

# GOVERNANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

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**Abstract:** In this paper we propose governance implementation for higher education system at different period of time. For this we intend to frame a logical architecture design for higher education system. On the basis of this architecture we will try give a broad base for governance of higher education. We aim at demonstrating the current status, growth and issue i.e. both external governance and internal governance with special reference to higher education system in India.

**Keywords:** Governance, Higher Education, Implementation, Policies, Pre/Post Independence.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In this paper, we focus on how the governance and objectives of Indian higher education have evolved, and whether changes in governance are consistent with changes in the system's social objectives, and, in their turn, how the governance system, which is a "layered" product of past structures heavily influenced by a series of historical reforms. We organize the paper by the types of national government that dominated India in various historical periods.

Higher education is of vital importance for the country, as it is a powerful tool to build knowledge-based society of the 21st Century. India's higher education system is under pressure from the State and an increasingly educated youth population to achieve multiple objectives, such as growth, quality and equitable access. To reach these political targets, national and provincial policymakers take an activist approach, such as providing adequate resources, enabling private provision of higher education, and so forth. With the growing size and diversity of the higher education sector particularly in terms of courses, management and geographical coverage, it has become necessary to have governance in higher education. Government has set a target of increasing the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) from the present level of about 12% to 15% by the end of XI Five Year Plan and to 30% by the year 2020. Various new initiatives are being taken by the Government to increase the GER. To manage the efforts taken by the government, it requires complete governance of higher education.

### Objectives of the paper

1. To know the growth and current status of Higher education.
2. To understand the issues of governance of Higher education.
3. To evaluate the governance during pre and post independent era.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Clark (1998) and Kirp (2003) discussed the rapid transformation of U.S. higher education institutions into "entrepreneurial universities" concerned with their "bottom line." This gradual shift to increased focus on an "altered" version of market coordination, one in which the university not only tries to attract students, but also becomes business oriented, mostly within the framework of state coordination, is highly relevant to current governance issues in India. Burton Clark's classic study of university organization (Clark, 1983) stressed the "triangle" of coordination— "market-like" coordination, i.e., a response to market demand from students and their families; state-induced coordination; and

academic professional coordination. More recently, higher education analysts have focused on globalization, its impact on the role of the nation-state, and how this translates into the relationship between the nation-state and universities (for example, Enders, 2004; Altbach and Teichler, 2001, Marginson and Ordorika, 2010). Many of these same writers are concerned with the internationalization of universities—the movements across borders by students and faculty, and even by branches of universities—and their impact on university systems.

All of these elements are present in the Indian case, but as we shall suggest, despite a growing tendency for the market axis of **Clark's** triangle to play a major role in the Indian university system, and the increased impact of the globalizing economy on higher education through the labor market—rapidly increased demand for engineering and business graduates, and the boom in private college provision in those fields—the government still dominates the shape of higher education governance. Indeed, the most “internationalized” parts of the system are the elite central government controlled universities, such as the Indian Institutes of Technology and the Indian Institutes of Management. Unlike in Europe, the model is not exhibiting change from “state control models” to “state supervisory models,” or to the “rise of the evaluative state” (Enders, 2009). Rather, the federal government in India and state governments under the federal government have slowly changed the governance of Indian universities mainly through changing the mechanisms of state control, and the use of these mechanisms as they vary from state to state.

In the past two years, with increasing interest in India's economic surge, some excellent analyses and critiques have also been made of India's universities, the manner in which they have been expanding, and their quality (for example, Kapur, 2009; Sundar, 2010). However, one of the problems with much of the research, including the discussion of general trends in university organization, and the more specific work on Indian universities is that they do not adequately deal with university systems' overall objectives, and especially how governance could be impacting those goals.

### III. CURRENT STATUS

India possesses a highly developed higher education system which offers facility of education and training in almost all aspects of human creative and intellectual endeavors: arts and humanities; natural, mathematical and social sciences, engineering; medicine; dentistry; agriculture; education; law; commerce and management; music and performing arts; national and foreign languages; culture; communications etc. The institutional framework consists of Universities established by an Act of Parliament (Central Universities) or of a State Legislature (State Universities), Deemed Universities (institutions which have been accorded the status of a university with authority to award their own degrees through central government notification), Institutes of National Importance (prestigious institutions awarded the said status by Parliament), Institutions established State Legislative Act and colleges affiliated to the University (both government-aided and –unaided).

### IV. GROWTH OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education institutions in India are of varied growth levels and also have varying funding mechanisms. We have higher education institutions under the category of Institutes of national importance like IITs, IIMs, AIIMS and the Central universities, all funded 100% by the Central Government. State Universities are funded mainly by the State Government, however, some marginal financial supports are provided by the Central Government as plan grants through various schemes of the UGC. The number of the universities up to the year 2010 has been reported to be 518 by the UGC. The total student enrollment under all these institutions is over 12.3 million students (123 lakhs). There has been a rapid growth beyond the year 2000. The number of universities in year 2000 was 266 and there is almost 100% growth in less than 8 years period. Likewise, the College sector which is primarily affiliated to the universities recorded its growth to reach a mark of 25951 in the year 2010. This number was 370 in the year 1950. In the current plan period, the Govt. of India has already established 8 new IITs, 6 IIMs, 20 NITs, 3 IISERs, and 20 new NITs are proposed and 2 more SPAs. The spectacular growth in the number of higher education institutions at all levels including the affiliating college system, the universities including deemed-to-be universities etc has elevated India as a country leading globally in higher education sector along with USA and China. Thus early 1950's is an important reference points from which we could look back at our progress of higher education. Table 1 depicts the growth of institutions from 1950-51 to 2010.

Table-1

Growth of Colleges for General Education, Colleges for Professional Education and Universities during 1950-51 to 2010

Year	Colleges for General Education	Colleges for Professional Education	Universities/Deemed Universities/Institutes of National Importance
1950-51	370	208	27
1955-56	466	218	31
1960-61	967	852	45
1965-66	1536	770	64
1970-71	2285	992	82
1975-76	3667	3276**	101
1980-81	3421	3542**	110
1985-86	4067	1533**	126
1990-91	4862	886	184
1991-92	5058	950	196
1992-93	5334	989	207
1993-94	5639	1125	213
1994-95	6089	1230	219
1995-96	6569	1354	226
1996-97	6759	1770	228
1997-98	7199	2075	229
1998-99	7494	2113	237
1999-00*	7782	2124	244
2000-01*	7929	2223	254
2001-02*	8737	2409	272
2002-03*	9166	2610	304
2003-04*	9427	2751	304
2004-05*	10377	3201	364
2010	22951	NA	518

\*\* Includes institutions for Post-Matric courses.  
Source: Educational Statistics 2004-2005.MHRD 2007,2011

## V. ISSUES OF GOVERNANCE

In India, the higher education institutions exist in two significant categories -- University and Colleges. Universities are autonomous bodies whereas colleges are affiliated to universities. Universities therefore, have the prime responsibility of developing the higher education system and maintaining quality of it. Here we need to review the governance issues for all aspects of higher education system prevalent in India. We should begin examining the manner in which the governance had been evolving since pre-independence period to the present context. Models of institutional governance and administration with particular reference to autonomy and accountability are the most important issues of governance which need much pondering. We may divide issues of governance of institutions into two major groups:

1. Issues of external governance of higher education
2. Issues of internal governance of higher education

Issues concerning interaction with the Governments, statutory bodies etc. are issues of external governance of higher education system/institutions. Likewise, the issues of academic and administrative matters of the institution; and matters of its own vision and mission are considered as issues of internal governance within.

**External Governance:** The authorities for external governance are the Central/State Governments and their organizations/bodies, and national/international accreditation authorities. This includes any policy directive concerning

the national agenda through the statutory bodies like UGC and other bodies responsible for governing the performance of the higher education institutions in terms of course content/duration of courses of study etc, particularly, with respect to matters concerning maintenance of uniformity of norms and standards of higher education. The governance of the institutions in pursuing the subject areas of studies and the areas of research are by and large through broad policy directions as prescribed by the national bodies. Internal systems of Institutions have significant scope of autonomy through their Academic Councils and the Governing Boards.

**Internal Governance:** Likewise, the internal governance within the Institutions is mostly carried out by the Governing structure of the institution as per provisions of respective Acts/ MoAs etc which includes apex authority of the University/Institute, namely, the Board of Governors called by many names like University Court, the Senate, Governing Council etc. These are various names assigned to the highest body of the governance of a specific institution or a university. These apex authorities are supported through various other bodies namely, Academic Council, Board of Studies, Research Board, Planning Board, Admission Committee, Faculty Selection Committee, and likewise many other committees. The financial management of the institutions are looked after by Finance Committee. In the State universities, highest body is presided over by the Governor of the State as Chancellor whereas in case of Central universities the central government appoints eminent person to be the Chancellor. Private institutes/universities are normally headed by the Chairperson or President of the sponsoring Trust with significant number of family members in the Governing Council.

#### **Higher Education Governance in the pre-independence Period:**

India's contemporary university system started in 1857 with the establishment of three public universities in the 'presidency headquarters' cities of Chennai, Kolkata and Mumbai. Subsequently, several state-owned universities started operations under the guidance of provincial governments. The governance system introduced by the colonial government replicated the University of London 'federal university' system, founded in 1836 to regulate the quality of existing colleges, in which the university is an affiliating body and reports to its local government. Similarly, in India, the role of the university was to support the educational goals of its constituent colleges by designing curricula, holding examinations and awarding degrees. The role of the colleges was largely to prepare Indians for work in the British colonial bureaucracy. The government was not interested in providing education through the university, nor paying for higher education in the colleges. The colleges were largely privately owned. The affiliated privately owned colleges primarily taught subjects in the arts and sciences, as well as the English language, to students who had completed their secondary education in the vernacular. Engineering colleges were later affiliated as well, and started awarding degrees from 1864. Their graduates usually sought employment in the state's railroads and other civic departments. Despite some later experiments with direct university education, the federal structure remained largely intact through the colonial period.. In summary, the colonial government created the federal university system, in which the lead institution—the university—was owned and operated by the state. The provincial administrations played the primary role in governing universities in their provinces. The focus of governance was on regulating quality standards. The constituent colleges were largely privately owned and lightly regulated regarding costs, access and equity. Since colonial government jobs—the ambition of most graduates—gave a relatively tiny group of college-educated Indians high status and relatively high income, they were willing to pay for it.

#### **Higher Education Governance in the post-independent Period**

The 1947 draft Constitution of independent India recommended the transfer of all responsibility for education to the provincial governments. Since the provincial governments already managed education, this merely legally ratified an existing situation. However, it significantly affected the prioritization of objectives: the post-independence provincial governments were interested in improving access as a first priority, even if it meant sacrificing quality. To ensure this goal, they increased the level of political control over the universities by provincial-level governments.

In 1956, Parliament established the University Grants Commission as a national regulator of standards and a provider of finance. Following the UGC's establishment, the national government provided financial support to create new unitary professional institutions, a large number of which were established. Unitary regional professional colleges, jointly promoted by state and central governments, were also established. The governance of the university system in the first two decades after independence thus shifted away from provincial state control towards centralization under the national

government. The change was led by India's first post-independence Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. Nehru's strategy of state-led industrialization required the universities to produce the technicians to work in large state-owned enterprises. The establishment of the IITs, NITs and unitary agricultural universities are witness to this. These were created in disregard of the constitutional division of responsibility, through the device of using special acts of Parliament. Nehru brought the existing provincial universities under indirect central control, though the UGC. However, the UGC, though responsible for setting national quality standards, was not empowered to implement them by accrediting universities or through financial incentives. The governance model of the upper tier was the state-owned unitary specialized institution: a teaching institution specializing in a certain field of study, such as engineering. The central government appointed the board of governors and the director. The institutions controlled admissions, faculty recruitment and assessment. The governance model of the lower tier was initially unchanged from colonial times. The provincial government controlled the university's budget and funding, approved senior staff appointments, staff salaries and tuition fees. Through its membership of the university's senate, the provincial government influenced academic policy as well. The university affiliated colleges, prescribed curricula and standards of admission, held examinations and awarded degrees. The colleges recruited students and faculty, built the infrastructure and provided the education.

In comparison with colonial times, the common objectives were a focus on the elite and, within a new and numerically minuscule category—the national government controlled unitary institutions—on quality. In contrast with colonial times, the provincial universities prioritized access over quality. The governance model of provincial universities was largely unchanged from colonial times at the apex. In contrast with colonial times, in which the colleges were largely privately owned, ownership was largely with the state at the end of Nehru's tenure.

The period after Nehru's rule ended in 1964, and up to 1984, coincides largely with the Prime Ministership of Indira Gandhi. Mrs. Gandhi centralized governance generally, thus challenging the federal nature of India's democracy. Unlike Nehru, her focus was on rural and poverty issues. Accordingly, national education policy shifted from addressing the needs of large-scale industrialization to creating skills for rural occupations and small-scale industries. In 1969, the UGC created a committee on University Governance. It recommended that universities be granted autonomy from the provincial governments. Thus, the State, during Mrs. Gandhi's tenure, made strong efforts to reprioritize higher education towards greater equity.

The period that began in 1984, with the end of Mrs. Gandhi's rule, is widely identified as the start of economic reforms and liberalization, and the advent of a new political era consisting of coalition governments that included provincial parties. Meanwhile, education policy at the national level was increasingly driven by the need to counterbalance the ill-effects of politicization at the provincial universities by instituting national regulations to improve quality, control costs, and increase the supply of higher education places. In 1990, the UGC published a report on "Alternate Models of Management" (informally known as the Gnanam Committee Report, after its chairperson). It discussed the adverse impacts of the deep politicization of university governance. The report called for greater autonomy for universities from government and greater involvement of "teachers, students and society at large" in running universities, including the positions at the top of the hierarchy.

The report recommended decentralization within the university hierarchy, including empowering university deans, shifting responsibility for course regulation, examinations and degree awards to affiliated colleges, and recommending that universities concentrate on "postgraduate education and research programmes." The report also recommended that UGC's activities be shared with State Councils for Higher Education. It suggested that most of the powers for regulating universities should pass to the State Council, with UGC playing an advisory role. It asked that the Council's composition be primarily academic. It recommended that the power to affiliate or disaffiliate a college should rest with the university.

## VI. CONCLUSION

India's higher education system is under pressure from the State and an increasingly educated youth population to achieve multiple objectives, such as growth, quality and equitable access. To reach these political targets, national and provincial policymakers take an activist approach, such as providing adequate resources, enabling private provision of higher education, and so forth. Issues concerning interaction with the Governments, statutory bodies etc. are issues of external governance of higher education system/institutions. Likewise, the issues of academic and administrative matters of the institution; and matters of its own vision and mission are considered as issues of internal governance within. The focus of

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