

University Grants Commission New Delhi

MINUTES OF THE SECOND MEETING OF THE UGC-AICTE REVIEW COMMITTEE HELD ON 23rd May, 2008 AT PUNE

The second meeting of the Committee was held at Bhaskara Hall, IUCAA, Pune from 10.00 am to 4.30 pm. The list of participants is enclosed.

Prof. Yashpal, Chairman of the Committee chaired the meeting. Dr. G. Srinivas, Deputy Secretary, UGC(WRO), Pune welcomed the members and participants present at the meeting.

Prof. Yash Pal through his introductory address set the tone for the discussion by raising various fundamental issues. He said that one can't buy knowledge. He asked, 'what is teaching and what is learning?' He said that good teachers engage and interact with students. There is mutuality in learning. Students should be encouraged for questioning habit. There should be no fear in questioning, in fact questions are welcome. He said that one has to learn to deal with questions put forth by students else creativity is lost. He said that our teaching did not provide answers to the students. In a way life was being distanced from education and knowledge was not even properly understood.

If there was a place where a lot of these problems could be sorted out, it was the Universities. Prof. Yash Pal tried to analyze the problems with our Universities. He said that all disciplines are connected. They tend to become infertile if they stand alone. He said that there was a lot of fragmentation at all levels of education. All Universities have large number of departments but there was no interaction between the people of these departments. He raised the question, 'how can we make a University, a place where things are done?' According to Prof. Yash Pal marvelous things are never done by consensus. To elaborate he gave an example of a University teacher who wanted to start a new course, which was a wonderful thing. But to do that he would need the approval of academic council where it would be reviewed and it would take a long time before it could get the go ahead. He said that we had to allow the freedom to start a new course say within two to three months. If this happens then the University will start to bloom. We could no

longer afford to be lax as everything in the world is so fast paced. The need of the hour was to connect together. As UGC chairman, Prof. Yash Pal was instrumental in setting up the Inter University Centres (IUC's). These types of Inter University Centres need to be set up between 4-5 Universities. So, instead of setting up 15-20 new Universities, it would be better to set up 15-20 Inter University Centres.

On the issues of whether Universities should have all subjects taught, Prof. Yash Pal was of the view that all subjects should be taught at the University. It need not be on the same campus but there should be a connection between these. He said that in any case a University, by definition should be able to deal with the whole Universe of knowledge. We need to make the boundaries in between porous to increase creativity, functionality and humanly relevant. With this Prof. Yash Pal invited comments, suggestions from the members present and interactions among on the various issues on the agenda. He added that in the discussions the question of resources should not disturb us at this particular stage. He put forward the following questions for discussion:

- **Are we generally in favour of a single Higher Education Commission/Authority/Agency/whatever?**
- **Can the University take full responsibility for establishment and support of Colleges, Engineering education, Teacher education, Medical & Dental education and Management Education?**
- **Views on the suggestion that the role of the Central Higher Education Body or Commission would be primarily on overall Policy level with support and catalytic functions.**
- **The University would be free to form alliances with other Universities, laboratories or education and research establishments.**
- **Will a move in this direction give the desired autonomy and involvement to the University? Would it be better or worse than now?**

- **Would it give more energy to the University or would it be a chore?**
- **Would it remove or reduce the impediments and irritations now faced by all involved in development of Higher Education, reducing bureaucracy and eliminating corruption?**

Dr.S.B.Lohia, Principal, Brijlal Biyani Science College, Amravati said that the Universities should not function as examining bodies. Instead universities should promote development of curricula, courses and concentrate on teaching and research. The job of examinations can be handed over to separate apex body/ agency which will work for that purpose alone throughout the year and in the process evolve new techniques of evaluation including on-line examination.

He strongly endorsed the opinion of establishment of single apex body for granting permission to establish colleges/Universities and to take suitable action against fake colleges/ universities. He added that the role of funding can be given to single apex body like the UGC instead of multiple funding agencies. He said that self standing specialized universities are a must which can serve as nucleus for advancement of knowledge through research. The system of affiliated colleges cannot be completely abolished. There should be an orientation and motivation of teachers for strong linkages with society at large-industry, banking sector, insurance and the government.

Dr.S.B.Lohia, proposed that the student be allowed to earn credits by attending classes and appear for the examination in different subjects of his choice in the same college or different college and even different Universities. The minimum number of credits required for a degree or diploma will have to be defined. He strongly endorsed the removal of boundaries between different subjects/disciplines/faculties and suggested the cafeteria approach for studies with credit system.

Prof.Ram Takawale, former Vice- Chancellor of University of Pune,IGNOU,YCMOU and Chairman,NAAC spoke about the integrated approach to Higher education. He suggested tackling the current problems in

higher education with 'out of the box' thinking leading to perhaps a radically different solution. He said that we should try and invert the picture wherein the student is at the center of the education system which is what happens in the Open University. This would be possible in the current scenario as we are in a connected society through communication links. He suggested linking Higher Education with New knowledge economy. To illustrate Prof. Takawale gave the example of accessing Encyclopedia Britannica on the net which costs Rs 75/month whereas Wikipedia is free because of mass collaboration. He said that mass collaboration could change everything. This was the new emerging paradigm.

Prof. Kamal Singh, Vice-Chancellor, SGB Amravati University, Amravati reinforced Prof. Takawale's views about the accessibility and equitability of knowledge. In response Prof. Yash Pal said that human beings are curious animals and a lot of learning happened because of this curiosity. Therefore there has always been hunt for a guru. Students can have a good rapport with the teachers which accelerates the learning – we learn through intimacies. This is part of being human. Like other species humans learn better from other humans. This is how learning at grassroots takes place. Eg. Learning music. An important point is that lot of learning is done for certification rather than knowledge.

She said that the University could take full responsibility to establish and support of colleges, but to enable to take full responsibility of colleges with traditional and professional courses political interference would have to be removed. She opined that a Board at National level would be a good idea and it would have full autonomy of granting the colleges, deciding the requisite infrastructure and moreover the syllabi of the courses required from the global, national and regional viewpoint. Role of the Central highest body would not be restricted only in making the policies but also for monitoring the overall development of higher education. She, said that India had come to a stage for globalisation of Indian education and we must take a studied and well informed risk for collaborations with other universities, laboratories or education and research establishments. Prof. Kamal Singh, strongly agreed that a move in this direction would give the desired autonomy and involvement to the university. In addition this would boost the confidence of the teaching fraternity. She added that it would certainly be better than it was now. She advocated giving time bound appointments to the staff depending on their performance and they would have to be held responsible for the

quality, relevance, equity, access and value education. Dr. (Capt) C.M.Chitale, Dean, Faculty of Management Studies, Pune university and Dr.S.B.Kolte, Director General, Indian Institute of Management Studies, Ahmednagar along with most other members were of the opinion that desired autonomy and involvement would definitely give more energy to the University. Prof. Kamal Singh added that India had more unaided colleges compared to the aided colleges and the contribution of the unaided colleges was very significant. She said that autonomy would improve efficiency and transparency and would reduce corruption and increase quality. Prof. Kamal Singh, was also of the view that a single Central Higher Education Committee was the need of the time. She strongly advocated of abolishing the system of affiliated colleges.

Dr.(Capt) C.M.Chitale, Dean Faculty of Management, University of Pune said that the autonomy of the University was in danger due to the business of Business Management Schools, which are mushrooming. Sanctity of University courses is violated. He said that flexibility of University has to be maintained. He ascertained that Pune University was quite flexible in starting of new courses and gave examples of various Certificate Courses that had been started without much time lag.

Dr.S.B.Kolte, Director, Institute of Management Studies, Ahmednagar said that there was rigidity in the University system as also in the UGC. UGC gives a list of various courses. Colleges have to accept the nomenclature of the list prepared by the UGC 10-15 years ago. He said that if the University wanted to start a new course then at least the statutory Universities should be given more freedom. He said that the role of the Central Higher Education body should be minimum. For starting any new course affiliated colleges need not have to go to UGC or AICTE.

Prof.Govind Swaroop, leading scientist, said that in India we have separated Science, Engineering, Technology and Medicine. If we have science and engineering in the same campus then there will be more research and development and new initiatives in these fields.

Dr.Gajanan Ekbote, Dean, Faculty of Medicine, University of Pune, emphasized on the need for an Independent Regulatory Authority. The current system is clumsy. There is chaos and overlapping of mandates. It is not conducive to enhance creativity in Higher education. UGC is over

regulated and under governed. In order to avoid complexity and multiplicity he proposed an Independent regulatory body, which would have single window clearance and would also be responsible for Accreditation. Prof. Yash Pal responded that role of the UGC should be that of a catalyst. Confusion is that there are overlapping mandates. He said that University should have a controlling role. He said that Geographical separation was not intellectual separation. If University gets this freedom then University will not only be overwhelmed but also very happy.

Prof.P. Vidyasagar, Director, B.C.U.D, University of Pune pointed out that there was utter confusion in the policies and practices of Higher Education. There were many contradictions in the approach itself. University had practically no role to play that was a great cause of worry so University's right should be established. Another thing he said was that if there was a uniform syllabus then there was no question of autonomy. Prof. Yash Pal said that there was no question of a common syllabus.

Prof.D.N.Dhanagare, former Vice-chancellor, Shivaji University said that the University can and must take responsibility of all the subjects but there was a tendency of interference from the government in case of Statutory Universities. This is so because Government and politicians frame acts and there are practical problems created by the government which has to be taken into account. He also pointed out some of the practical difficulties faced by the Universities. He said that various entrance exams were conducted by either the Director of Higher Education or Director of Technical Education. He suggested a consortium of Universities to conduct these examinations.

Prof.Jayant Narlikar, astrophysicist and founder Director, IUCAA said that generally the UGC gets criticized for the things it did not do properly and he then talked of the success story of the UGC and that was IUCAA. There are some countries like Japan for instance that have decided to replicate the model of IUCAA. These centers work at strengthening areas not otherwise looked at in University level. This system of establishing Inter University Centres needs to be replicated elsewhere in many more places. He stressed on the importance of interdisciplinary aspect of knowledge. Interacting with people from faculties other than one's own is rather enriching. Prof. Yash Pal spoke on the necessity of paralleling and Networking, wherein paralleling involves everybody and networking means interaction and all Universities must follow this in order to play a better role in Society,

whether it is at the Institutional level (university) or the Individual level (teacher).

Dr.S.Mukherjee, Visiting Faculty, IUCAA pointed out that the biggest contribution of UGC was the infonet service (Journals). Almost all State Universities had stopped subscribing. The suggestion was to do the same for other Universities. He also made a strong case for the stopping of the conduction of Joint Entrance Exams. These JEE's led to a lot of loss of young energy (where a student attended classes for 2-3 yrs). This was a national loss. A new mechanism needed to be introduced. No other country in the world wasted so much time of the young students. Dr. Mukherjee also asked the UGC to consider the ground realities. While framing rules the UGC must take into cognisance the ground realities, constraints, funding, etc. **Prof. Yash Pal** replied that if we took into consideration all the worries and constraints then nothing could happen. What could be done is give more thrust, more freedom. He said, *'lets start the freedom movement in education, the right to education, the right to move from subject to subject. We must ensure to be more and more free.'*

Dr.Ashok Thorat, Director, Institute of Advanced Studies in English, Pune, expressed his concern over the neglect of language studies. He said that language studies were either ignored or sidelined. He said that language was linked to human development and promotion of the same would lead to better understanding among people of various cultures and therefore lead to world peace. He said that there was a need to encourage teaching and research in this area. He said that language was integrated with computers, artificial intelligence and natural language processing and neglecting it would be unhealthy. Prof. Yash Pal, agreed with Dr.Thorat and supported the strengthening of all language departments.

Dr. Hemant Abhyankar, Principal, Vishwakarma Institute of Technology (VIT), Pune, was of the opinion that role of several bodies cannot be clubbed together. He added that nobody talked about government versus private. He suggested that we could have regulatory bodies which gave norms and standards as recommendations. He added that we can have NAAC/NBA and other bodies to monitor the quality of education. However it should be noted that institutions are not very keen to become autonomous. He noted that physical infrastructure could be bought but what about manpower? From 56 technical institutes in 1950 to 7000 in 2008 have come up. There is tremendous growth in the private sector too. Whether they would make

money or give importance to education is questionable. Our country has large numbers of people to be educated. Therefore growth should be allowed but at the same time have regulating bodies to give guidelines to the institutes. Autonomy is highly recommended but inspected by the recommending bodies.

Dr. S. B. Nimse, Member, Management Council, University of Pune Principal, New Arts, Science & Commerce College, Ahmednagar, was of the view that there should be a single body to promote Higher Education. He opined that Universities should be absolutely autonomous. The University should have control over the affiliating colleges rather than the state or the central government. This will result in the University becoming competent in due course. In the present scenario students are not getting opportunity for interdisciplinary education, so the integrated approach would serve the purpose. He also added that nomenclature of the courses was not as important as the courses and the credit system needs to be popularized and promoted.

Dr. Anil Rao, Principal, M. J. College, Jalgaon mentioned that there was a scheme of UGC “College with potential for excellence” which was a good motivational model. He said that law for state universities needed to be redefined at the central level as there were a lot of diversities in provision of University Act. Provision of State Universities Act becomes cumbersome in development of courses. Even today the present law does not permit Arts, Science and Commerce colleges to start engineering colleges. He talked of Geographical monopoly- where if a new university is carved out of the old university, identity of the new university is not well marked out. Thus for the sake of convergence some departments need to be given autonomy. Decision-making bodies many a times lack vision, therefore, full freedom should be given to Universities and affiliating colleges expect the same kind of freedom from the University to start various courses.

Prof. D. N. Dhanagare, former Vice Chancellor, Shivaji University was of the view that it was justifiable on part of the colleges to ask for autonomy. The resistance for autonomy came from the teaching faculty as in post autonomy an empowered management would result in additional work. He said that some monitoring by the Universities is necessary as degree was conferred by the university. He suggested that the name of the college should be put on the certificate of degree which will show the quality of the college. He opined that lot of responsibilities should be taken up by the Universities and

colleges and not the UGC alone. There is a tremendous growth of colleges but quality is very low.

Dr,N.K.Nikam, President,Maharashtra College Principals Association and Principal, C.T.Bora College, Shirur, while talking of a single Higher education commission said that Universities had four independent masters like the UGC, AICTE, NCTE, MHRD and for colleges there was an additional master in the form of University. He strongly believed that there should be a single roof monitoring commission or committee at the National level. Prof. Yash Pal said that it was not possible as it is too large a system. Prin Nikam pointed out that the perspective plan of the Universities not observed by the state and the perspective plan of the state not observed by the UGC. On the issue of autonomy, Prin Nikam said that Pune University had an overburden of affiliated colleges (400-500). Administration is difficult, therefore he suggested smaller Universities with 100 colleges affiliated to them. Prof. Yash Pal strongly advocated Autonomy. He said that Autonomy is a means to become excellent and not a reward for becoming excellent. All big colleges should become Universities. Dr.Ekbote said that the process of Autonomy should be made easier.

Dr. Ramdas Pai, President,Manipal University,Manipal,Karnataka and Member of the Committee was of the opinion that UGC should give autonomy to Universities and University should give autonomy to colleges. He added that all Universities should be brought under NAAC.

Prof.Ram Takawale, former Vice Chancellor, University of Pune, strongly felt that autonomy should be given to Universities and every institute. He said that Autonomy should be given to the students. He said that networking started by UGC gave connectivity to the students. All institutions should be connected. Customer satisfaction approach should come in education. The performance parameter should be handled at the national or regional level or together with universities. He said that in order to evaluate the performance of the students he advocated the formation of a consortium of evaluation. The student should go to this institute for evaluation. The teaching learning is related to books only; it should go beyond books and touch lives which would be real knowledge. He suggested that we have to reinvent by changing and objectives. Let the goal be shifted from knowledge to development. Every student should be guided in a way that teaching and learning should be linked with development of the student, workplace, life, etc. this can be done by creating knowledge resources like the Open

Universities. There should be vocational courses, application courses, etc. this would be a transformation. We have to promote this integration. Students can get opportunity to learn from experts.

Prin.Anirudh Deshpande, Brihan Maharashtra College of Commerce, Pune talked about Accreditation of colleges. Before NAAC there was no accreditation ever. He stressed the need for some motivational incentives for undergoing Accreditation. He said that accreditation was necessary for objectivity. He said that autonomy should be for even a single faculty college in a village. He said that there should be autonomy to form syllabus according to regional requirements. Prof Yash Pal responded that being good should be a joy. There should be an urge to excel, achieve, do better. One need not aspire for a prize for that.

Dr. E.M. Khan, Principal, AISC, Pune said that with reference the different councils, the UGC should regulate these councils and UGC should recommend state governments to accord autonomy to more number of colleges and universities. He drew attention on the need of rearranging the school & 10-12 level of education so as to improve the quality of students for higher education. The UGC should have a provision of funding for such colleges who will take initiative in training the school teachers. The consortium of school and higher secondary (10-12) junior colleges could be formed on regional basis for the purpose of promoting exchange of good faculty members, encourage to share infrastructure, establish science centers to cater to the need of school children under establish innovative programmes of UGC.

Prof. Yash Pal commenced the discussion in the afternoon session began by saying that UGC and AICTE cannot remain the same. He also commended some of the good things that UGC has done. He was in support of more power to the Universities but at the same time added that knowledge could not be splintered into pieces. For avoidance of this he suggested setting up several Inter University Centres not necessarily in Technology. Dr. Takawale suggested linking technological development to Sociological development. Prof Yash Pal invited discussion on the private sector in Manangement and engineering.

Dr.S.B.Lohia, said that not much teaching was done in private engineering colleges. Many colleges outsourced the teaching.

Dr. Shayam Tandon, IUCAA said that very little was taught in government supported colleges also. In most institutions 'hard work' more than academic excellence is the criteria for selection.

Prof. Takawale said that teaching was responsible for only 30% of the development of the students, rest 70% learning takes place outside like getting exposed to the urban environment, coaching classes, etc.

Dr. Chitale said that Management Institutes these days charged more fees to take care of placements. He also expressed concern about the practice of some private Institutes who took some courses from University as an umbrella protection and started their own courses. They attracted the students with incentives of buy one and get one free (pay fees for one course and get to do the other one for free) and giving laptops. He said that Industry these days were developing their own private institutes for MBA,etc. they prepare the students and absorb them in their own company. He added that private institutes start the admission procedure well in advance and block the students, whereas government run institutes that take time in conduct of admissions suffer by losing out on good students.

Prof.S.N. Godbole, Coordinator, SET, University of Pune lamented on the quality of students that our system is producing. He said that the results of the SET exams were a depressing 2%. He expressed his fear of the degradation of the quality if UGC norms were not followed in the event of autonomy.

In responding to a suggestion by one of the members about establishing teachers training centre in the colleges itself, Prof Yash Pal said that the aim of starting Academic Staff Colleges was to enable teachers from various faculties to come together and interact with each other, share their experiences and thus be subsequently enriched. However, the Orientation and Refresher programmes have become linked to promotions and increments, which defeated their very purpose of being started.

In the Valedictory Function Dr. Shyam Tandon, IUCAA said that Universities and Colleges should be made available to the masses. He wanted those assembled to focus on one of the functions of the UGC, that is determining Academic Standards. He said that Education should be made available to the masses. He concluded by saying that those who make it, make it, those who don't, sink!

Prof. Pramod Kale, Dept. of Electronics, Pune university said that there was continuous bifurcation and compartmentalization of education. To illustrate, he gave the example of the Space Programme that Government of Maharashtra wanted to initiate. Surprisingly the committee was unable to locate a single University who would be able to conduct this programme in the manner required. Pune University was shortlisted for the Tele communication part, whereas Nagpur and Mumbai University were selected for the Management and Finance and one of the IIT's for the Technological aspect. He also suggested that the three central agencies, chiefly UGC, AICTE and the Medical Council should come together at one place.

Prof Govind Swaroop, Scientist suggested on the Unification of the three government bodies. He said that what was required was a lot more representation to the local people. He said that the **Freedom Movement should be given Wings.**

Prof. Kamal Singh proposed the vote of thanks and said that there had been extensive discussion on Autonomy and Freedom. She especially appreciated Prof. Ram Takawale's suggestion on networking and a paperless office. She however emphasized the importance of the teacher and teacher-student interactions as the basis of learning.

The meeting ended on the note that we need Autonomy but to what extent needs to be determined. On the question as to whether UGC should exist or not, there was a consensus on one single umbrella of a central body.
