause by clause consideration for the Bill on April 19, 1955 which was continued at further sittings on April 21, as well as July 4, 5, 6 and 7, 1955 and concluded on July 9, 1955. The committee

sat in Poona from July 4 to July 9, 1955 and held five sittings with the permission of the Speaker. A motion for extension of time up to the July 30, 1955 for presentation of the report of the committee was moved in the Lok Sabha on April 29, 1955 and adopted. The Committee considered and adopted the report on July 26, 1955.

The majority of members who took part in the debate before the Bill was referred to the Joint Committee, cutting across party affiliations, as they expressed great concern about academic independence and firmly emphasized that the autonomous character of the universities must be maintained. Many expressed the fear that the UGC would be nothing more than an appendage of the central government and that the central government would exert undue influence upon the universities through the UGC thereby endangering their autonomy. Keeping this in view, Dr. M.M. Das took care to inform the Lok Sabha, that the keynotes or the guiding principles of the Committee were the maintenance of academic independence and autonomy of the universities.

The Committee was of the opinion that:

University education is a state subject and the states should be responsible for the maintenance of the universities, their constituent and affiliate colleges. The Centre should not take upon itself any responsibilities in the matter. The UGC will give grants where it thinks, that is helping a university in achieving its *raison d'être*, the advancing of the bounds of knowledge. University autonomy is basic to democracy in education and education for democracy. The concept of educational planning and engineering is also essential in a modern society, and, therefore, any agencies set up for educational planning must be democratically constituted so that the criterion for determining such planning will be the claims of individual and academic freedom communicate with the needs of society rather than the policies of the government administrations.

The Committee was fully conscious of the great importance of the proposed measure and its far-reaching consequences. There was continual awareness that they were dealing with

universities, the supreme and highest educational organizations of the country upon the well-being of which depended the future of India. It was careful, not even by a word or a phrase, to include any provision that could be construed to give either the central government or the Commission any authority over the universities. So much so that the Committee, according to Dr. M.M. Das, had reduced the University Grants Commission to a mere Advisory and Consultative Body having no power to enforce its recommendations. The only authority that the Commission had if a university did not agree or refused to carry out its recommendations was to withhold its grant. No other punishment could be imposed by it.

The Bill was vigorously debated in both the Houses of Parliament. Issues ranged from the very necessity of establishing a University Grants Commission to what was meant by determination of standards and coordination, women's education, sports, rural universities, the examination system and the reforms required in it, the question of overcrowding and student absenteeism, the status of institutions that were neither universities nor colleges, the need to help and look after affiliated colleges where most of the teaching and learning took place, the funding of educational institutions and its implications, university autonomy and the demands of planning, national purposes to be achieved and a host of other issues.

Discussion in Parliament

A sample of what some members spoke and debated shows their passion, energy and enthusiasm for higher education and the fierceness with which they defended their views emphasizes their awareness of the importance of higher education in the shaping of the destiny of both the individual and the nation.

For example, S.S. More questioned the very need and the constitutional propriety of the Centre in establishing a statutory organization for determining and maintaining the standards and coordination in the field of higher education, as, including university education, was a state subject. Of course, he conceded that the Centre had the right

to prescribe standards; but was there a need to set up the proposed Commission for that purpose? The Central Universities, he argued, were already under the control of the central government and these could be declared by Parliament to be of national importance. By attempting to establish the Commission, he felt, the Centre was trying to gain control over all the state universities too. The right to withhold grants was an instrument of control and since all universities in India suffered from a sort of financial anaemia, the imposition of this penalty would be of great consequence to them placing a potent tool in the hands of the central government. Such powers, he believed would also lead to the imposition of uniformity and would result in impinging both on the autonomy of the states and the universities.

He felt that this also went against the Radhakrishnan Commission that had unequivocally stated that the autonomy of the independent universities in general was a matter which should be the concern not merely of the universities but of the governments and of the public in general. Universities could play a pivotal role only if it was appreciated both by the public and the government that they functioned as autonomous units and were free to develop along well-established standards, uncontrolled and uninfluenced by the changing waves of democratic passion. At the same time, universities should also exercise self-control to work towards high standards. In any case, More pointed out that there were already similar institutions to take care of the objectives for which the University Grants Commission was being set up, like the Inter-University Board, which was a non-official organization in which all the universities participated. The Board attended to their common difficulties and tried to bring some uniformity in a non-official way. In addition, there was the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), which too gave some useful guidance on university education. Then there was already a University Grants Commission brought into existence by a Government Resolution in 1945 and its ambit had been expanded by orders in 1946 and 1947.

Therefore, S.S. More did not see the need for another statutory body. Another body would only exercise control and bring uniformity. This was what the British had done in the past and now the government was following the same path. The Radhakrishnan Commission had also stated, "that the State

should recognize its responsibility for the financing of higher education." Hence, said More, the government should not attempt to take control of the universities while spending very paltry sums of money on education.

M.D. Joshi not only supported the idea of a University Grants Commission as proposed by the Radhakrishnan Commission but also felt that the position that universities should have no control was not acceptable. The nation was engaged in the task of reconstruction for which the government had certain plans according to which it had to proceed.

There were many views on the question of university autonomy. While one extreme was that universities should have absolute freedom, at the other extreme was the view that the idea of giving autonomy to the universities was a feudal one which originated in England at a time when universities were more or less private enterprises conforming to a policy of *laissez-faire*. These were days of planning and socialism and so central control and direction were inevitable whether it was in administration or education or the economic field.

The truth lay somewhere between the two in the position taken by Dr. Lakshmanswami Mudaliar, when he said: "When we speak of university autonomy, let it be clearly understood that it is a type of freedom from unnecessary shackles and not a liberty which will degenerate into license. It was necessary for the government to have a certain kind of control over universities because in the gigantic task of nation rebuilding, educational institutions should proceed along certain definite lines, which were of a national character. In this endeavour uniformity was a functional necessity. For example, the Bombay Government had stipulated sixteen years to be the minimum age for entry into the university so that people did not embark on higher education at too immature an age. However, it would be advisable if all universities had the same age of entry so that they did not pull in different directions. Even to effect such measures, some coordinating agency was required and hence the need for the proposed University Grants Commission.

The thorny issue of the medium of instruction in higher education was also raised. Some members pointed out that a section of people

felt that it should be Hindi while others were in favour of English. Still others wanted it to be one of the regional languages. Different groups advocated different things and hence, once again, a coordinating agency was required.

Sucheta Kripalani felt that the Bill for the creation of the UGC had come rather late. Many new universities were being established and they were struggling for funds. It was imperative that proper standards for higher education be maintained. She, too, touched upon the issue of the medium of instruction when she referred to the demand of some people that university education be imparted in the regional languages. If that happened, she said, various difficulties would be created and the government would be left with no choice but to coordinate their activities and ensure that standards were maintained. Then, there was the issue of funds without which higher study and research, was not possible. This matter, she pointed out, had been thoroughly discussed by the University Education Commission which had made the specific recommendation that the government should meet 60 per cent of recurring expenditure and 75 per cent of capital expenditure, 30 per cent should come from fees and 10 per cent from endowments. Further, even the affiliated colleges that were receiving no government aid should be adequately helped. At least half the salaries of the sanctioned posts should come from the government. All this required a huge outlay and hence, she concluded, a Commission was required to allocate funds properly and help the universities to develop along the right lines.

Dr. Krishnaswami raised the issue of the national purposes that, according to the Bill, the universities were supposed to serve. This clause evoked a lot of discussion. Universities, he argued, were constituted under a Charter or under an enactment of the legislature and, being so established, the purposes they were expected to fulfil had to be necessarily national. It was, therefore, unconstitutional, he felt, apart from it being improper that an outside authority should tell universities that there were national purposes other than those in the enactments of their establishment that they were expected to fulfil. Such directives would militate against the autonomy of states that were responsible for the creation of the universities. Besides, who was to determine what such national purposes were? It, in effect, meant that someone in the Education Department would have the

right to issue directions and tell universities that if these directions, which were supposedly national, were not fulfilled the University Grants Commission would withhold their grants.

N.B. Chowdhury took up two important causes — that of affiliated colleges and of the salaries of teachers. He, like many others, emphasized that since the bulk of teaching and learning took place in affiliated colleges, it was necessary to make provision for them under the University Grants Commission. Also, he felt that teachers should be paid well. The Radhakrishnan Commission had also said, “The University teacher should be helped to live in comfort, if he is to devote himself to learning, teaching and research.... I hope the university services will become as attractive as the All India services, for that is the only way to recruit and retain some of the ablest persons for the universities.”

Members also raised other issues like women’s education, election of members of the Commission and overcrowding in classrooms. T.S.A. Chettiar, for example, was emphatic that elections should be avoided in university circles as they created many difficulties.

C.R. Narasimhan hoped that provision which enabled the UGC to, “recommend to any university the measures necessary for the improvement of university education and advise the university on the action to be taken for the purpose of implementing such recommendations would be freely used with regard to certain schemes visualized by the Planning Commission and published in the “First Five-Year Plan”.

K.L. Shrimali, the Deputy Minister of Education, observed that the Central government could on the advice of the Commission, declare by notification in the Official Gazette that any institution for higher education other than a university, shall be deemed to be a university for the purposes of this Act, and on such a declaration being made, all the provisions of the Act would apply as if it were a university.

H.N. Mukherjee urged that what the country needed was not only more education but also better education at every level including the highest. He agreed that serious deterioration of standards had taken place in university training and research but mere rectification of the deficiencies would not do. He did not, however, want the Bill to

emphasize only the deterioration and its rectification but concentrate on the improvement in the standards of work.

The Bill emphasized UGC's role in the "determination of standards" but he found this dangerous, as determination of standards should be done at the academic level by agencies that provided for inter-university consultation like the Inter-Universities Board. The Commission on the other hand, even with the very best of people on it, would carry an official flavour about it. Of course, while he understood that there could be no such thing as absolute autonomy for universities or for any organization for that matter, too much bureaucratization could lead to a danger of political interference ensuing out of a sense of "tidy-minded administration," coordination and determination of standards by a centralized agency could lead to a kind of stereotyping of university courses and university policies. This could be disastrous in a country as vast and as multifarious as India. Different regions had rich cultures that had to be nurtured and developed through the instrumentality of the universities. It was felt by some members that to give one agency the right to determine standards was dangerous. Universities should be free to determine their own standards.

Shrimali pointed out that the Radhakrishnan Commission had not favoured elections in the university bodies. It had categorically suggested that as far as possible, elections should be avoided.

Shyamanand Sahay added another dimension to the debate by raising the issue of the UGC itself and how it had to be kept free from the interference of the central government. He spoke in the context of whether the UGC should have the power to allocate and disburse maintenance grants to all educational institutions or whether the central universities should be maintained directly by the central government.

Once the principle was accepted that there should be no interference of the central government in the universities, it would be inconsistent to say that the central universities should not be covered by this principle. He argued that given the trend of conditions, mostly financial, if a long range view of things was taken, it would be exceedingly difficult for universities, even within the next two or three years, to secure much of the help that they were then receiving from the propertied class. They would have to depend increasingly on the public exchequer.

That being so, even from the point of view of what ought to be in the larger interests of the universities themselves, it would be unwise to curtail the powers of the UGC to disburse funds. This issue was hotly debated because, in practical terms, the disbursement of all grants through the UGC to all educational institutions would, inevitably, greatly enhance its role and powers.

Shrimali placed the point of view of the government. He reminded the House of the history of the University Grants Committee which was established to look after the central universities. The government had always felt that it would be better to have an independent body like the University Grants Commission to look after the universities so that their academic freedom could be maintained and there was no interference in their day-to-day administration. The central government had the direct responsibility of the four central universities and the University Grants Committee was looking after only these initially. Later on, it was felt that the functions and scope of the University Grants Committee should be expanded because the central government was responsible not only for the central universities but for the other universities as well.

This did not mean that the central government could shirk its responsibility towards the central universities and would, therefore, place funds at the disposal of the Commission for the maintenance of these universities. If the University Grants Commission was not given the responsibility of maintenance and development of central universities also, they would have to deal with two agencies — one, the University Grants Commission which would look after the development of state universities as well as of the central universities, and second, the Ministry of Education which would deal with their maintenance grants. Instead of creating a multiplicity of agencies, it would be advisable for the UGC to look after the maintenance and development of all universities, central as well as state. There should not be so much distrust and suspicion of the government, he felt. The UGC and the government should not function as rival bodies. There should really be a partnership between the two if university education was to be promoted.

Narayan Das wanted the UGC to have two more functions. The first was the power to recommend to the President of the Indian Union to

grant charters, provisional or permanent, for the establishment of a new university or for the conversion of any affiliated or independent institution into a provisional or a permanent recognized university. The second function that Narayan Das wanted the Commission to have was the authority to suggest, advise or recommend to the central or any state government to establish institutions or rural universities for the promotion of higher and advanced study in rural areas. Many members emphasized the importance of rural universities as there was neglect of rural areas and practically all the funds had been spent on advanced or university education in urban areas. Narayan Das also drew the attention of the House to the issue of free studentships, stipends, scholarships and fellowships to be awarded to deserving students as one of the functions of the UGC. The University Education Commission, too, had stated in its report that not more than 10 per cent of students were getting free scholarships or studentships in India. This resulted in a very large number of meritorious students being debarred from entering colleges for higher education. Narayan Das wanted sufficient funds to be placed in the hands of the UGC to allot to the universities for this purpose also so that meritorious students might not be excluded from higher education. He observed that several Ministries of the government were instituting or awarding scholarships, fellowships or stipends on an ad hoc or a permanent basis but the UGC, being an expert body, would have in its possession information from all the universities on this matter and, therefore, would be in a better position to disburse funds for it. Hence, it was suggested that it should be the UGC's responsibility to disburse funds to different universities for such schemes in a proper manner.

From these recommendations it was evident that Narayan Das wanted the UGC to be made responsible not only for the development of university and advanced education in the country but also for its expansion and, therefore, advocated the provision of sufficient funds for this purpose. Dr. M.M. Das, in his reply, pointed out that universities were established by legislatures, central or state. Not a single university was given a charter by the Governor General or the President, so the question of the issue of charters for the establishment of universities did not arise. As far as rural education was concerned, the Government of India was soon going to establish a Council of Rural Education. The Committee on Rural Education

had already submitted its report and the government would, on that basis, consider the necessary steps to be taken for the improvement of rural education. Since the Council would be an expert body, there was no need to encumber the UGC with this problem. In any case, whenever a rural university came into place, it would automatically come within the purview of the UGC.

Meghnad Saha raised some important practical problems that the UGC would have to face. These were with regard to the administrative machinery for undertaking all the work that the Commission had been assigned to do. Saha was in the University Grants Committee of 1948 that could not do much work because all its members were honorary and no one was full-time. Members, he said, would come once in six months and never read the agenda. No business was done and the Committee was merely an appendage of the Ministry of Education.

The objective of the Radhakrishnan Commission, too, of which Saha had been a member and had also helped with the drafting of the Report, was that the UGC should be an entirely autonomous body with very little to do with the Education Ministry. It was supposed to work like the Public Service Commission without reference to any ministry whatsoever. Therefore, Saha wanted, in addition to a whole time Chairman, four other full-time members.

Dr. K.L. Shrimali made a comprehensive statement with regard to all the points raised pertaining to the Bill on December 6, 1955. He explained that a kind of partnership had to be created between the government and the universities. Both had a social purpose and universities worked for the realization of it as much as the government did. However, when planning was being done for national life, some kind of planning for universities was also inevitable. Universities could not be given absolute autonomy. In fact, no social institution could have such autonomy, since all of them had to work within a certain societal framework. The universities, too, had to realize that they had to adjust to major social needs and be responsive to the changes that were taking place in society. If they did not do so, they would defeat the very purpose of their existence.

Second, while the government was anxious to maintain the autonomy of the universities, it was also vital that their development should

be responsive to the national needs. The government could not be completely indifferent to what was happening in the universities and was aware that there were all kinds of factions, groups and intrigues. In such circumstances, the government could not ignore the ground realities and so some kind of planning was necessary. In a planned society, while the freedom of the universities had to be assured, harmony had also to be ensured between the two. The broad objectives of the Constitution had to be realized and the universities, too, must do their bit in this endeavour.

The government could not be indifferent to these broad objectives and national purposes while being very conscious of the fact that within this framework, the autonomy of universities needed to be respected and they had to be allowed to develop in their own way. A healthy relationship between the government and the universities was necessary which required that there should be no day-to-day interference of the government in the functioning of the universities. It was hoped that the setting up of the UGC would bring about such a harmonious relationship.

After this general statement, Dr. Shrimali went through the Bill clause by clause incorporating amendments wherever required. Finally, both Houses of Parliament passed the Bill on March 3, 1956. The government, in November 1956, published the required notification and the University Grants Commission became a statutory body with effect from November 5, 1956.

The UGC Act

Two important provisions of the 1951 Bill, which gave teeth to the proposed UGC, had been deleted. The 1951 Bill vested the central government with the power of approving or not approving a university established by a State Legislature. In the 1956 Act this provision was altogether deleted and it was open to the State Legislatures to establish any university without reference to the UGC. The second important change made in the new act compared to the 1951 Bill was that in the earlier Bill it was open to the central government to de-recognize any degree conferred by a university provided the said university failed to carry out any directions given to it. This de-recognition would be for

the purpose of employment under the Central Government or for any other purpose. Now this provision too was deleted.

The University Grants Commission Act, as finally passed gave the UGC the responsibility for allocation of funds placed at its disposal to universities--for maintenance and development to central universities, and for development to state universities, -as a means to achieve the objectives of "promotion and coordination of university education and for determination and maintenance of standards of teaching, examination and research". The authority of the Commission to improve standards got diluted and remained merely advisory and, in the situation prevailing in the country, largely ineffective. Although the body as it emerged did not have the power to create new institutions or disaffiliate existing ones, it still shaped itself into a unique body, different from its model in the UK, of combining in itself both functions of giving grants and of coordinating and maintaining standards.

The Commission was to be a corporate body consisting of nine members to be appointed by the central government. The members were to be chosen as follows:

- a) Not more than three members from among the Vice-Chancellors of universities.
- b) Two members from among the officers of the central government to represent the government:
- c) The remaining members from among those who were educationists of repute or had achieved high academic distinction.

Provided that not less than one-half of the total members so chosen were from among persons who were not officers of the central government or any of the state government.

The central government was to nominate a member of the Commission, not being an officer of the central government or of any state government, as the Chairman of the Commission. Every member was to hold office for a term of six years. The Commission could associate with itself anyone whose assistance or advice it desired in carrying out its functions. The general duty of the Commission was to take,

in consultation with universities and other bodies concerned, all such measures as it considered fit for the promotion and coordination of university education and for the determination and maintenance of standards of teaching, examination and research in universities.

The Act sets forth the power and functions of the Commission under Article 12 as follows:

It shall be the general duty of the Commission to take, in consultation with the universities or other bodies concerned, all such steps as it may think fit for the promotion and coordination of university education and for the determination and maintenance of standards of teaching, examination and research in universities, and for the purpose of performing its functions under this Act, the Commission may —

- (i) Inquire into the financial needs of the universities:
- (ii) Allocate and disburse grants to universities established or incorporated by or under a Central Act for the maintenance and development of such universities or for any other general or specified purpose.
- (iii) Allocate and disburse such grants to universities for development purpose.
- (iv) Recommend to any university the measures necessary for the improvement of university education.
- (v) Advise the central and state governments to allocate grants to universities for any general or specified purpose out of the Consolidated Fund of India or the state, as the case may be.
- (vi) Advise any authority, it required, on the establishment of a new university or the expansion of the activities of any university.
- (vii) Advise the central or any state government or university on any question which may be referred to the Commission by the central or the state government or the university, as the case may be.
- (viii) Collect information on all such matters relating to university education in India and abroad.

- (ix) Require a university to furnish it with such information as the case may be needed relating to the financial position of the university or the studies in the various branches of learning undertaken in that university; and perform such other functions as may be prescribed or as may be deemed necessary by the Commission for advancing the causes of higher education in India.

The UGC Act of 1956 has been amended from time and time as situations have demanded by Parliament by Act No. 27 of 1970 (No.33 of 1972). The Act was further amended by the UGC Act, 1984 (No. 59 of 1984) and the UGC (Amendment) Act, 1985 (No. 70 of 1985).

The UGC Today

As it functions today, the principal concerns of the UGC are the coordination and maintenance of standards; allocation and disbursement of grants; and its interface with institutions that receive advice and grants from it. Much of the UGC's infrastructure is deployed in these three areas.

When the UGC came into being as a statutory body it consisted of nine members including the Chairman whose office was a full-time salaried one. According to the Act, all members, including the Chairman, were to be appointed by the central government. Apart from the ex-officio members the rest were to be educationists or those who had obtained high academic distinction. The Commission was assisted in its work by a full-time paid Secretary, an Assistant Secretary and some staff. It was empowered to associate itself with others whose assistance or advice it might need from time to time.

As amended in 1972, the University Grants Commission consists of a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman and ten other members. The Chairman and the Vice-Chairman are full-time members while the others are part-time. The Commission in addition has a non-member secretary. While the Commission itself decides on policy issues, the implementation of it is left to the secretariat of the UGC.

Two members are chosen from among the officers of the central government to represent the government. Not less than four are to be chosen from among those who are teachers of universities at the time when they are so chosen and the rest from among people:

- (i) with knowledge of or experience in agriculture, commerce or industry; or
- (ii) who are members of the engineering, legal, medical or any other learned profession; or
- (iii) who are Vice-Chancellors of universities or who, not being teachers of universities, are, in the opinion of the central government, educationists of repute or have achieved high academic distinctions. However, not less than one-half of the members chosen under (iii) should be from among those who are not officers of the central or of any state government.

While the original Act provided that no more than three members should be appointed from among the Vice-Chancellors of universities, the amended Act of 1972 provides that not less than four members shall be chosen from among the teachers of universities. In the originally constituted UGC, teachers of universities had no place as such. In the amended Act, they have been given representation to the extent of at least one-third of the total membership. The Vice-Chancellors of universities have also now been included in one of the three categories from which the remaining four, or less than four, members are to be chosen. This is a significant change in the constitution because it gives due recognition to the views of university teachers in shaping policies and determining the activities of the UGC. This is only appropriate as it is the universities which have to implement them and ensure that the objects of higher education are being truly served.

With the expansion of higher education and in pursuance of the National Policy on Education (1986), the UGC decentralized its function by opening six regional offices from 1994-1999, and two additional bureaus. The regional centres are Southern Eastern Regional Office (SERO) in Hyderabad; the Western Regional Office (WRO) in Pune; the Central Regional Office (CRO) in Bhopal; the North Eastern Regional Office (NERO) in Guwahati; the Eastern Regional Office

(ERO) in Kolkata; and the South Western Regional Office (SWRO) in Bangalore. The two bureaus are the Northern Regional College Bureau in Delhi that function from Feroze Shah Road and Delhi University South Campus. The aim is to enable the UGC to respond to the needs of the growing number of colleges throughout the country.

According to a UGC report, "Higher Education at a Glance," presenting vital statistics pertaining to higher education from 1950-2013, there are 700 degree-awarding institutions in the country. Of these 44 per cent, i.e. 306 are state universities, followed by 129 or 18 per cent deemed universities, central universities and institutes of national importance are 6 per cent and 10 per cent respectively. There are only 154 private universities accounting for 22 per cent share.

This shows the tremendous growth of higher education. Out of these, the UGC funds 39 central universities, 153 state universities, 24 deemed universities and 5,420 colleges. In 1950, the total number of universities was 30, mostly government-run or funded, and the number of colleges was 695, giving an average of 23 colleges per university. In 2011, the number of universities grew 30 times to stand at 634 while there are 33,023 colleges, averaging about 53 colleges to each university. In actual fact, the pressure of colleges on universities is much more than it appears because many are private universities or unitary universities.

The student strength in higher education, too, has also obviously risen manifold. It was 3,97,000 in 1950 growing steadily to 83,99,000 in 2001. After this, the next ten years saw an unprecedented surge in enrolment rising to 1,69,75,000 in 2010-2011.

This shows that the UGC has come a long way from 1956 when C.D. Deshmukh took over as the first full-time Chairman of UGC. He came to this post after he resigned as the Finance Minister. A highly erudite and learned person he quickly acquainted himself with the major challenges of higher education in India. His early experience of administration and financial management proved very valuable to the UGC and his personal eminence helped in establishing its authority in the country.

The expenditure on higher education was 7.92 per cent of total public expenditure which was 0.64 per cent of GDP. In 2009, it stood at

16.36 per cent of total public expenditure, i.e. 3.77 per cent of GDP of which higher education got 32.3 per cent. UGC funds universities and colleges, apart from the individual schemes in which funding is given to research scholars and teachers. It achieves these objectives through various schemes launched periodically.

While undoubtedly the UGC has grown with the education system and has become not only a grant-giving but also a policy-making body, it has not always been able to emphatically shape and implement policy. The retreat of central government under pressure from states and universities from the stand it had taken in the draft Universities (Regulation of Standards) Bill, 1951 and acceptance of a radically diluted UGC Act, 1956, was a crucial event in the history of higher education in India. It resulted in the laissez-faire growth of universities and colleges whose proliferation led the UGC to concentrate primarily on infrastructural facilities such as buildings, equipment, libraries, and adequately qualified staff.

In conclusion, a reference may be made to what C.D. Deshmukh said in his farewell speech at the time of his retirement from the UGC. He had been Finance Minister at the time the UGC bill was under discussion. The Prime Minister took the view at that time that after funds had been sanctioned and handed over to the UGC, it was for the latter to decide how to spend them. As the Finance Minister, C.D. Deshmukh found it unacceptable as it militated against the norms then being followed. When there is disagreement between a minister and the Prime Minister, the matter is invariably referred to the cabinet. After some discussion, the cabinet endorsed the view point of the Prime Minister. In regard to university education, the Prime Minister wanted a new convention to be established and his view was accepted.

At his farewell function, C.D. Deshmukh while reviewing his tenure in the UGC observed that his experience during the last few years had convinced him that in the earlier controversy, the Prime Minister had been right and he had been wrong. Only a man of Deshmukh's integrity and stature could have made such a remark.

CHAPTER II

The Formative Years (1953-1963)

The UGC in its early years was modelled, in part, on the University Grants Committee in the United Kingdom (UK). It was to advise the government on the funds to be made available from the Consolidated Fund of India for university education, to allocate and disburse them in a balanced and coordinated manner best calculated to develop university education in the country. The aim was to make it a fully free body like the British University Grants Committee whose activities were not subject to frequent and detailed scrutiny by the government.

However, there were certain inherent differences between the two bodies due to the differences in the administrative systems of the two countries. The University Grants Committee in the United Kingdom dealt with the financial needs of all the universities in the same way: whereas in India only four universities were the direct and complete responsibility of the UGC in the initial years of its inception. The other universities, created by the state legislature, were only partially dependent on the UGC for funds, as they also received financial assistance from their respective state governments. The funds given to these universities by the UGC were for special developmental purposes, to supplement the grants from the state governments; it was found that this raised various problems amongst the UGC, the universities and the state governments concerned. The UGC Annual Report of 1956 thus stated:

If the present constitutional set-up remains unaltered it will be necessary for certain conventions to be established by agreement between the state governments and the central government and between the universities and the UGC, by which it will be possible to deal expeditiously with the developmental needs

alike of central and state universities and to ensure that plans are not held up owing to delay in securing agreement among the parties concerned.

Universities of India

In 1956 there were thirty-three universities in India operating under Acts passed by the central or state legislatures that were on the grants list of the UGC. For historical and other reasons, four of these universities — Delhi, Banaras, Aligarh and Vishwa-Bharati — were incorporated under Acts of the central legislature. The other “State Universities” were under the jurisdiction of the newly constituted states.

Uttar Pradesh, formerly known as the United Provinces, had four universities: Allahabad, Lucknow, Agra and the Engineering and Technological University of Roorkee. The Central Universities of Aligarh and Banaras were also situated within the state. The state of Bombay had seven universities: Bombay, Nagpur, Gujarat, Poona, the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, the SNDT (Shrimati Nathibai Damodar Thackersey) Women’s University, and the university at Anand, called the Sardar Vallabhbhai Vidyapeeth.

West Bengal had two universities: the University of Calcutta, the oldest of modern Indian universities, and Jadavpur University, which grew out of the National Council of Education founded in the Swadeshi days following the partition of Bengal. Vishwa-Bharati, founded originally by Rabindranath Tagore was also situated in West Bengal but got incorporated under a Central Act.

Andhra Pradesh had three universities: Andhra University at Waltair; Osmania University at Hyderabad; and Sri Venkateswara University at Tirupati. In the state of Madras, there were two universities: University of Madras and the Annamalai University. Bihar had two universities, Patna University and Bihar University. In fact, Patna University was established in 1917 and Bihar University was formed from it in 1952.

The state of Mysore had Karnatak University at Dharwar, formerly a part of Bombay. In the Punjab, the University of Punjab with its

headquarters in the new capital city of Chandigarh affiliated all the colleges in the state. The following states had one university each: Assam — in Gauhati; Kerala — in Trivandrum; Madhya Pradesh — in Sagar; Utkal — in Cuttack; and Rajasthan — in Jaipur. Jammu and Kashmir had a university of the same name with its main headquarters located at Srinagar.

Steps were taken to establish new universities at Kurukshetra in the Punjab, at Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh, at Jabalpur and Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh. Certain institutions, however, remained outside the pale of accredited universities despite doing commendable work in imparting education of university standard. The problem, however, was how to accord them recognition. A committee headed by Mehr Chand Mahajan, former Chief Justice of India was set up to recommend a solution to the problem. It suggested that the criteria to be applied in deeming an institution to be a university for the purposes of the UGC must be determined by the Commission itself.

Medium of Instruction

The medium of instruction in most of the universities was English although a few adopted Hindi or some other regional language as the medium of instruction for some or all undergraduate courses. The question as to the most suitable medium of instruction for Indian universities had been attracting public attention ever since independence. The University Education (Radhakrishnan) Commission favoured the adoption of the regional language, with the option to use the federal language, as the medium of university instruction. But some organizations like the Inter-University Board were sceptical that unless all universities in India taught in a common language the possibility of interchange of teachers and scholars, free movement of ideas and possibly the unity of the country itself would be adversely affected.

However, this was complex because the adoption of Hindi as the medium of instruction in universities situated in regions where Hindi was not the common language would definitely involve considerable difficulties. There were also doubts based on practical considerations regarding the wisdom of changing the medium of instruction in the

immediate future. The comparative neglect of English on the part of university students along with some other factors, had already adversely affected the standards of university education to some extent. A committee consisting of H.N. Kunzru, N.K. Sidhanta, V.K. Ayappan Pillai and S. Mathai was appointed to examine the problems related to the question of the medium of instruction and recommend measures to ensure adequate proficiency in English at the university level.

After a detailed study, the committee recommended that the medium of instruction at the university level should be changed from English to an Indian language only after careful consideration and preparation. Even when the changeover was made, the committee was of the view that all university students should study English. The report came up for discussion in the Rajya Sabha on February 26, 1956. The government accepted that, in principle, the regional language should be the medium of instruction.

Expansion of Higher Education

It was projected that higher education expanded rapidly in post-independent India; at the end of the Second Five-Year Plan there would be 41 universities and 1,050 colleges. The number of students in these institutions in arts, science and commerce was expected to increase proportionately. Therefore, one of the main tasks in the Third Plan was to make larger provision for scholarships, fellowships, and research studentships.

To reduce the pressure on universities and colleges, it was also proposed that evening colleges, correspondence courses, and external examinations should be established on a large scale. A number of schemes initiated during the Second Plan for a qualitative enhancement in university education were implemented fully in the Third Plan. These included measures concerning examination reform, improvement of teacher-pupil ratio, grants for research and publications, organization of seminars and conferences for discussion of important problems, and provision of amenities and facilities for students. Action along these lines was also expected to resolve the problem of student indiscipline.

From 27 universities in 1950-51, the number increased to 32 in 1955-56 and to 46 in 1960-61. About a dozen more universities were likely to be added during the Third Plan. The number of colleges rose from 772 in 1955-56 to 1,050 in 1960-61. During the Third Plan about 70 to 80 colleges were to be added every year.

Five new universities, two in Punjab and three in West Bengal, were established in 1961-62 bringing the total number of universities to 53. The number of colleges increased to 1,783 in 1961-62. The enrolment of arts, science and commerce students stood at 8,50,000 in 1960-61; it increased to 9,27,000 in 1961-62. A Bill to amend the Delhi University Act to enable it to conduct correspondence courses was passed by Parliament and became effective from February 1, 1962.

The UGC's guidance and assistance to the universities had already made rapid progress since January, 1954. The central government also helped higher education by awarding twenty-seven scholarships during 1954-55 under their scheme, "Research Scholarships in Humanities". A government college of health and physical education was established at Patna. Under the scheme for the improvement of oriental education, Pali institutes were established at Patna, Bhagalpur, and Ranchi. The K.P. Jaiswal Institute (Bihar) was also established. The number of colleges (arts and science) and universities, which was 498 and 27 in 1950-51 respectively increased to 660 and 31 respectively in 1954-55. The enrolment at this stage rose from 42,00,000 in 1950-51 to 66,00,000 in 1954-55.

Development expenditure of university education increased in 1959-60. The outlay of Rs. 33.10 crore was incurred in 1959-60 as against Rs. 10.12 crore in the preceding year. Seventy-one per cent of the plan outlay was used by 1959-60. Enrolment at the university level in arts science and commerce was estimated to have increased to about 8,40,000 in 1959-60 from 6,34,000 in 1955-56. Efforts to provide physical facilities to match the growth in enrolment continued.

With the assistance of the UGC, a number of universities implemented programmes for the extension of libraries, laboratories, and hostels. New libraries were established at the universities of Delhi, Nagpur, Baroda, Sagar, Annamalai, Sri Venkateswara, Gauhati, Karnataka, Poona, and also at SNDT Women's University and Aligarh Muslim University. The universities of Bombay, Sagar, Banaras, Baroda, and

Nagpur completed the construction of laboratories for some of their science, engineering and technologies departments. Under the Wheat Loan Education Exchange Programme, additional assistance was made available to the universities to add books and equipment to libraries and laboratories respectively. A rural institute in the Punjab was started during 1959-60 raising the number of such institutes to eleven. The Government of India and some state governments recognized a three-year diploma course at these institutes. The number of optional courses was increased by four. In order to strengthen extension and research work in these institutes, twenty selected lecturers were deputed for training in the USA.

Members of the UGC were not in favour of rapid multiplication of universities without proper planning. First, there were the purely quantitative and physical needs as education took place in a certain kind of physical environment. It required the infrastructure of books, scientific apparatus, and many other things. Moreover, a fully qualified and able body of teachers was essential. Therefore, any increase in the number of students had to necessarily be accompanied by an increase in and improvement of physical and human requirements. And so, the demand that there should be no barrier or control on admission could not be acceded to. It was acknowledged that there was a problem of rapid increase of student enrolment in advanced countries too but it was also recognized that an increase in numbers should be related to the rate of other expansion plans. In no country had university education been treated as a fundamental right for which the state had to make provision. There had to be a correlation between the country's ability to provide university education for a large number of people and the national income of the country or the per capita income of the people.

Insufficient resources in India had led to inadequate educational facilities, resulting in lower standards of university education. The failure rate of students was high and, therefore, instead of indiscriminately increasing numbers, a selection method for admitting students had to be adopted. Most countries followed a selective process of admission into universities and colleges.

The primary aim of education was to bring out the best in the students and this was possible only when the number of students was fixed.

Controlling the intake of students in terms of numbers became of paramount importance in India because the ability of the economy to absorb these young people in different professions and vocations after the completion of secondary education was limited. Therefore, it was felt that university education should only be made available to those who were most likely to benefit by it.

However, higher education kept expanding rapidly in the 1950s and 60s because education was seen as a tool of vertical mobility. By the end of 1962, there were fifty-three universities with rapid increase in the number of colleges as well. Two hundred colleges were added in one year alone, between 1961 and 1962 bringing the total to 1,783 colleges out of which 1,223 were private. Hence, private enterprise played a significant role. Only 453 were government colleges, and universities ran 107 of them directly. Thirty new women's colleges were added in 1961-62 bringing the number to 211. Student enrolment multiplied; the total enrolment in 1961-62 was 11,55,380, which represented an increase of over 1,00,000 (about 11 per cent) over the previous year. However, increase in enrolment was not matched by a proportionate increase in the number of teachers. The staff student ratio was 1: 15.5 in 1961-62 as against 1:15.3 in 1960-61. The heavy increase in enrolment put a great strain on the staff and material resources, besides creating a problem of student indiscipline.

Student Indiscipline

The problem of indiscipline among students in universities and colleges attracted nation-wide attention. The UGC naturally became concerned with this problem and made various suggestions to deal with it. For instance, as far back as 1955, the Commission suggested that a Dean of Students' Welfare should be appointed whose main responsibility would be to look after students' welfare and maintain discipline. It also emphasized that groups of fifteen to twenty students should be placed under the care of a teacher who would then act in cooperation with the Dean of Students' Welfare. The Commission's suggestions did not receive an enthusiastic response from the universities because the majority were affiliating

universities and faced practical difficulties in implementing these suggestions. However, the Commission itself took steps to promote student welfare, such as increase and improvement of hostel facilities, provision of recreational and other centres for students and setting up of hobby workshops for students, as these were perceived to have a direct bearing in solving the problems of students. The teacher was seen as crucial and hence the Commission felt that teachers' salaries needed to be enhanced. The Commission also considered measures for improving the prevailing system of examination and introducing tutorials and seminars.

The Commission felt that the problem of indiscipline should be carefully studied by a group of persons intimately connected with university and college life. For this purpose, it appointed a committee under the Chairmanship of Dewan Anand Kumar who was a member of the UGC. The Committee thought that students should be admitted to the University after careful selection, and admissions to the universities and colleges should be made strictly with reference to qualifications and merit. However, some concessions could be made in solving the problem of student indiscipline, minimum qualifications for students in rural areas and those belonging to Scheduled Castes (SCs). It asserted that universities should make every effort to raise the minimum age of entry from 16 to 17 years and that no college should ordinarily be allowed to have more than 1,000 students in order to make it a manageable unit. The committee was of the opinion that universities and colleges should encourage close contact between teachers and pupils so that the immature students could get mature guidance. For that a very careful selection of teachers was required. In addition to their academic qualifications, it was necessary that men and women of the highest integrity were recruited to the profession.

The Committee felt that the existing practice of having Governors of State as ex-officio Chancellors of universities was not desirable, since they would naturally act on the advice of the state government, and this posed a serious threat to the autonomy of universities paving the way for political interference. The Vice-Chancellor should be selected for his academic ability to provide intellectual leadership. The Committee advocated that students should be associated with bodies of universities or colleges in some way.

Improvement in Higher Education

The UGC took several measures for improving the quality of university and college education and for reducing the wastage and stagnation of students who were unable to qualify. Over a course of time, these measures included instituting three-year degree courses; organizing tutorials and seminars; improving buildings, laboratories and libraries; providing hostel facilities, stipends for meritorious students, scholarships for research, and increase in salaries of university teachers.

The UGC decided to give priority for the first five or ten years to improving the physical facilities of the universities. It attempted to improve facilities in colleges by giving grants for basic requirements such as hostels, libraries, laboratories and others but it required the state governments to share the financial burden. A Building Committee was set up under the UGC Chairman to lay down norms for building hostels, staff quarters, new libraries, and extension of existing libraries and laboratories. Grants were made available as the government was persuaded to allocate Rs. twenty-seven crores to the UGC for this purpose in the Second Five-Year Plan, excluding the maintenance grants for central universities. This money was to be spent on buildings, equipment, books, hostel buildings, staff quarters and special schemes including special grants to the Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay universities for their centenary celebrations in 1957. The UGC believed that student hostels were an important part of the building programme in universities and colleges because improvement of residential arrangements for students and teachers would go a long way in creating an atmosphere conducive for teaching and learning.

Student welfare necessarily formed an integral part of educational development. Hence the UGC approved grants in the early 1960s for constructing halls of residence, non-resident student centres, health centres, for students' aid funds, educational facilities for the physically handicapped students, hobby workshops, scholarships and senior fellowships for research in science and humanities. The hobby workshops would provide facilities for activities involving mechanical work such as carpentry and woodcarving, smithy and metal work, assembling of electrical appliances, photography, clay modelling and paper making work.

The maximum non-recurring grant that would be given to a university for this purpose was fixed at Rs. 25,000 for building and Rs. 25,000 for equipment. In addition, there would be a small recurring grant of Rs.5,000 for staff. The Commission also approved a scheme for establishing of Gandhi Bhawans in the universities according to the project proposed by the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi; the cost of each bhawan, not exceeding Rs. 1,00,000 would be shared by the Commission and the Smarak Nidhi.

The governing bodies of colleges and procedures for appointing Vice-Chancellors needed to be improved. The UGC committee recommended an all- round improvement in teacher-pupil ratio in colleges; establishing some form of student government in universities and colleges; appointing Dean of Students' Welfare; guiding of students by teachers; improving the existing hostels and providing for more accommodation and other such measures.

The UGC was to provide assistance for implementing these resolutions. To that end, it had already put in place the procedure of giving 50 per cent of the cost of construction of staff quarters and hostels taking it up to 75 per cent in case of women's hostels. Since over 86 per cent of the total number of university students were enrolled in affiliated or constituent colleges that provided facilities for instruction in most cases for the first degree and, in some cases up to the postgraduate level, the UGC attached great importance to the development of affiliated colleges.

Three-Year Undergraduate Degree Course

One of the most fundamental tasks taken up was the introduction of a three-year degree course. The Education Ministers' Conference, held on September 2 and 3, 1956, recommended the appointment of a committee to work out the estimates of expenditure connected with the introduction of a three-year degree course in universities and affiliated colleges so that it might be possible for all universities to change over to the new pattern. In accordance with the above recommendation a three-year degree course estimates committee, under the chairmanship of Dr. C.D. Deshmukh, was set up on October 1, 1956.

This committee was to recommend the best manner in which a three-year degree course could be introduced in the affiliated colleges and universities in the country, frame estimates of expenditure involved in the reorganization of collegiate education implicit in the introduction of a three-year degree course, suggest the proportions on which the expenditure should be shared between the central government and the state governments, and recommend the best manner in which interim grants from the central government may be made to the state governments for the year 1956-57. Its work was also to consider and examine the future of the intermediate colleges, and to consider any other relevant issues.

The report was accepted and its implementation in the Second Five-Year Plan was estimated to cost Rs.15 crore. The earlier pattern had been ten years of schooling followed by a two-year intermediate course followed by another two-year degree course. On the recommendations of the Planning Commission and with the concurrence of the Ministry of Education, the UGC agreed to take the entire responsibility for the implementation of the three-year degree course scheme in universities all over India from the financial year of 1960-61. On the basis of 50 per cent being found by the state governments or the institutions concerned, the expenditure from central government sources was to be Rs 7.5 crore out of which the Commission's share would be Rs 2.5 crore.

As a result of discussions between the Ministry of Education and the UGC, it was decided that a ceiling of recurring grants for each type of college as recommended by the three-year degree course Estimates Committee may be kept intact. Apart from meeting the recurring costs on account of employment of new teachers, it would also cover the deficits, if any, incurred by colleges as a result of the three-year degree course scheme. A major portion of the assistance was to be on the provision of more buildings, teachers, libraries, laboratories and other such facilities. Assistance was also made available to the colleges on the condition that they would agree to a phased reduction of student numbers. The Commission fixed 800 to 1,000 students as a suitable number for a normal arts and science college, barring exceptional cases where adequate facilities for larger numbers existed.

In 1958-1959, the Commission discussed at some length the issues of colleges. It pointed out that while a compact university with a limit of

five thousand students and the majority of teachers and students on campus or in the geographical vicinity may be the ideal, but because of the large size of the country and its student population, this was not possible to implement and education would have to depend for a long time to come in the foreseeable future on the teaching and affiliating type of university. The Commission also emphasized that 'private' colleges were an important element in the existing university set up. Hence, they should be given liberal financial aid from public funds but left free to organize and develop their own internal life.

General Education

The new colleges to be opened were to be part of the three-year degree course scheme. Also general education was introduced in the syllabus of the three-year degree course. The issue of general education to the students came urgently to the fore while considering requests from Aligarh and Baroda for financial assistance to their programmes of general education. The UGC suggested that some principles with regard to general education needed to be evolved. A committee was set up under the chairmanship of S. Govindarajulu. In October 1960, the services of Professor Hans Simons, former President of the New School of Social Research, New York, were made available to the UGC by the Ford Foundation. Hence, he was also co-opted into the committee.

The committee noted that the basic idea behind general education was the interdependence or unity of knowledge and the equal importance of humanities, social sciences and natural sciences for training the mind. In India, the undergraduate stage was the terminal point of higher education for most students. It was, therefore, necessary that young men and women coming out of universities were really educated and capable of taking an intelligent interest in the world around them. This could be achieved through general education, which could serve as a principle of rational organization of undergraduate education. There was a long overdue need to overhaul the undergraduate education system but by merely introducing a three-year degree course was not enough. Curricula needed to be improved and in this the concept of general education might prove helpful. Such education could not

be standardized. There was need for experimentation but Indian tradition and culture had also to be considered by the universities and colleges.

Examination Reforms

Apart from these measures, examinations reforms were vital. A committee was set up in 1957 under the chairmanship of S.R. Dongerkery (Rector, Bombay University), which recommended several reforms in its report of 1961. The Report was circulated to colleges and universities and it was believed that gradually each university would be able to bring about changes and improve the existing method of lecturing, teaching, and testing. The report drew attention to the problem and indicated certain steps that could be taken to improve the methods of examination in the universities.

The most compelling reason for examination reform came from academic considerations. Therefore, reforms in examinations necessitated improvement in methods of teaching and learning. This could be done by devoting more time to tutorials and seminars, thus bringing the student in more intimate contact with the mind of the teacher. For this, given them number of lectures could be reduced, if required. The value of the tutorial system as an aid to good education in the universities had been widely recognized and so its importance was emphasized.

The Committee however, pointed out that it was not adequately recognized that examinations were an integral part of teaching and learning as both were bound to be affected by the mode of evaluation. It was realized that one of the most important causes of wastage of 50 to 60 per cent in individual examinations in India was that universities admit many students who were ill suited for higher education. It was, therefore, necessary to view the problem of admission to colleges and universities objectively. The Committee felt that only those candidates should be admitted to colleges who were capable of profiting by higher education. Therefore, admission could be based either on a cumulative record of the students' performance at school or by testing their language proficiency, intellectual maturity, and general interests. Further, one or two additional papers could be

introduced in the school-leaving examination for those who wished to enter colleges and universities.

Examinations had also to be tools of learning as they should periodically reveal to the student his or her progress in studies. For effective teaching also, it was necessary for the teacher to know at regular intervals how students were progressing. As an immediate measure, the essay type examination could be made less subjective, and evaluation more objective. The committee believed that it was also desirable to appoint two examiners to mark each paper at external examinations. Moreover, since students could take examinations in different languages, the Committee emphasized that examiners in the different media should meet and define the yardstick and standards before actual evaluation work was taken up.

Improvement was also urgently called for in respect of the administration of examinations. It would be desirable to modernize methods of tabulation and classification of marks for speed and accuracy. The Committee recommended that the UGC should encourage seminars, discussions and conferences of university and college teachers for defining the objectives of teaching and examinations in different subjects at various level. Where the courses were spread over two years or more, convenient spacing of the examinations should be arranged, so that that examination was not concentrated at the end of the final year.

Bridging Disparities in Higher Education

While indiscriminate university and college expansion was not to be encouraged, yet, if disparities in the facilities for higher education, especially in professional subjects among the different regions of the country had to be reduced, planned university expansion was a must. Education had a direct bearing on the nature and pace of economic, social and cultural development. A Committee had been established under the Chairmanship of Humayun Kabir, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Education in 1957, to consider the question of establishing new universities and colleges. It was of the view that since the First University Education Commission (Radhakrishnan Commission) had already examined in detail the question of setting

up new universities, no fresh enunciation of principles was required. However, it concentrated on two issues which it felt were of vital importance. One was the minimum number of students and colleges at various levels necessary for establishing a new university. The second was what should be the number of Faculties and Departments in the universities and how they should be developed in the future.

The Committee considered the general principles, which the University Education Commission had laid down and held that a minimum strength of 1,000 graduate and postgraduate students distributed in at least three faculties, were needed for the establishment of a unitary university, provided that other necessary conditions were satisfied. For a federal university, the Committee thought that at least two thousand students at graduate and postgraduate level were essential together with at least three faculties and four constituent colleges. The maximum number of students in a Unitary University should not exceed three thousand, while 12,000 distributed in not more than twenty colleges would be appropriate for the federative type. It was further agreed that no single faculty of a university should have more than three thousand students. Purely affiliating universities were not desirable as they were, "doing more harm to the good name of the Indian universities as a whole than any other single factor."

The issue of expansion of higher education again arose in September 1961 when a Committee was set up under Dr. D.S. Kothari, to examine the question of establishing new universities during the Third Plan Period. It was to suggest the broad outlines of a plan for the next few years, after reviewing the proposals so far received from the state governments, the need for higher education and the resources likely to be available for the purpose. The committee felt that there were large areas of the country in which the number of colleges was relatively very small. The average number of colleges per district varied from 35 in Delhi, to 12 in West Bengal, 9 in Bihar, Kerala and Madras, and 3 in Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan each. Everywhere interest in higher education was rapidly growing, and there was an increasing demand for more colleges and new universities. It felt that there should be no undue disparities between different regions of the country regarding facilities for higher education, especially in professional studies, since these had a direct bearing on the pace and nature of development.

The committee further reported that at the corresponding levels of the educational ladder, the Indian standard of academic attainment was generally much lower than that in the UK and other advanced countries. This was a matter of serious concern. The most pressing need, therefore, was to substantially improve quality and standards and to increase the number at postgraduate and research levels. For this purpose, it felt that the unitary or federal type of organization for a university was more appropriate than the conventional affiliating pattern. It was necessary that the number of university students, especially in science, medicine and technology should be increased and planning be done. The Committee felt that to maintain the ratio of university students to the total population at its present level, an annual increase of two per cent in enrolment would be required.

There were proposals for establishing about twelve new universities during the Third Plan period. The type, location, size, and pattern of these universities needed detailed examination. The Committee felt that the first thing a university needed, though not necessarily the most important, was money and a body of competent and dedicated men. Hence, it could not grow faster than at a certain maximum rate. Generally speaking, it would cost less to expand the existing facilities in a university than to establish a new university.

Stressing the role of a university, the committee felt that it must participate vigorously in an 'endless quest' of research or it was no more than an average 'college'. This combination of education and research was beneficial to the development of mind and character. It was the hallmark of a university. Both flourished best in combination, and suffered to some extent in vigour and vitality if isolated from each other. Undergraduate education was important per se and as a feeder to postgraduate courses, but the proposal for a new university had to be assessed essentially in terms of the contribution it was likely to make to postgraduate work and research.

The Committee defined a federal and / or unitary university as one whose jurisdiction was generally restricted to the city limits. In other words, the bulk or major portion of the university work was conducted in institutions located within the territorial limits of a city, although a few institutions of the university might exist outside. This type of university, as compared to an affiliating university, provided

for greater and more effective opportunities for raising standards, particularly at the postgraduate and research levels. In an affiliating university, postgraduate work was generally distributed over a number of colleges. In such a pattern, it became very difficult to raise standards, improve courses of study, or introduce any substantial reform in teaching or examination. Often the standard of the weaker institutions tended to become the benchmark and retarded the pace of progress of the rest. It led to mediocrity rather than to serious and sustained progress and the pursuit of excellence. In a federal / unitary type of university, postgraduate education in a particular subject was organised essentially as one unit, and the best available staff in the university as well as colleges, was available to teach it. It was relatively easier to improve courses, curriculum, and standards and greater attention could be paid to them than in an affiliating university. Establishing a new university was worthwhile only if it would lead to a substantial improvement in standards and raise the output and level of research work.

Establishment of a new university with Faculties of Arts, Science, and Social Sciences, was likely to require a capital investment of at least Rs. two crore spread over a period of three to Five-Years excluding the cost of land. The maintenance expenditure for a university with a student population of 10,000 was about Rs. 50 lakhs per year, that is Rs. 500 per student per year. Additional recurring and non-recurring expenditure would be required in the case of engineering, medical, and other professional faculties. It would be desirable to have at least one teaching university in each state, which was unitary or federal. The most important problem for a new university would be to secure professorial staff of high calibre. Hence subjects and faculties had to be selected after taking this into account. Efforts should be made to harness young talent, whenever available. Next, the quality and scope of postgraduate and research work in the existing colleges to be incorporated in the proposed university was an important consideration. In case a 'postgraduate centre' organized by the local colleges and the university on a cooperative basis was not already functioning, it might be desirable to first establish such a centre that could lead to establishing a new university. Other considerations were a large recurring and non-recurring expenditure and the interest and enthusiasm of the local community. Normally the public contribution

should not be less than about twenty-five per cent, of the required capital investment.

A university should select a limited number of subjects for high-level specialization up to international standards and they should be related to regional and national needs taking into account any special facilities that might be available in that area. A university strongly influenced and was, in turn, influenced by the social and cultural life of the surrounding community. The climate, physical as well as cultural, and the amenities available should be conducive to academic work, in order to attract and retain services of the academic staff of high quality. Adequate residential facilities for staff and students were important in this connection.

While drawing up developmental plans for existing or new universities, careful consideration should be given to specification for buildings, hostels, provision of equipment for laboratories, particularly special and expensive equipment. It was often possible to cut down costs substantially without reducing the functional value or utility of a project. Hence through careful spending a Planning Board could be constituted at an early stage to work out academic details, building plan and other matters relevant to the setting up of a new university.

The committee recommended that it would be desirable for every state to have at least one unitary or federal university. Such a university had the advantage of compactness, thereby permitting the pooling of resources for teaching and research and also offered easy scope for improving the curriculum and examination system. It led to creating a greater scope for creativity to come to the surface thus improving the quality of undergraduate and postgraduate students.

The Committee thought there should be no restriction on a Federal / Unitary university regarding its giving affiliation, in special cases, to a college outside the city limits. This would mean that a college outside the city limits would, in general, have an option of seeking affiliation either to the "city university " or to be the " affiliating university" in the region concerned. Such an option might help in encouraging healthy rivalry between universities with regard to the improvement and maintenance of high standards. However, the affiliating of colleges outside the city limits should not be undertaken in the early stages of establishing a federal / unitary university, and, further it

should be done only if it does not interfere with the essential objects of the university.

The Committee agreed to recommend the establishment of a federal/unitary university at Indore in Madhya Pradesh. With regard to Rajasthan, it thought that it might be worthwhile to transform Jaipur University into a federal university and establish an affiliating university at Jodhpur. The UGC received no formal proposal for Bangalore, but the committee thought that this would be one of the most suitable places in the country to establish a new university of the federal type as it fulfilled practically every condition essential for such a university. Another such place was Poona, which at that time had an affiliating university. The committee similarly thought that perhaps a new university of the affiliating type could be established at Kolhapur or some other suitable place, and that Poona University could be transformed into a federal type. Another suggestion was made on the same lines with regard to Osmania University at Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh. It was also felt that it would be of real value to have a federal type of university in Madras State, but its location could only be decided after a detailed consideration of the many relevant factors.

It was realized both in the interest of economy and quality, that postgraduate education in affiliated colleges should be carefully regulated taking into account the regional requirement for the expansion of postgraduate education. Ordinarily, it was felt, that no new college at a university headquarter should be permitted to start a postgraduate course if the university was already teaching that subject. Where postgraduate teaching was organized on a cooperative basis, the participating colleges had to be carefully selected and it had to be ensured that the number of students on the rolls of postgraduate colleges was neither too small nor too large.

College Education

While universities were important, the UGC was conscious that for 84 per cent of students, the first degree was the final one and marked the end of formal education. Hence colleges had to be strengthened to provide a worthwhile and meaningful education to the mass of

young people who had vast differences in ability and achievement, aptitude, and ambition. The Commission was of the view that “the quality of university education in India will largely depend on the standards maintained by colleges and unless it is made possible for them to improve their staff, equipment, libraries, laboratories and other facilities, no real improvement of university education will be possible.” In September 1962 it constituted a small committee to advise on the general policy to be followed in developing colleges, and make suggestions towards the proper and effective utilization of the limited resources. Further, it was to recommend ways and means of maintaining and improving standards of collegiate education. This Committee was re-constituted in April 1964 to suggest measures to improve collegiate education in the field of arts, science, commerce and education and to suggest any steps in this regard for the Fourth Five-Year Plan with Dr. G.S. Mahajani, Vice-Chancellor, University of Udaipur in the chair. The Committee made many significant recommendations. It felt that the school and pre-university course should extend for at least twelve years. This would ensure a minimum entrance age of 18 to the first degree course, assuming that students were admitted to schools at six. Two public examinations were desirable, the first, at the matriculation stage and the second at the old Intermediate level that could be called the pre-degree or pre-university course.

There should be an Honours course of three years, apart from the Pass course, for the better students. Further, those undergraduate students demonstrated aptitude for scholarly work in the two-year Pass course could be allowed to do a third year towards the Honours course. The undergraduate courses should be so designed that they provided adequate preparation to outstanding students to enter an Honours course of one year for eventual admission to a postgraduate course. They should develop basic skills and knowledge necessary for employment in various professions and industries and should transmit the cultural and traditional heritage of the country together with training for an enlightened citizenship. General education should be a part of the course curriculum but it should not increase the load of students. There was no need for special teachers to teach general education as all teachers should orient their teaching to meet the objectives of this course.

Colleges could be permitted to start postgraduate courses with the cooperative assistance from universities and if they had qualified staff of at least three teachers in the concerned subjects. However, even if a college could not have postgraduate courses, its qualified and competent teachers should be invited to lecture at the postgraduate centre. Such teachers should receive grants for books and material for pursuing research. Further, tutorials must be emphasized. However, the success of the tutorial system could not be guaranteed merely by providing additional staff, rooms and other facilities. The idea was that the student should come into personal contact with the teacher both in and outside the classroom for discussion of individual and personal problems; planning and executing a good programme of studies; and for stimulating the student to a pursuit of meaningful goals and intellectual attainments. It would be a great advantage if the UGC could start a pilot project for tutorials and give adequate assistance, in the first instance, to those colleges in which the pupil-teacher ratio was 10:1 and 20:1.

The Committee recommended establishing a new institution of higher learning only on a planned basis. New colleges should only be started after exploring the capacity of the existing ones for further growth and development. State governments and universities should jointly survey the area of their jurisdiction to draw up a ten-year plan for setting up various types of new colleges in collaboration with experts and the UGC. The plan should be flexible enough to withstand the emergence of unforeseen circumstances, accommodate local resources, and encourage community initiatives. The Committee recognized that the government was as much a concerned party in the affiliation of colleges as the university. No college should, therefore, be affiliated without the express approval of the university.

It would be desirable for the UGC to lay down some minimum standard conditions of affiliation and these should not be watered down by a university or a state government except for reasons recorded in writing and sent to the UGC for approval. However, it was possible to liberalize grant-in-aid code per rules by the setting up of a "Collegiate Grant Committee" by the state government to review them together with the salary scales of college teachers. Its advice with regard to such matters should be binding. The Committee felt

that the pattern of grant-in-aid given by the UGC to colleges in Delhi seemed to be the best way of meeting the requirements of affiliated colleges.

Autonomous Status

One practical method of improving the standards of higher education would be to select a few colleges on the basis of their past work, influence, tradition, maturity and academic standards and give them an 'autonomous' status with freedom to develop their personalities, experiment with new ideas, frame their own syllabi in consultation with the university, devise and conduct their examinations and initiate new measures. However, this did not mean that autonomous colleges would have a university (degree-giving) status. The selection of colleges for an autonomous status might be made on an all-India basis by a competent committee appointed by the UGC and the universities concerned. The credentials of a college for continued recognition as an autonomous institution may be examined from time to time.

Classification of Teaching Faculty

All teachers, teaching at university level, should be classified into three main categories, Professors, Readers and Lecturers. Disparities between the pay of teachers in college and those in the universities should be reduced to the minimum, if not completely eliminated. The pay scales of principals of postgraduate affiliated colleges should be the same as for university professors, if the qualifications and experience were the same.

During the Fourth Plan, the Commission's assistance was to be made available in the first instance to those colleges that had shown good results, say, 65 per cent or above in the university examinations; were at least Five-Years old; and had fulfilled most of the important conditions of affiliation rather than seeking the Commission's help to do so, and had a minimum of 500 students. On the analogy of centenary grants, an outright grant of Rs. 50,000 should be made available to colleges that had completed fifty years of existence for

any development scheme that did not involve the construction of buildings. The UGC should also accept the responsibility for securing the state government's matching share and make it available to the college from one central source. As far as the students were concerned, the Committee suggested that students' unions in colleges might be encouraged and welcomed and even assisted at times instead of being tolerated.

Centres of Advanced Studies

The UGC was keenly aware that apart from raising standards of teaching and research in the universities, it was necessary to build some university departments to a much higher level so that work of a more advanced kind could be done. To that end, it was proposed that university departments where work of high distinction was already being done needed to be aided and provided with facilities in terms of both competent personnel and equipment to make it possible for them to attract scholars of the highest ability to work in them.

These select departments were to be called Centres of Advanced Study and a committee chaired by A.R. Wadia was set up in 1962 for their selection. Such centres were to work as integral parts of universities but would have a measure of autonomy to enable them to work efficiently and effectively. It was also envisaged that they would work in close collaboration with other institutions and national laboratories involved in similar areas of work. The scheme was fully implemented during the Third Five-Year Plan. The UGC attempted to set up institutions in fields as diverse as agriculture, linguistics, engineering and technical education. For this, it also had some PL-480 funds at its disposal. Under the auspices of the PL-480 programme, the United States Government used the US owned Indian rupees to support scientific, technological, educational, and cultural activities involving the two countries. These rupees were the result of payments made to the US by the Indian Government in the 1950s and 60s for grain sales.

The UGC examined agriculture, which was of vital importance to the country and looked into the desirability of establishing agricultural universities. It was felt that there was a definite need for universities where agriculture was the central and primary subject of study and

research. These universities did not have to be called agricultural universities but could be named simply after the town in which they were established. A lot of PL-480 funds were used in these universities for research in agriculture. In addition, the UGC took several steps towards the development and expansion of engineering and technological education in the universities and allocated grants for this purpose. It also aided them in starting or continuing courses in business management and industrial management.

PL-480 funds were used to develop another field, that of linguistics in Indian universities. A blueprint committee was set up for this purpose in January 1958. It recommended that the departments of linguistics that already existed in universities needed to be strengthened and further that each university should have at least one department to teach linguistics in all its aspects.

Area Studies

Another aspect which the UGC looked at was Area Studies or studies in history, culture, language and other interrelated subjects of different countries and regions in particular the Far East, countries belonging to South, West and Central Asia and African countries. A committee was appointed in April 1963, chaired by B. Shiva Rao to examine whether adequate facilities were available in universities in this regard and to suggest steps to be undertaken for strengthening them further. It was to also recommend the introduction of such studies in other universities that might be considered suitable for teaching and research in particular fields and to explore the possibility of scholars being sent abroad for greater contacts on cultural and other grounds.

The committee recommended the setting up of Centres of Area Studies in several universities with an organizer or co-coordinator together with language teachers to form the core. Also, it recommended the selection of scholars by a National Board for deputation in specific areas for a period of twelve to eighteen months to undertake intensive studies of the problems of the region. On their return, these scholars were to be invited by universities interested in the problems of particular regions to deliver a course of lectures or otherwise assist the departments in Area Studies.

Libraries

The UGC was also concerned with the collection, preservation and use of manuscripts in various universities. A committee was appointed under Dr. V. Raghavan that submitted its report in June 1960 giving details of how to preserve manuscripts and restore them where required so that they could be made available to scholars for research purposes. The UGC also made grants available for the publication of approved doctoral theses.

The UGC appointed a committee with S.R. Ranganathan in the chair in 1959 with regard to two principal issues: establishment and development of libraries in universities and colleges and guidelines for running them. It produced its report in 1960. Plans and estimates of library buildings, furniture and equipment had to be prepared according to the recommendations of the committee. Also the Commission needed to bring about regional and local cooperation in the use of reading material so as to minimize duplication and maximize the number of books and periodicals in different subjects in the region or locality. There were also recommendations on the need for professional staffing for libraries and the use of library staff for teaching was to be discontinued.

Position of Teachers

The UGC had been concerned with the important issue of teachers since 1955. A committee chaired by Humayun Kabir had suggested that the salaries of university teachers should receive the highest priority. A committee was set up with C.D. Deshmukh in the chair to consider the qualifications of different categories of university teachers and to make recommendations for their improvement. The most essential quality required of a teacher is a sound knowledge of the subject and the ability to communicate it to his students. But, unfortunately, it was found that there was a shortage of adequately qualified men and women and so that universities had to be satisfied with persons who had just minimum qualifications. The problem could be solved to a certain extent by enhancing the salaries of teachers and giving them some facilities. The committee also recommended schemes for

visiting professors, including readers, lecturers and eminent foreign scholars.

The issue of adequate remuneration to teachers had been going on since 1955. The UGC consistently felt that improvement in the salaries of teachers should receive the highest priority and that steps should be taken to procure minimum requirements with regard to the teachers' salaries in university departments and colleges which may be brought under the purview of the commission in accordance with the provisions laid down in the UGC bill. The salaries of teachers up to this time were poor and the rising cost of living had made their economic position very unsatisfactory. Certain minimum scales of pay were laid down during the Five-Year Plans and the universities were offered assistance to raise them where they were lower than the minimum suggested by the Commission.

The Commission proposed the following salary structure:

1. Professors: Rs. 800-50-1250.
2. Readers: Rs. 500-25-800
3. Lecturers: Rs. 250-500; and
4. Teachers below the Lecturer's rank: Rs. 150 per month.

The Commission found that to enhance the salary scales of college teachers, it was necessary to frame regulations under Section 2(f) and 26 (d) of the UGC Act in order to treat the affiliated colleges as being included in the universities for purposes of grants. It prepared a list of 718 colleges who would be eligible for it.

Consequently, under the scheme adopted by the Commission for upgrading the salaries of college teachers, their scales of pay were fixed as under:

1. Principals: Rs. 600-40-800.
2. Heads of Departments: Rs. 400-25-700.
3. Lecturers: Rs 200-15-320-20-500
4. Tutors and Demonstrators: Rs. 150-200.

The Commission agreed to share 50 per cent of the increased expenditure of men's colleges and 25 per cent of the women's colleges.

Initially in 1956, the Ministry of Education turned down the UGC proposal in this regard. The UGC resolved that in view of the fundamental importance of revision of salary scales of teachers of affiliated colleges, a sub-committee consisting of Dr. A.L. Mudaliar, John Mathai and N.K. Sidhanta could be requested to re-examine the issue and find a practical solution.

The Commission agreed to bear the entire cost of upgrading the salaries of teachers in the central universities, and 80 per cent of the increased cost of the state universities, the remaining 20 per cent being payable by the state government or the university concerned. Simultaneously, it appointed a committee with Dr. Deshmukh as chairman to consider the qualifications of the different categories of university teachers and make recommendations for their improvement as this question was closely connected with the revision of their grades.

Together with the salaries being revised in the Second Five-Year Plan, a scheme was adopted to enable outstanding teachers, after their superannuation to continue teaching or research activities. While the normal age of retirement for teachers was fixed at 60 years, extension could be given for a period of Five-Years and an honorarium could be paid for this purpose. Further, efforts were made to improve the working conditions of teachers by providing for travel grants and housing facilities. Senior university science teachers were given grants for attending international conferences in foreign countries. University teachers were given awards under foreign aid programmes to study abroad. Teachers were also encouraged to upgrade their knowledge through in-service training. Financial assistance was given to universities to organize short refresher courses, study circles and summer schools. To stimulate research and attract suitable people to the profession, the Commission proposed to set up a number of postgraduate and research scholarships and fellowships. At the same time, public lectures were to be organized for those who had limited opportunities to come into contact with institutions of higher learning.

Impact of UGC

The UGC appointed “Review Committees” to evaluate the impact of its grants for improving the standards of university education. They had the widest terms of reference and the full freedom to make recommendations on any aspect of the subject. They were to pay special attention to the development in a particular scientific field; quantitatively and qualitatively appraise the researches in progress; study the trends of research and the steps necessary for expansion of training and research facilities; suggest modifications in syllabi and examinations; and suggest the means of achieving coordination between universities and other institutions of teaching and research. Review committees had also been appointed in physics, zoology, botany, biochemistry and mathematics and similar committees were appointed for various subjects in the humanities and social sciences.

Since the UGC had to perform such overarching functions, it was not possible to do it as long as education remained primarily a state subject. Hence, it was thought that it might be better placed in the concurrent list. On the recommendation of the informal Consultative Committee of Members of Parliament on Education that university education should be a union subject, the Ministry of Education set up a Committee of Members of Parliament on Higher Education in 1963, under the chairmanship of P.N. Saprú. It was to examine the provisions of the Constitution regarding responsibility of the central government with regard to higher education, as well as to find out the extent to which the centre could assume greater responsibility in this field, to suggest appropriate steps to be taken for the purpose, and to review the working of the UGC. This step was taken, probably, since the efforts of the Education Ministry, around this time, to include higher education in the concurrent list did not succeed. This was because of the resistance from most of the states. The intention was to strengthen the UGC and only incidentally, to give the government a greater, if indirect, voice in the coordination of higher education.

Thus the first decade ending with the Second Five-Year Plan and beginning with the Third Five-Year Plan saw attempts at expansion, diversification, streamlining and coordination. Dr. Deshmukh had laid firm foundations of the UGC. Dr. V.K. Krishnan became the chairman

of the UGC in January 1961 but his tenure was short-lived as he died on February 16, 1961. Dr. D.S. Kothari was appointed as chairman in March 1961 and he continued the task of cementing the work done by his predecessors. The Commission decided to adopt the following priorities: completion of the work already started, appointment of the teaching staff; purchase of scientific equipment and books, and construction of buildings. Anticipating a rapid increase in the number of students, the Commission prepared to meet the challenge.

Expansion, Growth and Evolution

CHAPTER III

The First Wave of Expansion (1963-1973)

The decade of 1963-73 covered the Third Plan and most of the Fourth Plan period. It also saw the UGC grow under the chairmanship of D.S. Kothari from essentially a grants-giving to a policy-making organization. The resources at its command, therefore, naturally increased. The total allocation for the Third Plan was Rs. 33.7 crore, marking an advance of about Rs. 10 crore over the Second Plan. It was further enhanced to Rs. 46.36 crore in the Fourth Plan period. This, of course, excluded the maintenance expenditure on the Central Universities and Delhi Colleges. The situation was summed up in the report of the UGC for 1965-66.

There has been a significant increase in the volume and diversity of educational effort at various levels. Attempts have been made to meet the challenge of the rising student enrolment on the one hand and the urgent need to improve the quality of higher education on the other. The development grants disbursed by the Commission have helped the universities and colleges to provide facilities essential for advanced studies and research, and to promote an improvement in the standards of education

The University Education Commission

An event of far-reaching significance took place in 1964 when the Government of India established an Education Commission under the chairmanship of D.S. Kothari who was also the Chairman of the UGC at that time. Popularly known as the Kothari Commission, it was concerned with the entire spectrum of education in the country. It made recommendations on all aspects of higher education, both academic and administrative, as well as on what the role of the UGC should be.

The University Education Commission accepted that in the modern world, universities had to perform a multiplicity of functions, the most important being teaching, research and extension and a direct contact with the community. Student enrolment, staff and budgets were becoming increasingly large. These new and bigger responsibilities necessitated the universities to bring forth fresh thinking while putting programmes into place. At the same time, the problems of the internal governance of universities and other institutions of higher education and of their relationship with the state were also becoming increasingly important and complex. The Education Commission made valuable suggestions with regard to some of these problems, particularly to those relating to the constitution of universities, the management of university affairs, their autonomy and academic freedom and related matters.

It recommended that the term of office of the Vice-Chancellor should be Five-Years and he or she should not normally be appointed for more than two terms in the same university. While the retirement age of the Vice-Chancellor should be 65 years, in the case of exceptionally qualified individuals of all-India eminence, an exception could be made to this rule. However, such cases should be very few and far between and evidently justifiable and should not be made only to 'accommodate' retired officials or politicians or other 'dignitaries'. The universities in the country were passing through a stage of rapid development. In view of this, and also because of the very special position that the vice-chancellor occupied in the life and work of a university, it was felt that it might be advisable to designate his successor one year or so in advance. The Education Commission also suggested that some universities could be designated as major universities on the lines of Oxford and Cambridge. It was argued that universities in the UK could maintain standards since most of their faculty was from Oxford and Cambridge and they had carried the traditions of these universities with them. This recommendation, however, ran into rough waters because there was no way to decide how some universities could be designated as major universities. Perhaps, the seed of the idea remained and it has fructified in universities with potential for excellence.

Also, the Education Commission felt that universities needed a permanent planning and evaluation machinery detached from the

day-to-day administration. It was, therefore, suggested that Academic Planning Boards should be appointed for this purpose, consisting of the representatives of the university along with some persons from other universities and a few distinguished and experienced people in public life. The Chancellor should do this in consultation with the Vice-Chancellor. They should be responsible for advising the university on its long-term plans and for generating new ideas and programmes together with periodic evaluation of the work of the university.

It was further found that universities tended to get involved in a lot of litigation. The Education Commission made two main recommendations in an attempt to facilitate matters in this rather sensitive area. The first recommendation was that the educational system should strive to give proper value-orientation to education in order to create the essential atmosphere necessary to transform all educational institutions into communities of teachers and students. Also, steps should be taken to make the administration of educational institutions as democratic as possible by associating the teachers and students with it. This would enable the grievances of individuals to be satisfactorily settled in most cases within the system itself and the temptation to go to courts of law would be minimized.

The second recommendation was that the Government of India might approach the Supreme Court with a request to review the trends seen in the recent decisions of the courts in cases relating to universities and educational institutions. It could urge the Supreme Court to consider the desirability of framing a suitable policy which would help in the maintenance of university autonomy and the development of higher education. In this connection, it was also mentioned that the question whether the university's decision in passing or failing a candidate in an examination was justifiable in a court of law had been considered by the Privy Council in the UK which had ruled that courts had no power to adjudicate in such matters.

Then there was the question of affiliated colleges. Both the university and the state governments were concerned in the granting of affiliation to a college. The university had to consider it from an academic point of view and the state government from the angle of the grant-in-aid to be given. The Education Commission made three main recommendations in this regard:

1. The affiliation of colleges was an academic matter and should be granted by the universities. But since each affiliation created eligibility for aid, they should consult the state government in respect of all private colleges, before a final decision was taken.
2. In granting affiliation for the first time, mention should be made not only of the time for which affiliation was being granted but also of the courses and the maximum number of students to be admitted to the college. In the case of science students, it was suggested that even the total number to be admitted to each course should be specified. When affiliation was granted subject to certain conditions, it was recommended that there should be a vigilant watch to see that the conditions were actually properly fulfilled. Laxity in this regard had often led to substandard colleges being affiliated in the past, thus lowering the standards.
3. The state governments should involve the universities more intimately with the operation of grant-in-aid system to colleges. It would be desirable to have an informal committee consisting of all the Vice-Chancellors in the state to advise the Education Department regarding grant-in-aid to affiliated colleges. The committee would be consulted on the formulation of grant-in-aid rules or modifications therein and the annual allocations of grant-in-aid. The work of this committee would be of great help both to the Department and the universities.

There was also a recommendation that a council of affiliated colleges in every affiliating university should be established consisting of representatives of the university and the colleges. It might also be advisable to associate with it as members, a few representatives of other universities in the state and from outside. The functions of such a council, to be laid down by the statutes of the university, would be to advise the university on all matters relating to affiliation of colleges, to help the implementation of the policy of the university

in this matter, to keep a close contact with the colleges with a view to ensure their proper development and to evaluate periodically whether or not the standards of colleges are being steadily raised.

By and large, there was a definite feeling that state governments should not normally govern any college directly. At the same time, the transfer of government colleges to universities was opposed by some on the ground that it did not help the colleges and burdened the universities with administrative responsibilities, interfering with their development. It was, therefore, desirable that some suitable agency be devised for the management of such colleges.

This point was carefully examined and it was found that it was not desirable to recommend one single solution that would apply to all cases. There was a need to try different approaches to suit local conditions and traditions. Again, some significant recommendations were made in this regard. One was the possibility that applied to states with large numbers of government colleges. In Madhya Pradesh or Rajasthan, for example, there was a significant number of government colleges run by a separate Directorate of College Education. While this practice might continue, it should be ensured that the Director of this Department was an educationist of standing.

The second was the possibility of the setting up of an autonomous organization to manage all the government colleges in the state. This could also be explored. This organization, as it was envisaged, would have a governing board with a whole-time secretary. All the Vice-Chancellors of the universities in the state would be members of its governing board, along with some representatives of the government and some non-official educationists and university teachers. Another alternative was to follow the practice adopted in Delhi where each government college had been planned under an autonomous board of governors. This had the advantage of localizing the staff and enabling it to develop loyalty to their institutions.

The Education Commission recognized that private colleges formed the vast bulk of affiliated colleges. Unless they were properly directed and given adequate assistance, the general standards in higher education would not improve. A major change was needed in the policy that treated all private institutions alike, both for purposes of control and for grant-in-aid. This, it was felt, should be replaced

by a discriminating pattern under which the really good institutions were given greater freedom and more liberal assistance while a firm policy of direction was adopted towards weaker institutions that did not deserve larger grants because they failed to make any attempt at self-improvement. The total grant-in-aid payable would be equal to all teacher costs together with non-teacher costs actually incurred or the ceiling prescribed for the purpose, whichever was less, minus the contribution by the management which had to be met from its own sources and not from fees and minus the income collected at the standard fee rates, after allowing for the prescribed free-studentship.

The Education Commission also dealt with the agencies charged with the overall promotion and coordination in higher education. The two main ones were the Inter-University Board and the UGC. Their functioning was examined and reforms were proposed. The Inter-University Board was set up by a resolution adopted at the first conference of the Vice-Chancellors of universities held in Shimla in May 1924. It provided a useful forum for exchange of views among Vice-Chancellors and for the discussion of common problems. The Board had also helped to enforce some standards and codes of conduct among the universities. It was a useful channel through which the government and the UGC could ascertain the perspective of universities on important problems and hence it played the important role of representing university opinion to the government and the public. A considerable increase in the functions of the Inter-University Board was visualized. Already, it acted as a very effective clearinghouse of information on universities. Not only was it expected to continue with these responsibilities but also its work was to be expanded. It was felt that it should also be possible for the Board to develop certain advisory, research and service functions for and on behalf of the universities and that in order to enable it to carry them out, it should be strengthened financially and enabled to maintain an adequate secretariat.

The Education Commission found that higher education was divided into a number of sectors and compartments with minimal communication and interaction between them. This fragmentation, unaccompanied by any effort at effective coordination, was a serious weakness. The UGC, the Commission felt, should represent the entire spectrum of higher education. For this, it should be professionally

concerned and adequately equipped to deal with all its problems. This was necessary for various reasons, but principally because, in the contemporary world, no discipline could develop fully in isolation from the mainstream of academic life. Agriculture, technology, medical sciences and teaching would all be the richer for being part of this broad stream and by being concerned with the problems and needs of one another. This applied most directly to teaching, but increasingly to research as well. Therefore, it was absolutely essential to bring all higher education, including agriculture, engineering and medicine, within the purview of the UGC. This was the ultimate direction in which the UGC should move.

However, while this was a desirable long-term goal, it was not possible to take up this step immediately. For the time being, it would be more feasible to set up separate UGC-type organizations for agriculture, engineering, and medicine and to create the machinery that would effectively coordinate them. The proposals for immediate action, therefore, were threefold. First, it was not desirable that the government should deal directly with the universities. It was always a great advantage to interpose, between the government and the universities, a committee of individuals selected for their knowledge and standing rather than for their political affiliation or official status. Second, UGC-type organizations, based on the above principles, should be set up to deal with technical, agricultural and medical education. They did not need to be set up by law. The purpose would be served if they were established as autonomous organizations. Third, for purposes of co-ordination, there should be a certain overlapping membership between the UGC and the UGC-type organizations that were recommended. In addition, the chairmen of all these four bodies should meet periodically to review and coordinate their programmes.

The committee of the Members of Parliament on higher education had expressed the view that a person holding full-time appointment as Vice-Chancellor should not be appointed as a member of the UGC. The government accepted the proposal for necessary changes in the UGC Act but the Education Commission did not agree with this view. It was of the opinion that the UGC should not be deprived of the services of an eminent person only on the ground that he or she happened to be a vice-chancellor.

The Model Act Committee of the UGC also raised the question of separate university grants commissions or committees to be set up by the state governments for universities within their respective states, but made no specific recommendation. The Standing Committee of the Inter-University Board was strongly against the establishment of such committees in the state, suggesting that if the state government required any advice, it should consult the UGC. The Education Commission agreed with this view since, in giving grants to universities, the questions of finance and standards, and collaboration between universities outside a given state, were all intimately linked. It could lead to confusion if the responsibility of coordinating standards was distributed amongst a number of bodies such as the central UGC and the state UGCs.

Impact of the Recommendations of the Education Commission

The Commission constituted a panel of Vice-Chancellors and other educationists to consider the situation of higher education in the light of the recommendations of the Education Commission. Several points emerged for the consideration of the UGC that could be introduced in universities and colleges. A dean for students' welfare should be appointed in each university. There should be provision for more seating in libraries and study rooms for teachers. Students must have better hostel facilities and student' homes for day students should be constructed. Health facilities needed to be provided for and sports and games promoted. Several of these recommendations became integral parts of the plans of the UGC and the schemes introduced by it.

Further, the Ministry of Education and the UGC convened a conference of Vice-Chancellors to consider the recommendations of the Education Commission. It met in September 1967. Following the conference, an important step was taken towards strengthening relations between the UGC and the universities. This was the setting up of an advisory committee of sixteen Vice-Chancellors. The committee would meet two or three times a year and advise the Commission on matters regarding the development of higher education, coordination between

different universities, specialized facilities for postgraduate studies, research, and other related problems.

The Commission met the Vice-Chancellors of universities in south India in December 1967 to discuss some key recommendations of the Education Commission of 1964-66 and of the conference of Vice-Chancellors held in September 1967. Important recommendations emerged from this meeting. It was felt that development panels should be set up in the universities for identifying and co-coordinating the development of teaching and research in the light of available resources and the special requirements of each university. Since resources for higher education were limited, it was necessary to consolidate and improve standards of postgraduate education and research. There was also need to give adequate attention to the improvement of undergraduate education and to assess select institutions in the field. Undergraduate education had to be related to the needs of future national development. It was also considered desirable to explore the possibility of enabling postgraduate students to do a part of their work in institutions other than their own where special facilities pertaining to such studies were available. Sports and games in colleges should not be treated as an alternative to an activity like joining the National Cadet Corps (NCC). However, the NCC itself should be voluntary and the universities themselves should evolve the NSS programme. Teachers and the local community should be involved in this process.

At its meeting held in March 1968, the Advisory Committee supported the introduction of the semester system in the universities and the institution of visiting professorships and visiting studentships. The committee emphasized that a bigger allocation of funds was needed to raise the quality of higher education and link it with national needs.

A meeting with Vice-Chancellors of universities in north India was held in 1968-69. It was earlier agreed that some meetings of the Commission should be held outside Delhi as that would provide an opportunity for discussing problems relating to the development and coordination of higher education and research with the Vice-Chancellors of the universities in the regions concerned. At this meeting, the commission met the Vice-Chancellors of the universities of the states of Bihar, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir

and Punjab. It was emphasized, as had been said earlier at the meeting with the Vice-Chancellors of universities in south India, that funds of the UGC should be at least doubled to enable universities to consolidate and improve academic standards. It would be desirable to provide for institutional cooperation and regional coordination in the development of facilities. This would require provision for scholarships to enable students to go to the universities or centres offering courses in particular disciplines. It would be of benefit and value to associate students in matters of direct concern to them by setting up consultative committees. Also, universities should introduce the credit system to enable students to take a variety of courses relating to their study. This would promote a broad-based education and introduce flexibility in the choice of subjects apart from encouraging interdisciplinary studies and research. The UGC's advisory committee of Vice-Chancellors met in September 1968 and noted that the resolution of the Government of India on the National Policy on Education issued in July 1968 was broadly in conformity with the recommendations of the Education Commission, 1964-66, and felt that it should form the basis of the development of higher education in the country.

A committee was appointed to suggest measures for implementing the recommendations regarding higher education. It recommended opening of new colleges as well as enforcing regulations for admissions in the universities on an all-India basis. The committee stressed that the development of colleges should be given top priority. No institution of higher education should be started outside the university. Orientation courses for teachers should be organized and an adequate number of scholarships should be provided to needy and meritorious students.

The advisory committee of Vice-Chancellors made some important recommendations in December 1970. It suggested that provision should be made for the appointment of Pro-Vice-Chancellors and rectors in the universities. Each university must appoint a group to assess the needs and priorities with regard to amenities for students. A committee should be appointed to examine the facilities required for the teaching staff in colleges to enable them to improve their competence and effectiveness. Finally, if a college on temporary affiliation had functioned well for a period of Five-Years and had fulfilled the basic requirements, it should

normally be given permanent affiliation. Committees were also set up to explore not only new areas of learning but also to introduce teaching methodology that did not confine itself to straightforward classroom lectures. Several steps were recommended. For example, teaching and research in areas like transport economics and management were found necessary and audio-visual aids including 'programmed learning' were sought to be introduced as teaching aids.

Student Enrolment and Colleges

Many of the recommendations of the Education Commission had a direct bearing on the work of the UGC as it grappled with the challenge of the rapid expansion of higher education in the 1960s and 70s. Student enrolment increased by leaps and bounds, as did the number of colleges and universities. In 1963-64, the student enrolment in universities and colleges was 13,84,694, recording an increase of 1,12,032 over the previous year. The number of universities increased from 55 to 61. Deemed universities went up from six to nine and the number of colleges in 1963-64 went up from 1,938 to 2,111. In 1972-73, the number of universities rose to 90 in addition to the nine deemed universities that were already in existence. The total number of colleges in this ten-year period almost doubled, touching a figure of 4,153, while the number of students enrolled in universities and colleges reached 35,44,000, a threefold increase. The most daunting task was to tackle education in undergraduate and postgraduate colleges where the majority of teaching and learning took place. However, it was heartening that the increase was not only in undergraduate courses, but also in postgraduate courses and in research. This meant that the Commission had to find solutions for the interrelated problems of both quality and quantity.

As has been discussed earlier, since college education was increasing so rapidly, a committee had been formed in 1962 to recommend measures necessary to improve it and to make suggestions for the effective utilization of resources available for the purpose. Later in April 1964, it was reconstituted under the chairmanship of Dr. G.S. Mahajani, Vice-Chancellor, University of Udaipur, with a mandate to suggest measures to improve collegiate education in the fields of

arts, science, commerce and education and also to suggest any steps in this regard for the Fourth Five-Year Plan. It might be appropriate to recall some salient recommendations made by the committee. No college, it felt, should be granted affiliation by a university unless the basic requirements relating to staff, library, laboratory facilities and others were provided at the very outset. It was vital to adhere to certain minimum standards. For example, every college, at the very minimum, should provide reading room facilities for at least 25 per cent of the students on rolls.

Besides infrastructure facilities, colleges were to follow a system of tutorials and the number of formal lectures could be reduced. Seminars ought to be provided for honours and postgraduate students. The committee also recommended cooperative teaching among affiliated colleges at the postgraduate level. This would enable the colleges to pool their resources and improve standards of instruction. Cooperative teaching would eliminate duplication of lecture work in colleges and the time so saved could be used for regular tutorial and seminar work. Considering that standards had to be maintained, it was felt that affiliation in postgraduate courses should be given with discrimination taking into account the possibility of cooperative teaching amongst colleges in the same area.

The Role of Teachers

It is interesting to note how aware the UGC was of the pivotal role of teachers in ameliorating standards. It emphasized the need for further improvement in the salary scales of college teachers and providing them with essential amenities and incentives. The Commission recommended revised scales for teachers in the Fourth Plan that was accepted by the Government on April 1, 1966. They were as follows:

Central Universities

1. Professors: Rs. 1100-50-1300-1600
2. Readers: Rs. 700-50-1250
3. Lecturers: Rs. 400-40-800-950

It was also agreed that one-third of the number of Professors might be given the senior scale of Rs. 1600-100-1800. The Commission adopted the same scales of pay for teachers in the state universities from April 1, 1966. It also revised the scales of pay for college teachers as follows:

Undergraduate Colleges

1. Principal: Rs. 700-40-1100
2. Lecturers (Senior Scale): Rs. 400-30-640-800
3. Lecturers (Junior Scale): Rs. 300-25-600
4. Tutor/Demonstrator: Rs. 250-15-400

Postgraduate Colleges

1. Principal: Rs.800-50-1250
2. Reader/Senior Lecturer: Rs. 700-40-1120
3. Lecturer (Senior Scale): Rs. 400-30-640-40-800
4. Lecturer (Junior Scale): Rs. 300-25-600
5. Tutor/Demonstrator: Rs. 250-15-400

The Government of India accepted these recommendations and decided to give special assistance to the state governments for implementing the revised scales. The assistance from the Centre was limited to 80 per cent of the additional expenditure involved and was to be available for a period of Five-Years. The remaining 20 per cent was to be made by the state government and not by universities and colleges.

Teachers had to be provided both proper remuneration and facilities and also professional stimulation. The Commission attached considerable importance to the programme of exchange of teachers for short periods and even decided to extend financial assistance to universities from 1964-65 to enable them to invite distinguished teachers and experts in various fields from other universities.

The Commission also decided to provide financial assistance to teachers in universities and colleges for undertaking research and scholarly work in science, the humanities and social sciences. It was realized that teachers were often handicapped in pursuing such work because they did not have the equipment and literature that was indispensable. Grants were made available to assist teachers in the purchase of books, chemicals, equipment and other such items that they might need for their work. These might not normally be available in the institution where they were working. Financial assistance was also given to meet any travel expenses that they might incur in the furtherance of their research work and to enable them to visit and work at different centres of research and advanced study in the country. To facilitate the disbursement of such grants, the UGC decided that the universities could be provided unassigned grants that they could use without reference to it but subject to a prescribed ceiling.

Other schemes were also put into place to boost research and academic activities. Grants were provided to universities for organizing extension lectures by university and college teachers. Senior and junior research fellowships were instituted for scholars to undertake advanced study and research. Grants were made available to universities for publication of research works including doctoral theses. The Commission went a step further and in 1963-64 approved the establishment and improvement of printing facilities at several universities such as Poona and Shivaji Universities, Vishwa-Bharati, Varanaseya Sanskrit Vishvavidyalaya and Gurukul Kangri.

It was realized that the teacher-student ratio should be improved and teachers should be given opportunities through symposia and summer schools for discussions on teaching methods, systems of examination and for promotion of research. In fact the Commission had already decided in November 1961 to assist the universities in organizing summer schools and seminars. This was to be done by the Commission either with its own resources or in collaboration with other agencies. In 1963, for example, it organized summer institutes for secondary school teachers in physics, chemistry, biology and mathematics in collaboration with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), Ministry of Education.

The main objectives were to establish channels of communication between schools and universities; to improve the competence of participating teachers by acquainting them with recent developments in their subjects; to strengthen their capacity to inculcate the spirit of critical enquiry among their students; and to give an opportunity to the participants for close intellectual association with outstanding scholars in their respective fields of study.

In 1964, the UGC in collaboration with USAID decided to hold sixteen summer institutes for university and colleges teachers of science subjects. These institutes were intended to deal with specialized fields in physics, chemistry, biology and mathematics. The objectives of this programme was to give opportunities for supplementary in-service training to college and university teachers in science subjects; to enable participants to keep abreast of the latest advances in their specialized fields; to acquaint them with modern concepts and ideas; and to provide means and opportunities for discussions and exchange of ideas.

Four summer institutes in English were held for college teachers in collaboration with the British Council in 1965. They were concerned with modern methods and techniques of teaching English language. Besides Indian experts in the field, the British Council made available the services of two experts to each of the institutes.

In 1966-67, the National Science Foundation, USA, in cooperation with USAID offered to assist in the improvement of the teaching of science, engineering and technology in India. A Memorandum of Agreement was signed between the Ministry of Finance and USAID under which forty-four summer institutes were organized in science subjects for school teachers, in collaboration with the NCERT, the Teachers Training College, Columbia University and USAID. Thirty-three summer institutes were organized for college teachers in science subjects in collaboration with the Ohio State University. Six summer institutes were organized in collaboration with the British Council, for college teachers to acquaint them with modern methods of teaching English language. The Commission itself organized three summer institutes in chemistry, mathematics and biology for college teachers apart from providing assistance for conferences, symposia, refresher courses, seminars and others.

As part of achieving the objective of achieving and maintaining high standards, the review committees also recommended that candidates for Ph.D. degrees should attend and conduct seminars and also teach for a minimum period of one year. Viva-voce should be compulsory for them. Time should be made available for field and experimental work in the teaching-learning process. Research bulletins and journals should be published regularly for which publication grants should be provided. Also active research centres in the universities should be developed through appropriate grants. Area studies had already been established following the recommendations of the B. Shiva Rao Committee. During the Third Plan period, there was a growing awareness of the value and importance of developing a gradually expanding programme of area studies and strengthening it. Consequently, a standing advisory committee was appointed to advise the Commission regarding measures to be taken to implement the scheme properly.

Governance of Universities

A Conference of Vice-Chancellors was convened in April 1969 jointly by the Ministry of Education and Youth Services and the UGC in which it was recommended that the UGC should appoint a special committee to study the problems of university governance in various aspects, including the relationship of universities with affiliated colleges, their condition of affiliation, constitution of governing bodies and university representation on them. Consequently, the commission appointed two committees in June 1969. One under the chairmanship of Prof. P.B. Gajendragadkar, Vice-Chancellor, Bombay University was to consider issues concerning governance of universities and another for colleges under Rev. P.T. Chandi, the then Vice-Chancellor of Gorakhpur University. However, Prof. Chandi relinquished his office and went on an assignment outside India. The UGC then amalgamated the two committees and asked Prof. Gajendragadkar to be the chairman of the larger combined committee that submitted its report in 1971. The Committee felt that was necessary to keep the lines of communication between the different constituents of the University system open and devise proper machinery for the removal of grievances so that there was no

reason for the eruption of violence or adoption of pressure tactics or agitational methods. The human touch had to be introduced into both the academic and administrative matters. The Vice-Chancellor and all his associates, including teachers and senior students, should do their best to control and stop such violence. They should advise the State authorities who deputed persons to deal with violence on the university campus to discharge their duties firmly but humanely. The university could not claim to be a state within a state and hence was subject to the jurisdiction of the courts established by law.

The UGC, with its intimate connection with all universities in the country, should advise and assist them in upholding the dignity of the university system, and safeguarding the autonomy of the universities in all its aspects. Emphasizing the role of the UGC, the committee said that it should be the philosopher, guide and friend of the university system. It was the custodian of university autonomy, and had to ensure that the universities made sustained and dedicated efforts to meet the challenges of higher education.

The state governments, too, should consult the UGC in all matters pertaining to the universities in their respective regions. The committee recommended that if any state government intended to introduce any new legislation with regard to the governance of universities or provide for participation of students in university administration or make any other changes in the existing statutes it would be advisable for it to consult the UGC and the respective universities in that behalf, before it reached a final conclusion. The Committee took the view that there was a considerable advantage in adopting a certain degree of variability, which was essential for innovation-cum-development. In other words, uniformity or rigid standardization was not desirable. Besides, there were some obvious difficulties in contemplating the concept of uniformity in India. It emphasized the importance and need of promoting and strengthening a sense of belonging and involvement among the constituents of a university.

The constituent units of a university should have a feeling of belonging and a sense of commitment to its ideals. They need to be participative in problems of policy, planning, decision-making, and implementation of plans of development. This could not be realized

if the number and size of the constituent units became too large. The committee said that the number of constituent units should not ordinarily exceed thirty and certainly not sixty. The Head of every college should have a seat in the university court and on the Academic Council, but this was not practical if the number of colleges were more than thirty or so.

The committee felt that, as far as possible, every state should have at least one “City University” — and postgraduate education to the extent possible should be limited to university departments. If it was to be extended to colleges, it should be very selective and carefully planned in order to ensure standards. The “City University” could be unitary or federal depending on the special circumstances and needs and such a university should be treated as a central university. It would be much easier to modernize courses and upgrade research in such a set up. It may also be desirable to give such postgraduate colleges and even some well-established undergraduate colleges, effective “autonomy”. There was great need to ensure flexibility in the organization of the university, of academic structure of a university. It should have the freedom to decide its academic needs and requirements, goals, and the manner in which it wished to specialize in certain areas. It needs to be free to decide how to tackle local problems. This could be ensured partly by keeping the items to be covered in the Act to the barest essentials. The composition and powers of the various authorities and bodies could be put in the university statutes and universities themselves given the right to initiate amendments in them. The universities could make the ordinances to set up many Boards of Studies and Committees as they deemed proper for dealing with interdisciplinary courses or projects of research. The ordinances could provide the broad scheme of the requirements for various courses, leaving it to the departments or the Boards of Faculties to spell out the details. The primary academic units should have a great deal of initiative and power. Procedures for amending statutes and framing ordinances should be simplified so that there was no undue loss of time. All these measures contribute to the flexibility in the organizational set-up of the universities and enable them to cope with their academic problems.

The Gajendragadkar Committee recommended that apart from Delhi University, the Central Universities should not have affiliated colleges.

Since Delhi University, for historical reasons, had both teaching and affiliating functions, it would be better to maintain its character.

Following the recommendations of the Radhakrishnan Commission, the committee felt that direct elections of teachers on university and college statutory bodies should be avoided. Apart from special or ideal situations, elections could lead to factionalism and other evils, which would seriously hamper and disrupt academic work. It conceded that normally the operations of democracy required elections but although democratization of university administration, and delegation of powers and functions were important, they did not necessarily involve the adoption of the principle of election. In fact, experience had shown that election to the statutory bodies of the university, did not always provide to a large number of people, and often the best were not inclined to stand the stress and strain of elections,. Besides, the committee apprehended that the process of election was likely to introduce considerations that might not be consistent with the academic atmosphere in which university bodies should function. Instead, it might be better to go by rotation, or nomination.

In the case of unitary universities the committee felt that it would be best, to adopt the method of "rotation". How it was to be effected, was a matter of detail. It could be on the basis of seniority but this would obviously work when the number involved was not too large, and that is why was better suited to unitary universities. "Rotation" was totally meaningless when the number was very large, so large that a vast majority of this category would never be eligible for appointment. Therefore, in the case of affiliating universities, and particularly when the number of colleges was large, the positions could be filled through some process of election; that would imply a measure of participation. Each college could elect, say two representatives (one from the senior and one from junior teachers), who would constitute an "electoral college" to select people for the various university bodies. It could be so organized that one third number of the "electoral college" retired every year.

The committee emphasized that wherever power was given to an individual, be he the Vice-Chancellor or the Dean or the Head of the Department, it was desirable for him or her to exercise such power after full consultation with his colleagues. Therefore, the Academic

Council should deal with general academic issues, and should really be the most important academic body in the university. The Boards of Studies should play a decisive role in matters concerning their respective disciplines. These Boards should be divided into two categories; one dealing with postgraduate studies and the other dealing with undergraduate studies.

The committee observed that the process of evolving a pattern of governance of universities, as well as modernizing the changing courses of studies in different disciplines, should be a continuous one. There should be no finality, inflexibility or absoluteness about them. In that sense, the committee emphasized that its recommendations should be adopted and implemented for the present, and after the experience of five or ten years, the problem could be reviewed again in its entirety. Such was the concept of experimentation that must inspire higher education.

The committee concluded by saying that while making university education purposeful, meaningful and significant for teachers, students and the general community, what ultimately mattered was not so much the pattern to which a university and its statutory bodies conformed but the spirit of dedication and the sense of purpose that guided the activities of those who function in these statutory bodies. Both the administrative and the academic wing of a university had to work in a spirit of cooperation, understanding, and imagination, and the human touch was a must on the university campus in the classrooms, co-curricular activities and even in purely administrative matters. University organization should demonstrate and prove to the community at large that debate and dialogue, communication and exchange of ideas carried on freely, fearlessly and objectively, could solve problems. The significance of the report lay in the fact that this was the first time that the role expected of the central universities was projected.

Expansion of Higher Education and Maintenance of Standards

Since there was a rapid growth in student enrolment there was also great pressure to start more universities and colleges. The Commission, however, felt that before any new universities were established, it

would be desirable for the state governments to prepare, in consultation with the UGC, a perspective plan for the following five to ten years taking into account the available resources and facilities and the need for a further development and expansion of higher education. The type, location, size and pattern of a new university needed detailed and careful consideration. Generally speaking, it would cost less to expand facilities in the existing ones than to set up new universities. Apart from this, the establishment of a new university could only be considered in terms of the contribution it was likely to make to raise the quality and standards of education, and in relation to the availability of competent teachers and adequate financial resources.

The Commission also felt that a convention should be established by which no major legislation pertaining to universities should be undertaken without prior consultation between the state government, the Ministry of Education at the Centre and the UGC. This was expressed while considering an amending Bill pertaining to state universities in Andhra Pradesh.

The Commission had earlier, too, tried to grapple with the problem of standards by setting up a committee in 1961 to suggest measures to improve academic achievement. It made some valuable suggestions in its report that became available in 1964-65. It emphasized that only those students should be admitted to universities who had shown the necessary aptitude and ability for higher studies. Methods had to be evolved for such a screening. Further, instituting correspondence courses and evening classes could only relieve the pressure of numbers on existing institutions. Facilities for correspondence courses were, therefore, extended in Delhi University and proposals for starting them in some other universities were accepted. It was also considered desirable to provide for two streams in undergraduate education — pass and honours courses — to meet both the quantitative and the qualitative requirements of higher education.

The committee also dealt with syllabi by suggesting that universities must set up standing review committees which could critically examine the syllabi periodically and improve them in the light of modern developments while retaining the core content. The committees were set up and while making recommendations for the improvement of syllabi they also recommended model syllabi for undergraduate and

postgraduate studies together with making some vital suggestions pertaining to the conduct of teaching and evaluation.

Special attention had to be paid to the postgraduate sector of higher education and candidates with the necessary aptitude and ability should be encouraged to join research courses. Further, it was imperative to considerably improve science teaching in schools, colleges and universities and periodically revise curricula and syllabi in the light of new developments. Together with that, evaluation of students needed to be done through a judicious combination of internal and external examinations as well as objective and written type of tests. The committees once again emphasized that recognition must be given and administered during the session in assessing the ability of students and these may count up to 40 per cent of the total marks to be given. This would reduce the dependence on one comprehensive annual examination at the end of the course.

Examination Reforms

A committee was appointed consisting of Dr. H.J. Taylor, Dr. S.K. Mitral and Dr. S.C. Aulack to advise the Commission regarding measures to be taken in the field of examination reforms. A brochure entitled, "Three Studies in Examination Techniques" by Dr. H.J. Taylor was published. In addition, the examination research unit of the Gauhati University published two papers entitled, "The Problem of the Third Examiner" and "The Influence of Scaling in Examination Results", under the guidance of Dr. Taylor.

The Ministry of Education and Social Welfare set up a Committee on Examination Reforms in 1971, under the Chairmanship of Prof. Rais Ahmed. The Committee endorsed most of the recommendations of the Kothari Commission, the Committee on Examinations of the C.A.B.E., as well as that of the Bi-National Conferences in various disciplines sponsored by the UGC. It emphasized that the desirable pattern of examination reforms must be based on some general principles. For example, those who taught should also examine. In this sense, examinations must become "internal", and an integral part of the teaching process. Since sessional or continuous assessment measured a number of essential abilities such as drive and capacity for hard work, motivation,

quality of imagination, intuition and speculation, leadership and team work and the skilled use of hands that a terminal examination or an achievement test did not measure, such assessment should be shown on the grade sheet separately. The committee said that the “standard” of every institution was ultimately governed by the education imparted by it. Therefore, every university or college had to maintain and defend its own standards. Institutions and colleges would be motivated to do this if the name of his/her institution could also be mentioned on the diploma, degree or grade sheet issued to the student.

If a student was to be examined in a number of courses for the award of his final degree or diploma, these should be delinked from each other, so that if a candidate failed to make the grade in a particular course he/she may not be penalized in other courses because of this failure. The delinking of courses in this manner would also allow the students to move, if required, from one institution to another, and from one type of study to another. It was necessary to assess the performance of students over well-distributed intervals of time so that a course which was completed in a year or a semester must come up for examination at the end of that year or semester, without having to wait for the “final” examination.

Further, it was not possible to measure the performance of students so accurately and unambiguously as to be recorded in marks. Since the standards of judgment varied from subject to subject it was preferable to award grades and not marks. An “A” would denote distinguished performance such as might be expected from not more than a few per cent of students, perhaps the top one quarter in a normal class. B would stand for satisfactory, C for poor; and D for unsatisfactory performance.

Examinations to determine the terminal performance of students in a course or towards a degree were distinct from entrance examinations that evaluated attitudes or indicated aptitude for a course of study or service. Hence institutions had to do two kinds of evaluations. One was examination/assessment that should be an integral part of the teaching programme towards a degree. The second was an entrance examination or test, where the number of applicants for admission exceeded the number of seats, in order to judge the fitness of a student for the particular course.

It was recommended that a central authority, should conduct national examinations in various subjects at the Bachelor's level. These could be designed to test creative thinking and comprehension of subject matter, so as to serve as a national index of performance and achievement of students at large and of various institutions. The examination ought to be conducted in all the regional languages and English. It should use a modern syllabus, the best techniques of paper setting, evaluation and processing of raw scores. However, a certificate showing the grade should be issued only to students who achieved a high standard. The examination should be open to everyone who wished to appear for it. The Committee reinforced the idea that opportunities for further study could be provided to those who failed to gain admission to any institution, correspondence courses and courses run by "open universities". This would enable anyone wanting to get a degree to do so by taking the examinations conducted by such a university, or national board, even without the formalities of enrolment or attendance.

Finally, it was felt that the UGC should make it obligatory on all colleges and universities to supply it with complete information about examination papers and question banks. This information must be evaluated with respect to the standard of education reflected in it. The analysis might be supplied to the institutions concerned so that remedial action could be taken, if necessary.

Implementation of Examination Reforms

The Committee desired that the principles enunciated by it should be put into practice at the unitary universities. As far as affiliating universities were concerned, the university had to supervise the college examinations at the undergraduate level particularly on two counts. One was to ensure that those who taught a subject also examined it. The second was to supervise the end year or semester examinations conducted by affiliated undergraduate colleges.

The Committee suggested a series of steps that could be practically followed: (1) The university could allow decentralization of examinations retaining the power of broad supervision only, together with binding advice to the colleges in this respect. (2) It could

maintain complete information about the manner in which the colleges conducted examinations and keep a record of the statistics of performance. The results could then be analysed and drawn to the attention of the colleges by the university.

The Boards of Studies established by universities should not only frame the syllabi, but also a "Bank" of questions for each course. Questions for the bank could be invited both from teachers and students, and wherever necessary members of the board could frame the questions themselves. In this manner each course should have a bank in which there should be 50 to 100 questions. The questions in the bank must be suitably distributed over the entire course and they should preferably be of the same standard. They could be modified or changed every year and teachers should be given a chance to set up to 25 % per cent questions from outside the bank, particularly in the case of numerical questions. The questions in the bank must be published and made available to the staff and students concerned at the beginning of every year.

Colleges should be allowed to hold examinations under the supervision of their own staff, the examination questions being selected from the proposed question bank. The university should lay down the procedure for selecting these questions and make known the scheme of evaluation for each answer to a question. It might be possible to have the questions printed on cards and the students could pick a given number of cards randomly. In this manner the expenses of setting question papers, printing and storage, as also of invigilation could be largely avoided.

The teachers concerned at the colleges must examine the scripts and the answer books should be returned to the candidates. Candidates who wished to appeal against the grade awarded by the teacher should be given an opportunity to do so to a committee of which the members may be the principal, a teacher from the department or section concerned and, perhaps, a students' representative.

Degrees should be awarded to all those candidates who attained a certain grade level to be decided by the university. Since the lowest grade in the system was suggested to be 'D', if a student got D in all the examinations or assessments for courses in a particular year, the university might reserve the right to cancel his admission. Students

who had completed the normal time for the degree or diploma might be given an additional semester or year to improve their performance under certain conditions to be decided by the university. The grades awarded by internal assessment at colleges must be subjected to a 5 per cent sample check by the college authority. Similarly 5 per cent of examination scripts must be sample-checked by the university. The result of the sample-check must be supplied to the college concerned with suitable advice from the university. Colleges should be required to keep a cumulative record of the grades of the students and a copy of the record must be supplied every year to the university.

The remuneration for the examination of the scripts might have to be increased since the return of the scripts to the candidates would require suitable corrective indications on them and hence time. But the increased remuneration was not likely to increase the expenditure on the examinations, since printing of papers, and fees for setting question papers were avoided in this system.

If the process of the conduct of examinations in this manner suggested above resulted in loss of legitimate revenue to the university, the matter should be sympathetically examined by the state and central governments. The grade cards finally issued to the candidates should show the record of sessional assessment together with the examination grades. Whether or not sessional assessment should be counted towards an overall grade, and, if so, what weight should be attached to it, was a matter to be decided by the university.

Affiliating universities at the postgraduate level should adopt the same principles but supervise the evaluation and assessment of postgraduate students in colleges with respect to teachers being the examiners of the papers taught by them and internal assessment. Where adequate staff and facilities existed, the university could empower individual postgraduate colleges themselves to conduct their own assessments/examinations like the unitary universities. In such cases, the university would only approve the syllabus through the Boards of Studies in the subject concerned, and keep itself fully informed of the examination procedures and standards of teaching in the colleges. In case of colleges where teaching staff and facilities were not up to the mark, they could be allowed to have different syllabi approved by the Boards of Studies of the university but the internal assessment and

examinations should be supervised and modulated in the same way as for the undergraduate colleges. It was desirable for universities to start their own postgraduate centres whenever it was necessary to expand postgraduate education with suitable facilities for teaching and research. They could be left to conduct their own assessments and examinations in accordance with the stated general principles.

Continued concern about examination reforms led to the setting up of a committee consisting of two experts from each of the existing four central universities to review the examination systems of the central universities. Aligarh Muslim University, Banaras Hindu University and Meerut University introduced the semester system for instruction and evaluation. A brochure was prepared for the information and guidance of other universities. A note was also circulated on the 'credit system' of organizing undergraduate studies. Review committees set up to examine syllabi and curricula recommended model syllabi for undergraduate and postgraduate studies together with making some vital suggestions pertaining to the conduct of teaching and evaluation. Once again, the pivotal role of teachers was emphasized in bringing about these reforms and it was recommended that they should be provided suitable salaries and conditions of services as well as necessary incentives and amenities in order to retain them in the service of colleges and universities.

Student Welfare Measures

Financial resources were needed not only for salaries but also for various student welfare measures. For example, the provision of suitable hostel accommodation for students was considered one of the essential measures for the improvement in the quality of higher education. Further, facilities had to be provided for rest, recreation and private study for day scholars. The Commission took all the steps it could to create these facilities. For example, in 1963-64, it approved the construction of hostels in twenty-six colleges of which fifteen were for men and eleven for women students. It also assisted twenty-one universities to establish centres for day scholars. The Commission accepted the proposal of setting up students' homes in the universities, particularly in big cities. These homes were expected

to function as day hostels and provide library facilities, a reading room and cafeteria.

The Commission appointed a committee with Prof. A.L. Mudaliar, Vice-Chancellor, Madras University as Chairman to examine the desirability of introducing a health service scheme in the universities for their staff and students and to formulate specific proposals for it. Grants were given to universities for establishing health centres to provide facilities for medical examination and treatment of simple ailments.

Other student welfare measures approved were grants for hobby workshops and assistance to needy students to enable them to buy their textbooks. Funds were made available for diploma courses in value-added subjects like museology, ancient history and archaeology. Sports coaches were appointed and grants approved for schemes like NCC and NSS.

The year 1967-68 saw an important step being taken in the direction of student welfare which was a participative measure. The UGC emphasized the necessity of careful and sympathetic consideration of the genuine needs and difficulties of students and of devising consultative machinery so that the authorities in the universities and colleges could discuss them periodically in order to take quick remedial action. Hence it suggested to the Vice-Chancellors that Advisory Councils of teachers and student representatives be set up in order to identify and deal with difficulties encountered by minds of the students, and to take appropriate action. The Commission gave earnest and serious consideration to questions relating to student unrest and took an active and sustained interest in programmes of student welfare and services. It had to be recognized that the causes of student unrest were complex and varied and some of them lay outside the education system.

Reducing Regional Disparities

New universities continued to be set up but it was considered imperative for the maintenance of standards that colleges should not be established without adequate facilities of qualified staff, resources and organization of studies. For this, considerably larger funds needed

to be made available to the UGC than had hitherto been in the Second and Third Five-Year Plans. However, regional disparities also needed to be minimized.

In 1964-65, the Commission together with the Ministry of Education took a significant step by appointing a joint committee to assess the facilities for higher education in the north-eastern areas of India and to consider the pattern and development of higher education best suited to their needs. There was an awareness that regional disparities had to be removed and access to higher education had to be equitably provided. To achieve this objective, the Committee recommended the setting up a full-fledged university or an institution deemed to be a university in this area. However, it felt that a federal type university would be the most useful with a constituent college in each important centre to cater to the needs of the scattered areas and the aspirations of the people. University colleges should be developed in the first instance, as centres of undergraduate teaching with honours courses in the main subjects. They could gradually become full-fledged centres of postgraduate teaching and research. The university so set up should conduct vocational and technical education at the appropriate level. To begin with, a polytechnic for boys and a nursing college for girls could be instituted. All these recommendations were accepted and the North Eastern Hill University (NEHU) was established in Shillong in 1973 to service the educational needs of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland. However, with the establishment of Nagaland University in September 1994 and that of Mizoram University in July 2001, its jurisdiction over Nagaland and Mizoram ceased.

Centres for Advanced Study and Research

In the Third Plan, the Commission made a new and important departure by establishing centres of advanced study and research in select university departments where quality was already established so that these departments could eventually reach the highest possible standards and attract scholars of ability and distinction to themselves. These centres were expected to make a significant impact in the field of higher education. This was done on the advice of a Committee under

the chairmanship of A.R. Wadia, consisting of eminent educationists and scientists. Twenty-six university departments were selected in the first instance as centres of advanced study in specific fields during the Third Five-Year Plan. Four more were added during the Fourth Plan. These centres were intended to encourage the pursuit of excellence, as their mandate was to improve quality and raise standards at the postgraduate and research levels. Working in close collaboration with national laboratories and other similar institutions on an all-India basis, they were to provide facilities for advanced study and research to outstanding scholars. Each centre of advanced study would have a fairly large staff of professors, readers, lecturers and research associates or fellows of outstanding ability and qualifications, actively engaged in advance training and research. A number of them would not be permanent members of the centre but come to it for long or short periods on deputation from their universities or institutions.

These Centres of Advanced Study and Research would attract teachers and students from all over the country and help to promote academic mobility. Further, personnel trained at the centres would in course of time be available to other university departments thus strengthening teaching and research particularly in specialized areas. It was decided to provide assistance to these centres for a period of ten years in the first instance and further assistance would be given after assessing their progress and the work done by them. In 1972, the Programme of Special Assistance to selected departments was initiated as a supporting programme for Centres of Advanced Studies. It was aimed at strengthening research in one or two thrust areas. This scheme was known as the Department of Special Assistance (DSA) programme. The departments were to be identified by subject panels, keeping in view their ongoing research activities and achievement.

Scientific and Technical Education

The emphasis throughout the Third and Fourth Plan was on science, medicine, agriculture, engineering, technology and research. The Commission was continually concerned about science education in the country. The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) served as an advisory body to the UGC. During this time, grants for

the development of higher education in arts, science and commerce were provided by the Commission while development programmes in the field of medicine, agriculture, engineering and technology were promoted by the different Union Ministries and the concerned state departments. For example, during 1963-64, of the one hundred and eighteen institutions in the country conducting courses in engineering and technology for the first degree, only thirty institutions and departments were under the purview of the Commission. The Commission appointed a committee on postgraduate engineering education and research with Prof. M.S. Thacker in the Chair. Its recommendations led to the introduction of postgraduate courses of two years' duration at various universities. The Third Plan laid special emphasis on the training of personnel in different fields and at various stages of engineering and technological studies together with the provision of suitable facilities for this purpose.

In the field of agricultural education, there were six universities constituted by Acts of State Legislative functioning in the country. The Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) at New Delhi was recognized as a deemed university in 1958. By 1963-64, there were forty-eight agricultural colleges functioning in the country. Emphasis was laid in the Third Five-Year Plan on education in agriculture and veterinary sciences at the university level. In 1963-64, the UGC appointed a review committee under the chairmanship of Prof. A.C. Joshi, Vice-Chancellor, Punjab University, to examine problems relating to the improvement of agricultural education. Another allied important initiative was the appointment of a committee to examine the scope and standard of education imparted in institutes of rural higher education.

In an effort to raise the standards of science education in colleges, the Commission established a College Science Improvement Programme (COSIP) in 1969-70 to bring about a qualitative improvement of teaching in the physical, biological and mathematical sciences in predominantly undergraduate colleges. The programme was undertaken at two levels. One, assistance was provided to some select colleges for better methods of instruction, laboratory equipment and workshop facilities, refresher courses for teachers, project work and special training for gifted students. Then, assistance was provided to some select university departments for development of improved

courses of study and curriculum material, organization of orientation courses for college teachers, development of workshop facilities and teaching aids and inviting selected teachers to spend an academic year with a university department and to encourage them to undertake research. Later, this scheme was also extended to the Humanities.

International Collaborations

Collaborations and exchange programmes with other countries in all areas of learning was an outstanding feature of this decade. Once put in place, they became a permanent feature of Indian higher education and served to put India on the world map in this area. The UGC played an important role in facilitating such international collaborations. For example, in addition to the grants provided by the UGC, centres for science subjects received substantial assistance under the United Nations Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance for the purchase of specialized equipment, training of Indian scholars in the former Soviet Union and for obtaining the services of Soviet scientists for short periods of time.

A similar gesture came from UNESCO who provided grants worth \$4,50,000 for equipment required by centres in physics and botany at Madras University, in physics and chemistry at Delhi University, and applied mathematics at Calcutta University. Part of the assistance was also used for the development of the departments of geology and geophysics at Osmania University. The Asia Foundation, USA, pitched in with \$30,000 for equipment and other facilities required for some departments in the humanities and social sciences including some centres of advanced study. Steps were taken to strengthen the teaching and research programmes of centres of advanced study to train teachers of affiliated colleges and acquaint them with new developments and techniques in their field of work. An expert committee was appointed to review and assess the work of each of the centres.

The assistance in the year 1967-68 continued to be mainly from the USSR for equipment, services of experts and training fellowship for Indian scholars and technicians in the USSR. The Committee appointed by UNESCO for evaluating the UNESCO assistance

to centres of advanced study recognized that these centres were effective instruments in the improvement of academic standards in the field of higher education and research. It recommended that small advisory liaison groups should be established to promote greater contact and collaboration between the centres of advanced study in India and institutions of higher learning and research in the USSR. Besides, a separate provision should be made for inviting senior staff members to visit the institutions of the USSR for short periods. Arrangements also had to be put in place for quick exchange of personnel for consultation. Steps were taken to formulate proposals regarding assistance from UNESCO that included the setting up of documentation, instrumentation and computation units as suggested by the evaluation mission.

The Centre for Advanced Study in Radio Physics and Electronics in Calcutta received aid under the Colombo Plan. Sri Lawrence Bragg, Director of the Royal Institution, London along with a number of scientists from other countries attended the seminar conducted by the Centre for Advanced Study in Physics at Madras University. During the same year, Prof. J.E.G. Raymond, Head of the Department of Oceanography and Marine Biology, Southampton University, UK worked at the Marine Biology Centre of Annamalai University and Prof. C. Velayachich, Professor of Philosophy at Zagreb University in former Yugoslavia was associated with the Centre for Philosophy at the Vishwa Bharati University at Shantiniketan. Collaboration and assistance agreements in sociology, linguistics, history, political science, psychology and law were also worked out with the UK and the USA.

The UGC, in collaboration with the Departments of Economic Affairs in the Ministry of Finance and the Ministries of Health, Food and Agriculture, selected Indians for training abroad. It also obtained equipment from abroad and invited foreign specialists to Indian universities. During 1963-64, for example, proposals for inviting sixteen foreign scientists and for sending twenty-one Indian scientists for training abroad were accepted under foreign exchange programmes. Cultural and scientific exchange programmes continued between India and the former Soviet Union and several other countries. The Commission also continued to help universities and colleges with foreign exchange for importing science equipment, journals and other articles required for teaching and research.

As the spread of higher education grew, the UGC felt that it needed more powers to be able to do justice to coordinating and maintaining standards of higher education throughout the country. It, therefore, requested the government in 1964-65 to amend the UGC Act to make it obligatory to get the Commission's approval before opening new universities. The MPs' committee on higher education (known as the Sapru Committee) had already recommended that the UGC Act should have specific provisions that would enable the Commission to consistently refuse to give any financial aid to universities established prior to its consultation. The government, in fact, brought an amendment bill before the Parliament in 1966 in which it proposed that the Commission "shall not" henceforth give any grant to any university "established without the previous approval of the commission and of the central government". The amending bill was introduced by M.C. Chagla in 1966 and passed by the Rajya Sabha but it lapsed with the dissolution of the Lok Sabha. It also contained a provision to revise the composition of the commission by including three full-time members, one of whom was to be elected by the commission as the vice-chairman. It was re-introduced by Triguna Sen in 1968, and piloted by him and V.K.R.V. Rao when the Amendment Act, 1970 was passed. However, the Ministry of Education discovered later that there would be difficulties in enforcing the Amendment Act and another Amending Bill was introduced in 1972 by Nurul Hasan, the then education minister, replacing the earlier Amending Act of 1970. He was more fortunate than his predecessors to see it through. The Amended Act provided for the revised composition of the Commission that included the Vice-Chairman to be nominated by the central government. It also enabled delegation of powers to the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and other officers to enable the UGC to carry out its functions. Further, a provision was included to enable the UGC to give grants to such universities and colleges that were declared fit for such purposes. According to the Amended Act, the UGC could disburse grants to institutions deemed to be universities for maintenance in special cases and for their development together with any other general or specified purpose that the Commission might think fit. Thus, some steps were taken to make the Commission more effective in the rapidly expanding scene of higher education.

CHAPTER IV

The Initiatives for Consolidation (1973-1983)

The decade of 1973-1983 saw the end of the Fourth Five-Year Plan in 1974, the planning and implementation of the Fifth Five-Year Plan (1974-1978), as also the planning for the Sixth Five-Year Plan (1980-1985). The UGC had three chairpersons during this period: George Jacob (1973-1974), Satish Chandra (1976-1981), and Madhuri R. Shah (1981-1986). Following the Amendment of the UGC Act in 1972, the post of a Vice-Chairman was created and Satish Chandra became the first occupant of the post.

If the decade preceding this one was a period of rapid expansion, then this was a decade of consolidation. The rate of increase in enrolment dropped to an average of about 5 per cent per annum compared to the previous decade when it had averaged about 11 per cent per annum. This was because of the introduction of the three-year degree course. Of course, the higher secondary system was to increase by one year, so as to make it twelve years of schooling. This gave the Commission some breathing space to consolidate and prepare itself to launch fresh initiatives. Also, some new path-breaking steps were taken.

As the Commission looked back at the three decades of its existence and the growth of higher education in India, it saw the need to emphasize three points. The first was concerned with the enrolment in higher education as a proportion to the relevant age group. This was hardly adequate, in spite of the unprecedented growth in higher education during the past decades.

The second point which the UGC emphasized was that although there was need to regulate expansion in view of limited resources, it was not easy to deny expansion altogether. The weaker sections of society looked upon higher education as the principal means for vertical, social and economic mobility. Therefore, to deny them access

to higher education would be against all canons of social justice and equity.

Third, the Commission felt, it would not be proper to determine the demand for education from the point of view of the labour market alone. Due consideration had to be given to the social, cultural and humanistic aspects of education as well.

The development of higher education in India thus faced the challenge of quantity versus quality and of finding a way that would best achieve an acceptable balance between the two demands. Concerted efforts, careful educational planning, coordination of resources and constant vigil were required to achieve this objective. It also called for dynamic action, identification of genuine priorities, regional needs and, above all, the determination of what constituted relevance and excellence in higher education.

The Fifth Plan

As the Fourth Plan came to a close, the Commission appointed a planning group to determine priorities and programmes for the Fifth Plan in relation to requirements of higher education, national development and social change. As a general principle, it was felt that during the Fifth Plan, the emphasis should be on consolidation and strengthening of existing departments while giving the right orientation. The main focus of the Fifth Plan should be on improvement of quality and maintenance of standards. To that end, universities should outline the steps to be taken for examination reforms, provision of greater autonomy to departments with regard to syllabi, courses of study assessment and examinations. They should encourage their staff to make the maximum use of faculty improvement programmes such as summer schools, seminars, national associateships, faculty exchange, teacher fellowships and others. They should also try to develop extension programmes on a part-time basis in order to extend their knowledge and skills to the local community. Such programmes could be organized in collaboration with voluntary agencies, industries and other independent bodies.

Further, postgraduate teaching should be consolidated as far as possible in university departments or in postgraduate centres set up

by the university or through a coordinated programme by groups of colleges or in postgraduate departments of well-established colleges. Postgraduate departments should not be started in colleges where they were not viable and the need for increasing seats in postgraduate departments should be properly assessed.

It was felt that instead of starting new programmes, the existing ones should be consolidated, and they should be given a stronger research base. Collaborative interdisciplinary programmes of study and research involving several departments should be developed and those departments and centres that took the initiative to create new types of postgraduate and research programmes, particularly related to national and regional needs, should be given priority. In the same way, efforts should also be made to develop pre-Ph.D. courses so as to make training for the Ph.D. broad-based. On the equipment side of things, it was felt that measures for instrumentation and other experimental facilities in universities with adequate provision for maintenance and repair should be coordinated to ensure their maximum use.

As far as undergraduate colleges were concerned, it was the responsibility of the universities to bring them up to an optimal level of functioning so that they could maintain proper standards and simultaneously relate their educational activities to both local and regional relevance. Efforts had to be made to remove regional imbalances while at the same time create opportunities for higher education both for the underprivileged sections of society and those in underdeveloped areas in each region. Special emphasis should be laid on supplementary programmes and courses to help students from Scheduled Castes and Tribes and from other underprivileged communities to enable them to overcome their initial handicap. Universities should pay special attention to the structure and content of courses in colleges located in rural areas. The Commission also envisaged the establishment of academic centres to meet the needs of a group of colleges in big cities.

The Commission classified the programmes for higher education in the Fifth Plan into two categories: programmes for which the universities would be required to formulate detailed proposals and programmes relating to certain schemes that the Commission might wish to initiate in the universities on a selective basis. In the former

category would be proposals for further development of teaching and research in the existing university departments; introducing new specializations or areas of study; programmes of reform such as modernization of courses giving specific orientation to research activities; workshops and other central maintenance facilities; general amenities for staff and students such as hostels, residential quarters, students' study centres and others; and health centres.

In the latter category, the University Grants Commission could also introduce schemes and programmes on a selective basis such as the College Science Improvement Programme (COSIP) or the College Social Sciences and Humanities Improvement Programme (COSSHIP); autonomous colleges; examination reforms; scholarships and fellowships; grants for support of individuals, groups and departmental research programmes; area studies; museums; and adult and continuing education programmes.

In the Fifth Five-Year Plan, the UGC decided that social justice required that provision of hostel facilities be given priority. This was especially in view of the Commission's policy of restraining the establishment of new colleges and universities. In this context, the Commission reiterated its earlier decision that all educational institutions would be required to reserve 20 per cent of the seats in the hostels for students belonging to Scheduled Castes and Tribes. Residential facilities were found to be important for ensuring access to higher education to the underprivileged sections of society. To make this goal a reality, the Commission decided to bear 75 per cent of the expenditure for hostels in backward areas as against 50 per cent in other areas.

Apart from student welfare, the UGC had always attached great importance to faculty improvement programmes. It provided opportunities to teachers to keep abreast of modern developments in their fields of study and research and to exchange ideas with experts in similar or related fields. The focus for improving standards was the upgrading of the professional competence of teachers, making them better equipped to initiate and carry out high quality instructional programmes. With these ends in view, the Commission decided to provide financial support for several programmes during the Fifth Five-Year Plan. In order to get a quantum effect, these programmes were to be implemented simultaneously.

Among the programmes was university leadership projects, refresher and short-term courses each of about six weeks in duration during holidays and summer vacation; refresher courses through correspondence, with a two-week contact programme for laboratory or allied work; all India advanced level institutes in specialized topics or subjects; English language teaching institutes on an all India level with programmes of approximately six weeks' duration; fellowships for teachers in affiliated colleges in which living allowances would be given in addition to their salaries when they went to outstation centres to carry out higher studies and research, one year national associateships with provision to visit specialized laboratories or institutions for research work over a period of eight to twelve weeks; and seminars, symposia and conferences.

The Sen Committee

A Committee was set up under the chairmanship of S.N. Sen, the then Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University, to examine the question of prescribing the minimum qualifications for lecturers in faculties other than arts, science, and social sciences, including commerce. This should also apply for teachers in foreign languages and in subjects in which facilities for Ph.D. were not available. The Committee was also to recommend new pay scales for teachers. The Committee, while looking at these problems, also examined most of the issues related to higher education, contending that no problem could be viewed in isolation and its solution found. There were inter-linkages that could not be ignored. The Committee submitted its report in 1974.

The Sen Committee emphasized that the teacher was the pivot on which the whole system of education turned. Hence, it devoted more time and space to issues pertaining to teachers, their problems, facilities, qualifications, remuneration, professional development and other aspects. The Committee laid great stress on the need to improve the functions and professional competence of the teaching faculty. Since there was a tremendous explosion of knowledge, particularly in the fields of science, technology and social sciences, it was the duty of all teachers and especially those working in institutions of higher

education and research to ensure that the vast increase of knowledge was made available to their students.

Teachers had two prime functions – to discover and to disseminate. Therefore, they must constantly engage themselves in research that was useful to society. They should encourage their students to do research and guide them properly, using new techniques and suitable methodology. Every profession was expected to maintain certain standards and the society had a right to demand these from the teaching community. A teacher was normally expected to have academic excellence, human sympathy and interest in his work and environment. The Committee felt that during the early part of a teacher's career, he should be exposed to some training in methods of teaching human psychology; problems of students; organization and management of higher education and its role in contemporary society.

The Sen Committee linked the issue of salaries to the improvement in the qualifications of teachers and said that a mere Master's degree was not enough for the selection of a lecturer. There should be teaching or research or advanced study qualifications beyond the postgraduate degree as was found in developed countries.

This was not only a radical and crucial reform but also a very worthwhile one. For such a reform, the UGC would have to undertake major programmes for providing training in collaboration with the universities at suitable centres. The Commission agreed that with the improved scales of lecturers in universities and colleges, it was essential that a candidate for the post of a lecturer should at least have a good academic record with a first or a high second in the Master's degree. In addition, an M. Phil or a Ph.D. or equivalent published work of high standard was necessary. The Commission felt that in the coming years, candidates should normally possess both the essential and desirable qualifications. However, if an institution was unable to find a person with the desirable qualifications, it should ensure that he or she attained them within Five-Years of the appointment failing which the person should not be given further increments till he/she had obtained the qualification.

The Sen Committee visualized three methods of appointment of teachers in universities: open recruitment; open selection

and appointment after at least six years of service on the basis of outstanding work; and promotion after reaching the maximum limit provided by a scale. Mechanisms for making these appointments were recommended. The Committee wanted a statutory state machinery to be set up for all universities.

Significantly, the Commission did not accept a statutory state body for selection but said that each university should constitute its own selection committee with outside experts for selection of teachers, the constitution of which may be prescribed by the statutes. Recruitment to all categories — lecturers, readers and professors should be strictly on merit on the basis of an all-India advertisement and selection. The Commission reiterated its earlier view that no reservation should be made for Scheduled Castes and Tribes for appointment to the posts of teachers in universities and colleges. In addition, the committee suggested the idea of Professor of Eminence and recommended that they be paid salaries equivalent to that of directors of national laboratories.

The Sen Committee also considered the issue of the recruitment of lecturers in affiliated colleges. It felt that since the scales of pay being recommended for college and university lecturers were almost similar, it was essential that the mode of recruitment of college teachers should be such that it inspired confidence. The Committee suggested some alternatives with regard to the process of recruitment of teachers in affiliated colleges. The first suggestion was that a Joint University Commission be set up by the state for their appointment. The second was a University Committee; and the third, a college-based selection committee. The Commission accepted the third alternative.

The Sen Committee opened up avenues for promotion of teachers in universities. It recommended that a lecturer or a reader who had completed six years of service and not only fulfilled the minimum qualifications but had also done outstanding work could offer himself/herself for assessment by a duly constituted selection committee of the university. The candidate would be given the next scale if found suitable for promotion, as well as the rank which should be personal to him or her. In case he/she was not found suitable, he/she could offer himself/herself again after a period of three years. Since a promotion would be personal to the candidate, the workload

would be so arranged that it would not involve the appointment of additional staff.

The UGC accepted the concept of 'personal promotions' but felt that the number of posts available for 'personal promotion' should be limited to 25 per cent of the sanctioned posts in the cadre of lecturers to readers and 50 per cent for readers to professors. It was said that a teacher asking for assessment must prepare a report of the work done by him/her in the previous six years that should be circulated to the experts in advance.

The Sen Committee was responsible for recommending the posts of readers and professors in select affiliated undergraduate and postgraduate colleges on the basis of prescribed criteria. It, however, felt that persons appointed to these posts should have the same qualifications as those in universities and have the same facilities of assessment for promotion to higher grades. The Commission endorsed the recommendations of the Sen Committee that posts of readers and professors should be created in select undergraduate and postgraduate colleges and preferably in autonomous colleges. The qualifications and the mode of recruitment to these posts should be the same as prescribed for the corresponding posts in the university departments. As a first step, the Commission decided to institute posts of readers during the Fifth Plan period on the condition that after the Commission's assistance ceased on April 1, 1979, colleges or state governments would take over the cost as committed expenditure. Other issues that were taken up were the mode of evaluation of teachers; their working conditions including the period of probation; security of service; age of superannuation and retirement benefits; examination work; and code of professional conduct.

The Commission, by and large, accepted the Sen Committee's recommendations, which said that university mechanisms should be put into place to protect the interests of teachers. The superannuation age was fixed at 60 years and the Commission felt that no further extension in service should be given. It was left to the university to decide the number of classes that a teacher was expected to take but it had to be ensured that he or she was available to his students for at least twenty hours a week in the department in a suitable manner. Further, a teacher should not do more than three hours of formal

lecturing in a day so as to ensure effective teaching. However, the Commission was of the view that there should be no remuneration for examination work, including invigilation within the university. The code of conduct for the teaching faculty was left primarily to the academic community.

The revision of pay scales of teachers on the basis of the Sen Committee report formed an important part of the Commission's programme to induct more qualified teachers into the teaching profession. Simultaneously, the UGC prescribed higher qualifications for appointment of teachers in the subjects in arts, science and commerce in universities and colleges. The UGC also launched a major programme of faculty improvement. Part of this was the institution of an award of teacher fellowships to provide opportunities to college teachers to undertake postgraduate research leading to M. Phil and Ph.D. The selected teachers were entitled to their full salary for a period of one to three years together with a certain allowance as living expenditure. Career awards to young scientists were also instituted. The purpose was to identify talent and provide sufficient facilities for research work.

Review Committee on the UGC

In pursuance of the recommendation made by the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament in its 114th report, the Government of India appointed a committee under V.S. Jha on August 31, 1974 to review the functioning of the UGC, with particular reference to coordination and determination of standards of higher education, and to recommend how it could discharge its responsibilities more effectively. The Committee first submitted an interim report on May 4, 1974 and later a comprehensive report in 1977. According to the committee, the UGC felt inhibited in performing its functions relating to coordination and determination of standards in higher education effectively as the states had full authority to establish and maintain universities without involving the Commission. The result was that in actual practice these remained the concern of the states and did not receive national attention. Therefore, the committee in its interim report recommended that higher education be brought on

the Concurrent List. It also stressed that laws, rules and regulations necessary for maintenance of standards should also be applicable to minority institutions without interfering with their right to establish and administer them according to their choice under Article 30 (1) of the Constitution. It further emphasized that there was need to take suitable legislative measures either by amending the UGC Act or through fresh legislation to ensure that higher educational institutions conformed to certain nationally applicable norms relating to coordination and standards.

The Committee suggested some legislative provisions that could be enacted. One was that the President of India should be advised by the UGC and be the Visitor of all universities in the country. His/her prior approval should be required for the enactment of all acts and statutes of universities particularly with reference to determination, coordination and maintenance of standards. He/she should then have the power to issue directions to all universities in the country on these matters. Appointments of Vice-Chancellors of all universities should be subject to the prior approval of the Visitor. Other recommendations made by the committee were pertaining to the UGC itself. It wanted the Commission to have six more members. The name of University Grants Commission might more appropriately be changed to University Education Commission. Its functions should include activities relating to the development of standards and coordination in respect of all universities and colleges in the country. It should be entrusted with the task of research, planning and evaluation of higher education. The Commission should be particularly authorized to evolve a system of accreditation of university departments and colleges. It should by law be given the power to recommend to the government the de-recognition of a degree of a university on grounds of lack of standards in the same way that the Indian Medical Council was empowered in respect of medical colleges.

In pursuance of its activities, the Commission should be able to advance loans for buildings to universities and colleges. The annual report of the Commission should, besides giving a true and full account of activities, also present before Parliament, problems and perspectives of higher education together with the situation in regard to coordination and standards in universities and colleges. The annual reports should be circulated to all universities and state governments.

The Commission should report separately on maintenance activities in respect of central universities and their affiliated colleges together with other institutions to which it might have given maintenance grants. In addition, it should report on the developmental activities of all universities. It was found that regulations in respect of maintenance of standards and coordination of work with regard to facilities in the universities, the minimum standards of instructions for grant of degrees, the delegation of powers within the Commission and such other matters had not been framed till then. The committee suggested that all rules and regulations envisaged under the UGC Act should be framed expeditiously in the light of experience that had been gained.

The Committee saw the task of the UGC, as divided into two broad categories, viz. educational planning and policy and administration and grants. The secretariat of the Commission, therefore, needed to be re-organized to make it more effective. The Committee felt that the Commission should have two broad divisions. One division would deal with research, planning and evaluation, that is, functions with regard to academic matters; and the other with the disbursal of grants, account keeping, establishment and housekeeping functions. The administrative and accounts division would have to be headed by the Secretary and the Academic Planning and Policy division by an academician with expertise in planning. The head of planning and policy division would also have to take charge of research and evaluation and be able to advise the Commission independently. He/she was not supposed to be a member of the Commission but an expert advisor to it and to the Chairman and directly answerable to him/her. He/she should have access to the meetings of the Commission to enable him/her to function effectively. His/her salary and prerequisites were to be the same as the Vice-Chairman. An appropriate designation was to be given to him/her. The Secretary of the Commission, on the other hand, would have to be primarily an administrator with interest in and experience of higher educational administration. Suitable individuals selected from a wide range of eligible persons should fill both the posts of the Secretary and the Head of the Planning Division, the Committee felt, on tenure basis.

Development of Higher Education in India: A Policy Frame

With a view to implementing the national goal of making education an instrument of social change, the UGC prepared two documents in 1977-78 – “Approach to Development of Higher Education” and “A Policy Frame” for a time span of ten to fifteen years. This was finalized towards the close of the year 1977-78 and circulated to the universities for discussion by students and teachers. They were considered and endorsed at the two conferences of the Vice Chancellors held in May and July 1978.

Following this, and to implement the policy framework, five working groups were set up to identify appropriate programmes which would have the necessary impact on the university system. These were extension, including optimal use of vacation; criteria for evaluation of colleges, role and responsibility of teachers; regulation of admissions and facilities to be provided to enable the weaker sections of society to take advantage of the facilities for higher education; and introduction of regional languages as the medium of instruction.

The first working group dealt with adult education and extension programmes. It recommended that these programmes should have three components: adult education of which literacy was an essential part; community service; and educational extension. Assistance was to be provided up to Five-Years for the implementation of the approved projects by the universities and colleges.

The second working group for the evaluation of colleges recommended that not only should they be intensively and continuously evaluated, but they should also be encouraged to evaluate themselves.

The third group, working on the role and responsibilities of teachers suggested a series of regional workshops to consider some vital issues in detail as they had a direct bearing on the functioning of educational institutions and on higher education as a whole. A few of these were the structure of decision-making in the university system; selection of teachers, especially in colleges; role and responsibilities of teachers with special reference to work load; and a system of assessment and accountability.

The fourth working group was for the regulation of student admissions and facilities to be provided to the weaker sections of society. It made several important recommendations. It analysed the decline in enrolment in several courses. Also, noting the existence of a large number of non-viable colleges, it suggested that no new college should be established for the following Five-Years bearing in mind the infrastructure facilities that had already been created. Further, the Commission should make a detailed study of the terms and conditions as laid down by different universities for affiliation of colleges and formulate appropriate guidelines to be uniformly adopted by universities and state governments.

While granting affiliation, the universities must make sure to determine the intake capacity of each course, department or college keeping in view the availability of academic and physical resources. If there was constant pressure for admission to certain courses and the requisite facilities were not available, the demand should be met through alternative means like the institution of correspondence courses and allowing students to appear privately. Even in the existing institutions, where there were more applicants than seats, reservations should be made for students belonging to the backward or weaker sections of society.

The fifth working group recommended the introduction of regional languages as the medium of instruction keeping in view the increasing number of students that were opting for them. It discussed in some detail the constraints in the speedy switch over from English to the regional languages especially when it came to their use as the language of examinations. But it also felt that it was necessary to bridge the gap between students educated in English medium schools and those from schools where the medium of instruction was Hindi or a regional language. Efforts, therefore, should be made to turn out students who were effectively bilingual. On the recommendations of the working group, the Commission agreed to assist universities in preparing reading material, organizing remedial courses and summer institutes for teachers in regional languages.

These recommendations were circulated to the universities for their guidance. They also helped the UGC to implement or strengthen measures already taken along these lines and to formulate its policies

and programmes for universities and colleges in the Sixth Plan period.

Review Committee on UGC Programmes

The year 1979-80 was important. It was the end of the Fifth Plan and the beginning of the Sixth Plan. The fundamental focus, when one Plan drew to a close and preparation for another began was to maintain and further strengthen standards. Hence, on a directive of the Government of India, the UGC appointed a Review Committee in 1979 under Satish Chandra to undertake a comprehensive review of the various programmes being implemented by it and their impact on the fulfilment of its statutory responsibilities. This was the first time that the Commission tried to evaluate the impact of its various ongoing programmes so that their implementation could be suitably reoriented. The Commission saw the review in the nature of a self-appraisal and introspection.

The Committee built upon the recommendations of the Jha Review Committee that had already carried out a critical examination of the structure and functioning of the UGC. It was thought that it would be useful to the Commission, as also to universities and colleges to critically assess their achievements and failures with respect to standards of teaching and research, strengthening of their academic infrastructure and their organizational set up. The report submitted in 1981 highlighted the urgent need of monitoring at various levels and of greater interaction between the UGC and other central agencies, including the government and the state governments as well as universities and colleges throughout the country.

The Committee felt that the UGC had invested a significant portion of its funds on the development of the universities and colleges during the Fourth and Fifth Five-Year Plans and, therefore, it wished to study the impact on a zonal basis. For this a sub-committee was formed which, in turn, formed sub-committees to visit universities and colleges and also suggested that a further in-depth study may be done of the Centres of Advanced Study, the Special Assistance Programmes of university departments, College Science Improvement Programmes and College Humanities and Social Science Improvement

Programmes, Research Fellowships, financial assistance to teachers for research work, etc.

The Committee recommended that the UGC's main objective should be to raise the level of university education first to the highest in the country and then make it comparable to the highest anywhere in the world. It stressed that coordination meant a proper linkage of educational facilities with the resources available for higher education. Given the financial and other inputs, a central agency was in a much better position to determine the areas that should be consolidated and strengthened, and to indicate the directions in which further growth and expansion might take place. Coordination was also to be brought about between maintaining quality through proper consolidation of existing facilities and expansion so that the universities could produce trained personnel who could attend to the development requirements of the country in various fields.

The Committee suggested that the highest priority should be given to improving the academic standards. Regulation of admission and establishment of new institutions was a must. Raising standards would mean faculty development, provision of essential equipment, building and other facilities and organization of an adequate programme of student services. These not only needed investment but, more importantly commitment and competence on the part of teachers. A selective approach, proper planning, and concentration of resources were equally essential to achieve good results. The committee grouped the universities under three categories: well-developed, developing, and universities having the potential to become well-developed in the following Five-Years.

The Committee asserted that it was of utmost importance to take remedial steps to ensure that Plan positions approved by the UGC were filled as expeditiously as possible. It suggested that the universities be asked to supply annual statements regarding teachers in position, including information regarding the number of non-Plan posts lying vacant, the duration for which these posts remained vacant and the reasons for this. In order to attract teachers of high calibre and to retain their services, it was necessary to make adequate provision for faculty housing. The Commission, therefore, should give attention not only to academic buildings but also to faculty housing. It

recommended that libraries be given adequate attention. At the same time, equipment that was lying idle should be serviced properly so that it remained functional over a long period of time. Universities should also assume responsibility for meeting the demand for properly trained personnel for various computer centres at different levels. Further, summer institutes, seminars, etc. should be organized after adequate preparation and well-documented papers become available.

The programme could also be linked with the restructuring of courses, curricular reforms and other innovations. Scholarships and fellowships should be awarded to enable academically bright students to continue with their research as an independent and full-time activity. The committee reiterated the need for granting funds for publication of scholarly research works and doctoral theses. It commended the Commission's role in making a shift from cultural exchange programmes to the development of bilateral academic links in identified fields. On the basis of the report of the review committee, the Commission in 1981-82 agreed that in the case of Centres of Advanced Study and Research that had already been assisted for a period of fifteen years, the type of assistance given for future activities must be related to specific well-formulated projects to be considered on merit keeping in view the suggestions made after their evaluation by the Evaluation Committees set up for this purpose. On the question of College Science Improvement Programmes and College Humanities and Social Sciences Improvement Programmes, a Standing Committee was appointed to advise the Commission in these areas as also in engineering and technology.

Autonomous Colleges

Several important changes in college education began to take place from 1973 onwards. Among them, one of the most radical was a proposal, together with the guidelines and criteria, for the establishment or recognition of autonomous colleges. The UGC accepted it at its meeting held on September 10, 1973 and worked out a pattern of assistance to be provided to them. Autonomy did not mean autonomy for the management but freedom in academic matters such as the framing of courses, methods of teaching, evaluation and others.

The concept of autonomous colleges represented a complete departure from the existing university structure and system. College education that catered to more than 80 per cent of students in higher education at the university level did not enjoy any academic freedom because of the prevailing affiliating system. The Education Commission (1964-66) regarded the exercise of academic freedom and promotion of scholarship on the part of teachers as crucial to the development of the intellectual climate in the country. It felt that all attempts at reform of university education through curriculum development and changes in the system of examination and promotion of research as well as its subsequent feedback into the teaching process had been defeated in the last few years because higher education institutions did not enjoy academic autonomy and the university structures were very rigid leaving little or no room for creativity or innovation.

Once the Commission accepted the concept of autonomous colleges, it followed it up with a specific request to the universities to send proposals for recognizing colleges as autonomous institutions. A provision had to be made in the University Act before it could grant the autonomous status to a college affiliated to it. Universities were requested to move the concerned state governments to make the necessary amendments in the Acts and incorporate the provision for autonomous colleges. A number of universities made such a provision in their Acts. Ranchi University, for example, conferred the autonomous status on the Birla Institute of Technology. The scheme of autonomous colleges was further refined in 1976-77 with the help of an expert committee. After consulting a number of principals and educationists, the Commission finalized a set of criteria, guidelines and pattern of assistance to autonomous colleges that would help the affiliating university to take suitable action in this respect with its relevant bodies. The Commission immediately recognized some colleges as autonomous colleges and Commission also agreed to provide each of these colleges with a non-lapsable grant of Rs. 2,00,000 for a period of Five-Years. Seventy-five per cent of the grant could be used for academic activities and the balance of 25 per cent for the required administrative support arising out of the autonomous status. By 1982-83, a grant of Rs. 31,72,000 was disbursed to such institutions.

Affiliated and Other Colleges

While the Commission favoured the scheme for autonomous colleges, it also recognized that the system of affiliated colleges, which was peculiar to India, had a crucial role to play in the university system especially in the maintenance and coordination of standards. A bulk of the student population, particularly at the first degree level, was enrolled in the colleges and a fair proportion of teachers were also working in them. Of the total enrolment of students, 87.9 per cent was at the undergraduate level, 55.3 per cent at the postgraduate level, and 15.1 per cent at the research level was in affiliated colleges. Almost 80 per cent of teachers too, were employed in them. It was therefore, vital for standards to be maintained and special attention had to be paid to them.

The Commission continued, through the Fourth Plan period, to provide the usual assistance to undergraduate colleges on a sharing basis for library and laboratory facilities, equipment, construction of classrooms and lecture theatres, workshops, non-resident students' centres, residential accommodation for staff and student hostels, tube wells, overhead tanks, cycle sheds and other such infrastructural requirements. Further, it not only continued to provide financial support for the development of postgraduate studies in colleges and attached high priority to them, it also substantially raised their level during the Fourth Plan period.

However, a resource crunch was beginning to be felt in higher education and the Commission recognized that financial resources for higher education would be limited in the Fifth Plan. Hence, it was essential that the development needs of the colleges affiliated to the universities were identified with great care. This limited resource could then be optimally used by these institutions for programmes likely to make an appreciable impact on the improvement of standards. The way ahead was through the modernization and rationalization as well as through diversification of undergraduate programmes in the humanities, social sciences, sciences and commerce.

At the same time, there was also a realization that since for the majority of students, the first degree was the terminal degree, it was important that the first degree courses offered, by and large, in affiliated colleges

should be adequately strengthened, diversified and made relevant to the fast changing needs of society. Such diversification should be related to local, regional and national needs, utilization of natural resources and linked to employment opportunities.

The Commission, accordingly, gave special consideration to the question of the restructuring of university courses at the first degree level to give them a practical or field orientation so as to make them more relevant to both the rural environment of the country and to the developmental needs of the community. The Commission was of the view that special attention should be paid to the existing courses to orient them towards rural problems so that a completely different channel for such studies would not have to be created. It selected eighteen universities for experimentation in this area.

1976-77 was a year of great unrest amongst the students and teachers in universities and colleges. Agitations led to loss of life and property that affected academic life and disrupted studies. Examinations were repeatedly postponed in many universities. This created a strong desire to make changes in the educational system. In order to channelize the enthusiasm of the young into constructive purposes, the UGC prepared guidelines for programmes of rural development, community service and adult education with special emphasis on adult literacy, extension services and related areas.

The Commission accepted several important recommendations of the Standing Advisory Committee in 1977-78 on the development of colleges. It advised that a district with five or less arts, science and commerce colleges should be treated as backward and grants should be given accordingly to colleges situated in such districts. Colleges that had a minimum enrolment of two hundred students in the three-year degree course and a hundred and fifty in the two-year degree course could be given assistance for books, journals, equipment, faculty improvement programmes and remedial courses but not for construction of buildings. Colleges with an enrolment of over one thousand students in degree classes would, in addition to financial assistance, be encouraged to move towards an autonomous status.

Again, evening colleges, too, could be assisted with grants for books, journals, equipment, appointment of additional staff and faculty improvement programmes but not buildings. A women's college,

especially if it happened to be the only one in the district, might be provided development assistance according to the merits of each case.

The Commission accepted that in the interest of maintaining standards of education, colleges must be persuaded to make the most of permanent teachers. In the case of government colleges, it should be ensured that frequent transfer of teachers did not take place and generally a teacher should not be moved except on promotion or for specific administrative reasons. Also, since in these colleges, recruitment and confirmation of a teacher took quite some time, the state government should give a reasonable assurance that a specified number of teachers in the college had been appointed on a regular long-term basis and were likely to be made permanent in due course of time.

The same procedure could be considered for private colleges where the entire staff salary was paid directly by the government. Non-viable colleges situated in talukas and tehsils might be encouraged to merge. No new college should be established except for academic considerations and only after the area had been surveyed by the concerned university or the state government. Further, faculty improvement programmes needed to be implemented by all colleges and universities. This would have a bearing upon the necessity of teachers being allowed to benefit from these schemes.

It was desirable to create professorships in colleges in certain select subjects keeping in view that a few teachers who had chosen to remain in colleges had done some outstanding research. Remedial teaching, especially in mathematics and languages was also to be formulated. Modalities were worked out for providing assistance for buildings, equipment and books.

Additionally, in June 1976, the Commission decided to identify one or two colleges in each district as lead colleges. These would be assisted in procuring optimal facilities required to maintain proper standards. An institution identified as a lead college should have good student enrolment together with a good student-teacher ratio and proper facilities so that it had the potential to undertake innovative academic programmes on the principles of diversification, relevance and flexibility in relation to the local, regional and national needs.

Further, the Commission continued to assist the development of single faculty colleges like Teacher Training Colleges, Colleges of Physical Education, Colleges of Home Science, Fine Arts, Music, Social Work and others. The Commission also continued its assistance for improvement of facilities like the development of playfields and other student requirements. Since upgrading of educational institutions was a continuous process it was decided to help even those institutions in the Fifth Plan that had already been helped in the Fourth Plan. Such assistance would also be given for the extension or construction of canteens as well as their furnishing and fittings.

Distance Education

It was observed that student enrolment had dropped by about 6 per cent per annum over the previous decade and stabilized at that level. This was mainly for two reasons — one, the provision of correspondence courses and two, more and more universities permitted students to appear as private candidates in university examinations. The strategy was that roughly 80 per cent of students should be streamed off into non-formal channels such as correspondence courses and self-study.

In order to maintain standards, the Commission, after careful and detailed deliberations, laid down that normally only one university should be permitted to start correspondence courses in a state though smaller states could group together and in bigger states more than one university could be permitted to undertake correspondence courses. It would be desirable for different universities to cooperate with each other in preparing lessons and participation in contact programmes. Further, the Commission was of the view that correspondence courses should be started in only those universities or well-established colleges that had strong teaching and research departments. The Commission emphasized the provision for contact classes, extra-mural lectures and library and other facilities for students enrolled in correspondence classes. Such facilities could also be provided to private students.

In 1979-80, the Commission endorsed an All India Board of Management Studies plan for correspondence courses leading to the degree of Master of Business Administration. A committee of this Board that went into the question of starting the programme,

suggested that it should be supplemented by contact classes at suitable intervals. The total duration of these classes should be twelve weeks, spread over the entire course.

The ambit of correspondence courses was expanded when the UGC allowed the universities to offer correspondence-cum-contact courses leading to a B.Ed. degree. This came about after a state level survey, which showed a great demand for such a course. In any case, there was an acute lack of trained school level teachers. To make these courses attractive, it was decided that no distinction should be made in the degrees awarded through correspondence courses and regular institutions.

Schools and institutes of correspondence courses faced several problems and difficulties in their day-to-day functioning. Hence, the Commission set up a project in 1981 to appraise correspondence education in India. A Standing Committee on Part-time and Own-time Education had been constituted to advise the Commission periodically regarding various steps to be taken for the successful implementation of the programme of correspondence education in universities.

The Committee drew up a set of guidelines to improve the functioning of distance education institutes. These were approved by the Commission and circulated to the universities. They dealt with all the aspects of correspondence education like criteria for admission, duration of courses, preparation and dispatch of instructional material, students' response sheets, personal contact programmes, library services and the staff required to run the programmes effectively. Certain flexibility in the enrolment of students was recommended, that is, students could enrol in a particular subject or subjects without taking a degree. In these cases, they would only be given certificates of the successful completion of their course. Emphasis was placed on the supply of instructional material for home study but it had to be supported and supplemented by personal contact programmes, student responses, library facilities, study centres, radio programmes and audio-visual aids.

Correspondence courses were recognized as a means of enabling the working population and other sections of the community to improve their knowledge and qualification by home study. The Commission

laid down guidelines for the introduction of correspondence courses in 1974-75. They were intended to cater to at least five categories of students; one, those who had to discontinue their formal education because of pecuniary and other circumstances; two, for students in geographically remote areas; three, for those who lived in places from where the pursuit of regular formal higher education was not possible; four, for those who could not find a seat or did not wish to join a regular college or university department, although they had the necessary qualifications to pursue higher education; and five, for those who considered education as a lifelong activity and might wish to either refresh their knowledge in an existing discipline or acquire knowledge in a new area.

In India, Delhi University was the first to establish a School of Correspondence Courses and Continuing Education in July 1962. Facilities for correspondence courses were gradually introduced in other universities as well. By March 1980, twenty-one universities and three deemed university offered correspondence courses.

Adult and Continuing Education

In the same spirit, the Commission tried to strengthen adult and continuing education programmes in the universities by agreeing to provide assistance for the purpose on a 75:25 sharing basis up to a maximum of Rs. 3,00,000 per university during the Fourth Plan period. It also accepted that the programme could include professional courses, courses for human relations, leadership and management skills, general courses and programmes for rural community, cultural activities, training of personnel, and research in adult education.

Recognizing the importance of adult and continuing education, the UGC towards the end of the Fourth Plan, appointed a standing committee on adult and continuing education and accepted several of its recommendations. Adult and continuing education helped to extend to the community around a university or a college the benefits of the intellectual leadership and facilities available in the university. It was also a way of meeting the needs of the expanding universe of knowledge and helping in the understanding and communicating of new ideas and techniques. Such programmes enabled the individual

to fill the gaps in his intellectual and professional knowledge. People, too, had a chance to become increasingly aware of the current problems while professionals could update their knowledge through in-service training and refresher courses. Many courses could lead to diplomas, degrees or certificates and provide training to those who were working or wished to work as administrators, field workers and educators in the field of continuing and community education. Finally, adult and continuing education programmes could study and research the programme itself so that gradually a body of knowledge on the subject was built up. The Commission also requested the universities to incorporate programmes with a major thrust on the weaker and backward sections of society and agreed to assist them in these programmes up to March 1985 on a sharing basis of 75:25 on the condition that state governments would treat this as a committed expenditure thereafter.

The Commission continuously attempted to strengthen adult and continuing education and extension programmes by promoting them as part of its regular research support programme. It also decided to widen the scope of the existing adult education centres to include programmes of continuing education. Further, these programmes, it was felt, should include areas like environmental protection, population education, nutrition, science for the masses and others. Efforts were made to give concrete shape to these programmes as an integral part of the activities of the various departments. State governments, too, would be persuaded to include expenditure on adult and continuing education in the maintenance expenditure of the universities.

Such programmes were considered essential for the universities to establish the necessary linkages with the community and to foster social change through meaningful relationships and interactions that promoted self-reliance and were mutually beneficial. They provided opportunities to disseminate knowledge in all walks of life in different segments of population to enable individuals and groups to fill the gaps in their intellectual growth, increase their professional and technical competence and the understanding of contemporary issues. They could, then, be instrumental in securing the effective participation of all sections of society, especially the underprivileged while simultaneously removing the isolation of higher education and

integrating it into the larger society. They could provide the faculty and students an opportunity to study and sensitize themselves to societal problems and realities experientially and to participate in national development in cooperation with the government.

A number of target groups belonging to the underprivileged sections of society were identified, in particular, women especially in rural and slum areas; Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes; dropouts; unemployed and out-of-school youth; handicapped workers in organized and unorganized sectors; teachers teaching primary and secondary classes and handicapped children; and university students from underprivileged rural groups and urban slums.

The Commission constituted a working group in 1982-83 to review the ongoing programme of adult education and extension and suggest a more comprehensive programme. This group recommended that the adult literacy programme should be implemented through universities be in two phases: the first, to cover the period ending March 31, 1985; and the second ending March 31, 1990.

In the first phase, about 20,000 centres should be organized through universities and colleges. In the second, their number should be raised to at least 50,000. Those universities and colleges situated in districts with literacy levels below the national average, colleges for women, and those in rural, backward and tribal areas would be given priority, particularly in the first phase. The group also recommended that university and college students from the NSS together with other students could be motivated to locate non-school going children and get them admitted to primary schools or in non-formal education centres.

Women's Education

The decade of 1971-72 to 1982-83 also saw a progressive increase in the enrolment of women, from 22.7 per cent in 1971-72 to 24.5 per cent in 1975-76, 27.2 per cent in 1980-81 and 28.5 per cent in 1982-83. There were 211 women's colleges in 1961-62. They increased to 624 in 1981-82. Women's enrolment was mainly in arts, science, education, medicine, agriculture and law but in commerce, engineering,

technology and veterinary sciences it showed only a modest increase and in some cases, actually declined.

The Commission's seriousness in promoting women's education is reflected by the assistance it gave for its development. For example, in the case of women's colleges, the sharing basis for construction is 75:25, that is, UGC's share was 75 per cent and that of the college or the state government was 25 per cent as against 50:50 for other colleges. Similarly, women's colleges were given higher levels of assistance than others. They were also encouraged to start vocational and professional courses like computer science and others through grants and facilities for training. The Commission was of the view that opportunities for vocational training and employment should be open to all women as they were to men.

The Commission placed special emphasis on women's education because it realized that it was a critical input for national development; a key factor in the transformation of character and inculcation of a value system; and in the mobilization of human resources. It was necessary to undertake special programmes and provide special assistance to women's institutions so as to give them equal opportunities of access to educational opportunities that could benefit the majority of women. Women's education also had to be continually reoriented in response to the needs of society and to the demands of the public and private sectors.

Strengthening of Existing Programmes

The Commission had already been continuously initiating and assisting in programmes and projects to meet these objectives. For example, it had started the College Science Improvement Programme in 1970-71 in order to bring about qualitative improvements in the teaching of science at the undergraduate level. The purpose of the programme was to accelerate the development of science capabilities of undergraduate students and to initiate a process of continuous self-renewal. This is brought about through an integrated approach and simultaneous improvements in the subject matter, methods of instruction, syllabi, curricula, laboratory exercise, workshops, library and teaching material.

A reconstituted standing committee on College Science Improvement Programme had also reviewed it in 1982 as also the university leadership project and made several recommendations that the Commission generally accepted. Teaching and other materials had been developed through this programme and they needed to be reproduced in large numbers and made available to colleges and universities. This would involve production and distribution on a commercial scale. Further, there was a need to work out norms of a minimum level for infrastructural facilities for science education such as laboratories, scientific equipment, books and journals, technical supporting staff and others and then these should be used to determine the real inputs required for the college system. Finally, regional conferences should be organized in different regions for bringing together people who had participated in the College Science Improvement Programme and those who had not yet taken it up.

Encouraged by the success of College Science Improvement Programme, the Commission in 1974-75 had extended the programme to the humanities and social sciences. The College Humanities and Social Sciences Improvement Programme aimed at bringing about improvement at the undergraduate level, by using the system of synopsis lectures and other teaching materials, of audio-visual and other teaching aids, tutorials and seminars. Special courses and interdisciplinary programmes had to be introduced together with remedial teaching, field and project work.

Improvement was needed in libraries. A standing committee was set up to advise the Commission on measures for strengthening university and college libraries. In April 1981, the Commission accepted its recommendations that included allowing university libraries to acquire a reprographic unit, periodic weeding out of obsolete materials in the library collections and making teachers of library science also eligible for the award of teacher fellowships. The Commission also considered and accepted in July 1981 the recommendations of the Sub-Committee of the Standing Committee on the Development of University and College Libraries regarding the organization of both short and long-term training programmes for college librarians.

Every two or three years, the Commission constituted panels of experts in various subjects of study and research from universities and other

institutions to advise it on all matters relating to the current status and standards of teaching and research in them; and also to suggest measures for further development of facilities for promoting study at advanced levels. These subject panels periodically reviewed syllabi and courses of study followed by different universities at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels to see whether they were relevant to the regional and national needs and whether an inter-disciplinary approach was being incorporated in their teaching and learning.

Panels of experts in various disciplines in the humanities and social sciences that had been first set up in February 1974 were reconstituted in 1982 and several of them undertook to consider significant steps to be taken. For example, the panel on modern Indian languages stressed the need of opening up new horizons in language learning and teaching, developing correct attitudes towards language learning; and the need for restructuring of language courses so as to make them more application-oriented. It also suggested the restructuring of courses in Hindi with emphasis on simplifying the teaching of the language with audio-visual aids, if necessary, and making them more relevant. Courses in journalism, translation, preparation of manuscripts for publication, lexicography, printing technology, advertising, précis writing and other specialized courses ought to be introduced in the curriculum of language courses to give them a practical orientation.

Several new steps were taken in 1982-83. For example, on the basis of the recommendation of an expert committee, the Commission decided to set up a Nuclear Science Centre as an inter-university national research facility to promote research and advanced studies in related areas of physics, chemistry, biology, medicine and others. A Working Group for Education and Research in Astronomy was constituted to advise the Commission on the direction for the development of the Centre of Advanced Study in Astronomy at Osmania University after the Commission's assistance came to an end after fifteen years. A National Committee on Cosmology and Relativity was also set up on whose recommendations it was decided to organize four summer/winter institutes, one in each different region of the country. The first was held in Calcutta in 1983-84.

In September 1980, the Commission had appointed a Committee to prepare a plan of action on integrated rural development that could

serve as a basis for the follow up activities in various disciplines like economics, sociology, public administration, anthropology and with agencies like the Planning Commission and the Reserve Bank of India. A national level workshop was also organized at the Department of Social Work, Delhi University in November 1982 to discuss the role of universities in the economic, social and technological aspects of rural development. The Rural Development Committee met in November 1982 to finalize its recommendations on the basis of the deliberations of the workshop. The Commission in March 1983 considered these and it was decided to circulate to the universities, general recommendations on their role in rural development to enable them to formulate suitable projects to be undertaken by them.

The Commission also drew up a minimum programme on examination reforms in 1982 that covered two broad aspects: syllabus and question paper; and conduct of examinations. Details were spelt out. The syllabus in each question paper had to be demarcated into well-defined units or areas of content together with a topic-wise break-down. These units had to be numbered. Further, examiners were free to repeat questions set in previous examinations. If there was a choice, it could be provided by alternate questions in each unit of the syllabus. It was stipulated that no examination should be held without the requirement of a minimum number of lectures, tutorials, laboratory sessions and others to be clearly laid down by the universities had been fulfilled. It was left to the universities to take all the steps required for the proper conduct of examinations such as effective security measures, proper supervision and invigilation, cordoning off the examinations centres from the range of loudspeakers and other interference, constitution of flying squads and ensuring that stern action was taken in all cases involving the use of unfair means.

The Reservation Policy

The Commission had always attached great importance to student welfare and continually supported projects related to non-resident students' centres, canteens, hostels and study centres, student aid funds and book banks. The UGC now began to look at the problems of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students. A Committee on

the welfare of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students recommended that statistics regarding reservation of seats for such students should be collected from all the universities and published in the annual reports of the UGC. Further, a separate cell with adequate staff should be created to ensure the implementation of the reservation orders for the Scheduled Castes and Tribes.

In 1973, the Ministry of Education had issued guidelines regarding reservation of seats for students from Scheduled Castes and Tribes in universities and colleges. Twenty per cent of the seats were to be reserved for these students and they were to be also given a concession of 5 per cent marks in the minimum percentage of marks required for admission to any course. It was later observed that even with these concessions, some seats in the reserved quota remained unfilled due to paucity of eligible candidates. Accordingly, it was suggested that where seats in this quota remained available, a further relaxation in marks could be given to them and seats filled in order of merit among the students in this category. Special cells were to be created in the universities to ensure the implementation of the orders regarding reservation.

Since reservation policies were not being implemented satisfactorily by all the universities, they were once again requested to do so and they were asked in April 1976 to follow the guidelines and intimate the latest position in this regard. It was found that only forty-four universities had strictly followed the instructions issued by the Government of India and of these, eighteen had made provision for relaxation of 5 per cent marks for the Scheduled Caste and Tribe students. In forty-five universities, reservation of seats varied from 3 to 33 per cent and fifteen universities had not provided for any reservation although they had acknowledged the difficulties being experienced by students belonging to these categories with regard to admission to various courses.

A Committee was set up by the UGC in 1980-81 to prepare a document regarding the facilities for the Scheduled Caste and Tribes at the higher education level and to identify the special measures to be taken to ensure that the facilities as prescribed by the Government of India were being actually made available to them. These related to admission to various courses, employment to teaching and non-teaching posts and

other facilities and concessions. The UGC was committed to provide special facilities for the weaker sections in the Sixth Plan and decided to give a hundred per cent assistance for this purpose.

Further, 20 per cent of the seats were to be reserved in hostels, irrespective of whether the hostel had been constructed with the assistance of the Commission or from other sources. These were revised to 22.5 per cent in 1982-83, 15 per cent going to the Scheduled Castes and 7.5 per cent to the Scheduled Tribes. Further concessions were 10 per cent reservation in junior research fellowships. In addition, fifty junior research fellowships in science, humanities and social sciences were created in 1980-81 for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Similar reservations were made in post-doctoral fellowships, research associateships, postgraduate scholarships, and research fellowships in engineering and technology and in postgraduate scholarships for full-time LL.M. courses.

In addition, the Commission instituted twenty post-doctoral fellowships and twenty research associateships exclusively for the Scheduled Caste and Tribe candidates in 1980-81. In addition, the Commission instituted twenty post-doctoral fellowships and the same number of associateships exclusively for Scheduled Castes and Tribes in 1980-1981. Also, twenty-five scholarships were to be awarded every year to students belonging to the Scheduled Tribes of border hill areas for undertaking postgraduate studies in science, humanities and social sciences. Preference was given to those who intended to pursue studies in subjects relevant to the problems of border hill areas.

Apart from these, instruction pertaining to recruitment in teaching posts for candidates for Scheduled Castes and Tribes were also sent to the universities. In the Sixth Plan, the Commission decided that arts, science, commerce and multi-faculty colleges located in tribal areas, with at least five permanent teachers and a minimum of hundred students at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels, of whom at least thirty-five belonged to the Scheduled Castes and Tribes category, would be considered for assistance up to Rs 4,00,000. Colleges with larger enrolments could receive up to Rs.5,00,000 provided that at least 20 per cent of their students belonged to the Scheduled Castes and Tribes.

It was only in the Sixth Plan that the government accepted the recommendations of the standing committee regarding a sub-plan

for students of the Scheduled Tribes and a special component plan for the scheduled castes drawn up by a working group constituted by the Commission. The main objective was to intensify efforts and to improve the position of actual admissions and appointments in respect of those belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Tribes. In view of the importance of the educational programmes for Scheduled Castes and Tribes and the need to accelerate these in the context of the Twenty-Point programme announced by the Government of India, the Commission accepted the recommendations of the Committee and decided to provide complete financial assistance to the universities during the Sixth Plan period for the creation of special cells to strengthen the implementation machinery for planning, evaluation and monitoring the programmes for Scheduled Castes and Tribes.

Journal/Bulletin of Higher Education

In 1975, the Commission brought out a Journal of Higher Education to promote scholarly study as well as to discuss problems and policies in higher education. The hundred and fifty page journal was to be issued three times a year: Monsoon, Autumn and Spring. Important topics discussed in articles and communications related to equality of educational opportunities with particular reference to Scheduled Castes and Tribes, examination reforms and restructuring of courses and other vital issues of higher education. The UGC also published a Bulletin of Higher Education for dissemination of information.

The Sixth Five-Year Plan

The Commission's efforts in the Sixth Plan were directed towards ensuring that there was no discontinuity in the implementation of the development programmes of the universities and colleges initiated during the earlier period. It also tried to ensure that priority proposals were processed speedily so that they could be detailed later into the Sixth Plan. It was involved in the preparation of guidelines for the universities and colleges for the Sixth Plan and in the formulation of its own policies and programmes.

The main emphasis in the plan was on improvement of standards; regulation of admissions, centralization of instrumentation and repair facilities and extension as an integral part of education. Lower priority was given to the expansion of educational facilities by way of establishing new universities, centres for postgraduate studies, new departments and improved infrastructure by way of new buildings.

The Commission gave guidelines to the universities according to which they could formulate their Sixth Plan proposals. Each university was asked to prepare a comprehensive plan to cover teaching and general research programmes of its departments with detailed information about the number of students enrolled at various stages during the Fifth Plan; the faculty strength and other facilities available; output of students in terms of results; total income from all sources and expenditure and the enrolment proposed to be obtained at the end of the Sixth Plan period.

The Commission had always recognized that the teachers had the most important and vital role to play in all programmes of higher education and their work had a bearing on the national development, social change and progress. Therefore, the job of the teacher could not remain confined to delivering a set of lectures in a listless manner or to impart routine information or mere 'coverage of syllabus'. The teacher had to be a charter for change to bring about the necessary changes in the system of education and make it more responsive to the needs of society. The primary objective should be to treat each individual student as an end in himself and to give him the widest possible opportunity to develop his skills, abilities and potentialities to the full.

In order to fulfil this end, the Commission continued with its programmes of providing assistance in seminars, symposia, workshops, national fellowships, national lectures, career awards, schemes for visiting professors and fellows, travel grants for teachers and others in the Sixth Plan. It also introduced a new scheme of great import in January 1983: the Merit Promotion Scheme. Its aim was to provide suitable opportunities to teachers working in universities and colleges for career advancement. It was envisaged as a merit promotion and not as an automatic time-bound promotion based on a fixed number

of years of service rendered by a university teacher. The merit for such a promotion was to be determined by a selection committee constituted according to the Acts and Statutes of the university as for normal recruitment to the posts of readers and professors. It was stipulated that the number of teachers promoted would not exceed one third of the positions available in the next lower cadres, i.e. of lecturers or readers. The work of the teachers who were being considered for promotion would include research publications, book reviews, curriculum development, development of teaching aids and innovations in teaching methods, equipment development and other allied academic activities to be presented by the candidate. The rapid expansion of higher education meant that not only was the need of infrastructural facilities reassessed but also that the broad contours of the teaching methods and facilities were made explicit. To this end, the Mehrotra Committee was appointed whose recommendations were to be the guiding principles for the UGC in the next decade.

Review of Central Universities

In 1982, the Commission constituted a committee under Madhuri R. Shah, the then chairperson of UGC, to enquire into the working of the central universities. It had five terms of reference. The first was to examine whether they fulfilled the objectives set for them in their Acts and Statutes. The second was to look at the general state of discipline in these universities, cause of periodic disturbances on the campus and the remedial actions that should be taken. The third was to find out whether the central universities had adequate dispute resolution mechanisms to deal with the grievances of students, teachers and the administrative staff and to suggest measures for strengthening the corporate life in these universities. The fourth was to see the desirability of evolving a code of conduct for political parties and to set limits to their involvement in the university affairs. And finally, the Committee was required to suggest measures of reform necessary for the efficient functioning of central universities and for promoting an academic atmosphere conducive to study and scholarship on the campuses.

The Committee felt that while the Central Universities had to some extent pursued their academic objectives within the resources

available, they could have done better if they were allowed to function in a peaceful atmosphere free from agitations and strikes by the different sections of the University community — students, karamcharis and in some cases even teachers. Also, it was a matter of serious concern that none of them were able to maintain an all-India character. The committee warned that this would reduce them to being local or regional institutions. Inbreeding tended to make them inward looking and conservative, and thus they could not function as national institutions. It led to practices like special consideration for “internal candidates”, which were a threat to the health of universities. Hence, the committee strongly felt that at least in Central Universities, with the exception of NEHU, admissions should be based strictly on merit. If universities also had schools for historical reasons, an entrance examination should be held for determining merit, which should be open to all. It did not need to be a lengthy and cumbersome examination. It could be based on a few papers and be held by the university in a few centres outside it in different states. Universities could also get together and sponsor a common all-India admission test for admission to the undergraduate courses of these universities. The Committee recommended that wards of local people, who could not qualify in the entrance examinations, could take admission in local colleges and state universities, or in non-formal streams of higher education courses. The universities could run correspondence courses to meet the pressure for admission. In all cases, the number of seats should be determined considering the physical and academic facilities. New courses when started should be in emerging areas and universities should aim at high quality in their postgraduate education and research so as to attract students from far and wide. Cultivation of excellence, however, required peaceful conditions of work together with a will to withstand pressures that led to the decline of standards.

The Acts of most universities did not clearly define the objectives for their establishment. In some cases they referred only to the “expediency” of establishing them, and did not specify that the aim of the university was the pursuit of excellence, national integration and socio-economic development. It was felt that universities must have a set of clearly spelt out objectives to serve as a constant guide to the development of their educational and research programmes,

and to provide a basis for judging their performance. It was widely accepted that universities existed primarily for its students and scholars and through them and their work, for society at large. An important source of learning was the actual experience of social and environmental realities, first hand investigation of phenomena and situations, and hands on participation in activities of a creative and developmental nature. Universities, therefore, should have facilities, structures, management and above all, a sufficient variety of programmes for each student to be able to learn according to his/her inclination, aptitude and needs for him/her to get the best out of the university. The nation in turn, was sustained from the human resource thus created. This was far removed from this ideal and courses and programmes of universities had remained, to a large extent, traditional and unimaginative. They also had very little relationship with employment opportunities indicating that everywhere the link with environment and society was weak.

It was vitally important to reform undergraduate programmes by introducing a wide range of courses meant to prepare the students for numerous technical, scientific, medical, commercial, cultural, sports-related and other professions. Student should also be given opportunities to participate in developmental and community activity with appropriate logistic support and academic credit. For this they had to be actively involved in tutorials, seminars, projects, fieldwork and the like, including writing of technical reports or term papers and short dissertations. Evaluation had to change correspondingly so as to be based on the quality of assignments and activities carried out by students. Thus, institutions could provide an intellectual challenge to the students and divert their energies into creative purposes. The Central Universities with their superior resources should lead in this process, the committee said, and interact with state universities to achieve a broader dimension.

Political activity in universities, the Committee felt, was natural because they were a community of thinking people who explored the frontiers of knowledge and had the ability to criticize and evaluate every idea before accepting it. The democratic traditions of the country and the Constitution ensured fundamental rights to all citizens, including the freedom of thought and speech, and freedom of association. Teachers and a section of students were not only voters

but they could also be candidates in local, state, or parliamentary elections. Therefore, the Committee felt, there was nothing wrong in political parties being active on university campuses. Presentations and debates about different ideologies and plans and perspectives of national development were welcome and could be wholesome for the growth of universities. However, the Committee observed, much of political activity on campuses was of a degenerate nature and led to "politics of opportunism and expediency." Educational activities were disrupted for a small gain as was evident from campaigns to prevent action against those who copied in examinations or misused university funds in a various ways. Further, those students and intellectuals who had vested interests or were frustrated because they did not get admission or promotion, as the case may be, tried to use politicians to their advantage. Agitations, that could not otherwise be justified or sustained, often degenerated into acts of violence with political backing. A more mature connection with politics with certain norms of conduct was needed to protect universities, which held the key in building the future.

The Committee maintained that the state and central governments and the parties in power should play an important role in setting an example to other political parties in their relationship to the universities. Government should not interfere in the working of the universities in their academic decisions, recruitment or admissions, and even in their financial and administrative matters beyond what was prescribed by the Acts and Statutes of the universities. Since the Visitor appointed the Vice-Chancellor in the central universities and the university was entrusted to him, giving overt or covert support to individuals or groups against the Vice-Chancellor either through government officials or otherwise should be completely ruled out. He or she should have the government's full trust and support without expecting him/her to become either a sycophant or partisan, since both would destroy the credibility of the high office. When a teacher of the university, or any of its employees became a Member of Parliament or of a State Legislature, he should be given leave without pay by the university, and his service benefits and increments should be protected so that when he/she returned, his/her interests did not suffer.

The Committee pointed out some significant legislative omissions in the Acts of Central Universities. While the UGC was responsible

through its own Act for determination, maintenance, coordination and improvement of standards of university education and research and provided funds for these purposes, the Acts of the universities made no mention of their relationship with the UGC and gave the impression that they were entirely independent in this sphere. A natural consequence was that on several occasions, university people were resentful of what they considered to be “interference” of the UGC in the “autonomy” of universities. At times, the suggestions of the Commission for restructuring of courses or reform of the examination system were not only ignored by universities, they were not even placed before the relevant university bodies. There were numerous examples of the universities not supplying important information to the Commission, on the basis of which it could regularly monitor university policies affecting standards.

The role of the UGC in relation to the Central Universities needed to be further clarified. The finances of the state universities came from the state government and those of the Central Universities from the UGC. Therefore, in many respects, the UGC’s relation to them was similar to the state government and the state universities. But the UGC had been only a passive spectator to the happenings in the Central Universities. The universities also seemed to treat the UGC as nothing more than a fund-distributing agency. The UGC, on its part, often gave occasions for criticism because of delay in deciding on matters referred to it resulting in disturbances and aggravating situations on campuses.

Further, the Committee pointed out that the Ministry of Education, Government of India, had certain responsibilities towards the Central Universities, which it discharged on behalf of the Visitor. But in other matters, the role of the Ministry and the UGC in relation to the Central Universities had not been clearly spelt out. It was only due to cordial personal relations that no misunderstandings had occurred but such undefined distribution of powers and functions could lead to confusion and delays in decision-making that could adversely affect a situation. Therefore, there should be a clear understanding between the Ministry and the UGC with regard to their roles in such situations of decision-making, particularly in times of crisis. Hence, the committee emphasized that a clearer enunciation of university autonomy in relation to academic standards, finance, law and order,

and social responsibility was called for. The involvement of the UGC and of the government, through the Visitor or otherwise, should be spelt out in the Acts/Statutes, which should represent the realities of the situation.

Delhi Colleges

The Committee looked particularly at the composition of the Governing Bodies of Delhi Colleges, both those run by trusts and by the Delhi Administration. It recommended that in the colleges run by Trusts, the Governing Body should have eight members nominated by the Trust two nominees of the Vice-Chancellor who were not to be university teachers, two persons from amongst the teachers of the college on the basis of rotation and the principal of the college as the Member Secretary. The nominees of the Trust were to be persons with interest in higher education and who could contribute to the management and administration of the college and thus serve as a link between society and the academic community. The terms of membership of the members other than that of the teachers of the college should be two to three years. The Committee also recommended that the autonomy of the Governing Bodies should be respected and that the university should not interfere in the functioning of the college except when there was a violation of the Act, Statutes, Ordinances and Regulations of the university. In the case of the university established or maintained colleges, the Governing Body might have the same composition as that of Trust colleges, the university being the Trustee. Hence the power to nominate members of the Governing Body should be vested in the Vice-Chancellor. At present, the Trust colleges have ten members nominated by the Trust on the governing body together with two teacher representatives from the college nominated on a rotation basis and two nominees of the Vice-Chancellor from amongst university professors.

In the case of colleges run by the Delhi Administration, the latter acted as a Trustee for them. They not only had many common problems, but there was also a great need to coordinate their activities and development. Hence, the Committee suggested, a common Council of Management for these colleges. Its Chairman should be the Lieutenant

Governor of Delhi or his nominee. In addition it should have two representatives each of the Government of India, the UGC, Delhi University and the Delhi Administration. In addition, four Principals of colleges and four teachers of colleges should be represented on the council by representation. The Education Secretary, Delhi Administration should also be a member.

Thus during this decade, the UGC made twin attempts of consolidating the gains it had made during the last thirty years as well as launching of new programmes for the development of higher education in India. Simultaneously, it also made an attempt to review the existing structure as a result of which it was in a position to know its strengths and weaknesses. This becomes evident from the fact that as it entered the next decade, an amendment in its Act became inevitable if it was to do away with its shortcomings.

CHAPTER V

The New Policy Initiatives (1983-1993)

Higher education in India was under considerable stress owing to the challenges offered by increase in the number of students and institutions on the one hand, and the need to maintain standards on the other. The average decadal growth of enrolment during 1983-84 to 1992-93 was close to 4.4 per cent as compared to 3.8 per cent recorded in the earlier decade (1973-74 to 1982-83). Notwithstanding its limited resources, the UGC tried to provide the necessary facilities to strike a balance between the conflicting demands of quality and quantity. However, in terms of absolute numbers, there was a consistent increase in enrolment as well as in the number of institutions over the years.

In order to do that, the Commission needed some additional powers. Hence, the UGC Act was amended in 1984 with a view to providing common facilities and service programmes and to deny grants to colleges which violated such provisions. The object, and reasons prefaced to the University Grants Commission (Amendment) Act, 1984 along with highlighting the recommendations of the successive reports of the Committees on Subordinal Legislation to the effect of: (I) Empowering the central government to make rules with retrospective effect and validation of rules already made earlier, (ii) providing for publication of the rules in the official gazette, and (iii) for laying of the same before Parliament, pointed out the following other reasons for enacting the Amendment Act.

For quite some time past, the University Grants Commission has been feeling handicapped in setting up establishments and financing the same to provide common facilities, services, programmes, etc. for a group of universities or for the universities in general. To overcome this handicap, the Bill seeks to confer additional power in this behalf.

A very serious situation has arisen in recent years because of the mushroom growth of private colleges, specially engineering colleges, in certain states, which charge huge sums of donations as capitation fees for admission to various courses of study offered by them. To tackle this evil which has grave deleterious consequences the Bill seeks to empower the University Grants Commission to determine the scales of fees charged by colleges and to deny grants to and to de-recognize, the college, which violates this provision, so that it cannot send any candidates for examination. The Bill also provides for inquiry before de-recognition of a college and also for taking care of the interest of the students who are already enrolled in the college.

With the above objective sub-section (CCC) was added after sub-section (CC) of Section 12 which reads, "to establish in accordance with the regulations made under this Act, institutions for providing common facilities, service, and programmes for a group of universities or for the universities in general and maintain such institutions or provide for their maintenance by allocating and disbursing out of the Fund of the Commission such grants as the Commission may deem necessary." Section 12-A was inserted with a view to impose financial discipline on colleges. Section 12 A sub clause 4 says that:

if, after making, in relation to a college providing for a specified course of study, an inquiry in the manner provided by regulations, and after giving such a college a reasonable opportunity of being heard the Commission is satisfied that such a college has contravened the provision of sub section(3), the Commission may, with the previous approval of the central government pass an order prohibiting such a college from presenting any students then undergoing such a course of study therein to any university for the award of the qualification concerned.

Sections 25 and 26 were amended to make rules and regulations with retrospective effect and Section 28 was newly inserted which required laying down of rules and regulations before Parliament.

The decade of 1983-1993 almost coincided with the beginning of the Seventh Five-Year Plan and encompassed measures taken both in the Seventh (1985-1990) and the Eighth Five-Year Plans (1992-1997). Madhuri R. Shah (1981-1986), Yashpal (1986-1991), Manmohan

Singh (1991-1991) and G. Ram Reddy (1991-1995) guided the policies and activities of the UGC during this period. The decade witnessed many events that influenced the growth of higher education in India. Among them were the formulation of the National Policy on Education in 1986, the appointment of the Mehrotra Committee, the pronouncement of the National Policy on Education (NPE), the launching of the Seventh Five-Year Plan, and the report of the Gnamam Committee on Alternative Modes of Management in Universities.

The Commission identified some major areas following the Mehrotra Committee recommendations and the National Policy on Education. These were — inter-university centres, autonomous colleges; redesigning of courses; State Councils of Higher Education; Assessment and Accreditation Councils; alternative models of management in universities; National Qualifying Test for recruitment of teachers; broad based research and development; training and orientation of teachers; improvement of efficiency; youth and sports education for minorities, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, the physically challenged and women.

The Mehrotra Committee

The Commission appointed a committee under the chairmanship of R.C. Mehrotra (1983) to review and revise the pay scales of teachers in universities and colleges. The Mehrotra Committee made some significant recommendations. It recommended that the career advancement of lecturers be provided through the introduction of two more scales: a senior scale and a selection grade, to be given on the basis of performance after completing some well-defined steps in the process of professional development. Fast track promotions were also suggested although details of the scheme were not worked out. Open selections for higher posts, if held regularly, could be treated as fast track as the number of years of service required to fulfil the eligibility conditions was less than the years of service needed under the career advancement scheme. No promotions were to be given as designated readers and professors were to be appointed only after a process of all-India open selection. The Committee made critical comments on the implementation of the Merit Promotion Scheme

that had been introduced by the UGC in 1983, as attempts were being made to convert it into time-bound promotions for teachers.

In short, the Mehrotra Committee recommended that career advancement might provide for higher scales of pay, but higher designations could not be given without careful selection. Performance assessment was recommended as an essential component of career advancement. Other conditions were the obtaining of a higher degree such as an M.Phil. or Ph.D. and participation in at least two refresher courses. Evaluation of teachers in the refresher courses was also suggested as a component of the process of performance assessment. Finally, qualifying in a National Eligibility Test (NET) was recommended as an essential condition for recruitment to the post of lecturer in any university or college in the country. This recommendation replaced the provision introduced by the Sen Committee in 1973 that an M.Phil. or Ph.D. be an essential qualification for recruitment to the post of a lecturer. The recommendation of a NET was aimed at removing disparities in standards of evaluations and teaching that prevailed among several institutions.

In arriving at the above set of recommendations, the Mehrotra Committee in effect spelt out explicitly or implicitly four objectives of pay review:

1. Ensure that the remuneration of teachers was in keeping with their role in nation-building and upgrading of human skills.
2. Improve the scales of pay and conditions of service so that a talented person having to choose from a number of competing careers might be attracted towards teaching.
3. Reward merit.
4. Relieve stagnation in service.

The recommendations were submitted to the UGC in May 1986 and were to be implemented in the central universities and other institutions fully financed by the central government. The Government of India also decided to assist the state governments that might, in their discretion, decide to introduce the revised revision of pay scales subject to some terms and conditions. These recommendations

formed the basis of the Government of India notifications issued in 1987 and 1988.

Accordingly, the central government would assist the state governments to the extent of 80 per cent of the additional expenditure involved in giving effect to the revised pay scales for a period of Five-Years. The state governments were to meet the remaining 20 per cent of the expenditure from their own resources and would not pass on their liability or any portion of it to the universities or to the management of private colleges. From April 1990 onwards, they were to take over the entire responsibility for the revised scales of pay. Also, the central assistance would be limited to the posts in existence in January 1986.

Together with the revision of pay scales, both, the qualifications for the posts of lecturers, readers and professors were laid down, and the details of the Career Advancement Scheme were spelt out. Other conditions of service were also clarified, for example, the period of probation for a teacher would not exceed a period of twenty-four months, and a lecturer appointed on probation would ordinarily be confirmed only if his or her performance reports were satisfactory and after he or she had completed appropriate short-term orientation programmes. The UGC was requested to ensure that sufficient orientation programmes were organized for all lecturers appointed on and after 1988-89. The age of superannuation for teachers was fixed at sixty years and no extension of service was to be given after that. However, it was left to a university or a college to re-employ a distinguished superannuated teacher up to sixty-Five-Years of age, according to the guidelines framed by the UGC.

An appropriate mechanism was to be established in all universities and colleges for redressal of grievances of teachers, for which guidelines were to be issued separately. In addition, the UGC was to prepare a code of professional ethics for teachers in consultation with the representatives of the national-level associations of teachers, and all concerned were required to ensure that the code was observed.

The Committee on the revision of pay scales of Librarians and Directors of Physical Education in universities submitted its report in August 1986. Its recommendations were considered and generally accepted by the Commission in its meeting of October 1986. They

related to the scales of pay, avenues of promotion and conditions of service. The report was to be sent to the Government of India for its consideration and implementation and an expert committee was appointed to consider the minimum qualifications for open all-India recruitment at different levels, completion of satisfactory period of probation and promotion to higher grades within the same cadre. The UGC also revised the scales of the pay of Registrars, Deputy Registrars and Assistant Registrars corresponding to the scales of Professors, Readers and Lecturers respectively. However, in this revision, no assistance was to be provided by the central government to the state universities.

Teacher Training

A fall-out of the Mehrotra Committee recommendations was the establishment of training programmes for teachers. The Commission felt that it was necessary to impart training to those entering the teaching profession so that they could competently perform the various functions expected from them. Professions like law, medicine, among others, required prospective practitioners to spend long years in training. In the teaching profession itself, professional courses like B.Ed. and M.Ed. were considered prerequisites for entering the profession at the school level. While a full-fledged training course for teachers might not be necessary at the tertiary level, training and orientation programmes were found useful in many countries.

It could be said that teachers at the university level had shown minimal concern for pedagogy. Few of those who wished to join the teaching profession were born teachers. The majority needed some training to get the best out of them. In the existing situation, entrants to the teaching profession learnt from experience, as they had no formal opportunities to train themselves. As a result, they usually mechanically copied methods and procedures adopted by their own teachers and inflicted them on their students. Thus, the traditional mode of teaching was passed on from generation to generation.

To remedy this, teachers must undergo training at the pre-induction stage itself. Even immediately after induction into the teaching

profession, there should be facilities to provide proper orientation towards the profession and skills such as curriculum making, using audio-visual aids, communication education psychology, evaluation methods, and the medium of instruction, need to be enhanced. The last factor was especially important for such teachers whose mother tongue was different from the medium of instruction. With these objectives, the Commission considered the question of providing financial support for organizing orientation programmes for teachers in universities and colleges. These programmes would cover newly recruited teachers and also those who had already spent some time in the profession. A committee was appointed to work out the details and modalities of the programme.

Orientation Programmes

The UGC set up a working group to work out details of an orientation programme for all university and college teachers at the time of recruitment and during the in-service period. It was to be organized through the internal resources of the university and by bringing a number of colleges together with the help of senior faculty members, visiting lecturers, and national lecturers. An inbuilt mechanism was to be put in place for assessing the impact of the programme largely through feedback from the participants.

The UGC proposed to put in place some other measures as well. These included course packages in major disciplines on videotapes that would be made available to teachers to enable them to keep pace with the latest advancements in their fields of specialization. Video material was also to be developed on teaching methodologies. There was also a proposal to develop a system of assessment of teachers through self-appraisal, peer evaluation and student assessment. The Commission also decided to publish factual information about institutions of higher education, indicating the number of working days, examination schedules, number of teachers and students, publications, library buildings and working hours of the library, management structure, and innovations made by institutions to create more awareness about the direction that the higher education system was taking.

Academic Staff Colleges

This scheme was initiated by the Commission in 1987-88. Forty-eight Academic Staff Colleges (ASCs) were approved to organize orientation programmes for newly appointed lecturers in universities and colleges. The main objectives of this programme were to enhance the motivation and general awareness of teachers; ensure systematic orientation in specific subjects, techniques and methodologies; and provide opportunities for professional and career development, so that the teachers could fulfil their role and responsibility. Each ASC was expected to organize five to six orientation programmes of four weeks' duration in a year. While 85-90 per cent of the teachers were to be enrolled from the notified catchment area and the rest could come from other parts of the country. Of the 48 ASCs, 44 commenced organizing orientation programmes. The ASC at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) proposed to organize the programme in 1990-91, although it had already been organizing refresher courses. The three remaining universities of Vishwa Bharati, Calcutta and Jadavpur in West Bengal could not establish ASCs.

National Policy on Education (1986)

The most important development in this decade was the formulation of the National Policy on Education and its adoption by Parliament. The UGC felt that an operational plan for its implementation should be framed with clear short and long-term measures. While doing so, it was also important to bear two things in mind: the system had, by and large, worked with considerable flexibility and economy, and the motivation for change and thrust towards excellence had to essentially come from within. The Ministry of Human Resource Development also constituted a Task Force on Higher Education under the chairmanship of Acharya Ramamurthy in 1983 to make a plan for the implementation of the NPE. The Commission generally endorsed the operational plan of the Task Force and evolved an action plan for its implementation.

The Seventh Five-Year Plan Guidelines

The Commission had formulated guidelines for the Seventh Plan in early February 1986 but revised them to incorporate the directives of the NPE before sending them to the universities in October 1986. The universities, in making their own proposals for this period, were supposed to keep certain broad principles in mind, together with the ideas enshrined in the NPE. They were to develop a new perspective to contribute more effectively towards intellectual pursuits and to find solutions to relevant societal issues. They were to interact meaningfully and effectively with all aspects of social life where knowledge, analysis and creativity were called for, and develop close links with other agencies like industries and institutions outside the university system which were interested in applying science, technology and social sciences in relevant social areas.

Universities were to develop activities like colloquiums that would cut across related disciplines in order to cope with the real issues of life. They would also establish Planning Boards in which teachers and other functionaries of the university would be involved at various stages of planning. An appropriate system would be evolved to continuously monitor the progress and impact of their departmental plans.

Each university was required to prepare a comprehensive plan for its teaching and research programmes for each of its departments of study. Appropriate pre-Ph.D. and M. Phil. programmes in various faculties could be developed to train students and teachers in research methodologies. Interdisciplinary research for Ph.D. and M. Phil. courses had to be broad-based. M.A and M.Sc. courses would keep future human resource requirements and regional and national needs in mind.

This necessitated an improvement of facilities in the existing departments to impart good quality education and undertake research work of a high standard. The infrastructure of existing postgraduate departments had to be improved. This involved provision of adequate academic as well as technical and other support staff, removal of obsolescence, modernization of laboratories, improvement of

workshops and enrichment of libraries as well as reprographic facilities. Universities could not diversify their teaching programmes in new areas of specialization in existing departments or start new departments as that would stretch the available resources, resulting in non-viable or sub-viable departments. Expansion could be attempted only when existing departments were developed in all aspects. Efforts would be made to inculcate a culture of sharing of available facilities among users and expensive equipment would be pooled together at central facilities. There would be provision for maintenance and repair of such equipment so that it could be used optimally. In the case of developed universities, however, new specializations, courses, or departments could be introduced but the approach would be interdisciplinary within the boundaries of traditional disciplines. But teaching and research in such emerging areas could be undertaken only if it could be sustained with existing facilities, with minimal support.

In the case of other universities, new departments could only be opened if there was a real need within the state or region as a whole. Opening new departments or courses of study with sub-viable level inputs and inadequate preparations would be avoided. Any courses that had no relevance or were outdated could be dispensed with. Teaching would not be confined to lectures alone but also imparted through modern teaching aids such as models, audio-visual aids and computers. The excitement of learning through computer simulation opened up new horizons in the realm of teaching.

The Commission contributed by making important recommendations widely accepted in the university system. It also realized that these efforts could not be one-time exercises but had to be made continuously. No attempt was made to impose these ideas. They were instead propagated through meetings, national and regional seminars and by interaction with visiting committees. The UGC saw itself as a coordinator and promoter of the cooperative mechanism of the academics in the university system to help universities develop excellence in frontier areas of knowledge and maintain their academic leadership in the country.

Expert groups, task forces and in-house working groups were constituted for formulating appropriate implementation strategies

and guidelines, financial patterns, action plans up to 1990, and also monitoring mechanisms to achieve the envisaged objectives and targets within a given time frame. During the year, the modalities of implementing the provision of the Plan of Action with priority to autonomous colleges, State Councils of Higher Education, and the NET for the recruitment of teachers, were finalized.

Autonomous Colleges

The UGC made some progress in the implementation of the NPE. For example, guidelines on autonomous colleges entitled, "Criteria, Guidelines and Patterns of Assistance to Autonomous Colleges" were revised and issued to universities and state governments. They clarified the concept of autonomy; procedures and criteria for identification of colleges for the autonomous status; governance of autonomous colleges and their relationship with the parent university; and accountability of autonomous colleges, together with the pattern of financial assistance for them.

A work plan was also drawn up and universities were requested to expedite proposals. Strategies to process them speedily were evolved. The UGC tried to remove some of the misgivings of teachers about the operational aspects of the scheme and highlighted the steps to be taken for motivating them and making them realize that autonomy was not an impediment but rather an aid to the development of higher education. State Governments were requested to amend the acts and the statutes of universities to include a provision for enabling autonomy in them.

To bring more colleges within the purview of the autonomous colleges scheme, the UGC attempted to open dialogue with universities, state governments, teachers and students. It also thought it desirable to increase the level of support to existing autonomous colleges and provide them with other incentives such as extending the benefit of the Commission's schemes of special assistance to them. Since autonomous colleges awarded degrees in the name of the parent university, the concurrence of the university had to be obtained before autonomous status could be conferred on a college. Steps had, therefore, to be taken to enable autonomous colleges to confer their own degrees by

considering them under the deemed university provision of the UGC Act. Not only colleges, but autonomous departments or centres could also be established and promoted within universities by evolving suitable guidelines and structures for this purpose. A committee was constituted for this purpose to resolve various issues in developing autonomous departments and centres within the framework of the universities.

Decentralization

Decentralization was recommended at different levels. As a step in this direction, it was felt that funds to colleges should be provided through College Development Councils. Consequently, their scope, functioning and composition had to be immediately reviewed. It was also important that the research efforts of various agencies as well as problems of relevance to national development should be strengthened and coordinated. Therefore, an organization on the lines of the National Science Foundation was set up.

Also, since library resources in universities and colleges were inadequate and they lacked computation facilities, a data bank should be created connecting all institutions dealing with science so that the available resources could be shared and their use optimized.

Accreditation

In order to maintain standards, the concept of accreditation on the basis of suitable academic criteria was put forward. This was to help colleges in self-evaluation so that they could come up to requisite standards. In 1989, the Commission agreed 'in principle' to set up a National Accreditation Council for Higher Education. At the same time, it appointed a committee to work out a model that sought to concentrate on the development of colleges in order to promote excellence in standards of education in all educational institutions, including autonomous colleges. While the idea was accepted, it was only in 1994 that the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) was set up as an autonomous body under the UGC.

Restructuring of Courses

The UGC also decided to review its guidelines on the restructuring of courses to provide the necessary details regarding course design, foundation courses and other related matters. The foundation courses were to be in the nature of liberal education and involved teaching of a subject in the context of its relevance to the milieu. Attention would be paid to the development of reading materials for the foundation courses and to the teaching arrangements for them. The existing staff, after proper orientation, could teach them or the staff could be specially recruited for the purpose. National lecturers could also be involved in teaching these courses. The whole idea was to make the degree courses more relevant and link education with work or practical experience and productivity. The key concept was to remodel the existing conventional three-subject course of the degree level by combining two of the existing subjects with a third work-oriented subject or one that had direct local or regional relevance.

Further, the UGC decided to review the composition of the Boards of Study to make them broad-based and allow for greater flexibility and autonomy in their functioning. Courses would be reorganized, especially at the postgraduate level to allow students to earn credits for units within a department or in related departments. This was to bring in greater flexibility and promote interdisciplinary functioning. All educational institutions would be encouraged to develop an activity such as a colloquium that would cut across disciplines and discuss concepts related to life.

In pursuit of quality, over a thousand academics from the university system from all over the country helped the UGC design standard teaching courses through national seminars, workshops and symposia. These included a course in futurology to take care of emerging trends in specific areas. Model curricula were designed for various subjects through curriculum development centres.

The UGC also initiated many innovative programmes and courses. In 1983-84, universities and colleges were asked to propose programmes dealing with specific problems, indicating a definite theme highlighting the most divisive tendencies in that area. They were to keep several

themes especially in mind such as multilingual people living together, getting to know neighbours across the state, projecting the culture of one region to other regions, appreciation and study of tribal communities and customs around the country, unity in diversity and the process of integration in time and space.

The Commission agreed to provide assistance for teaching and research in museology on a selective basis. This was done on the recommendation of the Art History Panel that constituted a sub-committee to examine this question. The sub-committee expressed the view that the Commission should encourage and provide funds for the establishment of museums in universities on a selective basis in the field of humanities, art, natural sciences and technology.

The Commission also constituted a committee on performing arts that identified priority areas of research in this field and recommended workshops and seminars on issues like teaching methodology. Since the performing arts, it was felt, had, by and large, remained neglected, universities were requested to include proposals for their development in the Seventh Plan proposals. Stress was also laid on establishing departments of fine arts in the programme of Action of the NPE and on broad-basing and diversifying cultural courses like music, arts, performing arts and others.

On the advice of the Home Science Panel, sub-committees developed curricula at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels in home science. These were finalized at a workshop held at Lady Irwin College, New Delhi in June 1984. The curriculum for teaching of home science at the undergraduate level was circulated among the universities, colleges and the state governments for adoption. The Panel also requested members to prepare suitable textbooks in home science, keeping in view the curricula developed.

The Commission constituted a committee to examine in depth the question of raising the standards of special education and to suggest measures for strengthening the departments imparting it. The committee recommended a uniformity of syllabus, training programmes and degrees awarded. It also felt that there should be proper school facilities for training teachers. This was particularly required for those dealing with physically challenged students before

they could specialize at the postgraduate level. One way would be to institute a general B.Ed. and another for special education. The syllabus for the special B.Ed. should cover teaching methods for normal students while differentiating the methodology for the handicapped. For short-term programmes, different eligibility conditions and qualifications would be required, keeping the area of specialization in mind. The Commission, as part of the Seventh Plan, would consider strengthening nearly ten university departments, and fifteen to sixteen colleges might start B.Ed. in special education in different regions.

During 1989-90, the Commission resolved to implement important strategies under the National Literacy Mission (NLM) for the spread of universal literacy in the country. It considered the minutes of the meeting of the Group on Student Mobilization, constituted by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, and took some important decisions. It wanted the whole university system to be involved in the NLM and the Vice-Chancellors to place it on centre stage by taking steps to involve both teachers and students, although on a voluntary basis. This would be undertaken mainly by the Departments of Adult and Continuing Education. While instruction and research in adult education were relevant, their main concern should be national literacy and expeditious reorientation to that end should be done. However, a large-scale involvement of students in this work was essential, whatever its exact nature. Also, the NLM would be an essential part of the courses for teachers organized in ASCs. Several films on the involvement of students in the NLM would be commissioned to motivate and inform teachers and students.

These resolutions of the UGC were brought to the notice of the Vice-Chancellors through a personal appeal of the Chairman, UGC, and they were requested to chalk out programmes that would play a major role in wiping out illiteracy in the country.

The UGC in 1991-92 decided to support programmes in Nehru studies with the objective of inculcating the philosophy and approach of Nehru and the relevance of his ideas in the present context. It was only appropriate that centres for Gandhian studies should also include Nehru studies in their programme and activities.

Inter-University Centres

After the amendment of the UGC Act in 1984, the Commission initiated the setting up of autonomous centres within the university system. These were expected to provide common facilities, services and programmes to universities since heavy investment in infrastructure and inputs had made it beyond the reach of universities to obtain these facilities. The centres were to provide common advanced facilities/ services to universities that were not able to make heavy investments in infrastructure and other inputs required for advanced research. They were to play a vital role in offering the best expertise to teachers and researchers across the country and provide access for research faculty members by making state-of-the-art equipment and excellent library facilities of international standards available to them.

The Nuclear Science Centre was established in 1984 for accelerator oriented research. The Inter University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics at Pune was established in 1988 to provide state-of-the-art instrumentation for research in astronomy. The Inter-University Consortium for Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) facilities at Indore was set up in 1989 to enable the use of the facilities available in the DAE. The Information and Library Network (INFLIBNET), Ahmedabad established in 1991 later became a registered society (in 1996) with the objective of networking all the university libraries through the electronic media. The year 1991 also saw the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies at Shimla designated as an Inter-University Centre for Humanities and Social Sciences.

In addition to the Inter-University Centres, national facilities were set up by the UGC at various universities to provide access to research facilities in order to improve the teaching and learning processes. The Consortium of Educational Communication, New Delhi, established in 1993 was to disseminate country-wide classroom programmes through television. Finally, the NAAC in Bangalore was established in 1994 and its objective was to assess and accredit the institutions of higher learning.

Media and Educational Technology

The important thrust area for UGC at this time was media and education technology. By 1987, a massive expansion had taken place in the communication infrastructure of the country. The Commission took the initiative to use the time-slot given for higher education on television to beam programmes entitled the “Country-wide Classroom.” These were telecast on the Doordarshan network every day for two hours, except on Sundays and holidays, through INSAT-IB. They were enrichment programmes meant for undergraduate students and teachers. In pursuit of its objectives of making higher education accessible to as many people as possible and harnessing technology for that purpose, the Commission took steps to supply TV sets to about 2,000 select colleges in phases. It also supported Educational Media Research Centres (EMRCs) and seven Audio-Visual Research Centres (AVRCs) for training and production of software.

The Commission was aware that rapid and immediate communication meant instant dissemination of knowledge and this had made the world a global village. Hence, it took timely steps to not only use television for making education possible where the physical classroom had not reached, but also to use it for supplementing and complementing classroom teaching. Funding was made available to the AVRCs and to the EMRCs for the production of videotapes pertaining to higher education programmes.

Foreign programmes were telecast in the first few months of inception but they were gradually replaced by Indian ones. With the efforts of the EMRCs, the AVRCs and the UGC-INSAT project coordination cell, 60 per cent of the programme content was Indian by 1987-88. An interesting component of these programmes was “Omnipresence”, that is, taking the viewers to “where the action is” whether it was a workshop, a hospital, a rural set up or a conference. Separate programmes were telecast for teachers in the university system to enable them to enrich their knowledge.

It was decided to plan the UGC-INSAT project so that projections could be made for the future INSAT time requirement for higher education. These, taken together with the requirements of the NCERT

and the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), would help in making out a case for a dedicated educational TV channel by 1991-92 and for creating a dedicated satellite system for educational needs in the long run. The UGC also proposed to establish a National Centre for Communication Research (NCCR) that would provide, among other things, training facilities for personnel development in educational media.

In keeping with the times, the UGC went wholeheartedly into using technology for education and recognized that the introduction of mass communication and technology could play a vital role in increasing professional competence, capability and communication skills of teachers who were pivots in the teaching process. In the context of non-formal education, too, educational technology would be very useful in adult and continuing education, extension and correspondence courses, and also in the restructuring of courses of study at the university stage.

The Commission decided to produce a ten-part series in collaboration with WGBH, Boston entitled "Race to Save the Planet" in Hindi and Tamil. Renamed "State of World", it was finally brought out in twenty-six parts, the majority of the work being done by the EMRCs and AVRCS. The series explored the human dimensions of international environmental issues, including the future of the earth, and provided insights into understanding the roots and processes of modernization and industrialization, together with the relationship between human society and natural resources.

During 1991-92, the UGC initiated activities for a Consortium for Educational Communication (CEC) in project mode at the Nuclear Science Centre. The Consortium would serve as a nodal agency and coordinate the activities of all media centres, explore and tap new technological advances in the field, and also provide guidance on policy for media-related activities. The UGC-INSAT cell located at Jamia Millia was also merged with the Consortium.

An interrelated activity was the establishment of film clubs and societies. The Commission had appointed a committee to examine suitable guidelines for setting up film clubs in universities and colleges in 1983-84. This was aimed at making students aware of film as a modern art form and of cinema as the 20th century medium of social

communication, and educate them by exposing them to international and Indian film classics of various genres in a systematic manner. Discussions, symposia, lectures and courses on aspects of film appreciation would be organized that would also serve to promote the film culture on the campus. Attempts would be made to relate films as a discipline with other subjects, especially the fine arts. Finally, students would understand the relationship of cinema with the needs of individual growth and social development. By 1987-88, twenty-two universities and colleges were selected for the establishment of Film Study Centres during the first phase. A UGC Central Cell was set up at the National Film Archives of India at Pune to ensure a constant supply of suitable film classics and ancillary support material.

Science Education

The NPE (1986) brought in its wake a heavy responsibility for the Commission to ensure coordination between the need to maintain quality through proper organization of the existing facilities in higher education and the simultaneous necessity for expansion to meet the developmental requirements of the country for trained personnel.

Keeping this object in view, the UGC encouraged new areas of teaching and research, especially in the sciences. A beginning had already been made. The Science Advisory Committee to the Cabinet discussed the ways and means of improving the infrastructure for education and research in science and technology. The Planning Commission was to make a special allocation to the UGC for this purpose through the Ministry of Education. The basic objective was to get the best out of the existing academics by providing such inputs as would help in imparting quality postgraduate education and research of a high standard. Science education had to be improved and strengthened at all levels.

Apart from schemes like the College Science Improvement Programme (COSIP), other measures were also taken. For example, the panel on electronics and instrumentation was reconstituted in September 1985. It reviewed the work done by the earlier panel and also suggested that research in materials science needed to be strengthened in universities. For this purpose, relevant areas would be identified and supported

by the Commission. Even simple measures like providing telescopes to select universities and colleges helped immensely in generating excitement among young students and teachers by enabling them to observe and systematically study various celestial bodies.

A committee was constituted to consider steps to be taken for strengthening research in materials science in universities. A few national centres were to be established in select universities. Also, training programmes and workshops were to be organized to enable university scientists from departments of physics, chemistry and biology to interact and develop materials of vital importance to industry.

Considering the growing importance of laser and fibre optics, the Commission constituted an expert committee to suggest steps to be taken for the promotion of teaching and research in these subjects. To begin with, the committee proposed the organizing of training programmes and workshops.

The Commission also constituted an expert committee for the promotion of education and research in the fields of astronomy and astrophysics. A national workshop was also organized on developments in astronomy education at Osmania University in Hyderabad. The Commission approved the setting up of a National Centre for Astronomy at the Rangapur Observatory, Osmania University, to be developed as a National Centre that would be used by astronomers from the university and outside. The primary objective of the Centre was to provide, within the university system, high-class facilities for observational astronomy, primarily in optical and wavelength regions within the university system that could not be obtained or managed within the resources and framework of individual universities. It was expected to attract young and talented persons to the field of observational astronomy and provide them with training to make them competent astronomers. The UGC also agreed to the setting up of an Inter-University Centre in Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA) at the campus of Poona University. Its main objective was to provide a Centre of excellence within the university sector for teaching, research and development in astronomy and astrophysics as well as to promote nucleation and growth of active groups in this area in the university. Besides conducting a vigorous research programme

of its own, the Centre would enable workers from other universities, teachers and students to visit it for varying durations to participate in research work and in executing developmental projects.

The Nuclear Science Centre had already been set up on the campus of Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi to generate research in the frontier areas of nuclear, atomic and solid state physics. It was supposed to function as an autonomous body after being under the Societies Registration Act and it duly attained this status in December 1988 after being registered in September in the same year. It was to provide research facilities to various universities and meet the general and specific needs of the scientists in the country. In 1990, the UGC constituted an expert group in energy to advise on teaching, education and research in the subject and to suggest educational components in energy education at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The group prepared a curriculum for a one-year certificate course after graduation, and a two-year postgraduate course. Universities with potential in this area were selected and the Department of Non-Conventional Energy sources agreed to provide financial support mainly for equipment on a case-to-case basis.

The Department of Science and Atomic Energy decided to set up a Synchrotron Radiation Facility at the Centre for Advanced Technology at Indore. To take advantage of the facilities being set up by the Department of Science and Atomic Energy and make use of them for the entire university system, it was decided that an Inter-University Consortium be set up at Indore. The Consortium was a joint venture of the UGC and the Department of Atomic Energy to provide networking that would enable teachers and research scholars of universities, institutions deemed to be universities, IITs and other institutions of higher learning, to participate in the design, fabrication, operation, management and utilization of frontline research facilities such as the Dhurva Reactor at Bombay, the Variable Energy Cyclotron Centre at Calcutta and the Synchrotron Radiation Source Centre at Indore.

The Commission also constituted a National Coordination Committee to promote teaching and research in the areas of relativity and cosmology in universities. Financial assistance was provided to university scientists undertaking multi-department agency

cooperation and an integrated scientific programme called the Indian Middle Atmosphere Programme (IMAP) for a period of Five-Years from 1980-81 to 1985-86. Such projects were processed and communicated to the UGC by the IMAP Coordination Committee. A mid-term review of the programme was made in January 1985 and on the basis of the recommendations of the review committee, the Commission approved the continuance of IMAP for a further period of three years beyond March 1986.

To promote meteorological and atmospheric sciences and to provide employment opportunities for trained persons at the computer systems being set up by the Council of Meteorological and Earth Sciences for medium range forecasting, the Commission launched a programme in 1987-88, starting a post-M.Sc. course in atmospheric sciences in seven universities and institutions.

Considering the importance of environmental education and the role of the university system in developing an adequate level of environmental awareness and in training of human resources in this emerging area, the Commission constituted an expert committee in 1982 to advise on matters relating to the development of teaching, research and extension work in environmental science including forestry and ecology education in universities and colleges. The committee suggested that specialized programmes such as undergraduate and postgraduate diploma courses in environmental sciences should be started. Details with regard to specific programmes in environmental engineering and pollution control were also worked out with the help of a sub-committee.

Pursuant to an order passed by the Supreme Court in November 1991 that universities and colleges should consider the feasibility of making environment a compulsory subject at each level in college education, the UGC constituted three groups to develop textual material for general environmental education, engineering and technical components of environment and enrichment and public awareness programmes. It was envisaged that a book of about a hundred to a hundred and fifty pages on the environment and issues related to it would be prepared and published at the earliest for circulation in universities which would be requested to make environmental education a compulsory course as a part of the foundation course at the undergraduate level.

The technical and engineering components would be operated in four or five select universities that possessed the infrastructure in these fields.

The Commission collaborated with the Department of Ocean Development for the development of ocean science and technology in the university sector. The need for collaboration and joint funding had arisen because the maritime universities were responsible for training and developing human resources for user agencies.

The Commission approved the establishment of the University Centre for Science Information at the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. This Centre would offer a current awareness service through computerized monthly abstracts in various subjects of science and technology to the Indian universities. The UGC also initiated a programme in superconductivity in June 1987, after exciting results in this field came to light the world over. Since 1987, the Commission had been supporting several institutions under the Programme of Superconductivity. A Standing Committee was formed to review the work done by them. At its meeting in March 1990, the committee recommended the establishment of a Consortium of Universities in the areas of Superconductivity, Education and Research. This would be an unregistered body whose members would work in close cooperation with one another and extend their facilities to affiliate members as well as to other interested scientists.

In 1989, the Commission decided to upgrade the existing Western Region Instrumentation Centre at Bombay University to the status of an Inter-University Centre in Instrumentation. It would provide a range of training programmes for the staff of the university science instrumentation centres and develop instrumentation required for teaching and research.

Research Scientist Scheme

With a view to promoting high quality research in science, social sciences and humanities in the universities, the Commission took the decision to create 100 positions of Research Scientists in science and 100 positions in the humanities and social sciences in the grades of

Lecturers, Readers and Professors. Persons of outstanding merit were to be centrally selected through a rigorous process for a period of Five-Years in the first instance. Their performance was to be reviewed before the five-year period ended and if, found to be of a high quality, they were to be promoted to the next higher grade. They were also to be provided with the requisite facilities to enable them to devote all their time to research. In addition, they were also expected to do some teaching.

The novel feature of this decision was that a scientist would not compete for promotion with the existing lecturers or readers since he/she was to draw his/her salary directly from the Commission. He or she was to compete with himself or herself and was, therefore, expected to perform at his/her best, always. It was believed that this would promote excellence and prevent many potential researchers from going abroad.

A Committee under the chairmanship of Prof. Yashpal examined the possibility of using and supporting promising young scientists, particularly those who were recognized by the Indian National Science Academy (INSA) as awardees of the Young Scientist Medals. It felt that this could be implemented within the broad framework of the existing UGC Programme of Research Scientists and be open to young Scientist Medal Awardees of the INSA as well as such brilliant young Indian scientists who wished to return to India from abroad. It was desirable to provide these groups of scientists or select individuals with adequate support for their research work. A related programme of the Department of Science and Technology on better opportunities for young scientists in areas of science and technology was also discussed. This was circulated to all university departments of science, engineering and technology, as well as international institutions for training or research exposure. University-to-university arrangements between Indian and foreign universities were also proposed, instead of government-to-government arrangements, to avoid delay.

Physical Education and Sports

Another thrust area in the decade of 1983-1993 was that of sports and youth affairs. Following the NPE, the Commission appointed a

committee to prepare a model curriculum for physical education. A questionnaire was issued to all universities and colleges to survey the existing physical infrastructure for sports and games and also to the trained teachers available. A committee was appointed to work out the modalities for compulsory participation in sports and physical education for promotion to higher classes. A sub-committee of the UGC Advisory Committee on Physical Education and Sports recommended the minimum infrastructure that should be developed in each college and university. This was circulated to all the universities and state governments.

The Directors of Lakshmbai National College of Physical Education at Gwalior and Netaji Subhas National Institute of Sports at Patiala were requested to draw up a refresher course to be offered to the directors of physical education. The curriculum proposed by the working group for the three-year degree course in physical education, health and sports was also circulated to universities with a request to identify one college in each district where it could be implemented.

The Ministry of Human Resources Development, Department of Youth Affairs and Sports (DYAS), Government of India revised the pattern of assistance for development of sports infrastructure in universities and colleges in early 1987 and decided that it should be administered through the UGC. The Commission then formulated guidelines for the development of sports infrastructure and circulated them to the universities and colleges so that they could accordingly send their proposals. A Committee was also appointed in 1986-87 to examine the feasibility of allowing outstanding students in sports, who were unable to take their examinations at the appointed time because they were participating in sports tournaments or coaching camps, to appear at an examination especially held at a later date.

The recommendations of the committee were received in 1988-89. It was felt that sportspersons could be permitted credit for lectures and practicals missed by them while they participated in coaching camps or national and international tournaments provided a certificate of participation was issued by the organizers of the events. A sportsperson who had missed the examination because of some recognized sports activity would be allowed to move to the

next class and keep terms in higher classes. He might, thereafter, be permitted to appear in subsequent examinations and carry credits for the papers cleared from one examination to another till the entire course was completed and he or she became eligible for the degree. In the event of a sportsperson being absent for long periods of time because of attending coaching camps, efforts would be made to arrange for all possible educational facilities including practicals and the use of the library so that he or she could make up the loss of studies. The recommendations of the committee were sent to the universities for adoption.

State governments and universities were requested to ensure that no college, either general or technical, was allowed to come up without ensuring the availability of adequate playfield facilities. Further, the Commission received the report of the committee appointed to prepare a model curriculum for physical education. This was referred for further examination to a panel of physical education appointed by the Commission. By 1992-93, the course was being run in twenty-nine colleges with the assistance of the UGC.

In October 1992, the Commission entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Adventure Foundation for systematically organizing adventure activities over a wide spectrum through specialized bodies in the country. The broad objective was to develop a spirit of adventure, comradeship, a love for nature and a capacity to bear stress and strain in the face of adversity. According to the Memorandum of Understanding, the UGC would communicate to the National Adventure Foundation at the beginning of every year the amount available for the implementation of the scheme. The Foundation would then organize the adventure sports programmes itself or through other professional organizations in the country and assume full responsibility for the competent and safe conduct of these programmes. Generally, there would be separate programme events for boys and girls and where they were combined, universities and colleges would be informed while inviting nominations. The UGC and the National Adventure Foundation would form a coordination committee to oversee the implementation of the UGC scheme and to clarify problems that might arise from time to time.

Women's Studies

Another area of focus for the Commission was women's studies. It concentrated on strengthening the database for better analysis of survey and research findings and agreed to extend financial support to universities undertaking well-defined research projects, and also for development of curriculum and extension activities. Proposals were invited for this purpose in 1983-84, which were examined by an expert group.

If we look at the steady increase in women's enrolment, the results are remarkable. Women's enrolment grew from a mere 40,000 in 1950-51 to 12.51 lakhs in 1988-89 recording an increase of more than thirty times over a three and a half decade period. In absolute terms, the number of women enrolled increased from 7.80 lakhs in 1979-80 to 12.51 lakhs in 1988-89 and 13.67 lakhs in 1989-90. The number of women's colleges went up from 577 in 1979-80 to 851 in 1989-90, recording an increase of over 43 per cent during this decade. It is interesting to note that the percentage of women's enrolment at the research level increased faster than the percentage enrolment at other levels. In 1988-89, the Commission introduced a scheme of part-time post-doctoral associateships for talented women scholars in the humanities, social sciences, science and engineering and technology, who were unable to devote their full time to research.

In as many as fourteen states as well as in Delhi, women's enrolment was higher than the all-India average of 32.2 per cent. Another trend was of more women opting for professional courses. The all-India average of women's enrolment continued to rise reaching 32.5 per cent in 1990-91. As in the earlier years, Kerala with 53.0 per cent continued to lead, followed by Punjab, Delhi and Haryana. Bihar remained at the bottom with only 16.4 per cent women's enrolment.

Role of Teachers and NET

The Commission continuously emphasized the pivotal role of teachers in education. To that end, it evolved schemes and projects to help them keep abreast of the latest developments in their subjects and provide

opportunities for interaction so as to enable them to find the programmes, innovations and efforts being made in other universities and colleges.

In order to ensure quality and a certain uniformity of standards at the recruitment level, the UGC introduced a national test for junior research fellows and lecturers. This was also in pursuance of the Programme of Action of the National Policy on Education (1986) that laid down that “the teachers in universities and colleges will be recruited on the basis of a common qualifying test, the details of which will be formulated by the UGC.” In pursuance of this, the Government of India in its notification of July 1988 regarding revised pay scales of teachers in universities and colleges stated that “only those candidates who, besides fulfilling the minimum academic qualifications, prescribed for the post of lecturer, have qualified in a comprehensive test to be specifically conducted for the purpose, will be eligible for appointment as lecturers.”

Keeping in view this policy and the recommendations made by a study group of academics that a qualifying test of eligibility nature for the recruitment of lecturers be conducted by the UGC, the Commission formulated a scheme of conducting qualifying tests for first appointment as lecturers in universities, colleges and similar institutions. The scheme stipulated that those who had already qualified for the Junior Research Fellowship (JRF) examination held by the UGC and CSIR would be exempted from the test. The Commission decided to hold a JRF examination together with the CSIR in subjects common to both the UGC and the CSIR schemes of examination. This meant that the CSIR would conduct examinations for science subjects while the UGC would do so for the humanities, including languages and social sciences. It was further decided to set up a coordination committee chaired by Anand Swarup for conducting this joint examination.. Also, those who had already completed their M. Phil. and Ph.D. would be exempted from appearing in the test up to December 1990 and December 1992 respectively.

Gnanam Committee

A committee was also constituted under the chairmanship of A. Gnanam to review the management pattern of higher education

including the structures, roles and responsibilities of the various university bodies, to develop alternate effective models and to set criteria for the assessment of performance of educational institutions. The committee recommended a more participatory approach to the management of universities with greater decentralization. It stressed aspects like university autonomy, accountability, planning, funds and the relationship of the university, state government and the UGC with each other. It also defined the powers and functions of various functionaries, authorities and bodies in the university system. This report was discussed at a special meeting of the Commission in July, and then again in October 1990 after which the Commission forwarded the report together with its own recommendations to the Ministry of Human Resource Development. These were placed before the CABE in March 1992, which desired that a sub-committee should be appointed to examine the report as its recommendations had far-reaching implications.

The Gnanam Committee recognized the fact that since higher education had an important role to play not only in academic pursuits but also in national development, universities should have a sound and scientific framework for governance. It suggested some general principles. Since universities were centres of excellence, they were also vehicles for regional and national development. Hence, the NPE must allow universities to occupy centre stage. Students, teachers and administrators, together with some public figures, must come together to determine the course and objectives of the university. It should also be realized that academic administration was difficult and different from what was prevalent either in the government or in the corporate sector. It had to be based on principles of decentralization, participation, autonomy and accountability and have the flexibility to adapt itself to the changing needs of the country. Hence, administration of all universities under a single framework would not be desirable. Only broad patterns of university management should be legislated, leaving the details to be framed by each individual university.

University autonomy was essential to ensure academic excellence and development. Elections were not a proper means of constituting university bodies. Representation on university bodies should be on the basis of selection and political interference should be avoided by not allowing any ministers, members of legislative assemblies and

councils, or office bearers of political parties to hold any office in the university system. Members of staff, both teaching and non-teaching of a university or college should not be allowed to contest elections to the Parliament, state legislatures or any local bodies unless they take extraordinary leave from the date of filing their nominations. They should also not be permitted to hold any office in a political party or organization. The political parties themselves should work out a code of conduct to ensure that the student community was left completely free to engage itself in study and research. Nomination of student representatives on university bodies should be based on their excellence in curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities but there should be no elections for this purpose. More women should be inducted in the planning and management bodies of departments, faculties and universities.

Powers in a university must be decentralized and delegated to Deans and Heads so as to make the faculties and departments powerful instruments of advancement of knowledge. They should function through various committees with adequate powers of decision-making to deal with matters of admission, research, budget and others. Some recommendations for decentralization were radical. For example, the Gnanam Committee maintained that university departments could be grouped together to become independent faculties. Existing faculties could be put together to become autonomous institutes with the central registry performing essentially a coordinating and unifying role.

An institute must have full administrative, academic and financial autonomy exercised through a Board of Management and its own Academic Council. Faculties and departments should be empowered to resolve grievances of the non-teaching staff, including matters relating to leave service conditions, job qualifications and others, according to general policies centrally formulated by the university. Universities should be gradually divested of the responsibility of regulating courses, conducting examinations and awarding degrees to students enrolled through affiliated colleges and left to concentrate on postgraduate education and research. Hence, the move for granting autonomy to colleges should be further strengthened.

Every university having colleges affiliated to it should have a Collegiate Council presided over by the vice-chancellor of the university and

it should be the final authority on all matters connected with the collegiate wing of the university. Universities with a large number of affiliated institutions should establish regional centres or sub-campuses for them. Each sub-campus should be autonomous within the broad guidelines laid down by the university and should be responsible for formulating courses, conducting examinations and exercising supervision and control over colleges.

For development of higher education and research in universities, it was necessary that full advantage was also taken of the special facilities and resources available in institutions concerned with advanced work and research outside the universities, like national laboratories and other research organizations. The movement of people organized on the basis of a deliberate policy, between universities, national laboratories, industry and government scientific departments would be of utmost value and benefit to all concerned. Research scientists and scholars from the national laboratories and institutes should be nominated on university bodies such as academic councils, planning boards, faculties, boards of study, and boards of research and extension. Universities as centres of research should recognize research laboratories and institutes. National research laboratories should be given the status of deemed to be universities if they undertake teaching and training programmes. Collaboration with industry was also important for university development. Fostering a close working relationship with industry through visiting professorship would bring various practitioners into the academic fold, which would be of mutual benefit and go a long way in making university education more meaningful, and also provide inputs of directly marketable skills.

Accountability would be maintained at all levels. Accountability of the teachers to the heads of departments and theirs to deans or directors who should be accountable to the vice-chancellor and various university bodies. The university, through the vice-chancellor, should be accountable to society. Everyone in the university community should realize that autonomy and academic freedom do not mean freedom from accountability. Performance appraisals would be made at levels of individual faculty members, college and departments and at the larger level of the university system itself on the basis of sound quantifiable norms. Teachers would work out the details of these carefully as they were essentially geared to their professional

development and should be linked to suitable schemes of incentives and disincentives, without which the appraisal would become a mere academic exercise. Autonomous bodies comprising experts would assess performance of academic institutions like a department or faculty or college or university. There would also be performance appraisals within institutions so that they become aware of their shortcomings and evolve their own methods of improvement.

There was a considerable lack of consciousness in the universities about the need for and importance of planning. It was essential that universities establish a statutory planning process like a planning and monitoring board so that the goals and objectives of the university were clearly defined and linked to the development plans at the state and national levels. This would serve two purposes — first, of planning both in the long and short term and second, of continuous monitoring and evaluation in the university system. The planning and monitoring board would consist of members drawn from the faculty, state government, the State Council of Higher Education, colleges and other bodies.

State Councils of Higher Education would be constituted through Acts of State Legislatures in every state to plan, monitor and coordinate the functioning of the universities and other institutions of higher education within the state. However, the role and function of such a body would not infringe upon the autonomy of the university. It would be composed predominantly of academics with a provision for a nominee of the UGC on it. The Councils would have a full-time chairman, who must be an eminent educationist with considerable working experience in higher education and research preferably having served as Vice-Chancellor. His term of office would be three years extendable by another term up to the age of 65 years.

The terms of reference, functions, composition and other issues of the Council would make it a body to assist and facilitate the universities and affiliated colleges in their functioning and not degenerate into an additional hurdle to be overcome or a mere grant transmitting agency. It would promote effective coordination with the UGC. Till such time that the Councils were set up, a committee of Vice-Chancellors of all the universities in a state would perform this role. The Government of India might circulate a Model Bill on State Council of Higher Education

to all state governments indicating its composition, functions, powers and other issues for the purpose of uniformity. The Act of Central Universities would provide for a Council of Central Universities for coordination of central programmes and other matters amongst the central universities. The Council may include the chairman and vice-chairman, all the vice-chancellors of central universities, some professors and others. The decisions of the Council would be final and be implemented by the concerned universities.

The governments would normally perform the role of partners in the promotion of higher education, and not that of exercising control. The universities would not only have complete autonomy in administrative and academic matters but also financial autonomy according to the guidelines formulated by the UGC or the State Councils of Higher Education and agreed upon by the universities and the governments. The statute-making powers would vest with the universities. However, the statutes would need the assent of the Visitor on the advice of the UGC and the State Council of Higher Education, in case any of their provisions were at variance with their own Acts and Statutes or if they involved sizeable recurring additional financial commitments not acceptable to the funding agency.

The powers of affiliation or disaffiliation of colleges would rest with the university but approval would need to be taken from the government for the purpose of a grant. The approval would follow affiliation given by the university and not vice-versa. The university would, however, seek the opinion of the government before granting affiliation. The provisions of university legislation that inhibited the universities in the exercise of their academic judgement on matters like affiliation, appointment of key functionaries like the Registrar, Finance Officer and others, should be withdrawn. Their appointment would vest with the university and not with the Chancellor or state governments.

The Gnanam Committee visualized considerably enhanced powers and functions for the UGC than it currently had. It suggested that the central government should come forward with a core central legislation with a few broad provisions for all universities to ensure that state governments conformed to the requirements relating to coordination and determination of standards in institutions of higher

education. These must be mandatorily incorporated into the Acts of all universities so that they were obliged to follow them and adhere to the regulations issued by the UGC periodically. No new university would be established without the prior concurrence of the UGC and the basis of establishing them would be general norms evolved with reference to the special needs and size of the population in the region together with the size of any existing university in that area and other interrelated factors. New legislation including amendments to existing ones in respect of state universities would be referred to the UGC prior to its enactment. The UGC would have greater involvement in the development of higher education in the country. However, its role would be mainly of an advisory and persuasive nature and it would not interfere in the autonomy of the universities. The UGC would also advise the Visitor in matters of university education, particularly with regard to aspects relating to coordination and standards.

State Council of Higher Education

The National Policy on Education together with the Programme of Action stated that there was no effective machinery to plan and meet for academics to hold personal discussions at appropriate levels, follow up progress of the implementation of programmes and schemes with universities, and hold dialogues with ministries at central and state levels, so as to create awareness and generate a climate conducive to implement strategies to make higher education more dynamic.

In this regard, it was considered necessary to set up State Councils of Higher Education as statutory bodies to coordinate higher education, both at the state level and interact with the UGC. The chief functions would be to prepare and consolidate programmes of higher education in each state, scrutinize the development programmes of universities and colleges, and advise the UGC in maintenance of standards. They would assist the state governments in determining block maintenance grants, encourage the programme of autonomous colleges, monitor the implementation of programmes, assess the performance of institutions and advise the government on the setting up of new institutions.

The Eighth Plan

In 1989-90, the UGC identified the thrust areas for the Eighth Five-Year Plan. Many of them were old concerns that had to be pursued further and some were related to the strengthening of projects launched during the Seventh Plan. They included autonomous colleges; special assistance programmes; further strengthening of education in science and technology; enhanced faculties for Schedules Castes, Tribes, women and minorities; spread of mass communication and education technology network; redesigning of courses and introduction of new ones; academic staff colleges for teachers; fellowships and scholarships for teachers, students and researchers; and the implementation of the qualifying test for the recruitment of teachers.

Most of these issues were also the concern of the National Policy on Education as revised in 1992. The Commission noted that action had already been taken on several schemes outlined in the Programme of Action for Higher Education. Certain doubts needed to be clarified through consultation with appropriate government agencies. For example, the Ministry of Welfare needed to give directions on whether linguistic minorities could also be considered under schemes for minorities. Also, clarifications were needed on whether it was acceptable to moderate reservation at postgraduate level so that those admitted could actually cope with the course. The National Assessment and Accreditation Council had to be further promoted and the UGC would favourably consider the setting up of community colleges as and when adequate resources became available for vocational programmes.

While circulating guidelines to the universities, the UGC identified certain priority areas. Existing departments of the universities had to be oriented to provide a better climate for teaching and research, and extension had to be made an integral part of education. Courses had to be modernized and oriented towards more relevance for regional and national development. Specialized courses or areas of study had to be developed in existing departments and inter-departmental linkages established both at the undergraduate and postgraduate level to link them better with the needs of society and various development sectors including the rural and the agricultural.

Both academic and infrastructural support was needed to achieve these objectives. Additional academic staff requirements could be met, keeping in view whether any of the existing staff was being fully utilized. Library and laboratory facilities together with workshops for central instrumentation and maintenance of equipment needed to be upgraded. In this context, the establishment of the Information Library Network Centre was also to be considered. Automation of libraries was a must to make them information centres and link them through modern communication technology so that there could be a sharing of information and research. Common facilities for students including counselling services and linkages with appropriate employment agencies had to be improved.

Vice-Chancellors' Conference of 1991

The Vice-Chancellors' Conference in 1991 made significant recommendations. One was to increase the outlay for affiliated colleges as most of the teaching took place there. There was a need to rationalize tuition fees while simultaneously providing adequate concessions like scholarships, freeships, subsidized loans and others to economically weaker sections of society. There was an urgent need to strengthen courses and curricula, evaluate performance of institutions and teachers, and ensure that the existing facilities were optimally used.

There was deep concern about reservations made by state governments in establishing State Councils of Higher Education. It was pointed out that these were essential for long-term planning and management of higher education particularly in colleges which was, by and large, absent because universities had a marginal role to play in the development of colleges once affiliation had been granted. It was suggested that the Central Advisory Board of Education should meet once a year with Education Secretaries and vice-chancellors to arrive at realistic policy decisions for improving the quality of college education.

Different models of the governance of colleges were suggested, especially in the case of universities with many affiliated colleges. One was to create a Statutory University Committee for Colleges

that would be responsible for providing them development grants and would promote cooperation between them and the experts so that academic and research programmes could be supported. The second was to have a Central University of Colleges that could work as a resource development centre for all colleges located in the union territories and also examine and recommend their financial requirements to the government. Colleges would have to provide flexibility in courses to make them relevant to the employment needs and thus enhance the employability of students.

The other significant recommendations were pertaining to distance education and the need to strengthen it. They went so far as to say that 6 per cent of the budget of higher education should be allocated to distance education. There was, at the same time, a need to review the quality of distance education being offered by different universities including the course material being provided. Expanding the distance education programme would go a long way in reducing the burden on formal education and reducing regional imbalances. States should be encouraged to set up open universities and diversify the courses in the existing ones to enhance the employability of students. There should be a mechanism of transfer between the formal and the distance education systems and a credit system should be introduced at all levels to enable this to happen. Teachers and administrators of distance education should be trained in newer teaching methodologies and encouraged to use audio and video tapes apart from textual material.

There was in-depth discussion on the current status of the coordination mechanism between different institutions imparting distance education with regard to IGNOU, the apex body vested with the powers of maintaining and coordinating standards of distance education. It was suggested that since there was an overlap between it and the UGC, it would be appropriate to set up a committee with representatives from both the UGC and IGNOU to oversee distance education.

Thus it can be said that the UGC took brave and bold steps in this decade. The UGC Act was amended in 1984 and the Mehrotra Committee laid down the broad guidelines for UGC's action. The National Policy on Education was in tune with this. The Re-Designing of Courses, Assessment and Accreditation Council along with special steps for the

upliftment of the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and Women all point to the taking of new vital steps. As the new millennium approached, the UGC geared itself to tackle new challenges thrown open by the advent of a globalized and liberalized era.

CHAPTER VI

Golden Jubilee and Post-Policy Interventions (1993-2003)

While much had been achieved in the four decades since the inception of the UGC, there was an increasing need to take stock before plunging headlong into the challenges being constantly thrown up by the age of information. Part of the introspective mood was the result of the rapid expansion of higher education and the increasingly felt resource crunch. Both concerns were evident in the guidelines for the Ninth Plan Period when steps were taken to bring in both academic and administrative accountability. In this decade, the Eighth and Ninth Five-Year Plans were implemented and the policy was made for the Tenth Five-Year Plan. Ram Reddy (1991-1994) completed his tenure as Chairman, UGC as did Armaity S. Desai (1995-1999) and Hari P. Gautam (1999-2002). The Chairman, Arun Nigavekar (2002-2005), has had to deal with the radical educational vision of the Tenth Five-Year Plan in keeping with the rapid and far-reaching changes taking place in the various sectors as a result of liberalization and globalization of the Indian economy.

Punnayya Committee

The UGC set up a committee under the chairmanship of Justice K. Punnayya to advise it on the funding of institutions of higher education. The Commission generally accepted the report submitted in 1993-94, and the recommendations were circulated to the state governments and to the central and state universities. The Punnayya Committee unequivocally stated that the state or the government must continue to accept the major responsibility of funding the essential maintenance and developmental requirements of the universities.

It deprecated the tendency to view education in a truncated fashion and to set one sector against another. However, the basis of funding of a central university could be linked to its specific objectives and to its pursuit of excellence, innovation, all-India character and the ability to provide access to weaker sections.

It was felt that from the Ninth Plan onwards, grants should be related to the unit cost of education as a rule except for new programmes for which unit costs had not been determined or would be difficult to determine. The government would ensure that the maintenance grant covered the wage bill of the universities, including periodic increases in increments, dearness allowance and other service charges. Heavy subsidies in many of the activities covered under maintenance grants, such as supply of electricity, transport, water supply and others needed to be reviewed and reduced by a substantial extent in order to stabilize the maintenance grant at an acceptable level. For this, an optimum division between academic and non-academic costs would be worked out.

Development grants would be linked to an academic audit system and performance indicators were to be developed by each university. Central universities had to avoid offering conventional courses, except where they were especially needed. For academic infrastructural facilities, no distinction would be made between plan and non-plan grants and the entire system must be viewed as a whole. The UGC needed to have a well-developed system for defining the objectives and profile of each central university as well as for monitoring its development. It was recommended that the UGC constitute a Standing Advisory Committee of experts who would continue on a reasonably long-term basis for evaluating the perspective plans drawn up by central universities and monitoring them.

The Vice-Chancellors would be provided with a specified discretionary fund to be used for promoting excellence in teaching and research, without incurring any recurring liability. Once the five-year plan of a university was finalized, it would itself be competent to implement these schemes within the broad guidelines of the UGC. Each university would have a Statutory Building Committee, thus ruling out the need for it to seek the approval of the UGC for construction of buildings, once the Building Committee had approved plans and estimates.

The university would have an efficient system for dissemination of information regarding development of resources and implementation of academic and non-academic plan programmes. Both the UGC and the universities would organize an efficient, reliable and prompt information system for the storage and retrieval of data and its analysis. Two parallel quantitative norms for determining the non-plan grants were suggested. One was to determine the optimum proportion of the total maintenance grant for a particular activity and the other, the optimum recurring cost per student per annum.

It was recommended that the academic cost, that is, the expenditure directly related to teaching and research, should be 60 - 65 per cent of the total maintenance grant, 10-12 per cent on academic administration and 20-25 per cent on other heads and auxiliary services. The recommended student-teacher ratio was 1:12. The teaching to non-teaching staff ratio would be brought to 1:3 and employees like gardeners, cleaners, watch wards and others should be engaged on a contractible basis, to the extent possible. The minimum work load for professors, readers and lecturers was prescribed as forty hours per week and the work distribution for actual teaching and tutorials, examination work, research, own reading, administrative work, and assistance to students was spelt out in detail.

While the government and the UGC might continue to be major funding agencies, universities would have to generate sizeable internal resources in course of time. Fees for library, laboratory, and sports would be revised upwards to recover a significant part of the recurring cost. Hostel fees would be revised with immediate effect to meet all the actual recurring costs and in due course of time, a part of the capital costs as well. The student community would be involved in the discussions to raise resources, whenever their interest was affected. The income derived from the enhancement of fees would be used to augment fellowships and scholarships for meritorious students belonging to the socially and economically weaker sections of society to ensure that they got access to higher education. There was also a need to review the cost of municipal, civil and other services that were extended to individual members of the university in their personal capacity and the cost recovered from them.

The existing scheme of the Department of Welfare to provide tuition and living expenses to students belonging to Scheduled Castes and Tribes also needed streamlining. The "Book-Bank" scheme in institutions also had to be strengthened. The UGC would introduce broad based student scholarship schemes for postgraduate students studying in central universities that could be given to about 20 per cent of the postgraduate students.

For generating income, the universities would let out their infrastructural facilities like playgrounds, auditoria and others and also organize short-term courses that were in demand. They should solicit endowments and contributions and actively participate in consultancy, without affecting academic activity. Any additional resources generated by a university or institution could be kept in a separate fund, to be used for furtherance of its objectives. The UGC could provide a matching grant as an incentive to universities generating additional resources. There would be 100 per cent income tax concession on all endowments and contributions made to universities, and additional concessions to donors sponsoring selected research projects in universities. The resources generated by the universities would constitute at least 15 per cent of the total recurring expenditure at the end of the first Five-Years and at least 25 per cent at the end of ten years. A significant proportion of the internally generated resources and incentive grants received from the UGC for the purpose would be put in a corpus fund. The UGC could also provide corpus fund grants to institutions in addition to maintenance and development grants.

Grants to Delhi Colleges

The question of grants to Delhi colleges came up periodically before the Commission which set up a committee under the chairmanship of A.C. Joshi in 1967 to review the rules regarding Grants-in-Aid to Delhi colleges. The committee prepared a comprehensive list indicating the items that were to be treated as "approved income and approved expenditure". Detailed guidelines had also been given by it for releasing different instalments to colleges on the submission of certain specified documents. The Commission later appointed a

Committee under the chairmanship of V.C. Kulandaswamy, the then Vice-Chancellor of Anna University, which submitted its report in June, 1985. The committee recommended that the Commission might pay 100 per cent grants for expenditure on salaries and related items after taking into account the income from tuition and admission fees. Other heads of expenditure could be grouped into two. The first might pertain to items relating to instruction, which the UGC and the management could share equally. The second might consist of miscellaneous expenses such as maintenance of gardens and playing fields, college magazine, sports, identity cards and expenses on convocation. The expenditure on these could be met out of the income and there should be no deficit. This should be treated as a Revolving Fund and the college should be allowed to carry forward the balance, if any.

The Commission, at its meeting held on February 10, 1986, accepted the Kulandaswamy Report. It agreed that instalments should henceforth be fully paid to Delhi colleges according to the schedule recommended by the Kulandaswamy Report. The Commission further wanted the financial implication of the recommendations of the committee to be worked out. In pursuance of that the Commission requested the Punnayya Committee to have a fresh look at the Delhi colleges with three main terms of reference: first, the funding problem of all colleges affiliated to Delhi University; second, issues relating to assistance for buildings of Delhi colleges; and third, assistance for introduction of new courses in Delhi colleges every year. The Committee submitted its report in May 1995.

The Punnayya Committee, during its deliberations, felt that the items of expenditure could be put into two categories: those in which the colleges had no say about the quantum of expenditure; and others in which the management could regulate expenditure either by controlling the same or raising additional resources. Accordingly the committee recommended that the UGC should meet the entire expenditure on salaries and admissible allowances to the staff together with other related matters. The other charges could be grouped under two heads, one for which assistance could be provided on a sharing basis after taking into account income from fees and other sources if any; and for other items, colleges could meet the expenses from the income raised for these from the students. However, Delhi colleges would

have to abide by the staff strength as determined in accordance with the teacher-pupil ratio. Also, the workload of teachers had to adhere to the norms prescribed by the UGC through its regulations framed under Section 26 of the Act. The University, too, would have to take effective steps to revise the tuition fee upwards for different courses as recommended by the different committees since 1968.

Implementation of the Punnayya Committee Report

The above Report was considered and accepted by the Commission in December 1997. It wanted it to be implemented only after the unit cost had been worked out for each college. The Report was forwarded to the MHRD, with a request for necessary funds to be disbursed in accordance with the recommendations made by the Committee. The Commission agreed in principle to finalize the audited accounts of Delhi colleges according to pre-1991-92 and also estimated that a sum of about Rs.3 crores would have to be adjusted in the future to colleges. It also observed that Delhi University and its colleges were not following procedures prescribed by the Commission for framing proposals to start new courses. Often, financial sanctions for them were being taken long after the beginning of the academic year. The Committee, therefore, recommended that it would be incumbent on the colleges to submit the proposals well in advance to enable the Commission to consider them and give its decision so that such courses could be started at the beginning of the academic year after they had been included in the college prospectus and proper financial provisions could be made for the required additional space and staff together with books and equipment.

Several steps were taken after the Punnayya Committee Report had been accepted. The Punnayya Committee indicated the unit cost of education, optimum teacher-student ratio and other such data. The Commission also attempted to work out the unit cost of education, for which data was collected from central and deemed universities maintained by the Commission. Simultaneously, subject panels were requested to work out the optimum class strength in each subject at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels, together

with the core journals that should be received by the departments in their subject areas. The Commission was also authorized to undertake a study to ascertain the student support system available at the universities at the national and state levels and approve the measures for saving cost and improving efficiency so that resources could be better utilized to provide a critical minimum level.

Ninth Five-Year Plan

During the Eighth Five-Year Plan, the University Grants Commission identified a large number of indicators to review the performance of the universities and decided that one-third of the total plan grant would be allocated to them according to their performance evaluated on the basis of identified indicators. The Planning Commission appointed a working group, chaired by the Chairperson of the University Grants Commission, to draft the Ninth Plan for Higher Education. It did not include technical and management education and open universities, for which separate committees were appointed. The annual Vice-Chancellors' Conference was held at Rabindra Bharti University at Kolkata in November 1996 to discuss the development of higher education during the Ninth Year Plan and future perspectives. It discussed significant issues such as the contribution of higher education to national development; women's empowerment; first-generation learners and students belonging to the deprived sections of society; the changing role of higher education in the wake of new economic developments in areas of general science, social sciences including commerce and humanities; technological advances and their impact on higher education with special reference to research, development and information systems and the upgradation of universities and colleges in backward areas.

The guidelines circulated to the universities for the Ninth Five-Year Plan had four thrust areas: improvement of standards and quality of education; removal of social disparities and regional imbalances in higher educational facilities; restructuring of courses including development of career-oriented courses; and grant of autonomous status to qualifying colleges.

Autonomous Colleges

The UGC tried to promote autonomous colleges as instruments of academic excellence since the Fourth Five-Year Plan (1969-73), in pursuance of the recommendations of the Education Commission (1964-66). They were seen as crucial to fulfilling one of the foremost priorities of the UGC — pursuit of excellence and promotion of quality to make education relevant and to enhance equity and access to university education. It was felt that greater emphasis and encouragement had to be given to the scheme of autonomous colleges to promote innovation and academic flexibility in curricula. In 1999-2000, there were a total of 131 autonomous colleges in the country. The parent university could confer the status of autonomy upon a college, which was permanently affiliated, initially for a period of Five-Years with the concurrence of the state government and the University Grants Commission. It would then review the functioning of the college periodically with the help of a committee constituted for the purpose. It was also decided that financial support to autonomous colleges that had completed ten years should not be reduced but be divided into two parts — 50 per cent of the grant could be used for purposes indicated by the UGC and the remainder for the innovations proposed by colleges and approved by the UGC. Autonomous colleges, too, should get themselves accredited by the NAAC once in Five-Years.

Libraries

In 1998, the UGC took stock of the university library system on the basis of the recommendations of the Second National Review Committee on University and College Libraries. It approved that a university should not be allowed to change the prescribed ratio of expenditure on one item to another item or items and these norms should be strictly adhered to. This should be emphasized over and over again and included in all future schemes. Of course, it did not preclude marginal changes and variations depending on the justified needs with the prior approval of the Commission.

Recommendations relating to library automation and impact of special grants paid to universities and staff training could be referred

to INFLIBNET for further action. The Commission approved the constitution of a standing committee for the development and monitoring of libraries together with a library cell in the office of the UGC. It also approved the constitution of a special visiting team, which would inspect the impact of the use of the special library grant paid to universities as some problems were highlighted with respect to certain universities.

Universities with Potential for Excellence

In its quest for excellence, the UGC proposed to identify some universities that could be considered for the grant of the status of universities with potential for excellence. In 2000-2001, five universities were identified. These were the Jawaharlal Nehru University and the Universities of Hyderabad, Chennai, Pune and Jadavpur. Based on their performance, they were each given a sum of Rs. 5 crores to enable them to optimize their potential. The scheme has now been extended to colleges also and the UGC is identifying colleges with the potential for excellence.

Training of Educational Administrators

As part of its efforts to improve the quality of the institutions of higher education, the Government of India appointed a nine-member committee to review the status of the existing training facilities for educational administrators, identifying their needs and suggesting measures to augment facilities for their professional development. The committee submitted its report to the government in September 1992. The report was sent to the Commission for its comments

The main recommendation of the Committee was to establish a nodal training institution at the national level, to be called the National Institute for Training and Research in Higher Education. It was to be a registered society under the UGC and set up as an Inter-University Centre to promote common training facilities. Its major objectives and functions would be to formulate a training policy, promote research and management of higher education, identify training

needs and provide the training, share information and expertise in the field, and work out the feasibility of establishing community colleges. The report was placed on February 23, 1993 before the Commission, which accepted it in principle.

Subject Panels and Emerging Areas

Subject panels were restructured and reconstituted during 1996-97. It was decided that the term of each member of the reconstituted panel would be three years and every year one-third of the members of the panel would relinquish their membership. This pattern was adopted to provide continuity to the work of the panels. While reconstituting subject panels, efforts were made to cover all major areas of specialization within the discipline of the subject, keeping in view the geographical distribution, gender balance and adequate representation of the universities. The Commission also decided to review all courses in emerging areas. The UGC set up an expert group to consider proposals from universities on environment education and approved assistance for workshops and seminars on the subject at the postgraduate level in different university and college departments. It also considered the introduction of a special paper on environment at the post-graduate level; an M.Sc. programme in Environment Education in ten universities; and six research projects together with their application on a large scale. The Commission prepared textbooks and some popular literature on environment with the help of experts for undergraduates and more than a hundred television episodes were telecast in its "Countrywide Classroom" programme for promoting environment awareness.

To cater to the needs of underdeveloped and rural sectors, especially women, tribal and hilly regions, the UGC identified eight subjects: agro-service, dry land farming, rural handicrafts, hill agriculture, silviculture, non-conventional energy sources, soil conservation and water management and forestry and wildlife management. Two additional subjects were identified. They were early childhood care and education, and the science and art of teaching. The UGC entered into a memorandum of understanding with the Indian Council of Agricultural Research to extend its support and assistance in terms of

faculty, laboratories and other infrastructure facilities through state agricultural universities and Krishi Vigyan Kendras.

Courses Pertaining to Indian Tradition

The UGC initiated a scheme for the “Promotion of Yoga Education and Practice in Universities” in 1993, with the aim of establishing Yoga Education and Practice Centres on university campuses and approved the proposals of ten universities to establish new yoga centres. The UGC also decided to support at least ten universities in establishing and strengthening yoga departments and further augmenting yogic science by establishing full-fledged departments of “Human Consciousness and Yogic Science” in certain deserving universities. These departments would be responsible not only for the award of undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in this discipline, but would also engage in meaningful research leading to M. Phil. and Ph.D. degrees. The object was to create competent faculty and also incorporate traditionally trained people in yoga education and practice.

Further, the UGC decided to promote innovations in quality teaching and research in Sanskrit and even sponsored the Veda Vyasa National Sanskrit Award for the purpose. It also sponsored a new programme, the “UGC Sanskrit Award”, and gave grants to fifty-seven universities and institutions to celebrate 1999-2000 as the year of Sanskrit. Proposals for the promotion of Sanskrit and to establish Saral Sanskrit Speaking Centres in universities were considered. It was decided, in principle, to set them up in select universities in line with the already established yoga centres.

The Commission felt that there was a need to rejuvenate Vedic astrology so that this knowledge could reach society and become known to the world at large. To this end, it approved, in principle, the setting up of a few departments of Jyotir Vigyan in Universities. A twelve-member committee constituted by the Commission considered the proposals of forty-one universities. The committee decided that at least one university from each state should be assisted in opening such a department and consequently proposed twenty universities. The Committee also felt that only degree courses should

be conducted and so introduced the B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. in Jyotir Vigyan. The Commission also introduced the B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. in Paurohitya in the universities on exactly the same pattern as in Jyotir Vigyan. Out of the forty-one universities that sent in their proposals, twenty-one were selected.

In compliance with the Official Language Act, the UGC had initially set up the Rajbhasha Cell that became a full-fledged section in 1992. It was supposed to create awareness and accelerate the use of the Rajbhasha in official working, for which it was to organize opportunities for UGC officials to train in Hindi. Further, it was to conduct seminars and workshops for the promotion of Hindi as an official working language and to organize programmes like essay competitions, debates, discussions and others to celebrate the Hindi Divas during the Hindi Pakhwara from September 1-14 every year. It was to also introduce innovative courses like certificate courses in functional Hindi and diploma courses in Hindi translation, journalism and other allied fields.

Science Education and Inculcation of the Scientific Temper

The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) communicated to the UGC that the Department of Science and Technology had decided to declare 1993 as 'the year of the scientific temper'. A committee under the chairmanship of Yashpal made certain broad observations and recommendations in this regard. It felt that a scientific temperament could not be inculcated overnight or in isolation from several other factors that were a part of an individual's psyche, outlook or approach. It was not an appendage or device that could be given to or acquired by an individual or something that he could use or discard at will. The human mind, psyche and temperament were very complex and factors and forces that influenced it could be many and varied. It was, therefore, a very difficult task to design a practical, action-oriented strategy to stimulate and promote a scientific temper among people.

In any case, a scientific temper of mind per se had nothing to do with the teaching and learning of science. It was really an outlook,

an approach and a methodology that did not admit or take anything for granted without looking at available facts, data and evidence at a given time and without asking questions and obtaining reasonably good answers in respect of any inconsistencies that might arise on a close and keen observation of them. Since a scientific temper was absolutely essential for societal progress, the committee proposed to use all the tools available such as institutions, media, individuals and technologies in its propagation. It also wanted an apex body to coordinate, facilitate, plan and guide the efforts of both governmental and non-governmental organizations. However, the implementation would have to be local and decentralized to be effective.

The strategy was to use the media and its reach together with interpersonal and interactive communication through the use of local and folk forms. The involvement of teachers and students was crucial for mass mobilization. Institutions like the NCC and NSS, Nehru Yuvak Kendras and Krishi Vigyan Kendras would be used not only to create awareness and bring about attitudinal changes, but also for small local community-oriented schemes. An immediately beneficial fall-out would be an improvement in the quality of life of the deprived and the disadvantaged. A more gradual and long-term benefit would be the promotion of a rational approach, a philosophy of self-help and reduced dependence on god and government. In urban areas, it would help reduce crime and deprivation.

Through its “Countrywide Classroom” programme, the UGC could telecast capsules of about three to four minutes duration every day before the beginning of every programme and ask universities to encourage programmes on scientific awareness. Based on the recommendations of the UGC and the Indian National Science Association (INSA), a high-powered committee approved national lectureships and adjunct professorships to rejuvenate science education and research in universities. The national lectureship in science was to be offered from 2000-2001 as an incentive to talented students who got first divisions and first positions in their respective universities in M.Sc. and were committed to research in science. Adjunct professorships were to be awarded to suitable persons from industry, research establishments or other relevant institutions to promote and encourage greater interaction between universities and industry and research centres in scientific and technical areas.

The Commission endorsed the recommendations of the Indian Science Congress held at Delhi University in January 1997. As universities provided human resources for all institutions, organizations and development programmes, the university system had to be strengthened to ensure that science prospered in the country. Nearly all institutions of higher education were crippled because of paucity of funds, but budgetary support for science education had to be increased manifold to enable competent individuals and groups to receive special support from the government without difficulty and delay. Further, since it was necessary to attract talented youth to take up science, technology and research as a career, the MHRD had to initiate a mechanism to ensure proper placements for select research workers in science and technology in appropriate institutions in keeping with their competence. Also, a National Information Highway was needed so that researchers could have access to all the available information in the field of national development. Universities had to be connected through a low cost network so that they could collaborate and share expertise in research, skills and sophisticated equipment.

Undergraduate Education

The Commission organized a Vice-Chancellors' Conference on December 20, 1993 at the University of Delhi. The Theme was "Academic Structure of Undergraduate Education: Need for Flexibility and Innovation". Several important recommendations emerged from it. Undergraduate education in India had to be brought on par with the standards prevailing in developed countries. For this, it was necessary to widen the knowledge base of undergraduates by adding foundation courses in areas such as environment, population, peace, international understanding, human values, history and culture, moral education, history of science and technology, and others. The idea was to create awareness among students about Indian history and culture together with the culture of Asia and Africa, the Indian freedom movement, the role of science and technology, Gandhian thought, and others.

There was also a need for core courses aimed at making students broadly familiar with their chosen disciplines including the study of one or more subjects in greater detail. In addition, courses could

be introduced to expose students to the world of work. Vocational courses could also be incorporated in undergraduate courses while restructuring them. Students had to be given flexibility in selecting their courses according to their aptitudes and interests across the existing faculties of arts, science, commerce, medicine, engineering and others. Reforms had to be introduced pertaining to the number of courses required to be completed by an undergraduate together with their duration and sequencing so that students could study at their own pace. For this, it was necessary to adopt the credit system instead of the existing annual or semester system. Credit could also be given for participation in sports and extracurricular activities.

The UGC also decided in March 1996 that no university would be allowed to enrol candidates for the one-time B.A. degree courses from the academic year 1996-97 onwards in view of the 1985 regulations for the minimum requirements for the first degree. Representations were received from many candidates who had already enrolled. The Commission considered these and decided that they could be allowed to complete their degrees by 1998-99 and that they would be treated equally with the others in the same university for all purposes including admission to higher courses and employment. Universities violating the Commission's decision could be debarred from receiving plan assistance.

Considering the rigidities of the Indian higher education system some recommendations that emerged from the Vice-Chancellors' Conference were radical. For example, it was felt that students should be allowed to change institutions, that is, move from one college to another and from conventional universities to open universities. Credits should also be transferred when such a change took place and there should be no need for certificates pertaining to caste, domicile and others at the time of migration. Further, there was no reason for restricting a student from taking admission simultaneously in an open university. Students should also be provided vertical mobility that would enable them to move from vocational courses to conventional ones and vice versa. Modern methods of teaching should be adopted and teaching aids be made available to students on hire. Syllabi should be continuously upgraded and universities must have inbuilt mechanisms for their review. Jobs had to be delinked from degrees.

Vocational Courses

The Commission felt that there should be meaningful linkages between vocational education at the school level and the first degree of the university. A core committee was constituted to examine courses at school level in home science and in service sectors like agriculture, paramedical, industry and commerce, electronics and others. Degree or diploma courses needed to be developed in universities and colleges to impart skills to students. Their syllabi had to be modified and made more meaningful by interaction with a cross-section of employers.

A programme of vocationalization of education at the first-degree level was launched by the UGC in 1994-95. The MHRD also provided support for its implementation. It was felt that this would help ease pressure on the Master's programme while equipping students to enter the workforce. On the recommendation of the Standing Committee on Vocational Education (SCOVE) together with its sub-committees and regional committees constituted for the purpose, two hundred and nine institutions were identified by the UGC. They included nineteen universities and a hundred and ninety colleges in the first instance.

Thirty-five vocational subjects were identified by the core committee and introduced through colleges and university departments that had the necessary facilities. In consultation with the Standing Committee on Vocational Education, guidelines were prepared to enable universities and colleges to seek UGC support and implement the scheme. Institutions were given financial support exclusively for introducing vocational subjects to help them in the training of teachers, preparation of reading materials, revision of syllabi and developing of new vocational subjects for teaching. Two to three week training programmes were organized to equip teachers who were also provided with especially prepared reading material. Two-day seminars on each vocational subject were also organized. All these gave the teachers and principals of the institutions opportunities to interact and exchange their experiences, which helped make the conduct of courses more effective.

The Committee constituted monitoring groups from amongst its own members to watch the progress of the vocational courses in

institutions where they were introduced. These courses helped in creating awareness about vocational education that gradually became more acceptable because they imparted useful skills. Industry had been initially reluctant to sign a memoranda of association with the institutions but was willing to accept students informally. However, state governments expressed concern about staffing and their ability to sustain the scheme after the central assistance from the UGC came to an end.

Community Colleges

The UGC at its meeting in June 1994 considered the project report on community colleges and desired that a feasibility study could be conducted to begin with. It accordingly constituted a committee under the chairmanship of A. Gnanam, the Vice-Chancellor of Pondicherry University. In the meantime, the Chairman, UGC, in consultation with the USIS nominated an Indian delegation of vice-chancellors and principals to visit community colleges in the United States and study their functioning. Gnanam's committee recommended that the concept behind community colleges should be incorporated in the existing degree programme by increasing its duration by one year. The first two years should be devoted to vocational and job-oriented courses and in the other two years, students should be allowed to pursue subjects in which they wished to specialize.

Taking into consideration the constraints in Indian higher education, the committee felt that the vocationalization of education at the undergraduate level could be strengthened as an alternative to establishing independent community colleges but the courses introduced should be technical and divergent enough to cater to the changing economy. However, instead of following the suggested four-year format, vocational courses were introduced at the undergraduate level in the three-year format itself. They were to be evaluated after Five-Years and restructured if required. It was also proposed that the existing infrastructure in colleges could be used for offering job-oriented programmes in the morning or evening and on weekends allowing flexibility in terms of the time and duration of the programme so that students could complete the course at their own pace. A credit system

needed to be introduced for this purpose. If community colleges had to be established as independent institutions, community resources would need to be mobilized. So a definite policy in this regard should be evolved. The existing polytechnic colleges could also be modified and founded on a broader philosophy to serve the community needs, keeping the model of community colleges in the USA in mind.

National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)

In 1994-95, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council was set up by the UGC as an Inter-University Centre with its headquarters at Bangalore, after deliberating the matter in nine regional seminars and finally at a national seminar. The NAAC was registered as a society on September 16, 1994 with five main objectives: first, to grade institutions of higher education and their programmes; second, to stimulate the academic environment and quality of teaching and research in these institutions; third, to help institutions realize their academic objectives, fourth, to promote the necessary changes, innovations and reforms in institutions; and finally, to encourage self-evaluation and accountability in higher education.

The issue of NAAC was first considered by the Commission at its meeting held on December 18, 1989. It wanted a complete proposal to be sent to the Government of India for approval. After a series of consultations, the matter was again considered by the Commission in March 1992 when it agreed to the proposal for the setting up of a National Accreditation Board for Higher Education as an Inter-University Council to function as an autonomous institution with the Chairman, UGC as its head. In September 1993, the Government of India gave its approval in principle. In July 1994, the UGC set up an empowered committee under the UGC Chairman to go into the various issues related to the setting up of the Council. The empowered committee approved the Memorandum of Association in September 1994.

To fulfil its objectives, the NAAC was authorized to perform several actions. One of them was to arrange for the periodic assessment and grading of institutions of higher education, their units, specific academic programmes and projects. It was supposed to convey the

result of assessment and grading to the concerned institutions in a form and manner appropriate for rectification and self-improvement. Through this endeavour it could help and encourage them to develop their own procedures, techniques and modalities for self-evaluation. It was to take measures to ensure the optimum use of resources and the achievement of identified goals by educational institutions. It could establish regional branches as and when necessary to ensure the smooth conduct of assessment and accreditation.

The assessment and accreditation of institutions of higher education was to be done on the basis of several criteria like the aims and objects of an institution; its organization and governance; infrastructural facilities available; the quality of teaching and learning; curriculum design and review; support services like library, laboratory instrumentation, computer facilities and student services; sources, adequacy and management of financial resources; publications and consultancy activities; and any other aspect that the executive committee might wish to examine. The most important tool for evaluation was the self-study report. Most universities take around three months time to prepare it. This creates an awareness that makes it easier for universities to take concrete measures.

Assessing the quality of education offered in an institution for higher learning is a stupendous task. Hence the NAAC began the process of developing a National Cadre of Assessors who were trained to do this task with care and objectivity. The first National Training Programme for Assessors was organized from December 15-17, 1998 in Bangalore in which twenty-six senior academics from different parts of the country participated. A national panel of assessors was developed with the help of the British Council.

The stakeholder initiated a research project on the perception of quality in Higher Education. Preliminary studies were conducted on the impact of assessment and accreditation on educational institutions. Promotional materials were printed by the NAAC and widely distributed to further the dialogue with university and college teachers. The first issue of NAAC News, the quarterly newsletter of NAAC, was published in January 1999. This was to disseminate information about NAAC and its activities throughout the country and abroad. A web site was also launched. The process of assessment

and accreditation was reviewed and strengthened by the Standing Academic Advisory Committee (SAAC) through meetings, a series of interactions and workshops. The grading system was also finalized. Detailed manuals, guidelines and formats were published to cater to different segments of the education system. The Handbook for Assessors was also finalized to guide the visiting team.

The NAAC was successful in its efforts to solicit the financial help of various state governments. For example, the West Bengal State Council of Higher Education and the NAAC jointly organized a workshop in February 1999 for the universities and colleges of West Bengal. The Chairman of the Uttar Pradesh State Council for Higher Education also held a workshop on assessment and accreditation at Kumaon University in April 1999 for the benefit for the northern region. The Government of Goa supported the NAAC by accepting the fee for it as a legitimate expenditure of educational institutions.

It was anticipated that in the Ninth Five-Year Plan, at least 50 per cent of the institutions would volunteer for accreditation. This would entail a proportionate increase in seminars on accreditation with institutions preparing self-study documents; visit of the review committee; and, training programmes for evaluation. The self-study documents were perhaps the most important because they brought home to the institution itself, awareness about the areas that needed to be strengthened or improved.

The NAAC also took initiatives for collaborative assessment with professional bodies such as the National Council of Teacher Education, Bar Council of India, and Medical Council of India. A few institutions offering professional courses also volunteered for institutional assessment and the NAAC accredited them in collaboration with the concerned bodies. It corresponded with the faculties of universities and colleges to prepare a database of experts. As the first step in the accreditation process, institutions were requested to express their willingness to undergo evaluation. Not many colleges and universities responded. In the Ninth Plan, financial assistance was proposed to be linked with performance. The UGC made provisions to meet the accreditation expenses of institutions. By 1999, however, only fifty-two colleges and three universities had been accredited out of nearly 12,500 colleges and 160 universities that were eligible for development

funding from the UGC. There were also many self-financing colleges that needed to be assessed for the quality of their output, as it was the UGC's overall responsibility to maintain standards and coordination in the higher education system. The programme envisaged international linkages with similar accrediting agencies in the USA and UK.

The UGC discussed the idea of making evaluation by the NAAC compulsory in 1999. It was felt that while there was no need to go into reasons why institutions had evaded the process of accreditation, anything voluntary did not really work in India. There was, therefore, no option but to make accreditation and assessment compulsory at least for all the universities in the country to begin with. Since then more than a hundred universities and five hundred colleges have been assessed and accredited.

National Eligibility Test (NET)

The UGC had laid down the NET as a qualifying examination for the appointment of lecturers. Those who qualified could pursue research in science, humanities and social sciences in any university of their choice and also apply for the post of a lecturer. This was challenged in the Delhi High Court, which upheld that NET, as prescribed by the UGC, was valid and mandatory, and that Delhi University was obliged under law to comply with the directions of the UGC. In a landmark judgement by Chief Justice Ahmadi and Justice Bharucha, the Supreme Court upheld the ruling of the High Court in its judgement delivered on September 8, 1994. The Court analysed the powers and functions of the UGC together with the reports of various commissions and committees like the National Commission on Teachers II, dated March 23, 1985 and that of the Mehrotra Committee. It also referred to the Conference of Vice-Chancellors under the auspices of the UGC in 1989 where, too, one of the recommendations related to the "implementation of qualifying tests for recruitment of lecturers".

Upholding the powers of the UGC to make the qualifying test mandatory, the court said, that the University Grants Commission had a great role to play in shaping the academic life of the country. It should not falter or fail in its duty to maintain high standards in universities. Democracy depended for its very life on high standards

of general vocational and professional education. Dissemination of learning and the search for new knowledge with all round discipline must be maintained at all costs. It was hoped that the UGC would duly discharge its responsibility to the nation and play an increasing role to bring about the needed transformation in the academic life of the universities. However the court also said that depending on the uniqueness of a case the UGC could also give relaxations. Thus, NET became a mandatory requirement but it has been continually fine-tuned according to the experience gained in its implementation.

For example, several important decisions were taken according to the recommendations of the NET Review Committee that met in August 1998. The Commission approved the clubbing of subjects that were overlapping in nature and the discontinuation of those that had a very small registration. New subjects like tourism and development of food science were introduced, while science for living was exempted as it was taught in only one university. Following the policy of the central government, no relaxation was given to the Other Backward Classes in respect of cut-off percentage. The NET Review Committee recommended a 30 per cent component to test the aptitude towards teaching and research and general awareness of the candidate together with a 70 per cent component to examine the knowledge of the concerned subject at the postgraduate level in one paper. However, the Commission turned down the idea of the general awareness component. The UGC also agreed to provide accreditation to various state agencies to conduct the State Level Eligibility Test (SLET) in the same year. Candidates who qualified in it were made eligible for lectureship all over India. It was introduced to basically facilitate candidates to appear in the subject concerned in their regional languages.

Rastogi Committee

The year 1994-95 was of great significance as the Commission appointed a committee under the chairmanship of R.P. Rastogi, former Vice-Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University, to review the pay scales of teachers in universities and colleges. The terms of reference were finalized in consultation with the MHRD. The committee was to

evaluate whether the previous decisions of the UGC during the earlier revision of pay scales for university and college teachers, librarians, directors of physical education and registrars of universities, had been implemented or not. It was also to examine the current structure of emoluments, taking into account the total packet of benefits available such as, superannuation benefits, medical, and housing facilities. It was to make recommendations keeping in mind all these factors, together with the necessity of attracting and retaining talented people in the teaching profession and the promotional avenues available to them. The committee could initiate studies and analyse these issues to make its final recommendations in the light of the Fifth Pay Commission. Initially, the Rastogi Committee had been appointed for a term of one year but its term was extended to May 31, 1997 as the recommendations of the Fifth Central Pay Commission were finalized only on January 30, 1997.

The Rastogi Committee made recommendations with far-reaching implications. It felt that for the recruitment of a lecturer, a good academic record, that is at least 55 per cent at the Master's level together with qualifying in the National Eligibility Test or an equivalent accredited exam, must be essential as a minimum qualification. The Commission was of the view that a systematic study should be conducted by the UGC for each subject to decide the cut-off percentage at the Master's level to determine the eligibility for recruitment as a lecturer. Till such time, the requirement of a minimum of 55 per cent at the Master's level should continue, as suggested by the Pay Committee. However, an exemption from 55 to 50 per cent marks at the Master's level could be given to those with a Ph.D. degree. The Commission agreed with the proposal of the committee to grant exemption from NET to those with a Ph.D. degree. However, no such exemption should be provided to those with only M. Phil. or a Ph.D. should be made compulsory for the designation of Readers. On the issue of probation, the Commission differed from the Rastogi Committee and said that one-year probation extendable to another year in case of unsatisfactory work was sufficient. A two-year probation extendable by a year, as had been suggested by the Committee, was preferred. In addition, a new recruit to the post of lecturer was supposed to do a short-term orientation course or diploma in higher education either before joining or immediately after but certainly within two years.

The Rastogi Committee felt that postgraduate colleges should have posts of professors and they should not be allowed to begin any course without providing for a professor in that discipline. While agreeing with this recommendation, the Commission felt that good undergraduate colleges whose teachers had contributed academically and which had a good academic record should also be granted the posts of readers and professors in the ratio of 1:4:12; that is, for every twelve lecturers, there could be four readers and one professor. In addition, faculty development programmes providing for career advancement through fast-track promotion was put in place. It replaced the old Merit Promotion Scheme.

In addition, the scheme for professor of eminence was continued but the Commission was of the view that the terms and conditions for it could be further liberalized. The upper age limit of retirement in this case could be seventy years rather than sixty-five. Chairs could also be established for different areas for which the UGC would lay down the guidelines. These need not be permanent and there was no age bar for appointment to a chair as long as a person was academically brilliant.

There had been a fair amount of concern over the actual number of teaching days in universities and colleges together with the actual work being put in by the teachers. Since there was some problem in interpreting 180 days, it was clarified that there should be thirty (six-day) weeks of actual teaching. Of the remaining weeks, twelve could be devoted to admission and examination activities, eight to vacations, and the remaining two could take care of public holidays. Since it was proposed that vacations should be curtailed by two weeks, university teachers could be credited with fifteen days of earned leave. Thus the schedule would work out as follows:

University Week	College Week
30	30 - Teaching
12	10 - Admissions/Examinations
8	10 - Vacation
2	2 - Public Holidays
52	52

It was reiterated that teachers should have a workload of forty hours a week and that the government should provide the resources to create

the necessary space and infrastructure required for its implementation. The Rastogi Committee recommended the following pay scales:

Lecturer: Rs. 8000-325-13500 [not clear]

Lecturer (Sr. Scale): 10000-325-15200

Lecturer (Sr. Grade/ Reader): Rs. 12000-325-18000

Professor: Rs. 14300-450-22400

Principal- (three scales)

1. Rs. 14300-450-22400(Starting with a basic pay of Rs, 15200)
2. Rs. 14300-450-22400
3. Rs. 12000-375-18000 (Starting with a basic pay of Rs. 12750)

These scales were to be implemented from January 1, 1996 or as decided upon by the central government in respect of their employees. The recommendation of the Pay Revision Committee together with those of the Commission was forwarded to the MHRD.

Based on them, the MHRD issued a notification in July 1998, on the revision of pay scales for teachers in universities and colleges. Subsequently, a notification was issued by the government in November 1998 in which it was mentioned that the UGC would formulate a scheme in consultation with it to give professional development incentives in the form of cash allowance or assistance in kind or both to those lecturers who registered in the M.Phil. or Ph.D. and whose pursuit of research was considered satisfactory by their guides.

Accordingly, the UGC formulated a scheme for professional development incentives that was submitted to MHRD for its consideration. It was decided that since the UGC already had a scheme of fellowships for teachers that gave incentives for professional development, it could be modified to accommodate the new recommendations and renamed "Teacher Fellowship for Professional Development". No limit was prescribed for the number of teachers who could avail themselves of the fellowship under this scheme. The duration was normally two

years but could be extended to the third year if it was necessary. It was also made applicable to university teachers but not to those who were entitled for study leave with pay. They could either opt for a teacher fellowship or study leave.

The Commission approved the recommendation that only candidates who had qualified for lectureship be provided fellowships under research projects sanctioned by the UGC, CSIR, DST, DBT, ICAR, ICSSR, ICHR and UNESCO and other bodies, if JRF qualified candidates were not available to meet the demand of the research fellows in the University. In case both could not be found, the existing practice of a project fellow could continue. It also decided that the state agency may be advised to conduct their State Level Eligibility Test in the subjects of botany, zoology and the sciences. It was further approved that the CSIR may be requested to bifurcate the life sciences into three subjects of botany, zoology and life science; that may also include interdisciplinary subjects such as biochemistry, microbiology, biotechnology, molecular genetics, molecular biology, tissue culture and others. The UGC laid down that candidates should be allowed in NET or SLET only in subjects of their postgraduation. In case that subject was not included in the NET examination, they could appear in a related subject.

Promotional Avenues of University and College Teachers

In December 1998, the Commission notified a scheme of promotion from reader to professor under the Career Advancement Scheme. However, it was put in abeyance by the UGC through its communication of July 1999, in view of the then unresolved issue pertaining to readers—whether only those directly recruited in open selection would be eligible or would those who had been promoted under the Merit Promotion Scheme also be eligible for promotion to professor. The scheme had been first proposed by the MHRD in July 1988 and considered by the UGC only in 1996. In order to evolve suitable criteria, the Commission decided to institute a small committee consisting of some Commission members, vice-chancellors, State Education Secretaries and educationists to operationalize the decision. The committee was also to keep in mind the fact that

colleges in south India had posts of professors in colleges and needed to open a dialogue with the Pay Committee so that uniformity of decision could be maintained.

The issues were discussed in a meeting at the MHRD in October 1999 and it was decided that the scheme would be applicable to all readers, whether directly recruited or promoted in the universities and colleges, provided they were eligible. There was a strong criticism of the creation of professorships in colleges from eminent persons and educationists as they thought it would be a regressive step since many of the institutions to which it would apply were either substandard or were only undergraduate colleges. This would adversely affect the standards of higher education in the country. Consequently, the matter was reconsidered and realizing that it was extremely important to protect and safeguard standards in higher education, it was decided not to allow the promotion of a reader to the position of the professor under the Career Advancement Scheme in colleges. As such another communication was issued disallowing professorship in colleges but continuing its operation in the universities.

UGC Observers in Career Advancement

Further steps were taken to ensure that academic, procedural and eligibility requirements were strictly followed during the promotion of readers to the post of professor. The UGC decided to institute observers to monitor the process under the Career Advancement Scheme in 2000. This had been endorsed by the vice-chancellors at their annual conference. The initial response from the universities was favourable but a few teachers' associations were resentful. The UGC clarified to the vice-chancellors of various universities that the UGC observer would neither be a member of the Selection Committee nor would he express any expert opinion on the concerned subject. He would observe that the procedural guidelines, rules and regulations were being complied with and that academic and administrative discipline was being maintained.

It was found in 2000-2001 that in spite of the wide acceptance of the UGC's observers' scheme, there were still many universities including certain central universities that had ignored the advice and directions

of the UGC. The Commission once again requested all universities to comply with these and stated that any promotion from reader to professor done in contravention to them after May 2001 would not be recognized by the UGC and as such, the grant for the person's salary would not be released.

Professor of Eminence

In order to reward quality research, the UGC adopted the professor of eminence scheme in 1998, though the idea has its roots in the Sen Committee Report of 1974. The UGC decided in November 1999 to formulate its eligibility criteria and selection process. The scheme's salient features were that only a directly recruited professor who had completed twenty-eight years of service as a teacher in the university with a minimum of ten years as a regular professor would be eligible for the position of professor of eminence. Both the scale and position would be personal to him. The scheme was sent to the MHRD for perusal. The Ministry proposed certain amendments like fifteen years experience as a regular directly recruited professor in a university department instead of ten years and also stipulated twenty years of regular uninterrupted service as a university teacher whether as lecturer, reader or professor in the university department. The person should be of outstanding merit who had contributed to both teaching and research at the national and international level. Apart from other procedural matters, it was proposed that the selection should not be done at the university level but centrally through search committees of experts who were not themselves aspirants for such positions. The search committee would send a panel of names to the National Selection Committee at the UGC, who would act as the jury. The committees, besides being chaired by the Chairman, UGC, should have five eminent experts on the subject concerned. The superannuation age of such a professor should also be 62 years and if he or she was re-employed, it should be as professor and not as professor of eminence. There should not be more than two hundred professors of eminence at a given time in the country and not more than 50 per cent in a university department could be designated as professors of eminence.

Superannuation and Reemployment

The scheme of professor of eminence has got linked to the issue of reemployment of teachers after superannuation. The UGC had earlier appointed a committee under the chairmanship of R.C. Mehrotra, to consider the question of reemployment of superannuated university and college teachers. The committee held its meetings in December 1990 and January 1991. Mehrotra briefed the committee about the issue involved and the recommendations that had earlier been made by the Sen Committee as well as the Mehrotra Committee on the age of retirement of teachers and their reemployment after superannuation. He also informed the committee that the Commission had framed no guidelines till then and different universities followed different patterns. The central universities were flexible in reemployment except the Banaras Hindu University, which stipulated that no extension would be given beyond sixty years of age.

It was also pointed out that the UGC communication on the subject had increased the confusion by the use of the word “extension” that could be given to the teacher after attaining the age of sixty years for three years and thereafter for a period not extending beyond two years. In all other communications of the UGC and the Government of India, while conveying the revision of pay scales of teachers in universities and colleges, the age of superannuation had been indicated as sixty years and thereafter, it was said, no extension should be given. However, it would be open to universities or colleges to reemploy superannuated teachers according to the existing guidelines framed by the UGC up to the age of sixty-Five-Years.

The committee suggested that there should be uniformity in the age, structure, service conditions and other benefits to teachers working in universities and colleges and therefore, some guidelines should be adopted. The committee made four major recommendations. Whenever a teacher was reemployed after attaining the age of superannuation, such reemployment should be done in an appropriate existing scale of pay and not in the scale of pay on which the teacher concerned retired from service. Reemployment should be permitted for a period of two or three years at a time and no teacher was to be reemployed beyond the age of sixty-Five-Years. Since reemployment would be given only in exceptional cases, it was not necessary to insist

on the candidate's fulfilling a prescribed minimum of qualifications. The university would take necessary steps to frame statutes and ordinances regarding reemployment of teachers on superannuation and such a teacher would not continue as head of the department or dean of faculty or hold any other administrative responsibility. The Vice-Chancellors' Conference of 2000-2001 also recommended that reemployment of teachers should be stopped forthwith. The UGC, on its part, was concerned that certain central universities were reemploying superannuated teachers en masse. In June 2000, it noted the gross misuse of the provision by them and felt that a national debate should be conducted on the issue in which opinions should be sought on the matter before taking any action.

A national level meet on "Reemployment of Teachers after Retirement at the Age of 60-62 Years in the Universities and Colleges in India" was conducted by NIEPA under the auspices of the UGC in January 2001. The Commission discussed the recommendations of this national seminar in great detail and found that the scheme submitted by it was more or less identical to that of the "Professor of Eminence" that had been submitted by the UGC to the MHRD for approval. It was, therefore, decided to defer the issue of reemployment of teachers and consider it only after the scheme of "Professor of Eminence" had been implemented.

UGC Concerns about Academic Discipline

The UGC was also concerned that at many places, its guidelines with regard to one hundred and eighty actual teaching days in a year and forty hours of workload every week were not being followed. It was felt that while strict compliance must be ensured, the matter could also be discussed at a national level at one of the national level seminars to be organized by the NIEPA under the auspices of the UGC. The Chairman, UGC, was advised that the issue could be discussed at the annual Vice-Chancellors' Conference at Guwahati in December 2000.

It was a widely recognized fact that while the cost of higher education had been going up in recent years, the accountability of university teachers towards students had been declining continuously. Also,

university teachers opposed any reformative step to introduce accountability in higher education and thereby defeated the goal of education managers to improve the quality of university education in the country. Most university and college teachers did not think that it was a part of their duty to finish the syllabi and students were often left to fend for themselves at the end of the academic year. Forget about extra classes, teachers were not even fulfilling the minimum workload norms stipulated by the UGC.

The anger of the UGC was obvious from some radical proposals that it made to ensure compliance. One was that teachers be paid salary proportionate to the number of hours they worked per week. That is, a teacher who worked for forty hours should be paid full salary and it should be reduced proportionately for those who worked less. Similarly, universities were asked to ensure one hundred and eighty teaching days whether they worked for five or six days a week. If the number of teaching days was less than required, their grant would be proportionately reduced.

The National Policy on Education stipulated that “A system of teacher evaluation — open, participative and data-based will be created and reasonable opportunities of promotion to higher grades provided. Norms of accountability will be laid down with incentives for good performance as well as disincentives for non-performance.” Besides performance-appraisal systems, there were other factors such as autonomy, accreditation, code of professional ethics, accountability, punctuality and others that had a direct bearing on the promotion of excellence and quality of higher education. The government and the UGC had urged the universities to take appropriate steps for enforcing UGC regulations and guidelines on these matters. However, there was a feeling that nothing substantial had been done by higher education institutions in this regard. In the backdrop of this scenario, it was proposed that universities should chalk out a time-bound programme for implementing the UGC’s directives on these matters and forward the action-taken reports to the Commission so that the progress made by them in this direction could be assessed.

Deliberation about improving the quality and standards of teaching continued in 2001. The UGC had set up various committees periodically and all of them emphasized the need for improving the quality of

higher education. In order to do so, the UGC and the Government of India revised the pay scales and service conditions of teachers and created facilities for their professional and career development. An analysis of the status of implementation of the recommendations made by the UGC's expert committees on the matter, particularly with reference to the number of teaching days, performance evaluation of teachers and other issues did not indicate that they had been effective in reaching anywhere near the desired goal of making the system of higher education quality-oriented, dynamic and socially relevant. However, while the efforts made by the teaching community itself could not be underplayed, these had to be further intensified especially as the intelligentsia and the public at large in the country felt that nothing much was being done to improve the quality and standards of teaching and research.

The world 'quality' had several parameters and some of the critical ones could be listed. These were intensive teaching and learning processes that included teaching days, contact hours, expectations of students from the profession and, in turn, the expectations of the profession from the students; the high level of professional efficiency among the teachers; use of new educational technologies; socially relevant courses of studies; examination reforms; quality research and development; and teachers who became catalytic agents of social development.

Fake Universities

The problem of fake universities awarding unrecognized degrees also engaged the attention of the University Grants Commission and the Government of India for some years. An Amendment Bill was introduced in 1991 with provisions to give the Commission powers to deal with the problem. Under Section 26 of the existing UGC Act, the Commission has the power to define the minimum standards of instruction for the grant of any degree by any university. Under Section 12(A)(4) of the UGC Act the Commission can inquire in a manner provided by regulations and may prohibit a college or a university from awarding degrees if it is satisfied that it is necessary in the public interest to do so. The proposed bill contained provisions

of stringent action against fake universities. However, it has not been pursued till now. A fake university was defined as an institution that was not entitled to call itself a university and award degrees under its name. The Commission issued press releases from time to time about these self-styled universities, vishvavidyalayas, and vidyapeeths that functioned in violation of the UGC Act 1956 and were advertising in the media for the award of degrees for various courses under their so-called 'open university' system. The UGC advised the secretaries, Departments of Education, Directors of Higher Education and vice-chancellors of all universities to caution their students against such 'universities'.

Resource Crunch

The resource crunch had already been felt and the problem was getting more acute. An indicator was that no centenary grants were given by the UGC to institutions that completed a hundred years of their establishment to meet expenditure of capital nature like construction and renovation. This had been the practice in the past but no grant was given after 1996-97 owing to shortage of funds. Another indicator was that the Commission had been supporting the University Science Instrument Centres but the scheme was not extended to any new university during 1997-98 because of paucity of resources. A thorough review of the scheme was undertaken. In 1998, the Commission decided to discontinue its schemes for research associates and research scientists till the end of the Ninth Five-Year Plan due to acute shortage of funds. Those who were already working were, of course, exempted. It was decided that the position of research associates would continue under the scheme of major research projects, special assistance programmes and other quality programmes within their respective grants, but these would be ad hoc contractual positions for the period of the project. The Commission, however, approved the scheme of part-time research associateship for women during the Ninth Plan although it had earlier planned to discontinue it. This was because of the policy decision of the Plan to encourage women's participation in higher education.

Resource Mobilization

Faced with the resource crunch, the Commission decided to encourage universities to mobilize resources. To that end, a scheme was introduced under which 25 per cent of the funds raised by a university would be given to it as an incentive. The year 1995-96 being the first year of the scheme, the resources generated during 1993-94 and 1994-95 would also be taken into account for calculating the incentive to be paid by the UGC. This was to be put into a corpus fund, interest from which could be used for development purposes by the universities. Guidelines for the scheme of resource mobilization were revised in 1996-97 to fulfil four broad objectives. The first was to motivate universities to mobilize resources by encouraging society at large to participate and contribute towards their development. The second, to evolve a process for such participation; the third, to encourage and enhance the flow of societal resources once the contribution had begun; and the fourth, to provide incentives to universities that worked towards such social involvement.

Students' Fees

Part of the reason for the resource crunch in higher education was that the fee structure had remained static. The Commission constituted a committee with Dr. Rahman, Vice-Chancellor, Aligarh Muslim University in the chair in October 1998 to formulate a revised fee structure in central and deemed universities. The committee was convinced that the level of fees charged by different universities for various courses was extremely low and should be urgently revised upwards. It was noted that higher education systems throughout the world faced severe financial constraints due to the mounting costs of higher education, reduction in philanthropic activities by society and its slow withdrawal of support from the field of education. Faced with a fiscal crisis, educational institutions were looking for alternate sources of revenue while simultaneously trying to find ways to reduce costs on the basis of the analysis of expenditure on a unit cost method.

It was also convinced that affluent sections of society should pay a reasonable cost for higher education and institutions should

be encouraged to augment their resources through it. However, simultaneously, the reach of higher education should be made wider to enable poorer students to avail themselves of it.

Students' Welfare

The UGC was made one of the respondents in a Public Interest Litigation case filed in the Supreme Court by the Vishwa Jagriti Mission highlighting the adverse impact of ragging on freshers in educational institutions all over the country. During the hearing of the case in July 1999, the learned judges indicated that it would be appropriate for the UGC to take a more proactive view in the matter and frame guidelines with regard to combating the menace of ragging in the universities and other educational institutions. Accordingly, the UGC constituted a committee to make recommendations in this regard.

On the basis of detailed deliberations, the committee suggested a three-pronged strategy to curb the menace of ragging — prohibition, prevention and punishment. This meant prohibition by law, prevention by following a set of guidelines, and punishment in case ragging took place in spite of the prohibition and prevention. The committee was of the view that punishment of offenders should be balanced by some incentives for non-offenders and those who helped to check the menace of ragging. Some of the incentives and rewards suggested were that institutions should give due recognition to the contribution made by wardens and other functionaries to the institutions when assessing them for higher posts. The perks for the warden and all such functionaries should be suitably enhanced to attract committed persons to them. Students who actively helped to curb the menace of ragging could be given some marks or grades. “Good conduct” and “not found indulging in ragging” during the semester should be one of the elements taken into consideration for sessional evaluation.

Self-Financing Universities

The Ministry of Human Resource Development of Education, in April 1994, informed the UGC that it had received a proposal, to start a

University of Computer Science totally funded by non-governmental agencies. It was observed that the issues involved were important for the university system and would mark a beginning of the system of private universities quite different from the present pattern of nearly fully government-funded universities.

It was felt that in the context of various liberalization measures that were under implementation, it was necessary to process the question of private universities expeditiously. The Ministry further asked the UGC "to arrange to prepare a Policy Paper on this subject and also convey the reactions of the UGC to the questions of setting up Private Universities." The UGC was also to suggest the legal framework within which the Private Universities should come about.

The Commission had accordingly got a concept-paper prepared on this subject, which was considered by a committee of the Commission and later by itself. It agreed in principle with the idea of allowing the establishment of non-government, self-financing private universities but felt that certain safeguards had to be put into place. The need was felt for a central act for the setting up of privately financed universities giving such details as the organizational structure, constitution of the executive and academic councils, boards of studies and other such bodies as suggested by it. Any proposal would be carefully examined by the UGC and only after its recommendations should the government issue a notification to set up a private university under the central act. The management should be a registered society or a trust accordingly to the existing provision of law. The university should have reasonable autonomy and flexibility though it should function within the policy framework of the government. There should be a proper mechanism for academic auditing and assessment for the accreditation of such an institution. Such universities should function as universities of excellence and should be multi-faculty. By and large, they should be single campus universities and should have due representation of academics through the UGC on their bodies. They should not be affiliating universities. Admissions should be done on the basis of merit with at least half the seats being filled by Indian students in case the university was established by NRI or foreign funds. Reservation for admission of students should be according to government policy. There should be a cash endowment of at least rupees ten crores at the beginning. The government, too, should not

show any rigidity with regard to salary, fees and other interrelated matters. On the basis of the above and further discussions between the Ministry and the UGC, a bill entitled, “The Private Universities (Establishment and Regulation)” was prepared. It was introduced in the Rajya Sabha on August 25, 1995. It was allowed to fade away and so it was never passed.

Internationalization of Education

During 1995-96, a new project called Education International was launched in which certain agencies such as IGNOU, NCERT, and National Open Schools agreed to work together on the project with the UGC. The main object was to promote and widely disseminate Indian educational material abroad on economic terms. It was to be implemented by a Consortium for Educational Communication in New Delhi.

While the UGC favoured the internationalization of education, it was greatly concerned at the way foreign universities operated in India. There was a noticeable spurt in the growth of institutions offering programmes leading to degrees of foreign universities. A letter was also received from the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Commission about investigations against foreign universities and educational institutions operating in India who claimed to have tied up with foreign institutions. The UGC, of course, had not given approval to any foreign universities to conduct their courses within India. Meanwhile, the MHRD constituted a standing committee to discuss the ways to regulate the entry of foreign universities into India. The Association of Indian Universities also provided guidelines that it had drawn up in this regard in 1996.

In the guidelines, the AIU accepted that recognized foreign universities might be permitted to offer degrees and diploma programmes in India provided this was in collaboration with Indian universities or colleges and institutions affiliated to them. The approval of the concerned university was mandatory and the collaborating Indian institution must participate significantly in the academic and teaching programme. Students admitted to any of these programmes had to meet the minimum eligibility requirements laid down by relevant statutory

bodies. The academic infrastructure, including library, laboratory and workshop facilities in the collaborating Indian institutions had to meet the requirements of the relevant statutory bodies. In the case of distance education, the collaborating Indian institution had to have adequate student support facilities prescribed by the Distance Education Council of the Indira Gandhi National Open University. The guidelines further mentioned that generally foreign institutions should not offer programmes in areas and subjects for which facilities were extensively available in India, but in specialized and vocational fields like computer-related courses that were in great demand. However, collaboration in teaching and research between Indian universities and established foreign institutions should be encouraged. Indian universities should also be allowed to operate offshore after fulfilling minimum requirements lay down by the government and statutory bodies.

The UGC agreed with these guidelines and added a few conditions of its own:

- 1) The Commission should approve the fee structure of the proposed institutes so that commercialization of education was avoided.
- 2) The institution should get itself accredited through the NAAC to ensure the quality of education being imparted by these institutions.
- 3) Reservation for weaker sections like the Scheduled Castes and Tribes, backward classes and the physically challenged should be provided in these institutions.
- 4) The academic requirements of the course should be laid down before commencing it.
- 5) Reservation for Indian students in these courses was advisable, so that these institutions did not serve only foreigners and non-resident Indians.

However, no concrete policy could be finalized for regulating the entry of foreign universities in India and they continued to grow by leaps and bounds.

In the meantime, in 1999, the Madras High Court in *R. Sethuraman and Others vs. Union of India*, had directed foreign universities to

notify their head offices or branch offices, if any in India, that the courses, or training, or coaching conducted, or the certificates issued, or diplomas granted were not recognized by the Government of India or the state governments, or by the University Grants Commission, the All India Council for Technical Education or the Association of Indian Universities. Their prospectus should contain such a clause so that students who joined them were fully aware of this. The MHRD in all the leading newspapers also issued such a statement in April 1999. However, in spite of all the efforts, no change in the structure of foreign universities operating in India took place.

It was essential for the UGC to take some concrete and positive steps to regulate the operation of foreign universities in India. Therefore, it was proposed that the Commission should frame regulations both for their entry and for the programmes offered by them. It would be mandatory for all foreign universities to follow them. The UGC was supposed to prepare the necessary draft regulations and submit them to the Ministry, which it did in May 2001. There were three objectives:

- 1) Exercise proper control over the operations of foreign universities and institutions functioning in India and awarding degrees.
- 2) Prevent sub-standard institutions from coming into India.
- 3) Regulate collaboration and partnership arrangements between these universities and academic institutions in India.

A standing committee of the UGC was proposed to help in achieving these objectives. These were sent to the Ministry for approval and gazette notification.

The Commission also considered the issue of collaborations being entered by various universities with private institutions not recognized by any government agency to conduct courses on their behalf. The Commission decided that a university that proposed to collaborate with any private institution would have to take prior approval of the Commission. The Commission also prohibited the university from establishing an off-campus franchise.

Diaspora Studies

Arising out of formal discussions with some academics, the Chairman, UGC convened a meeting in April 1994 with the President of the Commonwealth of Learning, Vancouver, Canada, and others to discuss the modalities for implementing the programme concerning “Indian Diaspora”. Apart from a committee that deliberated in detail on the Indian Diaspora, the issue was also discussed with Dr. Abid Husain, Vice-Chairman, Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies. It was decided that Dr. Ahmad Mukarara, Resident Fellow, Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies would be the convenor of the seminar and there would be an advisory committee consisting of representatives of four universities. The committee, in consultation with the UGC and the Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies, decided to hold a seminar in Hyderabad in November 1994. From this, it emerged with a consensus on several issues. One, that a centre that should be multidisciplinary in its approach should be established for the study of the Indian Diaspora. The activities of the centre should not be restricted only to research but it should also bring the common man to visit “His India”. The details of discussions should be taken to South African Universities to obtain their view on a further course of action. The centre, once established, should develop inter-diaspora linkages and a detailed database on the writing of the Indian diaspora, both by Indians and foreigners. Other suggested areas of research were modes of migration, statistical data on Indian diaspora and tourism-related issues.

Immediately after the seminar, three foreign participants — two from South Africa and one from the West Indies — had a long discussion with G. Ram Reddy, Chairman, University Grants Commission, regarding studies on the Indian Diaspora. Their views were that the centre should be located at the University of Hyderabad and that one or two sub-centres could be identified to conduct studies in the regions earmarked for them, for example, the Caribbean or South Africa. In 2002, the Commission also decided to establish a chair in the name of Sir Shiv Sagar Ramgulam, the first Prime Minister of Indian origin of Independent Mauritius, for diasporic studies in any Indian University.

Reorganization in the UGC

Pursuant to the National Policy on Education, the UGC in a significant development in 1994-95, decentralized its working by opening six regional offices catering to the states under them at Hyderabad, Pune, Bhopal, Ghaziabad, Kolkata and Guwahati. These regional centres were to deal with programmes and schemes pertaining only to colleges which included, to begin with, development of both undergraduate and postgraduate colleges, college development councils and college science improvement programmes together with the college humanities and social science improvement programmes, minor research projects, and autonomous colleges in matters of grants and training programmes although the conferment of autonomy to a college would be decided by the UGC office at Delhi and the seminars and symposia of colleges. In 1994-95, four of the six regional offices became operational and a seventh was added at Bangalore in 1999-2000 with jurisdiction for both Karnataka and Kerala.

Several new initiatives were also taken by the UGC in 1999-2000. For example, a new cell on “Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace” was created to look into the grievances of women employees. A vigilance cell, headed by an additional secretary of the UGC as its chief vigilance officer, was set up. A legal desk was also set up in 1989 to exclusively attend and monitor court cases in which the UGC was impleaded as one of the parties. In addition, the UGC launched its own web site and put on the net, apart from other things, the guidelines of all the schemes and the important regulations of the Commission.

It can be said that the UGC in this decade devised steps to promote quality and excellence in higher education in a focused manner. It has promoted several reforms in classroom teaching, laboratory practices, fieldwork, evaluation methods and other related aspects, which have a bearing on the quality of education. The phenomenal increase in the number of students clamouring for higher education and the lack of infrastructural facilities in institutions of higher learning have led to quality and excellence taking a backseat and the UGC is committed to tackle this problem. The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) revolution has also necessitated a change on the part of institutions towards developing modern methods of teaching, learning and evaluation. In the Tenth Plan through initiation of many

proactive approaches, the UGC is re-defining itself to make Indian Higher Education a tool for the growth of individuals and the nation as a whole. It is committed to bringing strategic changes through bold and imaginative approaches at all levels of decision-making and operative processes. Perhaps the UGC is aware that it has a unique chance to make higher education a vehicle of change and it is striving hard to protect and enhance its core mission, which is to educate, to train, to undertake research and to provide service to the society.

CHAPTER VII

The Second Wave of Expansion (2003-13)

The decade following the Golden Jubilee was a period of intense activity that covered the Tenth and Eleventh Five-Year Plans and the beginning of the Twelfth Five-Year Plan. Unprecedented expansion of higher education was visualized and steps taken in that direction. The National Knowledge Commission was set up and gave its report. A Pay Review Committee took note of the state of higher education and in particular the issues of attracting and retaining talent in the teaching profession. The Yashpal Committee reminded the country of the essential idea of a university and suggested radical rethinking and restructuring. A Task Force dealt with faculty shortage. The Narayanamurthy Committee dealt with the corporate sector and how it could contribute to the higher education sector. The idea of Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha found fructification in the Ministry of Human Resource Development. At every step new administrative steps were taken to make the system more accountable and funds allocated to ensure that expansion took place with quality. The significance of these initiatives, though a part of the decade under reference, has been outlined in chapter VIII . In this chapter, significant UGC initiatives in higher education in the 10th, 11th and the proposed initiatives for the 12th Plan are highlighted. An overview of the significant activities including new schemes, apart from Golden Jubilee lectures and seminars, taken up in the Golden Jubilee year are also included in the chapter.

The Golden Jubilee: An Overview

The UGC began its Golden Jubilee year on December 28, 2002. This was a landmark for the institution providing it an occasion

to both retrospect and celebrate. In a grand celebration at Vigyan Bhawan, the then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, spoke of the need to take a fresh look at the UGC Act of 1956 in the light of the new challenges confronting the education sector emerging in the 21st century. He exhorted academics to reform the higher education structure to cope with the challenges of access, quality, relevance, and international competence. Appreciating the efforts of the University Grants Commission in expanding access of quality education to many people, he urged that more needs to be done. The UGC has already taken steps to use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to interlink universities and colleges that would go a long way in augmenting the academic resources available to different institutions. But research and development facilities need to be enriched by tie-ups between universities, national laboratories, and industry. Opportunities presented by globalization have to be harnessed. India has to be made an attractive destination for higher education. There is need for fee revision and for more public-private partnerships so that the respective strengths of the two sectors can be harnessed to augment financial, managerial and teaching resources.

The Role of UGC

The UGC had already adapted itself to meet the challenges confronting it and its role was changing. Traditionally, it had been assigned the coordination, formulation and maintenance of the standards of university education. Following its mandate it had, among other things, been framing regulations on the minimum standards of education, determining standards of teaching, examination and research in the universities; monitoring developments in the fields of collegiate and university education; and disbursing grants to them together with setting up common facilities, services and programmes for a group of universities in the form of Inter-University Centres.

However, as the global scenario changed and impacted both the national and global economy, together with society and politics, the higher education sector had to rise to meet the multiple challenges it was faced with. The revolution of information technology, rapid transport and communications resulting in increased mobility of people, together with the creation of jobs that could be done from

anywhere in the world, led to creating a “knowledge economy”. This made the demand for higher education accelerate and grow as economic development got linked to the knowledge base and skills of the workforce. Five key issues confronted higher education: access and equity, relevance, quality and excellence, governance and resources.

To increase access in spite of crippling resource constraints, the UGC tried to transcend geographical barriers to bring about a synergy between the conventional system of education and distance education. It also tried to leverage information technology and consequently made plans to electronically link all universities, in a phased manner.

Acknowledging that education had to factor in employment, the UGC attempted to move away from the conventional teaching-learning process to a knowledge-linked learning process. This meant that the barriers between disciplines had to be broken and the students could be allowed to pursue a professional degree along with an academic one, to enable them to get a grounding in the discipline of their choice while equipping them with professional skills.

The UGC also engaged with the task of preparing higher education to meet the challenges of globalization and the imperatives of the WTO regime and GATS (General Agreement on Trade in Services). It meant opening India’s higher education sector to foreign universities. In spite of apprehensions to the contrary, this demanded strengthening the public education system as private and foreign universities would inevitably cater to people from the metros who had more affluent backgrounds. It was also felt that India could take the lead to export education to countries in South East Asia, West Asia, and Africa.

Launching New Schemes

The UGC launched new schemes to further develop teaching and research in universities and colleges. It proposed to develop universities and colleges in backward areas to improve access. This was to be done together with schemes for geographically isolated regions. It had to provide for special development grants for young universities. It was focused on creating a digital repository of research and teaching

material. This, together with development of e-education content and intranet and internet connectivity for colleges and universities would make teaching and research material more widely available. It proposed to set up a council to fund research and work out tie-ups between educational institutions, laboratories and industry. Efficiency in the implementation and delivery system was to be created for the professional management of universities and training of administrators.

The changed role of the UGC as emphasized by Atal Bihari Vajpayee, sparked off the idea of designing a new logo. The old logo did not have a motto line that captured the essence of the Commission's goals and objectives. A conscious decision was taken to tap the talent of the young and this was endorsed by the experts who oversaw the process. Twenty-six institutions were approached to take part in the designing process and a competition was held for it. Finally, the design by Priya Jayanand, a student from the College of Fine Arts, Thiruvananthapuram, was accepted. The motto, *Gyan-Vigyan Vimukti* (Knowledge Liberates) was found the most appropriate to capture the essence of knowledge and learning while indicating the UGC's role in promoting excellence in higher education and holistic development of individuals. The chakra symbolizes the Indian nation, its twenty-four spokes represent the continuous and uninterrupted flow of education, which is truly a lifelong process. The lines below the chakra portray both an open book, and a pair of hands; the book is the ultimate symbol of learning whose relevance had not diminished in the era of e-books and online education; and the hands are significant as they symbolize that knowledge supports and lifts the nation to development and progress.

Golden Jubilee Lectures

Throughout its golden jubilee year, the UGC organized a series of lectures in remote areas by eminent scholars who were known for their contribution at both the national and international levels. This gave the students a chance to interact with these eminent people. The lectures were later published as the UGC Golden Jubilee Lecture Series.

The lectures were as follows:

Sl.No	Speaker	Organizing University	Topic	Date
1.	Prof. J.V. Narlikar	Maharashtra University of Health Sciences, Nasik	How to Recapture the Thrill of Basic Sciences in Higher Education	April 25, 2003
2.	Justice Mohd. Shamim	Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar University, Agra	Importance of Value-Based Education	September 18, 2003
3.	Prof. V.R. Mehta	Ranchi University, Jharkhand	The Killing of Higher Education	September 19, 2003
4.	Justice J.S. Verma	Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi	Significance of the Ethical Component of Education	October 28, 2003
5.	Prof. Prabuddha Ganguli	Bhawanagar University, Gujarat	Adventure with Knowledge... Stepping Ahead with Intellectual Property Rights	November 12, 2003
6.	Prof. Yashpal	Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam	Reinventing Higher Education	November 26, 2003
7.	Prof. R.G. Takwale	Shivaji University, Kolhapur	Challenges of Globalization in Higher Education in India	December 2003
8.	Prof. M.G.K. Menon	University of Rajasthan, Jaipur	Future of Higher Education	December 20, 2003

Major highlights of the lectures

Prof. V.R. Mehta, while acknowledging the expansion of higher education in the country and the critical role that the UGC had played in it, focused on some of the grave problems faced by institutions of higher learning in the country. Universities not only preserve and transmit knowledge inherited from the past, but were also creators and disseminators of knowledge. They were expected to contribute to national development as a movement that took place from “Knowledge Society” to “Knowledge Economy,” by providing human resource with skills and expertise for both public and private services. In today’s highly competitive high-tech global society, it is recognized that only those societies and economies that have the capacity to nurture, sustain and develop innovative minds are able to compete.

Prof. Mehta further emphasized that in India, there is a wide chasm between what is expected of higher education and what it is in fact accomplishing. On the one hand there has been massive expansion of higher education and the social composition of the classroom has dramatically changed with the entry of students from classes which not long ago existed either on the periphery or did not count at all, but this has not been accompanied by increase in the quality of education being imparted. On the contrary, in most cases the expansion has resulted in a steep decline in quality.

Prof. Ram Takwale accepted that India had created one of the biggest higher education systems in the world and the quality of its top institutions could be compared to the best in the world, but the system encountered problems and issues that originated from disparities and the development models adopted. With all the impressive development in the areas of information technology, space science, nuclear technology, oil exploration and industrial production, India had not been able to solve its problems of poverty, ignorance and underdevelopment for various reasons. The disparity between the rich and the poor, urban and rural areas and the educated and uneducated was high, and this created enormous social tensions. In addition, the country has to face the challenges of globalization and pressures of liberalization while continuing its fight against poverty, illiteracy, and social disabilities.

The major challenges before higher education come from its commodification; global competitiveness; concerns of weaker institutions; developmental disparities and unsolved Indian problems of weak linkage of education with the developmental process. More of the same is not adequate.

Ram Takwale further pointed out that human society had seen two major transitions, one from tribal to agrarian, and the other from agrarian to industrial. The two had different driving forces. For an agrarian society the knowledge of nature, sowing seeds, growing plants, and tools and techniques necessary for agriculture was intrinsically vital. A transition occurred with the evolution and use of auto-machines to create an industrial society. The third transformation began around 1995 with the extensive use of internet-accelerated development and growth of information technology. The driving force of this phase was ICT, which created global communication networks and generated globalization. Prof. Takwale then proceeded to elaborate the uses of ICT in education and the paradigm shifts that would be required in the traditional teaching-learning processes.

Prof. Prabudha Ganguli focused on Intellectual Property Rights. The experience of the last few decades had unequivocally established a near coalescence of the generative, application and trading phases of knowledge. Therefore realistic legal frameworks were required to nurture innovation, provide for ownership of knowledge, facilitate fearless knowledge-sharing, transfer and rejuvenation, and encourage fair benefit distribution between the innovators and society resulting in enhanced trade and societal advancement. Appreciation of the issues of knowledge ownership and of Intellectual Property Rights was appearing centre-stage in all knowledge-linked activities. As knowledge space got segregated into aggregates of proprietary domains and non-proprietary domains, infringement of intellectual property rights could become expensive and disastrous. Hence the academic world had to come to terms with such realities of knowledge dynamics.

Prof. Ganguli emphasized that global outsourcing of expertise, cost-effective manufacturing, distribution of products and services were the new emerging avenues for institutions to establish and foster collaborative linkages in research collaborations and working in cross-

functional teams culminating in industry-university joint projects. Working with hi-tech companies also involved developing complex licensing agreements.

It is significant that at least three speakers talked of inclusiveness and ethics. Justice J.S. Verma highlighted the “Significance of Ethics in Education”; Justice Mohd. Shamim emphasized the “Importance of Value-Based Education”; and Prof. Yashpal focused on “Reinventing Education for an Inclusive World”.

Justice J.S. Verma observed that education was not merely the acquisition of knowledge but also the capacity to make proper use of it. Ethics is an important component of knowledge because it is ethics that make people apply knowledge in different ways with correspondingly different impacts on society. As society becomes increasingly complex, it is imperative for educational institutions to assume social obligations, train students for employment, solve social problems, and help set ethical directions for society. Higher education aims at the growth and development of students, the discovery and refinement of knowledge, and its social impact on the community. Justice Verma referred to the report of the International Symposium and Round Table, UNESCO 1990 on “Learning to Care: Education for the Twenty-first Century”, that emphasized some aspects desirable for the education system. The problem essentially is that now it is increasingly hard to create a more equitable, fairer and livable world in the 21st century. It involves caring and that includes caring for oneself and one’s health; for social, economic and ecological welfare of one’s society and nation; for human rights, for other species, for sustainability of life on earth and for truth, knowledge and learning. Justice Verma noted that imparting ethical values as a significant constituent of education was not merely persuasive but constitutionally imperative. The right to development had been recognized as an inalienable right in the Declaration made by the UN General Assembly in 1986 and reaffirmed in the Vienna Declaration in 1993 which made the human person the central subject of development, it was therefore essential that education, which was the most patent tool of development, be made available to all.

Concern for inequities, made *Prof. Yashpal* highlight the disparities in the school system. Inequities were evident in the facilities in private

schools as compared to both municipal and government schools. Not only was there a paucity of schools but several schools had no trained teachers. The private schools were almost unaffordable and even then many students had to join coaching classes after school hours reflecting on the quality of teaching in the schools.

At the university level there was a need for collaboration between different disciplines. For example, engagement with society required involvement with its arts, craft, and industry. There were important areas where the social sciences and physical sciences had to work together. This meant that walls of disciplines had to be broken to enable interdisciplinary and collaborative work. Prof. Yashpal also discussed the impact of the Internet, Web and information technology. Internet worked well for those who were already engaged in a serious research endeavour but just random net surfing could lead to mere superficial knowledge.

The production and dissemination of knowledge and its application to society had far-reaching implications. Hence he wanted to have the ability to quickly interact with masses of people at a distance from the concentrations of infrastructure. This made involvement in space communications and space broadcasting very attractive as it made communication with people possible. The aim was to reach thousands of remote villages via direct reception TV.

The importance of ethics and the cultivation of values was the theme of Justice Ahmed's talk. Emphasizing the importance of education, he spoke about the pre-eminence of books, teachers, parents, and companions who respected the values that a child imbibed. Justice Ahmed widened the meaning and scope of the word 'companion' to include not just human beings but also books. Hence parents and teachers had a duty to not only keep a watch on the flesh and blood companions of their children but also the type of books that their children read. The mere acquisition of educational qualifications was not the main aim of education; it was to excel morally and to develop a good character. It was a process of active self-growth, which was co-extensive with the entire work of a person's life.

A challenging area in education was basic sciences as it seemed to have lost its sense of adventure and students did not appear to be enthused by it. *Prof. Jayant Narlikar's* concern was how to recapture

the thrill of basic science in higher education. He narrated the life of astronomer Guillaume Le Gentil who visited India in 1761 to observe the transit of Venus across the solar disc. In spite of many obstacles he was determined not to let any misadventure or hardship deter him. In India, Narlikar felt the passion for scientific observation was missing as people were steeped in age-old superstitions. It required a British expert, Ronald Ross to tackle the mystery of the origin and transmission of malaria in the 19th century and indicate its cure. Why should it have required an outsider to come to India to do this? Narlikar traced the evaluation of basic sciences in India, the causes of their decline and then their resurgence at the beginning of the 20th century. The challenge was how to rejuvenate basic sciences at the university level so that more and more students could study and research them.

Golden Jubilee Seminars

Apart from the lectures, the UGC organized Golden Jubilee seminars in eleven universities while its regional offices held six national level seminars on pertinent themes of higher education in their own jurisdictions. Experts from all over the country discussed and debated issues and recommendations that emerged, both at the regional and national level, were published. The eleven UGC seminars held were as follows:

Sl.No.	University	Seminar Topic	Held on
1.	University of Jammu (J&K)	Governance of Higher Education	October 20-22, 2003
2.	Punjab University, Chandigarh (Punjab & Haryana)	How to Complete the First Cycle of Assessment and Accreditation?	September 26-27, 2003
3.	Allahabad University, Allahabad (UP)	Sustaining Quality in Higher Education Institutions	November 6-8, 2003
4.	Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Anantpur (AP)	Promoting Value Education and Ethics	October 28-30, 2003

5.	Gulbarga University, Gulbarga (Karnataka)	Physical Fitness / Health Consciousness / Yoga Studies	September 10-12, 2003
6.	University of Calicut (Kerala)	Public Private Partnership in Higher Education	August 27-28, 2003
7.	North Eastern Hill University, Shillong (Meghalaya)	Economics of Higher Education (How to be Self-Supporting? How to Generate Resources?)	December 28, 2003
8.	MS University, Vadodara (Gujarat)	Examination Reforms	September 11-13 2003
9.	JN Vyas University, Jodhpur (Rajasthan)	Export of Higher Education	September 29 - October 1, 2003
10.	Guru Ghasidas University, Bilaspur (Chhattisgarh)	Access and Equity in Higher Education (How to Reach the Double Digit Access Ratio?)	September 12-13, 2003
11.	North Bengal University, Darjeeling	Policy Planning for Higher Education in India under the WTO and GATS Regime	November 14-15, 2003

The seminars organized by the regional offices of the UGC were:

- Technology-enabled Teaching and Learning
- Revamping of Humanities and Social Sciences
- Revamping of Science Education
- Revamping of Languages and Literature
- Development in Higher Education in North Eastern States
- Examination Reforms, Research and Extension Dimensions

Together, these seminars provided a platform for vice-chancellors, education administrators, UGC officials, state governments and

higher education departments to interact and exchange their views, formulate strategies and time-bound plans. The basic objective was to get inputs from academics of the collegiate education system for the effective implementation of various schemes to enhance quality and relevance of the numerous colleges and their programmes.

Overview of Seminar presentations

Many important issues were discussed and significant recommendations emerged in various areas, some of which can be seen germinating today. An overview of the seminar presentations is given below:

Public/Private Partnership

The seminar on Public/Private Partnership highlighted that the Indian higher education system had undergone a vast expansion to generate and disseminate knowledge and provide easy access to the common Indian. The dominant role was played by public institutions that regulated academic activities on their campuses and within their areas of jurisdiction through the affiliating system. Some private institutions too got support from the public exchequer.

The demand for higher education had increased manifold. It has been increasingly felt that challenges of expansion and diversification could not be met by the public exchequer alone. Hence private initiatives were necessary. Deregulating of control mechanisms began in the 1970s with the granting of “autonomous” status to identified colleges some of which had grown to become “Deemed to be Universities”. The country was on the threshold of establishing private universities in different states. In fact, in many they had already become a reality and hence a good regulatory had to be created to monitor market forces that could be detrimental.

However, the primary responsibility of providing good quality higher education to all those who were eligible was with the state and so the investment on higher education may have to be stepped up to 3 per cent of the GDP. At least 1 per cent of the GDP could be used to set up a National Human Resource Development Fund to tackle the challenges of equity and ensure that no talented person got left behind because of social backwardness or for economic reasons. The

fund could be created through taxing individuals who had had the benefit of state-funded education and the industries who were the beneficiaries of the good human resource created in these institutions. Industries themselves could be encouraged to partner directly with educational institutions in areas of infrastructure, faculty sharing and direct financial support. This could be facilitated by a high powered committee set up by the UGC. The industry needed to encourage research by establishing research facilities. Those areas that could not attract private funding needed to be well supported from public funds but it would be in the interest of the industry to channelize some of its resources for human resource development and breaking new research ground.

Measures were also recommended to ensure quality through proper rating agencies and a creditable accreditation system with transparent benchmarking techniques and a regulatory system with sufficient powers to ensure compliance. Relevance and Total Quality Management were the key for the courses offered. For this, a strategic planning body and an institution to design courses were needed. Another important recommendation was for establishing an Indian Higher Educational Service along the lines of the All India Civil Services of the IAS. They would equip competent academics to take governance roles in institutions of higher education.

Governance

Governance structures in academic institutions were a major concern. Much of it was dysfunctional being archaic and having continued without much change from the pre-independence era. The university statutes needed revision and the governance bodies such as the academic and executive councils had to function with complete transparency. Student participation in governance could also be encouraged.

Further, while the policy framework was carefully planned at the level of the Planning Commission and the UGC, implementation left much to be desired because of faulty management at the institutional level. A total overhaul of the system was needed, especially in the face of globalization that required talent, competence, drive, innovation and initiative at different levels. Universities needed to be the drivers for economic and social growth.

Several recommendations emerged:

- There should be no political interference in university appointments.
- Government control over universities should be reduced and they should be free to take academic decisions on merit.
- New methods of financial regulation have to be devised so that there is no direct interference in the day-to-day management of the universities.
- Colleges provide undergraduate education and it was their students who go to the university for postgraduation. Hence better coordination between the colleges and the university is imperative.

Access and Equity

During the Golden Jubilee it was found that the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in India was only around 6 per cent. The seminar on Access and Equity in Higher Education brought into focus the low GER in India. It was only 6 per cent compared to the 47 per cent average in developed countries although India boasted of having the second largest education system in the world, next only to the USA. Thus access, equity, accountability, and quality had to be the four guiding principles while planning the development of higher education in India. A major challenge was to bring equity and quality across the length and breadth of India so that all sections of society could participate in the new economic revolution in the country. There were several constraints such as poverty; lower status of women, lack of implementation of existing programmes, inadequate utilization of resources, absence of political will, lack of coordination between different agencies, and inadequate financial resources.

Further, a paradigm shift was taking place from “national education” to “global education,” from “one-time learning” for a few to “lifelong learning for all,” from “teacher-centric education” to “learner-centric education.” One major factor for this was the interdependence and integration of the world economy; new challenges in higher education

had arisen as skilled human power was required at all levels, both nationally and internationally.

Several recommendations emerged. One was that education had to be planned in an integrated manner from early childhood to postgraduation to career advancement keeping rural, urban and gender disparities in mind. While quantity was important, quality was equally vital. The government should not only continue to subsidize higher education but the role of the public sector needs to be enhanced. It was felt that the state must take the major responsibility of financing higher education and all other sources of money including fees to be considered as peripheral. The World Bank, World Trade Organization (WTO) and General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) policies on education needed close examination as it was necessary to safeguard national interest and ensure that opportunities were not denied to the deprived and underprivileged regions and people. Increasing reliance on the generation of internal resources through consultancy and interaction with the industry needed to be done cautiously as it could produce imbalances. Resources had to be allocated between various activities so as to give top priority to core academic activities. While Western models of higher education could be suitably adopted, institutions have to devise and develop indigenous ones. Universities must ensure a liberal milieu where diversity of opinion and critique of society and its process need to be encouraged.

The appointment of bureaucrats, police officers, and generals as Vice-Chancellors and Registrars needed to be avoided as far as possible. Also, the method of selection of a Vice-Chancellor had to change so as to ensure that the Vice-Chancellor became accountable to the academic community rather than to politicians and bureaucrats. Transparency was required at all levels and all institutions needed to be encouraged to share facilities with each other.

New models of higher education were required that included extended traditional universities, technology-based universities, and corporate universities.

Policy Planning for Export

Two seminars on Export of Higher Education and Policy Planning for Higher Education under the WTO and GATS regime looked

at the increasing economic integration across the world that demanded structural adjustments like withdrawal of subsidies, reduced control of state privatization; access to corporate players; designing courses to meet the human resource needs of the market, and reliance on self-financing type management. There are WTO obligations and regulations of GATS that allow free import of higher education as a service commodity from developed nations. All these factors have caused great trepidation. These factors added to the challenges of the universalization of basic education; improving enrolment and increasing access to higher education; ensuring better equity, access, sound and realistic human resource planning; and faster growth of skilled human resource for economic development and self-reliance.

Several recommendations emerged from two seminars, "Export of Higher Education" and "Policy Planning for Higher Education in India under the WTO and GATS Regime." It was felt that since most areas identified with the export of higher education were directly concerned with industry, several programmes and incentives have to be undertaken by the central and state universities to improve links between the university and the industry. Courses need to be designed in collaboration with the industry and updated regularly, even annually if required.

There should be uniformity, as far as possible in the standards of courses, academic calendar, and examination system of universities. The credit system should be introduced. Libraries and laboratories should be well-equipped while the working norms of teachers should follow international norms. Teachers should be encouraged to participate in academic activities such as conventions, conferences, seminars, and workshops. A better evaluation and monitoring of teaching and research is required for which a Monitoring and Evaluation unit should be set up preferably linked to the Chancellor's office. Efforts must be made to attract serious students to the teaching profession.

Several recommendations dealt with setting up of Indian campuses abroad including using the franchising models as they could provide a global entry. Deputing teachers to go for short contractual appointments abroad, developing educational products that were flexible and learner-centric; preparing students for knowledge society including lifelong learning; developing e-learning and distance

education; ensuring quality management and catering to changing market demands were some of the suggested initiatives.

Economics of Higher Education

Limited resources and their optimal utilization was the theme of the seminar on Economics of Higher Education. It was pointed out that access to higher education needed to be widened in the country, both within the formal system and through other effective innovative measures, such as a truly open system and networking of universities. But given the magnitude of the task it is imperative for Indian universities to generate at least a percentage of their own resources. Some had resorted to such measures as raising tuition fees and collecting capitation fees, both of which had severe limitations. Others attempted to augment resources by launching courses for foreign students, obtaining donations from philanthropists and such measures where the potential was good.

In a globalized world, the state-protected educational system had to become competitive. New policy initiatives were required to be taken by the government keeping at least four factors in mind: (i) economic returns on primary education far exceeded those on higher education; (ii) private returns on higher education far exceed the social returns; (iii) state funding for higher education was insufficient in countries like India; and (iv) since the private sector benefited the most from higher education, it was only fair that it makes a decisive contribution.

Taking the problem of resource crunch in higher education at face value, some alternative ways were considered at this seminar to combat the present situation, such as: research grants from industries and donations for admissions among others, but these were not found to be adequate. It was observed that an organized structure could be set up for fund-raising for higher education and creating a culture of giving.

Reorientation of Higher Education

Three seminars, “Physical Fitness/ Health Consciousness / Yoga Studies”, “Promotion of Value Education and Ethics”, and “Examination Reforms”-- taken together were concerned with reorienting higher

education to make it more holistic. Till now, Indian universities as they had grown since independence, were producing graduates who could pursue limited career opportunities. In the new globally competitive environment, a student needed to develop a multifaceted personality. This required holistic development of the body, mind, and spirit rather than just concentrating on the mind. Hence, health consciousness and physical fitness for a healthy body was an essential part of the university culture. But a healthy body cannot be attained and maintained without a healthy mind. Therefore value education had become imperative in the process of meeting challenges of the contemporary world. Professional competence was of minimal value if professional ethics was forgotten. Similarly, brilliance was of no use if it was employed for anti-social activities. If education needed to serve a more holistic purpose than just the development of the mind then the existing processes of learning had to be assessed and evaluated. A closer interaction was required between the teachers and students to ensure that the teaching-learning process was not superficial.

Health Consciousness and Physical Fitness

Physical fitness and sports are two sides of the same coin and are mutually dependent on each other. The relationship between the mind and body has been acknowledged scientifically. It is generally believed that a healthy body has a healthy mind; but it could be the other way around also, that is, a healthy mind has a healthy body. In any case, a culture of physical fitness has to be developed.

The current system of higher education is largely academic. Realistically, this needs to be changed for a balanced development through inculcating health consciousness among students. The increasing emphasis on academics for lucrative employment and the rapid advances in science and technology demands constant upgradation and skills. Academic training has been privileged over health and physical fitness of the youth. It is urged that physical education and sports programmes be strengthened in higher education institutions by the integration of physical education, sports, yoga, and recreation activities.

Some important recommendations emerged. It was important to introduce subjects such as, Health Management, Fitness Management

and Sports Marketing in the curriculum. In fact sports education had to begin from the elementary to higher secondary level of education to develop sports awareness among the children. The standard of professionals in physical education and sports sciences had to be raised to produce competent physical education teachers.

Physical education programmes should include yoga and meditation to strengthen the mental makeup of students, which is so essential for success in life. All the agencies working in the field of sports should take immediate measures to check the menace of drug abuse in sports and create an awareness of its ill effects. Orientation programmes have to be designed for all physical education teachers covering sports medicine, nutrition, and psychology together with other allied subjects.

Professional Ethics and Value Education

Rapid developments have been taking place in science and technology. The issue of exploitation of natural resources without attending to sustainability is playing havoc especially because of manifold increase in consumerism accelerated by globalization. It has created an ever increasing hiatus between the rich and poor. While the education system has to keep pace with the scientific and technological developments in terms of building the skills and knowledge, it also needs to address the more fundamental issues of the social and moral consequences of the growing disparities. In this context, there was a growing demand on education to lay greater emphasis on the inculcation of values.

It was recommended that human values such as, quest for peace, adherence to truth and right conduct, non-violence, compassion, tolerance, love for all living beings, respect for the country and the knowledge of its culture and traditions should be part of the curriculum to promote societal concern and responsible citizenship. The UGC could plan, implement, and oversee the requirements and implementation of value education.

It may constitute a Committee of Value Education Experts to take appropriate steps to evolve a syllabus for a compulsory paper of appropriate credits that emphasizes values and duties laid down in Art. 51-A of the Constitution.

Alternatively, the compulsory paper on “Environmental Science”, that had been introduced by the UGC, may be suitably elaborated to bring forth environmental concerns in the backdrop of human values. In addition, teachers could be given orientation courses to enable them to make such a paper effective.

Evaluation and Assessment Systems

As part of meeting the global challenges of education, it was necessary to not just revisit the syllabi but to also ensure quality. While India had taken great strides in the expansion of higher education, making it one of the largest higher education systems in the world, quantity seems to have overshadowed quality. One of the important components of higher education is the manner in which the academic performance of students is evaluated. A concerted debate ensued for a long time to determine the best system of assessment that the universities could follow. The current education system in India showed considerable diversity in terms of assessment and grading of the students. However, a certain optimum degree of standardization in the examination system and in the assessment of students was necessary before important grades could be awarded to the students. These and related issues were deliberated at length at the seminar pertaining to evaluation and assessment leading to a set of recommendations to strengthen the system and make it more transparent.

The semester system is preferred to the annual system in teaching and evaluation at the Indian universities. Continued Internal Assessment should be given the attention it merits in the students’ academic programmes at the universities.

The grading system with a linear 10-point scale and its equivalence in terms of percentage of marks should be followed uniformly across universities and disciplines. However, the evaluation methodology could vary across disciplines/ institutions.

Pre- and post-processes of examinations should be transparent, that is, the pattern of papers, evaluation methodology and disciplinary rules should be properly documented and communicated to students well in advance. It is necessary to establish effective feedback mechanisms

like allowing students access to their corrected answer books and responding to the queries of students on the evaluation procedure.

Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Two seminars — “Sustaining Quality in Higher Education Institutions” and “How to Complete the First Cycle of Assessment and Accreditation” again concentrated on different aspects of quality in higher education. In an environment of global competitiveness it was important that graduates from India were as competent as graduates of any other country, not only in their scholastic attainments, but also in terms of the value system and richness of their personalities. For this the quality and standard of Indian higher education institutions had to be zealously enhanced and sustained at a high level through innovation, creativity, and regular monitoring.

Sustaining Quality

Quality is both absolute and relative. Its dimensions have two implications; functionality of the output and meeting the basic standards. Hence, the quality of a higher education system may be seen from the point of view of norms and standards, which may evolve depending on the need of the hour. Relative norms could be identified for different components of a higher education system such as curriculum design and development; curricular practices in relation to emerging principles of pedagogy; evaluation of the performance of the learners and an assessment of the curriculum on offer; and, quality management practices. The quality of these components may differ from institution to institution. Therefore, it was useful for institutions to share their experiences on quality issues to generate ideas for evolving norms and strategies for quality assurance. It also enables teachers to assess the quality and delivery of teaching-learning processes.

Recently various developments have been witnessed relating to quality assurance mainly through the intervention of information and communications technologies (ICT) in education, such as networking of the open learning system with traditional universities, interdisciplinary interactions at intra-institutional and

inter-institutional levels, networking of institutions globally, data based management of higher education, changing the orientation of institutions by incorporating self-financing in their financial management, assessment and accreditation of higher education institutions and creation of different statutory and regulatory bodies at the national level. These and related issues were discussed at length at the seminar on sustaining quality and many valuable recommendations emerged.

Curriculum Planning and Management should be studied in the perspective of knowledge management. Experts from different fields should design a multidisciplinary curriculum to meet the needs of learners, teachers, parents, employers, and society in general.

Decentralization must be encouraged within a broad framework of the university system. Every university must have its own curriculum rather than a centralized one because context, specificity and inquiry-oriented experience are important. Learners could give valuable feedback if given an opportunity to participate in curriculum design. The curriculum had to be geared to problem-solving abilities in life-like situations. In this the indigenous knowledge system must be kept in mind while adopting scientific and technological developments as core components of university curriculum. The curriculum had to be specific but cognizant of global developments, the two forming a seamless ecosystem. Its transaction should involve social negotiation and mediation by encouraging group activities and making optimum use of peer groups as resources of learning.

The augmentation of cognitive capital through the university curriculum would be the authentic indicator of quality education.

Assessment and Accreditation

In the seminar on assessment and accreditation, it was observed that the issue of expansion quality was intimately connected with assessment and accreditation of institutions of higher education. This is because higher education has largely been an elite phenomenon with vast sections of society not having access to it.

Many institutions of higher education in the country are excellent in the sense that their infrastructure, resources, faculty, and

programmes of teaching and research are almost as good as those in the best institutions in advanced countries. But, the same cannot be said of the average institutions of higher education in the country. They do not come anywhere near the level of average institutions of higher education in advanced countries. This vast gap in standards and facilities has been a cause of constant anxiety and concern to the policy planners of higher education in India.

The issue of accessibility to quality higher education needs to be addressed in the light of the vast economic and social disparities, cultural and linguistic diversities, and extremely uneven opportunities of learning at the school level together with the aspirations and capacities of the potential students. Since independence, the country has been in the process of transiting from elitist to mass education. This is significant because it means redefining the aims of higher education and what needs it has to fulfil. Therefore, the question of access to higher education needs to be addressed at the local, regional, national and international levels from trans-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary and discipline-specific perspectives. Also, it has to be understood that accessibility and quality upgradation are inseparable dimensions of higher education. Over-emphasis on one at the cost of the other is counter-productive. While expansion of higher education is required to mitigate regional, gender and social disparities, the institutions have to provide quality education. Hence quality parameters have to be emphasized and these become even more necessary in the light of mushrooming of private institutions with the opening up and liberalization of the Indian economy. Setting up of NAAC sent the right and positive signals in this direction and the need for effective ways and strategies had to be identified to expedite the completion of assessment and accreditation within a stipulated time frame.

Quality upgradation however, is not a one-time phenomenon. It is a perennial pursuit. In view of this, post-accreditation complacency had to be arrested by evolving quality assurance mechanisms for self-regulation. The setting up of an Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) is one such mechanism. The IQAC comprising the Chief Executive, senior academics and officers of the institution should work as a steering group. The Cell may constitute two quality groups, one for academic excellence and another for administrative efficiency.

These groups may design strategies for quality enhancement for consideration and implementation by IQAC.

The Golden Jubilee year came to an end on December 28, 2003 when the then President of India, Dr. A.P. J. Kalam was the chief guest. The venue was once again Vigyan Bhawan. The new logo of the UGC was unveiled and two books were released; *50 Years of University Grants Commission* by Kavita A. Sharma and *Higher Education in India (1781-2003)* by Kuldip Kaur.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Kalam expressed his “delight” at being called upon to formally conclude the UGC’s golden jubilee year and commended the Commission for having “contributed to the cause of higher education in post-independent India for the past five decades,” and for facilitating the growth of universities which have a “major responsibility in nation-building through enriching science, engineering and technology and by providing value-based education to students to make them moral leaders.” While it may be argued that much more could have been achieved and that challenges of gigantic proportions loomed ahead, the role of the UGC in post-independent India had to be acknowledged. Through the controlled expansion of higher education, it had created a large educated human resource, which had given the country an edge over many other developing countries.

Initiatives in the Tenth Five-Year Plan

There was a growing realization that in the planning of higher education for the 21st century, the key issues would be the increasing demand, relevance, quality and excellence, governance and resources. It was projected that while at the beginning of the Tenth Plan, there were just over 9.1 million students, by the end of the Plan, in 2007-2008, there were likely to be almost 13 million. How was such a large demand to be met? The UGC spelt out its vision for the Tenth Plan and some measures that needed to be taken.

It was a sobering thought at the time of the Tenth Plan that while India had one of the largest and most complex networks of educational institutions, it could only provide access to 6.9 per cent of people

in the relevant age group. Therefore, higher education had to be rapidly expanded and its sheer size might pose a challenge but mere numbers without quality would not do. The lack of infrastructure facilities and resources had often led to quality and excellence taking a back seat. The funds available during the Tenth Plan were almost one and a half times that of the Ninth Plan. Universities were to be encouraged to take innovative measures in the use of both physical and academic resources so that the challenges of numbers, relevance, quality, better governance and optimization of resources could be met. For this all stakeholders in the system — teachers, managers of education, vice-chancellors, principals and funding agencies had to make the best effort.

Taking stock of the situation in higher education, Professor Nigavekar, then Chairman of the UGC spelt out the tasks ahead in various areas that needed immediate attention. While the Commission may have largely fulfilled its role in ensuring the growth of higher education, challenges remained. The Commission was quite capable of dealing with them by adopting new approaches. It had to plan holistically for the future by considering the nation's requirement of educated human resource but always remembering that higher education in India performed both a social as well as an economic purpose. Thus, right from the stage of planning, it had to ensure that quality education was delivered to all students at various levels and that mechanisms had to be evolved to maintain standards. In this there was no room for compromise and so the National Assessment Accreditation Council would have to play a greater role than it had hitherto done. Also, information technology would have to be increasingly propagated through the length and breadth of the country to enable it to play its crucial role in the spread of higher education.

Further dispute resolution machinery would have to be evolved so that issues could be resolved without undue recourse to courts. For this, agencies like the All India Council for Technical Education, Medical Council of India and others would have to coordinate with each other and with the UGC. The issue of colleges and their relationship with their respective universities and with the UGC had to be settled as that of private universities coming up with or without the authority of state legislatures.

The UGC intended to use the latest tools of modern technology for the virtual enhancement of academic infrastructure, strengthening of research, and for improving the credibility and efficiency of administration. Colleges would also be brought within the purview of the UGC network through the help and support of state governments.

Four approaches were possible to enhance access. One was to expand the open and distance education mode. The second was to increase both physical and academic infrastructure in the conventional mode and run teaching programmes allowing students to combine the conventional with the open structure, that is, the use of partial full-time and partial distance-education mode to get a degree. The third was to use the existing physical infrastructure in double shifts with additional full-time teachers and other staff strengths while allowing students to combine a conventional and open structure. The fourth was to increase, the existing physical and academic structure in a limited manner and use the enhanced structure in double shifts with added human support from contracted retired teachers and other visiting or guest faculties.

The Tenth Plan laid down certain educational objectives. One was to achieve a profound transformation of higher education so that it became an effective promoter of sustainable human development. At the same time, both teaching and relevance of curriculum had to be improved for it to effectively forge links with the world of work. Teaching, research and community extension functions had to come together to make learning a lifelong adventure. The plan provided a frame of reference for various steps to be taken to make this vision a reality.

The UGC laid down certain ground rules for itself some of which required restructuring of systems. It resolved to create a more open and flexible structure by adopting the cafeteria approach. Curricula had to be revamped to simultaneously reflect the requirements for national development with international benchmarks. Quality was to be enhanced through the use of information highways and multimedia teaching material provided to teachers. An electronic communication network was required to be created to enable sharing of academic resources. Communication and teaching could be made easier by

linking all the universities and colleges through an information and communication network. Each and every university of the country would be connected through the UGC network. This would create intranet and internet connectivity for students, researchers, teachers and managers of education. It would improve the quality of teaching and learning as well as that of research in universities. Emphasis would be placed on quality undergraduate education. Colleges would also be brought within the purview of the UGC network through the help and support of the state governments.

The UGC would give incentives to universities to adopt a more open and flexible approach by imparting core education at the degree level in basic disciplines and subjects and then allowing students to add certificates, or diplomas or advanced diplomas in skill-oriented subjects to make the degree more useful in the job market. A few universities and colleges that had potential to do better in both undergraduate and postgraduate levels would be identified.

Science teaching would be strengthened by creating a framework to combine the strengths of scientific laboratories, private initiatives and universities to start advanced institutions at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. Together with this, the existing infrastructure in universities and Inter-University Centres would be upgraded. The UGC wanted to emphasize the role of universities in service to society through the interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary approach. Universities would be encouraged to increase understanding of social change and enhance perception for human values through outreach activities. The other major thrust areas were expansion of educational opportunities for foreign students while making educators and students more aware of the strengths of the Indian education system outside the country. All this would be done by creating an academic and administrative enabling environment and generating resources to enable implementation of specific programmes.

It was recognized that the management of colleges and universities in the rapidly changing education scenario needed to be more professional and efficient. The sheer size of the system and the competitive scenario that was emerging because of globalization, demanded the use of ICT in the management and organization of higher education. The UGC made plans for large scale automation not only for academic purposes

but also for a more efficient management of the higher education system. The functioning of the UGC would be computerized at two levels-- functional and support divisions. This would help the UGC in streamlining its activities while ensuring better management of the system. It also proposed to launch training programmes for officers who came from different academic streams who had to perform not only administrative duties relating to higher education but were also involved in various policy decisions. In order to improve both their efficiency and academic profile, they could be trained at different institutions both in India and abroad.

Further the UGC planned to open a separate cell for the implementation and monitoring of the Tenth Plan Schemes so that a mechanism could be put in place for feedback, evaluation and review of the different activities undertaken. Various documents like the database prepared by UGC, guidelines of various schemes, Annual Reports, Curriculum Development Committee Reports, Journal of Higher Education and others would be published by the UGC. This would go a long way in creating awareness about pedagogical issues; education policies; and their economic and societal interlinkages. These steps were vital because formulation of policies in higher education depended on the availability of data and its reliability.

“Knowledge” was the key word in a changing economy. Trained human power with appropriate skills would be important for any nation. For an emerging country like India it was essential to continually review and reorient its approach and policies in higher education through deliberations with academics, industry, government agencies, business and other directly affected sectors. The UGC wanted to initiate several policy studies in the Tenth Plan in collaboration with agencies like AIU, NIEPA and other organizations. It also planned to establish a Policy Research Cell to create a mechanism for doing projection studies at policy levels in higher education. This was recommended as far back as 1977 by the Jha Committee which was pointed out the need for continuous research on problems of higher education and an adequate machinery for the purpose. Since the Indian Higher Education system was big and complex, such an organization would research the problems and performance of higher education; development and innovation in materials, methods and media of instruction; sponsored studies

pertaining to future needs; evaluation and other related areas; and planning.

Several initiatives were taken to implement the goals of the Tenth Plan. Some were very innovative for that time. For instance, an e-journals consortium of universities was launched by UGC on October 6, 2003 to be implemented by INFLIBNET. The aim was to provide electronic access to scholarly literature in all areas of learning to universities that came under the purview of the UGC and gradually to extend it to colleges. The access to the e-journals formally began on January 1, 2004. The programme was the result of the close understanding and cooperation between UGC, ERNET, the Inter-University Centres, IUCAA, INFLIBNET, CEC and national and international publishers.

As the world became increasingly interconnected, India took some serious steps towards internationalization by initiating a programme for the Promotion of Indian Higher Education Abroad (PIHEAD) to run through the Tenth Five-Year Plan. An expert group of eminent persons was set up to carry the programme forward. The Committee felt that three 'products' could be marketed, formal degree programmes already being offered, short-term, non-degree but credit programmes specially designed for foreign students; setting up of campuses abroad. The formal degree programmes would be attractive for students from developing countries and the short-term ones for students from developed countries. It was felt that Indian educational institutions should participate in international education fairs to promote India as a provider of quality higher education and to make others aware of the strengths of select Indian universities. It was also possible to collaborate with bodies like the Institute of International Education and NAFSA, a prestigious non profit body of international educators in USA. At least eight disciplines had potential for export. These were Business Management and Entrepreneurship, Engineering and Technology, Computer Science, Basic Sciences, Social Sciences, Development Studies, and Indian Studies.

Several Indian universities and institutions attracted students from both developed and developing countries. In 2002-03 there were 8,000 foreign students studying in India. The global Indian diaspora too was a viable and substantial market for Indian higher education institutions. Globalization could only increase the flow of students

from all parts of the world to India as Indian students would need to study in other countries to gain a better understanding of local conditions and cultures.

Expansion of Higher Education

The issues of access and equity led to the unprecedented expansion of higher education. The 93rd Amendment of the Constitution took place which was notified as Constitution (Ninety-Third Amendment) Act, 2005, in January 2006. Consequent to it, the Government of India indicated its intention to provide reservations for students from socially and educationally backward classes in higher educational institutions. The then Minister of Human Resource Development, Arjun Singh announced reservations for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) to the extent of 27 per cent in all centrally funded institutions of higher education including professional institutions in addition to the already existing quota of 22.5 per cent for Schedule Castes (SCs) and Schedule Tribes (STs). The Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Admissions) Act, 2005 (No.5 of 2006) in respect of persons belonging to the socially and educationally backward classes was passed. The seats, however, were to be expanded by 54 per cent so that the number of seats available to the general category of students was not reduced.

Act 5 of 2006 was challenged in the Supreme Court, and after an interim stay, was finally upheld in April 2008 with the directions that the OBCs would not include socially advanced persons, commonly known as “creamy layer.” The Act was to be implemented from the academic session of 2008. In the meanwhile, an Oversight Committee had been appointed in May 2006 under the chairmanship of Veerappa Moily to monitor the implementation of Act 5 of 2006 and to assess the requirements of infrastructure, faculty and others to ensure effective implementation without diluting quality. Different groups were formed of Central Universities, Management Education, Medical Education, Agriculture Universities, and Engineering and Technical Education to get inputs on the academic and physical infrastructure required for effective implementation of the expansion, the process and the time frame. Also, the Oversight Committee was to estimate the resources that would be needed.

The government implemented the reservation for OBCs and also the expansion of the seats for the general category from the academic year of 2008 in the Central Educational Institutions. The only exceptions were institutions of excellence, and research institutions of national and strategic importance specified in the schedule of the Central Institutions Reservation Act (CIE Act). The reservation was applicable to all programmes and courses of study at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels except in those programmes that required a high degree of specialization including the post-doctoral level within any branch of study which might be specified by the central government in consultation with the appropriate authorities such as the UGC, AICTE, BCI, MCI and others. The reservation for OBCs, SCs and STs was not to apply to minority institutions. Candidates from the creamy layers were to be excluded and steps were to be taken by the central government to ensure that Central Educational Institutions were not inconvenienced in the phasing of admissions since reservation in admissions had been deferred from the academic session of 2007-2008 to 2008-2009.

Eleventh Five-Year Plan : “Education Plan”

The preparation for the Eleventh Plan began in 2007. It was to be as Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh termed it, an “Education Plan” to usher in the “Second Wave” of development of higher education. A 15 per cent target in enrolment was set which was backed by a quantum jump in the financial allocation from Rs. 3294 crores during the Tenth Plan to Rs. 46,449 crores in the Eleventh Plan. The unprecedented expansion in institutional capacity was reflected in the setting up of about 1464 new educational institutions — comprising 30 central universities, 8 IITs, 7 IIMs, 20 NITs, 20 IIITs, 3 IISERs, 2 Schools of Planning & Architecture, 374 model colleges and 1000 Polytechnics.

Several new initiatives of a fundamental nature were identified under the Eleventh Plan together with some new issues. The initiatives taken by the MHRD included setting a target of 30 per cent gross enrolment ratio, reforms of regulatory authority, reforms in the deemed universities sector, quality assessment mechanisms, qualification framework for vocational and legal education together with internationalization of higher education.

The UGC was called upon to prepare a report on Approach and Strategy for higher education for the Eleventh Plan. Keen on having a factual basis for accomplishing this task, Prof. Sukhadeo Thorat then Chairman UGC sponsored studies in 2006, on pertinent aspects of higher education. These included the estimation of enrolment rates at overall level and among different social groups, disaggregated in terms of religion, caste, gender, region, and others together with the finances required for equitable expansion, and ensuring quality and other related aspects. The studies were published by UGC as Higher Education in India: Issues Related to Expansion, Inclusiveness, Quality and Finance. The document contains eleven articles; "Enrolment Forecast of Higher Education for Inclusive Growth in the Eleventh Five-Year Plan," by P. Duraisamy; "Universities and Colleges Requirement for 15 per cent Target during the Eleventh Plan – An Estimate," and "Financial Requirements in Higher Education during the Eleventh Plan Period," by Sudhanshu Bhushan; "Identification of Educationally Backward Districts" by Sachidanand Sinha; Ravi S. Srivastava and Sachidanand Sinha together looked at "Inter-Social Groups Disparities in Access to Higher Education," and "Inclusiveness and Access of Social Groups to Higher Education," "Determinants of Post-Higher Secondary Enrolment in India," by Amaresh Dubey; "Status of Quality in Higher Education – Varying Perceptions" by Furqan Qamer; "Financing Higher Education in India – Estimate for 15% Enrolment the under Eleventh Plan" by Ravi S. Srivastava; and "Teachers in Universities and Colleges – Current Status Regarding Availability and Service Conditions" by G.K. Chadha, Sudhanshu Bhushan and V. Murlidhar. In addition, Prof. Thorat wrote an extensive introduction laying out comprehensively the issues to be studied before policy could be formulated and allocations rationally made in a focused manner.

In addition, the UGC organized five Regional Conferences, and an all-India Conference in New Delhi involving reputed educationists from different parts of the country. These meets discussed emerging issues and suggested possible approaches, strategies and programmes that should be formulated and implemented under the Eleventh Plan.

The information and analysis generated through these studies and conferences provided valuable insights into the problems confronting higher education in the country. The studies, of great relevance even

today, were an invaluable source material for developing the approach and strategy for higher education during the Eleventh Plan. The UGC put together a report, akin to a road-map for the growth and development of higher education in the country. It suggested the main issues to be addressed under the Eleventh Plan. The focus had to be on expansion of higher education with inclusiveness, quality, relevance, accompanied by the necessary academic reforms. The UGC report suggested that the Eleventh Plan address the following issues:

- Lower enrolment in higher education
- Inter-state and inter-district disparities and rural-urban differences in access to higher education
- Inter-caste, inter-religion, male-female, poor-non-poor disparities in access to higher education
- Issue of quality in higher education
- Academic reforms in universities and colleges; and
- Regulation of private educational institutes

The Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, had asked the UGC to make a presentation on the vision for higher education under the Eleventh Plan. Following the presentation, several major policy decisions were taken by the Prime Minister chiefly for the expansion of the institutional capacity in higher education including the setting up of 30 central universities during the Eleventh Plan. Out of these, 15 universities were to be set up in those states that did not have a central university. He also announced the setting up of model colleges in each of the 374 districts where the enrolment rate was lower than the national average. The announcement included scholarships to cover 2 per cent of undergraduate/postgraduate students. Further, the Prime Minister advised the UGC to work closely with the Planning Commission and MHRD to develop the strategy for higher education under the Eleventh Plan, which the UGC did. It also interacted with the National Knowledge Commission and considered some of its recommendations.

The Eleventh Plan brought higher education on the priority list of the government. The UGC had played a major role both in

highlighting the critical issues and the policy solutions to address them. Of particular importance was the study on financing of higher education if the target of 15 per cent Gross Enrolment Ratio was to be met by the end of the Eleventh Plan. It was felt that in the past higher education had been under financed and it would be advisable to make the finances as close to 1 per cent of GDP as possible. The estimated requirement was Rs. 56,362 crores. What was finally allocated was Rs. 46,449 crores. This was over eleven times what had been allocated in the Tenth Plan, namely Rs. 3,294 crores.

Beginning from April 1, 2007, the UGC vigorously proceeded to implement the various programmes and schemes envisaged in the Eleventh Plan. A select few UGC initiatives may be underlined. The Prime Minister's Office set up a Committee under the Chairmanship of the UGC Chairman to prepare a Bill for the 15 central universities proposed to be set up under the Eleventh Plan. This was done and it was subsequently approved by the government. The UGC was equally involved in respect of 14 new national universities for which it organized discussions with eminent educationists and experts so that the issues pertaining to the setting up of 'Quality' institutions would be clearly sorted out. It then developed a Concept Paper and a Bill for them for the MHRD. Further, Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh announced the setting up of model colleges in each of the 374 educationally backward districts in the country for which the UGC prepared guidelines and invited applications from the states. Since state universities and colleges constitute the core of our higher education system where the majority of students pursue their undergraduate and postgraduate studies, the UGC emphasized the need to strengthen this sector. Only a small number of the existing universities and colleges were being supported by the UGC. The figures at that time were about 125 state universities out of 260 and about 7000 colleges out of about 20,000 received UGC grants. The remaining were left out mainly because of deficient infrastructure. The UGC evolved a scheme to provide a one-time catch-up grant for these institutions to improve their academic infrastructure and thereby make them eligible for UGC grants. This was a major new initiative to strengthen the state university and college sector.

Issues of Quality

The UGC took an important step with regard to Academic Reforms in the university and college system. It set up a Committee to study and suggest the best academic practices to be followed. It also wrote to the institutions of higher education to undertake academic reforms to improve their academic quality and move towards excellence. This was welcomed by universities, and many of them initiated changes in their academic practices.

Mandatory Accreditation

Since quality was an issue of great concern, the UGC proposed to make accreditation by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) compulsory for all institutions of higher education rather than voluntary or optional as it was. Further it developed a scheme under which all universities were required to set up an in-house Quality Assessment Cell which would, among other things, prepare an annual report on the quality status of the university or the institution and monitor its progress. Also, the quality of Ph.Ds being awarded had to improve. Regulations were prepared by the UGC for admission, examination and evaluation of M.Phils and Ph.Ds that were binding on all universities and colleges.

Burden of Affiliation

The issue of college affiliation was examined. It was found that 114 state universities were affiliating universities. Some of them had 600 to 800 colleges affiliated to them and some of these colleges were located at a distance of 150 kilometers or more from the university. This put a heavy burden on the affiliating universities. The UGC set up a Committee to examine the problem of the affiliation system and propose guidelines for affiliation of colleges. The UGC approved the reforms of the affiliation system and recommended to state governments and universities to introduce them as early as possible.

Guidelines for Deemed Universities

The award of Deemed-to-be-University status to educational institutions too was governed by guidelines. The UGC set up a

Committee to draft a regulation for admission and fees in Deemed Universities. The Committee submitted its report, which was approved by the Commission, and submitted to the MHRD for consideration. Also “UGC (Institutions Deemed to be Universities) Regulation, 2010” was framed.

Meeting Faculty Scarcity

Recognizing the problem of ‘quality’ faculty, the UGC adopted several measures to increase the supply of teachers for universities and colleges. It drew the attention of the government on the ban on recruitment of teachers in universities and colleges that had led to acute shortages of teachers. The UGC set up a Pay Review Committee (PRC) with Prof. G.K. Chadha as its Chairman in September 2007 to address the issue of scarcity of quality teachers in universities and colleges, their emoluments and service conditions.

Pay Review Committee

The Pay Review Committee submitted its report on October 2, 2008. It commented that there was near consensus that education in general and higher education in particular had a significant role in enabling India to be counted in the world. Hence, a quantum leap had to be taken in the field of higher and technical education in spite of all the challenges that existed.

Enhancing GER

Although among the developing countries, India’s record of expansion of higher education during the post-war decades was a matter of pride but the GER had not gone beyond 11 per cent as late as 2004-2005. This was very low compared to 36.5 per cent for countries in transition, 54.6 per cent for developed countries and 22.0 per cent for Asian countries. It was disturbing that a preponderant majority of the eligible Indian youth, most markedly in the age-group of 18-23 years, did not attend college or a university. Thanks to the demographic transition that India witnessed in recent decades, about 70.0 per cent of its population was below the age of 35 years. India

had the potential of benefiting from this demographic dividend, but a mere counting of heads would not provide any advantage. The Indian youth had to gain access to higher education and to technical and professional education on a massive scale. There were formidable domestic challenges in expanding and improving higher education taking into account the inter-regional, rural-urban, and male-female differentials accumulated in the last four or five decades because of the long chain of lopsided policy dispensations.

India aimed to increase its GER to 21.0 percent by the end of the Twelfth Plan, with an interim target of 15.0 percent by the end of the Eleventh Plan. To achieve this, the enrolments in universities and colleges needed to be raised, at an annual rate of 9.0 percent to reach 210 lakhs of students by 2011-12. This required an additional enrolment of 8.7 lakh students in universities and 61.3 lakh in colleges. This was proposed to be achieved through establishing new institutions and expanding existing institutions, both government and private.

Faculty Shortage

Ever since the 1990s when the Indian economy opened its doors to the outside world the weaknesses of the Indian educational system on the one hand and the distorted reward pattern of the Indian labour market on the other, had been revealed conspicuously. These had got progressively intensified. A sizeable chunk of highly educated and professional job seekers especially from the urban areas had increasingly become part of the corporate sector. This was the very segment that could have held faculty positions in universities and colleges. Gradually faculty shortages became routine. According to a survey of the universities and colleges during April-July 2008 done by the PRC, 44-63 per cent of the sanctioned positions of lecturers at the university level and 41.0 per cent at the college level were lying vacant. The institution of part-time, ad hoc or contract teachers began to proliferate adding to the damage and consequently the quality of teaching began to suffer. In some disciplines, qualified people have just not been available as jobs both in the corporate and in the public sector are more attractive. The most urgent prerequisite therefore was to restore the place that is due to education, and, perhaps even more important, to show respect to those who are, or could be persuaded to become, the leaders in this sector.

Enhancing Budgetary Provision

According to the PRC many initiatives in varying form and content were needed to ensure that the vastly increased funds allocated for the higher education during the Eleventh Plan, served the intended purpose. First, intensive efforts had to be made to attract more and more bright and qualified young men and women to college and university jobs. For this, the entry point incentives had to be substantially improved. Second, their service conditions had to be ameliorated to an extent that these became discernible to a new job entrant. Better working and living conditions, career advancement prospects, post-retirement plans and other such factors had to become part of policy for faculty recruitment. Third, the span of a teacher's working career had to increase sizeably. The age of retirement differed from state to state, institution to institution and between the public and private institutions. These discrepancies had to be removed. Fourth, all stakeholders in education needed to play their role in a self-persuasive and self-disciplining mode. The central government was required to increase funds for education in general, and higher education in particular. It was imperative for state governments to play their role most decisively and comprehensively which the PRC felt they had the capacity to do. The institutions, whether a university or a college had also to contribute their bit to ensure that the recruitment drive proceeded apace and that the system was flexible enough to find more qualified hands who would benefit the institution.

Teacher Accountability

Finally, the teachers too had to be fully committed, responsible and transparent. If there were strong arguments for the teaching profession to be given social respect and assuring monetary incentives/rewards for university and college teachers, equally convincing were the arguments that teachers had to fulfil their social responsibility and vindicate the trust placed in them. They were obliged to deliver more and better, firstly to justify the belief of the PRC that they were entitled to better pay packages and other incentives, and secondly to ensure that India's higher education improved qualitatively to attain high standards comparable with good institutions in the world. To do this, the qualitative aspects of higher education required attention.

The PRC took note of outdated courses, inadequacies in teaching and research facilities, the crumbling infrastructure, lack of interaction with industry and the 'outside society,' absenteeism among teachers, and obsolete teaching and examination methods together with other operational infirmities. It was because of these lacunae, observed the PRC, that had led to the proliferation of fly-by-night colleges and even universities. Taken together more and more unemployable graduates were being produced. This had an impact on the ability to produce good faculty as well as an employable and efficient workforce.

Many corrective measures were needed to improve the quality of education, especially at the college and university level in all its diversity beginning with the central government at one extreme and individual teachers, at the other. To improve the quality of teaching the quality of teachers had to improve which, in turn, depended on the physical, economic and social environment under which the teachers worked.

Apart from working conditions and salaries, the quality of teaching and of teachers also depended on many academic factors. Financial support and enabling rules were needed at the institutional level to facilitate faculty participation at seminars, both national and international, teacher mobility and faculty exchange programmes, launching of joint academic endeavours, encouragement for course restructuring and improved teaching methods, creating inter-departmental or interdisciplinary interactions, student-faculty exchanges and other related measures.

Faculty Designations

Concerned with faculty shortage and recognizing that the teacher was the pivot of any educational system, the PRC examined a whole host of issues from the nomenclature of the designations of the faculty, incentives to be given at the point of entry as the qualifications required were much higher than in other professions, the incentives during the course of careers and the quantum of increments. The various allowances admissible to teachers were reviewed and the new allowances to be added looked into together with their service and working conditions. The issue of professorship in the colleges was examined as was career advancement, research facilities in terms of

seed money and other essential facilities including ensuring of post-retirement security and others. All these were considered seriously and recommendations made accordingly.

The PRC was convinced that the anticipated supply gaps would be bridged to a considerable extent if its recommendations specially relating to attractive pay packages at the entry point, providing better service and working conditions, faster promotional avenues, augmenting welfare measures, ensuring post-retirement social security and suggested new initiatives and provisions to promote research on a wide scale and others were implemented in both letter and spirit.

UGC's Other Initiatives

Several of the PRC recommendations were implemented including the salient ones with regard to pay and emoluments and designations.

Encore

Owing to the scarcity of quality teachers in universities and colleges, the UGC developed a scheme to use the services of academicians employed in various research institutes outside the university system. This scheme enabled universities and colleges to get the services of academicians, scientists and researchers on liberal terms and conditions. It recognized that the Subject Associations of universities and colleges serve an important academic purpose including holding discussions on various aspects of the teaching programmes and curricula, organizing annual conferences and publishing research journals.

The UGC extended the scheme of offering orientation and refresher courses to reputed research institutes. In addition it made improvements in the NET system including the examination system and brought out the new regulations.

The UGC began to vastly expand the intake capacity of higher education both by the expansion of existing institutions and the setting up of new institutions. At the same time, the emphasis was on inclusion for which the UGC took some important initiatives. For example, the number of fellowships for M. Phils and Ph.Ds was increased.

Also, the amount of the fellowship too was enhanced as it was felt that among other things, this should step up the potential supply of teachers in the medium-run. The UGC extended a helping hand to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in introducing Rajiv Gandhi Fellowships, numbering 2000, for SC/ST students.

The provision of reservation at the level of Lecturer or Assistant Professor was implemented for central universities. The same was indicated to state governments and deemed universities. Necessary steps were taken to implement the reservation for OBCs in central universities. The OBCs were also provided the required relaxation in various UGC schemes. Provision was made to give due representation to those from OBCs on various UGC Committees.

The UGC already had a scheme for remedial coaching in English language, for NET and for entry into services. The schemes were revised with an increased budget. A Minority Cell was also set up by the UGC. It took a number of new initiatives based on the suggestions of the government that had emerged out of the Sachar Committee Report.

The UGC set up an “Equal Opportunity Office” in all central and state universities to operate all the schemes related to SC, ST, OBC, minorities, physically challenged students and women and economically weaker students. The UGC framed regulations for curbing the menace of ragging in universities and colleges along the lines of various decisions--orders of the Supreme Court in consultation with other statutory bodies. These were made effective from the academic year 2009-10. A helpline with toll-free numbers was also set up. Special initiatives were taken to increase the number of hostels for girls and to enhance the amount of grants for this purpose from Rs. 25 lakhs to over one crore for one hostel.

The Babu Jagjivan Ram Chair was set up in Banaras Hindu University to undertake research on issues of social justice and marginalized groups. Chairs were also established in the names of Rabindranath Tagore, Ishwarchandra Vidya Sagar and Ram Mohan Roy, well-known Indian thinkers.

The study of issues related to social exclusion and discrimination associated with group identity such as caste, ethnicity, religion and

others had been neglected in mainstream social science literature. To promote the studies on the issue of social exclusion and discrimination and to develop inclusive policies, the UGC proposed the setting up of a Centre for the Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policies.

Task Force on Faculty Shortage

Looking at the seriousness of the problem of faculty shortage, a Task Force was appointed by the Ministry of Human Resource Development in September 2009 headed by Prof. Sanjay Dhande, Director IIT Kanpur to examine the problem in depth and across the board both in technical and professional education as well as in university education and develop strategies to address it. It was to assess the requirement of quality faculty in what was the remaining period of the Eleventh Plan and in the coming Twelfth Plan; suggest remedial policies and other measures to meet the estimated shortfall in quality faculty; design and develop a robust, objective, transparent and multisource Performance Appraisal System for the appraisal of faculty throughout the country regarding technical education, professional education and university education. The Task Force submitted its report in March 2010.

It interacted with the heads of various regulatory bodies and universities. Based on these and the presentations and the observations made by the earlier Commissions and Committees, some common points emerged. The basic problem of faculty shortage was due to inadequate supply while the demand for teachers increased. This was because an adequate number of qualified persons were not attracted to the profession. Academic careers were unattractive, primarily due to uncompetitive academic salaries, non-congenial work environment, rigid service conditions and lack of uniform incentive policies, particularly for outstanding performers. The problem was even more acute in those sectors where students with plain graduate degrees could earn handsome salaries working in non-academic sectors.

There was a severe resource crunch in institutions of higher learning, particularly those funded by the states as budgetary allocations for higher education had been practically frozen for decades and the institutions found it difficult to meet the expenditure even on the

salaries of teachers. The question of providing other facilities did not arise. This adversely affected the recruitment of new faculty.

As a result, more and more institutions resorted to easy and economically viable solutions of recruiting adhoc, temporary and guest faculties in place of permanent, regularly appointed faculties even where sanctioned posts existed and competent teachers were available. Even the posts that had been sanctioned were inadequate because they had been fixed a long time ago and the number of students had increased. This compromised on the quality of education being imparted.

The Regulatory Bodies were not able to control the functioning of institutions, particularly in professional education, because of vague laws and norms without any punitive measures for violations. This led to the dilution of quality education. The introduction of self-financing courses led to a skewed situation resulting in some departments within the same institution being flush with funds and faculty while others were sorely starved on both counts. The setting up of private universities and other institutions of higher education aggravated the faculty shortage as these institutions poached on teachers in state-run institutions by offering them better incentives if not higher scales of pay and promotions. The situation was aggravated by the absence of a uniform, transparent and scientific system of regular performance appraisal of the work of teachers.

The major reasons identified for faculty shortage were massive expansion of higher education, poor supply of Ph. Ds and qualified teachers; ban on recruitment by most institutions; lack of flexibility in the process of recruitment; procedural delays; communication gap and poor publicity; absence of a common forum to recruit faculty for various institutions together, and frequently over consciousness in recruitment because there was no way to root out the incompetent.

Quality was compromised because there was no special training before induction. The teachers themselves were not quality conscious. When they were rejected they got frustrated and created obstacles. Often there were court cases and legal injunctions, because of which posts lay vacant over long periods of time.

Based on the analysis of the data made available to the Task Force and the discussions held with Heads of Regulatory Bodies, the Task Force

made recommendations for reforms under four categories: Academic, Administrative, Financial and Miscellaneous.

Academic Initiatives

Clearing the backlog of scholarships

The UGC cleared the backlog in the selection for all the UGC Scholarships and Awards; and introduced the system of direct disbursement of all the scholarships / fellowships through banks to mitigate the hardships faced by the scholars.

Innovations and Reforms in the National Eligibility Test

The introduced innovations and reforms in the National Eligibility Test (NET) by introducing (i) 100% online registration, (ii) automatic generation of centre-wise and subject-wise Roll Numbers (iii) switching over of the third descriptive type paper to an objective type to ensure objectivity, transparency & timely declaration of results, (iv) allowing examinees to take home the carbon copy of their answer sheets and uploading of the scoring keys on the UGC website to enable examinees to self-score their papers, (v) issue of e-Certificates with photo-identity of the candidates.

Experimentation on Animals

The UGC also introduced alternative modes of experimentation on animals in Life Sciences instead of their dissection and introduction of chapters on animal ethics both at UG and PG levels.

Singh-Obama Knowledge Initiative and UK-India Research Initiative

India-US Summit on Higher Education and Singh-Obama Knowledge Initiative was conceptualized by the UGC as bilateral initiative towards reforms in higher education. It also prepared the contours of an MoU with the UK-India Education Research Initiative (UKIERI)

for (i) promotion of research; (ii) building a new generation of leaders; (iii) innovation and partnerships; (iv) skill development; and (v) enhancing mobility of academic professionals.

Basic Scientific Research (BSR)

The UGC launched Basic Scientific Research Programme (BSR) on the recommendation of the Scientific Advisory Committee of the Prime Minister (SAC-PM) pursuant to that the MHRD had established a Task Force for implementation of the SAC-PM's recommendation. The objective of the programme has to give a big boost to scientific research. The Scheme provides for:

- Improvement of infrastructure in Universities
- Support to Colleges (Upgradation of Science Laboratories in Colleges)
- Doctoral Fellowship
- Post-doctoral Fellowships
- Developing Networking Centres, and
- Faculty Recharge

Innovation Universities

India shares the global challenge of higher education in the 21st Century. The challenges require innovations that go beyond changes in management, governance and financing. The new century has brought new issues and the context of knowledge protection has been changing because of the dynamics of interrelated phenomena in the real world. In today's time no single discipline will be able to generate adequate and complete knowledge since the new knowledge lies at the intersections of different disciplines. Keeping in view these aspects the UGC prepared guidelines of the scheme through which it will provide substantial support and flexibility to the universities which will come up with bold and big ideas in the field of innovative teaching, innovative research and organizational innovations. The Innovation Universities that would be identified under this scheme will be eligible to receive substantial amount of financial assistance from the UGC.

Joint Appointments

In order to improve the academic environment in the university system by promoting collaboration and formal linkages with other universities, national laboratories, institutes of national importance through programmes of teaching, research and training, a system of joint appointments will provide solution to the problem of severe shortage of faculty even in the most premier institute of higher learning. Besides addressing the issue of faculty shortage, this is going to encourage faculty from metro cities to have first hand experience at the universities and institutions from rural and remote areas. Under this scheme, the UGC supported upto five awardees in a university in a given year.

Setting up of Electronic Repository of Research Theses and Synopses

The UGC started development of electronic repository of M.Phil and Ph.D. theses under the scheme of '*Shodh Ganga*', and the M.Phil and Ph.D. Synopses under the scheme of '*Shodh Gangotri*'. This is going to help the researchers in reviewing the related literature besides avoiding the duplication of efforts and resources. The UGC made it mandatory for all the universities to submit the soft copy of the M.Phil & Ph.D. theses / synopses to the INFLIBNET which is entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining the electronic repository.

e-PG Pathshala

As a phased-intervention towards curriculum reform, the UGC mounted the exercise of developing e-content in 77 postgraduate programmes under the National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (NMEICT) provide the needed technological orientation to the pedagogy of curriculum transaction. It was envisaged to create high quality, curriculum-based, interactive content in different subjects across all disciplines of social sciences, arts, fine arts and humanities, natural and mathematical sciences, linguistics and languages under this initiative named e-PG Pathshala. The contents of the e-courseware in four quadrants, among others, have the facility for students to carry out self assessment of their learning.

The UGC has introduced alternative modes of experimentation on animals in life sciences instead of their dissection. Besides, the UGC has also incentivized the universities to introduce chapters on animal ethics both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Administrative Reforms

The Task Force recommended that every educational institution should establish a Faculty Induction and Development Cell to deal with matters relating to recruitment, training, appraisal, promotion and human resource management of the faculty. It should be ensured that there were no delays in the process of promotion of faculty members. The process of recruitment and promotion could be improved by posting the information on the website of the institution. A calendar of recruitment and promotion had to be declared and made public at the beginning of every academic year along with the vacancy situation. This would make the process of advertisement simple.

It was recommended that the strength of non-regular faculty in an academic programme or institution should not exceed 25 per cent of the sanctioned strength. However, during the initial period of an academic programme, this resource could be as high as 50 per cent of sanctioned strength for about Five-Years. Non-regular faculty members comprised those on contract, guest faculty and adjunct faculty. The non-regular members who were primarily engaged for research purposes were visiting faculty members, distinguished mentor faculty members and international adjunct faculty members. While addressing the issue of shortage of faculty, both regular and non-regular faculty members had to be taken into account.

The financial packages for contract faculty should be comparable to those of regular faculty and they too should have the benefit of contribution to pension, medical and travel allowances and leave facilities. The contract could be an yearly one to be renewed in a transparent manner. Guest faculty could be engaged according to the requirements of the course and adjunct faculty could be appointed to teach a full course or a part of it together with contributing to the research and development activities. If a regular faculty member wished to spend time in an academic institution other than his/her

own, it should be made possible while allowing him/her to maintain lien and get the salary in the parent institution.

If an academic organization wished to seek the help of an eminent person as a friend, philosopher or mentor of an academic activity in an organization, such engagements should be considered under the category of distinguished mentor faculty members. It was felt that Indians engaged in academic activities abroad could be engaged effectively as international adjunct faculty members.

In order to enhance the image of the academic profession in higher education, it was proposed to institute awards such as the Best Higher Educationist award both at the state and national levels. These awards would be open for junior as well as senior faculty members.

Guidelines on Students' Entitlements and Obligations, 2012

The UGC guidelines make it obligatory for the universities and colleges to fulfill all types of Students' entitlements' be it relating to academic, infrastructure, sports and recreation, health, housing, counseling, redressal of grievances. In addition, the guidelines also make it obligatory for the students' to imbibe education and values imparted by the institutions' for their development as responsible citizens.

Restoration of the autonomy of Universities for seeking timely allocation of grants during the Twelfth Five-Year Plan

In an unprecedented move, the UGC took proactive steps to restore autonomy to the universities for seeking timely allocation of grants for operationalization of plan proposals. Under the new procedure, the proposals would now emanate at the level of the individual faculty and subjected to multi-level scrutiny at the levels of the Board of Studies, Academic Council, Finance Committee and the Executive Council of the university. This will facilitate ownership, accountability, transparency and speedy allocation of Twelfth Five-Year Plan grants to the universities for timely execution of programmes and projects.

Anti-ragging Measures

The quality education warrants an inspiring learning ambience on the campuses of institutions of higher learning. The UGC established a 24x7 Helpline for the students with a view to *combating the menace of ragging* and ensure ragging free campus life. In addition, the UGC set up a *dedicated web portal* for creating an anti-ragging database. The students can lodge ragging complaint through on-line mechanism and receive a registration number on their e-mail / cell phone. The complaints lodged on the web portal would be forwarded to the call centres immediately for further necessary action. The students can also check the status of their complaints from the web portal.

Facilitating Participation of Socially Disadvantaged Groups in Higher Education

Equality of opportunity is a fundamental right and a cardinal tenet of our Constitution which mandates that State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people. Education plays a critical role in promoting this egalitarian concern and is essential for integrating the marginalized and vulnerable groups, in the process of inclusive development. Promoting equity through a well developed higher education system, therefore, occupied the centre-stage of development agenda of the UGC and it continued to strive to tackle the existing disparities across socially disadvantaged groups, including gender and regional disparities amongst them. It introduced schemes for the marginalized sections of the society, particularly the Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Minorities, Differently-abled Persons and participation of women, cutting across regional and social groups, in order to increase their access to and retention and success in higher education. The outcomes of these efforts touched different levels of satisfaction.

Keeping in view this concern, the UGC undertook review of the existing schemes devoted to enhancing their participation rate in higher education. The basic purpose of this exercise was to further strengthen the existing schemes as also to suggest new initiatives during the Twelfth Five-Year Plan (FYP) period in terms of the design and delivery mechanisms.

Measures for Ensuring the Safety of Women on Campuses and Programmes for Gender Sensitization

Promoting equity through higher education continued to be at the heart of the agenda of the UGC and reflected its commitment to nurture and preserve democratic praxis in spaces of learning. The UGC set up a Task Force early in 2013 in the wake of the disturbing events of sexual violence in the national capital and the rest of the country, to assess the situation prevailing in all institutions of higher learning to ensure the freedom, safety and security of girls and women, in particular, and the entire youth in general. Drawing from a wide range of sources, the Task Force has come up with several fundamental and far-reaching recommendations. All of these are based on the principles of Equality and Justice guaranteed by the Constitution, including Rights to Dignity, Bodily Autonomy and Integrity enunciated in the Bill of Rights for Women in the Justice Verma Committee Report of January, 2013, and are in consonance with the Vishaka Guidelines, the Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act, 2013 and Criminal Amendment Bill 2013. The recommendations of the Task Force include:

- Broad principles and guidelines to be followed by all Higher Education Institutions in combating sexual harassment and imparting gender sensitization, including confidentiality, non-coercion, fair enquiry, interim relief, and so on.
- Fore-grounding of vulnerability of particular groups and an intersectional approach that acknowledges how gender is compounded by class, caste, region, religion, region, disability and so on, is spelt out.
- Conducting Open Forums on an ongoing basis to achieve accountability and the involvement of all members of higher education institutions in the task of imparting equality, dignity and the ability to live, work and study without fear of harassment and violence.
- Setting up of a gender sensitization unit within the UGC that will act as a nodal division to give effect to

the policy of zero tolerance of gender-based violence on all campuses.

- The Report of the Task Force offers modules that the UGC can disseminate widely to all its constituent institutions.

Financial Reforms

Besides teaching, it was recognized that higher education depended on the research activities of faculty members. In order to improve the quality as well as quantity of research, it was proposed that the time a faculty member spent on research could be charged to the budget of the sponsored research project. Such amounts could then be provided as an honorarium over and above the salary. However, the honorarium should not exceed the salary equivalent of three months as was the accepted international practice.

Further, in order to increase the public-private partnership in the academic world, it was proposed to encourage companies, alumni, public bodies and individuals to donate an amount to establish a chair at a university or an academic institution. It was recommended that the chair would be an academic honour for a period of three to Five-Years in which in addition to his/her salary, a faculty member would be paid an amount of Rs.15,000 to 20,000 per month. The details of the scheme were worked out. Also, special financial packages for faculty positions in backward regions were recommended as these would help to address the issue of faculty shortage in those places.

Miscellaneous Reforms

Inadequate data posed a challenge as it made policy inputs difficult. Hence the Task Force recommended that both the central and the state governments should be requested to collect educational statistical data to help in proper future planning.

A web portal was also recommended for academic induction. This could provide information to academic position seekers about

openings in IITs, NITs, IISERs, IIITs, central and state universities and private and deemed universities and thus connect the prospective faculty to the appropriate institution.

In conclusion the question of imparting quality education was linked inalienably with the performance of teachers for which uniform, robust, transparent objective criteria had to be designed and implemented for the appraisal of their performance.

Regulatory Reforms

In a renewed effort to accelerate the pace of several reforms in higher education, the UGC made a number of significant reform initiatives which are now on the anvil of implementation. The UGC undertook proactive steps towards prevention of discrimination on the grounds of caste and to safeguard the interest of the students belonging to Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) through the “*UGC (Prevention of Caste-based Discrimination/ Harassment/Victimization and Promotion of Equality in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2012*”. Besides protecting the interests of the students belonging to SCs & STs, these Regulations empowered institutions to put in place measures for elimination of caste-based discrimination and harassment of students.

The UGC also brought out *UGC (Establishment of Mechanism for Grievances Redressal) Regulations, 2012*. These Regulations will ensure transparency and prevent unfair practices in higher educational institutions envisioned through the appointment of Ombudsman in Central and State Universities and Deemed to be Universities. In the case of colleges, the Vice-Chancellor of the affiliating university shall constitute a Grievances Redressal Committee in accordance with the provisions of these Regulations. Each institution shall have to establish a registry where any aggrieved student or person can make an application seeking redressal of grievance ranging from admission to award of a degree or a diploma.

The UGC gave a much-needed fillip to quality higher education by introducing mandatory assessment and accreditation of higher educational institutions. The *UGC (Mandatory Assessment and*

Accreditation of Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2012 is going to ensure quality of higher education and research besides disseminating information about individual institutions amongst various stakeholders so as to enable them to make informed choices in accessing quality education.

There is an acceptance of the fact that free flow of knowledge is one of the inevitabilities in the modern world. The time has come when institutions of higher learning have to work collectively and collaboratively. The UGC came up with *Entry of Foreign Educational Providers Regulations, 2012* which will regulate the operation of foreign educational institutions in the country. These Regulations while preventing the operations of dubious foreign institutions would encourage quality institutions to collaborate with Indian institutions as also to set their up campuses in the country.

Proposed Initiatives for the Twelfth Five-Year Plan

Widespread consultations were held, the various reports and papers on issues pertaining to higher education were taken into account and strategies were enunciated for the Twelfth Five-Year Plan. A Conference of Vice-Chancellors of Central and State Universities was held at Vigyan Bhavan from March 25–26, 2011 to review what had been achieved during the Eleventh Five-Year Plan, the gaps that remained and provide critical feedback in order to set the agenda for the Twelfth Five-Year Plan. The detailed proceedings were published by the UGC as *University and Society: Issues and Challenges* which was edited by Prof. Ved Prakash, the current Chairman of UGC.

It was reiterated that higher education played a vital role in the development process and this has become even more significant with the emergence of “knowledge-based economy.” The world was becoming more interconnected and global markets were emerging for skills and innovations. Hence it was becoming crucial for India to expand equal opportunities to its youth to access higher education. If higher education was a major contributor to economic growth all citizens had a right to share in its benefits. “Knowledge” was a social and economic equalizer and so the expansion of higher education had also to ensure equitable access as well as quality.

The Twelfth Five-Year Plan had to aim at consolidating the initiatives taken during the Eleventh Five-Year Plan. It needed to create space for greater university autonomy and accountability by encouraging local solutions while retaining a regime of central approval for expanding equitable access to higher education. Partnerships had to be built between central and state governments for addressing emerging issues of access, equity and quality through an improved programmatic design rather than through discrete centrally/ UGC-sponsored schemes. A comprehensive university reform programme was required that had to be jointly designed by the central and state governments for promoting strategic planning and recognizing performance at the university level.

The Vice-Chancellors' Conference discussed these issues in eight broad heads:

Access, equity, engagement and outcomes; content and quality; research and innovations; faculty development and inter-university resource sharing; internationalization in higher education; alternative modes of delivery of higher education; models of financing; and good governance.

Some major recommendations emerged for each of these:

1. Access, Equity, Engagement and Outcomes

It was felt that it was vital to strengthen the University Information Management as the integrity and authenticity of basic statistics was important to enable proper planning and equitable utilization of the resources. Inclusive policy had to focus on state-supported expansion and upgradation of facilities in existing government-funded institutions of higher education together with optimum utilization of spaces and facilities of unaided institutions through appropriate Public Private Partnership (PPP). However, expansion that encourages profiteering should be checked and preferably stopped altogether, while an enabling environment should be created for philanthropy. Colleges and universities needed strengthening in terms of physical and human resources, while differential policies were required for those institutions located in backward and rural areas. Disparities with respect to weaker

sections of society and the minorities should be tackled by the universities for which they needed greater autonomy in the utilization of funds.

2. Content and Quality

The deliberations covered issues pertaining to planning by the universities, semester system and credits, mandatory websites, assessment of teachers and courses; entrance examinations, assessment and accreditation, resource allocation, professional development and quality assurance; performance of state universities, dual degree programmes for students and support for academics in affiliated colleges.

It was recommended that each university should evolve a perspective plan for academic and administrative reforms and their implementation. It should have a website containing updated information on admission policy, courses and curricula, faculty inputs, faculty profile and the research specializations of each faculty and department. Incentives were required to attract and retain quality faculty. Adoption of semester and choice-based credit system with well-defined policies of credit transfer needed to be implemented across all central and state universities.

Increased use of technology would be helpful in expanding equitable and quality tertiary education in improving the teaching and learning process and examination system, as also in university administration and governance.

3. Research and Innovations

The issues of research and innovation could be addressed at four levels, (i) the way the research programmes such as M.Phils and Ph.Ds were organized and carried out; (ii) time and energy devoted by the faculty in implementing independent research projects (iii) the outcome and quality of researches undertaken by the faculty and researchers and

(iv) integrating research with teaching. The faculty working in the postgraduate and research departments had to be more involved. College faculty that was predominantly engaged in classroom teaching had to be encouraged to do regular research. Several recommendations pertaining to research were made for enhancing research including motivation, policies and mechanisms, evolution of norms, standards and regulations to ensure quality, interface with industry and methods of making Intellectual Property Rights more pervasive in higher education institutions.

Further, it was recommended that individual universities should have earmarked budget allocation for research and innovation. Start-up research funds should be available for the new and younger faculty. Research decisions were taken primarily at the university level. Together with that, investigator-friendly guidelines, travel grants for research and for presenting papers at seminars were required.

Specialty oriented Inter-University Centres had to be created as experience showed that they were of enormous benefit to the faculty and scientists. Further, the concept of the Joint Appointment System between universities and national laboratories needed to be established and the number of full-time scientists had to be increased at least three times. Thrust areas at the national level should be identified in both experimental and theoretical sciences in all disciplines for which funds had to be prioritized in mission mode.

Another major recommendation was the establishment of innovation incubators to create the necessary linkages between the university, relevant local and national industry, research labs and civil society through public-private partnership. For universities and institutions located in remote areas, special steps were needed to develop their human resource and infrastructure capacities. That may include mentoring by reputed national institutions, labs, industry or individuals. Finally, a concerted and collective effort had to be made by universities and research institutions in various geographical locations to develop cross-border resources and knowledge pools.

4. Faculty Development and Inter-University Resource Sharing

After deliberating on searching and nurturing young talent; service conditions of teachers; faculty development initiatives; creation of a national knowledge network to augment classroom teaching; extending the scope of Inter-University centres and reviewing and restructuring of Academic Staff Colleges to augment research and teaching skills, several recommendations emerged. These were introduction of faculty exchange programmes between prominent universities and universities located in remote areas; introduction of Faculty-Student mentorship programmes to facilitate integration of students, both academically and socially; creation of Indian Education Service (IES) to maintain the quality of faculty and to bring diversity in the profile of universities; and setting up networking centres between universities and research institutions to promote cross-disciplinary perspectives.

5. Internationalization in Higher Education

It was accepted that the generation of new knowledge was better achieved by interdisciplinary, international networking and exchange of ideas between students, scholars and institutions. Hence a partnership could be nurtured between academic institutions in India and universities round the world. But first various regulatory and financial issues needed to be addressed so that the national objectives of nation building and modernization were not compromised.

Internationalization in higher education is a two-way process: within India and outside India. Within India, internationalization implies diversity of students including foreign students; presence of international faculty; collaborative research; use of information and communication technology; setting up of branch/offshore campuses of foreign universities; and programme collaboration which can have an exchange of curricula, teachers, teaching-learning and evaluation practices.

Outside India, internationalization implies students going to study abroad at all levels of higher education; outflow of faculty and researchers, as well as professionals; setting up of branch campuses of Indian institutions abroad.

There were several challenges to internationalization. Some were organizational like the need to establish nodal offices in universities to deal with all issues of internationalization at a single point and mechanisms to establish equivalence between Indian and foreign degrees. There were academic issues such as faculty shortage and the need for the existing faculty to upgrade their qualifications and knowledge base. Compulsory accreditation of universities was required for which several credible accrediting bodies had to be set up. Encouraging foreign universities to establish educational institutions in India would pose certain challenges as they would poach on competent teachers in the existing institutions accentuating the faculty shortage unless some means were devised to retain talented teachers. There would be questions related to providing a level playing field for Indian institutions and foreign universities.

One thought was to introduce the concept of navratna departments along the line of navratna universities which could have academic linkages with good foreign universities including faculty and student exchange. It was also necessary to move to a transfer credit system at two levels: between Indian universities within the country; and between Indian and foreign universities.

6. Alternative Mode of Delivery of Higher Education

Currently 18 to 20 percent of enrolment in higher education is in the programmes offered by the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) and State Open Universities. The Distance Education Council (DEC) was authorized to regulate the standards of these distance education programmes.

Advances in technology had made it possible to increase access and the reach of higher education institutions through the Open and Distance Learning (ODL). Hence it was recommended that

ICT be used in the further development and growth of both conventional and the distance mode of higher learning to reach the remote and less developed segments of population areas. It could even be useful in promoting technical, vocational and professional education with hands on experience in AICTE approved institutions. Since the boundaries between conventional and ODL were blurring, credit transfers should be introduced between the two for meaningful convergence.

7. Models of Financing Higher Education

Although public finance for higher education had increased significantly in the Eleventh Five-Year Plan, it was still much less than the normative figure of 1.5 per cent of GDP (Centre and States) recommended by the various commissions and committees from time to time. It was also inadequate for the expansion needs of higher education and this led to private finance entering the higher education sector in the last two decades. This investment was mainly concentrated in a few principally market-driven areas.

Financing higher education and funding mechanisms were crucial for the development of higher education. Although the demand for higher education had increased substantially, the funding from the central and state governments had declined in real terms. The Eleventh Five-Year Plan had attempted to remedy the situation. It saw a nine-fold increase over the Tenth Five-Year Plan. However, resources had to be spent carefully and hence it was critical to develop norms and improvements in the existing system of funding and its utilization.

Some major recommendations emerged. One was funding for higher education had to be increased to 1.5 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The state governments needed to provide liberal funding to state universities and colleges and this had to be supplemented by grants from the central government. The grants could be determined on the basis of past performance and future requirements. The funding had to be under three broad categories: minimum substantive grant;

maintenance grant to all universities; and performance-linked incentive grants.

At least four models of public private partnership (PPP) were recommended. One was the basic infrastructure model in which the private sector creates the infrastructure and the government runs and manages the institution, making annualized payments to the private investor. The second was the outsourcing model in which the private investor makes both the infrastructure and runs the operations and management on payment by the government for its services. The third is the equity or hybrid model in which the investments in infrastructure are shared between the government and the private investor and the operation and management is with the private sector. Finally there is the reverse outsourcing model in which the government invests in the physical infrastructure and the private sector takes the responsibility of operation and management.

8. Proposed Chairs in the Name of Nobel Laureates

The university system is the right place to generate thinking about the processes it would adopt in integrating inter-cultural and social dimensions into teaching, research and service delivery, including strong interface of science with other disciplines. In order to generate perceptual analysis of cross disciplinary issues, special focus is called for in enriching the academic resources of the university system for a deeper reflection on critical issues in multi-cultural and multi-linguistic contexts. It is in this context that the UGC created Chairs in the universities in the name of Nobel Laureates to promote deeper involvement in identified areas of knowledge. Accordingly, the UGC took cognizance of the honoured citizens of India as well as India-born American citizens who by their contributions to literature, physics, medicine, peace, economics, sciences, and chemistry have made the country proud by earning a place in the galaxy of Nobel Laureates. Rabindranath Tagore (1913), C.V. Raman (1930), Hargobind Khurana (1968), Mother Teresa (1979), Subramanyam Chandrasekhar (1983), Amartya Sen

(1998) and Venkatraman Ramakrishnan (2009) will remain a perpetual source of inspiration for the younger generation of researchers and academics of our country. In order to carry their rich legacy forward, the UGC decided to create such Chairs in the university system and identified appropriate areas of study which are relevant to philosophical, sociological, economic, scientific and cultural contexts of Indian education.

9. Inter-University Centre for Teacher Education

The UGC has established six Inter-University Centres (IUCs) between 1984-1994 in various domains of concern to higher education. Another IUC for Teacher Education is the latest addition to the establishment of such centres. In contributing its share to improving School Education, the dividends for the outcome of such interventions will substantially be reaped by higher education, in the long run.

A High-Powered Commission on Teacher Education was constituted by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India under the Chairmanship of Justice J.S. Verma, Former Chief Justice of India. In the Report of the Commission entitled "Vision of Teacher Education in India: Quality and Regulatory Perspective", many recommendations of significance, concerning Teacher Education in India, have been made. Out of 30 Recommendations contained in the Report of the Commission, 8 of them have a bearing on higher education. Of the 8 Recommendations, one, namely, Recommendation No.13, falls directly in the purview of the UGC. The Recommendation reads "There is need for enhanced investment in promotion of research in education in general, and in teacher education in particular in the universities; creation of an Inter-University Centre in Teacher Education could play a significant role in this regard".

In pursuant of the above, the MHRD issued directions to the UGC under section 20(1) of the UGC Act, 1956 vide its Order dated 19th August, 2013. Acting upon this, the Commission issued notification for the establishment of Inter-University Centre for Teacher Education, with its location at the premises

of the Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, Kakinada (Andhra Pradesh).

10. Integration of Knowledge and Skills

A new initiative of the UGC is a scheme on introduction of vocational education in higher education under the National Vocational Education Qualification Framework (NVEQF) towards integration of knowledge and skills to provide human resource for economic development and productivity. Ten vocational sectors have been initially identified for this purpose. The UGC is going to support the scheme in the Twelfth Five-Year Plan. It would help institutions to offer programs at Degree / Advanced Diploma / Diploma levels. This scheme is in addition to the career-oriented courses offered by the UGC as a part of undergraduate education in Arts, Science and Commerce.

11. Implementation of Community Colleges Scheme

There is a dearth of supply of 'skilled' workforce to the economy. Past experiences show that the conventional higher education system which is rigid in its approach cannot fill the shortage. Whereas, the Community Colleges model, which is prevalent globally in various forms appear to be a viable alternative to address this issues. Accordingly this issue was discussed in the Conference of State Education Ministers held on 22.02.2012, wherein this scheme was approved and a committee of 9 education ministers was constituted to finalize the concept and framework of the scheme. The Government of India accepted the report of the Committee and decided to set up 200 community colleges on pilot in the country. Further it has issued direction to the UGC to implement the Scheme. Accordingly proposals were invited. Out of the 77 proposals received, 51 were approved.

The courses in the community colleges are envisaged to be of shorter duration and is divided into credit-based modules to facilitate horizontal and vertical mobility. Under this initiative

industry including business and service sector will be associated at all levels, viz. development of curriculum, training of trainers, supply of adjunct faculty hands on practical training to ensure employment of the learner.

The aforesaid initiatives will set the agenda for action in the coming years and generate benchmarks for future reorientation of higher education in the country.

12. Good Governance

The principle of autonomy and the relevant spheres of autonomy in universities and higher education institutions have been stressed by a number of committees. But autonomy has always been constrained by invoking principles of accountability. Further, a university could only make a convincing case for autonomy when it was prepared to give autonomy to its own constituents, internal organs and sub-units. Autonomy had to percolate to all levels including the lowest.

Several issues impinged on the governance of higher educational institutions that differed between central and state universities and between universities and their affiliated colleges. While most of the university teaching departments were directly governed by the university administration, many government and aided colleges were governed by the departments of higher education that come under the state government and the governing councils in the case of aided or private institutions.

For universities to function with independence and autonomy, there had to be freedom from political and bureaucratic interferences in the appointment of Vice-Chancellors and key functionaries. The process of the appointment of Vice-Chancellors had to be transparent. It was felt that the placing of information on nominations received, short-listed panels and final selection in the public domain, would go a long way in ensuring this transparency.

The central government also needed to create model Acts, statutes and Rules of Governance. Large numbers of

colleges affiliated to a university tended to overweigh it with examination and other regulatory responsibilities which weakened its facilitative and promotional functions. Hence it was felt that the maximum number of colleges attached to a single university should not exceed 50. On one extreme were universities with too many affiliated colleges, and on the other, were a growing number of small single stream or specialized universities. Both had to be discouraged. Universities had to become more 'comprehensive' in character as recommended by the Yashpal Committee. They also needed to develop Internal Quality Assurance Cells and introduce a Code of Good Practices. E-governance and observance of code of professional ethics for university and college teachers would go a long way in the implementation of good practices and thereby improving quality.

Central and state universities together with policy planners had to design appropriate strategies for immediate, short-term, medium-term and long-term goals to improve the quality of higher education in the country.

13. Augmenting Human Resource for Enhanced Efficiency

The UGC has recently enhanced its human resources required at various rungs of the administrative ladder to enable it to perform at the optimum level. Towards this end, it has made recruitments of Director (Administration), Financial Adviser, 5 Joint Secretaries, 3 Deputy Secretaries, 19 Education Officers, 120 Lower Division Clerks. These positions had remained unfilled for a long time, thus adversely affecting the output of the UGC within time and efficiency.

14. Working Group for Higher Education in the Twelfth Five-Year Plan

The Chairman UGC wrote a detailed letter to the heads of central, state and deemed universities and institutions of higher learning emphasizing the pressing need for academic and administrative

reforms. On receiving an encouraging response, the UGC set up a Committee on Academic and Administrative Reforms with Prof. A. Gnanam as the convenor and comprising several eminent educationists from a diverse range of disciplines. The Committee submitted a report based on which an action plan was developed for the consideration of education authorities and phase-wise introduction of substantive academics and administrative reforms in the institutions of higher education.

Finally the Working Group for Higher Education in the Twelfth Five-Year Plan compiled the significant ideas about possible strategies for the Twelfth Five-Year Plan in order to implement the goals set. These have been detailed in a document *Inclusive and Qualitative Expansion of Higher Education: Twelfth Five-Year Plan, 2012-2017*, published by the UGC. It was compiled under the leadership of Prof. Ved Prakash, currently the Chairman of UGC.

It was recognized that higher education in India was passing through a phase of unprecedented expansion, marked by an explosion in the volume of students, a substantial expansion in the number of institutions and a quantum jump in the level of public funding. The enormity of the challenge of providing equal opportunities for quality higher education to an ever-growing number of students also provided a historic opportunity to correct the sectoral and social imbalances, reinvigorate institutions, reach international benchmarks of excellence and extend the frontiers of knowledge. The Twelfth FYP aimed at utilising the opportunity of expansion for promoting excellence and achieving equal access to quality higher education. The university system vital in the economic growth and development of a society, can only contribute by not only expanding but also by increasing student diversity thus effectively improving the participation of the hitherto underserved segments of the population, like women, socio-economically disadvantaged groups, minorities, and others in the programmes of higher education. Although higher education had expanded, it remained elitist and socially stratified. The concern to make it more equitable would have to take centre stage. Also it would have to evolve processes by which the inter-cultural and social dimensions would have to

be integrated into teaching, research and service delivery. The university system would need to strengthen its social function by building strong university - society linkages, emphasizing and disseminating core national values enshrined in the Constitution; developing the skills in the students required to cope with the expectations of the 21st century, and preparing graduates to work in a multi-cultural and multi- linguistic settings.

India had made enormous strides in achieving these goals in more than six decades since independence, but considerable challenges remained. The thrust of the Eleventh Five-Year Plan had been on expansion of higher education and promotion of greater regional and social equity. In spite of this the goal of achieving 15 per cent GER by 2011/2012 and 27 per cent by the end of Twelfth Five-Year Plan continued to engage the attention of policy makers, as did those of promoting relevance and quality. Several reform initiatives had been undertaken during the Eleventh Five-Year Plan. These included expansion, particularly of general higher education; creating space for non-profit private providers; deciding the optimum size of a university in terms of the number of affiliated colleges that it could have; reforming admission, curriculum and assessment procedures with focus on a common entrance test; restructuring academic programmes; universalizing the semester system; continuous internal evaluation and assessment together with the introduction of a choice-based credit system; mandatory accreditation system and creation of multiple accreditation agencies of unquestioned professionalism; and restructuring the National Eligibility Test (NET)/ State Eligibility Test (SET).

In the area of research Inter-University Centres had been set up; research programmes expanded; and Academic Staff Colleges revamped together with increase in teacher development programmes. Further autonomy and accountability of institutions of higher learning and inclusive policies and programmes in the domain of higher education were strengthened. However, all reforms were not implemented in all institutions across the country and, exceptions apart, the majority of higher education institutions performed poorly on quality when measured on a relative global scale.

The measures adopted yielded results showing a significant increase in enrolments and reduction in overall social group disparities. However, access to higher education was still less than the minimum international threshold levels, the distribution of institutions was skewed and enrolment in public universities was largely concentrated in the conventional disciplines, whereas in the private self-financed institutions, it was overwhelmingly in the market-driven disciplines.

To materialize a “quantum jump” in achieving the triple objectives of access and expansion, equity and inclusion, and quality and excellence, an important step would be to consolidate what had been established in the Eleventh Five-Year Plan. A large number of central universities and model colleges were set up and these would require continued and accelerated support because during the Twelfth Plan they were likely to fast pace their development and operational work. Any resource constraints at this juncture would be detrimental to their growth and development. The consolidation and optimal use of infrastructure already created during the Eleventh FYP, required better utilization of the existing infrastructure and its upgradation as and where necessary, together with the creation of new institutions primarily to meet the objective of regional equity.

To strengthen the University system, efforts would be made to minimize the affiliating burden of universities by implementing the “Affiliation Reform Package” developed by the UGC during the Eleventh Five-Year Plan. An overwhelmingly large number of students were enrolled in state universities and colleges and this sector had been least attended to in terms of resource support and subjected to external influences and pressures in the name of accountability. Enhanced resource support to this sector based on the commitment of the state governments to provide these institutions greater autonomy and operational flexibility had to be a priority during the Twelfth FYP.

New schemes for financial support of socially deprived groups, minorities and women, along with significant remedial support for such students and faculty were proposed to promote

equality at all levels. Financial support to girl students and students from SC/ST, Minorities and Other Backward Category (OBC) category was proposed to be considerably enhanced at all levels of higher education and for all branches, including professional and technical education. It would be given in the form of scholarships, transport/rent allowance, book banks, and fee-plus scholarship system for professional students. Also the post-doctoral scholarships were proposed to be enhanced and a fast-track methodology of disbursement implemented.

Regional/disciplinary/gender imbalances were sought to be reduced by setting up many Polytechnics, about one thousand in number; completing the establishment of 374 Model Colleges in the identified Educationally Backward Areas of low GER districts; establishment of 800 Constituent Colleges in the already existing 40 central universities; and establishment of 20 exclusive universities for women. In addition, infrastructure would be strengthened to provide access and retention of women students, differently abled students and those from socially deprived backgrounds. Equal Opportunity Cells, which were initiated in the Eleventh FYP, had to be set up in all institutions, including those covered under Section 2(f) of the UGC Act to monitor and oversee the implementation of policies and programmes for the weaker sections and their progress.

Promotion of quality was vital and so there would be a greater focus on performance, curricular reforms, better human resource management, and schemes to promote high quality research, together with technology-assisted monitoring mechanism. National science experimentation facilities, particularly in the cutting edge areas will be set up as Inter-University Centres and University-housed Networking Centres to provide international quality resource support to all the researchers and post-graduate students. Faculty being crucial to higher education, it was noted with grave concern that a large number of faculty positions remained perennially vacant either because suitably qualified persons were not available or because of procedural restrictions and fund constraints especially in state universities and colleges. Hence strategies had to be evolved and implemented to attract and retain the best talent as faculty.

The capacity and capability of the faculty had to be enhanced to meet the modern-day requirements through the Faculty Talent Promotion scheme. The Academic Staff Colleges needed to be upgraded as Faculty Development Centres (FDCs) with redefined roles and responsibilities.

In addition, support would be provided for curricular and academic reforms to improve student choices, technology-assisted participatory teaching-learning processes and increasing the provision of relevant education, with an emphasis on feedback-based holistic examination/evaluation system. A fine balance would be struck between the market-oriented professionals and liberal higher education. In addition, in order to improve competence, skill based education would be supported and incentivized with due regard to the National Vocational Education Qualification Framework. Equally important would be the initiative for Leadership Development and Institutional Management programmes at all levels, for those who may be currently holding the leadership, management and administrative positions. For those who were to be groomed for taking up leadership positions in colleges and universities in future, a separate Leadership Mentoring Programme was envisaged through dedicated/competent centres.

To remove financial and procedural bottlenecks faced by higher educational institutions, the Working Group observed, it was necessary to promote the culture of accountability, improved performance and better use of resources while at the same time respecting their academic autonomy. A norm-based funding mechanism based on the justified requirements submitted by the universities and colleges with due approval of their decision-making bodies, like the Academic and Executive Councils had to be put in place. This would be moderated according to the availability of resources with the UGC. Colleges and universities were the end users of the public funds provided by the central or state governments for which they had to be accountable. A New Educational Management System would be introduced by which their accountability would be assessed more in terms of their performance and outcomes and less in terms of insistence on adherence to elaborate processes and

procedures. Such would shall have to go beyond e-governance, management information system and enterprise-wide resource planning. What was more important was to bring about changes in the systems, processes, culture, and structure of the university Act/Statutes.

The UGC itself would need to be restructured and modernized as an organization to become a vibrant academic, administrative, fund providing and monitoring body by the introduction of a new management system of good governance. This was not merely about e-governance. There had to be transparency and accountability. Also, eminent academics had to be roped in on a full-time basis as advisers. Besides talent had to be infused into the organization through lateral entry and deputations from other departments and organizations. This would enable the UGC to design the schemes better, execute them effectively and monitor the outcomes and outputs in a time-bound manner.

It was pointed out by the Working Group that only a few states had established the State Councils of Higher Education. These were envisaged as interface bodies between the state governments, their universities and the national bodies and councils like the UGC, All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and others. All states had to be encouraged to establish them speedily. Similarly, the College Development Councils (CDCs) of the universities had to become more effective so that the UGC-supported schemes could be channelized more effectively to the colleges.

The need for private sector participation in higher education was recognized. For this new models based on quality would be explored, supported and incentivized by well-defined policies, norms, and monitoring mechanisms. The initiative would also include maximizing the potential of Public Private Partnership (PPP) in higher education not only for setting up new universities and colleges but also for creating and sharing quality infrastructure and physical facilities in the existing colleges and universities.

Aware of the enormity of the task and the inevitable resource constraint, the Planning Commission constituted a Committee

on Corporate Sector Participation in Higher Education in January 2012. This was the Narayanamurthy Committee.

15. Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)

Seeing the need to fast track the expansion of higher education and encouraged by the success of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) that had laid a strong foundation for primary and secondary education in India, the Working Group felt that a similar effort should be made for higher education. It was a sector that had still not seen any concerted efforts for improvement in access or its quality. India could reap the benefits of demographic dividend with its huge working age population, but for this an educated and productive workforce was needed. The International Labour Organization (ILO) predicted that by 2020, India would have 116 million workers in the age bracket of 20 to 24 years, as compared to China's 94 million. The average age in India by 2020 would be 29 years as against 40 years in USA, 46 years in Japan and 47 years in Europe. In fact, more than 60 per cent of the population in India was in the age group of 15 to 59 years. However, essentially what matters is not the size of the population, but its age structure and productivity. It would be a lost opportunity if this demographic dividend was not converted into an advantage and in this lay the significance of higher education.

The Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha took note of the enormous challenges that the higher education sector posed, and the efforts that were being continued from the Eleventh Plan to the Twelfth Five-Year Plan. It included the aim to make higher education more relevant to the global needs and to remove the inequalities in access to education amongst various social groups. Such objectives were sought to be realized by providing adequate inputs and implementing the much needed governance and regulatory reforms. Greater emphasis was being laid on the improvement of the quality of teaching-learning processes in order to produce employable and competitive graduates, postgraduates and Ph. Ds. With respect to the planning and

funding, some key changes are envisaged; (a) funding will be more impact and result-oriented, (b) various equity related will be integrated for a higher impact, (c) instead of unplanned expansion, there will be a focus on consolidating and developing the existing system adding capacities and (d) there will be a greater focus on research and innovation. The most significant paradigm shift proposed by the Planning Commission is in the arena of function of state higher education system. Strategic funding of its sector has been strongly recommended in order to make a marked difference in the overall resource endowment for the state higher education sector.

While recounting the shortcomings of the higher education system in India and the complexity of the system together with the limited reach of the University Grants Commission, a new centrally sponsored scheme for higher education which will spread over two plan periods (Twelfth and Thirteenth) and will focus on state higher educational institutions was envisaged. The scheme would be called Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA). Its key objectives are to improve access, equity and quality in higher education through planned development at the state level. This will involve creating new academic institutions, and expanding the existing ones. The approach would be to make these institutions self-reliant in terms of quality to provide students with education that is relevant to them as well as the nation as a whole professionally managed, and characterized by greater inclination towards research and creation of knowledge at all levels.

There are 316 states public universities and 13,024 colleges, that can be covered under RUSA. The funding will be provided Centre - State sharing mode in the ratio of 90:10 for North-Eastern States and J&K, 75:25 for Other Special Category States like Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand and 65:35 for Other States and Union Territories. Funding will also be available to private government-aided institutions, subject to their meeting certain pre-conditions, for permitted activities based on laid down norms and parameters.

RUSA will have a completely new approach towards funding higher education in state universities. It will be based on key principles of performance-based funding, incentivizing well-performing institutions and decision-making through clearly defined norms, which will establish and rely on a management information system that will gather the essential information from institutions. RUSA will aim to provide greater autonomy to universities as well as colleges and have a sharper focus on equity-based development, as well as improvement in the quality of teaching and learning together with research. It will be a new flagship scheme of the government that will pave the way for far-reaching reforms at the state level.

Many of the problems in the state universities are linked to the archaic systems and regulations that govern them. Without bringing about reforms in the existing governance and regulatory systems, it will not be possible to unleash the potential of the state universities. It was believed the reforms, initiated under RUSA, will build a self-sustaining momentum that will urge greater accountability and autonomy of state institutions and impress upon them the need to improve the quality of education being imparted in them. In order to be eligible for funding under RUSA, states will have to fulfil certain prerequisites. These include the creation of a State Higher Education Council, setting up of accreditation agencies, preparation of the state perspective plans, commitment of certain stipulated share of funds towards RUSA, academic, sectoral and institutional governance reforms, filling of faculty positions and others. Under the scheme, an initial amount will be provided to the state government to prepare them for complying with these a-priori requirements.

Once eligible for funding under RUSA, and after meeting the prerequisite commitments, the states will receive funds on the basis of achievements and outcomes. The yardstick for deciding the quantum of funds for the states and the institutions comprise the norms that reflect the performance in key result areas of access, equity and excellence. The state plans will capture the current position of the states and the institutions with respect to these indicators, as well as the targets that needed to be achieved.

The detailed institutional structure of RUSA is also presented in the document on RUSA. At the national level, the scheme will be implemented by the RUSA Mission Authority which will be assisted by the Project Advisory Group, Technical Support Group and Project Directorate. The State Higher Education Council will be the main agency in each state through which RUSA will work. The State Higher Education Council is envisaged as an autonomous body that will function at an arm's length from both the state and central governments. It may be immediately created through an executive order but had to be accorded statutory status within Five-Years of its inception. RUSA has also suggested a composition and structure for the Council. The State Higher Education Council will undertake this process of planning, execution and evaluation, in addition to other monitoring and capacity building functions. It will plan for the development of higher education at the state level and the State Higher Education Plan prepared by it would constitute the main instrument to guide the entire transformative process in the state higher education sector. It will be assisted by the State Project Directorate and Technical Support Group. In every institution, the Governing Body and a Project Monitoring Unit will oversee the project's progress. The effort is to plan from the grass roots to the top rather than from top to the bottom as usually happens. The idea is to ensure as much participation as possible at all levels to give a sense of ownership to all stakeholders and agencies to ensure the success of the scheme. On it lies the responsibility of fast tracking the nation goals in higher education of access, equity, relevance and quality while transformations take place at all levels through the UGC and other regulatory bodies together with universities, colleges and other institutions of higher education

16. Entrusting UGC with New Responsibilities

Recently, the UGC has additional responsibilities by the Ministry of Human Resource Development and as a consequence of the judgments of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India.

The Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, has entrusted all the regulatory responsibilities of the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) education system in the country upon the UGC. In the meantime, the UGC is working on development of appropriate regulations for maintaining standards in ODL programmes and courses.

Based on the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, in its judgement and order dated April 25, 2013, it has become imperative for the universities and the University Grants Commission (UGC) to evolve a suitable methodology to ensure that existing technical/engineering colleges affiliated to universities are under the purview of the universities and the UGC. In assigning this responsibility to the UGC, the Hon'ble Supreme Court has reposed confidence on the sanctity of autonomy of universities. Accordingly, the UGC is also working on preparing suitable guidelines and regulations for ensuring standards of teaching and learning in affiliated colleges who are offering these courses and programmes. All this is an indication that higher education is gradually being looked at as an integrated whole so that the UGC can ensure a more holistic and coordinated development.

CHAPTER VIII

The New Initiatives and Discourses

Areas of Discourse

The decade 2003-13 brought on the anvil of discussion some significant initiatives bearing on policy perspectives in Indian higher education. The focus of these initiatives was envisaged to bring about a radical transformation of the higher education system. It needed an in-depth discourse in order to implement the recommendations that emerged from the documents. Some of the ideas to be implemented needed even legislative action at the level of Parliament, for which a number of Bills were formulated. The list of pending Bills in Parliament concerning higher education are: (i) National Accreditation Regulatory Authority for Higher Educational Institutions, 2010, Bill; (ii) Foreign Education Institutions Bill (Regulation of Entry and Operations); (iii) The Prohibition of Unfair Practices in Technical Educational Institutions, Medical Educational Institutions and Universities Bill, 2010 (Prevention of Malpractices Bill); (iv) The Educational Tribunal Bill, 2010; (v) The National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER) Bill, 2010 (The Higher Education and Research Bill, 2011; (vi) The National Academic Depository Bill, 2011; (vii) The Professional Courses (Common Entrance Examinations and Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill, 2009; (viii) The Universities for Research & Innovation Bill, 2012. The limited extent to which some of the recommendations connected with these legislations could be incorporated by the UGC in its framework of action are contained in the earlier chapter. The developmental agenda in higher education reflected in the various initiatives during the period 2003-13 are given synoptically in the present chapter as these documents informed the Golden Jubilee decade of the UGC.

National Knowledge Commission

Recognizing that knowledge would be the key driving force in the 21st century and that India's ability to emerge as a globally competitive player would substantially depend on its knowledge resource, the National Knowledge Commission was set up on June 13, 2005 with Sam Pitroda in the chair as a high level advisory body to the Prime Minister of India with the objective of transforming India into a knowledge society. Its terms of reference were to recommend how to:

- Build excellence in the educational system to meet the knowledge challenges of the 21st century and increase India's competitive advantage in the fields of knowledge.
- Promote the creation of knowledge in Science & Technology laboratories.
- Improve the management of institutions engaged in Intellectual Property Rights.
- Promote knowledge applications in Agriculture and Industry.
- Promote the use of knowledge capabilities in making government an effective, transparent and accountable service provider to citizens and promote widespread sharing of knowledge to maximize public benefit.

To take its mandate forward, the Commission concentrated on five key aspects of knowledge from which several focus areas emerged. The broad key aspects were: enhancing access to knowledge, reinvigorating institutions where knowledge concepts are imparted, enabling a world-class environment for the creation of knowledge, promoting applications of knowledge for sustained and inclusive growth and using knowledge applications in the efficient delivery of public services. It submitted around 300 recommendations on 27 focus areas during its three and a half year term.

The National Knowledge Commission recommended that a legislation be enacted to enforce the right to education that was made a fundamental right in the Constitution. For this school education would have to be greatly expanded both at elementary

and secondary levels while the quality had to be improved across the board. This required improved infrastructure, greater flexibility in the disbursement of funds and management by local stakeholders. In addition the library system had to be strengthened to ensure greater public participation. In a multilingual country like India, translation had to be encouraged on a large scale. However English needed to be taught from Class 1 together with the mother tongue.

In higher education, the National Knowledge Commission emphasized the use of ICT and Open Distance Education together with Open Access Materials and Open Educational Resources. Their use could be vital in achieving the objectives of expansion, inclusion and excellence. However, to do so, its quality needed improvement and it had to be made more appropriate for the needs of society. A National Knowledge Network had to be established to facilitate research through live consultations and data and resource sharing. Open Access Materials and Educational Resources could be developed and disseminated through it. It could also be used for enhancing healthcare and facilitating the development of a Health Information Network.

Further, interconnectivity would facilitate e-governance which was not just a matter of computerization but also a step towards rethinking systems and processes to ensure greater efficiency and citizen orientation. Web portals could be created to become decisive tools in supporting the right to information, decentralization, transparency and accountability while ensuring people's participation.

The National Knowledge Commission stressed vocational and professional education. While vocational education had to be brought into the mainstream it required greater flexibility in order to remain relevant. As far as professional education was concerned recommendations were made for engineering, medical, management and legal education. Legal education had to be justice-oriented for the realization of the values enshrined in the Constitution. A comprehensive appraisal of medical education would be required to make it nationally sensitive and globally competitive. It was recognized that the contemporary global trends in the health sector suggested that medical pluralism would shape the future of healthcare. India could emerge as a world leader because of its strong foundations in

evidence-based biomedical sciences as well as an immensely rich and complex indigenous medical heritage. But strategies were required to promote the knowledge systems of traditional medicine.

Agriculture was a key area in the Indian economy which would benefit from knowledge applications but to be successful, these had to be community and farmer-driven involving both panchayats and community-based organizations for delivery of services from production to post-harvest storage and marketing. Collaborative mechanisms had to be created between scientists and farmers to identify the needs of the latter so that work could be prioritized, technologies refined, tested and finally evaluated.

Knowledge had to be used for the well-being of people, especially in rural areas. Working groups of experts involved with grassroots organizations needed to scale up some existing areas of work like designing ergonomic tools as a means of improving dignity of labour, encouraging energy efficiency, decreasing the workload for women, reducing drudgery, increasing skilful engagement and improving productivity. Further, the country's entrepreneurial capacities had to be enhanced and improved. India had traditionally been an entrepreneurial country, but for it to reach its potential, innovation, growth and employment had to be ensured.

Management education had shown very rapid growth which at times, led to a compromise in quality. It might be necessary to set up an autonomous Standing Committee for Management Education to exercise due diligence when it approved a license to grant degrees and diplomas. Similarly in engineering education, which too had expanded rapidly, there were some problems that could be rectified by setting new paradigms in regulation, accreditation, governance and faculty development. Urgent initiatives were required in this direction.

The Commission identified innovation as one of the key factors in India's economic growth, as it facilitated competitiveness, improvement in market share and quality as well as reduction in costs. However, as innovation was a complex activity that required interaction across the entire economy, from the grassroots to the large-firm level, a comprehensive campaign was needed to spur efforts in this area. Impetus had to be given to government-funded research and its translation into relevant and useful application to

benefit the widest cross section of people. For this incentives had to be provided to increase innovations, collaborations, licensing and commercialization. A uniform legal framework needed to be developed to give government- funded research, universities and research institutions ownership and patent rights. With innovation, the creation and protection of Intellectual Property were critical as competition was now knowledge-based and global. Therefore, an infrastructure of international standards was needed for Intellectual Property Rights. This would ensure that it served the best national interest for more extensive innovative research, technology transfer, wealth creation and overall benefit to society. Some key areas were identified to facilitate such systemic reform.

It was recommended that a National Science and Social Science Foundation should be established to enable all knowledge to be viewed as one seamless entity. The objective would be to suggest policy initiatives to enable India to assume a lead role in the creation and use of new knowledge in all areas of natural, physical, agricultural, health, and social sciences. India had a rich heritage in abstract thinking and scientific discoveries. But lately there had been a decline in talented students studying pure science and mathematics since commerce and professional courses gave more lucrative opportunities in related professions. Immediate course correction was needed. Also the number of Ph.D. students in the country had to be increased and the quality of the research that they produced improved. These steps were essential to transit to a knowledge and skills economy.

Sachar Committee

A High Level Committee was constituted under the chairmanship of Justice Rajender Sachar in March 2005 to prepare a report on the social, economic and educational status of the Muslim community in India and to analyse:

1. The geographic areas where the Muslims of India lived, their patterns of economic activities, their assets and levels of income, employment, and socio-economic development compared to the other communities of India.

2. The proportion of Muslims in the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) list out of the total OBCs as provided in the different states of the country.
3. Access of the Muslim population to education and health services, infrastructure, bank credit and other government services compared to the other communities of India.

The Committee was then to identify the various sectors that required government intervention to address issues relating to the social, economic and educational status of the Muslim community. As the very terms of reference indicate, social stratification among Muslims was recognized and hence Muslims were not treated as a monolithic block. Hence, the Committee looked at the various indicators on at least two levels: for Muslims as a whole and for the different classes within the Muslim community.

Broadly the Committee found deprivation in the Muslim community in many areas as in the standard of living which was approximated to that of SCs and STs both in the rural and urban areas. Also the Muslim community was grossly under represented in institutions of higher education, in jobs across the spectrum, civil services, public sector employment and others. In fact the disparity with other groups began right at the school level.

The Sachar Committee gave detailed recommendations on what was needed to improve the social, educational and economic status of Muslims. The committee, significantly, did not recommend quotas but took a progressive and long-term view in recommending the establishment of an Equal Opportunities Commission that could develop indices of under development to be used across caste and religious lines to suggest the nature and extent of affirmative action required. A Committee to work out the details of an Equal Opportunities Commission, based on the UK Race Relations Act, was set up. It recommended that the benefits of the Commission should be made available to all sections of society that felt discriminated against, cutting across social groups. 'Social identity', had to be defined taking into consideration not just economic backwardness, but also social backwardness. The Committee stressed the importance

of a public debate to determine what equality of opportunity meant and to build a 'deprivation index' that could be used by the Equal Opportunities Commission to function effectively. It was of the opinion that the private sector should be included in the jurisdiction of the Commission. A committee under the chairmanship of Amitabh Kundu was set up to design a Diversity Index to measure diversity in public spaces including education, employment and housing. However, its recommendations were not accepted by the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

Renovation and Rejuvenation of Universities (Yashpal Committee)

A Committee was set up on February 28, 2008 by HRD to advise on the renovation and rejuvenation of higher education with Prof. Yashpal as its Chairman. The Committee was originally supposed to only review the UGC/AICTE and various other Councils connected with higher education but it was felt that the mere listing of the limitations and faults of these two organizations would not be very productive. Instead, the Committee believed rather than expend energy in suggesting minor and major modifications in the structures of these bodies, it might be wiser to explore some fundamentals of the system itself. Hence the mandate of the Committee was expanded.

The Yashpal Committee did a remarkable job by bringing the essence of the idea of a university to the fore as it often gets lost in the din of market forces that measures everything including the universities with how much can they equip the students to get lucrative financial returns on the time and resources that they spend on higher education. It was important to understand that a university was a place where new ideas germinated, struck roots and grew tall and sturdy; a unique space, which covered the entire universe of knowledge, where creative minds converged, interacted with each other and constructed visions of new realities. It was a place where established notions of truth were challenged in the pursuit of knowledge. The principle of moral and intellectual autonomy from political authority and economic power is ingrained in the very idea of the university. Universities had to be autonomous spaces. However with autonomy went accountability

for which certain performance criteria have to be evolved on the basis of which the universities can assess themselves and be assessed by others in a transparent manner.

It was imperative to ensure freedom in research and training. Teaching and research were inseparable, because a university did not only impart knowledge to young people but also gave them opportunities to create their own. Active and constant engagement with the young minds and hearts of society also implied that the universities had to serve the society as a whole. In order to achieve this, considerable investment in continuing education was essential.

Apart from resisting fragmentation of knowledge, the idea of a university should at the same time aspire to encompass the world of work in all its forms. Work constitutes that human sphere where knowledge and skills are born, and where new knowledge takes shape in response to social and personal needs. Indeed, the experience and culture of work represents that core space where the humanities and sciences meet.

With these essential features of a university in mind, the founders of the Indian Republic, realized even during the freedom struggle that the future of Indian democracy depended largely on the ability of the society to create new knowledge. The enrichment and development of cultural, scientific and technical resources was to be done in centres of culture, knowledge and research, as represented by true universities. These expectations were to be fulfilled in a social context which was characterized by a sharp division between the rural and the urban, the elite and the masses, and between men and women. Since a university is based on the fundamental principle of transcendence and meeting of minds from diverse backgrounds, higher education was increasingly perceived as a means to overcome caste and class hierarchy, patriarchy and other cultural prejudices and also a source of new knowledge and skills, a space for creativity and innovations. Higher education, therefore was, and continues to be considered a national responsibility and the state has to make necessary provisions to realize its potentials.

Loss of primacy of the universities in the scheme of the higher education in India, erosion of their autonomy, undermining of undergraduate education, the growing distance between knowledge areas in the

universities and the real world outside and crass commercialization are some of the problems that characterize the growth of the Indian higher education system. It is important to develop an understanding of these issues before suggesting strategies to renovate and rejuvenate higher education in India.

The Yashpal Committee addressed the basic issues of fragmentation in the higher education system. For instance, it has been said that undergraduate and graduate programmes are too 'theoretical', devoid of 'practical' experiences. There is a divide between research bodies and universities, whereas research and teaching should go together. Universities should be spaces for dialogue and liberal enquiry. But in India where social hierarchy and divisions are sharp, they become spaces for powerful forces to vie for dominance.

While the higher education scenario was dismal, the bright spots were the IITs and the IIMs. These had been kept out of the traditional university structure to give them free play to help the nation have a pool of excellent engineering and managerial talent. However, professional education including medical education needed to be integrated into the university system.

The Yashpal Committee pointed out that many students, who graduate from institutions of higher education do not obtain the kind of skills they really need to work in a real-world environment. They cannot analyse or solve problems, relate problems to different contexts, communicate clearly and have an integrated understanding of different branches of knowledge. These problems can be addressed by improving the processes of curriculum design and syllabi. But to do so, the purpose of a university, especially at the undergraduate level, had to be kept in mind. At present, the design of curriculum and syllabi reflect the entrenched examination system under which the student is asked to face a question paper at the end of the year or semester, as the case may be and all teaching-learning processes are geared to this. Also much of higher education in India is unidisciplinary or within a narrow spread. At best, the other disciplines are taught as 'subsidiary' subjects which are seldom taken seriously. In any case, undergraduate education which should be the backbone of higher education, has mostly remained in affiliated colleges and therefore has not been a part of mainstream university life. The

universities should also be responsible for producing teachers for school education. Currently, their only involvement is to provide the mandated training under the B. Ed. programme.

The state universities were the backbone of higher education as the majority of students were enrolled in them. Yet these have been treated very shabbily in matters of allocation of funds or creation of more facilities for academic programmes. In fact successive governments started reducing their investments in higher education. Hence during the past two decades, even though there has been a rapid expansion of higher education, it has been mainly through private investments. Several colleges and university-level institutions, including institutions deemed to be universities commonly known as 'deemed universities', and private universities established through state legislation, have come into existence in recent years. Some of the private institutions took the deemed-to-be university route only to get degree-granting powers. Between 2000 and 2005, 26 private-sponsored institutions got the deemed university status. Then, a UGC notification removed the necessity for them to use "deemed" and so they could call themselves simply universities.

There is a growing demand for further expansion of private institutions. However, there has been no policy or guidelines to measure the competence of private investors in starting and managing a technical institution other than the requirement that it should be registered as a non-profit or charitable trust or society. However, these institutions charge exorbitant fees while unable to provide minimum competent faculty strength. The programmes are not affordable to a vast number of eligible students which is a matter of concern.

Again, on the issue of allowing foreign universities to set up campuses in India there should be clarity on what was sought to be achieved. The Yashpal Committee pointed out that universities had an organic connection with their cultural and geographical surroundings and the best of them could not be transported elsewhere. A university was not just a matter of courses that it offered but its physicality too gave it a unique character. However it might be advisable to invite from abroad a substantial number of potentially great academics and scientists to work with our students and teachers, instead of importing mediocre foreign universities to set up shop here.

It should be recognized that the cost of providing quality education was increasing and hence universities required constant infusion of resources to maintain and upgrade their facilities, resources and technologies. State funding was irregular and dwindling over the years. Universities were expected to raise their own resources which resulted in poor infrastructure both physical and intellectual, and the introduction of very low quality self-financing programmes that had no relationship with the university curriculum. Of course, checks and balances could be put in place but ultimately what mattered was the quality of people that the university attracted. Unfortunately, the best and the brightest in India were no longer aspiring to become teachers.

Autonomy was the lifeline of any institution that deals with education, creation of knowledge and learning of all kinds. Equally important were governance structures that could ensure the preservation of such autonomy under all circumstances. But the governance structures of Indian universities were archaic and had not changed with the changing environment to meet the expectations of its various stakeholders. Interference from various political or commercial vested interests touched all aspects of higher education from admission of students, selection of teachers, manipulation in appointment of senior functionaries such as vice-chancellors, registrars and deans, and purchase of equipment or allotment of construction contracts and others. The sad part was that there was minimal resistance from within the universities themselves when socio-political and market forces sought to subvert their normative structures.

The higher education system in India was vast, vertical and complex with a wide variety of institutions. The responsibility for establishing them and monitoring their performance was exercised by many different statutory regulatory bodies as well as governments and universities, often leading to multiplicity of authorities and duplication of inspection and control.

Recommendations of the Yashpal Committee

The Yashpal Committee was convinced that the Indian higher education system faced enormous challenges and needed a drastic overhaul. Apart from various short-term issues there was a serious

threat to the very idea of the university and its values of knowledge generation. Hence it made definitive recommendations pertaining to the overall structure of the system of higher education in the country.

A holistic view of knowledge would demand a regulatory system that treated the entire range of educational institutions in a holistic manner and all of higher education as an integrated whole. Professional education could not be detached from general education. Hence it was imperative to bring all higher education, including engineering, medicine, agriculture, law and distance education, within the purview of a single, all-encompassing higher education authority, the National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER). All levels of teachers should be brought under the purview of higher education. Such a body was envisaged in the National Policy on Education (1986) and the Plan of Action, 1992. It would subsume UGC, AICTE, NCTE and DEC and other professional councils. To insulate it from political and other external interferences from the government of the day it should be established through a Constitutional amendment and have a Constitutional status. The purpose of making it report directly to the Indian Parliament, was to make the NCHER fully accountable. The NCHER itself would be subject to review every Five-Years.

The objectives of the proposed commission were recorded in detail but it was not meant to be a Czar. Rather it was to be a body to enable greater freedom to the universities. One of NCHER's first tasks should be to identify the best 1,500 colleges across India to upgrade them as universities, and create clusters of other potentially good colleges to evolve as universities. All universities should establish a live relationship with the real world outside and develop capacities to respond to the challenges faced by rural and urban economies and culture.

The proposed NCHER should move away from the current tendencies of the existing regulatory bodies to control and impose bureaucratic interferences in the functioning of universities and colleges. New governing structures should be evolved to enable the universities to preserve their autonomy in a transparent and accountable manner. This would lead to the greater coordination and integration in the planning and development of the higher education system

which would include research. They needed to be freed from the control of both the government and 'for profit' agencies not only in the matter of academics but also finances and administration. Collectively they could frame for themselves a transparent set of rules to guide their regular functioning and submit themselves to an internationally recognized process of evaluation. They had to evolve and foster a culture of independent assertion of ideas, guarding of institutional prerogatives from external interference, transparency and accountability for decisions taken.

Restructuring Universities

The foundational principle on which Indian universities need to be restructured, said the Yashpal Committee, is that complete autonomy of institutions of higher learning is essential for free pursuit of knowledge. While in practice, autonomy of any institution is closely linked to structural factors such as its sources of finance, the legal framework it operates under and rules and regulations it is subjected to, it is also critically dependent on the overall culture prevailing within them. Undergraduate programmes should be restructured to enable students to have access to all curricular areas with a fair degree of mobility. It was recommended that normally no single discipline or specialized university should be created. The vocational education sector was at present outside the purview of universities and colleges. The alienation of this sector could be overcome by bringing it under the purview of universities and by providing necessary accreditation to the courses available in polytechnics, industrial training institutions, and others.

It was recommended that a national testing scheme for admission to the universities on the pattern of the GRE should be evolved, which would be open to all the aspirants of university education, to be held more than once a year. Students would be permitted to send their best test score to the university of their choice.

The practice of according the status of deemed university should be stopped forthwith till the NCHER took a considered view on it. It would be mandatory for all existing deemed universities to submit to the new accreditation norms to be framed on the lines proposed in this report within a period of three years failing which the status of university should be withdrawn.

A modern higher education system required extension facilities, sophisticated equipment and highly specialized knowledge and competent teachers, and it was not possible for every university to have the best of these infrastructures. One of NCHER's primary tasks was to create several Inter-University Centres (IUCs) in diverse fields to enable several institutions of higher learning to participate and avail themselves of their facilities.

The quantum of central financial support to state-funded universities should be enhanced substantially on an incentive pattern, keeping in view the needs for their growth. The expansion of the higher education system should be evaluated and assessed continuously to excel and to respond to the needs of different regions in India in order to ensure not only equity and access, but also quality and opportunity of growth along the academic vertical.

A National Education Tribunal was to be established with powers to adjudicate on disputes among stakeholders within institutions and between institutions so as to reduce litigation in courts involving universities and higher education institutions. Finally, a Task Force had to be set up to follow up on the implementation of this Agenda for Action within a definite time-frame.

In keeping with the recommendations of the Yashpal Committee, five Bills were introduced in Parliament. These were the Bill on the National Commission for Higher Education and Research; Unfair Practices Bill; Educational Tribunal Bill; Foreign Education Providers Bill; and Accreditation Authority Bill. So far nothing substantial has come of them.

Narayanamurthy Committee

It was proposed that increasing and enhancing access would have to be done through a mission mode national programme, the "Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)" or National Higher Education Mission for which a detailed document was prepared.

The terms of reference of the Narayanamurthy Committee were:

- Review the international and national experience of corporate involvement in creating and supporting

Education and Innovation hubs and clusters and Institutions of National Importance (INIs) together with Centres of Excellence.

- Assess the key constraints faced by the corporate sector in investing in Indian higher education and the associated legal and regulatory challenges.
- Delineate the role of the Public Sector Undertakings (PSU) and the private sector in this process together with assessing the policy measures and institutional mechanisms necessary to increase their involvement in higher education.
- Develop guidelines for the development of national education hubs and clusters around new and existing Centres of Excellence/ INIs and Models for Industry-Institute Interaction. The details of what was specifically required were stated.
- Identify potential Public Sector Undertakings and corporate partners willing to participate in this process ; and finally,
- Define a road map for implementation.

The Committee recognized that the corporate sector was a direct beneficiary of the higher education system. It argued that the corporate sector had played an important role in higher education institutions round the world, and it could do so in India, too. It could bring in financial resources, provide support for research and collaboration opportunities, help in faculty development, support students through scholarships and offer opportunities to complement learning through internships. Its engagement could range from being a passive provider of capital to the most active in terms of directly owning and running institutions. As an end stakeholder, the corporate sector could also play a key role in activities beyond the institutional aspects. To adequately leverage the corporate sector, it was important to look at the entire set of engagement models to ensure significant participation as well as diversity.

The committee provided detailed recommendations with regard to the creation of enabling conditions, improving quality and creation of new infrastructure.

Recommendations of the Committee

If Indian higher education wanted to attract investment from the private sector it had to create adequate enabling conditions. For instance, it had to give it autonomy in financial, regulatory, academic and administrative aspects and ensure the availability of land, infrastructure and connectivity. Further, fiscal incentives were needed to encourage investments and attract funding. Students too needed to have access to funds through scholarships to enable them to pursue their chosen fields of study. Faculty and student mobility had to be encouraged to promote collaboration with world class institutions abroad. For this the visa regime had to be less stringent. Further, institutions had to be free to seek global accreditation. This would put Indian institutions on par with the best.

The quality of higher education institutions could be improved by enhancing the focus on research and dedicated funding for it, sponsored doctoral programmes, and part-time Master and Ph.D. programmes. The talent pool of faculty could be enhanced by using human resource from the corporate sector, both working and retired. Faculty development programmes and sponsoring visits of expert faculty would enable faculty to grow in their respective fields.

As far as infrastructure was concerned, the corporate sector could establish new universities and higher education institutions. It could also set up new facilities in the existing institutions either as Centres of Excellence or as technology parks. It could develop new knowledge clusters or hubs too.

In order to strengthen the engagement between the institutions of higher education and the corporate sector, a nodal agency, a Council for Industry and Higher Education (CIHE) was proposed to be established. It was envisaged as an independent not-for-profit organization funded by contributions from industry and government and comprise business and higher education leaders. The goals would be to

- become a reliable information source for industry-institute collaboration
- develop new Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) and research parks

- enhance the quality and quantity of research in existing HEIs
- promote collaborative sandwich degree programmes as well as in-company up-skilling of employees and enterprise-level education
- promote entrepreneurship at the university level with the support of the corporate sector
- facilitate skill development at the postgraduate and doctoral levels through high-level apprenticeships and through applied research of advanced technologies
- provide prestigious internship opportunities for students and to provide entrepreneurial support for staff and students.

A roadmap for implementation was also provided.

Epilogue

Epilogue

In its journey of 60 years UGC has played a key role in the expansion of higher education and the creation of skilled human resource that has helped the country to grow and develop. In addition, this human resource has gone out of India and made a mark in different countries giving India the identity of a knowledge-based society. Hence much has been achieved but of course far more needs to be done. If we look back from 1953, when UGC was first established as a committee, to the present, it has come a long way indeed. It has evolved from a grant-giving advisory body to one that shapes policy and its implementation.

Growth and Development

Although it started functioning on December 28, 1953, UGC became a statutory body only in 1956. Established on the recommendation of the First Education Commission chaired by Dr. Radhakrishnan, its principal concerns were the coordination and maintenance of standards; and the allocation and disbursement of grants. Therefore it had a direct relationship with educational institutions that it advised and financed. Since its very inception, the UGC was given wide-ranging responsibilities. It continues to regulate fees and prohibit the acceptance of donations. It inspects universities and withholds grants where it considers fit. Since it is the main statutory body that has been given responsibility for higher education, its evolution is naturally connected to the way universities expand and grow; the problems and challenges that they face; and how these challenges are to be met both at the policy level and at their implementation. The issues are several: expansion and the resources that can be made available, their optimum utilization, the medium of instruction, starting of new courses, needs of infrastructure and staff, student welfare, skill development, use of ICT for promoting access, equity, and research, open and distance learning, diversification and interaction with the community and extension activities.

As the higher education system has grown, so has the UGC. The 1950s and 1960s saw an explosion of student enrolment that increased by as much as 11-14 per cent. While the UGC had to cope with the increased financial demands of universities, it was faced with the classic dilemma of quantity and quality. The Kothari Commission confronted the situation and recommended wide-ranging reforms pertaining to welfare measures for students, the examination and evolution system, and reduction of regional disparities. The UGC, recognizing the need for quality and excellence in higher education, took steps to promote certain departments where commendable work was being done as Centres of Advanced Study. It also emphasized scientific and technical education while it developed Area Studies for research on countries of particular interest to India.

Expansion and Autonomy

As the Commission grappled with the problem of numbers, it realized that while they were overwhelming yet in the relevant age group, the access to higher education was hardly adequate. Limited resources enjoined caution against reckless expansion, yet expansion could not and would not be denied. It also had to be equitable as education was a tool for upward mobility for the weaker sections of society. In the 1970s and 1980s, while the usual measures such as, examination reforms, strengthening of infrastructure, student welfare and others took place, steps were taken to consolidate the gains made while moving towards new areas for development. Efforts were made to attract and retain talent in the teaching profession by revising salaries to bring them more or less at level with the All India Services. At the same time, efforts were made to lay down the essential qualifications necessary while recruiting teachers and to recommend promotional avenues. The Sen Committee, appointed in 1973, made recommendations to that end.

Attempts were also made to give greater academic freedom to educational institutions and organizations. The idea of autonomous colleges came up in 1967-68. Not only for colleges, autonomy was recommended even for university departments. Women's education began to be foregrounded at the same time as it was acknowledged

as a critical input in societal transformation. At the same time, the Commission began to turn its attention to the educational problems of the marginalized and underprivileged sections of society, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

While the UGC grappled with the problem of numbers, it could not abandon its responsibility towards quality. While it tried its best to provide facilities and in-service programmes for the teachers, it also decided to bring in accountability and deny grants to colleges and institutions that did not follow the guidelines issued by it. It also identified new areas for measures to be taken to provide access and opportunities while simultaneously introducing measures that would streamline and strengthen higher education. The Mehrotra Committee reviewed the pay scales of teachers. The recommendations had some specific objectives: make the teaching profession attractive for the talented; ensure accountability and in-service training, and increase the general awareness of the teachers. The UGC tried to fulfil its responsibilities by setting up Academic Staff Colleges and Orientation programmes. The National Policy on Education (1986) also had made far-reaching recommendations that needed to be actualized. The Commission identified some major spheres of work for itself such as autonomous colleges, redesigning courses, establishing State Councils of Higher Education and Accreditation and Assessment Councils, Alternative Models of Management in Universities, National Qualifying Test for recruitment of teachers, broad-based research and development, training and orientation of teachers, improvement of efficiency, and education for the Minorities, Schedule Castes, Schedules Tribes, the physically challenged, and women. As it went about its assigned tasks, the UGC tried its best not to impose decisions from above but to facilitate them through dialogues with universities, state governments, teachers and students.

Struggling with numbers, and with issues of general development that required access to all sections of society while maintaining quality, the UGC tried to harness technology and media to reach out where classrooms could not physically go. Rapid global changes also highlighted alternative management modes. If an efficient delivery system had to be established, the approach had to be decentralized and participatory, for only then effective implementation was possible. At the same time issues of funding and resource mobilization had to

be confronted as well. While it was absolutely clear that the state had to accept the main responsibility for higher education the possibilities of private funding were explored.

As the 20th century drew to a close, fresh challenges were accepted. Chief among them was globalization. National boundaries were getting blurred and the means of communication had become rapid, almost instantaneous, making knowledge increasingly available through information technology. The UGC had to adjust and to adapt. Internationalization of education, the creation of virtual classrooms, use of television channels for the dissemination of knowledge, distance education, development of vocational skills, interdisciplinary research, sophisticated science centres, area studies of different countries, as well as pursuit of excellence through different means like Centres of Advanced Study were all efforts to satisfy diverse and often contradictory needs and requirements of higher education.

Challenges of Higher Education

The Golden Jubilee year 2002 was also the watershed in the life of the UGC. Issues pertaining to higher education were widely discussed and disseminated throughout the country through public lectures and national and regional seminars organized by the UGC. This prepared the ground for widespread debate and discussion on higher education. The challenges became a concern in the public domain giving rise to a continuing discourse to the extent that was not commonplace earlier. It was then not merely coincidental that the decade after the Golden Jubilee period was one of intense activity.

UGC in the Tenth Five-Year Plan

The Tenth Five-Year Plan also began in 2002. The need for accelerated expansion of higher education together with issues of access, equity, and quality became increasingly urgent. The Tenth Plan laid down certain educational objectives. One was to achieve a profound transformation of higher education so that it becomes an effective promoter of sustainable human development. The relevance and

delivery system of higher education had to be improved to effectively forge links with the world of work. Teaching, research, and community extension functions were all essential activities for institutions of higher education. Learning had to become a lifelong adventure. The Plan provided a frame of reference for the various steps that were needed to make this vision a reality.

The UGC laid down certain ground rules for itself. Some of them could not be implemented without the restructuring of systems.

- Create a more open and flexible structure by adopting the cafeteria approach.
- Curricula to be revamped to reflect the need for national development in keeping with international benchmarks.
- Quality to be enhanced through the use of information highway.
- Multimedia teaching material to be provided to teachers and an electronic communication network created to enable the sharing of academic resources.
- Emphasis to be placed on quality undergraduate education.
- A few universities and colleges to be identified that had the potential to do better in both undergraduate and postgraduate levels and supported.

Since the aim was to strengthen science teaching, a framework had to be created that would combine the strengths of scientific laboratories, private initiatives, and universities to start advanced institutions for undergraduate and postgraduate science education. Together with this, the existing infrastructure in universities and Inter University Centres had to be upgraded. The UGC emphasized the role of universities in serving society through interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary work. Universities had to be encouraged to increase the understanding of social change and enhance the perception about human values through outreach activities.

The other major thrust areas were expansion of study opportunities for foreign students while making educators and students more

aware of the strengths of the Indian education system outside the country. All this was to be achieved by creating an academic and administrative enabling environment and generating resources for effective implementation of specific programmes.

Apart from the increased activity during the Tenth Plan in which the budget for higher education was one-and-a-half times that of the Ninth Plan, the National Knowledge Commission was set up. This was in recognition of the fact that knowledge was the key driving force in the 21st century. If India had to emerge as a global leader, it had to gain pre-eminence in the field of education and in developing human resource. Thanks to the groundwork done immediately after independence in establishing institutions for scientific, technical, agricultural, and medical education apart from liberal university education and the subsequent rapid increase in the education system, India had emerged as a developer of skilled human resource. The much lamented brain drain was now seen as human capital. Developing countries also looked to India to develop their own human resource. In post-independence India this had led to the establishment of institutions such as the Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR). The First Education Commission of India, popularly known as the Kothari Commission (1964-1966), stated that “the destiny of India” was “being shaped in her classrooms”.

The National Knowledge Commission made wide-ranging recommendations from the school level to the colleges and university sector, and to professional, vocational, and technical education. Many of them found their way into systemic changes and expansion of the role of ICT among other areas.

UGC in the Eleventh Five-Year Plan

The Eleventh Plan got to be known as the education plan. Eleven studies were carried out by the UGC covering areas of expansion of higher education and enrolment, issues of equity, and social stratification together with regional and other disparities, the issues of quality and relevance together with financing. These proved vital for providing inputs for formulating policy, and the approach and strategy for the Eleventh Five-Year Plan. The aim was to reach a Gross

Enrolment Ratio of at least 15 per cent by the end of the Eleventh Five-Year Plan. It was backed by a quantum jump in the allocation of resources from Rs. 3,294 crores in the Tenth Plan to Rs. 45,449 crores in the Eleventh Plan. About 1464 new institutions were sought to be established which included central universities, IITs, IIMs, NITs, IIITs, Schools of Planning and Architecture, Model Colleges, and Polytechnics.

The need for expansion, access and equity in higher education also led to an unprecedented expansion of capacity in the existing institutions of higher education. The 93rd Constitutional amendment that reserved 27 per cent of seats for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in all centrally-funded institutions of higher education necessitated the increase of seats by 54 per cent so that the seats available for the general category students did not become less. The Oversight Committee laid out the road map for implementing the mandated reservation of seats for OBCs, and the consequent expansion in the total number of seats available together with the resources required for it.

The Sachar Committee observed that another area of low representation in higher education and other spheres of national life was in relation to Muslims. The Sachar Committee pointed out that representation of Muslims in institutions of higher education was similar to that of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. However, it did not favour reservation of seats to remedy the situation. Rather, it recommended establishing the Equal Opportunities Commission and formulating the “deprivation Index” to enable the benefits to reach the truly needy. This methodology could also be used to benefit other underprivileged and marginalized sections as well.

During this period the problem of faculty shortage came emphatically to the fore. Higher education was expanding but the higher education system had stopped attracting the best talent over a period of time; and even when it did, it found it difficult to retain it. Since the liberalization of the economy and after the growth of the corporate sector and other professions, teaching did not seem a very active proposition. The Pay Review Committee found it necessary therefore, to remind the policy makers of the importance of the role of education in general and that of higher education in particular, for the growth and development of India. It outlined the

crisis in higher education and the problems that needed to be tackled while emphasizing that the teacher was the pivot of any educational system. It suggested both short-term and medium-term strategies on how to enhance the supply of teachers, attract talent, and retain it. A Task Force was also constituted by the Ministry of HRD to suggest measures to remedy the problem of faculty emphasizing the great concern of the policy and decision-makers about the lack of adequate quality faculty.

Reforms for the UGC

The Yashpal Committee was set up with the initial mandate to suggest reforms for the UGC and AICTE. The Committee found this mandate to be inadequate and too narrow in its scope if the entire higher education system had to be made capable of meeting the emerging challenges before it. It was, therefore expanded to look at the system of higher education as a whole and to recommend measures that needed to be taken to make it an integrated ecosystem. The Committee took the discourse back to the fundamental idea of a university and its ideal role in society. It stressed on how fragmented higher education system was as a result of the disciplines growing into watertight compartments, with no conversation with each other. This had also resulted in the multiplicity of regulatory bodies with their often contradictory demands and rigidity of requirements. The Yashpal Committee emphasized the need for interdisciplinary work, and for scientific research, which could be applied to society. It accentuated the relationship between teaching and research, the necessity for quality faculty, and the requirement of an enabling an autonomous environment in which the universities could have the freedom to function. The Yashpal Committee recommended some radical restructuring in the governance and regulatory structures of the higher education system. At one point the very existence of the UGC seemed in jeopardy as establishing the National Commission for Higher Education and Research was proposed as a constitutionally mandated body. Some legislative measures were sought to be taken but eventually these did not materialize.

UGC in the Twelfth Five-Year Plan

While much was achieved during the Eleventh Five-Year Plan, the country has just begun the Twelfth Five-Year Plan period. As was done for the Eleventh Plan, widespread consultations were carried out resulting in a Working Group that put together the strategies and approaches for the Twelfth Five-Year Plan. The Group considered the basic reports and documents prepared in the last decade encompassing the reports of the various UGC Committees, of the National Knowledge Commission, the Yashpal Committee and the proceedings of consultations with various stakeholders carried out. The aim envisaged was to consolidate the work done during the Eleventh Five-Year Plan and to continue to correct sectoral and social imbalances while expanding higher education to provide equitable access, reinvigorating institutions, reaching international benchmarks of excellence and extending the frontiers of knowledge.

In real terms, the higher education sector has to respond to the challenges of globalization that are intimately connected with democracy and the empowerment of individuals. Individuals seek opportunities in an increasingly shrinking world and push for higher education. They see it as an attractive personal investment that can bring them rich rewards in terms of long-term income and employability compared to individuals with lower formal qualifications. This has created heterogeneous and complex systems to meet the new and diverse demand which has made it nearly impossible to maintain a uniform pattern of detailed regulation for higher education. Hence, new forms of governance, financing, curricula and flexible delivery and evaluation systems are needed.

The UGC has tried to respond to the twin challenges of globalization and democracy by streamlining and strengthening the existing system while expanding it and making it more equitable. A lot of systematization has been done. Regulations have been made to ensure the quality of teachers. Requirements for eligibility, recruitment, and promotion have been made more transparent. The UGC has laid down regulations and continued to strengthen them periodically to prescribe the minimum qualifications for teachers

and other academic staff at all levels (2000, 2010, 2011, 2013), the minimum qualifications required for promotion through career advancement scheme (2000), the minimum standards of instruction for the grant of first degree (2003), as also for the Masters degree (2003). Standards and procedures have been laid down for the award of M. Phil. and Ph.D. degrees (2009). Strict regulations have been incorporated for getting the campuses rid of the menace of ragging which have assumed alarming proportions (2009 and 2012). In 2013, guidelines have been made for students' entitlement to ensure transparency of the admission procedures and the documentation required, the infrastructure, the teaching and learning facilities in an institution as also the mode of evaluation, the fees and the financial aid available and other such inputs that the students should be aware of.

Regulations have been framed for application of colleges (2009 and 2012), as also for Deemed-to-be Universities (2010). Since issues of equity is a continuing concern, regulations have been laid down for the promotion of equity in higher education institutions (2012). Quality is to be ensured through making assessment and accreditation of institutions mandatory (2012), and setting up mechanisms for grievance redressal to minimize discontent that was so injurious to institutions (2012). In May 2013, guidelines were chalked out for the scheme of "Joint Appointment for Exchange of Human Resources between Universities and Other Institutions / Organizations".

It has also been proposed to transform higher education in the country and reach even those institutions that are outside the purview of the UGC. This is to be done through the setting up of Rashtriya Uchcharitar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) that draws its inspiration from the gains made through Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA). The essential idea is to improve state educational institutions where the bulk of higher education takes place by establishing State Higher Education Councils. These would be the pivotal agencies through which the RUSA Mission Authority in the HRD Ministry could act. The resources required are to be made available to institutions on a proportionate sharing basis between the Centre and the States.

Challenges of Globalization and Democracy

At the macro policy level, globalization together with the democratization of higher education leading to a vastly increased and accelerated demand, has led to certain challenges that have to be addressed both at the policy and implementation levels. Some of these are the internationalization of higher education, the emergence of private players in the sector of higher education, issues pertaining to research, its relevance and relationship to teaching, skill development as a knowledge economy that requires not just professionals but also mid-level skills, and others.

Globalization involves the inexorable integration of markets, nation-states, and technologies to a degree never witnessed before — in a way that enables individuals, corporations, and nation-states to reach around the world farther, faster, deeper, and cheaper than ever before, and in a way that also produces a powerful backlash from those brutalized or left behind. It is now taken as axiomatic that education and the spread of knowledge are essential to increase international competitiveness because national and global economies are interconnected and based on information and its exchange.

Internationally there has been extensive debate and discussion on higher education. October 1998, for instance, was a very significant year for the world of higher education as representatives for education from 128 nations, including higher education, met for the first time in Paris under the auspices of UNESCO to discuss issues of common concern and to agree on the general direction that higher education must take in the 21st century. The unanimous view was that renewal of higher education was essential for the whole society to face the challenges of the 21st century. This included intellectual independence of individual creation and advancement of knowledge; and education and training to shape responsible enlightened citizens and qualified specialists, without whom no nation could progress economically, socially, culturally, or politically. The Declaration of the World Conference emphasized that since society was increasingly knowledge-based, higher education and research were essential components of cultural, socio-economic, and environmentally sustainable development of individuals, communities, and nations.

The development of higher education, therefore, ranked as among the highest national priorities of nations throughout the world because without it, the required human resource could not be created.

The Conference was preceded by widespread mobilization of partners, national policy makers, institutional leaders, professors, researchers, students, professional sectors, and others. Regional Conferences were held in Havana in November 1996, Dakar in April 1997, Tokyo in July 1997, Palermo in September 1997, and Beirut in March 1998. Findings, declarations and plans of action of these conferences provided inputs for the Paris Conference. These were complemented by studies and analyses undertaken by some fifty governmental and non-governmental organizations charged with preparing a series of thematic debates on important issues of higher education. Twelve debates were structured around three main domains:

- Higher education and development considered as requirements for the world of work. Under this were to be considered higher education and sustainable human development contributing to national and regional development; and higher education staff development as a continuous process.
- New trends and innovations that encompassed students' vision of higher education for a new society; the use of new information technologies, challenge and opportunities in research, and the contribution of higher education to the education system as a whole.
- Higher education and its relationship with culture and society. It had under its umbrella, women and higher education; promoting a culture of peace, mobilizing the power of culture; autonomy and social responsibility and higher education.

At the Conference itself the delegates dealt with issues pertaining to the changing missions of higher education in the 21st century. These included interaction of higher education with society; the impact of the change process on higher education together with diversification; increased flexibility of systems and promotion of lifelong learning; and access to higher education. All these factors provided elements

that went into the Declaration and Framework for Action that the Conference adopted at the end as, “World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century: Vision and Action” and “Framework for Priority Action for Change and Development of Higher Education.” The Conference resolved that “beyond its traditional functions of teaching, training, research and study, all of which remain fundamental”, higher education must, “promote development of the whole person and train responsible, informed citizens, committed to working for a better society in the future.” It has led to intense activity around the world as country after country has tried to assess the role of higher education in development and what needs to be done further.

The Task Force on Higher Education and Society was convened by the World Bank and UNESCO in 2000 to bring together some of the world’s foremost education and development experts. Based on research, intensive discussion and hearings conducted over a two-year period, the Task Force concluded that without more and better education, developing countries would find it increasingly difficult to benefit from the global knowledge-based economy.

Internationalization of Higher Education

In India, persistent efforts have been made to internationalize higher education. One of the thrust areas of the UGC in the Tenth Plan was the internationalization of higher education for which it set up an Expert Committee to encourage the free flow of students from other nations to India and vice versa. Subsequently, a Standing Committee of UGC for the Promotion of Higher Education Abroad (PIHEAD) submitted its report in January 2004. This could be seen as a culmination of endeavours made by the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) that held round tables on internationalization of higher education, the first at the University of Mysore in February 2001 and the second at Guru Nanak Dev University in Amritsar in February 2002. The National University of Education Planning and Administration (NUEPA) has deliberated upon issues pertaining to globalization and internationalization of education from time to time. It has raised issues of quality; modes of supply; access and

equity in higher education; responses to General Agreement of Trade in Services (GATS) and WTO; and matters pertaining to identity, culture and curriculum. There are also concerns about the impact of foreign universities and students on Indian universities and their students and faculty. In fact the benefits that internationalization of education have also been recognized.

Finally, the Foreign Educational Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operations) Bill 2010 was introduced in Parliament for a comprehensive and effective policy for regulating the operations of all foreign educational institutions in the country. This has not seen the light of day but the UGC itself has entered into collaborations with educational institutions outside India to facilitate research and institutional academic arrangements. For this purpose the UGC drew up Regulations for the Promotion and Maintenance of Standards of Academic Collaboration between Indian and Foreign Educational Institutions in 2012.

Much of the renewed enthusiasm for higher education and research stems from the motivation that it will lead to increasingly higher rates of economic growth and greater income for individuals who can use the new technologies. The UGC is making substantial resources available for research. But certain questions need to be asked: what is the kind of research that universities need to do whether public or private and to what end? What are the forces that drive this research? What are the aspirations of the students enrolling in the universities and would they be enthused by research? Has the kind of research being pursued led to imbalances in the outcomes and the privileging of some disciplines over others? What are the consequences of this in teaching, learning, and its impact on society at large? Certain issues have to be factored while making policy for research and allocating resources. The relevance and applicability of research must always be kept in mind because it has created unacceptable levels of disparity because of being unevenly distributed. The greater part of the world's research is conducted by a few industrialized countries while developing countries have neither the means nor the education base to get their share in the global research effort. Of course it can be argued that the developing countries may not be at a disadvantage as there may not necessarily be a correlation between the benefits of research and the efforts required to be put in.

The development of new technology could be expensive but the cost of using it may be low. However, the research problem sought to be solved in developed countries would usually deal with problems and questions related to the needs of those countries. Their solutions may not be appropriate for countries like India which may not even have the level of competency in education, research, and technology required to benefit from the knowledge developed elsewhere.

Research has led to the privileging of science as development is the practical end sought to be achieved through it and its applications. However, the universalistic scientific approach that does not factor in the national, social, and cultural dimensions, can lead to problematic and even tragic results. Scientific endeavours have to be linked to social concerns and scientists need to be aware of the societal impact of their work. To ensure this, it is essential to bring scientists and different audiences together in democratic spaces so that expert knowledge can become comprehensible and more widespread. This would enable the plural perspectives to emerge on the pros and cons of application and increase informed awareness among citizens. Without the growth of higher education will not necessarily reduce social and economic inequalities and may even widen the gulf.

Universities cannot just engage in neutral science research. They must contribute to building a foundation of civic and democratic values for social cohesion and purpose. They must create knowledge that not only leads to economic growth but also to an understanding of how to overcome racial and ethnic tensions, dogmatism, and religious extremism that often come with uneven growth and uneven distribution of fruits. This requires higher education to pay attention to cultural diversity. Equity cannot be achieved by merely increasing the population of the under-represented social groups on the campus as is being done in India today. Knowledge systems have to be built that give an understanding of diverse values, policies, practices, traditions, resources and living knowledge systems outside the formal structures so that students, faculty and communities that have been excluded up to now become part of the knowledge resource and provide keys and solutions that have eluded thought and policy. The Yashpal Committee emphasized this when it talked of the implications arising out of the fragmentation of knowledge and the consequent fragmentation of the higher education system. The universities must

produce societally relevant research, which can compete with the best in the world through interdisciplinary work in which the sciences, social sciences, and humanities work together.

Teaching and Research

How can the Indian higher education, which is currently low on research, combine the teaching and research functions in its universities? To do so, teachers have to understand and accept that there is no real dichotomy between teaching and research. The actual connection is not so much between research and teaching as between research and learning. Research is a process, a form of learning. The mode of delivery in teaching has a wide spectrum. At one end is just information transfer that takes the form of lecturing or slide presentations and power points and at the other end is enquiry into a problem by individuals or teams. Information today is easily available especially through information technology. Therefore integrating research and learning is really about inculcating skills of enquiry and research in the students. This is much more important educationally than providing them content knowledge which is now freely available in different media, both print and electronic.

To enable this to happen, teachers have to know more than merely their subject. They must also know how in its transmission it can become understood and misunderstood. That is, teachers must know how individuals experience the subject. Seen thus, researchers and teachers have much in common. While researchers are essentially involved in, “meaning-making activity”, which provides explanations in the prevailing cultural context, the learning process too is increasingly becoming a meaning-making process that helps the students to construct knowledge rather than simply receive what is transmitted to them. Therefore, the pedagogical goal is, “not objective knowledge”, which is outside the learner and which can in today’s technological world be obtained through multiple sources. It is to understand the subjective processes of the learner as learning always takes place in a particular context. Hence, there is a symbiotic relationship between research and teaching. It requires not just knowledge of a particular discipline but an understanding of the similarities and differences

between various disciplines, the boundaries between which are getting increasingly blurred. All teaching and research also requires communication and inter-personal skills for team work. Hence the methodology has to comprise group projects, interactive lectures, problem-based learning and information, initiatives, as they can beneficially cross disciplinary boundaries with relative ease. This can start right from the undergraduate level. It is, in essence, an ecosystem of knowledge, a shared quest between the teachers and students that integrates the local knowledge resource base with cutting edge research and technology.

Empowerment through Productive Employment

One of the aims of higher education is empowerment by opening doors to economically productive employment. However, the existing system of higher education in India is not conducive to providing the skills necessary for employment. Students have resisted vocational education in India because of a misguided perception that it is meant for those not good at academics. But with the liberalization of the economy, the demand for skills has increased manifold. To meet it, provision has to be made from the school level. It can be argued that vocationalization of education has been attempted before and it has failed. But it is necessary to analyse why this has happened. One reason, which continues till today, is that if a student opts for a vocational subject in school, he/she has no opportunity to pursue it or an allied field at the tertiary level. In the existing colleges and universities no credit is given for studying vocational subjects at the school level and so it actually becomes a disadvantage. Also, when vocationalization was attempted in India, the economy did not have the capacity to absorb skilled human resource at different levels that it has now and the demand can only grow. Another detriment which still persists is that a person in the vocational stream has little or no opportunity to join the academic stream at any point in his or her life without starting totally afresh. In other words, no credit is given for either the vocational knowledge or the work experience acquired.

While universities may prepare engineers, scientists, industrialists, and social leaders, a second-tier educational level is essential to

produce middle-level technologists who can manage and maintain the industrial infrastructure. Without such an educated and technical workforce, there can be no progress. Steps were taken during the early 1980s to introduce Application Oriented Courses (AOCs) within the framework of the graduate courses and in the 1990s several self-financing institutions sprang up, with the approval of universities and state governments, to run job-oriented programmes in fields such as electronic, computer science, accountancy, food science, hospital, and hotel management and others. These have been popular with students. The University Grants Commission also introduced vocational courses as part of the three-year bachelor's degree courses. The curriculum was restructured to integrate the vocational angle. Add-on courses with orientation towards skill development were also allowed outside the time table.

However, heads of academic educational institutions have difficulty in identifying industries for practical application work and funding agencies to finance the training. There continues to exist a considerable gap between what industry wants and what colleges are able to provide. India needs different levels at the tertiary education system so that a bouquet of options is available. This will bridge the gap between what the students are taught and the demands of the workforce and also provide opportunities for training the large workforce available outside the formal structures of training and higher education. There is also a backlog of school dropouts who are over sixteen and work as unskilled workers. Some provision has to be made so that they have opportunities to learn and become skilled at some point of time in their lives. This vast need for productive skills cannot be achieved through the formal sector only, especially if it is as rigid as it tends to be in India. A parallel, informal, and flexible system is required to identify and develop local talent for local needs and provide an entry point to the mainstream for those who have dropped out.

Upgrading Skills

The government has strongly emphasized skill development and formulated a National Policy to enforce this and has set a target of

providing skills to 500 million people by 2022. Currently, the Ministry of Labour and Employment has various schemes and deals with it across the country. Other ministries like those of Human Resource Development, Rural Development, and Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation have also launched skill upgradation programmes and self-employment schemes. As part of the National Skill Development Mission, the government has established the National Skill Development Corporation in the public-private partnership mode. The aim is to set up 1,500 ITIs and 5000 skill development centres across the country as well as a national vocational qualifications framework for affiliation and accreditation in vocation, educational, and training systems. The private sector, too, which feels the lack of quality human resource acutely, is not only conducting in-house training to upgrade the skills of its workforce but also taking steps to make its potential employees job ready before they join their organizations.

There are several systemic challenges posed by tertiary education in India, which were foregrounded emphatically in the Eleventh Five-Year Plan. The issues were not new. An attempt was made to rectify both access to education and to strengthen vocational education in the Eleventh Plan through measures such as Open and Distance Learning and Community Colleges. One of the strategies was to strengthen and expand the Open and Distance Learning system that provided higher education to about 25 per cent of learners. Primarily with the use of ICT this figure to rise to 40 per cent in the Eleventh Plan . The focus was on professional, vocational, and career-oriented programmes at the certificate, diploma and degree levels, concentrating on skill development, vocational training, and community development programmes.

So far, skill development has been underdeveloped, but the two-way interactive platforms like EDUSAT have created a vast potential for short-term training and there has been a shift from enrichment programmes to curriculum-based learning programmes. Now that the Distance Education Council is also with the UGC, there is an opportunity for a more holistic integration of distance learning, with academic education and imparting of vocational skills in the distance mode.

The learner profile includes the employed and the unemployed, those seeking to upgrade skills and knowledge while working, and the disadvantaged and the marginalized rural youth. The system has already developed a wide delivery network. The Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), which was established in 1985 is the National Open University, is also the nodal institution for Distance Learning Programming in India with a focus to promote Distance Learning. It has widened access to higher education by adopting integrated multimedia instructions and increasing its reach considerably through the use of Gyan Darshan, an educational TV channel and Gyan Vani, FM channels. It has a delivery network of regional and study centres with counsellors providing learner support. It has an ever-expanding network of FM radio stations and TV channels including interactive ones. It has been given the responsibility to develop an additional 15 FM radio stations.

The Eleventh Plan also accepted Community Colleges as an alternative system of education that would help its graduates to find gainful employment in collaboration with local industry, business, and the community. The pioneer of Community Colleges in India however, is Rev. Dr. Xavier Alphonse, the founder of the Indian Centre for Research and Development of Community Education (ICRDCE). He has been involved with the preparation, establishment, monitoring, and evaluation of over 300 Community Colleges spread over twenty states of India. The Community College or the people's college was developed in the US, and could well be adapted to the Indian system of education to offer quality education, with technical and vocational training, in order to create competent career-oriented individuals.

The Working Group on the Eleventh Plan recommended national recognition of the Community College system; and the vertical mobility of the Community College student through open and conventional universities with a three-tier system of diploma, associate degree and degree. Community Colleges need to be set up in educationally backward regions to correct regional imbalances in higher education with emphasis on the development of soft skills. Also, central placement cells can be set up in collaboration with the Confederation of Indian Industries and Chambers of Commerce. The reach of Community Colleges can be further strengthened

through distance learning for those students who cannot commute to college or stay in hostels.

These are all important aspects in the Indian context, with its vast range of cultural and linguistic diversity, differing educational requirements and economic development. In the Twelfth Five-Year Plan, the government itself is planning to establish community colleges as an educational institution located in a particular region, responsive to regional needs and aspirations would translate to providing better, low-cost education, resulting in improved economic development opportunities for the people. The Twelfth Five-Year Plan will undoubtedly have to consolidate all the initiatives taken during the Eleventh Five-Year Plan and not just concentrate on expansion if it has to bring quality into the system and in this the UGC will have to play its part.

The correlation between economic development and higher education, or rather tertiary education that includes the university and college system, skill development, and professional education, has promoted market elements through increased privatization, which in turn has helped to meet the demand for massification, diversification, and increasing of access. There is increasing realization that the private sector would have to play its part in the sphere of higher education. In any case this is already a reality with self-financing courses, self-financing colleges and professional education available throughout the country. Private universities have already been set up in several states. Hence, it is appropriate that the Planning Commission set up the Narayanamurthy Committee to look into what could be the contribution of the private sector to higher education to gain a better and more systematic understanding of the issue. The Committee foregrounded the fact that the private sector would have to play an important role in the nation's efforts in higher education. It accepted that the corporate sector was the beneficiary of the human resource being produced by the higher education system and that it could play a key role in the growth and development of higher education in India, as had been done in other parts of the world. The Committee gave recommendations on how the corporate sector could aid in both expansion and research. It also recommended establishing the Council for Industry and Higher Education as a facilitating mechanism.

Models for Private Higher Education

At least four distinct models of private higher education are found in India:

- The Manipal model: the approach is to provide access to students who can pay and who may not have got admission for various reasons in a public sector university. The Manipal Academy of Higher Education is a pioneering centre for self-financing higher education, managed and funded by private enterprise.
- The marketing model: already existing institutions receiving aid from the government central or state are allowed to start some professional courses at the undergraduate and postgraduate level on the self-financing pattern.
- The sponsoring model: popular with the corporate sector in which it sponsors its managerial and executive personnel to enable them to update their skills and knowledge. For this they are attached to some leading institutions for a short period of training.
- The franchising model: self-financing institutions have to select courses designed by the university and follow the teaching according to norms prescribed by the affiliating university. However, these colleges do not receive grants from the government. Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, Delhi has several privately managed self-financing courses in different professional fields such as engineering, technology, management studies, medicine, pharmacy, education, law and others are affiliated to it.

Lacking a national legislation many states have established private universities, sometimes with disastrous consequences, as in Chhattisgarh. But state legislation is not enough and a national legislation is required which reflects the national policy and has

at least three components: (i) promotion, (ii) facilitation and (iii) regulatory control. The UGC has taken note of the setting up of private universities through State Acts and made regulations for them, the “UGC (Establishment and Maintenance of Standards in Private Universities) Regulations, 2003”. These deal with establishing and operating such universities to safeguard the interests of the student community with adequate emphasis on the quality of education and to avoid the commercialization of higher education with its concomitant ills.

Conclusion

The responses playing out in the world to meet the twin challenges of globalization and democracy are being reflected in India. It is clear that India is affected by global trends and is trying to deal with them. It is making efforts to create an internationally competitive academic system by reforming outmoded structures of academic governance structures and delivery systems, and by building a national consensus by a continuous centre-state dialogue on higher education both in the public and the private sectors.

Obviously the public higher education system will have to cope with it but it is not likely to be able to meet the huge demand for higher education on its own. Also, since education and employment have got firmly linked to higher education, questions are becoming insistent about its relevance and quality.

India needs a fluid and integrated educational ecosystem that begins with a much improved school education so that the quality of those entering higher education becomes better. The vocational stream, already diverse, has to laterally feed into the system of higher education. This would ensure that while expansion takes place, the existing institutions can be transformed to suit the educational requirements of the communities they serve. Therefore, whether it is community colleges, ITIs or Polytechnics, unless students who have opted for vocational/technical training at the +2 stage have an opportunity to move to universities at a subsequent stage in their lives, these will not succeed. The Indian educational institutions at the lower levels of higher education must become more receptive to local

community needs while providing adequate comprehensive education and maintaining links with formal higher education institutions and bodies. The latter have also to develop flexible structures to accommodate those coming from the vocational stream.

All students must have options available that enable them to fulfil their needs to enter and improve their qualifications at different points of time in their lives. It means that the rigidity of education structures at all levels, but particularly higher education, must be removed and opportunities for lifelong learning provided. A bouquet of quality educational institutions has to be created so as to give students options to continue their education, exercise options best suited to them and have opportunities to improve levels of academic performance. A tall order perhaps but without it the Indian higher education system can neither deliver nationally nor can it compete globally.

Obviously the future path of the UGC is going to be radically different and expanded from the one traversed so far. As the only statutory body in the country that is mandated to coordinate and maintain standards of higher education in the country, the UGC will have to shoulder much greater responsibilities for which it will have to prepare itself. To begin with, it will have to improve its physical infrastructure. Appropriately it is developing a new campus for itself, complete with office accommodation, guest house, conference room, and other facilities. At present the UGC is housed in three separate buildings on Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, Feroze Shah Marg and the South Campus of Delhi University. The Commission faces difficulties because of inadequate space and infrastructure. An auditorium and other facilities for national and international academic exchange are also needed. The Government of India allocated 25 acres of land in the JNU campus to the Commission where its new office building, with all the required facilities is soon likely to be actualized. However, mere enhancement of physical infrastructure is not enough.

If the UGC has to shoulder all the new responsibilities, it has to restructure and expand its domain of action to prevent fragmentation and contradiction. For this it will have to evolve from a Grants Commission to an Education Commission and accept all post-secondary education as its province in one integrated ecosystem of knowledge.



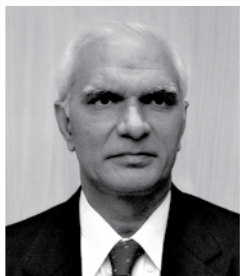
1. Prof. S Radhakrishnan, Chairman of the Universities Commission, presenting the representation of the Commission to the Hon'ble Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, at a brief ceremony held in New Delhi on 24 August 1949.
2. The first meeting of the UGC was held in New Delhi on 28 December 1953. Pt. Jawarharlal Nehru, Prime Minister addressing the meeting. Sitting on his right (on the left row of the table) are : Dr. Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar, Chairman of the University Grants Commission; Justice N.J. Wadia, Vice Chancellor, Bombay University Member; Prof. Humayun Kabir, Secretary, Ministry of Education, Shri M.S. Bhatnagar, Finance Ministry's representative on the Commission; Prof. Samuel Mathai, Secretary, UGC. To the Prime Minister's left are Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Union Minister of Education and Natural Resources and Scientific Research and Dr. Zakir Hussain, Member of the Commission.



3. *Shri C.D. Deshmukh, Chairman, UGC, laying the foundation stone of the UGC building at New Delhi on January 14, 1961.*
4. *Dr. D.S. Kothari (middle right) on a visit to Marine Research Laboratory, Annamalai University.*

Photo courtesy : Photo Division, Press Information Bureau, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India, New Delhi and Indian Council of World Affairs.

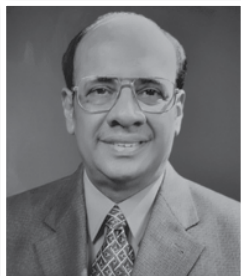
Chairpersons of University Grants Commission



Prof. Ved Prakash
2013 -



Prof. Sukhadeo Thorat
2006 - 2011



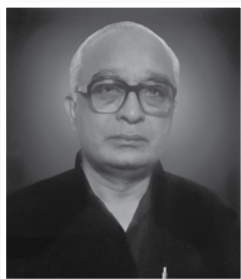
Prof. Arun S. Nigavekar
2002 - 2005



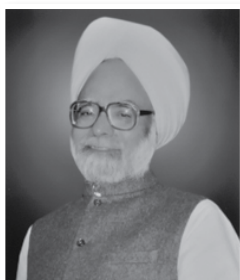
Dr. Hari Pratap Gautam
1999 - 2002



Dr. (Miss) Armaity S Desai
1995 - 1999



Prof. G. Ram Reddy
1991 - 1995



Dr. Manmohan Singh
1991- 1991



Prof. Yashpal
1986 - 1991

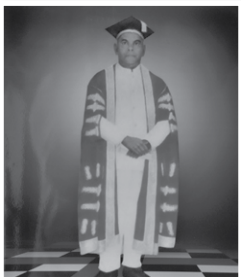


Dr. (Smt.) Madhuri R Shah
1981 - 1986

Chairpersons of University Grants Commission



Prof. Satish Chandra
1976 - 1981



Dr. George Jacob
1973 - 1974



Dr. D.S. Kothari
1961 - 1973



Dr. V.S. Krishna
1961 - 1961



Shri C.D. Deshmukh
1956 - 1961



Pt. Hridaynath Kunzru
1956 - 1956



Shri Humayun Kabir
1955 - 1956



Dr. Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar
1953 - 1955

APPENDIX

Chairpersons of University Grants Commission

S.No	Chairperson's Name	Period
1.	Dr. Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar	1953 - 1955
2.	Shri Humayun Kabir	1955 - 1956
3.	Pt. Hridaynath Kunzru	1956 - 1956
4.	Shri C.D. Deshmukh	1956 - 1961
5.	Dr.V.S. Krishna	1961 - 1961
6.	Dr. D.S.Kothari	1961 - 1973
7.	Dr. George Jacob	1973 - 1974
8.	Prof. Satish Chandra	1976 - 1981
9.	Dr (Smt) Madhuri R Shah	1981 - 1986
10.	Prof. Yashpal	1986 - 1991
11.	Dr Manmohan Singh	1991- 1991
12.	Prof. G. Ram Reddy	1991 - 1995
13.	Dr (Miss) Armaity S Desai	1995 - 1999
14.	Dr Hari Pratap Gautam	1999 - 2002
15.	Prof. Arun S. Nigavekar	2002 - 2005
16.	Prof. Sukhadeo Thorat	2006 - 2011
17.	Prof. Ved Prakash	2013 -

Vice-Chairpersons of University Grants Commission

S.No	Vice -Chairman's Name	Period
1.	Prof. Satish Chandra	1973 - 1976
2.	Prof. B.Ramachandra Rao	1976 - 1982
3.	Prof. Rais Ahmed	1982 -1985
4.	Prof. K. Satchinanda Murthy	1986 - 1989
5.	Prof. S.K. Khanna	1990 - 1993
6.	Prof. N.C.Mathur	1994- 1998
7.	Dr .Hari Pratap Gautam	1999 - 1999
8.	Prof. Arun S. Nigavekar	2000 - 2002
9.	Prof. V.N. Rajsekharan Pillai	2003 - 2006
10.	Prof. M.C. Sharma	2006-2009
11.	Prof. Ved Prakash	2009-2013
12.	Prof. H.Devraj	2013 -

Secretaries of University Grants Commission

S.No	Secretary's Name	Period
1.	Shri Samuel Mathai	1953 - 1963
2.	Shri K.L. Joshi	1963 – 1967
3.	Dr. P.J. Phillip	1967 – 1971
4.	Shri R.K. Chhabra	1971- 1983
5.	Prof. S.K. Khanna	1984 – 1990
6.	Shri Y.N. Chaturvedi	1991 – 1993
7.	Shri Inderjeet Khanna	1993 – 1996
8.	Dr. G.D. Sharma	1996 – 1999
9.	Prof. Ved Prakash	2002 – 2005
10.	Prof. Mool Chand Sharma	2005 – 2006
11.	Dr. Raju Sharma	2008 – 2008
12.	Dr. Akhilesh Gupta	2012 – 2013

INDEX

A

Academic and Executive Councils 243, 299
Academic Discipline 218
Academic Initiatives 274
Academic Planning Boards 79
Academic Reforms 263, 265, 299
Academic Staff Colleges (ASCs) 158, 185, 287, 296, 299, 327
Access and Equity 233, 241, 244, 331
Access, Equity, Engagement and Outcomes 284
Accreditation 120, 153, 162, 207, 208, 209, 210, 219, 224, 243, 251, 252, 253, 285, 288, 296, 303, 309, 318, 321, 343
Accreditation and Assessment Council 153, 185, 187, 327
Accreditation Authority Bill 319
Accreditation, Mandatory 265, 296
Act of Parliament 3, 28
Act(s) of Incorporation 5
Administrative Reforms 277, 285, 295
Adult and Continuing Education 114, 133-135, 165, 168
Affiliated Colleges 5, 30, 33, 34, 55, 56, 64, 67, 71, 72, 79, 80, 81, 88, 92, 94, 108, 115, 117, 121, 128, 117, 121, 128, 180, 182, 186, 285, 293, 294, 296, 305, 314
Affiliation Reform Package 297
Ahmed Khan, Sir Syed 10
Ahmed, Justice 239
Ahmed, Prof. Rais 98
Aligarh Muslim University 5, 21, 25, 50, 103, 222
All India Board of Management Studies 131
All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) 106, 227 241, 255, 289, 300, 312, 317, 332
Alphonse, Rev. Dr. Xavier 344
Anand Kumar, Dewan 53

Annamalai University 20, 47, 50, 109, 193
Application Oriented Courses (AOCs) 342
Areas of Discourse 306
Asia Foundation, USA 108
Assessment and Accreditation 240, 251, 252, 253, 282, 285, 334
Association of Indian Universities (AIU) 13, 225, 227, 337
Audio Visual Research Centres (AVRCs) 167
Aulack, Dr. S.C. 98
Autonomous Colleges 67, 114, 118, 126-127, 128, 153, 161-162, 184, 185, 196, 229, 326, 327
Ayappan Pillai, V.K. 49
Azad, Maulana Abul Kalam 22, 24, 27

B

B. Shiva Rao Committee 92
Babu Jagjivan Ram Chair 271
Banaras Hindu University 7, 25, 103, 210, 217, 220, 271
Basic Scientific Research (BSR) 275
Besant, Annie 8
Bhatnagar, Dr. Shanti Swarup 22, 23, 25, 26
Bhushan, Sudhanshu 262
Birla Institute of Technology 127
Bishop's College at Sibpur 4
Bragg, Sir Lawrence 109
Budgetary Provision 268
Burden of Affiliation 265

C

Calcutta Madrasa 3
Calcutta University Commission 8, 9
Cambridge University 7, 8, 78
Career Advancement Scheme 153, 155, 214, 215, 334

Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) 14, 31, 186
 Central College 5
 Central Council of University Education 18-22
 Central Grants Committee 14
 Central Institutions Reservation Act (CIE Act) 261
 Central Universities 15, 31, 35, 36, 40, 44, 47, 54, 72, 77, 88, 94, 96, 103, 121, 144-149, 154, 183, 190, 192, 215, 217, 218, 260, 261, 263, 264, 271, 297, 298, 331
 Centre for Advanced Technology, Indore 171
 Centres for Advanced Study (and Research) 68, 90, 105, 106, 108, 109, 124, 126, 138, 326, 328
 Chadha, G.K. 262, 266
 Chagla, M.C. 110
 Chandi, Rev. P.T. 92
 Chandra, Satish 111, 124
 Chettiar, T.S.A. 34
 Chowdhury, N.B. 34
 Christian Missionary colleges 10
 Church of England 4
 City University 63, 94
 College Development Councils (CDCs) 162, 229, 300
 College Science Improvement Programme (COSIP) 107, 114, 124, 126, 136, 137, 169, 229
 College Social Sciences and Humanities Improvement Programme (COSSHIP) 114, 124, 126
 Colombo Plan 109
 Committee of Members of Parliament 73
 Community Colleges 185, 198, 205, 206, 292, 343, 344, 345, 347
 Consortium for Educational Communication (CEC) 168, 225
 Constitution of India 16, 18, 27
 Content and Quality 284, 285
 Council for Industry and Higher Education (CIHEC) 321

Council of Meteorological and Earth Sciences 172
 Council of Rural Education 37, 38
 Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) 25
 Curzon, Lord and His Role 6-10

D

Dacca College 4
 Das, Dr. M.M. 26, 28, 29, 30, 37
 Das, Narayan 36, 37
 Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College, Lahore 10
 Dean of Students' Welfare 52, 55
 Deccan Education Society 10
 Decentralization 100, 162, 179, 180, 252, 308
 Deemed Universities 44, 87, 194, 222, 261, 265, 266, 271, 282, 294, 315, 318
 Delhi Colleges 77, 149-150, 192, 193, 194
 Department of Ocean Development 173
 Department of Special Assistance (DSA) 106
 Department of Youth Affairs and Sports (DYAS) 175
 Desai, Armaity S. 189
 Deshmukh, C.D. 25, 26, 44, 45, 55, 70, 72, 73
 Dhande, Sanjay Prof. 272
 Dhurva Reactor, Bombay 171
 Diaspora Studies, Indian Diaspora 228, 259
 Directorate of College Education 81
 Distance Education 131-133, 187, 226, 233, 256, 308, 317, 328
 Distance Education Council (DEC) 226, 288, 317, 343
 Dongerkery, S.R. 58
 Dubey, Amaresh 262
 Duff, Alexander 4
 Duraisamy, P. 262

E

e-PG Pathshala 276
 East India Company 4
 Economics of Higher Education 241, 247
 Education Commission 3, 5, 6, 9, 15, 16, 18, 22, 33, 37, 59, 60, 77-87, 120, 127, 196, 325, 330, 348
 Education Ministers' Conference 55
 Education Providers Bill 319
 Educational Management System 299
 Educational Media Research Centres (EMRCs) 167
 Educational Tribunal Bill 306, 319
 Educationally Backward Areas 298
 Electronic Repository of Research Theses and Synopses 276
 Empowerment through Productive Employment 331
 Equal Opportunities Commission 311, 312, 321
 Equal Opportunity Cells 298
 Equal Opportunity Office 271
 Ethics in Education 238
 Evaluation and Assessment Systems 250
 Expansion and Autonomy 326
 Export of Higher Education 241, 245, 246

F

Faculty Designations 269
 Faculty Development 125, 212, 284, 287, 299, 309, 320, 321
 Faculty Development Centres (FDCs)
 Faculty Scarcity / Shortage 266, 267, 269, 272, 273, 276, 281, 288, 331
 Fake Universities 220-221
 Federal / Unitary University 7, 44, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 94, 95, 102, 105
 Ferguson College, Pune 10
 First Education Commission 3, 325, 330
 First World War 9, 12

Five-Year Plan, First 25, 34
 Five-Year Plan, Second 49, 54, 56, 72, 73, 105
 Five-Year Plan, Third 49, 50, 60, 61, 68, 73, 77, 92, 105, 106, 107
 Five-Year Plan, Fourth 65, 77, 88, 106, 111, 124, 196
 Five-Year Plan, Fifth 111, 113, 114, 124
 Five-Year Plan, Sixth 111, 124, 142-144
 Five-Year Plan, Seventh 152, 153, 159
 Five-Year Plan, Eighth 152, 185, 189, 195
 Five-Year Plan, Ninth 189, 195, 208, 221
 Five-Year Plan, Tenth 189, 231, 254, 259, 289, 328
 Five-Year Plan, Eleventh 231, 261, 262, 283, 284, 289, 296, 297, 330, 331, 333, 343, 345
 Five-Year Plan, Twelfth 231, 278, 279, 283, 284, 292, 294, 295, 296, 301, 333, 345
 Five-Year Plan periods 26
 Five-Year Plans 71
 Ford Foundation 57
 Foreign Education Institutions Bill 306

G

Gajendragadkar, P.B. 92, 94
 Gajendragadkar Committee 94
 Gandhi Smarak Nidhi 55
 Gandhi, Mahatma 10
 Ganguly, Prof. Prabuddha 235, 237
 Gautam, Hari P. 189
 General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) 245, 246, 338
 General Assembly's Institute 4
 Ghosh, J.C. 25
 Globalization and Democracy 335, 347
 Gnanam Committee 153, 178-184, 205
 Gnanam, A 178, 205, 295
 Golden Jubilee Lectures (Series) 231, 234, 235

Golden Jubilee Seminars 240
 Golden Jubilee: An Overview 231
 Governance 6, 16, 78, 243, 254, 255,
 275, 285, 293, 300, 301, 303,
 308, 309, 316, 332, 333, 347
 Governance of Universities 92, 93, 96
 Govindarajulu, S. 57
 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) 289
 Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) 244, 261,
 264, 266, 267, 296, 298, 331
 Gurukul Kangri 90

H

Hales, Sir Edward 26
 Hardinge, Lord 4
 Hare, David 4
 Hasan, Nurul 110
 Hasan, Prof. Hadi 21
 Hastings, Warren 3
 Health Consciousness and Physical
 Fitness 248
 Higher Education and Research Bill
 306
 Higher Education, Alternative Mode of
 Delivery 288
 Higher Education, Corporate Sector
 Participation in 301
 Higher Education, Challenges of 44,
 93, 328
 Higher Education, Development of
 122-124, 125, 127, 128, 133, 134,
 140, 142, 143, 144, 145, 149, 150,
 158, 161, 162, 167, 181
 Higher Education Institutes (HEIs)
 321, 322
 Higher Education, Internationalization
 of 337
 Higher Education, Journal of 142
 Higher Education, State Council 182,
 183, 184, 208, 300
 Hindu College 4
 Hoogly College 4
 Husain, Dr. Abid 208, 228
 Husain, Dr. Zakir 25

I

IMAP Coordination Committee 172
 India-US Summit on Higher Education
 274
 Indian Agricultural Research Institute
 (IARI) 107
 Indian Centre for Research and
 Development
 of Community Education (ICRDCE)
 344
 Indian Council of Cultural Relations
 (ICCR). 330
 Indian Education Commission 5, 6, 9
 Indian Education Service (IES) 287
 Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore
 173
 Indian Medical Council 120
 Indian Middle Atmosphere Programme
 (IMAP) 172
 Indian National Science Academy
 (INSA) 174
 Indian Universities Act of 1860 5
 Indian Universities Commission 6,
 Indian University Grants Committee
 14
 Indira Gandhi National Open
 University (IGNOU) 168, 187,
 225, 226, 288, 324, 344
 Information and Communication
 Technology (ICT) 212, 229, 232,
 237, 251, 257, 289, 308, 325,
 330, 343
 Information and Library Network
 (INFLIBNET) 166, 197, 259, 276
 Innovation Universities 275
 Institutional Management Programmes
 299
 Institutions of National Importance
 (INIs) 320
 Intellectual Property Rights 235, 237,
 286, 307, 310
 Inter University Centre for Astronomy
 and Astrophysics, Pune (IUCAA)
 166, 170

Inter-University Centre in Instrumentation 173
 Inter-University Centres (IUCs) 153, 166, 232, 257, 259, 286, 287, 291, 296, 298, 319
 Inter-University Consortium for Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) 166, 171
 Interim Commission 22-24
 Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) 253, 254, 294
 International Labour Organization (ILO) 301
 Internationalization in Higher Education 287
 Internationalization of Education 225, 328, 337, 338

J

Jacob, George 111
 Jamia Millia Islamia 10, 168
 Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Delhi 158, 171, 197
 Jha Review Committee 124
 Jha, Dr. Amarnath 13
 Jha, V.S. 115
 Joint Appointments 276
 Joshi, A.C. 107, 192
 Joshi, M.D. 32
 Junior Research Fellowship (JRF) examination 178
 Justice Verma Committee 280

K

K.P. Jaiswal Institute (Bihar) 49
 Kabir, Humayun 19, 21, 26, 59, 70
 Kalam, Dr. A.P.J. 254
 Karve, D.K. 11
 Khalsa schools and colleges 11
 Kothari Commission 77, 98, 306, 330
 Kothari, D.S. 60, 74, 77
 Kripalani, Sucheta 33
 Krishnan, Dr. V.K. 73
 Krishnaswami, Dr. 33
 Kulandaswamy Report 193

Kulandaswamy, V.C. 193
 Kundu, Amitabh 312
 Kunzru, Pandit H.N. 25, 26, 29

L

Leadership Development Programmes 299
 Libraries 5, 45, 50, 51, 54, 56, 65, 70, 84, 86, 126, 137, 160, 166, 186, 196, 197, 246
 Lok Sabha 28, 29, 110
 London University 5, 6, 8

M

Macaulay 3
 Madras Presidency College 4
 Mahajan, Mehr Chand 48
 Mahajani, Dr. G.S. 65, 87
 Maharaja Sayajirao University 47
 Malviya, Pandit Madan Mohan 8
 Manipal Academy of Higher Education 346
 Mathai, John 72
 Mathai, Samuel UGC
 Media and Educational Technology 167
 Medical Council of India 208, 255
 Medical Educational Institutions and Universities Bill 306
 Mehrotra Committee 144, 153-156, 187, 209, 217, 227, 327
 Mehrotra, R.C. 153, 217
 Mehta, Hansa 21
 Mehta, Prof. V.R. 235, 236
 Menon, K.R.K. 25
 Menon, M.G.K. 235
 Ministry of Education 15, 16, 18, 21, 24, 26, 36, 3855, 56, 59, 72, 73, 84, 90, 92, 97, 98, 105, 110, 120, 148, 169
 Ministry of Education Resolution 15
 Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD) 175, 179, 194, 200, 210, 212, 213, 214, 216, 223, 225, 227, 263, 264, 266, 272, 275, 291, 304, 305, 334

Mission College at Serampore 4
 Mitral, Dr. S.K. 98
 Models for Private Higher Education
 346
 Models of Financing Higher Education
 289
 Mohameddan Anglo-Oriental College
 5
 Moilly, Verappa 260
 Monopolies and Restrictive Trade
 Practices Commission 225
 More, S.S. 31, 32
 Mudaliar, Dr. A.L. 25, 72, 84
 Mudaliar, Dr. Lakshmanswami 32
 Mudaliar, Sir Ramaswamy 20
 Mukherjee, H.N. 34
 Murlidhar, V 262

N

Narasimhan, C.R. 34
 Narayanamurthy Committee 231, 301,
 319, 345
 Narendra Dev, Acharya 25
 Narlikar, Prof. J.V. 235, 239, 240
 National Academic Depository Bill
 306
 National Accreditation Regulatory
 Authority 306
 National Adventure Foundation 176
 National Assessment and Accreditation
 Council (NAAC) 153, 162, 185,
 187, 196, 226, 265
 National Cadet Corps (NCC) 85
 National Centre for Astronomy 170
 National Centre for Communication
 Research (NCCR) 168
 National Commission for Higher
 Education and Research
 (NCHER) 306, 317, 319, 332
 National Committee on Cosmology
 and Relativity 138
 National Coordination Committee
 171
 National Council for Educational
 Research and Training (NCERT)
 81, 90, 167, 225
 National Education Tribunal 319
 National Eligibility Test (NET) 154,
 209, 214, 274, 296
 Innovations and Reforms in NET
 274
 National Film Archives of India, Pune
 169
 National Higher Education Mission
 319
 National Knowledge Commission 231,
 263, 307-310, 330, 333
 National Knowledge Network 287,
 308
 National Literacy Mission (NLM) 165
 National Mission on Education
 through Information and
 Communication Technology
 (NMEICT) 276
 National Policy on Education (NPE)
 43, 86, 153, 158, 159, 161, 164,
 169, 174, 178, 179, 184, 185,
 187, 219, 317, 327
 National Science Foundation 91, 162,
 310
 National Skill Development
 Corporation 343
 National University of Education
 Planning and Administration
 (NUEPA) 337
 National Vocational Education
 Qualification Framework 299
 Nehru Yuvak Kendra 221
 Nehru, Pandit Jawaharlal 23, 24, 165
 NET Review Committee 210
 New School of Social Research, New
 York 57
 Nigavekar, Prof. Arun 189, 255
 Nizam of Hyderabad 8
 Nobel Laureates 290
 North Eastern Hill University (NEHU)
 105, 145
 Northern Regional College Bureau 44
 Nuclear Science Centre 138, 166, 168,
 171

O

- Ohio State University 91
- Open Access Materials 308
- Open and Distance Learning (ODL) 288, 289, 305, 343
- Open Distance Education 308
- Open Educational Resources 308
- Oriental College, Aligarh 10
- Orientation Programmes 155, 156, 157, 158, 249, 327
- Osmania University, Hyderabad 8, 47, 64, 108, 138, 170
- Other Backward Classes (OBCs) 210, 260, 311, 331
- Oversight Committee 260, 331
- Oxford University 7, 8, 78

P

- Parliament, Houses of 2, 27, 30, 31, 39, 50, 110, 119, 120, 151, 152, 158, 160, 306, 319, 338
- Parliament, Members of 28, 83, 147
- Pay Review Committee (PRC) 231, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 331
- Performance Appraisal System 219, 272
- Physical Education and Sports 174-176
- PL-480 Funds 68, 69
- Planning Commission 25, 26, 34, 56, 139, 169, 195, 243, 263, 300, 302, 345
- Policy Planning for Export 245
- Poona University 10, 11, 29, 47, 50, 64, 90, 170
- Prevention of Malpractices Bill 306
- Private Initiative 10, 11, 12
- Private Universities 44, 224, 225, 242, 255, 272, 315, 345, 346, 347
- Privy Council, UK 79
- Professional Ethics and Value Education 249
- Professor of Eminence 117, 212, 216, 217, 218
- The Prohibition of Unfair Practices Bill 306, 339

- Promotion of Indian Higher Education Abroad (PIHEAD) 259, 337
- Proposed Chairs in the Name of Nobel Laureates 290
- Public Accounts Committee of Parliament 119
- Public Private Partnership (PPP) 284, 290, 300
- Public Sector Undertakings 320
- Punnayya Committee Report 189, 193, 194
- Punnayya, Justice K. 189

Q

- Quality Assurance in Higher Education 251
- Quality, Issues of 265

R

- Radhakrishnan Commission 3, 16-18, 31, 32, 33, 35, 38, 48, 75
- Radhakrishnan, Dr. S 16, 22, 325
- Raghavan, Dr. V 70
- Rahman, Dr. 222
- Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies 228
- Rajya Sabha 28, 49, 110, 225
- Ram Reddy, G. 153, 189, 228
- Ramamurthy, Acharya 158
- Ramgulam, Sir Shiv Sagar 228
- Ranganathan, S.R. 70
- Rao, V.K.R.V. 21, 110
- Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) 301, 334
- Rashtriya Uchcharat Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) 301, 302, 303, 319, 334
- Rastogi Committee 210-214
- Rastogi, R.P. 210
- Raymond, Prof. J.E.G. 109
- Reading, Lord - Viceroy 13
- Reforms for the UGC 332
- Regional Conferences 137, 262, 336
- Regional Office, Eastern (ERO) 43
- Regional Office, North Eastern (NERO) 43

Regional Office, South Western (SWRO) 44
 Regional Office, Southern Eastern (SERO) 43
 Regional Office, Western (WRO) 43
 Regional Offices of UGC 43, 229, 240, 241
 Regulatory Bodies 252, 273, 304, 316, 317, 332
 Reinventing Higher Education 235
 Renovation and Rejuvenation of Universities 312
 Reorientation of Higher Education 247, 293
 Research and Innovations 284, 285
 Research Scientist Scheme 173
 Reservation Policy 139-142
 Resource Crunch 128, 189, 221, 222, 247, 272
 Resource Mobilization 222, 327
 Restructuring of Courses 126, 138, 142, 148, 163-165, 168, 195
 Restructuring Universities 318
 Roy, Raja Ram Mohan 4, 271
 Rural Development Committee 139

S

Sachar Committee 271, 310, 311, 321, 331
 Sachar, Justice Rajender 310
 Sadler Commission Report 8
 Sadler, Sir Michael 8
 Saha, Meghnad 38
 Sahay, Shyamanand 35
 Saiyidain, K.G. 25
 Sapru Committee 73, 110
 Sapru, P.N. 73
 Sardar Vallabhbai Vidyapeeth 47
 Sargent Committee 9
 Sargent Plan 14
 Sargent Report 14
 Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) 301, 334
 Scheduled Caste(s) (SC) 53, 113, 114, 115, 117, 135, 140, 141, 142, 153, 168, 279, 288, 307, 331
 Scheduled Tribes(s) (ST) 135, 141, 142, 153, 168, 279, 288, 307, 331

Science Education 106, 107, 137, 169, 200-202, 241, 329
 Scientific Advisory Committee of the PM (SAC-PM) 275
 Self-Financing Universities 223
 Sen Committee 115-119, 154, 216, 217, 326
 Sen, S.N. 115
 Sen, Triguna 110
 Shah, Madhuri R. 111, 144, 152
 Shamim, Justice Mohd. 235, 238
 Shanmukham Chetty, Prof. R.K. 20
 Shantiniketan, Vishwa Bharati 10, 109, 158
 Shiva Rao, B. 69, 92
 Shivaji University, Kolhapur 90, 235
 Shrimali, K.L. 34, 35, 36, 38, 39
 Sidhanta, N.K. 49, 52
 Simons, Prof. Hans 57
 Singh Sabha Movement 11
 Singh-Obama Knowledge Initiative 274
 Singh, Dr. Manmohan 153, 261, 263, 264
 Sinha, Sachidanand 262
 SNTD Women's University 11, 47, 50
 Social Science Foundation 310
 Srivastava, Ravi S. 262
 Standing Committee for Management Education 309
 Standing Committee of the Treasury 12
 Standing Committee on Part-time and Own-time Education 132
 State Council of Higher Education 182, 183, 184, 186, 208
 State Eligibility Test (SET) 296
 State Higher Education Council 302, 303, 304, 334
 State Project Directorate and Technical Support Group 304
 Superannuation and Reemployment 217
 Sustaining Quality 240, 251, 252
 Swadeshi Movement 11
 Synchrotron Radiation Source Centre, Indore 171

T

Tagore, Rabindranath 10, 47, 271, 290
 Takwale, Dr. R.G. 235, 236, 237
 Task Force 158, 160, 231, 272, 273, 275,
 277, 280, 281, 319, 332, 337
 Tata Institute of Science, Bangalore 11
 Taylor, Dr. H.J. 98
 Teacher Accountability 268
 Teacher Training 131, 156
 Teachers and NET, Role of 177
 Teachers Training College, Columbia
 University 91
 Teaching and Research 69, 73, 85, 87,
 103, 105, 106, 109, 114, 124, 138,
 159, 160, 164, 169, 190, 191, 199,
 206, 210, 216, 220, 23, 234, 246,
 253, 269, 313, 340, 341
 Thacker, Prof. M.S. 107
 The Great Depression, 1929 8
 Thorat, Prof. Sukhadeo 262

U

UGC (Amendment) Act 42, 110, 151
 UGC Growth and Development 66,
 238, 263, 325, 331, 345,
 UGC New Responsibilities 304
 UGC Observers in Career Advancement
 215
 UGC-INSAT project 167
 UGC's Other Initiatives 270
 UK-India Education Research Initiative
 (UKIERI) 274
 UNESCO 108, 109, 194, 214, 238, 335,
 337
 Unfair Practices Bill 319
 United Nations Expanded Programme
 of Technical Assistance 108
 United States Agency for International
 Development (USAID) 90, 91
 Universities for Research & Innovation
 Bill 306
 Universities (Regulation of Standards)
 Bill 19, 45
 Universities of India 47,
 University Education Commission 3, 16,
 18, 22, 33, 38, 59, 60, 77-84, 120

University Grants Commission Act
 (UGC Act) 39-42
 University Grants Committee 12, 14,
 15, 18, 20, 21, 26, 36, 38, 46
 University of Computer Science 224
 University, Agra 8, 47, 235
 University, Aligarh Muslim 5, 21, 25,
 50, 83, 222
 University, Allahabad 47, 240
 University, Annamalai, Madras 20, 47,
 50, 109
 University, Assam 11,
 University, Banaras Hindu (BHU) 7, 8,
 25, 50, 83, 210, 217, 271
 University, Baroda (Maharaja
 Sayajirao) 21, 47, 50
 University, Bombay 12, 13, 20, 25, 50,
 58, 92, 173
 University, Calcutta 12, 25, 108, 115
 University, Delhi 21, 24, 30, 50, 94, 95,
 97, 108, 133, 139, 150
 University, Gauhati 48, 50, 98
 University, Gorakhpur 48, 92
 University, J&K, Srinagar 48
 University, Jabalpur 48
 University, Jadavpur 11, 47, 158, 197
 University, Jaipur 44, 48, 235
 University, Jawaharlal Nehru (JNU),
 Delhi 158, 171, 197
 University, Jawaharlal Nehru
 Technological 292
 University, Karnatak, Dharwar 47
 University, Karnataka 50, 241
 University, Kolhapur 64, 235
 University, Lucknow 8, 47
 University, Madras 4, 12, 13, 25, 84,
 108, 109,
 University, Meerut 103
 University, Mizoram 105
 University, Nagaland 105
 University, Nagpur 8, 47, 51
 University, Poona 10, 11, 29, 47, 50, 64,
 90, 170
 University, Punjab, Chandigarh 47,
 107, 240
 University, Ranchi 50, 127, 235
 University, Sagar 8, 50

University, Sardar Vallabhahi
Vidyapeeth, Anand 47
University, Sri Venkateswara, Tirupati
47
University, Travancore 20
University, Udaipur 65, 87
University, Utkal, Cuttack 8, 48
University, Vishwa Bharati,
Shatiniketan 10, 109, 158
Upgrading Skills 342

V

Vajpayee, Prime Minister Atal Bihari
232, 234
Value-Based Education 235, 238, 254
Varanaseya Sanskrit Vishvavidyalaya
90
Variable Energy Cyclotron Centre,
Calcutta 171
Ved Prakash, Prof. 283, 295
Velayachich, Prof. C. 109
Verma, Justice J.S. 235, 238, 291
Vice-Chancellors' Conference 186, 195,
202, 203, 218, 284
Vidya Sagar, Ishwarchandra 271
Vidyapeeth Bihar 10
Vidyapeeth Gujarat 10
Vidyapeeth Kashi 10
Vidyapeeth Tilak Maharashtra 10

Vishwa Bharati University 10, 109,
158
Vishwa Jagriti Mission 223

W

Wadia, A.R. 68, 86, 106
Wadia, Sir N.J. 20, 25
Wheat Loan Education Exchange
Programme 51
Women's Education 30, 34, 135-136,
326
Women's Studies 177
Wood's Dispatch 4, 9
Working Group for Education and
Research in Astronomy 138
World Bank 245
World Conference on Higher Education
335
World Trade Organization (WTO) 245,
246

Y

Yashpal Committee 231, 294, 312-318,
319, 332, 333, 339
Yashpal Committee, Recommendations
316
Yashpal, Prof. 152, 174, 200, 235, 238,
239, 312