

**REPORT
OF THE
STATE - LEVEL REVIEW COMMITTEE
ON
AUTONOMOUS COLLEGES
IN
TAMIL NADU**

**GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU
NOVEMBER, 1991.**

NIEPA DC



20000

LIBRARY & DOCUMENTATION CENTRE

National Institute of Educational
Planning and Administration.

17-B, Sri Aurobindo Marg.

New Delhi-110016

DOC, No

Date

D-9909

27-7-98

**REPORT OF THE
STATE - LEVEL REVIEW COMMITTEE
ON AUTONOMOUS COLLEGES IN TAMIL NADU**

CONTENTS

Summary and Recommendations

CHAPTERS

- I Introduction
- II Autonomous Colleges in Tamil Nadu
- III Academic Autonomy
- IV Administrative Autonomy
- V Financial - Autonomy
- VI Inter - relationships and Concluding Remarks

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PREVIEW

Tamil Nadu Government appointed in October, 1990 a State Level Review Committee on Autonomous Colleges "to make an indepth study and evaluate the functioning of autonomous colleges in the State in academic field as well as achievements of results and suggest suitable recommendations".

The concept of autonomous colleges, though can be traced back to pre-Independent days, was given a concrete shape only in the Kothari Commission Report (1964-66). The report called for conferring of autonomous status to select colleges, as an interim measure, before they can attain the status of deemed university. The scheme of autonomous colleges was also given a special emphasis in the National Policy on Education (1986). The main objectives of autonomous colleges, among others, shall include "freedom to determine their own courses of study and syllabi, prescribe rules of admission, subject, of course, to the reservation policy of the State Government and evolve methods of evaluation and conduct examinations."

Tamil Nadu took the early lead in the sphere of autonomous colleges [and it continues to maintain its lead till date]. In the year 1978-79, University of Madras granted autonomous status to eight of its affiliated colleges and Madurai Kamaraj University to two of its colleges. The late eighties [particularly 1987-88] saw a phenomenal expansion in the number of autonomous colleges which went upto as high as 43 colleges [more than 40 per cent of autonomous colleges in the country are located in Tamil Nadu today]. These colleges include 33 Arts and Science Colleges, six colleges of Teacher's Education and five Engineering Colleges. Of these autonomous colleges, University of Madras accounts for 14, Madurai Kamaraj University

accounts for 10, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University 2, Bharathiyar University 10 and Bharathidasan University 7. After a lull period of early eighties, the late eighties (particularly 1987-88) saw a phenomenal expansion in the number of autonomous colleges which went upto as high as 43 colleges; more than 40 per cent of autonomous colleges in the country are located in Tamil Nadu today. Among the autonomous colleges, Avinashilingam Home Science College recently became a Deemed University. After 1987-88, the process of growth of autonomous colleges has slowed down.

Some of the apprehensions raised against autonomous colleges by the teachers, particularly teacher associations, and some of the public include:

- the curricula have not been substantially revamped to make it application oriented, with sufficient thrust local/regional relevance; most of the changes introduced are more formal than structural;
- lack of innovations in methodology of teaching;
- deficiencies in the evaluation system, especially in Continuous Internal Assessment (CIA) under semester system, because of which their credibility is questioned not only by other colleges but also by the parent University itself;
- inadequate extension component;
- autonomy leads to concentration of enormous powers in the hands of the management, which is likely to use the power against its staff; and
- autonomy encourages elitism.

The Committee, against the backdrop of above apprehensions, made a comprehensive review of all the 43 autonomous colleges, held detailed discussions with a cross

section of students/teachers/Principal/Management of every autonomous college, collected primary academic data from all institutions using structured questionnaire and got the syllabi/regulations/question papers assessed by the respective subject experts. All these inputs had gone into assessment of performance of autonomous colleges. The rationale behind each of the recommendations can be seen in the corresponding sections in the text [number given in the parentheses]. The assessment and recommendations have been made under following four heads: academic autonomy, administrative autonomy, fiscal autonomy and inter-relationship among different agencies/bodies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

ACADEMIC AUTONOMY

Syllabi and Regulations:

1. The Board of Studies may be reconstituted to include meritorious alumni and user agencies in order to get the proper feedback about the syllabi. It is also recommended that the University should allow the autonomous colleges to have a free choice of their nominated experts, without insisting on prior approval by the University [3.2.1.2. and 3.2.1.4].

2. Besides introduction of locally relevant optional/applied papers, the colleges can introduce field-oriented Project Work at the U.G. and P.G. levels that will help the students learn their environment and also get trained in creative and independent thinking, which is a missing element in the current system. Further, it is recommended that while the core theory papers be comparable to universal standards, the local relevance can be given due emphasis through elective/optional papers [3.2.2].

3. The syllabi must be unitised, wherever it has not already been done ie. split into different modules, with specific details on the scope and objectives of each paper, number of lecture/tutorial hours allotted for every module instruction guidance, etc. [3.2.3].

4. The autonomous college shall establish a Curriculum Development Cell [CDC] which shall act as an academic resource centre. The CDC shall collect syllabi/curricula data from various Universities and advanced centres in the country and also the syllabi prepared by the UGC-Curriculum Development Cell. These resources shall be supplied to the members of the College Boards of Studies, with a view to inspire innovative changes in the curriculum [3.2.4].

5. The colleges may be allowed to have reasonable flexibility to have variations from the University regulations provided such variations do not result in dilution of generally accepted University standard. Given this norm, the colleges may introduce innovations, for instance, allowing for adequate flexibility in the choice of subjects by students and also inter-disciplinary programmes [3.3.1].

6. The autonomous colleges may introduce credit system at P.G. level to start with and make available extra-courses with suitable time-table adjustments. The students with higher academic potentials would be greatly benefited by the credit system. It may also help mobility of students from one college to another [3.3.2].

7. Autonomy should encourage as much diversity as possible in curricular pattern; in the name of uniformity, scope for innovations should not be stifled. Even within a College, different Departments might have different course patterns, if found appropriate to the concerned discipline. However, there must be some correlation between number of instructional hours and marks allotted for the respective

papers. On the whole, the number of courses or the subject content should not be less than those prescribed by the University [3.3.4].

8. All those colleges, which have not introduced extension component in their curricula, may take earnest efforts to include extension programme as part and parcel of the academic programme. The Universities and the State Government also should accord due recognition to such activities; accomplishment in extension activities by students may be recorded in the Degree Certificates as Part IV, as desired by some colleges [3.3.5].

9. As part of Foundation courses, study of ethics, communal harmony and national integration, and cultural heritage may be introduced by all colleges; these courses be imparted in an inspiring manner using audio-visuales, special lectures and group discussions. A pass in these courses may only be a secondary goal; the primary purpose should be to inspire the students and inculcate in them such important values in order to shape them into good citizens [3.3.6].

10. There can be one or two papers which shall be studied by the students themselves by means of self-study/directed study; this would help develop a sense of independent and creative thinking among the students [3.3.7].

11. The Universities must stipulate clear-cut norms/regulations permitting the mobility of students atleast within the University area. Every University must appoint an Academic Equivalence Committee to evolve detailed norms of equivalence between the programmes of different institutions and thereby provide for mobility of students under genuine circumstances [3.3.8].

Teaching:

12. The Committee observed from the interaction with teachers and students that in some colleges, some teachers "dictate" notes to the students and also give good marks only to those students who repeat those notes verbatim in the examination answers. Such tendency should be discouraged [3.4.1].

13. The benefits of syllabus revision may not be fully realised, unless corresponding changes in teaching methods have been introduced. More of group discussions, seminars, exercise orientation, question-answer sessions, micro-teaching, field-visit-studies, etc. may be adopted as frequently as possible. The Committee further recommends that every junior teacher undergoes orientation courses conducted by the Academic Staff Colleges, specially on teaching techniques, which may be organised using the expertise from Technical Teachers Training Institute and Teachers Education Colleges. Senior teachers must undergo refresher courses atleast once in two years, so that they can keep abreast of the latest developments in the subject [3.4.2].

Evaluation:

13. There are different methods of setting of question papers [internally, externally and jointly]. These diverse practices may be permitted to continue as long as question papers are of good quality covering all portions in the syllabi and that there is no leakage of question paper at any stage [3.5].

14. The structure of question paper must be reformed to include objective type questions, exercise-oriented or problem-solving medium-size questions and also essay type questions, to bring out different types of capabilities in the students. Examination

reform must be a continuous component in the dynamics of autonomous system. Since no set pattern can be insisted for all papers, the individual Departments may be given certain amount of freedom to suggest a suitable question paper pattern, subject to the above principles [3.5.2].

15. The autonomous colleges, being a small and compact system, could better provide for revaluation facility at the U.G. level. As there is double valuation at P.G. level, revaluation may not be necessary [3.5.3].

16. Supplementary examinations may be conducted for the candidates failing in the final Semester. The candidates who had passed with lower marks may be allowed to reappear for improvement of marks [3.5.4].

17. Those autonomous colleges which have not introduced CIA may be advised to introduce CIA at the earliest, in due recognition of the merits of the CIA [3.5.5.1].

18. Unless the campus conditions specially warrant, mere attendance need not enable students to gain marks under CIA [3.5.5.3].

19. Too many CIA tests may be avoided; three tests are quite optimal. In case of genuine absentees from CIA tests, a retest may be conducted. The answer scripts must be returned to the students immediately after valuation and the students' claim for rectification of mis-valuation, if any, must be properly heeded to in order to instill a sense of internal confidence and credibility [3.5.5.4].

20. Different assignments may be given to different students, requiring them to refer to different sources in the library [3.5.5.5].

21. Universities may conduct a centralised entrance-test for screening the candidates for admission to

P.G. courses in the affiliated colleges and University Departments. Students may be admitted on the basis of entrance test marks giving substantial weightage to the entrance test [3.5.5.6].

22. The Universities may invite the rank-holders of individual autonomous colleges to the University Convocation and issue the college - level medals to them. This may, to some extent, redress their grievances among them [3.5.6].

ADMINISTRATIVE AUTONOMY

Motivation and Training:

23. The autonomous bodies and committees have been, by and large, constituted in the autonomous colleges in accordance with the UGC Revised Guidelines, giving due representation to teachers. This organisational structure has its own merits. But the administration of autonomous colleges requires a new style rather than a new organisational structure. The management of autonomous college must change their style of functioning for ensuring teachers' participation in decision making and by making the system open and responsive. In all matters, including allocation and utilisation of autonomous funds, the teachers must be taken into confidence and their views duly considered [4.2.1].

24. A periodical motivation cum-training programme be arranged by the respective Universities, through their Academic Staff Colleges, and necessary funding be provided by the UGC for the purpose. The Management/Principals/Controllers of Examinations/Heads of the Departments also be given appropriate orientation courses. The Academic Staff College should organise atleast one or two programmes per year exclusively for autonomous colleges; such programmes must be also offered to such

colleges who intend to prepare themselves for autonomous status [4.2.2].

Autonomous Bodies, Committees and their Roles:

25. The Private College Regulation Act of Government of Tamilnadu envisages a management structure for all privately managed colleges which is at variance with that recommended by UGC Guidelines for autonomous colleges. The Committee recommends that the UGC Revised Guidelines be suitably incorporated into the Rules of Tamil Nadu Private College Regulation Act. The UGC may also be addressed to reconsider the functions assigned to Governing Body relating to property management [4.3.1].

26. The Principals and managements of most of the colleges focussed on the enormous constraints faced by them from the Government in filling up the vacancies of teaching posts. The Government may take due note of this problem and ensure timely action [4.3.2].

27. The composition of Academic Council as per the UGC Revised Guidelines seems to be rather restrictive. It is recommended that the colleges may be permitted to widen the composition of autonomous bodies wherever possible and necessary. For instance, besides the Head of the Department one more teacher from every Department [on rotation by cadre] may be nominated to the Academic Council [4.4.1].

28. There must not be any lapse in duly nominating student representatives to the Academic Council as per UGC norms. The provision for student nominees in the Academic Council must be duly notified and the Principal must give wide publicity about the existence of student nominees; and the latter must ascertain from their fellow students about their genuine academic grievances [4.4.2].

29. All academic regulations may be periodically updated and made available to students so that they can be aware of the procedures and conditions well in advance. Amendments to regulations, as and when effected, must be displayed in the notice board and sent as circular to class rooms [4.4.3].

30. The students in autonomous colleges must be appraised of the concept, aims and objectives of autonomy and their privileges and advantages under the system, at the beginning of the academic year [4.3.4].

31. The Planning and Evaluation Board is envisaged as an important body under autonomous system. Every autonomous college must devote adequate and serious attention to the aspect of planning. The College shall prepare a 10 year Perspective Plan and also the annual plans for phased action. There must be an institutional thrust and orientation for every autonomous college. The Planning Board must also conduct self-evaluation of autonomous programmes annually [4.5].

32. The Committee recommends the constitution of Appeal and Grievance Committee [AGC] in every autonomous college; the AGC may take active steps to redress the student/faculty grievances and thereby improve the campus atmosphere [4.6].

Personnel and Responsibilities:

33. In the case of autonomous government colleges, the Principal and the teachers should not be frequently transferred; whenever transfers are made as far as possible the transfers may be done among the autonomous colleges. While transferring, care may be taken to avoid large-scale transfer, unless circumstances warrant otherwise [4.7].

34. The Principal of an autonomous government college must be delegated with adequate powers by the governing Body of the College and other autonomous committees. In respect of private autonomous colleges, the Principal, while being made accountable, may be provided with adequate freedom and powers of decision making [4.8].

35. The Government/Management may consider adoption of liberal norms in the sanction of secretarial staff for Controller's Office etc. to these institutions, in order to improve the administrative system [4.9].

36. The Dean, College Development Council, must play an effective role of liaison between the Colleges and the funding agencies like UGC/State Government/University. The Dean's Office must cater to autonomous colleges as well as non-autonomous ones [4.10].

37. It is partly true that the autonomous college teachers have marginally higher workload than in some of the non-autonomous colleges. However, this is compensated by some of the advantages like academic freedom, the teachers of autonomous colleges enjoyed [4.11].

38. For effective and smooth administration of autonomous colleges, there should be meaningful decentralisation of powers and responsibilities which will enhance sense of participation and involvement in the system [4.12].

39. The committee was convinced of the fact that wherever the leadership provided by the Principal has been dynamic and inspiring, the autonomy in such colleges has been an exemplary success. Of course, the effectiveness of a Principal, apart from his or her own leadership qualities, depends largely upon the positive attitude of the

management and the co-operation of teacher colleagues [4.13].

FINANCIAL AUTONOMY

Autonomous Grants:

40. The UGC must accord the due priority to autonomous colleges and avoid any delay in sanction/release of funds to them. As the State Government has created a rolling fund in respect of Government autonomous colleges, the private managements may also create rolling funds so that they can make up during delay in receipt of autonomous grants from the UGC [5.2.2].

41. UGC shall continue to finance autonomous colleges till autonomous system gets sufficiently stabilised and self-sustaining [5.2.3].

42. The UGC may arrange for discussion with the AICTE to evolve an expeditious procedure for sanction and release of grant to autonomous engineering colleges [5.2.4].

43. Autonomous colleges should earmark and utilise as much proportion of autonomous grants as possible on improving academic infrastructure including strengthening library facilities and their utilisation, laboratory facilities for the Departments and on visiting/guest faculty, special lectures on thrust areas. Since the conduct of examination can be made mostly self-supporting, the autonomous grants must be put to better use on improving academic quality of the college. The extension programmes for students can also be effectively organised using autonomous grants [5.2.5].

Government Grants:

44. The State Government, atleast on a trial basis may sanction "block grants" to these institutions, so that they

can meaningfully plan and develop their institutions and their academic programmes. This may be sanctioned on the lines of State Government's sanction of block grants to Universities [5.3.1].

45. It was suggested by one of the college managements that the State Government could bear all the capital expenditure items of autonomous colleges, leaving the maintenance/salary expenditure to be borne by the concerned colleges, by allowing them to re-structure fees payable by students. The Committee recommends that this suggestion, though largely in tune with the spirit of NPE, 1986, may be examined keeping in view of its socio-economic implications [5.3.2].

Resource Generation and Allocation:

46. The autonomous colleges on their part, must also explore the possibilities of generating their own resources, among others, by encouraging consultancy services by the faculty members. The colleges may harness the examination surplus and make good use of them for campus development and provision of amenities to students. The colleges can also find means of generating more surplus by judiciously economising expenditure [5.4.1 and 5.4.2].

47. The budget allocations for different Departments may be made, after consulting the respective Departments regarding their requirements. The Finance Committee, where teachers are represented, shall be provided with all the relevant data on financial receipts/expenditures from time to time; and the approval/recommendations of the Finance Committee be sought in time for various items of expenditure. Openness in financial administration would go a long way in removing several possible misgivings in the system [5.5].

Elitism:

48. The scheme of autonomous colleges is criticised on the ground that it breeds "elitism". But, even before the introduction of autonomy, some of today's autonomous colleges, in social esteem, were far better, if not excellent institutions. So, with or without autonomy, these institutions would remain better than others. And such a trend is not only inevitable but also desirable; we need to have atleast a few centres of excellence in a larger system of education [5.6.2].

INTER - RELATIONSHIPS**Universities and Autonomous Colleges:**

49. The Universities, have the primary and direct responsibility of maintaining the standards in autonomous institutions. Therefore, the Universities must take adequate care in identifying the right type of institutions for autonomous status, by evolving and applying an objective criteria of selection. The Committee generally concurs with the criteria outlined in the UGC Revised Guidelines. Autonomy is not a reward or recognition of the institution's past performance but an opportunity to be more innovative and creative and raise academic standards [6.1.2.1].

50. The University Act/Statutes must clearly specify the working relationship between the Universities and autonomous colleges. Some of the Universities in Tamil Nadu are yet to spell out these in more clear terms. Interpretation of provisions in the Act/Statutes already specified in this regard must be liberal enough to facilitate the effective functioning of autonomous colleges [6.1.3.1].

51. The Committee reiterates that enough freedom and flexibility be given to autonomous colleges, subject to the condition that the University standards are not diluted [6.1.4.1].

52. There must be a forum which provides for exchange of information/ideas among the autonomous colleges. This forum can be sponsored by the respective Universities [6.1.5.1].

53. The nominees from autonomous colleges may be invited to attend the University's academic council meetings [wherever not already provided for], as special invitees, in order to enable them get a better acquaintance of on-going academic changes in the University system from time to time [6.1.5.2].

54. The University must set up an example by granting autonomy to its own Departments/Schools, in order to inspire the autonomous colleges [6.1.5.3].

55. University can liberalise autonomous provisions in a phased manner, depending upon the performance of different colleges.

- Colleges, with less than 5 years of autonomous standing, may be "effectively assisted/monitored" by College Development Council of the respective Universities
- Colleges in their second spell of five years [5-10 years] shall be subject to "comprehensive review and appraisal" by their Universities, based on which further continuance of autonomy shall be decided.
- Colleges with more than 10 years of autonomous experience and with commendable record of consistent performance, be selected and enabled to effect substantial structural reforms in syllabi and academic regulations. This may be preparatory a phase to their becoming Deemed Universities [6.1.6].

56. The success of autonomy may be assessed among others, in terms of the objective "indicators", as detailed in the Chapter VI of the Report [6.1.7].

STATE GOVERNMENT

57. Autonomous colleges face the problem of declining quality of student input coming from Higher Secondary courses. The Plus One syllabi is either ignored or haphazardly learnt as there is no central examination on Plus-One portions. As the students concentrate on the subject papers only, giving scant attention to language studies, their language and communication skills are also not as good as their knowledge in the subjects. To ensure complete and effective coverage of Plus-One and Plus-Two syllabi, a comprehensive examination be conducted covering the syllabi of both Plus-One and Plus-Two courses [6.2.2].

58. The proposed State Council for Higher Education may be assigned with the responsibility of overall planning, policy formulation and evolving development strategies relating to autonomous colleges in the State [6.2.5].

59. At the University level, an Advisory Body on autonomous colleges may be constituted. This body may periodically review the general progress of autonomous colleges and suggest suitable measures for improvement of the system [6.2.6].

UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION

60. The UGC should take immediate steps to clear all the arrears of grants to the autonomous colleges and enable them implement autonomous academic programmes [6.3.1].

61. The Committee recommends that UGC sets up a separate section for release of grants to autonomous colleges, so that release of grants to these colleges is not tied up with the release of grants to other colleges in the University area. Further in order to ensure uninterrupted flow of funds to those colleges, the UGC must earmark certain amount each year for autonomous colleges [6.3.2].

62. As there are 43 autonomous colleges in the State the UGC may arrange for annual clearing of pending claims/proposals of the autonomous colleges at Madras or any central place in the State [6.3.3].

63. The Committee recommends that the AICTE may also nominate a member to the initial Commission which goes into the question of considering an institution for granting autonomous status, so that the report will be a joint Committee report and AICTE can process the same common report and provide necessary funds. This may be taken up on priority basis since so far no autonomous engineering college has received autonomous grants since 1987-88 [including the college which was getting earlier][6.3.4].

64. It would be appreciated if the UGC disseminates among autonomous colleges the guidelines/curricular reforms as recommended by UGC and other agencies from time to time [6.3.5].

65. The Committee is generally convinced of the overall success of autonomous colleges in the State and therefore recommends that autonomy may be extended to other institutions in stages, on selective basis [6.4].

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Constitution of Committee

The Tamil Nadu Government in its G.O. No. MS. No. 1419, dt. 12.10.90 [copy enclosed in the Annexure 1] appointed a State-level Review Committee on Autonomous Colleges under the Chairmanship of Dr. S. Muthukumaran, Vice-Chancellor of Bharathidasan University. The following is the composition of the Committee:

Dr.S.Muthukumaran,
Vice-Chancellor
Bharathidasan University,
Tiruchirapalli - 620 024. Chairman

Dr.S.Sathikh,
Vice-Chancellor,
University of Madras,
Madras - 600 005. Member

Dr.M.Lakshmanan,
Vice-Chancellor,
Madurai Kamaraj University,
Madurai - 625 021. Member

Dr. C.J.V.Jagannatha Raju,
Chairman, Andhra Pradesh State
Council of Higher Education,
Hyderabad - 500 001. Member
[representing UGC]

Dr.A.P.Kamalakara Rao
Principal,
Pachaiyappa's College,
Madras 600 030. Member
[representing academicians/
scholars]

**Dr.P.S.Subramanian,
Director of Collegiate Education,
Madras - 600 006.**

**Member-
Secretary.**

Subsequently in response to the clarifications sought by the Chairman of the Committee, the Education Department in its letter No. 112859/NU.1/50-1 dt.12.12.1990, [copy in the Annexure 2], informed that the purview of the Committee includes the autonomous Engineering Colleges and Colleges of Education in addition to the autonomous Arts and Science Colleges and also added the following members to the Committee:

**Dr. T.R. Natesan,
Director of Technical Education,
Government of Tamil Nadu.**

**Dr. A. Panneerselvam,
Director of Teacher Education,
Research and Training,
Government of Tamil Nadu.**

[upto 30 April, 1991]

&

**Thiru T. Naachimuthu,
D.T.E.R.T - incharge,
Government of Tamil Nadu.**

[since 1 May, 1991]

1.2 Terms of Reference

The terms of reference as outlined by the State Government read:

"The Committee shall make an indepth study and evaluate the functioning of autonomous colleges in the State in the academic field as well as achievements of results and suggest suitable recommendations."

1.3 Modalities adopted by the Committee

The Committee after considering several alternatives decided to collect the relevant data from all the 43 autonomous colleges [list given in Annexure 3] using a detailed questionnaire, inspect all the autonomous colleges, and get their syllabi, regulations and question papers reviewed by the respective subject experts.

1.4 Questionnaire:

The Committee, after a detailed discussion finalised a structured Questionnaire [copy of the Questionnaire given in the Annexure 4] and mailed the same to all the autonomous colleges in the State. The questionnaire elicited information/responses on the following aspects of autonomous functioning: Curricular innovations and other academic reforms, teaching and evaluation methodology, constitution and functioning of autonomous bodies and committees, trends in student intake, profiles of faculty members, academic activities in the campus, relationship among the autonomous colleges, University, State Government and UGC, pattern of utilisation of autonomous grants and suggestions on the issues relating to autonomy. The responses to the questionnaire formed the basis of the Committee's review of individual colleges.

1.5 Inspection of autonomous colleges:

1.5.1 The Committee took up the arduous task of inspection of all the 43 autonomous colleges spread over the entire state. The inspection took a total stretch of about seven months, from mid-February to mid-October 1991. But the actual number of inspection days were only 19, covering two/three institution per inspection-day. Due to unavoidable circumstances, some members could not visit some of the institutions.

1.5.2 The inspection schedule of every autonomous college was quite detailed; it covered free and frank discussion with all the groups of the participants in the autonomous system: students and alumni, teachers, Principal and members of the governing body; the sequence of meetings with different groups was also in that order, starting from students. The discussions were held almost in-camera, that when one group had discussion with the committee, none from other groups was allowed to be present.

1.5.3 While in most of the groups, the discussion was quite frank and useful, there were a few instances where the group was either not outspoken or their response was just a conditioned reflex. The representatives of teachers association in some colleges submitted memoranda to the Committee. The whole exercise, in general, proved to be very fruitful and constructive. In particular, feedback of different groups to the responses from a particular group, say, students was most interesting. The extent of communication gap and lack of rapport among different groups became quite revealing in some institutions. The Inspection Reports of individual colleges are appended under Annexure 5.

1.6 Study of Syllabi and Regulations:

The Committee collected the copies of syllabi, regulations, question papers from all the autonomous colleges for all the disciplines. These academic resource materials were put to impartial scrutiny by select subject-experts drawn from various centres in the venue of Presidency College, Madras,. Of course, the format of comments from various groups of subject experts was not uniform. Further, the task of studying all the syllabi of so many autonomous colleges at the same time proved to be a challenging task. The general impressions drawn from various expert groups are given in the Annexure 6. The specific comments are used in the discussion of the Report.

1.7 Meetings:

The Committee met on 22 November, 1990 and evolved the modalities; on 22 December, 1990, it finalised the Questionnaire and the Inspection Schedule; the inspection of autonomous colleges was made on the following dates:

Dates	Region	
11 - 14, Feb. 1991	Madras	
27 Feb. - 2 March, 1991	Coimbatore	
4 - 5 July, 1991	Tiruchirapalli	
17 - 19 July, 1991	Madurai	
1 Aug. 1991	Madras	[contd.]
31 Aug. 1991	Tiruchirapalli	"
23 - 24 Sept. 1991	Madurai	"
14 Oct. 1991	Madras	"
15 Oct. 1991	Coimbatore	"

The Committee met on 29 October, 1991 and finalised the draft recommendations; and after detailed discussions on 22 & 25 November, 1991, the Committee finalised the Report.

1.8. Acknowledgement:

The Committee wishes to place on record its grateful thanks to the Government of Tamil Nadu for constituting the Committee and for giving an opportunity to review and evaluate all the autonomous colleges in Tamil Nadu and for reposing its fullest confidence on it; the various Officers of

the Regional Directorates of Collegiate Education at Madras, Madurai, Coimbatore, Tiruchirapalli and Tirunelveli, for all the assistance rendered by them in making the necessary arrangements for successful visit of the Committee to the various autonomous colleges in their respective regions; the members of the various Sub Committees constituted for reviewing the syllabi, regulations, course-content and the patterns of evaluation and for all the support extended by them in this regard; the Chairman and Members of the Governing Councils/Managing Committees of the various autonomous colleges, the Principals, the Teachers, the students - including the alumni - for sparing their valuable time to meet and discuss with the Committee.

The Committee further places on record its appreciation of the valuable help rendered by Dr. C. Thangamuthu, Professor of Economics, Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirapalli, in analysing the data and in the preparation of this Report.

Chapter II

AUTONOMOUS COLLEGES IN TAMIL NADU

2.1 Concept of Autonomy:

2.1.1 The concept of autonomous colleges, though can be traced back to pre-Independent days, was given a concrete shape only after the submission of the Report by the Education Commission [1964-66], headed by D.S. Kothari. The Report called for conferring of autonomous status to select colleges, as an interim measure, before they attain the status of deemed university: "Where there is an outstanding college or a small cluster of very good colleges within a large university which has shown the capacity to improve itself markedly, consideration should be given to granting it an autonomous status. This would involve the power to frame its own rules of admissions, to prescribe its courses of study, to conduct examinations and so on. The parent University's role will be one of general supervision and the actual conferment of the degree. The privilege cannot be conferred once for all and it will have to be continually earned and deserved and it should be open to the university, after careful scrutiny of the position, to revoke the autonomous status if the college at any stage begins to deteriorate in its standards. We recommend that provision for the recognition of such autonomous colleges be made in the constitution of the Universities." [Kothari, 1966,p.2]

2.1.2 The scheme of autonomous colleges was also given a special emphasis in the National Policy on Education [1986]. The NPE observed " In view of mixed experience with the system of affiliation, autonomous colleges will be helped to develop in large numbers until the affiliating system is replaced by a free and more creative

association of Universities with colleges. Similarly, the creation of autonomous departments within universities on a selective basis will be encouraged. Autonomy and freedom will be accompanied by accountability" [NPE,1986]. The NPE envisaged that before the completion of VII Plan, atleast 500 colleges must be identified and granted autonomy. But only about 100 colleges were granted autonomy within the Plan period.

2.1.3 Having recognised the importance of granting autonomous status to select colleges, the actual modus operandi of the system was outlined by the UGC in its guidelines in late seventies which were subsequently revised in 1986 [the extract of UGC Revised guidelines is given in the annexure 7]. The main objectives of autonomy have been identified as:

"An autonomous college will have the freedom to:

- determine its own courses of study and syllabi;**
- prescribe rules of admission, subject, of course, to the reservation policy of the State Government and**
- evolve methods of evaluation and to conduct examinations.**

...The autonomy shall rather be a means to achieve higher standards and greater creativity in the future. For the time being the parent university of an autonomous college will continue to confer degrees upon the candidates declared eligible, on successful completion of the prescribed syllabi and valuation by the autonomous colleges. An autonomous college will thus be fully accountable for the content and quality of education that it imparts. It will be responsible for evaluation of the students for awards of degrees which will be accepted by the parent university.

...Promotion of National Integration will be an important feature of the autonomous colleges through their academic programme and other activities* [UGC,1986,Revised Guidelines].

2.2 Autonomous Colleges In Tamil Nadu - a General Survey:

2.2.1 In pursuance of the recommendations of Kothari Commission, a beginning was made in 1973 to grant autonomy to a few carefully selected colleges and Departments of University. Tamil Nadu took the early lead in this sphere [and it continues to maintain its lead till date]. In the year 1978-79, University of Madras granted autonomous status to eight of its affiliated colleges and Madurai Kamaraj University to two of its colleges. The first batch of ten colleges to which autonomy was conferred are:

1. Loyola College, Madras.
2. Madras Christian College, Madras.
3. Vivekananda College, Madras [Only PG Department of Chemistry & Economics - subsequently the college opted out of autonomy]
4. Regional Engineering College, Tiruchirapalli [only PG Departments to start-with]
5. St. Joseph's College, Tiruchirapalli.
6. P.S.G. Arts College, Coimbatore.
7. Sri Avinashilingam Home Science College, Coimbatore [subsequently became Deemed University].
8. P.S.G. College of Technology, Coimbatore.
9. American College, Madurai.
10. Lady Doak College, Madurai.

2.2.2 After a lull period of early eighties, the late eighties [particularly 1987-88] saw a phenomenal expansion in the number of autonomous colleges which went upto as high as 43 colleges [list given in the Annexure 3]; more than 40 per cent of autonomous colleges in the country are located in Tamil Nadu today. These colleges include 32 Arts and Science Colleges [out of 186], five colleges of Teacher's Education [out of 21]; one college of Physical Education [out of 3]; and the Technical Teachers Training Institute at Madras; and five Engineering Colleges [out of 9]. Of these autonomous colleges, University of Madras accounts for 14, Madurai Kamaraj University accounts for 10, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University 2, Bharthiyar University 10 and Bharathidasan University 7. Out of five autonomous Engineering Colleges, three are in Bharathiyar University, one under Bharathidasan University and one under Madurai Kamaraj University and none in University of Madras. All the six colleges of education and physical education are under University of Madras.

2.2.3 The University of Madras, in late seventies, conferred autonomous status to two of its Post-Graduate Centres at Tiruchirapalli and Coimbatore which subsequently emerged as the nuclei of separate universities. Among the University Departments in the State though a good number of the Departments might enjoy an informal academic freedom, full autonomy [with academic, administrative and fiscal powers] has been extended to two of its schools [Management and Energy] by the Bharathidasan University. Autonomy for University Departments is, thus, still a distant dream to be realised, in sharp contrast with the numerous autonomous colleges in the State.

2.2.4 The autonomous colleges, as it was earlier pointed out, were envisaged by Kothari Commission as only a prelude for their becoming Deemed Universities. Among

the autonomous colleges, Avinashilingam Home Science College recently became a Deemed University.

2.2.5 There was a spurt in the growth of autonomous colleges in 1987-88. Only two colleges were granted autonomy subsequently. Some Colleges which had prepared themselves for autonomy and also applied for the same are still awaiting clearance.

2.2.6 In the case of the oldest autonomous colleges [first batch], the extension of autonomy for the third spell of five years is yet to be formalised by many universities; some colleges have been given extension for a year or two; some colleges continue their autonomy without formal extension. The UGC's policy on funding these colleges is also uncertain. The Colleges which were recently conferred autonomy have been subject to review/inspection even before their completion of first five year term. All these and some of the apprehensions raised against autonomous colleges by the teachers, particularly teacher associations, and some of the public are the general backdrop against which the Government of Tamil Nadu constituted the Committee to review the functioning of autonomous colleges in the State.

2.3 Views on Autonomy:

2.3.1 The apprehensions against the performance of autonomous colleges, in general, have been:

- the curricula have not been substantially revamped to make it application oriented, with sufficient thrust on the local/regional relevance; most of the changes introduced are more formal than structural;
- lack of innovations in methodology of teaching;
- deficiencies in the evaluation system, especially in Continuous Internal Assessment [CIA] under semester system, because of which their credibility is questioned

not only by other colleges but also by the parent University itself;

- inadequate extension component;
- autonomy leads to concentration of enormous powers in the hands of the management, which is likely to use the power against its staff; and
- autonomy encourages elitism.

2.3.2 As opposed to these apprehensions there have also existed views in favour of autonomy. Even the report of the very first Education Commission constituted in Independent India [Radhakrishnan Committee, 1948] pointed out that while the higher education is the responsibility of the Universities and the corresponding activities are confined to the University campuses throughout the World, it is peculiar only to the Indian sub-continent where the predominantly affiliated college system is in force, having higher education entrusted to several of those colleges.

Chapter III

ACADEMIC AUTONOMY

3.1 General

Academic autonomy, as it has been conceptualised and implemented in autonomous colleges, consists of the following components. The autonomy for:

- designing syllabi and academic regulations;
- innovating suitable methodology and techniques of teaching; and
- adopting useful reforms in evaluation system, including the re-structuring of question paper pattern and examination system.

3.2 SYLLABI FORMULATION

3.2.1 Board of Studies:

3.2.1.1 The syllabi formulation is done by the Board of Studies consisting of the concerned faculty members of the College, one or two experts nominated by the parent University, and two or three experts nominated by the College. Sometimes special invitees also attend these Board meetings. In very few colleges [eg. Women's Christian College, Madras and American College, Madurai], student nominees also are there in the Boards of Studies. Rarely representatives from user agencies and alumni are also included.

3.2.1.2 There seems to be some restriction on the College in constituting its Board of Studies. For instance, in Bharathiar University, as per the University statutes governing autonomous colleges, "the colleges have to send the panel of names, for constitution of various Boards of Studies to the University for prior approval". Thus the

University, besides sending its own nominees to the Boards of Studies, decides on the other members as well. It is recommended that the University should allow the autonomous colleges to have a free choice of their nominated experts, without insisting on prior approval by the University.

3.2.1.3 In many Universities, nominations to Boards of Studies are not regularly made, as and when the terms of the existing nominees come to a close. Despite the repeated reminders from the colleges, the parent University takes its own time in sending its nominees. Some College Boards continue to run with the old nominees. There are also instances where the Boards of Studies did not meet for a few years because the University had not sent its nominees. Sometimes, the Board of Studies meetings get postponed as a result of the University nominees not attending the meeting. By and large, many felt that the University nominees made positive contributions towards curricular changes; however, some felt that they could do still better.

3.2.1.4 Though there is no formal provision in UGC Guidelines for student nominees in the Boards of Studies, many colleges seem to give due consideration to the responses from the students, both current and past. On several occasions, many useful revisions had taken place thanks to the suggestions from the students. The Committee is of the opinion that the Board of Studies be reconstituted to include meritorious alumni and user agencies in order to get the proper feedback about the syllabi.

3.2.2 Regional Relevance of Syllabi:

Among the deficiencies in the syllabi, mention must be made about inadequate regional/local orientation and relevance. Of course, most of the colleges have taken earnest efforts in introducing one or two optional/allied papers in every discipline with local application. It is quite

understandable that these institutions are constrained to strike a balance between 'local relevance and academic excellence'. These two do not necessarily go together; sometimes, there is a trade-off between the two; the more a syllabus is locally relevant, the less its comparability to national/international standards; particularly, when the employment potential in a local region is more limited than at the national level, one cannot logically harp upon the local relevance of syllabi beyond its proportion. **The Committee is of the opinion that, besides introduction of locally relevant optional/applied papers, the colleges can introduce field-oriented Project Work at the U.G. and P.G. levels [eg. St. Joseph's College, Tiruchirappalli, A.V.C. College, Mayi aduthurai, Lady Doak College, Madurai, American College, Madurai], that will help the students learn their environment and also get trained in creative and independent thinking, which is a missing element in the current system. As such it is recommended that while the core theory papers may be comparable to universal standards, the local relevance can be given due emphasis through elective/optional papers/project work.**

3.2.3 Syllabus in Modules:

The syllabi in most of the colleges, as pointed out by subject experts lack unitisation or modulisation [division into different modules]. They do not specify the scope and objectives of each paper and hence the students are unable to appreciate the purpose of the papers. Further, the syllabi in most cases are not explained in operational terms; that is, the number of hours required for covering each unit or module in the light of total hours of instruction have not been properly spelt out. As a result, some papers are too stuffy and some papers are too light. Sometimes, the syllabi are quite vague, abstract and non-detailed; this situation gives room for the so-called out-of-syllabus questions when set by external members. **The Committee recommends that the**

syllabi must be utilised wherever it has not already been done.

3.2.4 Curriculum Development Cell:

The draft syllabus is normally prepared by concerned faculty members. In this respect, academic autonomy can be said to percolate down to the individual teacher who teaches the subject. This draft is approved, of course, with necessary modifications suggested by other members. While preparing the draft syllabus, however, the influence of parent University syllabi seems to be quite pronounced; parent University is taken as the 'bench mark' or model on which basis, some changes here and there are included. Generally, a new autonomous College, to start with, safely "adopts" the parent University syllabi as such. Thereafter, only marginal changes are made, with very little substantial innovations. Further, the Board of studies in autonomous colleges, may not have adequate exposure to the different models of syllabi obtaining in various advanced centres of study; many of them are not even aware of the syllabi prepared by the Curriculum Development Cell of the UGC; there is a long time-lag before newly emerging thrust areas in the disciplines get into the syllabi. Under these circumstances, the Committee strongly recommends that the autonomous college establishes a Curriculum Development Cell [CDC] which shall act as an academic resource centre. The CDC shall collect syllabi/curricula from various Universities and advanced centres in the country and also the syllabi prepared by the UGC-Curriculum Development Cell. These resources shall be supplied to the members of the College Boards of Studies, with a view to inspire innovative changes in the curriculum.

3.3 ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

3.3.1 General:

Only a few colleges have formulated their own autonomous regulations. Other colleges follow University regulations regarding attendance, minimum marks for pass, examination remuneration, classification of passed graduates, etc. Some colleges have raised the minimum attendance [S.R. College, Tiruchirapalli] for eligibility to take examination. Very few colleges [American College, Lady Doak College, Women's Christian College] have marginally increased the passing minimum of marks [by 5 marks]; One or two colleges [St. Joseph's College, Trichy] which had lower passing minimum than that of University, had subsequently raised it at par with University. Some colleges have introduced "Distinctions" with first class, though they are not recorded in the University Degree Certificate. The Committee recommends that the colleges be allowed to have reasonable flexibility to have variations from the University regulations provided such variations do not result in dilution of generally accepted University standard. Given this norm, the colleges may introduce innovations, for instance, allowing for adequate flexibility in the choice of subjects by students and also inter-disciplinary programmes.

3.3.2 Credit System:

The credit system which is prevalent only in very few colleges (St. Joseph's College, Tiruchi), would provide scope for the meritorious students to do some extra-courses and thereby earn extra-credits. The Committee recommends that the autonomous colleges may introduce credit system at P.G. level to start with and make available extra-courses with suitable time-table adjustments. The credit system may help mobility of students from one college to another.

3.3.3 Course Structure:

Within the over-all course-structure prescribed by the parent University, the autonomous colleges may be granted reasonable flexibility in the introduction of new courses and other curricular reforms. One of the major difficulties encountered by autonomous colleges while introducing innovative courses, is the non-availability of qualified faculty. If new faculty is to be recruited, it would involve recurrent additional financial commitment. And it may also render the existing faculty surplus. It is suggested that the existing faculty members could reorient/train themselves in order to handle such new courses. The University/State Government may provide for such training facilities which would go a long way in restructuring and innovating academic programmes, with the least dislocation of infrastructure including the faculty position.

3.3.4 Diversity In Syllabus Content:

The syllabus content and the number of papers per discipline seem to vary widely between different autonomous colleges; even within an autonomous college, there are differences in the total number of papers in different disciplines. Such differences have been pointed out by the subject experts [vide: Annexure 6]. The Committee is of the considered view that autonomy should encourage as much diversity as possible in curricular pattern; in the name of uniformity, scope for innovations should not be stifled. Even within a College, different Departments might have different course patterns, if found appropriate to the concerned discipline. However, there must be some correlation between number of instructional hours and marks allotted for the respective papers. On the whole, the number of courses or the subject content should not be less than those prescribed by the University.

3.3.5 Extension Programmes:

In many colleges, a new formal thrust to extension activities has been given. A student is expected to put in minimum attendance and also pass the qualifying test, if any, in any one of the extension programmes offered by the colleges. These extension programmes include N.S.S., N.C.C., Physical Education, Adult Education and other Community oriented programmes. They are clubbed under Part IV, a pass in which is insisted as minimum eligibility to qualify for the Degree; but marks obtained in Part IV are rightly not taken into account for classification purpose [A.N.J.A. College, Sivakasi, N.G.M. College, Pollachi, S.R.M.V. Arts College, Coimbatore, A.V.C. College, Mayiladuthurai, Christian College, Madras and many other colleges in different University areas]. In some colleges, these extension service programmes are christened as an intensive package for an integrated upliftment of select rural areas [SHEPHERD - Science and Humanities for Rural Development - in St. Joseph's College, Trichy and RADAR - Rural Action, Development and Research - in Arul Anandar College, Karumathur]. Such experiments are most desirable, as these will not only expose the students and teachers to the real world situation but also imbibe in them a sense of social consciousness and compassion. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommends that all those colleges, which have not introduced such extension component in their curricula, take earnest efforts to include extension programme as part and parcel of the academic programme. The Universities and the State Government also should accord due recognition to such activities; Part IV accomplishment by students may be recorded in the Degree Certificates, as desired by some colleges.

3.3.6 Value Education:

The inculcation of ethics, moral values, social values such as national integration, communal harmony and cultural

and religious heritage would go a long way in nurturing full personality of a student. Realising this, some colleges, despite lukewarm response from some sections of students, have introduced such courses. These ethics courses are grouped as part V in one or two colleges. Some colleges have prepared and published their own texts [N.G.M. College, Pollachi, Vivekandanda College, Thiruvudakam, S.R.M.V. Arts College, Coimbatore, etc.]. The Committee is of the opinion that courses on ethics, social harmony and national integration, and cultural heritage, be introduced by all colleges; these courses be imparted in an inspiring manner using audio-visuals, special lectures and group discussions. A pass in these courses may only be a secondary goal; the primary purpose should be to inspire the students and inculcate in them such important values in order to shape them into good citizens.

3.3.7. Scope for Self / Directed Study:

The current curricular pattern provides little scope for training the students in the art of independent or self study; unless all papers are taught by the teachers, the students do not feel comfortable in facing the examinations. At least at the tertiary stage of education, students must be able to study a subject/paper by themselves, under informal guidance by teachers, if necessary. Such a system is adopted only in one or two colleges [P.S.G. Arts College, Coimbatore]. The Committee recommends that there can be one or two papers which shall be studied by the students themselves by means of self-study/directed study; this would help develop a sense of independent and creative thinking among the students.

3.3.8 Inter-Collegiate Mobility:

The mobility of students among the autonomous colleges and from autonomous colleges to non-autonomous colleges or vice versa in the middle of the course, is almost

an impossibility at present. This is partly due to difficulty of arriving at equivalence [as syllabi are different] and partly due to the 'superiority feeling' possessed by almost every institution. Under these circumstances, the Committee recommends that Universities must stipulate clear-cut norms/regulations permitting the mobility of students atleast within the University area. Every University must appoint an Academic Equivalence Committee to evolve detailed norms of equivalence between the programmes of different institutions and thereby provide for mobility of students under genuine circumstances.

3.4 TEACHING

3.4.1 The Committee observed from the Interaction with teachers and students [vide: Inspection Reports in the Annexure 5] that in some colleges, some teachers "dictate" notes to the students and also give good marks only to those students who repeat those notes verbatim in the examination answers. Such tendency should be discouraged.

3.4.2 The teaching methods have almost remained the same as those of non-autonomous colleges. Very little use of audio-visuals has been observed. Only during special guest-lectures/seminars, such equipments are used in most of the colleges. The Committee strongly feels that the benefits of autonomy will not be fully realised inspite of revisions effected in syllabi, unless corresponding changes in teaching methods have been introduced. More of group discussions, seminars, exercise orientation, question-answer sessions, micro-teaching, field-visit-studies, etc. may be adopted as frequently as possible. The Committee further recommends that every junior teacher undergoes orientation courses conducted by the Academic Staff Colleges, specially on teaching techniques, which may be organised using the expertise from Technical Teachers Training Institute and

Teachers Education Colleges. Senior teachers must undergo refresher courses atleast once in five years, so that they can keep abreast of the latest developments in the subject.

3.5 EVALUATION

The setting of question paper is done differently in different colleges. It is done by external members only in some colleges, by internal and external members in some and in others jointly by the course teachers and external teachers [American College and Lady Doak College, Madurai]. In some colleges [St. Joseph's College, Tiruchirapalli and Loyola College, Madras], etc.] where the external setting is done, the question papers are subject to review and modifications by the Head of the Departments. In some colleges where the papers are set by internal as well as external teachers, some papers, chosen at random by the Controller, are set by the internal members and others by the external members. The externally set question papers are sometimes considered by students as sub-standard or out of syllabus [Loyola College and Christian College, Madras]. When question papers are set internally, there is an inherent danger of the concerned teacher omitting certain portions in the syllabus both while teaching and while examining. This danger partly exists in joint setting also. These defects must be guarded against. In the case of joint setting, both internal and external members sit together and set the question papers. Question banks are used only in one or two papers on an experimental basis in very few colleges [A.V.V.M. Sri Pushpam College, Poondi]. The Committee recommends that these diverse practices may be permitted to continue as long as question papers are of good quality covering all portions in the syllabi and that there is no leakage of question paper at any stage.

3.5.2 Question Paper Pattern

The pattern of question paper varies from institution to institution and also between different Departments in some colleges. Objective type-questions testing the conceptual understanding of the subject are not found in most of the colleges. Most of them have three components: short answer questions, paragraph type and essay type. Some colleges have unitised their syllabi and questions of 'either or' type are asked giving only internal choice within every unit, which pattern is recommended by UGC, in order to ensure full coverage of syllabus by the teachers and the taught [vide: UGC Document on Minimum Examination Reform]. Hence the Committee recommends that the structure of question paper must be reformed to include objective type questions, exercise-oriented or problem-solving medium-size questions and also essay type questions, to bring out different types of capabilities in the students. Examination reform must be a continuous component in the dynamics of autonomous system. Since no set pattern can be insisted for all papers, the individual Departments may be given certain amount of freedom to suggest a suitable question paper pattern, subject to the above principles.

3.5.3 Valuation:

Excepting a few colleges [Women's Christian College, Lady Doak College, A.N.J.A. College, Sivakasi] which follow double valuation for both U.G. and P.G. levels, most of the colleges follow single valuation at the U.G. and double valuation at the P.G. level. The provision for revaluation exists only in a very few colleges. Some colleges allow for re-totalling only. The Committee recommends that the autonomous colleges, being a small and compact system, could better provide for revaluation facility at the U.G. level.

3.5.4 Supplementary and Improvement Examinations:

Some colleges conduct supplementary examinations (AVC College, Mayiladuthurai), within a month after the publication of results, for those candidates who fail in final semester examinations in order to enable them to catch up with other candidates in pursuing higher studies. The Committee recommends that supplementary examinations may be conducted for the candidates falling in the final Semester. The candidates who had passed with lower marks in end-semester/CIA examinations may be allowed to reappear for improvement of marks.

3.5.5 Continuous Internal Assessment:

3.5.5.1 Almost all the autonomous colleges follow semester system with Continuous Internal Assessment [CIA]. However, at Government Arts College, Kumbakonam and Erode, Arts College, Erode, CIA was introduced for the first batch of students, but it was dropped subsequently; Gobi Arts College, Gobi did not introduce CIA at all, because of alleged bitter experience the teachers had with unruly students over the CIA marks, long back while under University of Madras]. These colleges which do not have CIA may be advised to introduce CIA at the earliest, in due recognition of the merits of the CIA.

3.5.5.2 The proportion of CIA in total marks varies from 20 per cent to 50 per cent. Most of the colleges in Madurai Kamaraj University [including those which were granted autonomy quite recently] follow 50 per cent CIA weightage on the ground that they had 25 per cent CIA even while under non-autonomous set-up. These colleges, even to start with, introduced 50 per cent CIA. The colleges in Bharathiar University have followed a "reverse" trend; many of them have reduced CIA weightage from 40 to 50 per cent to 20 to 25 per cent. Instead of progressively increasing the CIA component, these colleges thought it prudent to bring

down the CIA component perhaps due to the declining credibility for CIA marks. Most of the older autonomous colleges maintain 50 per cent CIA. Some of these colleges have also, internalised the paper-setting and valuation work, to some extent.

3.5.5.3 The CIA composition includes assignments, tests [of different duration], seminars and attendance [in some colleges]. The Committee feels that, unless the campus conditions warrant, mere attendance need not enable students to gain marks.

3.5.5.4 The CIA tests, in some colleges [particularly women's colleges] are too frequent and too many, leaving little time for even assimilation of the subject, leave alone partaking in extra-curricular activities. Further, there is no correspondence between intensity of CIA work and weightage for CIA marks. The Committee would like to avoid too many CIA tests; may be, three tests are quite optimal. In case of genuine absentees from CIA tests a retest may be conducted. The answer scripts must be returned to the students immediately after valuation and the students' claim for rectification of mis-valuation, if any, must be properly heeded to in order to instill a sense of internal confidence and credibility.

3.5.5.5 The assignments are generally considered to be stereotyped and some times copied from other students. Different assignments may be given to different students, requiring them to refer to different sources in the library. Some teachers do not seem to return the assignments to the students, after valuing them; assignments may be of use to the students in preparing for examination and hence must be returned to them.

3.5.5.6 Most of the students in every autonomous college feel genuinely distressed over the scant regard shown to their CIA marks by other educational institutions

and sometimes by the potential employers. Some of the students observe that even the Semester Examination or End Examination marks are discounted by others. In order to overcome this serious difficulty, the Committee strongly recommends that Universities conduct a centralised entrance-test for screening the candidates for admission to P.G. courses in the affiliated colleges and University Departments. Students may be admitted on the basis of entrance test marks, giving substantial weightage to the entrance test.

3.5.6 University Ranks:

Another grievance from the brighter students of these autonomous colleges has been that they are deprived of University Ranks/Medals. Their contention is that better students join the autonomous colleges and are deprived of getting University ranks. The Universities may invite the rank-holders of individual autonomous colleges to the University Convocation and issue the college - level medals to them. This may, to some extent, redress the grievances among them.

Chapter IV

ADMINISTRATIVE AUTONOMY

4.1. General

Under administrative autonomy, the issues relating to the composition and functioning of Governing Body, Academic Council, Planning and Evaluation Board, Grievance Redressal Cell, and College Development Council are discussed. Further the chapter deals with specific issues such as the powers and responsibilities of the Principal, Management, need for reorienting their outlook, decentralisation, and leadership.

4.2. Need for Reorientation:

4.2.1 The autonomous bodies and committees have been, by and large, constituted in the autonomous colleges in accordance with the UGC Revised Guidelines, giving due representation to teachers. This organisational structure has its own merits. Yet, the actions of the management are viewed with suspicion and mistrust by the teachers, particularly the members of teachers' associations. Such teachers are of the opinion that the managements of autonomous colleges have overnight gained enormous powers which may be used against their interests. If it is a minority institution, the suspicion among some teachers becomes much more as they feel that even as affiliated college, the management of minority institutions enjoy more power and when such institutions are conferred autonomy, their powers become enormous. Under such conditions, there is a need for abundant caution. The management should take the teachers into confidence and enlist their co-operation to dispel the misgivings. A copy of the UGC Revised Guidelines may be made available immediately to all the teachers. Decisions by willing consensus must be the rule, without which decisions are likely to be counter productive. In other words, the dictum that one should not

only do justice but also appear to do justice, holds very much relevant here. Hence, the Committee strongly feels that the administration of autonomous colleges requires a new style rather than a new organisational structure and that the management of autonomous college must change their style of functioning for ensuring teachers' participation in decision making and by making the system open and responsive. In all matters, including allocation and utilisation of autonomous funds, the teachers must be taken into confidence and their views duly considered.

4.2 A number of teachers of autonomous colleges need to be trained in curriculum planning and reforms. A periodical motivation cum-training programme be arranged by the respective Universities, through their Academic Staff Colleges, and necessary funding be provided by the UGC for the purpose. The Management/Principals/Controllers of Examinations/Heads of the Departments also be given appropriate orientation courses. The Academic Staff College should organise atleast one or two programmes per year exclusively for autonomous colleges; such programmes must be also offered to such colleges who intend to prepare themselves for autonomous status.

4.3. Governing Body:

4.3.1 The Governing Body, the nodal agency of autonomous administration, as envisaged under UGC Revised guidelines [vide: Annexure 7] has been constituted in almost all the autonomous colleges. This body consists of Principal, two senior most teachers, three representatives from the Management, one representative from university, one representative from State Government and one representative from UGC. Regarding the composition of Governing Body, there seems to be some confusion about the number of management representatives. The guidelines suggest that their membership shall be three; but in some

of the autonomous colleges, their number is more than three, with risk of over-dominating other members in decision making. The Private College Regulation Act of Government of Tamilnadu envisages a management structure for all privately managed colleges which is at variance with that recommended in UGC Guidelines for autonomous colleges. The section on Governing Body of the Tamil Nadu Act [sec.11] is applicable to all private colleges including autonomous colleges. The Committee recommends that the UGC Revised Guidelines be suitably incorporated into the Rules of the Tamil Nadu Private College Regulation Act. As the managements of private colleges would like to retain the powers to manage the property, the UGC may be addressed to reconsider the functions assigned to Governing Body relating to property management. Regarding the functions of the Governing Body relating to laying down of service conditions and emoluments for teaching staff, procedure for selection/recruitment of teaching and non-teaching staff etc., the State Government may evolve suitable strategy.

4.3.2 During the course of the inspection of 43 autonomous colleges by the Committee, on several occasions, the Principals and managements focussed on the constraints faced by them in filling up the vacancies of teaching posts. The Government may take due note of this problem and ensure timely action.

4.4. Academic Council:

4.4.1 Next to the GB, the apex academic authority of autonomous colleges is Academic Council [AC]. The composition of AC as per the UGC Revised Guidelines [vide: Annexure 7] seems to be rather restrictive. The Colleges according to the local conditions, can broad-base the composition of autonomous bodies and committees, giving more representation to teachers/students of different cadres [even if it would marginally contravene the UGC

guidelines]. For instance, the UGC revised guidelines suggest that the Academic Council shall consist of four teacher nominees apart from the Heads of Departments of the College. This may look sometimes too restrictive. Other teachers may feel deprived of their participation in decision making. Giving more representation to teachers would largely enhance the sense of participation and involvement among the teachers. Hence it is recommended that the colleges may be permitted to widen the composition of autonomous bodies wherever possible and necessary. For instance, besides the Head of the Department one more teacher from every Department [on rotation by cadre] may be nominated to the Academic Council.

4.4.2 A good number of Colleges have failed to include student nominees in the Academic Council. While the Guidelines clearly indicate that the AC shall include "two post-graduate and two under-graduate students, one each representing major disciplines and one outstanding sportsman of the College nominated by the Principal on the basis of merit" [academic excellence]. Even in those colleges where the students are nominated to AC, many students are not aware who are the student nominees in the AC; in some cases, even the nominees themselves plead ignorance of their nominations. In one or two Colleges [Lady Doak College] as many as 16 students [2 per every course] are nominated to the AC. In the case of one year course like B.Ed./M.Ed., the Colleges of Education may nominate one or two from their alumni as well; the current students, while attending the AC meeting at the beginning of the academic year would be quite new to the system and hence may not meaningfully partake in discussions. The Committee recommends that there must not be any lapse in duly nominating student representatives to the Academic Council, as per UGC norms. The provision for student nominees in the Academic Council must be duly notified and the Principal must give publicity about the existence of student nominees; and the latter must ascertain from

their fellow-students about their genuine academic grievances.

4.4.3 Some colleges do not seem to maintain proceedings/minutes of their Academic Council meetings properly. The procedure for the conduct of the meeting [calling for agenda from members etc.] has not been specified. Another lacuna observed in many colleges has been that all the academic regulations [updated] are not brought out in a single volume and they are not generally made available to the students. Hence, not all students are aware of the changes in regulations; in one or two colleges, different people [including the Controller of Examinations] give different versions of their regulations leading to avoidable confusion. The Committee, therefore, recommends that all academic regulations be periodically updated and made available to students so that they can be aware of the procedures and conditions well in advance. Amendments to regulations, as and when effected, must be displayed in the notice board and sent as circular to class rooms.

4.4.4 Many students are not aware of the concept and objectives of autonomy and consequently the students do not have a clear perception and appreciation of autonomy. Hence, the Committee feels that all the students in autonomous colleges be appraised of the concept, aims and objectives of autonomy and their privileges and advantages under the system, at the beginning of the academic year.

4.5. Planning and Evaluation Board:

The Planning and Evaluation Board is envisaged as an important body under autonomous system. Unfortunately, this Board has not taken seriously the task of planning for academic development. Almost all the colleges have constituted the Planning Board; but they seldom meet

and deliberate on planning for future development of the institutions. It is vital that every educational institution prepares a Perspective Plan, lists out the priorities and chalks out the programmes of action. The progress of such plan must be also periodically assessed and monitored. If all the colleges are just identical and stereotyped in their academic programmes, autonomy would lose its significance. Currently, in many colleges, there is very little academic planning; all are done on an ad hoc basis. The Committee recommends that every autonomous college devotes adequate and serious attention to the aspect of planning. The college shall prepare a 10 year perspective plan and also the annual plans for phased action. There must be an institutional thrust and orientation for every autonomous college. The Planning and Evaluation Board may also conduct self-evaluation of autonomous performance annually.

4.6. Appeal and Grievance Committee [AGC]:

In many autonomous colleges, the AGC is often mistaken for Discipline Committee or the Committee which looks into examination offences only. The AGC consists of one or two senior faculty members, Students Welfare Officer and one or two student nominees. Actually, the purpose of the AGC is to ease tension in the Campus by paying due attention to the emerging grievances then and there. Sometimes, the AGC, without waiting for the formal complaints/representations, may have to take the initiative in arranging for redressal of potential grievances. The AGC may be headed by one of the senior most motivated faculty member who has excellent rapport with the students. The Committee recommends the constitution of Appeal and Grievance Committee in every autonomous college; it may take active steps to redress the student/faculty grievances and thereby improve the campus atmosphere. This Committee shall also serve as the

Peace Committee as suggested by Prof. Yash Pal, former Chairman of UGC.

4.7. Continuity of Faculty:

There is one problem that is peculiar to Government autonomous colleges; that is, the transfer of teaching staff, as the Government servants are liable to be transferred once in three years. Frequent transfer of teachers may lead to inconsistency and instability of the system. Therefore, the Committee recommends that in the case of autonomous government colleges, the Principal and the teachers should not be frequently transferred; whenever transfers are made, as far as possible the transfers may be done among the autonomous colleges. While transferring, care may be taken to avoid large-scale transfer, unless circumstances otherwise warrant.

4.8. Powers of the Principal:

The Principal of an autonomous college has certain special responsibilities by virtue of the conferment of autonomy. He should not be required to get orders of the private management or the higher authorities of collegiate education for executing the duties arising out of autonomy. This is quite necessary for the effective discharge of autonomous responsibilities. Therefore the Committee recommends that the Principal of an autonomous government college must be delegated with adequate powers by the governing Body of the College and other autonomous committees. In respect of private autonomous colleges, the Principal, while being accountable, may be provided with adequate freedom and powers of decision making. There is a need for a change in the attitude of Management and its style of functioning and they must accept the concept of "teachers' participation in management".

4.9. Additional Staff Requirements:

In due recognition of additional administrative burden in autonomous colleges, the Government/Management may consider adoption of liberal norms in the sanction of secretarial staff for Controller's Office, etc. to these institutions, in order to improve the administrative system.

4.10. The Role of Dean of College Development Council:

Universities must collect and disseminate the information regarding different schemes of College Development sponsored by various funding agencies from time to time. Many times, lack of information and guidance handicaps the Autonomous Colleges in availing of funds and schemes. For want of fulfilment of some small technical requirements such as filling up of applications and preparation of project proposals, the funding agencies keep their cases unprocessed. The Committee recommends that the Dean, College Development Council, must play an effective role of liaison between the Colleges and the funding agencies like UGC/State Government/University. The Dean's Office must cater to Autonomous Colleges as well as non-autonomous ones.

4.11. Workload of Teachers:

The workload for teachers in autonomous colleges is often cited as "heavy", compared to the corresponding workload in non-autonomous colleges. In many colleges, the teachers pleaded with the Committee [vide: Inspection Reports in the Annexure 5] that the government should adopt different workload norms in sanctioning teaching posts in the autonomous colleges. Their argument is that the CIA work hours, involving periodical tests, seminars, assignments etc., must be reckoned as part of the workload and accordingly

additional posts must be sanctioned. Some teachers grumble over this additional work. Some teachers however feel that though it involves extra work and responsibilities, they are happy to bear them and they take legitimate pride in implementing their own syllabi and academic reforms. In this context, it is worth recalling what the UGC Guidelines state regarding the workload for College/University teachers: The teachers have to work for 40 hours per week, apportioning these 40 hours on teaching, examination, tutorials, preparation of teaching, supervision of extra-curricular work and departmental administrative work. Taking fair cue from these guidelines one should understand that assignment and conduct of test form part of the work-load of teachers in all colleges. In other words the conduct of periodical tests, seminars, etc. and giving assignments is the responsibility of the teachers. In autonomous colleges the evaluation is used to declare the final results. In other colleges the marks in tests etc. are not taken into consideration in declaring the final results. It is true that the autonomous college teachers have "marginally" higher workload than in some of the non-autonomous colleges. However, this is compensated by some of the advantages like academic freedom, the teachers of autonomous colleges enjoyed.

4.12. Decentralisation:

The purpose of creating many bodies and committees in autonomous colleges is to distribute the responsibilities and ensure accountability for their fulfilment. Decentralisation also means mutual respect and understanding. The bodies and different functionaries should have clear-cut roles to play and they must desist from embarking into others' domain. In some institutions, the faculty have some grievance that academic regulations are dictated by the management without formal consideration and approval of the Academic Council. The management shall not interfere in academic matters; their responsibility

Faculty and Administration.

17-B, Sri Surobindo Marg.

New Delhi-110016

DOC, No.....

Date.....

D-9909

21-1-98

should be to support and execute the programmes designed by academics. Similarly the Principal must give free hand to the faculty heads and their colleagues in curricular matters, subject to the approval of Board of Studies and Academic Council. In short, for effective and smooth administration of autonomous colleges, there should be meaningful decentralisation of powers and responsibilities.

4.13. Leadership:

The Principal is the prime mover behind the whole system. The committee was convinced of the fact that wherever the leadership provided by the Principal has been dynamic and inspiring, the autonomy in such colleges has been an exemplary success. Of course, the effectiveness of a Principal, apart from his or her own leadership qualities, depends largely upon the positive attitude of the management and the co-operation of teacher colleagues.

Chapter V

FINANCIAL AUTONOMY

5.1 General:

The autonomous colleges are eligible for special financial assistance from UGC . The State Government does not give any preferential treatment in working out their financial requirements. All the private colleges receive from the State Government salary and maintenance funds only; all other expenditure have to be borne from what they get by way of special fees from the students; and all the development expenditure including library development are met from the UGC assistance and their own management contributions. The developmental assistance [capital expenditure] mostly comes from UGC and non-governmental sources. The institutions are very much constrained to consolidate, expand and diversify their academic programmes for want of financial assistance for infra-structural development including new buildings. The Government is almost "neutral" between its autonomous and non-autonomous colleges; the autonomous colleges are left to manage within the autonomous grants. The autonomous Engineering colleges [Government College of Technology, Coimbatore] continue to be autonomous with no autonomous assistance so far from the UGC for want of clearance from AICTE . Such colleges and others which do not regularly receive autonomous grants often are left with no other go than to avoid convening their Academic Council and Board of Studies meetings.

5.2 Autonomous Grant:

5.2.1 The UGC guidelines indicate that an autonomous college is eligible to receive autonomous grant of Rs.7 lakhs per annum provided it has six U.G. and six P.G. courses; the colleges with less number of courses would receive Rs.2 to 6 lakhs. This autonomous assistance is

provided to enable the college to meet the expenditure involved on items such as:

- additional faculty including visiting faculty;
- additional administrative/laboratory/library staff;
- redesigning of courses, development of teaching and learning material, organisation of workshops, seminars, orientation course for teachers, faculty exchange and participation of teachers in conference, etc.;
- examination reforms, development of question-banks, etc.;
- provision of audio-visual aids [TV, VCR, Video cassettes, etc.];
- development of monitoring instruments and evaluation guidelines;
- improvement of laboratories;
- strengthening of libraries;
- cultural activities and sports; and
- procurement of office equipment.

5.2.2 The UGC releases the first instalment of the grant in respect of the Arts and Science Colleges soon after the grant of autonomy. But thereafter, the release of grants becomes uncertain. The colleges which started off with a lot of enthusiasm and expectations, sooner than later, reach a stage of uneasy anxiety, if not a complete disillusionment. It takes a long time for the committed grants to be released. At the time of inspection, it was brought to the notice of the Committee that the older autonomous colleges [1978-79 batch] have not received their assistance for the last 3 to 4 years. In the light of above conditions, the Committee strongly feels that the UGC must accord top priority to this and avoid any delay in sanction/release of funds. As the

State Government has created a rolling fund in respect of Government autonomous colleges, the private managements may also create rolling funds so that they can make up during delay in receipt of autonomous grants from the UGC.

5.2.3 The older autonomous colleges [in their third spell of five years - started in seventies] face a real problem of uncertainty. Some Universities have not "formally" extended autonomy or extended only for a year or two. The UGC is also maintaining silence as to whether it is committed to support autonomous colleges even after 10-15 years. This uncertainty needs to be removed. It is recommended that UGC shall continue to assist autonomous colleges.

5.2.4 The engineering colleges which became autonomous in eighties are yet to get their autonomous grants, for want of clearance from AICTE. This causes serious hardships. It is recommended that this issue may be sorted out by the UGC early. The UGC may arrange for discussion with the AICTE to evolve a procedure for sanction of grant to autonomous engineering colleges and for speedy release of grants.

5.2.5 The autonomous funds are generally utilised for the equipment of Controller's Office as the first priority; computer, copier machine and other office appliances have been purchased by almost all the autonomous colleges. After meeting this requirement, the colleges take up establishing some central facility of computer centre and reprographics in order to cater to the teachers and students. The recurring expenditure incidental to curricular reforms, conduct of meeting of the faculty, Board of Studies and Academic Council, etc. become another major item. The strengthening of libraries, appointment of part-time/visiting faculty, conduct of seminars, sponsoring faculty for FIP, conferences/orientation programmes account for relatively small share of autonomous expenditure in many colleges.

The Committee recommends that all autonomous colleges should earmark and utilise as much proportion of autonomous grants as possible on improving academic infrastructure including strengthening library facilities and their utilisation, laboratory facilities for the Departments and on visiting/guest faculty, special lectures on thrust areas. Since the conduct of examination can be made mostly self-supporting, the autonomous grants must be made better use of on improving academic quality of the college. The extension programmes for students can also be effectively organised using autonomous grants.

5.3 Government Grants:

5.3.1 In order to give some flexibility, it is suggested that the State Government atleast on a trial basis sanction "block grants" to these institutions, so that they can meaningfully plan and develop their institutions and their academic programmes. This may be sanctioned on the lines of State Government's sanction of block grants to Universities.

5.3.2 Alternatively, one of the far-reaching suggestions, regarding finance of autonomous colleges, made by one of the college managements [N.G.M. Autonomous College, Pollachi] deserves careful and cautious consideration; that is, the State Government could bear all the capital expenditure items of autonomous colleges, leaving the maintenance/salary expenditure to be borne by the concerned colleges, by allowing them to re-structure fees payable by students. And such an arrangement, would help develop proper infra-structure of the colleges and at the same time ensure a self-supporting system of higher education with built-in accountability from all concerned. The Committee recommends that this suggestion, though largely in tune

with the spirit of NPE, 1986, may be examined, keeping in view of the socio-economic implications.

5.4 Resource Generation:

5.4.1 The autonomous colleges on their part, must also explore the possibilities of generating their own resources, among others, by encouraging consultancy services by the faculty members and getting as many sponsored research projects as possible.

5.4.2 From a cursory look into the economics of examination in autonomous colleges, it is seen that a college with 1,000 and odd students can, not only break-even but also make some marginal surplus on examination account. Some of the colleges with more than 2,000 to 3,000 students can definitely make some considerable surplus. The Committee recommends that the colleges harness the examination surplus and make good use of them for campus development and provision of amenities to students. The colleges can also find means of generating more surplus by judiciously economising expenditure.

5.5 Finance Committee:

The Finance Committee, as suggested by the UGC shall consist of the Principal as Chairman, a nominee of the Governing Body of the college for a period of two years, one senior-most teacher of the college to be nominated in rotation by the Principal for two years and one nominee of the University. The Finance Committee will be advising Governing Body on all financial matters and will meet atleast twice a year. All proposals relating to creation of posts, sanction of capital expenditure, annual accounts, financial estimates and audit reports shall be laid before the Finance Committee for advice and recommendations to the Governing Body. Thus, the Finance Committee shall

recommend on priorities of allocation of funds under various heads. It shall impartially study the representations received from various Departments/teachers and advise on their priority. In some of the colleges, the Finance Committee does not meet regularly; many times the Finance Committee is requested to ratify, after the decisions had been made and implemented by the college authorities. This should be avoided. The Committee recommends that the budget allocations for different Departments be made, after consulting the respective Departments regarding their requirements. The Finance Committee, where teachers are represented, shall be provided with all the relevant data on financial receipts/expenditures from time to time; and the approval/recommendations of the Finance Committee be sought in time for various items of expenditure. Openness in financial administration would go a long way in removing several possible misgivings in the system.

5.6 Elitism

5.6.1 Most of the teacher associations often raise the question that the autonomy breeds elitism. In other words, autonomy perpetuates inequity among institutions of higher education and enables the development of elitist institutions at the expense of non-autonomous institutions. Thus, the associationists often assert that they are opposed to autonomy in "principle", though not against the way it is implemented in their respective colleges. College-specific criticism by the respective associations was not voiced in many cases.

5.6.2 The committee, appreciates the concern of the teacher associations for the upliftment of common/backward colleges. But it is of the opinion that in any system of education, anywhere in the world, there is not going to be a complete parity among institutions. Always some institutions, with better endowment and potentials will

develop faster and establish themselves as centres of excellence, while some other institutions are bound to relatively lag behind for various reasons. Even before the introduction of autonomy, some of today's autonomous colleges, in social esteem, were far better, if not excellent, institutions. So, with or without autonomy, these institutions would remain better than others. And such a trend is not only inevitable but also desirable, in the sense, that we need to have atleast a few centres of excellence in a larger system of education.

Chapter VI

INTER-RELATIONSHIPS AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

6.1 UNIVERSITIES AND AUTONOMOUS COLLEGES

6.1.1 As far as autonomous colleges are concerned, the Universities play the role of "accreditation body". Though these colleges continue to be technically affiliated with the University, there is a vast difference between them and non-autonomous affiliated colleges. The Universities, through their nominees in Governing Body, Board of Studies, Academic Council, Finance Committee of the autonomous colleges seek to have a first hand feel of the maintenance of standards in these institutions; their standards must be atleast at par with that of the Universities. Only with that implicit understanding, the Degrees are awarded with the emblem of the Universities. As an accreditation body does not interfere with or restrict the functioning of its member institutions, the University also shall not be a restrictive/monitoring body; it shall suggest, encourage and promote the standards and academic freedom in autonomous colleges.

6.1.2 Criteria of Selection:

6.1.2.1 The Universities have the primary and direct responsibility of maintaining the standards in autonomous institutions whereas other bodies such as State Government and University Grants Commission have a limited and indirect role to play in this direction. Therefore, the Universities must take adequate care in identifying the right type of institutions for autonomous status, by evolving and applying an objective criteria of selection. The indicators may vary from institution to institution, depending upon their locale, objectives and status. But, by

and large, there must be a general consensus over the major components of the criteria. **The Committee generally concurs with the following criteria outlined in the UGC Revised Guidelines:**

- **Academic reputation and previous performance in University examinations and their academic/ co- curricular activities.**
- **Academic attainments of the faculty.**
- **The mode of selection of students and teachers viz. whether such selection is without regard to caste, creed or social class.**
- **Physical facilities eg. library, accommodation and equipment.**
- **Institutional management, viz., whether it is motivated by and responsive to academic**
- **The financial resources that the management/State Government can provide for the development of the institution[s].**
- **The responsiveness of the administrative structure to the views of staff and students.**
- **Extent of academic freedom enjoyed by the faculty for advanced scholarship, research and experimentation involvement in educational innovation and reforms.**

6.1.2.2 On the whole, the emphasis must be more on the motivation and potentialities of the institutions rather than their past achievements, which at times might be just historical accident. In other words, autonomy is not merely a reward or recognition of the institution's past performance but also an opportunity to be more innovative and creative and raise academic standards.

6.1.2.3 In according autonomous status to a college, no other extraneous considerations should prevail over. Many times, it is alleged that some of the college managements show interest in attaining autonomous status either for availing grants for developing the college infrastructure or for their becoming "more important" in having a say over various spheres of academic administration. Both these considerations, though may be true, should be discounted by the Committee which inspects a college to decide whether it is fit for autonomous status.

6.1.3 Act and Statutes:

6.1.3.1 The University Act/Statutes must clearly specify the working relationship between the Universities and autonomous colleges. Some of the Universities in Tamil Nadu are yet to spell out these in more clear terms. Interpretation of provisions in the Act/Statutes already specified in this regard must be liberal enough to facilitate the effective functioning of autonomous colleges.

6.1.3.2 The Universities, while advocating and seeking autonomy "upto" themselves, are not very enthusiastic in allowing the autonomy percolate down to their colleges designated as "autonomous". It is only a reflection of Universal human tendency; everyone wants autonomy upto him and not below him. The UGC in its guidelines has quoted the Himachal Pradesh University Act, 1970 as the model. This Act reads, among others, as follows: "the extent to which the courses may be varied and the manner of holding examinations by such [autonomous] college or department as the case may be, shall be determined in each case by the University". This provision is amenable to interpretation and misinterpretation. Mostly, the power centers of the University system are likely to misinterpret and impose their own yardstick as per their whims and fancies.

Many other University Acts have also followed similar pattern.

6.1.3.3 The autonomous colleges can have U.G. and P.G. programmes under autonomy. The M.Phil./Ph.D. programmes provide adequate scope for teacher/scholar autonomy even under non-autonomous system and hence, these programmes may continue to be under the University.

6.1.4 Freedom to Innovate:

The insistence of University's course-structure and pattern on autonomous colleges has been discussed in detail in the Chapter on Academic Autonomy. **The Committee reiterates that enough freedom and flexibility be given to autonomous colleges, subject to the condition that the University standards are not diluted.**

6.1.5 Interactions:

6.1.5.1 **There must be a forum which provides for exchange of information/ideas among the autonomous colleges. This forum can be sponsored by the respective Universities.** All the Principals of autonomous colleges in the University region shall periodically [may be, twice in a year] meet under the chairmanship of Vice-Chancellor and discuss their problems and evolve strategies pertaining to autonomy. Such useful dialogue can be extended on inter-University basis also.

6.1.5.2 **The nominees from autonomous colleges may be invited to attend the University's academic council meetings [wherever not already provided for], as special invitees, in order to enable them get a better acquaintance of on-going academic changes in the University system from time to time.**

6.1.5.3 **The University must set up an example by granting autonomy to its own Departments/Schools,**

and that caused by exogenous factors will be a negative index)

- Library Index which may be computed on the basis of the following : number of books and journals available in library; number of books/journals added per annum; duration of library working hours; reading room facility in proportion to the number of students, intensity of daily issue of books to the teachers and students and the number of readers visiting the library;
- Number of teachers who are sponsored to attend FIP, Seminars/Conferences/Workshops;
- Number of Professional Conferences/Seminars organised by the Colleges;
- Use of infra-structural facilities including audio- visual equipments;
- Number of publications and other academic distinctions by the faculty members.
- Satisfactory self-appraisal by the teachers/Principal; and
- A system of feedback from students for the benefit of teachers.

6.2 STATE GOVERNMENT AND AUTONOMOUS COLLEGES:

6.2.1 The State Government of Tamil Nadu deserves appreciation for its progressive attitude towards the concept of autonomous colleges [more than 40 per cent of the autonomous colleges in the country are in Tamil Nadu]. Whether it is 10 + 2 + 3 pattern, or vocationalisation of Plus Two stream or autonomy for colleges, the Tamil Nadu Government has always been a pioneer in introducing educational reforms in letter and spirit. The Committee, while recording its deep appreciation, would like to make the

following suggestions to strengthen and reinforce the autonomy of colleges. Some of these suggestions may be generally relevant to the tertiary sector of education.

6.2.2 Problem of Input:

The autonomous colleges have been quite ambitious in upgrading their syllabi and standards. But they encounter a ticklish situation of progressively declining quality of the student-input. The students who pass out of Plus-Two stream, it is generally pointed out by the college teachers, are inferior in quality to their earlier counterparts who underwent P.U.C., then-conducted by colleges; and this situation has arisen, despite the substantial improvement in Plus-Two syllabi. What really happens is that the Plus One syllabi is either ignored or haphazardly learnt as there is no central examination on Plus-One portions. Thus the students simply skip 50 per cent of the course and still pass out "creditably". As the students concentrate on the subject papers only, giving scant attention to language studies, their language and communication skills are also not as good as their knowledge in the subjects. Under these conditions, the curricular improvement in autonomous colleges [or for that matter in non-autonomous colleges also] could not be pushed through. To ensure complete and effective coverage of Plus-One and Plus-Two syllabi, a comprehensive examination be conducted covering syllabi of both Plus-One and Plus-Two courses.

6.2.3 Administration and Finance:

Academic Autonomy shall become a reality only when it is backed by adequate administrative and fiscal freedom and powers. Somehow, many people, including some educational administrators assume that the autonomous institutions can enjoy "full" academic autonomy without administrative and financial powers. As it happens, whether it is an University or a College, the so-called

autonomy enjoyed by them is only partial due to financial/administrative constraints . The Committee, therefore, strongly feels that the concept of autonomy is an integrated entity with immediate and natural linkages among academic, administrative and fiscal autonomy. Unless the administration and finances are inherently strengthened with necessary freedom and flexibility, real autonomy can not be realised.

6.2.4 Extension of Autonomy to New Colleges:

The degree of success among the existing autonomous colleges, of course, varies from institution to institution; even in a given institution, the success pattern differs from department to department. Though all the institutions/departments have initiated well-meaning efforts from their own perspectives, the actual achievements have not been uniformly impressive, may be due to institution-specific constraints and problems. Some of these constraints had existed in some form or other in these institutions even before they became autonomous. In general, the autonomous colleges in the State have undertaken sincere efforts in implementing the academic reforms as envisaged under the UGC guidelines, within the constraint from the parent universities, State Government and UGC. Moreover, it is difficult to use a common yard-stick and evaluate the autonomous performance of all the institutions in terms of specific quantitative indicators. The Committee is generally convinced of the overall success of autonomous colleges in the State and therefore recommends that autonomy may be extended to other institutions in stages, on selective basis.

6.2.5 State Council for Higher Education [SCHE]:

The proposed SCHE may, among others, be assigned with the responsibility of overall planning, policy formulation and evolving development strategies relating to autonomous colleges in the State, from time to time.

6.2.6 Advisory Body on Autonomous Colleges:

At the University level, an Advisory Body on Autonomous Colleges may be constituted. This body may periodically review the general progress of autonomous colleges and suggest suitable measures for improvement of the system.

6.3 UGC AND AUTONOMOUS COLLEGES

6.3.1 Autonomous Grants:

Needless to emphasise again [as discussed in previous chapters] that the UGC should take immediate steps to clear all the arrears of grants to the autonomous colleges and enable them implement autonomous academic programmes.

6.3.2 Special Section for Autonomous Colleges in UGC Office:

The delay in processing of papers by the UGC relating to autonomous colleges is partly due to absence of a separate Section/Cell in the UGC Office to specially look after the affairs of these institutions. At present, one of the existing Officers has been assigned with this additional responsibility and hence the procedural delay. The Committee recommends that UGC sets up a separate section for release of grants to autonomous colleges, so that release of grants to these colleges is not tied up with the release of grants to other colleges in the University area. Further in order to ensure uninterrupted flow of funds to those colleges, the UGC must earmark certain amount each year for autonomous colleges.

6.3.3 Annual Clearing:

As there are 43 autonomous colleges in the State [more than 40 per cent of the autonomous colleges in the

country are located within Tamil Nadu], the UGC may arrange for annual clearing of pending claims/proposals of the autonomous colleges at any central place in the State. This would help avoid unnecessary delay and uncertainty and also frequent trips by the Principals to UGC office at Delhi. A Regional Office of UGC in South [a long pending plea] may obviate a lot of hardship.

6.3.4 Autonomy for Professional Colleges:

The UGC must sort out the lingering uncertainty over the autonomous Engineering Colleges. All these colleges are generally "accredited" institutions as per the general norms of standards prescribed by AICTE; otherwise no University or UGC would have granted them autonomous status. As a reasonable way out, the Committee recommends that the AICTE may also nominate a member to the Initial Commission which goes into the question of considering an institution for granting autonomous status, so that the report will be a joint Committee report and AICTE can process the same common report and provide necessary funds. This may be taken up on priority basis since so far no autonomous engineering college has received autonomous grants since 1987-88 [including the college which was getting earlier].

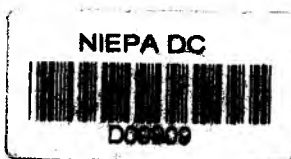
6.3.5 Information Dissemination:

It would be appreciated if the UGC shares with these autonomous colleges the guidelines/curricular reforms as suggested by UGC and other agencies from time to time. The communication gap leaves many schemes untouched by the target group. Many of the special schemes such as support to rural/women's colleges, backward areas, etc. are least known to the potential beneficiaries. The Universities, which receive such circulars/information, should instantly disseminate them among autonomous colleges; many times such

dissemination does not occur. Towards this, the UGC may supply their printed brochures on various schemes, in adequate numbers to the Universities for immediate distribution to the affiliated colleges, avoiding the delay in making copies.

6.4 Concluding Remarks:

A careful perusal through the inspection reports and subject experts' comments on the syllabi, regulations and question papers of individual autonomous colleges [vide: Annexures 5 and 6] would give sufficient indication as to the performance of various autonomous colleges in the State. It is true that there are degrees of variation in their success. In almost every college, there is both the brighter side and negative side. Of course, in many colleges the positive side overweigh the negative side; wherever there are deficiencies, attempts are being made to remedy the same. And autonomy is a continuous process aiming at academic excellence. In general, the autonomous colleges in the State have undertaken sincere efforts in implementing the academic reforms as envisaged under the UGC guidelines, within the constraints. The Committee is generally convinced of the overall success of autonomous colleges in the State and therefore recommends that autonomy may be extended to other institutions in stages, on selective basis.



LIBRARY & DOCUMENTATION CENTRE
National Institute of Educational
Planning and Administration.
7-B, Sri Aurobindo Marg,
New Delhi-110016
DOC. No D-9909
Date 27-7-98