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# UNIVERSITY AND SOCIETY

## ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

Some Ideas from Leading Practitioners  
of Higher Education

(Based on the Conference of Vice-Chancellors of  
Central and State Universities)

*Edited by*  
Prof. Ved Prakash

**University Grants Commission**

Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi - 110002



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ज्ञान-विज्ञान विमुक्तये

**University Grants Commission**  
**New Delhi**

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## PREFACE

Reforms in Higher Education are intensely under discourse amongst the stakeholders of higher education, ranging from the Governments, University leaders and eminent thinkers in the field of education. It hardly needs mention that as most reform initiatives in higher education have to take roots at the university level, the university leadership acquires a significant role in shaping policy planning process at the macro level and in recommending strategies for achieving the targets set. It is in this context that initiatives were launched by the University Grants Commission (UGC) in bringing together Vice-Chancellors of Central and State Universities in the country from March 25-26, 2011 at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi to brainstorm on issues critical to higher education. This was done to ensure that the consultations are not limited to a few but involve the entire leadership of the university system to highlight the critical issues and make insightful contributions for possible approaches for future policy interventions.

This document is collection of some ideas synthesized from the deliberations of leading practitioners of higher education, ideas as they have emerged in the Conference of the Vice-Chancellors of the Central and the State Universities. The deliberations touched a variety of themes ranging from Access, Equity, Engagement & Outcomes; Content and Quality; Research and Innovations; Faculty Development and Inter-University Resource Sharing; India's Global Engagement in Higher Education; Alternative Modes of Delivery of Higher Education; Models of Financing, and Imperatives for Good Governance.



I have ventured to encapsulate the deliberations in this volume with the hope that it becomes a frame of reference for taking the concerns of higher education further towards fructification. The issues and challenges are reflective of the role, particularly in a developing economy the university system has to play in societal transformation.

It is hoped that the managers of higher education will take cognizance of the recommendations, contained in this document, and device suitable plans for their effective implementation.

I am grateful to Shri Kapil Sibal, Hon'ble Minister for Human Resource Development, for being a catalyst in suggesting the need for the discourse and to Ms. Vibha Puri Das, Education Secretary, for providing the valuable support and guidance in planning and coordinating the deliberations. I am also grateful to Shri Sunil Kumar, Additional Secretary, Government of India, for his support and suggestions from time to time.

I wish to place on record the valuable support I have received in the organization of the deliberations by my colleagues in the UGC. I also wish to acknowledge the contributions of many eminent educationists who provided the guidance and academic inputs needed for undertaking such a task and to bring this document to its present shape.

**(Ved Prakash)**  
Chairman (Actg.)  
University Grants Commission

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New Delhi



# University and Society: Issues and Challenges

## SOME IDEAS FROM LEADING PRACTITIONERS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

### 1. BACKGROUND

#### 1.1 Critical Role of Higher Education

Higher education in India is at the core of the developmental challenges facing the society. The challenge of global competitiveness has also been added to other demanding concerns such as access, equity, privatization and internationalization. It is necessary, therefore, to redesign its social functions in terms of building strong university-society linkages, creating and disseminating core values along with skills necessary for coping with the demands of the 21st century, and preparing graduates for a multi-cultural and multi-linguistic workplace settings. Needless to mention that as most reform initiatives in higher education demand changes at the university level, the university leadership acquires paramount importance in shaping the policy planning process at the macro level.

Keeping in view the critical contributions of higher education towards maintaining socio-economic cohesion in the Indian society, the Government of India has initiated wide ranging reforms in the field of higher education. The 11th Five-Year Plan (FYP) initiatives for expansion, inclusion and promotion of excellence in higher education, through a series of measures aimed at revival and rejuvenation of the higher education sector have indeed been remarkable. The massive allocation for this



sector during this period has resulted in setting up of a large number of higher education institutions in the public sector (Central Universities, Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISERs), Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIITs), Schools of Planning and Architecture (SPAs), Colleges etc.). Targeted expansion of participation aimed at equitable access to quality higher education has been no less laudable. As a result, the higher education sector, during the recent past, has undergone significant quantitative and qualitative changes. However, there is a need to further identify and deliberate on key areas of concern in order to convincingly make our way forward. It is time to review our achievements and failures in translating the reform agenda initiated in the 11th FYP period into action. It will not only inform us as to what worked and what did not, but will also provide critical feedback for setting the reform agenda for the 12th FYP.

The critical role of higher education in the development process has gained greater emphasis with the emergence of the notion of "knowledge-based economy". As the world is becoming more and more interconnected and global markets for skills and innovations emerge, it has become crucial for India to expand equal opportunities to the nation's youth to access higher education. Higher education, clearly a major contributor to economic growth and national development, therefore, must address the rights of all citizens to share its benefits. The fact that 'knowledge' is considered an equaliser, calls for expansion of equitable access to and quality of higher education. In other



words, the university system can improve the growth and development of our society by increasing the diversity of its student population, by effectively engaging itself in improving participation of the hitherto underserved segments of our population, that is, women, socio-economically disadvantaged, minorities, etc. in the programmes of higher education.

## **1.2 Imperatives for University Leadership**

It is imperative for the university system to think about the processes it would adopt in integrating intercultural and social dimensions into teaching, research and service delivery. It needs to redesign its social function in terms of building strong university-society linkages, emphasizing and disseminating core national values enshrined in our Constitution, along with skills to cope with the expectation of the 21st century, and preparing graduates for a multi-cultural and multi-linguistic workplace setting. Needless to mention that, as most reform initiatives demand changes at the university level, improving university governance would matter a great deal in improving university effectiveness, particularly in terms of its function as creator of new knowledge.

## **1.3 Need to Reduce Elitist Orientation to Higher Education**

The higher education system in the country has, to a large extent, remained elitist, offering differential access in respect of gender, residence, wealth and social status. Even when the overall participation in higher education is low, its supply has remained stratified (viz., expansion through greater participation of private providers following the market principles). The approach to





expansion of equitable opportunities in higher education also has not changed significantly, even though policy planners talk in terms of alternative delivery mechanisms. The emphasis has always been on the "built it and they will come" approach (i.e., increase supply of higher education to improve equitable access), which though may create opportunity, often may not encourage increased participation of the disadvantaged and the marginalised groups. This concern has to assume centre-stage in all current and future discourse on higher education.

#### **1.4 Output of Secondary Education Critical to Higher Education**

It is also important to look into the kind of a policy framework appropriate for analysis of access, equity and quality in higher education in India. Development of higher education is largely dependent on the output of secondary education as the secondary school sub-sector contributes substantially to access and equity concerns observed at the entry level of the undergraduate courses. Access and equity in secondary education largely determines the level of differentiation in higher education. Increased investment in secondary (which includes higher secondary) education is a necessary condition to expand equitably quality higher education. With the implementation of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, the need for equitable expansion of quality secondary education has also become necessary. The "interventionist approach" by the university and the state can significantly influence and expand opportunities for the underserved by assessing the transition loss from secondary to higher education and recommending strategies to improve this situation, and promoting strategic planning and



management at the university level for its greater engagement with society. Increasing the university efficiency by improving survival rates, quality and relevance of learning must form part of the analytical framework of access, equity and quality. Identifying barriers to access, opportunities, and developing context - specific strategies and action programmes for improving quality and relevance of higher education, therefore, matters in expanding equitable access to and quality of higher education.

### **1.5 Reform Initiatives in the 11th FYP**

Although several reform initiatives have been taken during the 11th FYP period, the challenges of raising the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) target to 15% by 2011/12 and 27% by the end of the 12th FYP period (2016/17), and promoting relevance and excellence in higher education continue to engage the attention of the policy-planners in the country. Some of the reforms initiatives undertaken are:

- Expanding access, particularly to general higher education;
- creating space for non-profitteering private providers in higher education;
- deciding the optimum size of a university (in terms of number of affiliated colleges);
- setting up of Inter-University Centres (IUCs);
- reforming admission, curriculum and assessment procedures with focus on common entrance test;
- restructuring academic programmes;
- universalizing the semester system;



- continuous internal evaluation and assessment, introduction of choice-based credit system;
- mandatory accreditation system and creation of multiple accreditation agencies of unquestioned professionalism;
- restructuring the National Eligibility Test (NET)/State Eligibility Test (SET);
- revamping Academic Staff Colleges (ASCs) and teacher development programmes;
- expansion of research programmes;
- promotion of autonomy and accountability of institutions of higher learning; and
- promoting inclusive policies and programmes in the domain of higher education.

## **1.6 Approach to Proposed Initiatives in the 12th FYP**

On the eve of the 12th FYP, it is important to think differently to address the above-stated development concerns involving a paradigm shift in the approach to reforming higher education. The 12th FYP, therefore, should create space for greater university autonomy and accountability (i.e., encouraging local solutions while retaining a regime of central approval) for expanding equitable access to higher education. This calls for a major shift in the approach of the Central Government/ University Grants Commission (UGC) in providing funding support to the university system. It is time now to move on to build partnerships (Central and State Governments) for addressing emerging issues of



access, equity and quality through an improved programmatic design, rather than the discrete centrally/UGC sponsored schemes. A comprehensive university reform programme needs to be designed and implemented jointly by State and Central Governments for promoting strategic planning and recognising performance at the university level for accessing resources. However, there is a need to identify and deliberate on key areas of concern in order to make our way forward.

## **2. RAISON D'ETRE OF THE CONFERENCE**

It is in this context that the UGC organised a two-day Conference of Vice-chancellors of Central and State Universities from March 25-26, 2011 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi with the overall objective of taking stock of the initiatives undertaken during the 11th FYP period for improving access, equity and quality of higher education, identifying development constraints and making recommendations for policy planning and development interventions during the 12th FYP period. *It is significant to mention that as against the previous practice of limited consultations in providing inputs to the Plan formulation, this Conference provided a major opportunity for all the leaders of the university system to highlight the critical issues and make insightful contributions for possible approaches for future policy interventions.*

### **2.1 Conference Agenda**

The Conference had the following specific objectives:

- (i) To identify development issues, challenges and reform agenda in higher education for the 12th FYP period; and



- (ii) To provide inputs for policy planning and to carry forward the reform process into the 12th FYP period.

## **2.2 Thematic Areas for Deliberation**

The overriding theme of the Conference was "University and Society: Issues and Challenges", as the main purpose of the Conference was to come out with inputs for policy planning and development strategies for making higher education relevant to the contemporary as well as the future needs of our society at large, while making it more inclusive by ensuring enhanced participation of under-served segments of our population. In all, the following eight broad thematic areas had been identified for facilitating discussions during the Conference:

- (i) Access, equity, engagement and outcome;
- (ii) Content and quality;
- (iii) Research and innovations;
- (iv) Faculty development and inter-university resource sharing;
- (v) Internationalization in higher education;
- (vi) Alternative modes of delivery of higher education;
- (vii) Models of financing; and
- (viii) Good governance.

## **2.3 Participation and Mode of Deliberation**

Nearly 250 Vice-Chancellors of Central and State universities, eminent educationists and officials from the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) & UGC and national



level resource organisations participated in the Conference (*Annexure-I*). Besides two plenary sessions, eight parallel technical sessions were devoted to each of the thematic areas in order to come out with specific recommendations for facilitating the design and implementation of reform programmes during the 12th FYP period (*Annexure-II*).

The Hon'ble Minister for Human Resource Development, Shri Kapil Sibal, inaugurated the Conference with a strong emphasis on the need for university autonomy and accountability for addressing the issues of access, equity and relevance during the 12th FYP period. He highlighted the need for introducing collaborative reform programmes (by the State and Central Governments) for the development of higher education in the country. The plenary session was followed by technical sessions for thematic discussions to arrive at concrete recommendations as inputs for policy planning during the 12th FYP. The core issues under each theme were highlighted, scope of deliberations have been documented and specific recommendations of the eight thematic groups have been summarized in the sections that follow.

While delivering the valedictory address, the Hon'ble Minister Shri Kapil Sibal requested the Vice-Chancellors to critically reflect on the recommendations of the Conference and identify those which would be carried out during the 12th FYP period. In view of this mandate, the Vice-Chancellors, therefore, were requested to specify theme-wise recommendations of the Conference that are critical for implementation during the 12th FYP. It is hoped that this would help immensely not only in developing an Approach



Paper on higher education for the 12th FYP but also feed into the agenda of the next meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) Committee on Higher Education.

### **3. MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

Each group had discussed in detail, among others, the key questions of critical concern in their respective areas as contained in the Background Note prepared for the Conference, and came out with specific recommendations. Since the themes of the Conference were cross-cutting, as expected, the recommendations of the Groups were overlapping as they appeared in the minuted deliberations of the Groups as such. Such a repetition has been avoided in documenting the final proceedings of the Conference and the recommendations have been included in the thematic group where they fitted the best.

#### **3.1 Theme: Access, Equity, Engagement & Outcomes**

##### ***(a) Core Issues***

Even though our higher education system is one of the largest in the world, the GER is far below the world average. The national target is to increase the GER to 15% by the end of the 11th FYP period (2011-2012) and 30% by 2020. While this goal requires higher capacity for intake, it also requires steps to improve access to higher education across gender and different social groups, and to bridge the rural-urban divide in order to ensure more equitable outcomes in educational participation. The policy measures and programmes which were aimed at improving access and equity concerns in education in the past have certainly yielded some



results and a large number of students from socially and economically disadvantaged sections are now entering the higher education institutions. However, results show that there are still large disparities across the social and economic groups particularly in enrolment in professional disciplines. Some studies show that despite increasing support to students from the marginalized groups, there is dearth of mentoring inputs for such students resulting in their high rates of drop-out and failures. The following core issues were discussed on this theme:

- The effectiveness of the existing policies and programmes in improving access and equity in the higher education system and measures taken at the institutional or at the Government level to further improve access and equity;
- Measures attempted at the institutional level to support and mentor students from socially and economically marginalized backgrounds;
- Causes and ramifications of a large amount of the enrolment capacity created in the unaided sector remaining unutilized;
- The issue of underutilized capacity in a number of disciplines in public-funded institutions because of such factors as lack of demand, stringent eligibility requirement or greater demand for market-oriented courses;
- Full utilization of the existing enrolment capacity before further expansion; and
- Remedies to improve the situation that although access may have increased, often through a high financial burden on





families, a significant proportion of the graduates do not find employment.

### ***(b) Scope of Deliberations***

Considering the fact that 'access and equity' are cross-cutting themes (strongly linked to themes on quality and financing), they have been looked into within the overall framework of the Indian Constitution (i.e., Articles 38 & 39 mandated the state to work towards reducing inequalities between income, status, facilities and opportunities and build an economic order that does not result in the concentration of wealth and sub serve the common and collective good).

### ***University Information Management System (UIMS)***

The integrity and authenticity of basic statistics about our universities/ institutions of higher learning is an important input for planning and equitable utilisation of our resources. Profiling universities/its affiliated colleges, assessing transition loss from schools to colleges; and identifying the out-of-college youth and barriers to their access are critical for informed policy planning and strategic interventions. The 12th FYP recognises the critical role of information (both at the university and government levels) in evidence-based planning and management of higher education, and accordingly, strengthen UIMS on a priority basis.

### ***Out-reach Programmes***

University-society engagement needs to be increased by expanding outreach programmes of various types (mostly to be designed at



the university level), counselling, diagnostic studies, action research, targeted college preparatory activities/information sharing at the higher secondary level organised by the university in its catchment area may promote access and equity.

### ***Bridging Inequality Gaps***

Policy emphasis during the 12th FYP must focus on state-supported expansion of higher education in terms of expansion and up-gradation of facilities in public-funded institutions and making use of the opportunities of the underutilised spaces and facilities in non-aided institutions, including designing the right kind of Public Private Partnership (PPP) models. The mode of expansion that encourages profiteering should be checked, if not stopped altogether, while also creating enabling institutional environment to encouraging philanthropic support to higher education. As disparities, particularly in respect of participation of Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs), Minorities and Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) are high, the need in the policy planning is to encourage university level interventions to address the root causes of inequality (i.e., variations in the socio-economic status of the target groups). This implies allowing greater flexibility and autonomy at the university level with increased facilities and untied-funding support to plan and implement local specific interventions, for example, increasing funding and empowering universities to provide proper economic support to the disadvantaged groups. The case of Kerala in adopting the strategy of deepening the university level interventions to increase participation (GER around 18%) and reduce disparities is worth



citing in the policy planning process. There should be differential policies to accommodate the needs of infrastructure, teacher and student support services in colleges/universities located in backward and remote rural areas.

### ***Diversification of Courses in Public-Funded Institutions***

In recent years, expansion of higher education has happened in a truncated manner, encouraging growth of unaided professional and technical institutions, without ensuring their quality that has further fuelled disparities in higher education, while doubtedly, increasing the overall opportunities. Moreover, the arts and humanities segment with low labour market pay-offs and high opportunity costs has virtually stagnated. Most of the less privileged groups are found participating in this segment of higher education. The need, therefore, is to diversify courses in public-funded institutions and create work opportunities in the campuses. The need for expanding Community Colleges was felt critical to encourage participation and retention of the disadvantaged groups in higher education. The university/college should assess the social needs and tailor the courses to those needs.

### ***University - Industry Linkages***

The university-industry/labour market linkages continue to be weak with virtual absence of feedback channels and mechanisms for delivering quality and relevant education. Promoting university-labour market feedback by designing an effective system to monitor the outcomes of higher education in relation to the needs of the labour market and society may raise access and equity.



## ***Financing for Better Access and Equity***

Financial crunch is the crux of not being able to meet the diverse needs of the university and colleges, particularly state-funded institutions, to enable them to act effectively to promote access and equity. Besides, with rigid and limited size for student loan, the disadvantaged have little scope to access courses having high market premium. The problem gets multiplied by the low level of current expenditure in higher education (less than 1% of the Gross Development Product (GDP), while the national commitment is to invest 1.5% on higher education out of the total of 6% of the GDP in education. Where from to find funds to implement the expansion and equity related interventions in higher education? The state funding, while diversifying modes of financing higher education, needs to be increased. Efficiency of government subsidies in the form of targeted scholarships, stipends, low fees, student loans, etc. need to be improved. Cost-sharing strategies, to be compatible with improved access and equity, must be accompanied by measures which remove financial barriers to admission and retention, especially for the disadvantaged groups. Measures must be initiated for effective student financial aid system, need-based grants (particularly to state universities and colleges in remote rural areas), loan schemes to compensate for the unequal educational opportunities, preferably from the secondary school level onwards.

### ***(c) Recommendations***

In respect of sustaining access, equity, engagement and outcomes, the following emerged as the major recommendations,



of the Conference:

- Strengthening of the University Information Management System (UIMS) for informed decision making and promoting evidence-based planning.
- Inclusive policy to focus on state-supported expansion and upgradation of facilities in existing government-funded institutions of higher education and optimum utilization of spaces and facilities of unaided institutions through appropriate Public Private Partnership (PPP).
- Greater flexibility and autonomy with increased facilities and untied funding support to remove disparities and to increase participation of SCs, STs, OBCs, Minorities, Physically Challenged and EWS through local and university interventions.
- Strengthening of colleges and universities in terms of physical and human resources, located in backward and remote rural areas through differential policies.
- Equity measures to compensate for unequal educational opportunities through loan schemes.

### **3.2 Theme: Content and Quality**

#### ***(a) Core Issues***

The content and quality of higher education continues to be a major area of concern. In spite of several initiatives by the UGC and the universities, the content and quality of higher education still presents a lot of challenges for further improvement. Quality



of teaching and research is closely associated with continuous development of educational infrastructure, instructional design process, quality of curriculum, competence and motivation of the faculty and reforms in the examination system. The process of curricular design and implementation needs greater attention. The method of induction of competent teachers in our universities and colleges needs revamping. The following core issues were discussed on this theme:

### ***(a) Curriculum***

- Alternate approaches being attempted by the Universities for development and revision of curricula and syllabi;
- The degree of flexibility in developing curricula for various programmes of study keeping in view the needs of the society, industry and the market; the desirable balance between the disciplinary focus and inter-disciplinary orientation;
- Various possible approaches in the choice of options of courses across faculty and departments including inter-university mobility through credit transfer; and
- Approaches for integrating campus-based and field-based learning.

### ***(b) Instructional Design and Assessment & Evaluation***

- Innovative strategies being adopted by the university faculty in curricular transaction which is worthy of wider dissemination; and



- A desirable strategy for defining credits and their equivalence to facilitate credit transfer across institutions and to define equivalence of qualifications.

### ***(c) Infrastructure Facilities***

- Need for benchmarking standards and norms for infrastructure facilities (including classrooms, laboratories, libraries and other physical facilities, etc.) for different type of institutions of higher learning and modalities needed for improvement in this regard; and
- Nature and scope of sharing of facilities across institutions of higher learning.

### ***(b) Scope of Deliberations***

The past five years have witnessed heightened interest in higher education and its role in nation building. Major emphasis has been put on access, equity and excellence. These are indeed very appropriate and worthy goals but their achievement requires, besides additional resources, a strong desire to implement long-delayed reforms in the higher education system. While intellectual freedom has to be the bedrock of a University, parameters of accountability also need to be spelled out and performance of the faculty needs to be open to scrutiny. Institutional autonomy has to be wedded with an institutional culture that puts high premium on creating new knowledge and imparting knowledge in the most creative manner for enhancing the quality of higher education.



## ***Perspective Plan***

All the universities seeking UGC funding should seriously examine the 'Action Plan for Academic and Administrative Reforms' and come up with perspective plan.

## ***Semester System and Credits***

The UGC could initiate development of model curricula for each subject (discipline-wise) with model course materials/combinations and recommend quality learning resources with diversified evaluation strategies for universities and colleges to refer to and adopt as per their requirement. The semester system as well as credits should be implemented across all Central and State universities without any further delay. Credit should be clearly defined and credit transfer among educational institutions should be facilitated. The period between examination and declaration of results should be compressed. Every undergraduate course should be backed by appropriate text books, reading materials, assignments, quizzes and e-materials, for digital learning inputs.

## ***Mandatory Websites***

Every university should have a website which should be constantly updated. The website should include information on all teachers and their research activities and courses taught should be available on the university/college/institution website and should be updated every year before the start of the admission process. All the information related to admission policy, courses and curricula, inputs and expected outputs of each course should also





be displayed on the university website. It should further be mandatory that courses are revised at least every three years. Every course described on the website should provide the date on which it was revised.

### ***Assessment of Teachers and Courses***

Mandatory assessment of teachers and courses by students can go a long way towards quality improvement. Similarly, assessment of university/college/institution administration by teachers should also improve the functioning of the university. These assessments should be appraised by an Advisory Committee of the university and appropriate follow up action should be taken in the spirit of improving individuals' performance and the quality of the system.

### ***Entrance Examination***

Currently, every university/institution tends to have its own entrance examination. The quality of these examinations is not monitored. There should be a few well organized national level examinations and universities should be encouraged to subscribe to these. The Central Universities should take the lead in this regard.

### ***Assessment and Accreditation***

External assessment of colleges/universities/institutions is a must. Major parameters should be teaching standards, course content, research achievements, books and patents, provision of information, student evaluation of faculty, achievements of faculty, academic standards, infrastructure and facilities like instrumentation centres,



computer centres, etc., affirmative action and sports. While the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) (or any other body) should do macro-level institutional evaluation, the micro-level evaluation and improvement of teaching-learning processes and related aspects should be carried out by each institution for which NAAC should develop performance parameters and guidelines. To incentivise reforms and performance, colleges/universities/institutions with high level of performance should be recognized by NAAC (or similar body) and provided additional funding by UGC/MHRD to achieve global standards in research and teaching.

### ***Resource Allocation***

Existing resource allocation in the schemes of the UGC for upgrading infrastructure and teaching in colleges and universities in rural, remote and educationally backward areas is inadequate and more resources should be allocated to this activity. In general, up-gradation of affiliated colleges should be a major activity in the 12th FYP.

### ***Professional Development and Quality Assurance***

Internal Quality Assurance Cells (IQAC) should be strengthened in every institution/university/college and a yearly report should be posted on the website of the concerned institution. There should be systematic and continuous training on pedagogy for all teachers of colleges and universities, incorporating student-centric and participatory methods as part of continuing professional development and quality assurance. Training on instrumentation,



practical work, field work and ICT tools should be given due importance.

### ***Performance of State Universities***

State universities require serious attention and support to improve their quality of teaching and research. Central government must support State universities through additional grants. This support should be in two forms - those that have excellence should be provided additional funding for reaching higher standards, those that are in remote or under-developed areas should be provided additional funding for improving standards.

### ***Dual Degree Programmes***

Four year dual degrees, as for example - B.A. (Hons.) in Economics and Mathematics, B.Sc. (Hons.) in Biology and Maths or 4 year B.S. degrees as suggested by the Science Academics be started to encourage inter-disciplinary approaches to frontier areas of learning, in selected colleges. To begin with, autonomous colleges should switch to 4-year integrated degree programmes. Meritorious students with 4-year degree may be admitted directly to Ph.D. programmes with one year course work for which they should earn credits and grades. Another way to implement interdisciplinary approach would be to have undergraduate degree with a Major subject and a Minor subject. Also to prepare effective teachers at the school level - 4-year B.Sc.- B.Ed. and 4-year B.A. B.Ed. degrees initiated as an integrated model of professionalizing teacher education and should be offered in the Universities / Colleges.



## ***Student Support for Academics***

Research institutes in science, technology and social sciences should be encouraged to run summer workshops for undergraduate students. Students should be able to earn credits for these. Special remedial classes should be organized by the colleges/universities for students admitted under affirmative action and for other interested students. Information on remedial classes should be displayed on the college/university website. These classes should be included in the workload of the teacher. A National Education Communication Network could facilitate inter-university teacher exchange, interactive learning, resource sharing, faculty and staff development and research and student evaluation.

## ***Affiliated Colleges***

The number of affiliated colleges with any university should not be more than 50. Current numbers in many cases are too high. New Central Universities should not affiliate any colleges. All the new Central Universities should consider starting undergraduate courses preferably 4 year's Bachelors' courses, to set quality benchmarks in undergraduate education and to prepare young undergraduates of proven value to post-graduate education.

## ***(c) Recommendations***

In respect of Content and Quality in higher education, the following emerged as the major recommendations, of the Conference:

- Evolving a Perspective Plan by each university for Academic



and Administrative Reforms and implementation by all universities.

- Each university to have a website containing updated information on admission policy, courses and curricula, faculty inputs, faculty profile, research specializations of each faculty and department.
- Adoption of semester and choice-based credit system with well-defined policies of credit transfer to be implemented across all central and state universities.
- Increased use of technology for expanding equitable and quality tertiary education.
- Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in university administration and governance, teaching and learning process, and examination system.
- Addressing the issue of shortage of faculty. Incentive policies to be introduced to attract and retain the quality faculty.

### **3.3 Theme: Research and Innovations**

#### ***(a) Core Issue***

The issues of research and innovation need to be addressed at various levels, viz., (i) the way the research programmes such as M. Phil and Ph. D are organized and carried out; (ii) time and energy devoted by the faculty in carrying out independent research projects (iii) the outcome and quality of researches undertaken by the faculty and researchers; and (iv) integrating research with teaching. There is a need to enhance the



involvement of faculty working in the post-graduate and research departments, and colleges to engage themselves in regular research; presently they are predominantly engaged in classroom teaching. The initiatives taken by the UGC in this direction need to be supported and supplemented by creating appropriate mechanisms and structures in universities and colleges so that teachers could be motivated to undertake research projects, especially on themes which can improve teaching-learning processes.

Institutions that have had a long and reasonably good academic culture of research and innovations too have been facing serious procedural problems such as lack of administrative support, delay in clearance of research proposals, timely release of funds and institutional monitoring of research needs. Most of our universities need to strengthen the support for Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) related initiatives in order to encourage successful patenting as well as innovation in teaching and research.

The following core issues were discussed on this theme:

- Motivating factors to enhance research activities in an institution; kind of initiatives that could be helpful for this purpose;
- Scope for enhancing the participation of a large number of university departments and colleges in advanced research, including interface with university and industry;
- Kind of policies and mechanisms that could help to strengthen the abilities to avail of the UGC initiatives for research, including elimination of procedural bottlenecks;



- Efficient methods to make IPR initiatives more pervasive in the higher education institutions; and
- Evolving the norms, standards and regulations to ensure the quality of the research degrees offered by the university-system in different disciplines.

### ***(b) Scope of Deliberations***

Keeping in view the critical role of research and innovations in empowering our nation to acquire competitive edge in an interconnected world, the group deliberated on the following concerns to promote research and innovation in Indian universities:

#### ***Fillip to Research and Innovations***

A budget in each FYP for individual university should be allocated for research and innovations. The decision to fund the research of the faculty members should be made at the university level. To motivate the new and younger faculty, a provision of 'Start-up Fund' should be initiated and institutionalized. For motivating the faculty members, Research and Development (R&D) Project guidelines should be made investigator friendly. Travel grant for students/Ph. D scholars for undertaking short term visits in the country or abroad may be provided for training, capacity building, collaborative research and for presenting papers in seminars and conferences.

#### ***Specialization-Oriented IUCs***

More speciality-oriented Inter-University Centres (IUCs) may be created, particularly in view of the enormous benefits presently



accruing to the faculty/scientists from the existing IUCs. Provision of "Central Instrumentation Facility' catering to all the faculties should be made. To maintain the instruments and their running costs, a Corpus Fund with the support of UGC may be created in each university. A data bank of all the major equipment may be maintained at the university level and shown on university web page to enable collaborations and for optimal utilization by all the stake holders. An IUC for informal knowledge systems pertaining to cultures, communities, heritages, endangered languages, etc. should be set up by the UGC.

### ***Appointment System***

There is a need to formalize the concept of Joint Appointment System between universities and national laboratories. There is also need to enhance the present strength of about 150,000 full time scientists by at least 3-fold, i.e., 450,000 over a reasonable time frame.

### ***Identification of Research Thrusts***

Thrust areas at the national level should be identified in both theoretical and experimental sciences in all disciplines. Priority should be accorded to research projects for funding in these thrust areas on mission mode. In a major shift in policy paradigm, co-location of Research Labs/Institutions in the University system ought to be encouraged.

### ***Innovation Clusters / Innovation Incubators***

University Innovation Clusters should be set up in all geographical





locations with the university acting as a nodal point of such a cluster, with a view to building an innovation network with industry, other universities and R & D Labs. This would ensure optimum use of human and infrastructural resource. An Innovation Incubator should be established to create the necessary linkages between the university, relevant local/national industry, research labs. / Institutions, Civil Society and the Government. The funding for such initiatives on creating clusters and incubators be realized through PPP. For universities/institutions located in remote/rural/less developed areas special steps should be taken to develop their human resource and infrastructural capacities. These steps may include 'mentoring' by reputed National Institutions/Labs./Industry/Individual, etc.

A concerted and collective effort may be made by universities and research institutions located in various geographical regions to access, coordinate and develop cross border resources and knowledge pools. Measures like incentive networking with the cross border academic and research institutions and exchange of scholars, professionals and experts could be undertaken in order to facilitate the same. To encourage university-industry partnership, adequate measures should be taken including fiscal incentives.

### ***Enhancing National Professorships***

The existing "ENCORE" scheme of UGC should be further strengthened. In addition to the existing provisions (approx.1,000) National Professorships of Eminence (to make use of expertise of people of Indian origin to contribute teaching and research) may be created and implemented.



## ***Intellectual Property Rights***

An Intellectually Property Rights (IPR) Cell should be established in each university. A consortium of IPR firms be created to advise the faculty and the students on filing of patents in different disciplines and making them aware of copyright issues. Provision of generous support for filing patents by students, scholars and faculty be made either at the institution level or by funding agencies such as UGC/DST/CSIR/ICMR/DBT.

## ***Plagiarism-free Outputs***

In order to ensure quality of research/intellectual output, best practices for citation must be followed. All written and oral information should be properly cited. Appropriate steps such as pre-screening of thesis/ research manuscripts should be taken to ensure plagiarism-free output. UGC could be repository of knowledge in terms of all the theses and their abstracts, project reports, etc. And the details be made available online on the UGC website.

## ***Issues of Critical National Concern***

A conscious and substantive initiative must be designed and undertaken to address the issues of critical national importance like climate change, natural resource management, disaster management and national security in a collective and integrated framework. This would call for strong and comprehensive coordinated collaborations among the national, regional and local institutions.



## ***Broadband Connectivity***

A long-term and far-reaching intervention is required to transform the quality and scale of connectivity including broad-band services that would reach the remotest geographical entity and educational institutions.

### ***(c) Recommendations***

In respect of Research and Innovations, the following emerged as the major recommendations of the Conference:

- Earmarking of budget allocation for research and innovations for individual universities.
- Establishment of specialization-oriented Inter-University Centres (IUCs).
- Establishment of Innovation Incubators to create necessary linkages between the university, relevant local/national industry, Research labs, civil society, through PPP mode.

## **3.4 Theme: Faculty Development and Inter-University Resource Sharing**

### ***(a) Core Issues***

Faculty development is central to the issues of quality and excellence in higher education. In order to ensure continuous flow of talented and qualified teachers to meet the needs of expansion and consolidation of higher education, a special drive may be needed to attract and incentivize talent to pursue teaching and research as a career. Post-induction, the faculty needs to continuously update themselves for the new knowledge and skills



is a must. The initiatives taken by the UGC through setting up of Academic Staff Colleges for conducting refresher courses and orientation programmes have to be reviewed with respect to their roles, functions and infrastructure facilities. The academic performance audit needs to be further strengthened. The following core issues were discussed on this theme:

- Possible ways of addressing the critical faculty shortages in the short term and medium term;
- Efficient and workable approaches to faculty development, improvement and incentives;
- Successful approaches institutionalized on sharing inter-institutional faculty resources; need for streamlining national policies for faculty exchange; and
- The nature of minimum facilities and working ambience to attract and retain competent faculty in universities.

### ***(b) Scope of Deliberations***

The importance of quality teaching and its requisite orientation needed for the faculty, particularly, in the context of curriculum and research was reiterated by the Group. Meeting the shortfalls in teacher deployment and faculty development were considered critical both for improving access and quality of higher education in the country. The following core issues were discussed on this theme:

### ***Searching and Nurturing Younger Talent***

A search process to recruit young faculty may be instituted



providing start-up research grant and optimized infrastructure facility. Special efforts should be made to recruit reputed faculty as Professors as this will have tremendous multiplier effect, besides instituting Young Faculty Awards for outstanding faculty. Research Students may be assigned teaching jobs as is the practice in other countries and they may be given teaching experience certificate for the same. Post-Doctoral Fellowships supported by the UGC should be introduced.

### ***Service Conditions***

Uniform rules and regulations regarding retirement age benefits for all universities in India be made mandatory. Faculty selection through a pool selected by the UGC Faculty Recharge Programme could be made use of by the universities deficient in faculty resources. Nationwide accreditation of faculty should be initiated. Nationwide registry of faculty at all levels be made. National Eligibility Test needs to be rationalized with restructuring of curricula. Data base of qualified unemployed potential teachers should be created.

### ***Faculty Development Initiatives***

Selection of Nodal Centre of Excellence for collaborative research region wise and nation-wide may be created. Faculty Development Grants for outstanding Departments for a period of 10 years from the UGC may be introduced. Adjunct Faculty Programme of the UGC for attachment of foreign faculty and from other institutions may be introduced. Short term training programme for teachers in areas such as pedagogy, research methodology, teaching



learning practices, management of research, etc. may be started. Consultancy by faculty needs to be promoted.

### ***National Knowledge Network***

National Knowledge Network to augment classroom teaching may be introduced. Sharing of lectures by eminent faculty and course delivery through IT connectivity and NKN may be promoted. This would enhance academic productivity. Networking Centres between Universities/Research institutions to develop cross disciplinary perspectives may be established. Mobility of teachers may be promoted through clusters of neighbouring Institutions. Database for resource sharing amongst the universities using NKN and INFLIBNET may be created.

### ***Extending Scope of IUCs***

The IUCs of the UGC - three in the Research and three in the Services Area are already functional. IUCs have succeeded in promoting Inter University resources, sharing of resources and achieving synergy with universities with knowledge generation. There is a need to promote such IUCs particularly in areas of Life Sciences, Earth Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, Humanities & Social Sciences and Medical Sciences.

### ***Review ASCs***

ASCs have served useful purpose in the Faculty Development. With changing time the need is to review ASCs and to restructure ASCs in terms of augmenting research and teaching skills. The nomenclature of ASCs may be changed faculty development



centres. Induction course for all freshly recruited faculty should be conducted immediately after recruitment. The syllabus of orientation courses should be standardized all over India.

### **(c) Recommendations**

In respect of faculty development and inter-university resource sharing, the following emerged as the major recommendations of the Conference:

- Introduction of faculty exchange programs between prominent universities and universities located in remote areas.
- Introduction of Faculty-Student mentorship programmes to facilitate integration of students, academically and socially.
- Creation of Indian Education Service (IES) to maintain quality of faculty and to bring diversity in profile of universities.
- Development of Networking Centres between universities and research institutions to promote cross disciplinary perspectives.

## **3.5 Theme: Internationalisation in Higher Education**

### **(a) Core Issues**

There is an increasing realization that generation of new knowledge is a major concern for which university-system stands, and this can be better achieved by inter-disciplinarily, international networking and exchange of ideas between students, scholars and institutions. The quality of teaching and research within Indian higher education institutions can be further promoted through diverse strategies of collaboration within India and abroad. This will



facilitate exposure to different cultures, branches of learning and create understanding of society and polity of different nations. It will also enhance both the physical and academic infrastructure and resources of educational institutions in India.

Internationalization in higher education has acquired a new dimension in our higher education discourse. There is a felt need to nurture a partnership between our academic institutions and universities around the world to develop prestigious linkages. However, at present, there are various regulatory and financial issues that need to be addressed to successfully internationalize higher education system without compromising with the national objectives of nation building and modernization. Internationalization in higher education is a two way process: within India and outside India. Within the former, internationalization implies: *Diversity of students including foreign students; Presence of international faculty; Collaborative research; Information and Communication Technology; Setting up of branch/offshore campuses of foreign universities; Programmatic collaboration which can have exchange of curricula, teachers, teaching-learning and evaluation practices.* Outside India, internationalization implies: *Students going to study abroad at all levels of higher education; Outflow of faculty and researchers, professionals; Setting up of branch campuses of Indian institutions abroad.*

However, there are various regulatory, financial and administrative constraints. At present, there is no regulation to enable the entry of foreign universities as the degree conferring authority vests with the Universities to be established under an Act. Even if the





Foreign Education Providers Bill enables foreign universities to make an entry into India, the regulations pertaining to them need to be clearly spelt out. However, with regard to programmatic collaborations, issues relating to different modes of collaboration and award of degrees need to be clearly articulated. On the financial front, Indian universities need to be provided funds to create facilities of academic collaborations and the necessary physical infrastructure.

At the Government of India level, visa policies and procedures need to be streamlined. An issue of greater importance is the motivation and receptivity of the different stakeholders particularly the faculty in the Indian universities. While there may be various arguments for and against the different modes of delivery and practices of internationalization, the Vice Chancellors may have their views so as to create policy facilitation as well as a framework for planning. The following core issues were discussed on this theme:

- The scope and extent of attracting foreign students for higher education in India; kind of programmes and facilities can help this process;
- Opportunities and constraints in inducting foreign faculty of either Indian or foreign origin to our higher education institutions;
- Utilizing the potential of ICT for encouraging collaborative teaching and research;
- The major pull and push factors in the international migration of Indian students and faculty; and



- Setting up of branch campuses of Indian institutions abroad to help in internationalization process.

### ***(b) Scope of Deliberations***

The nomenclature "Internationalization in Higher Education" was questioned and it was suggested that "International Cooperation" or "India's global engagement in Higher Education" could be used instead. Besides, questions were raised on whether Indian Universities were ready for internationalization with regard to both their physical and academic infrastructure. The Indian Universities were bound by territorial jurisdiction which needed to be phased out if student and faculty mobility was to be achieved and diversity was to be encouraged. A model of 'hubs and hinterland' was referred to for empowering existing Indian Universities. The following core issues were discussed on this theme:

#### ***Accreditation Mechanism***

All universities in the country may be required to go for compulsory accreditation. There should be multiplicity of accrediting bodies and their credibility should be acceptable.

#### ***Faculty Shortage***

The issue of faculty shortages need to be addressed on an urgent basis. Further, faculty had to be provided continuous opportunities to upgrade their qualifications and knowledge base.

#### ***Implications of Establishing Foreign Universities***

If foreign universities began functioning in India, poaching of



faculty from Indian Universities, for some time, was going to be a big issue adding to the problem of shortage of faculty faced by Indian universities. It would be crucial to improve the quality of our own higher education institutions and empower our existing institutions in the country to arrest brain drain. This would help retain Indian students as well as attract foreign students to India. The "dynamic conflict of interest" between the developing and the developed countries also needed to be understood and analysed properly in this context. The distinction between higher education for better human capital and for better trade is to be underlined. There is scepticism about good quality foreign universities actually coming to India to set-up campuses. A reasonable proportion of the profit may be allowed to be repatriated. Even if the foreign universities did come to India, it would be necessary to provide a level-playing field for both Indian and foreign universities. Issues pertaining to fee structure, faculty salaries, curriculum to be followed and affirmative action policies were some of the areas in which discrepancies were apprehended.

### ***'Navratna' Departments***

The idea of 'navratna' departments in the universities may also be introduced like 'navratna' universities to promote outstanding departments of excellence.

### ***Arrangements for Tie-Up with Foreign Institutions***

Indian universities should be encouraged to engage with foreign universities for tie-ups between departments, for faculty exchanges, student exchanges and so on. All Memorandum of Understandings



(MoUs), however, to be signed by Indian universities with foreign universities and departments of good standing in their own countries have to be done on equal terms and on the basis of reciprocity. The issues of regional imbalances and socio-economic inequality should be critically examined in the context of internationalisation in higher education.

### ***Transfer Credit System***

It is necessary to move to a transfer credit system to enable mobility of students across different universities. This is required to happen at two levels; (a) between Indian Universities within the country; and (b) between Indian Universities and foreign Universities.

### ***Apprehensions***

Every Indian university need to have a nodal office to deal with foreign students as well as the foreign universities. It is also required to collect information about foreign universities so that all information could be available to the university and its departments at one single window. Research done in collaboration with foreign universities or within the campuses of foreign universities that might be set up in India raise questions about patents and the possible erosion of indigenous knowledge. Proper safeguards need to be institutionalised. There was a strong feeling that foreign universities would offer only those courses which would have commercial returns, e.g., professional and technical courses. In the process, social sciences and humanities would suffer. Hence, foreign universities coming to



India should be asked to provide holistic programmes. Steps need to be taken to streamline and rationalize visa regulations to facilitate the smooth entry of selected students from abroad.

### ***Applying ICT***

ICT needs to be extensively used for online admissions, testing, communications with applicants and also for academic use. For this, bandwidth needs to be increased and strengthened.

### ***National Testing Norms***

The quality of foreign students entering Indian Universities needs to be tested through online entrance examinations which could be patterned along SAT, GRE, GMAT, etc. It is necessary to establish equivalence of degrees and diplomas etc. so that these are recognized abroad and vice-versa. This may facilitate both further education and employment. Mechanisms can also be developed to establish reciprocal programmes for undergraduate students spending one semester in foreign universities and also organize dual degrees with foreign universities.

### ***(c) Recommendations***

In respect of internationalization of higher education, the following emerged as the major recommendations of the Conference:

- Internationalization of Indian universities by augmenting physical and academic infrastructure.
- All universities and colleges to go in for compulsory accreditation.



- Introduction of credit transfer system at national level for student mobility.
- MoUs between foreign and Indian universities to be encouraged to enable faculty and student exchange.
- Equivalence of Indian and foreign degrees to be established.

### **3.6 Theme: Alternative Mode of Delivery of Higher Education**

#### ***(a) Core Issues***

At present, 18 to 20 per-cent of enrolment in higher education is in the programmes offered by the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) and State Open Universities. However, there is a substantial number of students who are enrolled in various correspondence courses with the State Universities and the Central Universities. The Distance Education Council (DEC) is authorized to regulate the standards of distance education programmes run by the IGNOU and the State Open Universities. The correspondence courses offered by the State and the Central universities are regulated by the universities concerned.

There is an opportunity to exploit the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode, particularly with the advances in technology. This will increase access and the reach of the institutions to all corners of India. This mode of delivery may provide enormous opportunities of learning to those who have missed the opportunities for formal education because of various reasons. It may also provide opportunities to those who are already employed and seek to enhance their qualifications. However, the perceptions about the



quality of programmes under ODL to be at par with the regular courses where face to face teaching is used need to be convincingly tackled. With the advances in ICT, the boundary between face-to-face and ODL modality is getting blurred. While there should be an attempt to use online teaching modes in the face-to-face programmes, similar opportunities should also be an integral part of ODL programmes to derive optimum advantage in learning achievement. The following core issues were discussed on this theme:

- The credits earned through the ODL; modalities to accommodate in the face-to-face learning;
- Identification of programmes which are more amenable for ODL than others;
- Best models available for development and delivery of e-content for various levels of courses; and
- Special mechanisms are required for monitoring the quality of programmes offered through the ODL modality in different institutions (Open Universities, State Universities, State Institutions etc.).

### ***(b) Scope of Deliberations***

Higher education in India is at the cross roads of various reforms and there is an urgent imperative to seek means of enhancing the GER. While the establishment of new universities is on the anvil, seeking to strengthen alternative modes of delivery of higher education is equally important. Open & Distance Learning (ODL) is now becoming mainstream. The inherent nature of ODL



comprising of flexibility, modularity and addressing target issues of social inequality, gender disparities makes it a feasible tool for enhancing access. Further programmes available in the modular and credit system in ODL institutions could be extended to conventional universities as well. As such, alternative modes such as ODL and e-learning can contribute significantly towards the goal of expansion higher education in the country.

The following core issues were discussed on this theme:

### ***Blurring Boundaries between Formal and ODL Systems***

In consonance with the requirements of new modes of delivery of higher education, the governance structures of these universities will have to be articulated differently. In an ideal situation, the focus should be on delivery of quality higher education independent of the mode which means that the borders between "conventional", dual mode and ODL should get blurred. All universities should be enabled to use technology to its fullest extent to offer programmes both through face-to-face mode and through technology enabled means.

### ***Norms and Standards in ODL***

The Distance Education Council (DEC) may be an autonomous body to coordinate standards in Open & Distance Learning. It may function through linkages with various professional bodies for accreditation purposes. While there are many private players in distance education and on-line learning, the State Open Universities should be supported financially in order to deliver quality programmes. The investment should be both in faculty development and training, curriculum development and deployment of technology.





All programmes are amenable to Open & Distance Learning practices. To ensure quality, benchmarks will have to be identified for activating Study Centres which have the requisite, physical and human infrastructure. In general, institutions may be encouraged to offer general degree programmes through alternative modes and wherever specific/high end requirements are needed, the criteria will have to be specified.

### ***Accreditation of ODL System***

ODL can be on a strong wicket only if it is played well and its processes are comprehensively addressed. A strong accreditation mechanism which emphasises on internal quality checks and external reviews is important. Student Satisfaction Surveys, and outcomes assessments may become minimal requirements. Some important criteria for which key performance indicators are to be worked out for quality evaluation are: Curriculum, Pedagogy, Technology Infrastructure, Student Support Services, Credit transfer and Governance.

In respect of Alternative Modes of Delivery of Higher Education, the following emerged as the major recommendations of the Conference:

- Use of ICT in further development and growth of conventional and distance mode of higher learning to reach the remote and less developed segments of population areas.
- Promotion of technical, vocational and professional education through ODL with hands-on-experience in AICTE approved institutions.



- Introduction of credit transfer system between and among the conventional and ODL systems for meaningful convergence between the two modes.

### **3.7 Theme: Models of Financing Higher Education**

#### ***(a) Core Issues***

Public finance for higher education increased significantly in the 11th Five-Year Plan. However, it is much less than the normative figure of 1.5% of GDP (Centre and States) recommended by the various Commissions and Committees set up to reform Indian education from time to time. It is also inadequate in relation to the expansion needs of the higher education sector. Private finance has also come into higher education to some extent in the last two decades but this is mainly concentrated in a few areas and is principally market driven. The following core issues were discussed on this theme:

- The role of public financing of higher education; Mechanism for provision of funds to public institutions to promote its objectives and whether in the form of block grants or improving the existing method and whether funding be norm-based, that is, on the basis of enrolment, inclusion, and outcomes;
- Examining the practice of Central Government funding through the UGC followed currently to State Universities, affiliated colleges, aided and unaided institutions;
- Implication of the practices the Central and State institutions are currently following to augment their revenues which



include self financing courses, education through distance mode, fees and charges collected from affiliated colleges, etc.;

- Alternatives which the Universities and Colleges can explore to augment their existing resources with due regards to autonomy, equity and efficiency;
- Enhancing possibilities of State Governments to contribute more towards financing higher education;
- The current constraints in attracting private investment in higher education; increasing and maximizing philanthropic investments in higher education;
- The specific models of public-private partnership that can be considered either in the context of publicly or privately managed higher education institutions; and
- The existing models of financing subserve the overall balanced growth of the higher education system including inter-disciplinary balance, basic and applied disciplines; needs to meet the goals of access, equity and quality.

### ***(b) Scope of Deliberations***

Financing higher education and funding mechanisms are the most crucial aspects for development of higher education. Although the demand for higher education has increased enormously over the years, the central and state governments' financial support to institutions of higher education has declined in real terms. However, there is around a 9-fold increase in the 11th FYP



allocation compared to the 10th FYP grants to higher education. New models of financing higher education based on well established norms and improvements in the existing system of funding by the central and state governments, therefore, are critical development concerns in higher education. The following core issues were discussed on this theme:

### ***Augmenting Public Funding***

The public financing of higher education needs to be augmented to 1.5% of GDP as recommended by various Commissions & Committees on higher education. The UGC should evolve a new funding pattern for Central Government funds through UGC and the State Government funds to universities and colleges based on objective and transparent norms based funding under three broad categories: (a) minimum substantive grants on mandatory basis to all universities based on objective criteria; (b) provision of maintenance grants to all universities based on transparent and objective criteria; and (c) performance linked incentive grants based on assessable indicators to be made available as per their eligibility.

### ***Norms for Grants***

The basic norms for providing minimum substantive mandatory grants to universities and colleges may include inter-alia:

- (a) Student enrolment pro-rata basis;
- (b) Adherence to Government of India reservation policy;
- (c) Student-Teacher ratio;



- (d) Teacher-Non teacher ratio;
- (e) On-campus support services grants like teaching-learning-evaluation infrastructure, Library cum e-resources, hostels, play ground and sports facilities, counseling, guidance & placement services, etc. and
- (f) Off-campus support services grants for extracurricular activities like NSS/NCC/NSO and extension activities.

### ***Criteria for Maintenance Grants***

The criteria for maintenance grants for universities/colleges may be based on:

- a) Student strength and the institutions' stage of development;
- b) Expenditure on teaching and non-teaching staff;
- c) Per-student annual expenditure at UG/PG/Research and other levels;
- d) Per-student expenditure on libraries, hostels, estates, examinations, administrative and management activities; and
- e) Fellowships, scholarships, free-ship and other student support systems offered by the institution.

### ***Performance-based Incentive Grants***

Norms for performance based incentive grants may include:

- a) Inclusiveness in excess of the reservation percentage of central/state governments;
- b) Fee subsidies/scholarships/free-ships/funding, support for meritorious students at the Institutional level;



- c) Filling up of all teacher vacancies;
- d) Introduction of e-governance and digital library with e-resources;
- e) Strict adherence to all UGC/Statutory Council Regulations;
- f) Regular faculty development programmes;
- g) Academic productivity;
- h) Administrative & financial accountability as evidenced by audit reports; and
- i) Matching grants for resources mobilized by the institution.

### ***Review of Pattern of Faculty Support***

The present practice of faculty support only for the Plan period and insisting the State Governments to take over the responsibility of funding after the Plan period involves practical difficulties and also creating uncertainty in the future of the tenure of such faculty sanctioned by the UGC. The UGC may adopt a system of block grants of recurring nature in respect of faculty support of the State Universities or institutions not fully funded by the Central Government through UGC. That is, a fixed percentage of all faculty salary of the University concerned (at least 15%) be paid on an annual basis in lieu of the present system of supporting only the sanctioned posts for the Plan period only.

### ***Fee Structure***

The Central and State Universities be statutorily required to adopt revision of fee structure payable by the students by at least 10% for every three year period.



## ***Provision of Section 12 B of the UGC Act***

All Government and Government aided Colleges affiliated to various Central and State Universities, after getting authenticated intimation from the State Government concerned, should be automatically brought under Section 12 B of the UGC Act making them eligible for central government grants through UGC. A similar procedure can also be adopted for all the new public Universities established by the Act of the State Governments. A large number of Government and Government aided Colleges and some of the State Universities are deprived of UGC basic grants and other scheme based support for want of the technical requirement of 12 B recognition of the UGC. This creates a vicious circle in becoming eligible for the UGC grant. On the contrary, the Central Universities/Institutions become eligible for the UGC grant from the very date of inception without the precondition of 12 B which really enables the Central Universities to take off without facing difficulties. All the Government and Government aided institutions be given UGC assistance without insistence on 12 B recognition as a precondition. Under certain schemes of UGC, a matching grant from the college management or State government is insisted upon. This condition is easily fulfilled by the private aided colleges. However, Government colleges find it difficult to utilize the grants from such schemes due to procedural and bureaucratic delays on the part of the State Governments. The government colleges be exempted from the condition of prior sanction of matching grants for those schemes.

All the State Governments be advised to convert the self financing courses offered by State Universities, Government and Government



aided colleges as government approved courses with appropriate aid and make the faculty members attached to the self financing courses as regular faculty subject to the condition that these institutions strictly adhere to Government approved fee structure for these courses as well as the reservation policy of the respective State Government.

### ***Channelling of Funds to Affiliated Colleges***

The channelling of the Central Government fund to the affiliated Colleges be made directly to the respective institutions giving them necessary powers to utilize the grant upon intimation to the concerned State Government and the affiliating University. The monitoring of the implementation of the schemes for which funding has been made could be undertaken by the respective affiliating Universities.

### ***Models of PPP***

Follow-up steps may be taken in introducing the following models of public-private partnership in higher education which is being considered by UGC/Planning Commission:

- i) **Basic Infrastructure Model:** the private sector invests in infrastructure and the government runs the operations and management of the institutions in turn making annualized payments to the private investor.
- ii) **Outsourcing Model:** Private sector invests in infrastructure and runs operations and management and the responsibility of the government is to pay the private investor for the specified services.





- iii) **Equity / Hybrid Model:** Investments in infrastructure is shared between government and private sector while operation and management is vested with the private sector
- iv) **Reverse Outsourcing Model:** Government invests in infrastructure and the private sector takes the responsibility of operation and management.

### ***Promotion of Inter-disciplinary Programmes***

A special scheme of funding may be introduced to encourage institutions to offer inter-disciplinary programmes of teaching and research. Any administrative / regularization difficulties arising out of these programmes in terms of work load calculation, faculty recruitment and qualification norms be sorted out providing the necessary flexibility to the institutions. The proposal for UGC grants must be scrutinized at the University / Institution level by a Planning Board consisting of external experts and to be forwarded to the UGC. The present practice of submitting the consolidated proposals of individual departments to the UGC, without critical scrutiny, should be avoided. The present practice of UGC sending a visiting team to Universities to examine and sanction proposals to various departments should be avoided as it involves enormous delay in the process of allocation and release of funds. The UGC grants may be determined on the basis of the past performance and future requirements.

### ***Community Colleges***

To increase the GER, efforts be made to initiate community college model by which the school dropouts would be enabled to



join main stream higher education by means of associate Degree/ Certificate/Diploma programmes.

### ***Academic Audit***

The public and private aided institutions take up the Academic Audit involving external experts once in 3 years. This should be a pre-condition for the eligibility of these institutions for funding support.

### ***Mechanism of Releasing Grants***

The present practice of releasing further installments of the grant only upon submission of utilization certificate causes undue delay in receiving and utilizing grants. The release of second installment should not be withheld for want of utilization certificate of the first installment. However the release of third installment be effected only after receipt of utilization certificate for the first installment. Above all, the institutions must adopt maximal degree of e-governance, de-bureaucratization and transparency in fund management.

### ***Norm-based Funding***

Norm-based funding for every Central and State University is another area of concern. However, quantum of norm-based funding should vary from university to university with defined minimum standards. Time to time block grants may be given by the UGC to both the State and the Central Universities on the basis of relevance of the programmes offered and their performance in academic and professional fields.



### **(c) Recommendations**

In respect of Modes of Financing Higher Education, the following emerged as the major recommendations of the Conference:

- State Governments to provide liberal funding to state universities and its colleges.
- Central Government to supplement funding of state universities and its colleges through additional grants.
- Augmentation of public finance to higher education upto 1.5% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
- Norm-based pattern of funding under three broad categories:
  - Minimum substantive grant
  - Maintenance grant to all the universities
  - Performance linked incentive grant
- Models of Public Private Partnership (PPP)
  - Basic Infrastructure Model
  - Outsourcing Model
  - Equity/Hybrid Model
  - Reverse Outsourcing Model
- The present practice of UGC sending visiting teams to universities to ascertain their financial requirements may be done away with. The UGC grants may be determined on the basis of the past performance and future requirements.

## **3.8 Theme: Good Governance**

### **(a) Core Issues**

The principle of autonomy and the relevant spheres of autonomy



in universities and higher education institutions have been stressed by a number of Committees. Nevertheless, the autonomy of universities in different spheres continues to be constrained by several factors, often invoking principles of accountability. There are also several other issues which impinge on the governance of higher educational institutions. These issues differ between central and state universities, between universities and their affiliated colleges. It is important to note that while most of the university teaching departments are directly governed by the university administration, a large number of government and aided colleges are governed by the departments of higher education which come under the State government and governing councils in the case of aided or private institutions. The leave rules and procedure for obtaining study leave is tardy, bureaucratic and time taking. The following core issues were discussed on this theme:

- The levels of academic, administrative and financial autonomy that exist among different types of higher education institutions;
- Setting up standards for certain minimum accountability standards/norms; kind of self-regulation that would be helpful for ensuing autonomy;
- Promoting a significant constituency which strives for both autonomy and excellence;
- Encouraging divergent perspectives and creative deviance in our system for the purpose of achieving excellence;
- Reasons why institutions do not always exercise autonomy in the spheres that are available to them; overcoming the problem;



- Maximizing financial autonomy (which can be considered as a critical dimension of overall autonomy of the institutions) in a situation in which institutions receive public funds and are accountable for their proper use in accordance with the prescribed rules;
- The existing practice of affiliation has implications for the ways universities can be governed and how they can achieve different objectives. They also have implications for the affiliated institutions and various constituents, as often these affiliations are granted on a temporary basis;
- The nature and quantum of representation of Government nominated members in the Executive Council, Senate and Academic Council;
- The desirable qualification of the members to be nominated to the Governing bodies of public as well as privately funded institutions; and
- The issues of governance that are forced by the State Government/UGC/Universities/other regulatory bodies and their implications.

### ***(b) Scope of Deliberations***

Academic freedom is sacrosanct, and in the exercise of that freedom, rests the ability of universities to innovate and promote creativity and excellence in teaching and research. Therefore, good governance requires setting up of appropriate institutional structures, framing policies and practices for promoting academic freedom. Accordingly, academic autonomy is key ingredient in the



exercise of academic freedom and self assessment is a necessary condition for ensuring accountability. Importantly, autonomy does not start and stop at the institutional level, i.e., the university. It percolates throughout the entire system of higher education and concerns the relationships, external as well as internal, to the university. Centralisation and concentration of power is antithetical to autonomy. The above principles need to be seen in the current context. The autonomy of the universities is currently unduly constrained and the constraints fall broadly into the following categories: (a) Financial issues and funding practices; (b) Bureaucratic hurdles; (d) Political interference; and (e) Legal and regulatory framework.

The Conference felt that the central universities are less constrained and enjoy greater autonomy than the state universities. Further, institutions funded directly by the MHRD like the IITs and IIMs appear to have greater autonomy than the central universities funded through the UGC. Therefore, how funds are channelled appears to correlate significantly with institutional autonomy and academic freedom. Also the central universities have greater funding than the state universities, indeed the financial constraints for the state universities are a serious impediment to, and a significant cause for eroding, university autonomy in various ways.

### ***Scope of Autonomy***

Academic freedom is absolutely essential for academic excellence. Academic autonomy shall not be possible without autonomy in administrative matters and decision-making processes. Further, academic and administrative autonomy shall have no meaning



and will not be effective unless the academic institutions enjoy autonomy in financial matters. Academic, administrative and financial autonomy does not mean a blanket freedom to universities and their constituents - the students, teachers, staff, schools, faculties, departments, centres and colleges to do whatever they want. Instead, the autonomy must mean freedom to achieve academic goals.

### ***Erosion of Autonomy - Evasion of Accountability***

It is necessary that all overt and covert attempts to erode or corrode autonomy must be as much resisted as the blatant and clandestine tendencies to evade public accountability. It cannot be over-emphasised that the absence of accountability is as much detrimental to academic excellence as the loss of autonomy. University autonomy is often seriously hampered, curbed and curtailed by overloading the decision making bodies of the universities (the AC, the EC and the Court) with political and bureaucratic nominees and people with vested interest and thereby vitiating the decision-making process and adversely affecting the quality of decisions made. While the composition of these bodies may give representation to various stakeholders, the nominees must be people with requisite qualifications and high integrity. Academic institutions funded through public exchequer are established with the sole purpose of pursuing academic excellence and must meet the expectations of the society in this regard. However, their ability to impart quality teaching and to create new knowledge through excellence in research and publication rests on academic, administrative and financial autonomy.



## ***External versus Internal Autonomy***

Universities often lose out on the argument for greater autonomy on account of their inability to accord autonomy to their own constituents, internal organs and sub-units. It is necessary that both autonomy and accountability be extended to all constituents and stakeholders within the university system and must not be restricted to the relation between the university and the external spheres of governance. Autonomy should percolate to all levels including the lowest.

Issues of internal accountability should be built in the following principles:

- a) Evaluation of teaching performance by students;
- b) Strengthening assessment through the IQAC and obtaining feedback on the assessment of the University by its constituents;
- c) Introducing a "Code of good practices", on the lines recommended by the MHRD Committee;
- d) Restricting inbreeding in recruitment at all levels;
- e) Subjecting institutions to mandatory accreditation and external reviews every five years;
- f) Systems of governance focusing on sound financial management and practices;
- g) Effective systems of decentralisation at all levels;
- h) Fairness and transparency in decision-making processes; and
- i) Highest standards of probity of the academic and administrative leadership.





## ***Appointment of Vice-Chancellors***

Political and bureaucratic interference in the appointment of Vice Chancellors and such key university functionaries, as Registrars, Finance Officers and Controller of Examinations, etc. shall have to be avoided with concurrence of political and bureaucratic leadership. The Vice-Chancellor is the leader of the university system. Her or his appointment norms must adhere to the minimum qualifications prescribed in the UGC Regulation 2010. The Vice-Chancellors should have experience of academic administration and should be able to provide academic leadership. The process of appointment of Vice-Chancellors should be fully transparent and information on nominations received, short listed panel and final selection should be publicly available in all cases. Finally, the Vice-Chancellors should be selected on national basis.

## ***Acts and Statutes of Universities***

Provisions in the Acts and Statutes of several state universities restrict autonomy and have not been revised over long periods. It can also take a very long time to change them and bring them in sync with the regulations of the UGC or policy directives of the Central Government. The centre should create model Acts and Statutes and rules of governance and, if necessary, these could be implemented through appropriate constitutional reforms.

## ***Enhancing Funding to Universities***

There was a close link between the adequacy of financing as well as the financing modes available to the universities and autonomy available to universities. Starving universities with a resource-



crunch are compelled to resort to such modes and mechanisms of funding that further incapacitate them for taking sound financial decisions and jeopardises their academic autonomy. The Conference felt that there was an urgent need to enhance overall funding to higher education. Several Vice-Chancellors from State Universities emphasised the need for the Centre to provide adequate finances to State Universities and for reduction of disparity between the allocation of grants between Central and State funded Institutions. While timely availability of adequate resources is important, it is equally necessary that the universities are given necessary freedom and flexibility to best utilise the available resources for realising the larger objectives of the universities. To this end:-

- a) The budgets should be allocated at the beginning of the financial year and subsequent releases should be automatic.
- b) The conditionality attached to grants and allocations of funds need to be simplified.
- c) There should be clear move towards a predictable norm-based funding with powers to universities to allocate and utilise available resources in various competing priorities of the university.
- d) The norms should provide for incentives for performance and disincentives and penalties for non-compliance and non-performance.
- e) Special state priorities, if any, should be limited in number and should be addressed through an additional funding window.



## ***Size of Affiliation***

Large number of colleges affiliated to the universities tends to overweigh the universities with examination and other regulatory responsibility and weakens the facilitative and promotional functions. The Conference felt that the number of colleges attached to a single university should not exceed more than 50. The states could create mentoring universities to facilitate the development of affiliated colleges but, in turn, these universities should not affiliate more than a certain number of colleges, say 50.

## ***Unitary Discipline Universities***

At the other extreme, growing number of small single stream or specialised universities also create a special class of issues for governance. Proliferation of such universities should be discouraged and universities should preferably be "comprehensive" in character as recommended by the Yashpal Committee.

## ***Decision Making***

Reforms are needed to cut down the time taken in routine administrative decision making and in other non-academic tasks which regularly engage and take up a lot of time of the administrative as well as the academic staff of the universities.

## ***E-governance***

E-governance should be used to improve the efficiency, transparency and responsiveness of the university governance system.



## ***Nature of Academic Discourse***

Respect for divergent in discourse by the academic faculty and their creative deviance need to be encouraged in the university system to create an academic climate of insightful outputs in teaching and research. There should be a class of very eminent academics for whom there should be no age of retirement. Teachers should have the freedom to design innovative courses. Inter-disciplinarily should be encouraged.

### ***(c) Recommendations***

In respect of good governance, the following emerged as the major recommendations of the Conference:

- Setting up of appropriate institutional structures, framing policies and practices for good governance.
- Academic freedom, autonomy and accountability to be ensured through self-assessment.
- Freedom from political and bureaucratic interferences in appointment of Vice-Chancellors and key functionaries.
- Process of appointment of Vice-Chancellors to be transparent and information on nominations received, short-listed panels and final selection to be in public domain.
- Central Government to create Model Acts, Statutes and Rules of Governance.
- Strengthening of assessment through Internal Quality Assurance Cells (IQAC) and introduction of Code of Good Practices.



- Use of e-governance to increase efficiency, transparency, and responsiveness.
- Number of colleges affiliated to a university to be restricted to 50.
- Observance of Code of Professional Ethics for University and College Teachers.

The recommendations outlined under various thematic concerns of higher education now need to be put on the anvil of implementation in the context of emerging concerns for the 12th Five-Year Plan. It is hoped that the Vice-Chancellors of the Central and State Universities as also policy planners will apply their insightful minds to design appropriate strategies for immediate, short-term, medium-term and long-term goals, which can improve the quality of higher education in the country.



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Bellary Distt.-583 278.
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Mangattuparamba, Kannur Univ Campus P.O.,  
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Dist. Darjeeling  
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147. Dr. Subhash Prasad Sinha  
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148. Prof. Nanda Dulal Paria  
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149. Dr. Ravindra Nath Bhagat  
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Vinoba Bhave University  
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150. Prof. Sabyasachi Sen Gupta  
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2. Dr. K. Biswal  
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6. Prof. Ranabir Samaddar  
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12. Prof. Binod Khadria  
Zakir Husain Centre for Educational Studies  
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University Grants Commission  
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16. Mr. M.S. Yadav  
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University Grants Commission  
Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg  
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मान-विद्यान विमुक्तये



सत्यमेव जयते  
MHRD

## Conference of the Vice-Chancellors of Central and State Universities

**Conference Schedule**  
**March 25 & 26, 2011**



ज्ञान-विद्यान विमुक्तये  
UGC

### Day 1 : **March 25, 2011, Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi**

## University and Society: Issues and Challenges

- 09.00-09.50 hrs.** : Registration of Delegates  
**10.00-11.30 hrs.** : Inaugural Session, Hall #6  
**11.30-12.00 hrs.** : Tea  
**12.00-17.30 hrs.** : Separate Technical Sessions in 8 Groups  
**13.30-14.30 hrs.** : Lunch, Foyer in Main Bldg. & Press Area in Annexe  
**20.00 hrs.** : Dinner, Hotel The Lalit, Barakhamba Avenue, Connaught Place, New Delhi
- Group I : Access, Equity, Engagement and Outcome (Hall #6)**  
 Discussion Leaders : Prof. G. Haragopal, Prof. Rupa Shah  
 Coordinators : Prof. R.G. Harshe, Dr. K. Biswal and Prof. Sydney Rebeiro
- Group II : Content and Quality (Hall #2)**  
 Discussion Leaders : Prof. Deepak Pental, Prof. Ajit Kembhavi and Prof. V.S. Prasad  
 Coordinators : Prof. Biswajit Das and Prof. Ranabir Samaddar
- Group III : Research and Innovation (Hall #3)**  
 Discussion Leaders : Dr. Sam Pitroda, Dr. T. Ramasamy, Prof. Goverdhan Mehta,  
 Prof. N. Mukunda, Prof. S.K. Saidapur, Prof. Anil K. Gupta,  
 Dr. Praveen Chaddah  
 Coordinators : Prof. V.K. Jain and Prof. H.D. Devaraj
- Group IV : Faculty Development and Inter University Resource Sharing (Hall #4)**  
 Discussion Leaders : Prof. G.K. Chadha, Prof. P. Rama Rao and Prof. Amit Roy  
 Coordinators : Prof. Sudhanshu Bhushan and Prof. Jaspal Sandhu
- Group V : Internationalization of Higher Education (Annexe Hall A)**  
 Discussion Leaders : Prof. P.N. Tandon and Prof. V.R. Mehta  
 Coordinators : Prof. Kavita Sharma and Prof. Binod Khadria
- Group VI : Alternative Modes of Delivery of Higher Education: Open Distance Learning (Annexe Hall B)**  
 Discussion Leaders : Prof. N.R. Madhava Menon and Prof. H.P. Dikshit  
 Coordinators : Dr. Sachidananda Sinha, Dr. (Mrs.) Latha Pillai and Dr. Kulwinder Kaur
- Group VII : Models of Financing (Annexe Hall C)**  
 Discussion Leaders : Prof. C. Thangamuthu, Prof. H.A. Ranganath and Prof. S.P. Thyagarajan  
 Coordinators : Prof. P. Duraisamy and Prof. Saumen Chattopadhyay

### Day 2 : **March 26, 2011, Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi**

- 09.00-10.00 hrs.** : Tea, Atrium  
**10.00-12.00 hrs.** : Finalization of Group Reports in respective Halls  
**12.00-14.30 hrs.** : Plenary Session to discuss and adopt Group Reports, Hall #6  
**14.30-15.00 hrs.** : Lunch, Atrium  
**15.00-16.00 hrs.** : NKN, NMEICT & NPTEL in the Service of University Education, Hall #6  
**16.00-16.15 hrs.** : Interventions of the All India Higher Education Survey, Hall #6  
**16.15-17.00 hrs.** : Valedictory Session, Hall #6  
**17.00 hrs.** : High Tea, Atrium

**Conference of the Vice-Chancellors of Central and State Universities**

