

AUTONOMY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract: *In this paper, it is pointed out that from the time immemorial man is searching ways and means for autonomy, may be in such matters as spiritual, political, social reformation, discoveries, invention, etc. Autonomy in education is expected to achieve autonomy in other areas of real-life, worldly affairs. In India, the buzz word since the last two decades is autonomy in higher education. We have several models in higher education found and established in Post Graduate (PG) programmes of University, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) or Indian Institute of Management (IIM). These institutions one-way or the other imbibe some elements of autonomy in education. A brief literature review presents some concepts of autonomy and their scope of implementation as perceived worldwide. It is pointed out that the concept of autonomy is being tried out since many decades and researchers have made some proposals to have better perception of autonomy. An overview of autonomy in higher education in India is presented, as viewed either by UGC or Vice-Chancellors. The author has proposed that a teacher (referred to as a roaming university) is the first link in education chain to be autonomous in a real sense followed by autonomy at such levels as university/institution, management, regulatory bodies, and then at national level. The author has made some suggestions for each level for inculcating autonomy For instance, some suggestions are clear national policy, least regulations, reformulation of laws, autonomous management, autonomous institutions awarding degrees, five years teacher's tenure, lean system, etc. The article will be of interest to all autonomous personnel concerned.*

Keywords: *Autonomy, Higher Education, Reforms, University Grant Commission (UGC),*

1. INTRODUCTION

An attempt to find the response to such queries as “Who am I?” or “What is the purpose of my life?” may lead hopefully to have a better perception of the word “autonomy”. Lord Krishna says “Oh! Arjuna, God am I.” Jesus says “Oh! Am I the son of God”. God is man’s imagination, creation that presents the concept of “Infinity”, auto (self)-controlled and auto (self)-managed. Autonomy is absolute freedom in the areas concerned, no constrained, no boundaries, but at the same time autonomy is caged in self-controlled and self managed phenomenon enabling the autonomous man or entity to do good to all, a boon to mankind, a way leading to peace, prosperity and perfection for one and all, with reasonable, rational and natural worldly gains, if any, to oneself or entity. It is above and beyond pretty interests, greediness, envy and what not. The autonomous man or entity excels in all walks of life, embossing his footprints on the pages of history. All great personalities like Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Ramkrishna Paramhansa, Swami Vivekananda, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Jamshedji Tata, Thomas Alva Edison, Dhirubhai Ambani, Bill Gate, etc., have left their footprints on the man’s history. The life style of these

persons and functioning of the organizations instituted after their names enlighten man about the glimpses of autonomy. Thus, autonomy is a self-controlled, self-managed tool leading to excellence with the ultimate objective of peace, prosperity and perfection to man. In the present era, the four important components of democracy are government, parliament, judiciary and education. Education, as history has been witnessing, plays a vital role among all these four pillars of democracy because it is that education which builds others, their values, actions, efforts, involvement, commitment and sincerity of purpose. Tertiary education is the building block of any education system. Obviously, it is rightly thought right from time immemorial that higher education, may be in universities or Gurukuls is the key for human prosperity. The countries that have shown this concern are advanced countries or the conquerors. No doubt formal education, fit-all-in-one-size, a standardization approach, and plays an important role, but it is not sufficient to cater to the needs of world of man. Wider, louder, broader and lateral attitude with freedom need to be inculcated in higher education so that the learners will be more creative, innovative contributing something extra to the society. The functioning of IITs/IIMs is something like on this pattern. Earlier reports on education of 1948 (Radhakrishnan) and 1968 (Kothari) have shed some light on such/and similar aspects. National Education Policy 1986 goes one step further. The era of privatization, liberalization and globalization has been knocking on our door since the last two decades. And to be globally competitive, Indian stalwarts started thinking more about autonomy in higher education, a way expected to lead to prosperity. Education means understanding and learning of worldly affairs, assimilating and digesting some principles, ways and rules of life that will hopefully lead to a happy/enjoyable life. However, education is mainly concerned with building up of psychological set ups, especially positive mind-sets, as is obvious psychological patterns even of twins are not alike.

Wide and varied patterns of mindsets are a natural phenomenon. How to capture this and turn it into a fruitful exercise is a million dollars question. Autonomy can be one of the tools to achieve this. But autonomy does not mean absolute freedom left to the whims and likings of one with no concern for others, near or far. Thus, it is of utmost importance to have a clear perception of autonomy in a real sense. The history witnesses whenever there has been autonomy in education great feats have been materialized. However, autonomy, it appears, is interpreted, as one perceives it, like the four blind-men describing an elephant. The following Sections are an attempt to present some thoughts against such queries: What is autonomy in a real sense and how to use it in higher education?

2. AUTONOMY: A BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW

This Section presents a brief literature review in respect of autonomy and related areas like governance. World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century: Vision and Action, was adopted by the World Conference on Higher Education on 9 October 1998. It advocates the principle of equity of access (Article 3) and the principle of solidarity and true partnership amongst higher education institutions worldwide (Article 15) (The full text of the World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century is available at: http://www.unesco.org/education/educprog/che/declaration_eng.htm). Montgomery and David C (2003) speak about the basic functions of universities as:

1. The primary obligation of the university is to acquire, develop, transmit, and protect knowledge in a sensitive and inclusive way.
2. No one, not even those actually doing the intellectual work, can know in advance to what future humane or inhumane use that knowledge may be put to, if any.

2.1 Corollaries:

1. Those directly engaged with acquiring and transmitting knowledge are the sole best judges of where and how to invest their own efforts,
2. But they are obliged to separate rigorously their role as researcher or scholar from their legitimate roles as citizen, advocate, or consumer.

The academic's role in the historically privileged community of higher education is inherently un-privatizable, whether a person gets a payback from the public or the private sector: to privatize the structural form role is to destroy it, by robbing the academic of the authority; that needed to be taken seriously. Moses (2007) and Ingrid revisit the concept of autonomy and its constituents. Australian universities have enjoyed large-scale autonomy. In a society that increasingly regards university education from an instrumentalist point of view, university anxious for safeguarding their autonomy is widely seen as an attempt to evade accountability. Yet there has been an acceptance that a corollary to autonomy is accountability. Over the past 20 years, the boundaries of autonomy have changed and accountability requirements multiplied. In particular, it is pertinent to note the changes in seven areas of institutional autonomy, namely:

1. Staff,
2. Students,
3. Curriculum and teaching,
4. Academic standards,
5. Research and publications,
6. Governance, and
7. Administration and finance.

Ideology along with political conditions explains the variety and heterogeneity of the universities and institutions. Rapid growth of private academic institutions exemplify needs of local community, enormous demand for higher education services and how this is linked to the concept of autonomy, the public vs. private controversy, the role of the state and the matters of pertinence and quality. The grave concern for the future of higher education is about the quality and purpose of colleges and universities. "Student achievement", say, in terms of employability or otherwise, is the core issue. Involving accrediting agencies or the federal government in evaluating and regulating teaching and learning is an unhealthy departure from the traditional arrangements. Outside involvement in those activities runs the risk of curbing the innovation and high levels of creativity, the hallmarks of higher education. In theory, the charter school concept is based on a trade-off or exchange: greater autonomy for increased accountability. Hayden (2007), for effective implementation of right to autonomy, propagates the following supportive measures:

1. Legislative and regulatory reforms,
2. The establishment of appropriate accountability relationships,
3. The development of leadership and managerial expertise at the institutional level, and
4. Building of confidence and trust in the process of institutional self-governance.

Boos-Nunning and Ursula (2004) point out that the German discussion on higher education has shown a more emphatic turn toward business. The traditional autonomy of the university is

reinterpreted to embrace an “orientation to the client and to demand”, but it is also reinforced structurally by legislation giving broader range of action in “pedagogical work, more freedom in matters of financing, administration and staffing, and more cooperation with partners close to... colleges and universities, as well as more competition among the latter themselves”. The quality of research and teaching is situated, as part and parcel of internationalization and globalization, in the context of Europe wide and indeed worldwide competition. There are, therefore, opportunities and risks of competition in higher education. Lingens (2004) discloses that the Germany ranks in the bottom fourth in spending on higher education in a comparison among western industrial countries. There is a danger that in near future, the very best and most promising of the upcoming generations will increasingly choose only professionally relevant training courses offered by business; turn to expensive private educational establishment (in so far they are affordable); or turn to more attractive universities abroad. Hence, a reform of the way higher education establishments operate and are organized is not realistic if approached centrally, since it would be vulnerable to excessive bureaucratic resistance. Naturally, colleges and universities need as much freedom of decision and action as possible. The strictures imposed by federal and state law, and especially civil service law must be radically dismantled, and a dismantling of bureaucracy and administrative boards in higher education establishments must follow this.

Within the binding mission of “teaching” every faculty or department must be able to decide on how the funds raised from student fees are to be used. Higher education establishments should choose themselves their students and admit them only within the bounds of their financial and personal capabilities. The goal is a competition for students among higher education establishments, which will also commit professors to greater engagement in teaching. Eskeland (2007) states that student learning can be raised by autonomy and parental participation through separate channels, but mutually supportive effect. The data available do not allow the potential endogeneity of autonomy and participation to be ruled out with certainty. If decentralization moves responsibility from centre toward local level governments, the results are relevant if this raises autonomy and participation in schools.

More generally, the result is relevant for efforts to moving decision-making toward users and local community. Most importantly, perhaps, we illustrate the importance of checking who is empowered when higher-level strings are loosened. Graycar (1975) advocates that education programmes, i. e., what is taught and how it is taught, are determined by those in the educational institutions. Notion of autonomy needs to be examined and a distinction is made between “subjective” and “objective” notions of academic freedom. Burnheim (2007) takes up the issue of external engagement with autonomy. In Higher Education University’s external relations, particularly with industry, have been seen as a contributor to the reduction of institutional autonomy, through both adoption of management models from other sectors and through commercial arrangements. On the other hand, a more engaged approach to communities, government and industry has also been seen as a means to revitalize academic life (http://www.ducation.uwa.edu.au/research/forum/abstracts2/2007_abstracts).

Meier and Deborah (2004) speak in terms of lean concept in autonomy. The challenge of scaling up is the most daunting one faced. Sceptics like to say “Oh well, that ‘X’ and ‘Y’ did something really special is irrelevant, they’re exceptions”. But today’s exceptions can become tomorrow’s norms. If that is to happen, a way for exceptions to be nourished and made systematic needs to be provided. A new kind of system is needed whose central task is to maintain the protected space necessary for nurturing what the author calls “exceptional”: a lean,

mean system, with a limited but critical accountability function that protects the public interest; a system that respects the fact that schools must be responsive, but their own constituents- the members of their community, not the system itself, Leslie and David (2003) present that the four perspectives on power and its exercise in organizations to analyze the practice of governing colleges and universities are:

1. The exploration uses political theories (particularly those assessing the legitimacy and effectiveness of stable political entities),
2. Leadership studies,
3. Analyses of how formal and informal organizations interact in the management of conflict
4. Analyses of the tensions between governing provide more useful data than structures in understanding how college and university organizations manage conflict.

It is concluded that power, conceptualized more in Jeffersonian than Machiavellian terms, can form the central theme of a way to govern academic institutions, and has a far better chance of succeeding than any particular structural form. Kathryn (2008) presents a Chinese model of autonomy. China has shifted from an elite to a mass system of tertiary education, now enrolling more than 23 million students, diversified funding patterns and new relationships between government and individual institutions, moving away from top-down control toward greater state supervision using evaluation and accountability mechanisms from West. Adamowski, Steven and Pettrill (2007) states that institutions feel constrained by a bureaucracy that impedes principals' ability to raise student achievement. They are caught in autonomy gap. It is genuinely hard to transition from command-and- control to autonomy-in-return-for accountability, but they must. Such a shift means doing battle with meddlesome states, powerful unions, and central-office fiefdoms. It means paying principals more and micromanaging them less. If leadership is an important factor in institution success as research indicates, and if great leaders demand (and need) true authority, taking this difficult step is worth the effort. Taousanidis (2002) spells out the key issues affecting higher education as:

1. Globalization,
2. Technology,
3. The need for diversification,
4. Preservation of autonomy, and
5. Collaboration.

To respond to changing needs, higher education institutions must increase their transparency and accessibility of their program and enhance their market advantages while protecting principles of education. Caldwell (2002) advocates that the earlier concept of self-management needs to be distinguished from the concept of autonomy. The merits of school-based management, local management, and self-management have been robust over the past two decades. The management features, it appears, are a part of school reform in virtually every nation that is seeking to improve the quality of learning. Several nations are now moving beyond self management toward autonomy. A high level self-management within a centrally determined framework of goals, policies, curriculum, assessment, and accountabilities is the present trend. It is stressed that the merits of self-management have been established, but the focus of implementation must shift to making the connections between empowerment at the school level

and strategies to achieve improved learning outcomes for students. Henkel (2007) raises a vital query whether autonomy will survive in knowledge society. The challenges of knowledge society signify the breaking down of boundaries that have been critical for justification of academic rights to self-government and freedom of inquiry. The ideal of academe as a sovereign, bounded territory, free by right from intervention in its governance of knowledge development and transmission, has been superseded by ideals of engagement with societies in which academic institutions are 'axial structures'. It proposes alternative concepts of institutional and individual self-determination within a reconfigured policy, in which boundaries are permeable and the governance of knowledge and knowledge based institutions is shared and often contested between the state, the market and academic institutions.

3. AUTONOMY: THE NATURE.

As presented in the preceding section, it is a Herculean task to codify autonomy in words, its definition, simply because autonomy is expected to consider wide and varied psychological patterns of human mind; the identification of all of them is next to impossible. But looking at the life sketches of great persons, one can make an attempt to identify some components of autonomy. Some of these are:

1. Thinking is wide, loud, broad, lateral and always positive.
2. The only mission of life is to do good to man.
3. Behaviours have no well defined definite boundaries.
4. High stake with high risk, sometimes even at the risk of life.
5. No self-vested interests, above and beyond six enemies: Kam, Krodh, Mad, Moh, Matsar and Lobha.
6. Love and affection towards one and all, friend or enemy no distinction.
7. Self-controlled and self-managed, own law-makers and their strict followers.
8. Do not bother about any regulatory body, good or evil.

The stakeholders of education, as we know, are students, parents, government, industry, teachers, management and society as a whole. The most vital elements of teaching-learning (education) process are teachers, students and curriculum. And amongst these three, teacher plays a key role in dealing with students and curriculum concurrently achieving the objectives, if any, set. Teacher is a cutting edge between students and curriculum. That is why in advanced countries teacher is regarded as integrator, facilitator or coach. Vinobaji Bhave (1932) in his book "Shikshan Vichar" says a teacher is a roaming university. It means the autonomy of teacher is the starting point of institution autonomy. To give autonomy to teacher, institution needs to be given autonomy. In other words, to reach to teacher's autonomy, management of the institution needs to be autonomous. And such autonomy is gained against a heavy risk, risk of survival itself. Those who take higher risk are prone to higher dividends. Autonomy cannot be granted in parts. It is always complete, absolute. Normally, autonomy to institution means freedom to management in administrative, academic and financial matters. Before the emergence of self-financed engineering/medical colleges, there were a few professional colleges, one in one university. In a sense, these colleges were at least academically autonomous. But one can hardly dare to say they achieved what was expected from them, look at what has happened in the last 6 decades in India and abroad (Dominic 2007). Concepts like small group working, team building, participative management, decentralization, lean thinking, etc., express autonomy but to a very limited extent. Autonomy is a two edged sword. Dictatorship or bureaucracy may creep in under

the disguise of autonomy, anytime, anywhere through anybody! For example, the socialist or communist philosophy advocates a state without state, without boundaries, without police force. What does the history unfold? The next section, in view of this, is devoted to the Higher Education in India: Indian scenario in the global context.

3.1 Autonomy: Indian Scenario

To arrive at the ways and means of achieving autonomy in higher education, it is desirable to recognize some major models of education system as given below:

1. Capitalist model.
2. Socialistic (Cuban) model (Davila, 2006).
3. British model,
4. Colonial model as the one designed by Lord Macaulay in India to create a class of people who would be the intermediaries between British rulers and the ruled natives, making their task of ruling this vast country easier (Shalabh Kumar, Sonia and Macaulay's children, 1999, The Rediff Special, <http://www.rediff.com/news/1999/may/19shalabh.htm>).

Japan has 4000 universities for its 127 million people, US has 3650 universities for its 301 million, and India has 348 universities for its 1.2 billion people. In India, nearly 160000 students go overseas to pursue higher and technical education. This results in a foreign exchange out flow of about \$ 10 billion per year. This amount is sufficient to build 40 IIMs or 20 IITs per year. "There is no such thing as control. It is only on paper and gives rise to corruption". Grant autonomy to each one of 16885 colleges operating in India. Autonomy will make the entities responsible to impart quality education. Currently India spends 0.5% of its GDP on education, whereas, Singapore spends 4% of GDP. "Unfortunately, higher education in India has lost its edge"(Naithani and Biswas, 2008). In Southern Indian States, almost every district has a university resulting into more employability potential of the graduates than those turned in the Northern Indian States.

USA follows the capitalistic education model, cost based, higher quality-higher costs, scientific based, no free lunch and exclusive one. Cuba follows a socialistic model, inclusive one, scientific based (Anon, 2007). British model followed in UK is scientific one, long standing. These models have both strong and weak points. However, India has been following a colonial model designed by British to turn out slaves into efficient and effective labour force. Indian ancient Gurukul model is flexible, spiritual and scientific based; one according to one's potential and need, cafeteria approach and, eco-friendly. Gurukul system has produced Arjuna, the best warrior and the dancer, Bhima, the best wrestler and the chef, Shivaji, the best statesman, social reformer and general, Chandragupta Mourya, the benevolent king, Swami Vivekananda, the hope of India..

Since India's present model is based on colonial British model, one has to be wary while dealing autonomy to Indian colleges. Ministries at Central like MHRD and State levels like Ministry for Higher and Technical Education go for enactment of laws pertaining to education. UGC, MCI, AICTE, Architecture Council of India and a few more councils function at the middle level mainly approving and granting aids to institutions. Sam Pitroda, Chairman, National Knowledge Commission, India, is reported to have opined that AICTE be abolished [20]. NAAC and NBA are the main statutory bodies dealing with accreditation; ISO 9000-02 is rarely seen on

the accreditation map of higher education in India. Some institutions like IITs and IIMs are autonomous in a limited sense funded by Central Government. At State level Directors take care of their disciplines like medical, agriculture, technical, vocational, etc. Chancellors, Vice-Chancellors and Directors (may be of IITs, IIMs or State Technical Education), mostly appointed by government, are expected to be the intellectual and academic peak of society. Recently a Seminar on “Autonomy in Higher Education: A Retrospect” was held in IMC, Mumbai on 24th October 2007 and at Raj Bhavan on 25th October 2007 (Kunte and Dalvi, 2007). Chancellors, Vice-Chancellors, Directors, Principals, teachers, top Officers and Members of ministry, UGC, etc. attended it. Their opinions and findings are:

1. There are 18000 institutions of higher learning.
2. Six out of 150 autonomous institutions in the country are in Maharashtra.
3. Management and principals of the affiliated colleges: 51% stake for control on the management and protection of the interest of the minority community in colleges.
4. Teaching and non-teaching staff desire clear policy statement of the government on funding and protection of grant-in-aid to the existing teaching and non-teaching posts with a flexibility of interchanging as per the need from time to time from one subject to another as per the changing needs and circumstances.
5. Vice-Chancellors, University Officers and members of Authorities desire proper representation of university for managing the academic affairs of autonomous colleges such as review of syllabi, appointment of teaching staff and examination since the university will award the degree.
6. If autonomy is freedom, then institutes should strive for it rather than it being imposed on them, it's all about the 'right mind set' that is to be developed through conducive atmosphere. Committees are to be formed at the state and university level on the lines of Quality Assurance Cell (QAC).
7. The Governor of Maharashtra in his concluding remarks pointed out that, in the era of globalization, the accessibility; quality and inclusiveness are the key words for development of higher education. He further advices to maintain quality along with quantity and stresses need to pay attention towards human resources in the form of quality teachers to cater to the needs of higher education.

Fortunately, Supreme Court of India has to pass on certain directives in case of issues like management empowerment, fixation of tuition fees, admission procedure, etc., raised from time to time through Writ Petitions. The verdicts of the Supreme Court hint directly at autonomy, categorizing educational institutions as service industry, and teaching not as a profession, but an occupation with a mission. In October, 2002, Supreme Court of India has given their judgment for WP No. 317/1995. What are the observations and directives? The judgment has a significant bearing on the future of Higher Education in India, especially in case of minority educational institutions and non-aided private professional institutions. The judgment says, “Private education is one of the most dynamic and fastest growing segments of the postsecondary education at the turn of the twenty-first century”. Further the judgment says that education is “charitable” in nature (the ancient Indian concept, India is the only country that regards education as charity), it is an “occupation”, “a mission of life”, commercialization of education is not permissible, the principle that there should not be capitation fee or profiteering is correct, reasonable surplus to meet expansion and augmentation of facilities does not, however, amount

to profiteering, educational institutions would come within the expression “industry” in the Industrial Disputes Act, academic degree as a “private good” (the Supreme Court is the first authority to declare education as industry, and not our educationists or other stalwarts), etc. The judgment further observes that “the logic of today’s economics and an industry of privatization have contributed to the resurgence of private higher education, and the establishing of private institutions where none or very few existed before”. The judgment states that the scheme (“free” and “payment” seats) framed by this court in Unni Krishnan’s case and the direction to impose the same, except where it holds that primary education is a fundamental right, is unconstitutional. It is well established all over the world that those who seek professional education must pay for it. The essence of a private educational institution is the autonomy that institution must have in its management and administration. And this judgment, therefore, declares that surrendering the whole process of admission to government is unreasonable and that the right to establish and administer institution broadly comprises the following five rights (right to autonomy?):

1. To admit students,
2. To set up a reasonable fee structure,
3. To constitute a governing body,
4. To appoint staff (teaching and non teaching), and
5. To take action if there is dereliction of duty on the part of any employee.

In India, one finds Universities, deemed to be universities, Technical Universities at State level (Maharashtra has yet to make such a university operative), private universities (Gujarat has many, Maharashtra yet to pass a bill), and then autonomous colleges that are affiliated to university that awards degrees under her brand. The University Grants Commission, New Delhi, in its meeting held on 30th November 2007, identifies the Action Plan strategy for implementing the strategies of the 11th Five Year Plan. Goals of 11th Plan can be summarized as (Anon, 2007):

1. Expansion of education, enhancing enrolment ratio by 5%.
2. Promoting equity and inclusion principle.
3. Quality and excellence in higher education.
4. Academic and administrative reforms.
5. Public-Private participation.
6. Internationalization of higher education.
7. Financing of higher education.

UGC has proposed Action Plan strategy that includes eleven points so that the goals set can be achieved. The Indian higher education system will have to wait and watch how it is going to be deployed. Nevertheless, the fear of survival on one’s own feet is the main issue. During the last six decades of independence, we could not turn a single noble laurel, India had two before freedom. Autonomy now is considered as the panacea to tackle higher education issues in India. But the non-existence of crystal clear national policy towards autonomy and lack of societal ‘mind set’ making are the main hurdles. The on-going experiments on granting autonomy to institutions are not encouraging and the success is too limited. Some suggestions for grant of autonomy are presented in the following section.

3.2 Autonomy: Ways and Means

Autonomy needs a well thought out design, mechanism and operations, system as a whole encompassing all elements or levels concerned especially the teachers. Helter bran proposes three strategies for teachers to become a professional, namely, collaborative planning, reflectivity and growth (Helterbran, 2008). The author further states that teachers must decide who they are and how they want to be perceived in the classroom. Becoming increasingly professional implies a commitment to change, to strengthen and to grow as a person and as an educator. Thus, autonomy to institutions of higher education is a complex phenomenon, an interwoven chain. Nevertheless, for the sake of simplicity, one can consider at least five important links (levels) of autonomy: national, regulatory bodies, management, institution and faculty. Some suggestions at the levels listed out are:

3.2.1 National Level:

1. What are the objectives of higher education: More pay package (intellectual slavery anywhere), or national prosperity? The objective of higher education needs to be nation making and national mindedness.
2. Policies regarding manpower planning, development and training (Talent Management) will be set.
3. National wage policy: Pay must be linked with performance with a provision for incentives, fire and social security.
4. Nation first, interest of a group/individual/political party are secondary
5. Principle of inclusion will be adhered to.
6. No compromise once the policy is adopted.
7. Adhere to periodical review, do not go for experimenting now and then show me the parson/party I will show the policy, this mindset mercilessly needs to be curbed out.
8. Deploy institute's out-turn for national cause like no graduate/diploma holder will be allowed to leave country unless he devotes two years to country. This sacrifice is necessary to make the future of coming generations prosperous.
9. To promote private universities.
10. To discourage conduct and award of PG degrees, M E/M Tech or Ph D, by universities. Only IITs, IIMs and NITs will run such programs, preferably vocational ones.
11. All engineering/technical non-autonomous institutions in a state must be affiliated to a technological university run by the state.
12. On the pattern of UPSC, a faculty recruitment board can be established; institutions can avail of this facility.
13. A central training school may be established for pre-service and in-service training of faculty and technical supporting staff. Such training must be compulsory for the first and subsequent higher posting.
14. Education Bank of India will be established giving loans to institutions and students at say 2% interest per annum.
15. Eligibility norms for faculty recruitment will be strictly adhered to.

3.2.2 Regulatory bodies:

Central/State governments, bodies like UGC, AICTE, MCI, etc., constitute regulatory bodies. Ours is the independent country and regulatory bodies need to be true public servant to the society. The mind set of officers involved need a drastic change. The motto needs to be 'dedicated to the service of the nation'. Corporate culture is the call of the day. Some suggestions for regulatory bodies are:

1. To minimize scope of authority/functioning of the regulatory bodies: granting approval to institutions by one hand and autonomy by another.
2. To run the Body as a corporate.
3. Adopt the principles of transparency, equity, public accountability and fair practices.
4. Regulatory bodies like UGC, AICTE, MCI, etc., will prescribe 60 % curriculum, uniform throughout India, 40% in the hands of the senior teachers who will design and offer courses successfully in commensurate with the market forces and demand (pull-type) and firing the defaulters.
5. Accreditation of institutions/universities needs to be in the hands of 3-4 or more NGOs. Accreditation body needs not to be a government/statutory body.
6. There should be enough representation of the stakeholders on the body.
7. Appointments of officers on regulatory bodies must be based on merit only. Political appointments need to be curbed out.
8. Regulatory bodies need to have autonomous status and no political interference will be allowed.
9. One window system: Why several committees for, say, institution approval by AICTE, University, Government, or merit list approval by Joint Director, Director and then Shikshan Shulka Samiti?
10. Execute minimum extent of control over institutions; delight to customer should be the motto. Abandon the culture of master-slave (client) relationship, the approach needs to be positive, helping institutions to improve and grow, do not simply count the heads and square meters.

3.2.3 Management

The Supreme Court of India has shed the light on what is meant by complete autonomy to management, in administrative, academic and financial matters, and needs no further elaboration. Management will be allowed to go for raising equity for fund/capital. The principle of inclusion will be followed for student-admissions. The tuition and living for students will be free, but they will have to pay 2.5% of their income throughout their life to the alma-matter. Institutions will be residential ones for both faculty/staff and students. Management will motivate faculty to build their own personal library contributing 50% costs of books limited to Rs 1000 per faculty per year.

3.2.4 University/Institution level

University and institution must function like a corporate body.

1. Set the objectives and goals.
2. Adopt the principles of transparency, equity, public accountability and fair practices.
3. Establish indices for performance measurement. Presently it is missing,
4. Link performance with pay with provision for incentive.
5. Establish strict performance measurement practices.
6. Institute's award and punishment mechanism needs to be performance based. The decision of the Management is final and binding on the party. Remove tribunals.
7. Do not permit any union or association.
8. To curb out corruption, financial, intellectual or otherwise. Traces of corruption in institutions show that all other sectors of society are fully corrupt because corruption enters last in institutions because of the intellectual resistance of teachers, their values.
9. Life-long-learning needs to be the moral of university/institution.
10. Joint decision-making and team building will be two major elements of functioning.

11. To cancel all holidays except two, 15th August and 26th January.
12. Adopt lean philosophy, Plan, Do, Check and Act (PDCA) cycle, quality quadrangle: policy, planning, implementation and evaluation, on-line quality monitoring, e-learning, etc. Weed out unproductive days including those presently required for conduct of examinations as autonomous institutions can conduct evaluation tests with flexible timings depending on a student's progress, preferably on line.
13. A teacher's tenure needs to be only of 5 years. After assessment, a teacher can be further given tenure of 5 years. Presently EPF provides enough social security.

3.2.5 Teachers and staff

Teacher's performance is the real measure to judge the extent of autonomy. In fact, autonomous teachers are the real contributors to human society. Thus, autonomy to teacher is the key.

1. Adopt the principles of transparency, equity, public accountability and fair practices.
2. The present practice that teaching by one teacher, designing curriculum by the second, setting question paper by the third, and evaluation of answer books by the fourth, needs to be stopped.
3. The teacher is the only real evaluator of his/her students. The countries in which students are known after the names of teachers are the advanced countries.
4. In the era of e-learning, it is necessary to reduce the classroom contact hours, reducing to half that of today. Have an academic calendar, follow it from the day one, and make teaching more interactive, student friendly and more productive, i.e., adopt lean education system (i.e., learning to learn. In fact, under Indian education philosophy or theory, the concept of learning is recognized; and not that of teaching!).
5. The senior teachers should be accountable for designing and offering the advance courses as per market forces and demand (pull-system). The scope of such subjects will be minimum 40% of total curriculum, remaining 60% to be prescribed say by AICTE.
6. Laboratory practical plays an important role in professional colleges. These are now -a- days have become rituals. Skills must be developed through lab-work.
7. The present hue and cry is that students need backup of soft skills. Is not possible to inculcate these during the course work of four years? Integrate theory and practical so that these skills are inherently developed. For instance, use excels for generating and operating data (numerical and computer skills), use case studies in classes (GD and PI); edit extensively seminar and project (technical report writing skill).
8. Multitasking, multi-skills, downsizing and high perks appear to be the outcome of globalization. To be competitive, teacher has to update his/her knowledge very fast and h/she in turn will update the students. Today, we denounce that syllabi are outdated. Remember syllabi is the minimum level of information that a teacher is expected to deliver. Are all teachers really covering at least syllabi cent percent? An autonomous teacher is one who crosses the boundaries of prevailing syllabi (however fast it is updated) to cope up with the fast advancing knowledge. Therefore, since it is teacher's responsibility to turn his/her students globally competitive; h/she must be autonomous, teacher and assessor too. The institute will award degrees. Stop practice giving degrees under the brand name of university.
9. Those teachers, institutions and universities respond to the market well are fit for survival. Let the incompetent universities, institutions and teachers die. Do not provide them protection. This cost is meagre when one looks at the benefits meant for future generations.
10. Reduce blackboard type teaching load, reduce teaching load/week to say 50% of the present, stress on e-learning, web-learning and teacher to work as facilitator only. Five days/week

teaching needs to be planned giving more free time to both faculty and students for self development on their own.

11. Change the mindset of students, teachers, parents and all others involved directly or indirectly in the education process.

12. Publications in international journals, involvement in R & D and consultancy must be the prerequisites for higher faculty post, tenure of five years only, and no life tenure.

3.2.6 Scope for future work

Grant of autonomy is an area potent for further research in several fields like lesson planning, performance measures, enactment (old outdated British laws are still prevailing), role of regulatory bodies, accreditation, etc.

4. CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, a brief literature review of autonomy was presented. An over view of Indian higher education system was also presented. Teacher's autonomy is recognized as the most vital link in institutional autonomy. In view of the on-going experimentation world-wide, some suggestions are made in respect of the five major links (levels) in the educational chain, namely, national, regulatory bodies, management, university/institution and teachers and staff. For instance, suggestions put fourth are- at national level crystal clear policy in respect of autonomy, corporate culture at regulatory body's level, complete autonomy to management as extended by the Supreme Court of India, establishment of performance measures at the university/institution level and teacher as a roaming university. By virtue of the Indian education model, India is lagging far behind in granting autonomy to institutions. This needs to be corrected without any further delay or else India is sure to miss the train. The article will be of interest to all concerned, especially those not favouring complete autonomy to institutions.

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