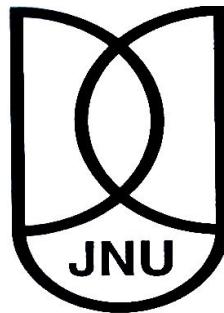


**TRACING THE EVOLUTION OF IDEA AND PRACTICE OF  
UNIVERSITY AUTONOMY IN INDIA**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the award of the degree of*

**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

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**DECLARATION**

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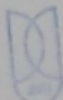
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## Introduction

Universities as institutions of higher education are a fundamental section of the social fiber. Traditionally they were seen only as sites of learning and acquiring degrees. However, since modernity they have become sites of research, sites of political confrontation, demands, experimentation and much more. They have been regarded as key institutions in the process of development and change, here they have an added role of encouraging new cultural values, socializing members of society apart from meeting and economic ends and producing graduates. It is evident in the establishment of modern universities and their transplants to the colonial soil in late nineteenth century, that the concept of autonomy is inherently entwined with universities. This autonomy can be situated broadly in two terms i.e., institutional autonomy and academic autonomy. Since the establishment of first universities in India, the autonomy of universities has been a contested domain in which different stake holders argue from their different vantage points. The first universities were the examining bodies and was under the strict supervision of the then government officials. The teachers which were appointed in the government colleges were not the scholars of eminent repute but instead civil servants, who were asked to focus on the curriculum designed by the government itself. This was a major hindrance for the development of a rational and critical pedagogy that could contribute to the individual's holistic education. Similarly, in the period of intensified national movement the demand for an integration-friendly curriculum, which reflects 'national'<sup>1</sup> the character of India, was made. The directive of university education came to be entwined with the national movement. Hence the concept of autonomy of universities has always been negotiated within the wider socio-political economic context of the nation-state.

Before any further argument, it is imperative for us to understand "what is the necessity of higher education or why higher education is necessary?" The answer to this question is aptly found in the New Education Policy of 1986 and revised in 1992, which says that the Higher education provides people with an opportunity to reflect on the critical social,

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<sup>1</sup> National in this context came to be visualized differently by different individuals and groups operating in the national movement against colonialism.

economic, cultural, moral and spiritual meshwork facing humanity. It contributes to national development through a dissemination of specialized knowledge and skills. Being at the apex of the educational pyramid, it also has a key role in generating teaching personnel for the education system. In this context, we must consider that higher education in India is broadly pursued in two types of institution, i.e. universities (which is my focus of study) and non-university institutions like in technical and professional disciplines. Along with this, it is imperative to discuss the genealogy of higher education in India (generally) and universities (particularly) to understand how the agenda of establishment of universities differed in different phases in colonial and post-colonial India and the concept of autonomy is inherent in this differentiated agenda of establishment of universities in Indian soil.

It is interesting to note that the ideology of colonization of India by Britain is highly motivated by the cross currents of different ideologies in Britain itself. The liberals and utilitarians differed over the question of 'Anglicisation'. The evolution of University in India could also be seen in the similar light. There were different motivations for different actors in India concerning English education. The primary motivation for EIC was to produce clerks and officials who could be employed chiefly whereas free traders wanted to develop English taste to create a market for English goods. Similarly, missionaries were motivated to spread Christianity and liberals wanted a civilizing mission to flourish through English education. Moreover, Utilitarians wanted India to be the experimental ground for their ideas.

The expansion of the university system has been characterized by the four major waves of intellectual colonization<sup>2</sup> and in the nineteenth century first-time universities were founded in non-Christian societies supplanting ancient indigenous centers of learning. In India, the first universities were established in the presidency towns of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay (now Mumbai). These were initially the examining universities established replicating the model of the University of London, among other models, available in Britain itself, like Oxford, Cambridge and Trinity College, Dublin, London and the

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<sup>2</sup> One in the 15 century, already alluded and fully described by rashdall, one in 16 century and 17 century which carried higher education across the Atlantic to the new world, one in the 19th Century, when for the first founded in non-Christian societies supplanting ancient indigenous centers of learning, in our own day.

Queen's university, Ireland, Durham, Owen College Manchester, and universities of Scotland. The attraction of this model, University of London, was primarily derived from purely economic considerations. This model is also suited as all the real educational problems were delegated to the colleges to prepare students for examinations. The colleges had to deal with the method of teaching, staffing, libraries, laboratories, social amenities, residence for students. Hence University as an examining body remains as overtly a 'secular institution'. However, the Senate as an administrative body comprised of the people with different religious denominations excluding the representation of professors in the Senate.

In India, three universities were established in 1857 in the presidency town, but debate regarding what should be the nature of education imparted to Indians was a concern for officials from the time before the establishment of the university. These universities were characterized as first-generation universities, whereas the second generation of universities in India commenced in the second decade of the twentieth century, which also departed from London university model.<sup>3</sup> To quote Dhruv Raina, "the idea of having a system of higher education under a national management and on the national lines was spreading. It is in this developmental context that the system of higher education was domesticated to the national context."<sup>4</sup> Initially, the EIC Act 1813 proposed two diverse objectives of education in India, i.e. the revival and modernization (under the Western impact) of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives of India, and the introduction and promotion of knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories in India.<sup>5</sup> This debate was furthered by Macaulay who insisted on English education and later in Woods dispatch, Sir Charles wood reaffirmed the policy of religious neutrality; and he gave fresh and emphatic sanction to the fundamental aim of diffusing 'the improved arts, science, philosophy and literature of Europe'.<sup>6</sup> The first generation universities were examining bodies whereas the second generation universities were the teaching universities with residential character. However, there were several

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, pg 20

<sup>4</sup> Dhruv Raina, 'Institutions and Knowledge: Framing the translation of Science in Colonial South Asia', *Asiatische Studien Etudes Asiatiques*, Vol. LXV (4), pg 959, 2011

<sup>5</sup> Eric Ashby, *Universities: British, Indian, African: A study in the ecology of Higher Education*. Pg 70, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 1996

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, pg 54.

universities which came to be established in the first half of the twentieth century, and most prominent of these were Aligarh Muslim University and Banaras Hindu Universities, and these universities had denominational character. This idea of denominational universities was outdated itself in Britain. The reason for the emergence of denominational universities can be seen in the process of colonization itself. Modernization began under the colonial rule produced threat perceptions among both Hindus and Muslims as each side saw the other capitalizing upon the benefits of the colonial state. Out of this threat, perceptions emerged the movement for denominational colleges and universities devoted to the development of respective religious communities.<sup>7</sup> The further development took place in the last quarter of national movement when there arose demands for mission-oriented research in science. This period saw the rise of big science in India and universities came to be characterized as the site for long-range research. At the time of independence, the university system in India was still weak hence the imagination of a post-colonial developmental state with the sentiment that the science and technology policy must articulate national goals resulted in the efforts undertaken by the state and hence the post-independence period saw the emergence of research institutes which acquired the status of institutes of national importance and their funding was separated from university funding.

This post-independence period saw the steady growth of universities and the enrollment numbers. It was after the initiation of structural adjustment policies in the 1990's there was an exponential rise in the number of universities and their enrollment numbers which have been mediated by market forces. This can be explained by understanding the different perceptives in which higher education per se and university education, in particular, came to be conceptualized.

India follows a pattern of three years of post-secondary education (PSE) for the first university degree (Bachelor's degree) and two years of further studies to obtain a

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<sup>7</sup> See, David Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation: Muslim Solidarity in British India*. New Delhi. Oxford University Press. 2003, Rennold, Leah. *A Hindu Education: Early Years of Benaras Hindu University*. Delhi: Oxford University Press. 2005.

Master's degree.<sup>8</sup> The two things which emerge from the above discussion on the importance of higher education is that of enhancement of *critical thinking* and *national development*. Both these components are equally important and are difficult to priorities any one of them. Having said this, let us problematize the national development and its relation with education. The traditional growth theory was of the opinion that the growth of the country depends upon four major factors, i.e. land, labor, Capital and entrepreneurship. In this Capital is one which is formed by investment. In this context, the goods are classified as consumption and investment goods. The consumption good is short-term whereas investment goods are long-term which also has reproducing capacity and hence all investment leads to Capital Formation. The economic growth theory before 1960's focused on land, labor, capital and entrepreneurship; but this was changed when T.W. Schultz gave his theory. According to Schultz education is an important component of economic growth. Education provides skilled knowledge which increases productivity which in turn enhances employability which results in higher wages and leads to national economic growth.

According to Schultz along with physical capital the human capital is a necessary component of national growth. This theory was challenged in the 1990's by the Human Development theorist like A.K. Sen and M. Haq. This theorist held that education should not be a means for development (as in the case of human capital theory) rather it is an end in itself. They held the view that 'Development' is a much broader concept than merely economic growth. They also developed a human development index to measure the overall development of the country. Hence from the above argument, it becomes clear that education is a major component of national growth or development. However, in post-independent India the progress of higher education has been impressive. This can be understood by the fact that a number of central universities rose from 3 in 1950-51 to 43 in 2013-14 and the number of colleges increased from 578 in 1950-51 to 36671 in 2013-14.<sup>9</sup> Along with this India is also in its initial stages of massification of higher education

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<sup>8</sup> N.V Varghese 'Challenges of Massification of Higher Education in India', CPRHE, Research papers Centre For Policy Research in Higher Education, NUEPA (2016) .

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.



(as per Martin Trow's classification) with GER of 21.1 per cent in 2012-13.<sup>10</sup> After China, India has the largest education sector with around 28.5 million students, 0.70 million teachers and 35000 institutions in 2011-12.<sup>11</sup>

But all that glitters are not gold; these facts suggest an alternative story too. The massification of higher education India has become a market-mediated process facilitated mostly through private institutions and financed by the households which are in complete contrast to the matured market economies where massification of higher education was facilitated mostly through public institutions, as argued by N.V. Varghese. This argument could be substantiated by the fact that there was no private university in the country till 2001-02 and there were seven private universities in 2005-06 which proliferated to 143 in 2013-14.<sup>12</sup> With the opening up of the economy in 1990 and WTO agreement of 1995, it became imperative for the government of India to increase the privatization of higher education which in turn also means reducing the funds to public-funded universities. This has the direct impact on the quality, accessibility and equity of higher education in India. It is in this context it is essential to investigate the question that *how did autonomy get controlled and enhanced during the development of different universities in various phases in India.*

Having said this, let us problematize the concept of critical thinking in higher education. The concept of critical thinking is directly proportional to the freedom of enquiry or academic freedom or autonomy. The freedom of enquiry acts as an enabling value<sup>13</sup> which provides other values to be enquired upon. In other words, the freedom of enquiry is given lexicographical priority as it enables the pursuit of other values, and therefore it cannot be weighed on the same scale as the values it enables, whether these are 'truth' in the outcome of inquiry, or more generally 'excellence' in the pursuit of inquiry or simply

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Akeel Bilgrami and Jonathan R.Cole. *Whose Afraid of Academic Freedom?*, Columbia University Press, New York 2015.

the mind of inquirers.<sup>14</sup> However, the relation between the autonomy of institution and inquirers with the state has always been on questionable terms.

As Geoffrey R Stone argues that universities in the middle ages were the institution of power and prestige, largely autonomous conceived by the spirit of the guilds. But there existed a hardcore authoritatively established doctrine that was obligatory for all scholars and teachers. To quote him- “It was expected that each new accretion of knowledge would be consistent with a single system of truth, anchored in Christian dogma”.<sup>15</sup> However in the eighteenth century with the process of secularization as a part of the enlightenment provided space/ ground for skepticism to grow which is an essential and necessary component for academic freedom and institutional autonomy. But as Gregory argues that this was short lived due to the rise of fundamentalism in the early part of the nineteenth century which led a sharp counter-attack on skepticism of enlightenment along the concerted effort of on the part of Protestant churches to reassert their control over intellectual life.<sup>16</sup> The above mentioned two instances are pertinent to understand that institutional autonomy, as well as freedom of inquiry, should be fundamental to the understanding of ‘critical thinking’ in higher education. If there is a continuously coordinated move by the state and other multinational organizations to curb the autonomy of university and its practicing scholars, then it leads to a sad state of affairs. It is in this context that this dissertation will attempt to analyze that *how the idea of the autonomy of universities has evolved as a principle of modern universities*. At this point, it is important to understand that Humboldt and Schleiermacher associate two notions with the idea of the university. First, they are concerned with the problem of how modern science, freed from the supervision of religion and the church, can be institutionalized without endangering its autonomy - whether through the authority of the government Which secures the external existence of science, or through pressures from the side of the occupational and economic system, with its interest in the useful applications of scientific work. Humboldt and Schleiermacher see the solution to the problem in a governmentally organized autonomy of science which would protect the university from both political

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

interventions and economic imperatives. At the same time - the second notion - Humboldt and Schleiermacher want to explain why it is in the interest of the state itself to guarantee to the university the external organizational form of internally unlimited freedom. Both thinkers were convinced that, if only scientific work were turned over to the dynamics of research processes, the universities would serve as focal points for moral culture, and indeed for the spiritual life of the nation generally.

There are a few dimensions of a regulatory regime that need to be highlighted. First, in the last few years, heavy emphasis was placed on legislative processes to address the problems of higher education. The Educational Tribunals Bill, 2010, The Prohibition of Unfair Practices in Technical Education Institutions, Medical Education Institutions, and Universities Bill were meant to solve disputes and unfair practices. Quality improvement in higher education was said to be addressed through The National Accreditation Regulatory Authority for Higher Education Institutions Bill, 2010. National Electronic Database of academic awards was scheduled to be maintained through The National Academic Depository Bill. National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER) bill was the move to maintain standards and regulate higher education in India. The Universities for Research and Innovation Bill was a move to help develop world-class standard universities. The objective of Foreign Education Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operations) Bill was to maintain the standards of higher education within the country as well as to protect the interest of the student community. None of the bills could be passed in the Parliament. However, legislative means were relied upon to address problems and initiate changes. Policies in higher education were guided by some state-mandated reason under some hypothetical premises whose validity was simply assumed to be correct. It was supposed that the right institutions and right behavior would follow or adapted as per the state reason.

The regulatory councils' mandate to maintain standards in higher education, too, was not restricted to bare essentials. Whenever problems were brought to the notice regulations were imposed to change the behavior of individuals and institutions. The restriction was placed on teachers' working hours regarding teaching, research, consultancy and all academic and extra-curricular activities in great details to regulate teachers' working

condition. Uniform API (Academic Performance Index) score has been mandated for the promotion of teachers all over India irrespective of variable circumstances under which they have to work. The move was made to regulate the promotion of teachers by the university. Regulation has been issued to all the universities to follow UGC guidelines for improving doctoral practices, including a system of competitive examination for entry and the mandatory provision of course work. It is in this context that Habermas was of the opinion that what different committees and commissions have done is to give cloak to the university's systemic autonomy by rhetorically affirming an earlier tradition of a wholly different normatively intended autonomy. Thus veiled, the flows of information between the now functionally autonomous subsystems (for example, between the universities and the economic-military-administrative complex), can be all the more discreetly coordinated. In this view, a sense of tradition retains only compensatory value; an awareness of tradition counts as much as the size of the gaps that it is called upon to fill in a university robbed of its formative idea.<sup>17</sup>

Besides, following colonial legacy for all the central universities, the act stipulates that the President of India shall be the Visitor of the University. The President of India, by the Visitor, has been assigned the inspectorial role. Besides the President of India has powers to appoint Chancellor and Vice Chancellor of a central university, approve and amend statutes of the university. He is also the reporting officer of annual reports, annual accounts of the university and the agenda of the meetings of the authorities of the University as soon as they are issued and the minutes of such meetings. The point to note is that the highest office of the government has been vested with the powers to manage all 39 central universities in India. At the state level, too, the state universities' highest body is the Governor of the state in the capacity of the Chancellor of the university with wide-ranging powers of the university. Above examples is ample proof of the strong legislative and regulatory role of the state in the affairs of the university. Strong legislation and regulation are said to be the pillars of democratic governance. The faith of democracy is expressed regarding activity and hyperactivity of actions from the top. Legislation and

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<sup>17</sup> J. Habermas, The idea of the university. *e New Conservatism: Cultural Criticism and the Historians' Debate*. 1989.

regulations are the faith. The consciousness of the state lives through the legislation and powers of the authorities of the institution which the legislation provides for. It is presumed that legislation and regulation express the will of the institution and people. Whatever is expressed through them has been fully understood, and there is a plan ready for implementation based on the rational consensus of the individual, teachers, officers and students of the education system. Such is the Rawlsian faith in democracy doing just policy.

The retreat of state and the advance of the market have impacted the national context of higher education and thus universities too. Institutions of higher education are supposed to achieve excellence in teaching-learning, knowledge production and discoveries, but how academically and institutionally free these institutions are, remains an eminent question. It is often argued that Indian universities never really had a strong tradition of autonomy, in the past due to British control over universities through policy and in post-colonial India due to financial aid, policy, changing relation and complex pattern of power. The question of autonomy in the context of institutions have always been a contentious one. Autonomy is crucial for growth and development of higher education. The Indian universities have lost their autonomy either to the government or to the professional institutes recognized by the parliament or to the agencies created by the University Grants Commission. A critical study of the problem would reveal fascinating facts and the thinness. Universities today are expected to fulfill a variety of tasks from a variety of actors (state, market, society etc), which influence it one way or the other. Autonomy cannot be absolute and undefined due to its dependence on wider society and most importantly its source of funding. Universities cannot be seen as outside of a socio-political context; they are very much situated in one. Since they play a prominent role in social transformation. They are expected to be responsive to the context and society. Thus, there is the complex and interesting interplay between 'autonomy and accountability'. Autonomy is not only shaped by the inner life of a university it is much shaped by external factors which influence it.

Autonomy cannot mean society has no stake in university; autonomy rather may include the right of a university to determine its strategy, taking into account public interest and

academic excellence. The role of the state is decisive in the regulation of universities, in most of the developing countries states are anxious to retain the ability to use universities as key instruments to build up what they assume to be - national capacities, political agendas and much more. To analyze autonomy of universities one has to look beyond inner life of university –at the socio-economic, political context, changing power relations, changing ideas of knowledge and its uses etc. state has the power to keep turning the dynamics of a universities in most of the countries, in India itself state- is packing people inside the university as a disguised solution to the problem of unemployment, demands of social justice etc., but at the same time the space in public university are shrinking, the autonomy to decide over curriculum, the voices of dissent emerging from the universities are being crushed.

Autonomy of universities is also endangered when, in the disguise of complete freedom the internal mechanisms of a university escape all the control, universities use autonomy as a pretext to compromise the very principles which are under attack from the state and other actors. The Indian universities are not untouched from this practice. This research would be centred around public universities in India and their autonomy. Autonomy can be defined as the power to decide the regulative framework and academic curriculum of the university, along with the power to decide the mode of the strategy of implementing the policies made by themselves or other bodies'. Public nature of university in Kantian conception has been defined as the knowledge generated and disseminated in the benefit the public, it generates public consciousness and is a place for the flourishing of democracy. The state must, therefore, protect the autonomy of universities since it is the in the interest of the government to allow conflictual inquiries to be conducted in universities, as the knowledge gained will be used for the good of the public, whose interest the government is supposed to promote, argues Sudhanshu Bhushan. But the question which looms large at us is- how much autonomy and what for? How much autonomy can universities strive for, in an atmosphere where the state can exercise control over it, the market is increasing intervening into it, they are accountable to the state and society, and at the same time they have to remain a site of academic excellence, remains a matter of great concern. Another question which requires our attention is that *what has been the impact political and economic changes on the universities in post-*

*independent India*. This question is important to understand that how autonomy of universities came to be negotiated with government and other stake holders in a developmental context of a newly independent nation and with the advent of neoliberalism as the only available measure for the stability of the national economy.

Chad Wellmon in his book *Organizing Enlightenment: Information Overload and the Invention of the Modern Research University*, traces the defining characteristics of medieval universities and their transformation to modern universities. He argues that the medieval universities were caught in the battle between religious authority and state regarding the control of universities. By the 17<sup>th</sup> century there was growing discontent in German-speaking land that the medieval universities were not catering to the need of the time which was defined by the advancement of science as a march towards the true end of knowledge. Walter Rugg in his edited book *A History of the Universities in Europe Vol. 3. Universities in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century (1800- 1945)* explains the socio-political context of the establishment of different models of modern universities in nineteenth-century Europe.

The three main models of his discussions were a Napoleonic university in France, Humboldtian University in Germany and different models of universities existing in Britain and their relationship with the state. These discussions were essential to understanding the transplantation of different models of universities in the colonial soil. In the same book, Edward Shills argues that the late nineteenth century was the period when different models of universities were transplanted to the colonies of different nature, and it was the result of different colonial imperatives. Andre Beteille in his book at the '*Universities at the Crossroads*' provides important insights into the changing conditions of universities in India from colonial times to post independent India. The argument given by policy makers, and those who strived for expansion and creation of universities is, that universities play a prominent role in creating equality and disturbing the hierarchical structure of society. Universities in India have played an important part in unsettling the prevailing social hierarchies but could not eliminate them. There exists a paradox, universities are supposed to be socially inclusive and at the same time maintain academic excellence by discriminating academically, this task is difficult

to achieve but is certainly not impossible, countries in the west have been able to accomplish both. The solution lies in individual mobility. The autonomy of universities is impinged upon when the demands of making them more inclusive get politicized. Also, developing countries have limited resources; there is thus a constant battle to acquire what one can. The demands had become a matter of rights whereas they were more about a policy when the British introduced them.

During the second half of 20<sup>th</sup>-century massification of universities took place in India as well as in other parts of the world. The universities are generally dependent upon the government for financial aid; this hinders autonomy of universities. Amrik Singh in his work 'Undergraduate vs Postgraduate education' argues despite efforts to maintain excellence in higher education we have not been able to improve the deteriorating situation which is ailing our universities. Despite efforts, autonomous college has not been able to set up as an established part of university system we have around 300 universities today, incorporation of colleges into universities at a rapid scale is problematic, it restricts the work of universities as only examination taking centers, and this has serious implication on the academic standards. We need a revision of the role of UGC, and other bodies which are responsible for examining universities. Along with a better center, state relationship. In another work 'what ails the Indian universities,' he argues the universities has no autonomous existence they are very much a part Indian polity and the political process. The rate of expansion of universities in India has been 12% to 13% whereas it's not more than 5% in developed countries.

The role of universities is seen as producing more and more graduate, but the stagnation in the economy has somewhere widened the gulf between the rich and the poor which means there is a growth of educated unemployment. Moreover, the teachers have also compromised with the existing situation of universities. We have to grow the professional awareness and not succumb to the pressure from the state market or other influential actors. The battle has to be fought within the universities and by academics that constitute the university. It has to preserve its identity as an institution against the market pressure. Pressure on universities will only ease when elementary education will be strengthened, and employment is generated, but both these processes will take far-reaching economic



and political changes which can take place without a shift in the policy of growth. Ved Prakash in his work argues the structure of governance in all institutions of higher learning should be conducive for consensus making; this will result in autonomy and enhance the responsiveness of the institution as well. However, universities can have only as much autonomy as law permits. He emphasizes the relationship between autonomy and accountability since universities cannot be given a free hand s absolute autonomy, they have to work under a regulatory framework. A D Oak in his work 'University autonomy – Reality or myth?' argues Indian universities in the post-independent era, have lost their autonomy to regulative bodies. Universities are serving an insignificant role of the post office, they had a considerable amount of financial and academic autonomy but after this period autonomy has eroded to an irreparable level. University officials themselves are also responsible for this erosion, due to non-use of autonomy, no monitoring of appointments, negligence of their welfare etc., since they handed down the privileges to other agencies. M Shatrugna presented an extremely informative report- 'Blow to university autonomy' in 1988 on the erosion of autonomy of higher education by the Telugu Desam government in Karnataka, reducing universities to degree-awarding factories. They established Andhra Pradesh state council higher education Act in 1988, which eventually retained all the decision-making power regarding the functioning of universities, allocation of funds, conduct of entrance examinations, transfer of teachers etc., reducing universities to degree awarding factories. Dharma Kumar in his work 'Autonomy for university Department- But For Whom', argues the biggest danger to university autonomy in India is the University Grants Commission, it is constantly trying to tighten its control over universities and departments by directly dealing with departments superseding central university body. There is no balance relationship between UGC and universities, the battle between both is an uneven one.

Philip. G Altbach in his work 'The University in transition' argues universities in India are in a permanent state of crisis due to various demonstrations, the involvement of universities in regional politics, government policies and pressure from the society. Every actor of the state and society agrees that universities are a critical ingredient in the process of economic and political development, but there is no agreement over the solution of issue stated above. He takes the case study of the University of Bombay to

provide us with a framework of discussion and analysis of general issues prevailing in the higher education in India. He argues that there is a close relationship between the social political and economic aspects of a country and its universities. Many times, the policies regarding universities are shaped by taking into account these 'aspects' rather than educational considerations. He argues, there is a severe lack of academic autonomy, due to the kind of management and institutional structure of administering universities, moreover a numerous policy takes either huge time to get implemented or do not get implemented at all. In M. Gibbons's edited volume 'The new production of knowledge: the dynamics of science and research in Contemporary societies', we can get a broad idea of the whole process and shift in knowledge production in higher education. The book argues there is a transformation in the mode of knowledge production traditionally, it was generated in only universities in a disciplinary and cognitive context. But now, there is an emergence of another mode of knowledge production along with the first one, the production of knowledge takes place now in a broad, transdisciplinary social and economic context.

This knowledge is not only produced in universities, but in firms and corporate laboratories, it is also less institutionalized. This knowledge production undermines the monopoly of universities as knowledge producers whereas, universities continue to produce graduates. This whole process again hampers positively or negatively, the autonomy of universities in general. The universities have to adopt itself in this new mode of production of knowledge. The new institutions of higher education try to make themselves more efficient centers, but at the same time knowledge produced by them are more incoherent and centrifugal. Universities are no longer in a state to determine what counts as excellent knowledge. Sudhanshu Bhushan in 'Public university in Democracy' writes, universities in India are institutions embedded in a hierarchical socio-economic structure, committed to values of democracy and diversity, thus bound to throw up challenges. They are sites of growth of public consciousness for this democracy is also a precondition for a public university to survive and uphold these values. The autonomy of university should be upheld as long as the mode of arising unresolved, conflictual questions, remains non-violent and reasonable.

Dhruv Raina in his work 'Institutions and Knowledge: Framing the Translation of Science in Colonial South Asia' traces the process of colonial translation of a modern institutional structure for the reproduction and production of knowledge in modern India. Universities initially were primary site of production of knowledge, but over the last few decades this status has declined he makes a pertinent point while explaining the establishment of universities and higher education he states about the interests of different actors in modern education system, EIC wanted to inculcate English knowledge in India to produce clerks, free traders want to develop a taste and thereby develop a market for English taste among Indians, missionaries thought it would ease the process of conversion, liberals saw the system as a part of civilizing mission. He also marked periodization of universities into three generations, the first (1857), second (the 1920s) and third (second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century) generation of universities in India. He explains what motivated the establishment of these universities. What was the social base and what kind of knowledge production it gave rise to? Ivar Bleiklie and Walter W. Powell in their article 'Universities and the production of knowledge' argue there is pressure on universities for greater productivity from not only government but various actors.

There exists a clear link between university autonomy and knowledge production, different modes of knowledge can be associated with specific patterns of power which includes funding, objectives, resources etc. They argue this is an era of "academic capitalism" wherein universities are also becoming commercial enterprise, producing and selling research. They explain this by giving an example of US government's close link with the industries policy influence research in universities, finding of research can be translated into a viable product. Krishna Kumar in his book '*Political agenda of education*' claims that the introduction of this English education and universities in colonial times had an important element of experimenting with the concept of 'secularization of education' and also developing a curriculum for this kind of an education program. Michael Sanderson's edited book '*The universities in the nineteenth century*' explains the nature, context and debate surrounding universities in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The period saw radical changes in the thinking content and purpose of higher education. In beginning liberal idea of education was followed in universities but during this time, the paradox emerged that liberal education was also directly applicable to the

most common career followed by graduates of Oxford and Cambridge namely the church. The ambivalence of purpose became more and sharper by the nineteenth century. Having said this, it must be considered that the clear distinctions on the topics like autonomy, accountability and university are a difficult one to make because all are interdependent on each other.

Pankaj Chandra in his recent book '*Building universities that matter*', highlight the various aspects of Indian universities and the reasons behind their vulnerability. He also provides a detailed model of ideally governing the universities in India. The recent work of R.K Kale '*Higher Education in India: A perspective from the Margins*' also identifies some of the major issues plaguing Indian higher education system.

This work will be pursued by studying the literature produced by some of the key scholars, along with the literature stated below. The idea is to trace the evolution of autonomy in the context of universities and to construct a political discourse around the idea of autonomy. These works remain largely qualitative. The primary sources which shall be consulted during study are archival material, commemorative volumes, and annual reports of university bodies. However, apart from these, this study remains open to consult any other materials which appear important during study.

This dissertation will attempt to understand the establishment of universities in the medieval period and its subsequent transformation in the modern period. Eric Ashby has identified four different waves of institutionalisation of universities around the world<sup>18</sup> in his book *Universities: British Indian African*, and it is the third wave which we are concerned with in the chapter titled "*Quest For Autonomy- A Historical Perspective*". In this chapter, we will try to analyze the concept of autonomy in different models of modern universities which came to be established since an eighteenth and nineteenth century. Having discussed this, we intend to analyze the evolution of university system in

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<sup>18</sup> In the words of Ashby "The spread of universities into new countries has gone on ever since English Scholars were we called from Paris to Oxford in the 12th century. But there have been four major waves of this kind of intellectual colonisation : One in the 15 century, already alluded and fully described by rashdall, one in 16 century and 17 century which carried higher education across the Atlantic to the new world, one in the 19th Century, when for the first founded in non-Christian societies supplanting ancient indigenous centres of learning, in our own day."

India and how the concept of autonomy of universities came to be negotiated in colonial and post-colonial India under the title “*Contextualizing autonomy in the evolution of university system in India*”. This chapter will also analyze that how the modern university got domesticated in the Indian situation. Further in the next chapter titled “*Crisis of Autonomy and Indian Universities*” we will study what has been the relation between the newly independent state and university. It will attempt to understand that what role the university was assumed to play in a post-independent developmental context. Further, it intends to analyze the reports of different committees and commissions which have impacted the development of university system in post-independent India and played a significant role in the determining the idea of Autonomy. Along with this, this chapter will also study the change in the relation between university autonomy and different stakeholders with the advent of neoliberalism. This chapter also intends to scrutinize whether accountability stimulates or impedes the practice of autonomy. In the concluding chapter, we will present the arguments which have been inferred by reading various primary and secondary sources regarding the concept of autonomy of the university in its negotiated space and will try to give some suggestions.

## Chapter 1: Quest for University Autonomy- A Historical Perspective

### Introduction

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high  
where knowledge is free  
Where the world has not been broken up into fragments  
By narrow domestic walls  
Where words come out from the depth of truth.

These were the lines written by a poet of a colonized nationality aspiring for a society with freedom, equality and liberty. But these lines can be equally helpful to encapsulate the idea of university in free and liberated society. Universities thrive on creation and dissemination of new knowledge, that may not always be in conformity with the authorities. In order to cultivate knowledge or new truth to be discovered, we need an academic atmosphere free from any kind of intimidation and fear. It's only the autonomy that can ensure an uninhibited mind to experiment with new knowledge.

This sense has been raised by many academic and third world leaders of twentieth century. As voiced by Nehru:

A university stands for humanism. For tolerance, for reason, for adventure of ideas and for the search of truth. It stands for the onward march of the human race towards even higher objectives.<sup>1</sup>

In the same way while underlining the importance of academic freedom and universities, Butler argued:

the task of the university is to preserve and support critical thought, even when it is not in line with official views of the state or other external institutions.

These institutions provide the condition for the academic thought and research they do, but these institutions have to be reproduced and maintained precisely by

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<sup>1</sup>Address to special convocation to the University of Allahabad, December 1947.

those who wish to exercise freedom of inquiry and expression within those institutions. In other words, academic freedom implies a right to free inquiry within the academic institution, but also an obligation to preserving the institution as a site where freedom of inquiry can and does take place, free of intervention, and censorship.<sup>2</sup>

It is this freedom from intervention and censorship of the government, that is a prerequisite, for the university to remain autonomous academically and institutionally. Universities have often turned out to be the voice of conscience against the power that be. Since the second half of the twentieth century, various universities were created where free and autonomous environments have worked as hotbed against atrocities of states and its governments. The anti-Vietnam protests of USA, May 68 protests in France, Naxalbari movement in Kolkata and JP movement in north Indian campuses, anti-emergency protest in JNU, BHU and Allahabad universities are shining examples. Equally evident are the retaliations. Whenever universities became synonym to popular mass upsurge, the governments also resort to retaliation curbing their freedom, often with the excuse to restore academic brilliance. Any institution that inculcates critical engagement with knowledge becomes a potential threat for structures of exploitation and nepotism, so governments and its apparatuses being prone to such vices have a tendency of being skeptic to the freedom and autonomy of university spaces. There is plethora of instances where, dictators and totalitarian regimes had to conduct massacres of student and faculties in order to bulldoze their authority. But the skepticism and high handedness of a paranoiac and authoritarian regime is perhaps one of the perils that cause threat the autonomy of universities. Malaises, like nepotism, corruption in recruitment of faculties and admission of students often may equally cause a dent the moral integrity of universities as an institution.

Since universities offer upward mobility both for its faculty and students, malpractices of nepotism are not uncommon in cases of getting admission as a student or a tenure as a faculty. These malpractices, apart from compromising the quality of academic standards

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<sup>2</sup> Judith Butler. "Academic Freedom and the Critical Task of the University." *Globalizations* 14, no. 6 (2017): 857-861.

also erode the confidence of the academic community. An academic community unconfident of their competence has higher tendencies to shy away from confronting the exploitative structures when need be. So, to have a thriving university to be confident of its autonomy, it must develop a system free from corruption and nepotism, and based upon democratic norms and institutions where every single individual stake holder's opinion matters with equal importance.

The idea of academic and institutional autonomy remains one of the contested topics in the arena of higher education and universities. In this chapter, we will look into this debate through the lens of the history of the evolution of European universities, as Indian university system is broadly based upon European models of higher education.

Indian public universities can be divided into two categories viz. affiliating university and research university. The main difference is while the former is primarily engaged in conducting exams and awarding degrees to a more extensive section of students centrally or through its affiliated colleges the latter is mainly dedicated to research along with teaching. Educationists have argued autonomy both academic and institutional to be the necessary condition for universities to produce higher quality research. In the following section, we will be discussing some of the significant educationists and their observations on the university system in India, vis-a-vis the debate on autonomy, and the problems perceived by them.

### **Indian Education System an Introduction:**

Autonomy can be defined as the right to take decisions regarding the functioning of the university, along with the power to define the implementation process of the policies made by state or other authorities<sup>3</sup>. Newman<sup>4</sup> argued university is a space where a pure and clear atmosphere of thought is created, which the student breathes. One can understand the essence of the University and its significance in these words written by Newman:

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<sup>3</sup>Bhim S Dahiya, *The university autonomy in India: The idea and the reality*. IAS. 2010.

<sup>4</sup>J. H. C. Newman, *The idea of a university*. University of Notre Dame Press. 1992



(S)tudents apprehend the great outlines of knowledge, the principles on which it rests, the scale of its parts, its lights and its shades. Its great points and its little's. Hence it is that this education is called liberal. A habit of mind is formed which lasts through life, of which the attributes are freedom, equitableness, calmness, moderation and wisdom; or what in a former discourse I have ventured to call philosophical habit. This then I would assign as the special fruit of education furnished at a university. This is the main purpose of a University.<sup>5</sup>

Famous philosopher Immanuel Kant<sup>6</sup> described his ideal university as the one, which is devoted to the critical work of science.

An ideal university's unity has to be grounded not in the medieval guild or the political ends of the state, but in the constant feud among the university faculties, which critical philosophy ensured never ended. The role of the state Therefore should be to protect the freedom of faculty who are engaged in the examination of knowledge.

At another occasion Kant<sup>7</sup> Wrote, the public nature of the university has to be protected since 'knowledge generation and dissemination in the university benefits the public'<sup>8</sup>. Sudhanshu Bhushan while revisiting Kant's argument, comments 'Kant was writing in an era where democracy was still non-existing. However, concepts of freedom, liberty, rights were taking shape'. In this line, Bhushan further argues public universities in a democracy have a much wider role to play. It is not only necessary for flourishing democracy but democracy by allowing public discussion is a precondition for the university to create enlightenment among people"<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> J. H. C. Newman, *The idea of a university*. University of Notre Dame Press. 1992

<sup>6</sup>C. Wellmon, *Organizing enlightenment: Information overload and the invention of the modern research university*. JHU Press. 2015.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Bhushan, Sudhanshu. Public university in a democracy. *Economic & Political Weekly* 51, no. 17 (2016): 35.

<sup>9</sup> Sudhanshu Bhushan, Public university in a democracy. *Economic & Political Weekly* 51, no. 17 (2016): 35.

In the earlier half of the nineteenth century when three German scholars Schleiermacher, Humboldt, Fichte<sup>10</sup> were trying to formulate the idea of a modern university, there were three foundational principles<sup>11</sup> of the modern university, the second principle emphasized upon academic freedom and autonomy. The two German terms used to define the concept of freedom to teach and learn *lehrfreiheit* and *lernfreiheit*.

Eminent sociologist Andre Beteille<sup>12</sup> argues, a university cannot discharge its social and academic responsibility effectively if those are defined by the state, political parties, and market. Since the very establishment of universities in India in 1857, we have had a tradition where no unrestricted freedom has been provided to the universities. The situation has remained the same so far, but the reasons behind it kept changing. Universities ought to be spaces where a free mind can develop its own thoughts and inculcate a scientific temper.

Prabhat Patnaik<sup>13</sup> argues for the autonomy of universities, according to him with the advent of the Neoliberal era, came increased intervention of the market in the realm of knowledge production. The universities could not protect themselves against this tendency, and consequently, research works were started being produced to feed the market primarily. In this way, the idea of the university as a space to foster academic ideas is compromised. Inside universities, research is produced only to feed the market. This logic undermines the role of universities in promoting a universe of academic ideas.

Amrik Singh<sup>14</sup>, points out, there exists a lack of proper higher educational structure in India. He further argues that this lack often causes a burden on the universities. Under this circumstance, the universities become the target of state intervention. The lack of proper structure and the state intervention caused by them make it difficult for the universities to produce good researchers and research. The ideal nature of autonomy of a

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<sup>10</sup> C. Wellmon, *Organizing enlightenment: Information overload and the invention of the modern research university*. JHU Press. 2015

<sup>11</sup> The three principles are unity of teaching and research, academic freedom and autonomy, expansion of philosophy. They are elaborately discussed in the later sections of this chapter.

<sup>12</sup> A. Beteille, *Universities at the Crossroads*. Oxford University Press. 2010.

<sup>13</sup> Prabhat Patnaik, Challenges before higher education in developing societies. *Social Scientist* 37, no. 7/8 (2009): 21-32.

<sup>14</sup> A. Singh, What Ails the Indian Universities? *Economic and Political Weekly*, 1975, 867-870.

university remains an unsolved debate in case of India. Recent state intervention in various universities and its curricula has further aggravated this debate. It will be important to investigate whether the universities in this country are entitled to the degree of autonomy that is required to produce quality research at all. Indian universities have been a site of conflict and contestations during the last few years; and this demands for an inquiry into the role, sphere, meaning, and freedom of university as an institution. The modern public university is expected to fulfil a challenging task of promulgating knowledge. They are seen as an institution to lead critical changes and to contribute in the development of society and nation at large. But this idea of the university can only get fulfilled within the confines of a nation-state. The moment universities are imposed with the responsibility of nation building; the state gets one more reason to intervene in the functioning of it. Also, somewhere the tasks of nation building deviates us from the actual role of higher education and detach it from the universe of academic ideas and load upon it a political task. The major characteristics of public universities in democratic developing countries according to Patnaik include:

state funding, and thus the responsibility to realize the task of nation-building. This task cannot be foisted on private institutions because they sell education as a commodity most of the times. Secondly, the composition of these institutions has to be inclusive, in the name of preserving quality there should be no attempt to undermine equality, each social group should have the equal opportunity to be able to acquire higher education. The third fundamental characteristic is to preserve the ethos of democracy and dissent. A university should always thrive to ensure debates and discussion, as a mode of expressing various ideas.<sup>15</sup> If the authority attempts to kill dissent in the name of preserving academic atmosphere and excellence, then they are fundamentally opposing an essential element of nation-building.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Prabhat. Patnaik, Challenges before higher education in developing societies. *Social Scientist* 37, no. 7/8 (2009): 21-32.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid*

With the advent of neo liberalism, this idea comes under attack. Patnaik<sup>17</sup> also argues in the same line that the realm of neo liberalism the driving force of operating an institution becomes expropriation of private profit as opposed to imparting skills and education to the larger population; as the role of a university envisaged in the in the newly independent nation-states like India. After the decolonisation of countries universities was perceived as space to encourage contestation of ideas, it was believed that democracy to flourish multiplicity of opinions and dissentful representation of social realities is not necessarily antithetical to the post-colonial dream of nation-building. It is under this zeitgeist universities in India at least partially evolved to debate things which were otherwise not always allowed to be debated in the Indian society as a whole. These are reasons for which universities autonomy have to be protected so that it can freely promote the growth of public consciousness, give space to differing opinions and various branches of knowledge could flourish into it. However, the public character of the university is being threatened by the state as well as the market forces in the present era. Thus, the state has to guide the university in a neutral manner. But with neo liberalism, things started to change. A political ideology that thrives upon the concept of profit can neither afford heterogeneity of product nor ideas. It is because of this reason the space of dissentful co-existence gets quelled of the society in general and universities in particular.

Higher education as defined by the NPE (National policy on education 1986) – ‘Higher education provides people with an opportunity to reflect on the critical social, economic, cultural, moral and spiritual issues facing humanity’<sup>18</sup>. Having said all of this, we can assume how difficult the working of the university can be if its academic freedom and autonomy are not taken care of. Universities are also meant to be the institution which challenges the social hierarchy at least in India<sup>19</sup>, It was one major role expected out of the universities, even around the world universities had facilitated the process of breaking barriers of caste, communities, religion class etc. However, it is also being argued that like other public spaces they may sometimes reproduce hierarchy. Universities are also

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<sup>17</sup> *ibid*

<sup>18</sup> B. S. Dahiya, *The university autonomy in India: The idea and the reality*. Indian Institute of Advanced Study. IAS. 200.

<sup>19</sup> A. Beteille, *Universities at the Crossroads*. Oxford University Press. 2010.

places of individual and social mobility.<sup>20</sup> They are places where many times the process of demythization also takes place<sup>21</sup>; one can make an attempt to transcend and unlearn their socio-cultural upbringing.

The twentieth century marked the period of massification of higher education in India. Numerous universities, colleges and institutions were set up during this time. This was also the time when an expansion of universities was taking place in most of the developing and even in the developed world. Those who were leading the country in the post independent era believed universities have to be an active player in the metamorphose of Indian society. The education commission under D.S Kothari stated “if this change on a grand scale is to be achieved without violent revolution, there is one and only one instrument for that EDUCATION.”. The Ramakrishnan commission also stresses “education is a universal right not a class privilege”.<sup>22</sup> The Indian universities were supposed to leave behind the burden of medieval those and were supposed to be egalitarian, secular institutions’ it was to contribute into the social and individual mobility of the citizens. They are to contribute to the task of the betterment of nation and society. Universities are not seen as they were seen in the initial years of independence as, a place where new intellectual, social life merged, transcending the boundaries of hierarchy, caste, class etc. The problematique of maintaining academic quality of the universities and increasing the number of students in these spaces, remains unsolved. Andre Beteille argues, the universities continuously face this dilemma of discriminating academically and giving equal opportunity to all for moving upward in the social hierarchy.<sup>23</sup> Prabhat Patnaik also gives an argument in the same line while discussing about quality and quantity:

Only is there no conflict between the achievement of equity and the enhancement of quality, but the former is the most effective and potent means of achieving the latter. This follows simply from the premise, acceptable to all but the most die-hard racists, that talent and academic ability are more or less evenly distributed

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<sup>20</sup> ibid

<sup>21</sup> I. Illich, *Deschooling society* (p. 46). Harmondsworth, Middlesex. 1973.

<sup>22</sup> A. Beteille, *Universities at the Crossroads*. Oxford University Press. 2010.

<sup>23</sup> ibid

across the various social groups in a society. It follows then that if among the students or teachers of the higher education system there is overwhelming representation of only a few social groups, to the exclusion of others, then that system must be suffering from a loss of quality. The best quality education system would thus be one where the group-wise composition of students and teachers, i.e., of the academic community, would closely approximate the group wise composition of the population as a whole. Of course, because of past discrimination, the excluded groups in any initial situation are so handicapped that their actual performance invariably falls short of what they are capable of, i.e., of their potential, so that in what appears to be a 'fair' selection they continue to remain excluded; but this only shows that establishing formal equality at the level of selection only serves to reinforce and perpetuate substantive inequality. Or putting it differently, the apparent insistence on 'quality' in a given situation serves to undermine quality in the long run. The only way to overcome this situation and bring about long-run quality improvement in the higher education system is through affirmative action that appears immediately to be compromising on quality. The argument here is exactly analogous to Friedrich List's argument for the introduction of protection, as opposed to free trade, in newly developing economy.<sup>24</sup>

Overall expansion of quality institutions and academic institutions are much needed in India, with an intrinsic element of meaningful learning.

### **History of University System and the State of Autonomy.**

In this section, we attempt to map the trajectory and evolution of autonomy as an idea and its evolution in the traditions of university system and to compare it with India's experience of the same. The advent of university system and its extension in India was taking place at a time when universities were developing everywhere. However, the circumstances under which they were expanding in each country was different. To dig deeper into the university system and its relation vis-à-vis state and society, it would be

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<sup>24</sup> P. Patnaik, Challenges before higher education in developing societies. *Social Scientist*, 37(7/8), 2009. 21-32.

helpful to look at the condition of universities in the medieval times and trace its transition into modern institutions, how the shift has taken place is a much relevant question to analyze the freedom universities held as one of the most important institution of the state as well the society.

With regard to the history of institutional mission John Scott was of the opinion that there were six missions or transformations in the university system which he terms as being layered in multiplicities because of their dynamic and fluid nature; they reflect the ever-changing philosophical ideals, educational polices, and cultures of particular societies of learned institutions.<sup>25</sup> He was of the opinion that the guiding philosophy of medieval period was scholasticism and in this there was the subordination of human reason to the biblical truth. This premise was challenged by the foundation of modern empirical sciences. Further, in the beginning of the modern period it was humanism which propagated individual free will which was then taken over by neo humanists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century who subscribed to Wilhelm von Humboldt's notion of *Bildung* and promoted original enquiry of research. The six different missions described by Scott are as follows<sup>26</sup>-

#### Pre-Nation State Stage

1. Teaching Mission- in the later middle ages, the teaching services were provided in the university of Bologna and Paris. It incorporated undergraduate liberal education and graduate (professional) education.
2. Research Mission- Before the national unification, the research first appeared in the pre-industrial German states i.e. in 1800 as a consistently funded mission. With the establishment of university of Berlin, original research was the primary goal and this got incorporated by the integration of research and classroom teaching with a focus on applied research.

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<sup>25</sup> John C. Scott, The Mission of the University: Medieval to Postmodern transformations. *The journal of higher education*77, no. 1 (2006): 1-39.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid

### Nation State Stage-

3. Nationalisation Mission- it was in early modern times i.e., c. 1500 the service to the government appeared as a mission and the monarchies of England, Spain and France carried out nationalization process to serve the government more efficiently.
4. Democratisation Mission- the service to the individual of the nation state or democratization was promoted as mission in the formative colleges of United States i.e., in 1800 such as Jefferson University of Virginia.
5. Public Service Mission- service to the public of the nation state first appeared as a regular mission in 1860's in American higher education which influenced several universities and held that public service is at par with the mission of teaching and research.

### Globalization Stage-

6. Internationalization Mission- in the present context, according to Scott, the internationalization meant service to the body of nation-state which involves the multiple mission of the university. In Scott's analogy, the postmodern university is likely to internationalize its teaching mission, along with research and public service in the global 'information' age.

### **Medieval Universities**

The relation between the autonomy of institution and its relation with the state in the medieval times has always been on questionable terms. As Gregory Stone argues that universities in the middle ages were the institution of power and prestige, largely autonomous conceived by the spirit of the guilds.<sup>27</sup> But there existed a hard-core authoritarian established doctrine that was obligatory for all scholars and teachers. To quote him- "It was expected that each new accretion of knowledge would be consistent

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<sup>27</sup> George. Makdisi, *The Rise of Humanism in Classical Islam and the Christian West with special reference to Scholasticism.* (1990).



with a single system of truth, anchored in Christian dogma.”<sup>28</sup> But, this is one side of the story; it would be intriguing to look at the argument of George Makdisi. He has contested a very frequent practice of tracing the system of higher education from exclusively western tradition. We can trace the movement of scholasticism and humanism through Islamic-Arabic grounds. Scholasticism is defined as the establishment of school guilds in the middle ages. The phenomenon of ‘doctorate’ is an essential idea to be explained under Scholasticism. The term comes from a Latin word ‘docere’, meaning license to teach and the exact term used first for the license to teach was ‘I-ifta’(license to issue legal opinions).<sup>29</sup> This license would only be achieved by a doctor in classical Islam, no other doctorate was allowed in any field apart from the religious law and its teachings. To achieve this degree, it was essential to study in the guild school of law, after an oral examination. The degree of the doctorate bestowed three status on the individual- *faqih* (master of law), *Mufti* (professor of legal opinion), *mudarris*(teacher).<sup>30</sup>

The guilds of law, can be traced back to the ninth century. They were exclusive, autonomous units, a professional guild with rules and regulations for those who wanted to be a part of it. The purpose was to place, in the hands of juris-consults exclusively, the machinery to determine orthodoxy in Islam. The guild initially was known by the region or city powered by Basrians, Iraqis, depending upon the region and its jurisdictions. The autonomous unit were formed, after the intrusion of Greek thought upon Islam, many of which tended to question the monotheistic beliefs of Islam. Education in the medieval times was highly influenced by religious practices and theology, even the secular current in university movement was triggered by not exactly a secular source but from as Makdisi quotes ‘an intrusive individualistic, difficult to accommodate system, administered by ecclesiastical hierarchy’ (In the Sunni tradition of Islam)<sup>31</sup>. The individualistic doctorate formulated by Islamic orthodoxy proved to be an indiscreet element in hierarchical Christianity of the west. For Islam doctorate meant jurisdictional

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<sup>28</sup> C. Wellmon, *Organizing enlightenment: Information overload and the invention of the modern research university*. JHU Press. 2015.

<sup>29</sup> George. Makdisi, *The Rise of Humanism in Classical Islam and the Christian West with special reference to Scholasticism.*" (1990).

<sup>30</sup> *ibid*

<sup>31</sup> *ibid*

authority, whereas for Christianity it was more about ‘competence’ to determine the matters of church and pope, and to pass a judgment whether a religious doctrine was true or false. This system in Christianity was applied by Peter of Ailly, in 1387<sup>32</sup>. Inside the very tradition, the university system took a little shift of becoming more autonomous and individualistic, to analyze theology deeper. Chad Wellmon argues “medieval universities were not simply extension of church or state, but they were supported both politically and financially by one or the other, or both in a few cases.”<sup>33</sup> Even the directions and regulation on Oxford in 13<sup>th</sup> centuries put by these authorities were never to be realized in collaboration with any secular authorities.<sup>34</sup> The allegiance of medieval universities was to local religious bodies, and to fellow members of the university guild.

Wellmon described universities as a religious mission. Even Michel Sanderson in his work argues, that in the medieval times more than 50% of the Oxford graduated would opt for a career the work of church or theology, giving a blow to the so-called liberal idea of education for the sake of knowledge and scientific rationality etc. the primary work of universities in those time was to produce new works in medicine, jurisprudence and theology<sup>35</sup>, but we must also remember the very idea of higher education in the liberal sense was not mature in the medieval times.

The second important movement which can be traced back to Islam was humanism. Study of grammar, poetry, rhetoric, history, philosophy. It is generally assumed that humanism is a modern movement which marked a shift from medieval ages, but the authenticity of this argument has to be revisited. The term humanities were borrowed from Colucci Salutati. A humanist was known as a poet, orator both.<sup>36</sup> The term humanism was used first in the 19<sup>th</sup> century though its origin can be traced back to the ninth century. However, humanism gained momentum in Italian renaissance. Long before

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<sup>32</sup> *ibid*

<sup>33</sup> C. Wellmon, *Organizing enlightenment: Information overload and the invention of the modern research university*. JHU Press. 2015.

<sup>34</sup> M. Sanderson, (Ed.). *The universities in the nineteenth century*. Routledge.2016.

<sup>35</sup> Eric Ashby. *Universities: British, Indian, African: A study in the ecology of Higher Education.*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 1968

<sup>36</sup>George. Makdisi, "The Rise of Humanism in Classical Islam and the Christian West with special reference to Scholasticism." (1990).

humanism got incorporated in the western history, it was a major intellectual movement in defence of classical Arabic against languages spoken by those who were conquered.<sup>37</sup> Humanism in Islam began in the 7<sup>th</sup> century in the school guilds later, when Muslims realized the fact that there are differences and contradictions emerging between the language of the sacred classical scriptures and the language that developed after the division in Islamic and Arabic tradition.

There has been a persistent battle between religious authority and state over their authority of universities since 1357<sup>38</sup>. A new battle which emerged over this issue can be traced back to 17<sup>th</sup> century; there was a great discontent among German-speaking lands, over the system of universities, which they thought has not changed drastically since the 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>39</sup> They believed that if the system remains the same it will restrict the scholarship or science and we would never be able to realize the 'true' end of knowledge. Eric Ashby marks four different waves of the spread of universities in the world, the first one in 15<sup>th</sup> century, the second in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century which took higher education to Atlantic the new world, third in 19<sup>th</sup> century when universities were established in non-Christian societies (like the Indian), and the fourth in the present day.<sup>40</sup> Two models of reform envisaged by Germany and their French counterparts. They were prominent institutions for defining the nation-state as an entity argues Guy Neave.<sup>41</sup>

### **Modern Universities**

Before the discussion on the mode of establishment and the model of the university in India, it is imperative to look into the models of 19<sup>th</sup>-century universities in Europe. Scholars are of the opinion that 19<sup>th</sup>-century University of Europe shaped the world's idea of a university.<sup>42</sup> This debate also informs us regarding the further changes which took place in the Indian university structures one of them was the transition of the university as an affiliating institution to the teaching university. Therefore, we will try to analyse the

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Wellmon, C. (2015). *Organizing enlightenment: Information overload and the invention of the modern research university*. JHU Press.

<sup>39</sup> ibid

<sup>40</sup> Eric Ashby. *Universities: British, Indian, African: A study in the ecology of Higher Education.*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 1968

<sup>41</sup> M. Kwiek, The classical German idea of the university revisited, or on the nationalization of the modern institution. CPP RPS, Volume 1. 2006

<sup>42</sup> ibid

two-major model of universities which was prevailing in 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe, namely, the French University model also known as Napoleonic model of university and Humboldtian model of university or German university model. These university models are also important for the fact that they opened the way for reform in the functioning of the traditional university in the British university structure (the case of British university will be dealt subsequently in our discussion of the French and German model of the university). The models are as follows-

### **Napoleonic University Model**

The French university model is the outcome of French revolution which has been built on the most part on a tabula rasa.<sup>43</sup> This is because in rest of the Europe certain structures of medieval period or ancient regimes survived but in France post-revolution, it was a new beginning. This could be analyzed from the point that what would have been the goal of establishing a university in France by Napoleon. The goals of establishing a university in France was-

1. To secure the officials necessary for political and social stabilization in a post-revolutionary state;
2. To prevent the emergence of new professional classes and with the establishment of new social order, education must be carried out in harmony;
3. To limit the freedom of intellect if it seemed dangerous to the state.<sup>44</sup>

One important feature of the goals of establishing the university mentioned above is secularization, i.e. universities should be free from papal controls. Prof Christopher Charle argues that university was the only corporation which was refounded after the revolution and it had nothing in common with the University of the ancient regime.<sup>45</sup> Another feature of French university was that in living up to the spirit of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, it was open for all person irrespective of their social origin. But the goals also indicated the dangers inherent with the French university regarding the curtailing the autonomy of university with explicit and implicit state intervention. This

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<sup>43</sup> Charle, Patterns. In Rüegg, W. (Ed.) *A history of the university in Europe: Volume 3, universities in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (1800–1945)* (Vol. 3). Cambridge University Press. 2004.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid

<sup>45</sup> Ibid

could be identified from the fact that after the establishment of state faculties in 1808 the study and examination regulations were no longer within the jurisdiction of the establishment instead they were the objects of laws, decrees, orders, edicts and circulars.<sup>46</sup> However, the Napoleonic model vehemently focused on the establishment of specialized schools and an important example of this is the establishment of Ecole Polytechnique in 1795 which was intended to produce technicians of all sorts. This leads us to another concept, i.e. professionalization of university careers. Before the establishment of the Napoleonic model, the pupils studying in the university used to enter the government services, but it was through a gradual process of promotion from clergy to the state offices. The Ecole Normale Superieure established in 1794 was such an institution in which students at least seventeen years of age were selected and were trained to pursue their careers in academia or government and hence the public education was run as a branch of state administration.<sup>47</sup> The two major aspects of a modern institution are secularization and bureaucratization. If one analyzes the process of selection and progress in French university model, then it becomes clear that it was based on the ideals of modernity. In the new system, the academic degrees and the means of selection by competition and examination were integrated into a hierarchy. This means the baccalaureate was essential in obtaining a post in college then the license allowed for promotion to college chairs and high offices, the aggregation, a competitive examination provided access to carriers in administration and chairs in higher education.<sup>48</sup> This indicates that the system of higher education in France was organized along the idea of merit (which is antithetical to the feudal concept of patronage) and hierarchy (which is the basis of bureaucratization).

Furthermore, there was a severe division of labour between the different faculties and the professors earned their reputation from their faculties. To quote Walter Ruegg “In, France the poly technicien, the normalised and graduates of other grandes ecoles referred to

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<sup>46</sup> Paul Gerbod, Relations with Authority. In Rüeegg, W. (Ed.) *A history of the university in Europe: Volume 3, universities in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (1800–1945)* (Vol. 3). Cambridge University Press. 2004.

<sup>47</sup> Walter Ruegg, ‘Themes’. In Rüeegg, W. (Ed.) *A history of the university in Europe: Volume 3, universities in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (1800–1945)* (Vol. 3). Cambridge University Press. 2004

<sup>48</sup> Ibid

themselves by their school, taking advantage of its reputation”.<sup>49</sup> However it should not be ignored that these same goals of establishing university in France also upheld the idea of centralization. This concept of centralization could be explained by the pattern of funding of university in 19<sup>th</sup> century France. The funding of faculties in France was state-controlled, and a Ministry of Public education Budget was set up in 1834, and from then it became part of the general state budget subject each year to debate and vote in parliamentary assemblies.<sup>50</sup> Paul Gerbod was of the opinion that state intervention also determined the orientation of research and it was state who was the judge in research outputs, and it was its task to find out the ‘errors’ in the research work which generally depended on the ideological orientation of the ruling power.

Moreover, university fees covered the large part of costs, and differential fee structures resulted in the restriction in the choice of subjects which the students wanted to pursue. For instance, the examination fee for the license in law, a three years course required 570 Francs whereas the same for arts for one year was 150 francs.<sup>51</sup> Again there is no motivation for arts and science students to pursue teaching as their career because in provincial France they were badly paid. This is because Paris was the centre of higher learning in France and the peripheries were neglected. In 1876, 55% of all French students were registered in Paris which prevented the regional centers from flourishing and with the integration of Ecole Normale Superieure in University of Paris in 1903, the centralization was further strengthened.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, as Paris became the centre of higher learning in France, the wealth was also accumulated in the capital as an obvious phenomenon which then resulted in the neglect of the regional centers as they were mainly dependent on private donations which had no similarity with those of the University of Paris. The administrative structure of university remained under state supervision. The heads of the universities were rectors who were appointed by the state, and they were responsible for the administrative system in their academies.

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<sup>49</sup> *ibid*

<sup>50</sup> Paul Gerbod, ‘Resources and Management’. In W. Rüegg, (Ed.). *A history of the university in Europe: Volume 3, universities in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (1800–1945)* (Vol. 3). Cambridge University Press. 2004

<sup>51</sup> C. Charle, Patterns. In W. Rüegg, (Ed.). *A history of the university in Europe: Volume 3, universities in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (1800–1945)* (Vol. 3). Cambridge University Press. 2004.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*

From the above-mentioned arguments, it can be summed up that there was a lacuna in theory and practice of Napoleonic university model because in the name of bureaucratization it preferred interventionism and regarding hierarchy it preferred anti egalitarianism which was antithetical to the idea of merit. German university model was considerably different than the Napoleonic university model, and it is discussed below.

### **German University Model**

The German university model is also known as Humboldtian university model because it was Wilhelm von Humboldt's efforts which led to the establishment of university of Berlin in 1810. It should be noted that 18<sup>th</sup> century has been the low point in the history of German universities as there were dropping enrollments, unruly students, little correlation between subjects taught and the post university positions available; there was even a talk of abolishing the universities and its place could be taken by the existing academies of science and new practical vocational schools.<sup>53</sup> Amidst of all this there was also the defeat of Prussia by Napoleon and the reorganization of Prussian administrative bureaucracy, and then there are also the philosophical writings of Kant, Schelling, Fichte, Schleiermacher and Humboldt on university.<sup>54</sup> The foundations of the formation of university of Berlin can be found in the developments which took place in Gottingen and Halle regarding the importance of research for teaching and supplementation of lectures with seminars which encouraged research-based study for students who wished to enter into different professions. The University of Gottingen can be regarded as the first one to be found instead of the reform that took place in the very framework of modern universities. Some of the reforms were: the state would determine the faculty appointments', good salaries for teachers, more importance and expansion of philosophy, gradual deviation from the theological doctrines and avoiding hiring people from that field.<sup>55</sup> It is also argued that it established itself in close association with mercantilist policies<sup>56</sup> and administrative interest of the state. However, there are much criticism voiced against this close link, one significant being, this close link between mercantilist

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<sup>53</sup> T. Bahti, Histories of the University: Kant and Humboldt. *MLN*, 102(3), 437-460. 1987

<sup>54</sup> Ibid

<sup>55</sup> C. Wellmon, Organizing enlightenment: Information overload and the invention of the modern research university. JHU Press. 201.5

<sup>56</sup> ibid

policies and universities actually undermined the importance of university as a distinct institution of learning.<sup>57</sup> There was an apprehension that it might become an extended branch of the state. Therefore, the model of Gottingen university was not very easy to replicate in other countries (since they had different domestic circumstances). It was also argued that by making the university as the only source of fulfilling the aims of state, the whole purpose of a university is jeopardized. The modern universities, argued critiques, were to have their legitimacy, and authority they should be able to define their importance, the recognition may come from the state, but it should also stem from the society and the internal fabric, essence, of the university.

The shift from medieval to modern universities can be looked at from the perspective of Kant who has extensively *written* around these themes. He described the ideal university as the one where unity was grounded into ‘not medieval guilds of the *universitas magistrorum scholarium* or in political ends of the state but in constant feud among the university faculties, which critically philosophy ensured never ended<sup>58</sup>. It has to be a constant, rigorous questioning of the grounds of knowledge; the university should flourish the critical capacities to distinguish good from the bad, real knowledge from mere information. The university was to be constituted not just of bricks and mortar but of people, practices and norms’. Keeping this very principle in mind the founders of University of Berlin, in 1810 dedicated a poem to its making and describing the essence of a modern university:

Here you will find the science

A castle of heroes dedicated

That grants you the courage the power

With which you will make yourself a new.<sup>59</sup>

Wilhelm Humboldt described university as a “moral culture of the nation”. It was a place where objective knowledge and subjectivity would reunite, as to form a better

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<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*



understanding. It was to equip people, to use the scientific imagination to look at different things. The modern universities' advent cannot be traced back before the 19<sup>th</sup> century, centered around the notion of science and scholarship. The University of Berlin has been an important one while analyzing the shift, there we three main principles upon which the foundation of the modern university was laid. 1) the unity of research and training 2) protection of academic freedom and the freedom to teach (*lehrfreiheit*) and learn (*lernfreiheit*) 3) central importance to the faculty of philosophy. Three principles are developed in various extent in the writing and notions of Humboldt, Schleiermacher, Fichte and others.<sup>60</sup> The second principle of academic freedom and autonomy are under severe attack from the state and other stake holders. The state in countries like India is still the major funding agency for most of the public universities and thus play an important role in regulating it's working.

There has been an increase in the closeness of industries and universities globally, and this brings us to the concern of how the research is mostly 'strings attached' and not exactly very 'autonomous'.<sup>61</sup> There is more of a utility approach attached to research now, how to produce more useful knowledge which can immediately be out to some 'use' and made productively. There has always existed a tension between 'the pursuit of truth' and public responsibility. Thus, the universities have to be the places where knowledge at best has to be acquired in the purest sense but they also have to inculcate national consciousness, train people to serve the nation. This argument is voiced by those who believe there was simultaneity in the rise of nation states and the advent of modern university system, and it facilitated the process of nationalization, and was responsible for national community.<sup>62</sup>

Prof. Ruegg was of the opinion that the manner of study, the content of teaching and the relation of the university with authorities in the University of Berlin were to be characterized by 'freedom'.<sup>63</sup> This idea of freedom was central in the German Romantic

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<sup>60</sup> M. Kwiek, *The Classical German idea of the university revisited, or on the nationalization of the modern institution.* (2006).

<sup>61</sup> *ibid*

<sup>62</sup> *ibid*

<sup>63</sup> W. Rüegg, (Ed.). *A history of the university in Europe universities in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (1800–1945)* (Vol. 3). Cambridge University Press. 2004.

Movement by which the founders of Berlin University were motivated. The German Romantic Movement was against the mechanical understanding of enlightenment which their French and British counterparts promoted. The mainstream enlightenment argued for the controlling of nature as a mark of progress in human history. The control of things, according to mainstream enlightenment, has grown with modern science and technology and it is often thought of as the principle motivation behind the scientific revolution and development of modern outlook.<sup>64</sup>

However, the German romantic movement contradicted this view of understanding world regarding controlling it and Herder reacted against this objectification and against the analysis of the human mind into different faculties.<sup>65</sup> This was one of the reason because of which Schleiermacher rejected the French model of professional colleges and faculties. Schleiermacher was the advisor of Humboldt and played a major role in the foundation of University of Berlin. He held that as Prof Ruegg informs us that the function of university was not to pass on recognized and directly usable knowledge such as the schools and colleges did, but rather to demonstrate how this knowledge is discovered 'to stimulate the idea of science in the mind of students, to encourage them to take account of fundamental laws of science in all their thinking'.<sup>66</sup>

As against the mainstream enlightenments divide of man in to body and soul, the German romantic movement held that freedom is synonymous with self-realization which leads to the harmony or union with nature whereas the division of faculties in French enlightenment philosophy leads to specialization which further leads to fragmentation, i.e. fragmentation of self from the whole and this is the cause of the division of classes which makes the relationship between human beings mechanical and it is responsible for the absence of the sense of communion between man and man and man and nature. This philosophical understanding had its bearing on the establishment of the Napoleonic model and Humboldtian model. The French model preferred the mainstream enlightenment's concept of division of faculties, and hence it established different

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<sup>64</sup> C. Taylor, *Hegel*. Cambridge University Press.1975.

<sup>65</sup> *ibid*

<sup>66</sup> W. Rüegg, (Ed.). *A history of the university in Europe: Volume 3, universities in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (1800–1945)* (Vol. 3). Cambridge University Press. 2004.

academies for different faculties. But the most striking feature of the Berlin university is the unity in teaching and research or in the words of Schleiermacher the ‘togetherness of the ‘masters with journeymen’, togetherness of masters with the apprentices and academy as the meeting of masters with each other’.<sup>67</sup> Another critical feature of the Humboldtian university was the institutionalization of private lectures.

Centralization was an important feature of the French model of the university, but the Humboldtian model promoted decentralization. The governments of individual states were responsible for the universities after its foundation. This was reflected from the point that there was no compulsory student attendance except in medicine course and There were no compulsory lessons or exams. It was only at the end of the course of study the student was tested. Freedom was the basis of study in Humboldtian university. The philosophical reason behind this is the understanding of adulthood which is the essence of enlightenment. Before renaissance and reformation, the Christian understanding of human being was the guiding principle. According to this understanding, man is considered as a fall from heaven, and every activity of human being should be directed towards reattaching himself with god. Hence human is not the responsible for its own activities, and there is always a superior authority which is guiding him. The existence of human being in biblical order was conceived as a child like existence whereas enlightenment claims that man is the centre and responsible for all its activities. This meant a rejection of any superior authority; it also meant that in the knowledge there is no superior knowledge or inferior knowledge rather there should always be the courage to know or in Kant’s word Sapere Aude.<sup>68</sup> Adulthood means to learn to have authority within oneself rather than accepting any other authority. The students in Humboldtian university were free to plan their study as they liked and they also had lectures and seminars and private lectures which showed them new ways of understanding the same problem based on the research of speakers.

However, the German model also entered into crisis as it finds itself difficult to integrate modern technology into university and the tendency of the teaching body to form a

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<sup>67</sup> C. Charle, ‘Patterns’. In W. Rüegg, (Ed.). *A history of the university in Europe: Volume 3, universities in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (1800–1945)* (Vol. 3). Cambridge University Press. 2004.

<sup>68</sup>Immanuel Kant, An Answer to the Question: “What is Enlightenment?” Königsberg, Prussia. (1784).

hierarchy.<sup>69</sup> The increase in the numbers of students in the German universities coincided with the change in orientation of higher education towards different careers. This increase in the number of students reflected that it is less likely that these students came from the educated middle class. Rather the majority of them were first generation learners and wanted to study to earn. As a result of this several technical universities sprang up in the last quarter of 19<sup>th</sup> century in Germany. This was also the result of the industrial revolution which took place in Britain in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century and started having its presence felt in Germany. The technical universities which were established in this time are Aachen in 1879-80, Brunswick in 1877, Danzig in 1904, Darmstadt in 1868, Stuttgart in 1876.<sup>70</sup> There was also an increase in the number of non-professorial staffs who were in majority in disciplines like medicine and sciences but did not have any say in the decisions of their faculty.<sup>71</sup> Till 1860 the salary of professorships formed the major parts of the university budgets but from 1870's onwards it was the seminars and institutes whose costs were growing faster than that of the personnel, so in 1910 half of the university budget was taken by the running costs of the institutes and seminars.<sup>72</sup> This, in turn, promoted state interventionism in the appointments of the professors and they become dependent on the state for funding of its libraries, of medicine, and research expeditions.

### **British University Model**

Having said this, from the above mentioned two models of universities the German university model had its impact not only in the whole world but Europe also and the case of Britain is an exemplar of this kind. It must be noted that most of the characteristics of English and Scottish university the state policy was less responsible than the compromise between the centuries of tradition and long over-due partial reforms.<sup>73</sup> British university system was heterogeneous and it is reflected from the fact that at the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> C. Charle, 'Patterns'. In W. Rüegg, (Ed.). *A history of the university in Europe: Volume 3, universities in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (1800–1945)* (Vol. 3). Cambridge University Press .2004.

<sup>70</sup> *ibid*

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>72</sup> *ibid*

<sup>73</sup> Charle, C 'Patterns'. In Rüegg, W. (Ed.). *A history of the university in Europe: Volume 3, universities in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (1800–1945)* (Vol. 3). Cambridge University Press. 2004.

century there was one Scottish university along with the two British counterparts, and it was financed largely by the state and middle class. But the Oxford and Cambridge represented the model of the old medieval university. The strict adherence to the policy like compulsory residence in the colleges, the high cost of the study, lack of any preparation for the profession except that of the church, and obligation to be a member of the Anglican church limited the admission of students in Oxbridge.<sup>74</sup> Both these universities enjoyed complete autonomy from the state as their wealth stemmed from land and they had close links with the Anglican Church. They valued the humanist mode of education in which the morality was the essence of the gentlemanly character. But as Prof. Charles argues in 1870's Oxford and Cambridge were forced by the acts of parliament to open themselves to the modern world and admit non-Anglican and women students.<sup>75</sup>

Moreover, the major change in the British university system took place outside Oxford and Cambridge as the civic universities sprang up in the industrial cities of England like Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield, Bristol. Most of the British universities survived on the grants by the University grants committee which since 1919 provided the central subsidies in a general way.<sup>76</sup> It is interesting to note that the British parliament through Privy Council limited itself to granting universities a charter and perhaps partially to amending its terms and to ordering enquiries into the system of studies or the financial management of establishments.<sup>77</sup> Hence this grant neither enforced supervision nor was seen as a case of infringement of the autonomy of universities.

As we mentioned, earlier this British system was a heterogeneous system. During the end of Industrial revolutions many Polytechnique and technological institutions came to be established in Britain. They were initially institutes but later given the status of universities, which could grant degrees. The context and reason are different, but the same tradition of establishing technical institutions was followed in France much before,

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid

<sup>75</sup> Ibid

<sup>76</sup> Ibid

<sup>77</sup> Ibid

to impart skills in its populace, and to produce technicians of all sorts. This also led to professionalization of education up to some extent. However, it might be assumed that in Britain these technical institutions emerged as to feed into the needs of capitalism since the process started at the end of the industrial revolution.

After analyzing the French, German and British system of universities, it is imperative for us to briefly understand the diffusion of universities to the colonies of the mother country. In this regard, we are restricting ourselves with the British case as a discussion on the colonies of French or Russian or Spanish would lead to digression.

### **History of Indian University System**

The foundation of the British Empire can be analyzed by the developments of eighteenth century Indian politics and the approach of mother nation towards East India Company (EIC, hereafter). As the weakening of the centralized Mughal empire due to the weaknesses inherent in the in the Mughal institutions which evolved gradually in the sixteenth and seventeenth century.<sup>78</sup> EIC did not only respond to the crises of the Indian politics but also played an active role in proliferating the crises. It has been argued that the territorial annexation by the company was merely the 'sub-imperialism' of the officers of EIC on the spot and the mother state has no role to play. But it has been proved that EIC and the mother state was intimately interlinked to promote England's diplomatic goals. This is explicit even in the formation of EIC which was founded on the royal charter as a royal stock company of London merchants uniting to combat Dutch competition in Eastern trade. This is further reiterated in the "Company's obsession with stable frontiers as a necessary precondition for the smooth operation of trade, was another motivation behind conquest as one annexation bought them to more unstable frontiers, which necessitated more conquests."<sup>79</sup>

It is interesting to note that the ideology of colonization of India by Britain is highly motivated by the cross-currents of different ideologies in Britain itself. The liberals and utilitarians differed over the question of 'Anglicization'. Liberal like Macaulay favored

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<sup>78</sup> For a detailed discussion see S. Chandra, (1986). *The eighteenth century in India: its economy and the role of the Marathas, the Jats, the Sikhs and the Afghans*. Bagchi. Habib, M. (1963). *The agrarian system of Mughal India (1556-1707)*. The agrarian system of Mughal India (1556-1707).

<sup>79</sup> S. Bandyopadhyay, *From Plassey to Partition and After: A History of Modern India*. 2004.

English education whereas utilitarian's like Mill favored vernaculars as it is more suited to Indians regarding utility.<sup>80</sup> The evolution of University in India could also be seen in the similar light. There were different motivations for different actors in India concerning English education. The primary motivation for EIC is producing clerks and officials who could be employed chiefly whereas free traders wanted to develop English taste to create a market for English goods similarly missionaries were motivated to spread Christianity and liberals wanted civilizing mission to flourish through English education. Moreover, utilitarian wanted India to be the testing ground for their ideas.<sup>81</sup>

The spread of universities has been characterized regarding four major waves of intellectual colonization and in the nineteenth century first-time universities were founded in non-Christian societies supplanting ancient indigenous centers of learning.<sup>82</sup> In this work, we are concerned with the establishment of a university in Australia and India. In India, the first universities were established in the presidency towns of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay (now Mumbai). These were initially the examining universities established on the London university model among other models available in Britain itself, like Oxford, Cambridge and Trinity College Dublin model; London and the Queen's university Ireland model; Durham; Owen college Manchester; and universities of Scotland model. The attraction of the London university model was primarily derived from purely economic considerations. London University model is also suited as all the real educational problems were delegated to the colleges to prepare students for examinations. The colleges had to deal with the method of teaching, staffing, libraries, laboratories, social amenities, residence for students. Hence University as an examining body remains overtly a 'secular institution', however the Senate as an administrative body comprised of the people with different religious denomination excluding the representation of professors in the senate. However, novelty in the curriculum reflected the novel purpose for which the university has been founded.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid

<sup>81</sup> Eric. Stokes, *The English Utilitarians and the India*. Oxford Clarendon. 1959

<sup>82</sup> Eric Ashby. *Universities: British, Indian, African: A study in the ecology of Higher Education.*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 1968

<sup>83</sup> M. Sanderson, (Ed.). *The universities in the nineteenth century*. Routledge. 2015.

The universities that were to be called the second-generation universities departed heavily from the London, university model. To quote Dhruv Raina- “the idea of having a system of higher education under a national management and on the national lines was spreading. It is in this developmental context that the system of higher education was domesticated to the national context.”<sup>84</sup> Initially, the EIC Act 1813 proposed two diverse objectives of education in India, i.e. the revival and improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives of India, and the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories in India.<sup>85</sup> This debate was furthered by Macaulay who insisted on English education and later in Woods dispatch, Sir Charles wood reaffirmed the policy of religious neutrality; and he gave fresh and emphatic sanction to the fundamental aim of diffusing ‘ the improved arts, science, philosophy and literature of Europe’.<sup>86</sup> The first generation universities were examining bodies whereas the second generation universities displayed several models the most prominent of these were denominational universities. This idea of denominational universities was outdated itself in Britain. The reason for the emergence of denominational universities can be seen in the process of colonization itself. Modernization began under the colonial rule produced threat perceptions among both Hindus and Muslims as each side saw the other capitalizing upon the benefits of the colonial state. Out of these threat, perceptions emerged the movement for denominational colleges and universities devoted to the development of respective religious communities.<sup>87</sup>

The further development took place in the last quarter of national movement when there arose demands for mission-oriented research in science. This period saw the rise of big science in India. At the time of independence, the university system in India was still weak hence the imagination of a post-colonial developmental state with the sentiment

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<sup>84</sup> D. Raina, Institutions and Knowledge: Framing the Translation of Science in Colonial South Asia. *Asiatische Studien*, 65(4), 2011. 945-967.

<sup>85</sup> Eric Ashby. *Universities: British, Indian, African: A study in the ecology of Higher Education.*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 1968

<sup>86</sup> Ibid

<sup>87</sup> David Lelyvel., *Aligarh's first generation: Muslim solidarity in British India*. Princeton, Princeton UP. 1978. Renold, L. *A Hindu education: early years of the Banaras Hindu University*. Oxford University Press. 2005



that the science and technology policy must articulate national goals resulted in the efforts undertaken by the state and hence the post-independence period saw the emergence of research institutes which acquired the status of institutes of national importance and their funding was separated from university funding.

The twentieth century marked the period of massification of higher education in India. Numerous universities, colleges and institutions were set up during this time. This was also the time when the expansion of universities was taking place in most of the developing and even in the developed world.<sup>88</sup> Those who were leading the country in the post independent era believed universities have to be an active player in the social transformation of Indian society. The education commission under D.S Kothari stated ‘if this change on a grand scale is to be achieved without violent revolution, there is one and only one instrument for that EDUCATION’.<sup>89</sup> The Radhakrishnan commission also stresses ‘education is a universal right, not a class privilege’.<sup>90</sup> The Indian universities were supposed to leave behind the burden of medieval ones and were supposed to be egalitarian, secular institutions’ it was to contribute into the social and individual mobility of the citizens. However, universities are now not seen as they were seen in the initial years of independence as, a place where new intellectual, social life can merge transcending the boundaries of hierarchy, caste, class etc.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, we have tried to trace the trajectory of the university in European and other traditions. We have reviewed the opinions of contemporary scholars like Prabhat Patnaik, Andre Beteille, Sudhanshu Bhushan etc., on the idea of autonomy and the nature of the public university and its present status in the Indian context. Along with this, we have tried to locate the relationship between the mode of establishment and model of the university established in India vis a vis its mother nation Britain.

Having said this, we have thoroughly dealt with the history of the university system in Europe starting from medieval to the modern period i.e. 19<sup>th</sup>-century university of

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<sup>88</sup> A. Beteille, *Universities at the Crossroads*. Oxford University Press. 2010.

<sup>89</sup> *ibid*

<sup>90</sup> *ibid*

Europe. We can draw a conclusion from the above-mentioned arguments in the chapter that autonomy has always been determined by the relationship between the university and the ruling authority. However, the idea of the Humboldtian university as against Napoleonic model has been influential in shaping the nature of university in Europe as well as in India.

Furthermore, from the above arguments, it can be summed up that, there were different motivations for establishing a university in India by different actors like liberals, East India Company, Christian Missionaries, and Free Traders. However, the nature of Indian universities also went into the transition from affiliating body to teaching universities, and the influence of the German university model is self-evident. The questions of autonomy of universities in India have been analyzed historically with the establishment of universities in India and subsequently with its changing nature

## **Chapter 2: Contextualising Autonomy in the Evolution of University System in India**

### **Introduction**

*The higher interest of the universities should not be subordinated to the obligations of financial assistance which they receive from the governing authorities. There is bound to be a difference of opinion as regards the extent to which the vital forces of the country can be permitted to impinge on the legitimate functions of the universities but there can, however, be little doubt about their attitude towards National problems.<sup>1</sup>*

This chapter intends to study the concept of autonomy of university in the context of the evolution of university as an institution of higher education in India and its gradual domestication in the colonial soil. It is important for us to understand the process of establishing the university as it reflects the philosophical ideas and world views of the different colonial administrators who were instrumental in giving shape to the nature and content of higher education in general and university education in particular. This chapter will also discuss at length regarding the model of university selected by the colonial administrators for transplantation in India and what were the guiding forces for the selection of one model and rejection of other models available in Britain. It shall also try to establish a relation between the colonial state, the need of society and university within their given context. This will be done through a meticulous reading and assessment of the documents like recommendations, charters, dispatches etc. which reflect the agenda of colonial education in India particularly university education. This chapter will also reflect upon the shift in the role of university from affiliating body to the research and teaching body and finally the change in the university as a site of research to the proliferation of different research institutes with the introduction of mission oriented research. These shifts regarding the nature and funding of university in India, has been argued, does not reflect the paradigm shift in the university system as a whole rather they were more of continuous and gradual in nature. For instance, the shift of university as an affiliating institution to the teaching and research institution reflects that the idea of German

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<sup>1</sup> University Reform-I, (1933) *Current science*, Pg-41.

university which was on the move among the colonizers as well as among the English educated middle and professional class in India. This helped to transform the nature of university which many believe was a major paradigm shift in the Indian higher education. These gradual shifts will help us to develop an adequate understanding of the relation of university with the state and the need of autonomy to create an educated class.

### **Marking the Beginning of Higher Education in India**

The East India Company embarked its political career in India in 1757, at that point of time there was no education system organized or sustained by the state. But from Plassey onwards, as the British started expanding their empire in India, they were soon encountered with the question of what should be their policy towards Indian institutions, practices and education at large. J.P. Naik makes a fourfold classification of the different phases of the changing characteristics of higher education in India under colonial rule. He was of the opinion that the trail of the university system (higher education) opens with the act of 1813 and closes with the Woods dispatch 1854. The second narrative in the system of education according to J.P Naik began from 1854 till 1901. This period was seen as a time of speedy westernization of education system but Indianization of its agency. The next phase opens up with 1901 and closes with Curzon's transfer of educational control to Indian ministers in 1921. Eventually the last phase starts with 1921 ends with 1935 Government of India act's introduction of provincial autonomy which marked a period of experimentation under the newly independent government's control.<sup>2</sup>

But, prior to any discussion on the British attitude towards Indian education, let us first engage in brief with the situation of education before British rule. In other words, what was the condition of indigenous schools when the British took charge of the colony? It is known to us through the reports of various educational surveys that the state of education in India had a developed form. William Adam, in his report on the Vernacular Education in Bihar and Bengal, held that 1,00,000 village schools exist in Bihar and Bengal<sup>3</sup>, and they are of different types like Madarsa, Pathshala, Mathas. Further, G.L. Pendergest of

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<sup>2</sup> J.P. Naik, & Nurullah. *A history of Education in India: During the British Period*. Macmillian & Co. Ltd., 1951.

<sup>3</sup> Dhrampal, *The Beautiful Tree*, Goa: Biblia Impex, 1983.

the presidency of Bombay held that ‘there is hardly a village, great or small throughout our territories in which there is not at least one schools.’<sup>4</sup> The other reports like G.W. Leitner’s ‘History of Indigenous Education in Punjab since Annexation’, Francis Buchanan’s discussion of indigenous schools in the district of Shahabad (1812-13), held that there was a system of education existing in their respective areas of surveys.<sup>5</sup> These educational institutions received patronage by the system of grants in the form of rent-free land which were provided by the ruler and the revenue from these lands were given to educational institutions for their maintenance.<sup>6</sup> In addition to this public patronage of education, there was also the private support for maintaining the educational institutions in the form of ‘revenue contributions by the community which also included peasants.’<sup>7</sup> With the East India Company taking charge of the colony, it did not intervene in maintaining the indigenous educational structure as they were guided by the economic interests and their primary motive was to extract revenue from the land. The dominant trend of the reading of early colonial history held that the British in the form of East India Company were trying to renovate to institutions, which also included educational institutions, of the country. This view was based on the teleological idea of the Indian history which held that India had a glorious past and it has been decayed in the rule of Muslims and it was the duty of British to uplift the colony from its mode of decay. This view was based on the writing of James Mill who parodized Indian history as Hindu, Muslim and British.<sup>8</sup> Hence it was obvious that in this reading of Indian history, British were seen as a savior. But this was not the case as has been argued by later historians, who held that the ‘decline’ of the indigenous education system was the result of the centralization of revenue by the East India Company.<sup>9</sup> This can be proved by the fact that the EIC removed rent-free lands through the laws for the resumption of land revenue, as they held that rent-free land endowments were a measure to avoid revenue payments.<sup>10</sup> This resumption policy of land increased the revenue of the company by five thousand

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<sup>4</sup>Quoted in, Baber, Zaheer. *The Science of Empire*, New Delhi: OUP, 1998.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Dhrampal et al., *The Beautiful Tree*, Goa: Biblia Impex, 1983.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Jawed Majeed, et al., *Ungoverned Imaginings: James Mill's The History of British India and Orientalism.*, Canada:OUP,1992.

<sup>9</sup> Dhrampal et al., *The Beautiful Tree*, Goa: Biblia Impex, 1983.

<sup>10</sup> Zaheer Baber, *The Science of Empire* New Delhi: OUP, 1998

rupees in Bengal alone, while the amount collected in North-Western provinces was over 2, 321,953 rupees.<sup>11</sup> This clearly states that under the veil of improvement of the colony the company pursued its motive of extracting revenue from land. This marked a death blow to the indigenous education system, as public patronage was no longer provided and the community was caught under the pressure of revenue payments and stopped its contribution to sustain the indigenous educational institutions.

It must be noted that till 1813 no funds were allocated by EIC for the educational purpose. However, the Calcutta Madrasah was founded by Warren Hastings in 1781, and Jonathan Duncan established Hindoo Sanskrit College in 1794 in Benares. The primary motive of these institutions was to assist English Judges to understand the Muslim and 'Hindoo' law.<sup>12</sup> This is explicit from Warren Hasting's minute in which he justified the foundation of Calcutta Madrassah and held that "... (they) represented that this was a favorable occasion to establish a Madrassah or College and Mugdih O'din the fittest person to form and preside in it... that the numerous offices of our government which required men of improved abilities to fill and care which has occasionally been observed to select men of the finest eminence in the science of jurisprudence to officiate as judges in the criminal and accessors in the in the Civil Courts of judicature."<sup>13</sup>

The East India Company Act 1813, can be seen as an important event in the initial discourse of educational activities in India. Under the provisions of the act the governor general in the council was equipped with the authority of giving not less than a sum of one lacs rupees a year in service of two objectives: the revival and improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives of India and to the promotion and introduction of knowledge of sciences among the inhabitants of British territories in India.<sup>14</sup> One cannot foresee the inherent debate in this policy until 1817, when the evangelical pressure along with the utilitarian pressure came to dominate the educational

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Minute, dated the 17<sup>th</sup> April 1781, by Warren Hastings, in H. Sharp (ed) *Selections from the Educational Records part I 1781-1839*, Calcutta : Superintendent Printing, 1920 , 8.

<sup>13</sup> Aparna Basu, *Essays in the history of Indian education*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1981.

<sup>14</sup> E. Ashby, '*Universities: British Indian, African : A study in the Ecology of Higher education*'. Hazell Watson & Vinet Ltd, England. 1966, Pg-48

policy in England as well as India. Initially in the company act of 1813 and in the educational dispatch to Bengal in 1814, there was a pre-assumption that the natives of caste and reputation would not surrender themselves to the English way of learning. Therefore, Indian susceptibilities were to be respected. Even till 1824 the pre-dominant opinion in the committee was orientalist. The orientalist essentially believed that the pace of westernization should not be forced, it should be allowed to take its own time. They argued that at the time of establishment of the old institutions the means available at the time of making the original policy, disqualified other mode of learning apart from the customary oriental type of instruction. In defense of the orientalist way of learning they maintained that only those who are sufficiently trained in the old learning would be able to effectively inculcate the new one. Even the civil servants in the committee had a general agreement over the stride of westernization. But soon new members were appointed in the committee influenced by the liberal and utilitarian schools of thought in England.

### **Intensifying Debates and Changing Contexts**

The debate between orientalist and anglicists had its root in the idea of decadence or 'decayed system' which has been propagated by British under the teleological understanding of Indian history. The logical underpinning of the argument of the orientalist was that the conquered people were to be ruled by their laws or in other words the British had to legitimise their rule in an Indian idiom.<sup>15</sup> Further, it was William Jones who by the time of his death in 1794 has gained proficiency in 28 languages and believed that languages held the key to the history of human mind.<sup>16</sup> He studied Indian languages from the vantage point to restore the lost glory of Indians about their ancient culture and legal system. He established the Asiatic society of Bengal in tandem with the Royal society of London with a view of discovering India's past. It was institutionalized with a mandate to carry out modern scientific research in late eighteenth century which Shiv Viswanathan held that it was the institutionalisation of Western Science in India.<sup>17</sup> In

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<sup>15</sup> Jaweed Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings: James Mill's the History of British India and Orientalism*.

<sup>16</sup> Mukherjee, Soumyendra Nath. *Sir William Jones: a study in eighteenth-century British attitudes to India*. Cambridge University Press, 1987.

<sup>17</sup> Zaheer Baber, *The science of empire: Scientific knowledge, civilization, and colonial rule in India*. SUNY Press, 1996.

addition to this, William Jones credited Asiatic Society to carry out research in the areas of language, literature and philosophy of India. Hence the establishment of institutions like Calcutta Madrassah (1781), Sanskrit College in Banaras (1794) and Asiatic Society of Bengal (1784) marked the beginning of Orientalist tradition in colonial India. Zaheer Baber was of the opinion that the main purpose of William Jones was to reduce the various indigenous classificatory system to the modern taxonomical system which was based on the Linnaean natural order of genera and species.<sup>18</sup> This was important to produce the knowledge of Indian society which Gauri Vishwanathan has termed as 'reverse acculturation'.<sup>19</sup> Further, another political project of orientalism has been identified by Thomas Trautmann who argues that giving legitimacy to the idea of kinship between Britain and India dates back to the classical time and hence morally bound the subjects to the colonial rule through a rhetoric of love.<sup>20</sup>

In contrast to the Orientalist view, the Anglicist view was held by Charles Grant in the British Parliament. Grant has also worked in India with Lord Cornwallis as a member of the Board of Trade in early 1780-90. Grant lost his two children and suffered major financial setbacks while working in Bengal and his apprehensions regarding India has this personal vantage point.<sup>21</sup> He was of the opinion that "the true cure of darkness is the introduction of light. The Hindoos err, because they are ignorant; and their errors have never fairly been laid before them. The communication of our light and knowledge to them, would prove the best remedy for their disorders; and this remedy is proposed, from a full conviction that if judiciously and patiently applied it would have great and happy effects upon them, effects honorable and advantageous for us."<sup>22</sup> At this point it is important to understand that Charles Grant belong to the Evangelical sect of protestant Christianity. The evangelists held that human kind was congenitally infected by the Original sin of Adam and redemption from this sin was available through conversion.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Gauri. Vishwanathan, *Masks of conquest*. New York 1989: 28-30.

<sup>20</sup> Thomas R Trautman, *Aryans and British India*, Yoda Press, 2006

<sup>21</sup> Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, technology, and ideologies of Western dominance*, (London: Cornell University Press,1990)

<sup>22</sup> Extract From Charles Grant's Observations, dated 16<sup>th</sup> August 1797, in H. Sharp (ed) *Selections from the Educational Records part I 1781-1839*, Calcutta : Superintendent Printing, 1920.

<sup>23</sup> Ian Copland, "Christianity as an arm of empire: The ambiguous case of India under the Company, c. 1813–1858." *The Historical Journal* 49, no. 4, 2006. 1025-1054.



Hence, Charles Grant's anglicist argument should also be studied from the point that the promotion of English language was also a means of proselytization.

By 1835 the gulf between competing claims of orientalist and occidental way of learning intensified to such a level that the secretary of the committee felt the needed of submitting the issue to the government at home.<sup>24</sup> With this came the famous minutes of Macaulay, which did not only put an end to this whole debate between the two opposing policies of learning but also shaped the future character of the educational policy of India. Macaulay in a straight manner brought down the debate to the issue of choosing the medium of instruction to be adopted in higher education, and the choice was to be made between English and the oriental classical languages. Following the utilitarian approach and believing in the superiority of English he had no ambivalence in stating the natural choice has to be English. He held:

“had our ancestors acted as the committee of Public Instruction has hitherto acted- had they neglected the language of Thucydides and Plato, and the language of Cicero and Tacitus, and they confined their attention to the old dialects of our islands, had they printed nothing and taught nothing at the universities but chronicles in Anglo Saxon and romances in Norman French, would England ever had been what it now is? What the Greek and Latin were to contemporaries of More and Ascham, our tongue is to people of India”.<sup>25</sup>

Having said this, there was also a difference between Macaulay and utilitarian like James Mill. James Mill was skeptical over the vigorous implementation of English as a medium of instruction and advocated reliance over the vernaculars. Macaulay held that the old system was not sufficient to show the desired results as expected by the government. Zareer Masani in his biography of Macaulay, highlights this fact that “he (Macaulay) went on to highlight the wastefulness of the previous system under which government had printed thousands of volumes of oriental literature which no one was willing to buy

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<sup>24</sup> Eric Ashby. *Universities: British, Indian, African: A study in the ecology of Higher Education.*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 1968

<sup>25</sup> *ibid*

or read. Twenty-three thousand unsold books... had been lying in store.”<sup>26</sup> However, this could not convince James Mill and his successor John Stuart Mill. The junior Mill’s rebuttal to the Macaulay’s Minute was based on the apprehension that the vigorous introduction of English might produce hostility among the Indians who thought regarding the promotion of English as a threat to their religion.<sup>27</sup> The point of contention among the utilitarians like JS Mill and liberals like Macaulay was that, both agreed on the introduction of English in the colony but Mill wanted to concentrate on the small elite class from which the language would trickle down to the masses and Macaulay wanted English as a compulsory medium of instruction as he was convinced of the wastefulness of the vernaculars and it will also be cost effective for the existing government, both at home and in colony.<sup>28</sup>

Having said this, Macaulay advocated a ban on the indigenous studies and regarded them useless. He also advocated for an end to the printing of Arabic and Sanskrit books and establishment of Madrasah and Sanskrit college in Calcutta. In case these colleges were to be allowed, the system of stipends should be stopped so that these funds could be used to assist and develop English schools in cities. He only agreed with the ‘orientalist’ in one matter, that more efforts should be made towards higher level of education. ‘The aim should be to form a class of persons Indian in blood and color but English in tastes, opinions, morals and intellect’.

However, Macaulay’s proposals were not agreed upon at once, Lord Bentinck disapproved of abolition of the two colleges, however he also asserted that the ‘the great objective of the British government would be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India, and that all funds appropriated for the purpose of education would be best employed on English education alone’.<sup>29</sup> The orientalist faction, whom Macaulay had so fiercely attacked and derided, now regrouped with Royal Asiatic society of Calcutta. They suggested the Directors of EIC (East India Company) to

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<sup>26</sup> Zareer Masani, *Macaulay: Britain's Liberal Imperialist*. Random House, 2013.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> ibid

countermand Bentick's resolution.<sup>30</sup> Finally, it was Lord Auckland in 1839 who tried putting an end to this controversy. He advised for generous support to the orientalist institutions but he was also critical of the errors in the oriental system, and made it explicit that the ultimate aim of education must be to correspond 'a complete education in European literature, philosophy and science' through the English language. He advocates the 'filtration theory'. The filtration theory could be looked at from two perspectives: first that the British government was only educating the 'upper class' of society with an intention to develop a governing class mostly consisting of Nawabs, Sardas, Rajas and other aristocratic groups. But this could not be exactly true since the proposed social fabric of the Indian universities never officially supported a distinction based on class, caste or gender. It might be more appropriate to say that the British did want to secure a loyal class for themselves which could act as a supporting base for their policies.

The other reason more implicitly advanced by the likes of Macaulay was that the Government should educate few people and leave it to them to educate the masses.<sup>31</sup> But the point remains that initially every individual educated through English medium would get a government employment and would rarely be involved in teaching others.

In the Indian case, there were different ideological vantage points which differentiated in the introduction of different policies. This has been demonstrated by Eric Stokes in the case of Lord Cornwallis and Thomas Munro. Lord Cornwallis introduced the permanent settlement in Bengal which was motivated by the thought of rule of law and private property rights of late eighteenth century England and had a conviction that it would liberate the individual from the bondages of customs and traditions.<sup>32</sup> On the contrary, Thomas Munro in Madras was of the opinion that Cornwallis system did not pay the heed to Indian tradition and reforms should be modified to suit the Indian context. He introduced the Ryotwari settlement in his province and deployed a large number of British officers who were endowed with the responsibility of collecting revenue directly

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> J.P Naik, & Narullah. *A history of Education in India: During the British Period*. Macmillian & Co. Ltd. 1951.

<sup>32</sup> Eric Stokes, *The english utilitarians and India*. 1959.

from the peasants.<sup>33</sup> From the above-mentioned arguments, it has been observed that the universal conceptualization of the *colonial state* will not help us to understand the specificities of the particular conditions in which it operates. To quote David Scott- 'Colonial power came to depend not merely upon inserting English ideas here and there, but upon the systematic redefinition and transformation of the terrain on which the life of the colonized was lived.'<sup>34</sup> Further, Gauri Vishwanathan in her work 'Masks of conquest' was of the opinion that in the inevitability of the triumph of anglicists, one can explicitly see in the history of education in British India that there were some basic 'humanistic traits and functions associated with English literature; for instance- the shaping of character or the development of aesthetic sense or the discipline of critical thinking- they were considered essential to the process of socio political control by the guardians of the same tradition.'<sup>35</sup>

### **Establishment of First Universities in India**

Having this as the background, the university system embarked its journey in India with Sir Charles Woods's well known educational dispatch of 1854. Dr. F.J. Mouat (secretary to the council of education), was one of the main architects of the framework of university system. He was convinced that 'nothing short of a university' would be able to fulfill the definite aim and objective of education in India. After a careful study of the constitution of Oxford and Cambridge, Mouat believed that London university model was best suited for Indian Climate. The model would provide an examining university, testing the studies of affiliating colleges, irrespective of their religious persuasion, it was well suited to the needs of the varied and scattered colleges in Bengal'<sup>36</sup>. With this idea in mind he ensued to frame the plan for a university, which he finally completed in 1845. This frame provided with a central university in Calcutta, with a senate or governing body having a vice chancellor, chancellor, and fellow empowered to award degrees, in arts and science, law and civil engineering, and medicine and surgery. 'The governor

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> David Scott, Colonial governmentality. *Social text* 43: 191-220.1995.

<sup>35</sup> G. Vishwanathan, *Masks of Conquest: Literary study and British Rule in India*. Faber and Faber limited, London. 1990, Pg-3

<sup>36</sup> Eric Ashby. *Universities: British, Indian, African: A study in the ecology of Higher Education.*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 1968 Pg-48

general was to be the chancellor and was vested with the same authorities and powers as the chancellor of a university in Europe'.<sup>37</sup> However the government in Bengal was still not very convinced with the idea of having university but they were impressed by the scheme and directed the decision-making power in the hands of experts in England. Lord Hardinge, however, believed that the appointment of the chancellor should be done by the supreme court, and also that during the beginning years of the university, government should have the direct control and interference in its workings. The home government in 1847 declined the idea of having a university in India. But after another year, Mouat drew a framework of a different kind of university where he proposed that the existing colleges should be transformed into teaching university. Along the same time E. Trevelyan and Cameron also stressed upon the need of universities in India with an anglicize emphasis. They were the ones to propose Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and Agra as best sites for having universities.

Simultaneously, missionaries also advocated the establishment of university system in India reason being, there was a social eligibility test for government posts was made mandatory by Lord Hardinge's 1844 resolution, the standards of the test were too high that it eventually upbraided the students of missionary colleges or those having classical education. Therefore, the whole idea of examining university, having a liberal course of study was intriguing for them. They submitted their written insistence of establishing such universities to the government directly. Apart from these British officials, Sir Charles Woods's role cannot be under emphasized while discussing the university system in India. He was not over enthusiastic by the idea of having universities, for him the more important concern was the future role of Indians in the administration. He did not favor the idea of having an abnormally high number of Indian natives on the senior posts in British administration. He contended 'I care very little about teaching Hindoos to read bacon and to be examined as we should be for honors at the Oxford. I am inclined to think that these highly educated natives are likely to be a very discontent class unless they are employed and we cannot find employment for them all'.

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<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*

Therefore, he was readily attracted to the London university model for India and confided in Dalhousie that 'I am for universities to confer degrees and honors for candidates who came up or colleges of all descriptions also he believed to leave higher education to only those who are anxious for it'.<sup>38</sup>

However, the London university model was not to be adopted without alteration, Woods proposed two modifications first to mold the examination character of the university and second was concerned with the power of the senate and the question of government's control upon the universities. Further Wood in his famous dispatch cautioned the government regarding the power of university senate, originally the senate of university of London had the ability and power to elect new members to fill open seats. Woods also invested the same powers to Indian universities but later became skeptical of it thinking that the potential problems it can lead to would leave the government incapable of controlling these new institutions.<sup>39</sup>

The idea of Woods was not to have a separate independent body for the governance of the university he thus wrote "it seems at variance with all other India institutions except the free press, should not a majority of the senate be appointed by the government? Otherwise may you not have religious and political feuds?".<sup>40</sup> The proposals made by Woods were agreed upon by the government. Regarding the curriculum and standards it was agreed that the curriculum should be based upon religious neutrality and impart in the natives a knowledge of improved arts, science, philosophy and European literature. These were the response of some of the British administrators who played a crucial role in the establishment of universities in India and the rationalization of London university model. Furthermore, Manu Bhagwan was of the opinion that 'London model epitomized the utilitarian liberal vision of the time, and therefore seemed the natural choice to export to the colonies in need of progress'.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> M. Bhagavan, '*Sovereign Sphere: Princes, Education and Empire in Colonial India*'. OUP, 2003

<sup>40</sup> Eric Ashby. *Universities: British, Indian, African: A study in the ecology of Higher Education.*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 1968

<sup>41</sup> M. Bhagavan, '*Sovereign Sphere: Princes, Education and Empire in Colonial India*'. OUP 2003.

Finally, in the beginning of 1855 committee was constituted to construct a plan for university of Calcutta and similar plan was to be followed for university of Bombay and Madras. The university which came afresh in 1857 was according to Eric Ashby a ‘deliberate exotic of a hybrid kind’. The outline of university was essentially based on London university model but it can be argued that the model did not exactly reflect its academic character. The university majorly had to fulfill two objectives to provide people for the administration and to disseminate an alien culture. These two functions are surely not the essential functions of a university and they acted as a hindrance in the aim of university as a place for learning and scholarship for training advancement of people and diffusion of knowledge. The Indian universities in this sense were no true university, they were not concerned with the knowledge or training of men but with the examination of the candidates.<sup>42</sup>

Again, this must be view in the political motive of the introduction of English education in the colony. This can be best exemplified from the fact that Macaulay in his rebuttal to James Mill was of the opinion that the government spent rupees 60000 on printing of vernacular books and received rupees 900 in sales.<sup>43</sup> Hence, East India Company was under the tremendous pressure to retrench its finances and reduce its administrative costs. And doing so meant the reduction in the number of British officers and reliance more on the Indians in the several government posts. This in turn also means that the Indians have to be educated in the English Language and in turn also meant that the production of textbooks will entail low cost than the cost of translating books from English to Indian vernaculars. It was the amalgamation of economy and ideology which prompted the political agenda of education in colonial India.

Alongside the establishment of the universities a need was felt to constitute a commission or a committee which was supposed to be ‘politically neutral’ and should consist of the best educationalists. A commission was made finally in the chairmanship of Chamberlain. They were given the charge to look into the issues of Bengal, with special powers to examine the institutional set up of university of Calcutta. The Calcutta

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<sup>42</sup> J.P Naik, & Narullah. *A history of Education in India: During the British Period*. Macmillan & Co. Ltd. 1951

<sup>43</sup> Zareer Masani, *Macaulay: Britain's Liberal Imperialist*. Random House, 2013.

university commission voiced several criticisms of university act of 1857 but they also maintained:

“yet it must be recognized that the system afforded the easiest solution of the problem as it presented itself in 1857 and perhaps met the immediate need better than any other system could have done. Few of the colleges were yet to ripe for the freedom of teaching which we have learnt to regard as the essence of university work. Clearly defined standards of attainments were needed and a system of examination can give these, even if in a rather mathematical way. The Indian universities were founded in the mutiny year, and it was not to be expected, in the political and financial circumstances of that time that the government should undertake any large and ambitious program involving great expenditure. the new system gave to the government an impartial means of picking up Indians of ability for the public services”.<sup>44</sup>

The disadvantages of the university system were somehow hiding under the fact that ‘at least’ some measures towards initiating the system of higher education in India. The further growth of universities began with the Acts of incorporation of the Universities. In 1884 Indian universities act was passed which provided the university of Bombay Madras and Calcutta to confer the degrees in LL.B. In lieu of Incorporation of the universities act Punjab University was established. This institution certainly contrasted with the earlier ones in some respects, it had the power to grant native title to students of Muhammadans and Hindu law, it maintained a law college and an oriental college.

In 1887 under the incorporation act the university of Allahabad was founded. R Nathan narrates the story of its institution:

“the question of establishing a university for upper India was raised as far back as 1869, 1870, the Government of the North-Western Provinces submitted proposals for the establishment of a central college at Allahabad as the nucleus of a university for resident under graduates. The government of India sanctioned the establishment of the college,

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.



but without committing itself to any opinion as to desirability of founding a university. The secretary of state expressed the hope that college might hereafter be extended into a university for united provinces and Punjab.

“Sir William Muir LG (Liutenant Governor) of the united province having invited the co-operation of the chief and feudatories opened a central college in a hired building on the 1<sup>st</sup> july1872. The foundation stone of the Muir college was laid by Lord Northbrook in 1873, and the college was opened by Lord Dufferin in 1886. In the meantime, Punjab has secured a university for itself, and in 1884 the education commission suggested that the time had come to establish a university in United Province. The suggestion was well received. It was felt that Calcutta was too far distant, and that regulations of that university were not altogether suitable to the development of higher education in northern India. In especial Calcutta curriculum was considered defective in that it took too little notice of those purely oriental studies which had formerly flourished in the united provinces. It was further hoped that the establishment of a local university should stimulate educational progress. An act was accordingly passed in the council of the Governor general in the year 1887 incorporating the university of Allahabad. The local government carefully considered the exact form the university should take and especially whether in addition to prescribing courses conducting examinations it should maintain a staff of professors and even of private teachers after the pattern of universities of Germany. While recognizing the great merit of university of this type. The Governor considered that, at all events at first, the university should confine its operations to the direction of the methods and aims of instruction; adapting them to the needs, circumstances, provisions and predilections of the country, which is gradually uncovering its place in the intellectual progress in India. The Act imposes no limitation on the scope and activity of the university, but hitherto Allahabad has confined to the practice of the three original universities and confined itself to conferring degrees on candidates who has its examinations passed following a prescribed course of study in an institution attached to it”.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> J.P Naik, & Narullah. *A history of Education in India: During the British Period*. Macmillan & Co. Ltd.1951

This narrative depicts an interesting fact that the very first idea of having a teaching and research university bloomed when Allahabad university was in making, but it came to be realized only upon the establishment of Banaras Hindu University. Dhruv Raina was of the opinion that the defining characteristic of first generation universities was that they were the examining bodies, established with an attempt to create an 'intelligentsia' which will be a helping hand to the British.

### **Governing Structures and Autonomy of First Generation Universities**

Having discussed the establishment of the first-generation universities in India, it is of utmost importance to understand that what was the governing structure of university in this period and the condition of the autonomy of universities. The Calcutta university commission was endowed with the task of making a policy framework and highlight issues related to the sphere of higher education and universities in Bengal. Their recommendation was of utmost importance because it was these recommendations which were going to be implemented Bombay, Madras Allahabad and other newly established universities.

While outlining the structure of the university the commission had two main aims in mind: Granting more freedom and responsibility to universities for teaching bodies in teaching university and trying to invigorate universities which can be respond to the needs of the communities in a more responsive manner. Regarding the structure, they stipulated:

“A university needs, for its proper governance, bodies of three kinds. In the first place, in order that it may be kept in touch with the community which it exists to serve, it needs a large body widely representative of all the varies interests which are affected by the university’s work. Secondly a great university which deals so many complex matters needs an efficient administrative body, including men with a wide knowledge of affairs, who will be especially responsible for finance, and for the conduct of general policy... but the most essential element in the structure of a teaching university is a strong body or a series of bodies representing the teachers and endowed with large independent powers in purely academic matters”. Applying these criteria to the constitution of the university of Calcutta, they found it seriously wanting in all three aspects.

The senate of the university was composed of Chancellor, Vice Chancellor and the Fellows, and will have the following powers:

- 1) To have the entire management and superintendence over the affairs, concerns and property of the university
- 2) To make and alter any bye laws or regulations regarding the examinations for degrees and the granting of the same.
- 3) To hold examination and charge fees
- 4) To point to remove examiners, officers and servant's of the university
- 5) To generally act in such a manner as shall appear necessary to promote the purpose intended to have a university.<sup>46</sup>

The responsibilities related to academic affairs were invested in the senate but because of its wide role it fell short of a body which could be called a body of academic experts. The other body was syndicate which did not hold much powers related to the executive nature in the university. In the syndicate, also there was no mention of “any authoritative direction by a body of scholars’ For the Calcutta University Commission ‘a series defect in the organization of the university was the absence of any authoritative directions by the body of experts’”.<sup>47</sup>The syndicate was eventually trusted with no powers and was neither granted a statutory status in the university act of 1902.

In the place of senate and syndicate, while submitting their report, the Calcutta university commission proposed to have ‘executive council’ and ‘academic council’. With a strong proposition that the government’s interference in the workings of the university should be less, and that the academic experts should have more say in the matters concerned with the same. The academic council it was proposed would be composed of scholars and teachers, unlike the older bodies having 80-100 members, including representative of all streams and chief subjects. The academic council constitutive of such members was to be the ‘real heart of the university’.<sup>48</sup> Similarly on the place of senate they recommended an executive council, the commission emphasized that the court of executive council should

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Calcutta university Commission Reports 1917-1919, volume 4, part, 2. Pg : 212.

<sup>48</sup> ibid

have ‘every important element in the public opinion of the areas specially served by the university and every kind of expert judgment whose criticism on university policy could be of value’.<sup>49</sup> This should have around 400 members. This body was supposed to have ‘a real authority and ultimate jurisdiction over the university policy’. The commission also contended that its functions would also include ‘watchfulness and criticism, and keeping the university in touch of the public opinion on educational questions’.<sup>50</sup> It was also empowered to supervise the finances of the university with the help of a standing committee.

Another important reform suggested by the Calcutta university commission was regarding the relation between universities and government, this suggestion was also stirred by the new role they have imagined for the universities. It maintained the degree of authority appropriate for an affiliating university primarily concerned with administrative functions delegated by the state was no longer necessary or desirable for a teaching university primarily devoted to the pursuit of learning’. Commission was critical of the government even regarding the existing control of government on affiliating university.<sup>51</sup> The commission contended that an entirely new framework of ‘supervision’ was needed if required freedom has to be given to the universities to teach and learn.

The commission advanced a new position on the control of government by suggesting that direct control is going to act as a hurdle whereas the role of the government should be more ‘valuable’. The government would surely be responsible for the standards and forms of the universities, but by employing methods other than the older one. Taking an example from the universities in England, the commission believed that the power of making changes in the regulations and laws related to the universities shall remain with the government of Bengal, without having a direct control over the finances of the university. They suggested the governor general to be the chancellor of the university, who could also hold the ordinances through his special veto power, along with the power to nominate members in the basis of universities and also appoint external experts.

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<sup>49</sup> Eric Ashby. *Universities: British, Indian, African: A study in the ecology of Higher Education.*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 1968, Pg-120

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Calcutta university commission Report. Volume 4. Part 2, Pg-375.

Other proposal related to the measure of autonomy the universities decisively differed from the earlier provisions. The proposal solicited rejection of state control on the colleges engaged in university teaching, and said that these kinds of colleges should gradually move towards an independent management.<sup>52</sup> They thus suggested:

“The service system of staffing adopted in government controlled colleges should be abandoned and in future all university posts should be individually and independently filled by the governing bodies of the universities and the colleges concerned. This will facilitate recruitment, since the claims of seniority would no longer need to be considered; supply incentive to scholarship and above all enable the staff to command greater loyalty from their students and exert a wider social influence.”

The commission further held that:

“a body of university teachers of this character who are well selected holding their posts by secure tenure and therefore independent, would form an element in the shaping of public thought in India the value of which is impossible to over-estimate. One of the greatest defects of the service system has been that their very position as government officers has robbed members of the services of the influence upon opinion which they ought to be able to exercise and has precluded them from the expression of their judgment upon many questions on which it would have carried very great weight.”<sup>53</sup>

Another proposal was made to liberate the universities from a more implicit influence exercised by the government was related to decreasing the influence attached to the acceptance of university examinations as an eligibility for public services. They advised that the recruitment of public servants might be done through special competitive texts designed on the pattern related to the then educational system. While drafting their proposals commission drew heavily from the practices and discourses of the West. Eric Ashby was of the opinion that the commission even advanced a peculiarly British

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<sup>52</sup> *ibid*

<sup>53</sup> Calcutta university commission report V part 1. Pg-230

interpretation of the concept of university autonomy discreetly ignoring the political difficulties in India, they have disallowed the earlier disagreement of the government of India and endorsed the opposite conviction of the Indian office. The recommendations of Calcutta University Commission played a pertinent role in determining the nature of autonomy of university in terms of institutional and academic realm. It is at this juncture that we can posit the component of autonomy which is prominent in determining the further changes in the university system, as we may note in the introduction of denominational universities.

### **Changing Nature of Universities**

There was a growing discontent among the Indians regarding the system of higher education established by the British. Sir Alfred argued acknowledging this discontent and its dangers ‘when more are bred scholars than preferment can take off’.<sup>54</sup> By this he was hinting at the creation of a fertile ground for rising demands on the issues relating to higher education. Eventually, this discontent was furthermore the reason for demands of denominational universities.

Dhruv Raina, was of the opinion that the urban intelligentsia created by the colonial system of higher education comprised of administrators, civil servants, professional, social and political leaders. They also acted as the torch bearers of the process of modernization. By the early twentieth century this educated class came to be seen as the root cause of politicization of the newly educated class and the spread of seditious ideas and movements. The rising discontent and malaise in this newly educated class over the restricted career opportunities within the imperial dispensation and the experience of preferential treatment meted out on racial lines produced a variety of projects demanding greater self-sufficiency in scientific and technological research and training.<sup>55</sup> These political events related to education led to significant developments in the act of 1904, this was also the time when the London university model itself had incorporated some changes and introduced teaching and research in its system therefore on the same lines in

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<sup>54</sup>Eric Ashby. *Universities: British, Indian, African: A study in the ecology of Higher Education*., Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 1968

<sup>55</sup> Dhruv Raina, ‘Institutions and Knowledge: Framing the translation of Science in Colonial South Asia’, 2011.

India introduction of teaching and research functions within the university were considered permissible.

Having said this, the Hindoos and the Muslims apart from being skeptical of the patronage provided by the British to each other, also criticized the idea, that there were still fewer career opportunities to educated Indians. Dhruv Raina in his works has characterized these universities as denominational universities. The urge to establish such universities also stemmed from the discomfort of the process of modernization unleashed by the colonial government. However, the idea was opposed by British officials and as well as quarter of Indian educated class. Both these groups feared a communal mobilization on the religious lines. For Indian educated class, a mobilization based on this nature might be detrimental to the solidarity for the nationalist struggle. The idea of denominational universities was implicitly linked to development of religious communities. Aligarh Muslim university and Benaras Hindu University are examples of such institutions. It is imperative for us to discuss the nature and structure of these universities along with the relations they had with the British government. The British however were caught in dilemma regarding establishment since opposing the demand for such universities might invite reactionary responses from the religious groups. The idea of denominational universities should also be seen in the light of orientalism. This re-orientalization in the establishment of denominational universities should be seen in tandem with the then narrative of national movement which was articulated in terms of Hindu and Muslim revivalism and reformism.

David Lelyveld argues that the foundation of Anglo Oriental College (later turned into Aligarh Muslim university) was laid in 1870s when a group of Muslims in the leadership of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan took an initiative to establish an institute that would have comfortably impart religious knowledge in Muslim and at the same time promote English education and had elements of one of the best universities of England namely Oxford and Cambridge. The discontent from British education system stemmed from condition of the

British Indian schools, missionary education as well as the condition of Madrasahs.<sup>56</sup>

The proposal of setting up Anglo Oriental College came to the British Indian government first in 1902, and later again in 1911, both the times it was equally criticized by the likes of E.S Montagu and Thomas Raleigh without having a deep knowledge of the Indian atmosphere were of the opinion that these kinds of universities would bring a divide into the unity which Britain has brought in India.<sup>57</sup> They argued that like Hinduism, Muhamadanism is also not just a community but also a creed, a movement, with a social base a particular type of civilisation and ideals, histories and traditions. Nevertheless, the British officials believed:

“as long as you teach only writing, reading arithmetic etc, you can disregard the difference of culture between the two communities, but directly you probe the deeper question of education, you are brought face to face in the necessity of inquiring into the intellectual antecedents of your pupils when you want to mould the character and ring certain ideals in your pupil, you can't appeal only to the head, you must touch the heart which really governs actions. There are certain rules of conduct conventional standards of honors which a part of one's history. The Muhammadans have distinct kind of moral and intellectual history; but all this legend and history charged with Muhammadan sentiments will leave a Hindu quite cold; and conversely you cannot appeal a Muhammadan by with stories of Mahabharata. And what the Hindus and Muhammadans are now asking is to be able to use this powerful force in the education of their sons. We are not able to do it ourselves but we have no right to take away the key knowledge ad while not entering into it ourselves hinder those who are ready to enter in”.<sup>58</sup>

With this thought process in mind an approval was given to establish these kinds of universities and this can be termed as a land mark decision in the history of education policy of the British.

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<sup>56</sup> D. Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation: Muslim solidarity in British India*. Princeton university press. 1978

<sup>57</sup> Eric Ashby. *Universities: British, Indian, African: A study in the ecology of Higher Education.*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson. 1968

<sup>58</sup> *ibid*



The proposal for the establishment of Banaras Hindu University forced Britishers to address more complex issues related to indigenous education and University curriculum. The proposal for a Hindu University was drafted by Annie Besant and Madan Mohan Malviya in 1910, they envisioned a university on National lines under National control. The initial proposal was to make a University on the London University model where BHU (Benaras Hindu University) was to act as an examining body with affiliating powers. But it was to be different from the other 5 universities in 3 ways, the affiliation was to be granted to colleges which had religion and morality as an integral part of the curriculum. Secondly, BHU was to have Indian philosophy, history and literature as the most important subjects to be studied. Western knowledge in the university curriculum could only be used to enhance and not distort the expanding National thoughts. A subject that could develop the material resources of the country were to be given special emphasis. They aimed at providing the knowledge of scientific truths embodied in Oriental learning. A proposal for such a University was expectedly met with expeditious hostility. The Britishers certainly disregarded the system of affiliation, and absence of government control, above all the proposal, expressed explicit Nationalist undertones which the government was already finding difficult to control. Apart from the government of Punjab all the local governments voiced their criticism in a similar tone, and argued that is special emphasis on this kind of studies would prove to be retrogressive. They wrote the critical a president of 'Indian philosophy and literature are subjects well worthy of the attention of educated Indians and the study of Indian history on scholarly and scientific lines is an object deserving of nothing but commendation but it is very doubtful whether these topics are fitted to take the first place in a modern university education'.<sup>59</sup>

As the proposal for Anglo Oriental Mohammedan College got passed, Annie Besant also agreed to alter her proposal but even the modified proposal did not appeal to the British government, some of the British officials apprehended that the 'scheme was one of the products of the same imaginative mind whose groupings in the realm of organism and mysticism had let to know useful or tangible results'. Sir William Lee Warner voiced his

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<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*

criticism:

“what is this religious spirit with comments to patronize is it a Hindu spirit of religious intolerance such as we are meeting with in Mysore are the Brahmins claims to a Monopoly of education and government needs to be inculcated what does National mean does it reckon 53 million of untouchables as beyond the care of the state are we to revert back to Sati if the aims of the project is-really a Restoration of Indian society to the pay to the Post with antique. And let us part company at once we must stand by what we call principles of civilized countries and as far as I understand any business aims her principles and what I mean by principles of Civilization do not agree in the very least they are indeed antagonistic" he still showed his faith in the Woods dispatch however at the same time are most sympathetic position was taken by Sir Theodore Morrison regarding the Hindu University proposal he argued ‘all the educational arguments in favour of a teaching University in which a Mohammed And Atmosphere prevails hold good of a teaching University in which Hindu atmosphere prevails if the Hindus can arrive at agreement upon the social and religious ideas with they want to impart at Banaras they ought to be given a chance of doing so under the conditions already mentioned if they fail to arrive at agreement, cadit questio’.<sup>60</sup>

Later, many elite Hindus generously donated and extended support to the idea of a Hindu University and after the collection of sufficient funds Harcourt Butler specified the terms upon which Government support would be provided to the university and finally a bill draft was handed over to the government in 1913. The draft bill read that the university should promote a special degree in the study of Hindu religion literature, philosophy, history, medicine, and Science. Unexpectedly this did not make the British government uncomfortable however after negotiations the government did define the limits upon which official support was provided to the project.

The establishment of BHU can also be looked through the interactions within the currents of Hindu revivalism, colonialism and nationalist movement. The British wanted to

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<sup>60</sup> *ibid.*

present the concept of Hinduism as a single unitary religion, to be compared with other world religions of Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Buddhism. In this work, the orientalist and Christian missionaries, according to Renold, played an important role. The orientalist translated ancient texts into English and missionaries propagated the importance of English language in order to spread Christianity as they were of the opinion that there is nothing that could be called redemptive in Hindu religion. Hindu revivalism, according to Renold, is the movement which grew out of anti-colonial anger. The author also presents the differing view of Annie Besant and Pandit Madanmohan Malviya, in the context of the call for national university by Annie Besant for all faith. In contrast to Besant, Malviya took the position that Hindus and Muslims in India should have their own institutions of higher education and that both should receive the benefit of religious training in their own faith.<sup>61</sup>

Similar is the case with Aligarh Muslim University, as before establishment of Mohammedan Anglo Oriental College into the university, there was a debate regarding the nature of Muslim University. Mohammed Ali, an alumnus of Aligarh raised the demand that Aligarh should be the 'affiliating' university in order to strengthen and unite Muslims, not just sharifs, but also all Muslims of the subcontinent. He was against any government interference in the affairs of the university as he considered that falling away from faith has resulted in the degradation of Muslims. In contrast to this there were other Muslim supporters of university who, in the footsteps of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, saw the destiny of Muslim community closely related to the prosperity of the British empire.<sup>62</sup> Due to this debate the establishment of Aligarh Muslim university took more time than BHU. Pandit Malviya had declined the idea of national university of all faiths and held that Muslims and Hindus should have their own educational institution. He held that without the knowledge of one's own religion intertwined with western ideas, the development of an individual character of a good citizen is not possible. Malviya persuaded Britishers that observance of religious duties provided the foundation for a peaceful, non-seditious and well-functioning society. Britishers were concerned regarding the growing seditious activity among the youths and after the passing of government of

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<sup>61</sup> L. Renold, '*A Hindu education: Early years of Benaras Hindu University*'. OUP. 2005.

<sup>62</sup> *ibid*

India resolution 1913, which urged for teaching and residential universities in each province; the establishment of BHU was for British's an attempt to control the growing anti-government sentiments among the youths and secure their faithfulness to the government.

The second-generation universities spread around the country in the years before the Second World War. These universities were residential and teaching and / or research universities established through private donations and grants from local regional rulers, landlords and sometimes industrialists.<sup>63</sup> Moreover, the princely states also contributed to these endeavours. For instance, the princely state of Mysore played an active role in establishing Mysore University. The proposal of establishment of Mysore University has to be seen in the backdrop of Indian university act 1904 because it was through this act the universities in British India adopted the role of becoming teaching and research and residential universities. This act implicitly expanded the English institutions authoritarian powers.<sup>64</sup> and in turn weakened the princely autonomy. The agitation for the establishment of Mysore university had three different reasons of which the first was the wider discontent with the madras university secondly the growing demand to meet the local needs of Mysore, and lastly, the dissatisfaction from the fact that Mysore could not influence upon the governing body of Madras university.

Mysore university was to be different from the other models in nature and curricula; a model which was non-European in nature. It was Visveswaraiya who released the final draft to the government of India which had two important aspects to it; first, the durbar (the Mysore Regal Government) pronounced that the university shall be created through a regulation in legislative council and not by an executive order. Since this would establish an incorporated body somewhat under the durbar's control but still would remain autonomous having a more populist touch. A university under executive order would directly fall under the control of durbar. Secondly, the intention was to introduce improvements an increase the standards and not just follow the path of universities like Madras. It is important here to stress the underline agenda was to subtly reject and

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<sup>63</sup> Dhruv Raina, 'Institutions and Knowledge: Framing the translation of Science in Colonial South Asia' *Asiatische Studien Etudes Asiatiques*, Vol. LXV (4). 2011

<sup>64</sup> M. Bhagavan, *Sovereign Sphere: Princes, Education and Empire in Colonial India*. OUP. 2003

counter the ideal of colonial modernity imbibed in the older existing models of the university. Simultaneously a tripartite agreement was signed between the Maharajah of Mysore, the industrialist Jamsetji Tata, and the British Government of India to found the Indian Institute of Science again in the first decade of the twentieth century. This remains one of India's premier research institutes in sciences and was inspired by the model of Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.<sup>65</sup>

This can be marked as shift from the university as a site of research and teaching to the institutions solely dedicated for the long-range research as the developmental agenda in the late colonial period was came to associated with mission oriented research through the establishment of scientific research institutes. From here we mark another shift in the characteristics of universities. Dhruv Raina is of the opinion that it was the scientists who strived for the introduction of research in universities and to change its character from affiliating body to the teaching body<sup>66</sup>, but with the emergence of big science in India it has been felt that universities are not adequate to produce the research solutions as it has been anticipated by the scientists. Hence, we can find the supersession of universities as a research institution and this occurred largely because of two reasons i.e. the commoditization of scientific knowledge and the pact signed between institutions of scientific research and state which is embodied in the entity called defence research.<sup>67</sup>

As we have noted above that that the utilitarianism of Britain influenced the Anglicisation of education in India particularly relating to higher education. Interestingly, this utilitarian philosophy reverses its role in the early decades of 20<sup>th</sup> century and now it was the Indian English educated middle class and the industrial class who were arguing from the lens of this philosophy. This can be proved by the fact that two different versions of science were at move in the context of national movement; first was the idea that science as a radical rectifier of a new world order and science as a symbol of economic prosperity and well-being.<sup>68</sup> The second version found its immediate resonance in the context of

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<sup>65</sup> Dhruv Raina, 'Institutions and Knowledge: Framing the translation of Science in Colonial South Asia', *Asiatische Studien Etudes Asiatiques*, Vol. LXV (4). 2011.

<sup>66</sup> D. Raina & S.I, Habib. *'Domesticating Modern Science: A social history of science and culture in India'*. Tulika Books. 2004

<sup>67</sup> *ibid*

<sup>68</sup> *ibid*

swadeshi movement i.e. freedom from British rule meant two things- 1. Self-rule (swarajya) and 2. Economic self-reliance (swadeshi). Hence, we can find the echoes of nationalist tone in the foundations of institutions like Indian Institute of Science by Jamshetji Tata. However, it must be noted that the motive of the institutions established by the individual efforts which were different from the nature of university sought to promote the national education under national control. This can be said by the analysis of National Council of Education which has been established by Satish Chandra Mukherjee in the last decade of nineteenth century and it held the point of critical assimilation of the thoughts of east and west and to engage critically with both tradition and modernity which is in turn a different argument made against the mainstream argument of Macaulayans.<sup>69</sup>

Having said this, the individual efforts of establishing institutions has been coupled by two broad reasoning about the role of science and its relation with nation. Firstly, the contributing to science prestige accrues to the nation and secondly, path to political independence must be paved with economic self-sufficiency which in turn requires adequate scientific and technological basis.<sup>70</sup>

## **Conclusion**

From the above-mentioned arguments, we can summarize that since the beginning of the university system in India, autonomy has been a contested domain. The first universities were established as a part of British policy and were the examining universities. Hence the institutional and academic autonomy were both under the strict supervision of the colonial masters. The second-generation universities which were the teaching bodies was marked by the idea of independence from the clutches of British rule as they sought to promotion of national character in education system. But the structure of the universities was adopted from the modern universities of Europe. By the late colonial period under the rubric of national movement the idea of promotion of national education under nation lines was gaining prominence which was also the case with the establishment of

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<sup>69</sup> ibid

<sup>70</sup> ibid

denominational universities in the second-generation universities in India. The concept of autonomy can be centrally located in this context. Further, in the following chapter we will discuss the concept of autonomy in the context of the late colonial period and post-colonial India. It will also discuss the nature of autonomy of universities through the recommendations of different committees and commissions constituted in post independent India.

## Chapter- 3: The Crisis of Autonomy and Indian Universities

### Introduction

*'To modern man, free university is the Citadel of Civilization...when the Citadel is attacked society is in danger. When it is is conquered, freedom has disappeared. Today the attack is frequent and if it is possible demonstrates the persistence of these dangers and difficulties which are implicit, as they have always been, in the responsibility for maintaining the spirit of free enquiry'<sup>1</sup>.*

This chapter intends to study the autonomy of universities in the post independent India. Since the establishment of first universities in colonial India, there has been a growing demand regarding change in the nature of university education. It was in the post independent context that university education came to be associated with the developmental goals of the newly established nation state. In this chapter, we will make an attempt to analyse the role which universities were assigned to perform from late colonial period to the advent of neo liberal policies in India. It is imperative for us to understand that the autonomy of universities was always a ground of continuous tension. In the present context, the universities in India are marred by numerous pressure and misconducts, including political interference, economic liabilities, the wrath of neo liberal transformation and increasing demand of responding to the cultural, social, and political context under which they function. Hence, in this chapter we will also analyse the recommendations of different committees and commissions which came to be constituted in a post independent period and which played a major role in demarcating the 'limits' of the university autonomy vis-à-vis the state. In this context, we will also attempt to analyse the constitution of different regulatory bodies, in the case of universities, whose regulations were also the reflection of the changing imaginations of the post independent India.

The first universities in India were established by the colonial government for their economic and political agenda, and thus they kept a watch on their funding and functioning both, they could not let the universities act without constraints and control

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<sup>1</sup> AIU's stand on University Autonomy, *University News*, 53(03), January 2015.



because there existed a constant fear of rebellion and unexpected response. In the independent India, the government remains a principal actor in maintaining and governing the universities and their functioning. Unlike its predecessors it never tried to express their solicitude for academic autonomy.<sup>2</sup> Beteille, while writing about his brief experience in the education policy making in India as the member of national knowledge commission and chairman of ICSSR (Indian Council For Social Science Research), developed a particular kind of skepticism about the outcome of the policies that are made for the universities. He further realized that scholars and others related to the affairs of the university never fail to emphasise upon the need of autonomy, but there is unequivocal nonchalance regarding the consequences of policies that undermine the very same autonomy.<sup>3</sup>

It has been widely acknowledged that higher education has a twofold character; firstly, it is a process of socialization that universally dominates and domesticates individuals, i.e., socializes them to conform to the norms and values of the society and establishments; secondly, it has an inbuilt hidden capacity of budding the spirit of enquiry and questioning of the accepted truths. In other words 'it has the potential of liberating the human mind from the shackles of the past and present'. Secondly, it has the potential to make humans question the ruling norms and values to make them rebel against the social constraints and to seek solutions, outside the frameworks of the established system, to the social contradictions that have developed'.<sup>4</sup> This was the premise upon which the autonomy of universities have been debated since the middle ages. The questions of this have has been fought on two levels i.e., the institutional autonomy of universities and academic autonomy. In this sense, scholars like Edward Shils in his work 'The Calling of Education' writes, the theory of academic freedom rests on the view that truth can be achieved and that it can never be attained by coercion or by fear that the political, economic or religious powers will inflict sanctions for any view which is contrary to their own.<sup>5</sup> Ernest Barker was of the opinion that 'If the cause of academic freedom was fought in the past on the ecclesiastical field, and regarding chairs of divinity, it is likely to

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<sup>2</sup> Andre Beteille, *Universities at the Crossroads*, OUP. 2010.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

<sup>4</sup> A. Singh, & Sharma, G. D. (Eds.). *Higher education in India*. Konark Publishers. 1988.

<sup>5</sup> Shils, E. *The Calling of Education*. The Academic Ethic and Other Essays on Higher Education. 1997.

be fought in the future on the field of politics and economics, and regarding the chairs which touch those subjects'.<sup>6</sup>The nature of academic activity provides legitimacy to the practice of academic autonomy. The dynamism of thought can be best enhanced, in a free environment which encourages dissent, questioning and has scope for consensus and toleration. Academic activity shall to be differentiated from other kinds of social activity, where productivity can be multiplied by gearing up the routinized mechanical processes, and competition.

Nevertheless, higher education came to be conceptualized as an essential factor of the developmental strategies of emerging nations and especially of the developing countries, with unprecedented growth in its provision and participation rates. With the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, worldwide there has been a deliberate or planned shift toward massification of higher education. Ahmed C Bawa is of the opinion that the development of universities worldwide is led by two main factors, first is the inevitable link between the economic growth and higher education second is the increase in social and political pressure for the access of higher education. Since the stakeholders in democratic transformation recognised higher education as a driving force which can facilitate this process. While massification is a powerful driving force for the transformation of higher education, research and research capacity building are always central to the discussion. And therefore, universities come to acquire an extremely prominent place in this discussion.

### **The National Agenda of University and Nation-building**

It must be noted at this juncture that the crisis in the university system emerged at the turn of the twentieth century had its implications on the changing nature of the universities in India and the Indian university Act 1904 marked the beginning of university as a teaching institution. The university education for nearly a half a century lacked the industrial training and research. It was the constructive trend of the Swadeshi movement which argued for starting Swadeshi enterprise and stores and tried to organise education on autonomous and indigenous lines.<sup>7</sup> This was the outcome of the dissatisfaction due to

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<sup>6</sup> E. Barker, The Nature and Condition of Academic Freedom in Universities. *Bulletin, of the American Association of University Professors (1915-1955)*, 10(7). 1924. 78-84. Pg:80

<sup>7</sup> Sumit Sarkar. *The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal 1903-1908*, New Delhi: People's Publishing House. 1973.

unemployment among the educated middle class and the moderates were criticised as ‘denationalized Anglicists’. From 1887 onwards the Congress repeatedly passed resolutions which called for an education with a technical bias. This point is important to understand that what role universities were assigned to play in the context of national development which, according to Ashby, is also known as the fourth wave of university formation. The formation of IACS (Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science) can be studied as an institution which motivated the Indian scientists to undertake fundamental research, and many academics of the Calcutta university like J.C Bose and Prafulla Chandra Ray were associated with it in the capacity of teacher or by some other means.<sup>8</sup> Dhruv Raina was of the opinion that “the Association blossomed in the wake of the emerging nationalist struggle, and the greater the reluctance displayed by the imperial administration, the greater was the resolve on the part of the incipient scientific community to ground their independent efforts.”<sup>9</sup> Hence as we have discussed the discontent among the educated youth in the Swadeshi days led Satish Chandra Mukherjee to found National council of education in March 1906.

The NCE (National Council of Education) sought to promote the research charter of IACS and held to found an education system on national lines under national control which defined national regarding the critical assimilation of both east and west.<sup>10</sup> The idea of science as a harbinger of economic well-being and prosperity found resonance in the NCE which sought to establish its colleges in opposition to the Calcutta University.<sup>11</sup> However immediately with the foundation of NCE, there was a split led by Taraknath Palit and Nilratan Sircar who wanted to concentrate on technical training alone and founded an institution named ‘Society for the Promotion of Technical Education’, while the majority wanted to combine literary and scientific instruction.<sup>12</sup> But the split was

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<sup>8</sup> Dhruv Raina and S. Irfan Habib. *Domesticating Modern Science: A Social History of Science and Culture in Colonial India*, New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2004.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Sumit Sarkar. *The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal 1903-1908*, New Delhi: People’s Publishing House, 1973.

soon resolved under the impetus of the national movement and ‘the growing demand for professional engineers and scientists to man India’s mushrooming industries.’<sup>13</sup>

The idea that the path to independence will be guided by the economic self-reliance was gaining currency before the swadeshi movement. This can be exemplified by the fact that in 1867 Kishorilal Mukherjee started Shibpur Iron Works and P.C. Ray started his Bengal Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals in 1893. As Dhruv Raina points out that through the efforts of the scientists like P.C. Ray and J.C. Bose a substantial school of research in the area of physics and chemistry has been established in Calcutta University which had its relation with the ideas which gained importance in the late nineteenth century that ‘the contributing to science prestige accrues to the nation, and secondly, path to political independence must be paved with economic self-sufficiency which in turn requires adequate scientific and technological basis.’<sup>14</sup>

The Calcutta University Commission of 1919 was of the opinion that “university work has at present too little relation to many aspects of the life of community... the study of commercial subjects ought to be organized in relation with the study pure economics and geography, and the study of law in relation with history and political science; the technological application of science cannot without danger be divorced from the pure sciences on which they rest; the study of medicine is dependent upon the sciences, and it is wasteful to provide a wholly separate system to teach all these sciences to medical students alone...if the University of Calcutta is to seen to be mere organization for the conferment of degrees and the preparation of the students who seek them, and if it is to become, like the great modern universities of the West, genuinely a city university, it must have the organic relations with the city it serves.”<sup>15</sup>

From the above statement, it has been made clear that by the second decade of the twentieth century the research agenda of the university was legitimised. Another concept which got prominence by this time was the unity of teaching and research which was

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<sup>13</sup> Dhruv Raina and S. Irfan Habib, *Domesticating Modern Science: A Social History of Science and Culture in Colonial India*, New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2004, 1973.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> *Calcutta University Commission Report 1917-19*, Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, 1919, vol. Iv, part ii, pg 427.

influenced by the German University model. An Indian industrialist J.N. Tata established Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore and was dissatisfied by the state of Indian universities. A tripartite agreement was signed between the Maharajah of Mysore, the industrialist Jamsetji Tata, and the British Government of India to found the Indian Institute of Science. He was influenced by the German University Model and established IIS (Indian Institute of Science) on the model of John Hopkins University proposing to establish a 'real university' with his endowments with matching support from the Government of India.<sup>16</sup>

Subbarayappa was of the opinion that the reasons for the emolument of the John Hopkins University stem from the fact that John Hopkins was the first university in the world founded as a postgraduate institution and this what IIS turned out to be and continuing till date; secondly, in 1875, when it was founded, John Hopkins was in the center of a district where vast industrial development was in progress.<sup>17</sup> However, P.C. Ray was opposed to this idea as he held that Indian students still required to be apprenticed to a researcher at an existing university and these universities needed to be well endowed and widened in scope; whereas Tata was suggesting a leapfrogging.<sup>18</sup> This approach of Tata, as argued by Raina, is the result of 'the scientific research programmes (which) was underway in the minds of those shaping the future of India's scientific institutions.'<sup>19</sup>

The conceptual undertone which lies under the idea of industrialisation as the basis for acquiring economic sovereignty stems from the idea of 'development'. Benjamin Zachariah in his reading on the development discourse in the late colonial period was of the opinion that 'by the 1920s and 1930's the idea of backwardness was framed in predominantly economic terms in British Colonial as well as nationalist arguments'.<sup>20</sup>

Earlier the British argued that the colonial rule is beneficial as it played the modernising role by instilling the scientific rationality as against the superstition of east and made

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<sup>16</sup> Dhruv Raina and S. Irfan Habib, *Domesticating Modern Science: A Social History of Science and Culture in Colonial India*, New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2004.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Benjamin Zachariah, *Developing India: An Intellectual and Social History c. 1930-50* New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005.

gains to the colony from the imperial connections in the areas of finance, trade, and commerce. On the contrary, the Indian nationalists argued that Britain was the main reason for the backwardness of the colony and this has been explicit since the days of Dadabhai Naoroji. To quote Zachariah- "British colonialism in India was dependent on the justifications based on the ideas of British expertise in the arts of government, economics, and administration, and on assumptions of inadequacy and inferiority of Indians in these fields. Indians on their part sought to combat the imperial claim to a monopoly of expertise in government, economic and otherwise, but also to come up with their conception of development."<sup>21</sup> By the time of the formation of National Planning Committee with Nehru as its Chairman, the idea of development or in other words nation building came to be associated with mission-oriented research based on two major imperatives of research, i.e. Industrial research and nuclear research,<sup>22</sup> and this reflects in the formation of different research institutes like CSIR(Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research), TIFR(Tata Institute for Fundamental Research), BARC (Bhabha Atomic Research Centre) etc.

By the end of imperial control over India, universities came to be characterised as the centers of long-range research as against the mission-oriented research institutes of science and technology. Having said this, there are numerous of nitty-gritties and nuances which needs to be discussed regarding the transition from universities as the centers of research to the mushrooming of research institutes in science and technology and the further role which university played in a post-colonial situation.

In Post independent India, higher education was necessarily seen as a machine of production of knowledge that has carry forward the task of national building and nationhood.<sup>23</sup> Due to this reason, immediately after independence economic research and technological institutes were established and given importance.<sup>24</sup> However, this forced link between higher education and nation-building, in turn, distorted the role of

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Dhruv Raina and S. Irfan Habib, *Domesticating Modern Science: A Social History of Science and Culture in Colonial India*, New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2004.

<sup>23</sup> P. Patnaik, Challenges before higher education in developing societies. *Social Scientist*, 37(7/8), 2009. 21-32.

<sup>24</sup> A. Béteille, *Universities at the crossroads*. OUP. 2010.

universities as places of creating knowledge in a free and fair environment. Patnaik further argues that this imposition of the national building reduced universities to a place where higher education becomes a purely functional activity, detached from its quest for knowledge and truth, filled with artificiality, narrowness and outcome-based approach. Another problem is the fact that the task of nation-building through higher education, is seen as possible through only certain disciplines and segments<sup>25</sup>. Now this further leads to a couple of problems, first is the exclusion of other disciplines, and secondly, research and training of certain type are appreciated leaving aside a large number of subjects.

The point which has been grossly missed by the policy makers is that Universities are not just centres of learning, but are a distinctive centre of learning they play an essential role in knowledge creation and its transmission. Along with this, they are also social institutions which play their role in making interaction between young men and women and among generations<sup>26</sup>. The linking of higher education to nation building and the role of the university as machine to produce graduates, made it more important for the government to control the functioning of the universities, and not realize the fact that they are not just political institutions as was assumed by the British Raj at the times of their establishment. In independent India, they were much more than that. This is not to say that our universities have not grown, the massification of higher education led to the growth of universities but they are still far off from delivering what was being expected out of them, and the reason for this necessarily lies in the manner they are governed and this will be analysed further in the following section. Having said this, it must be noted that the period of 1970 to 1990 has been classified by N.V. Varghese as the stage of decline in the growth of enrolment in higher education. This has been exemplified by the fact that in 1970's the gross enrolment ratio in higher education was 4.2% and in 1990's it was 5.9% when compared to the increase in the enrolment ratio from 1960 to 1970 i.e., 1.5% in 1960 and 4.2% in 1970 which shows a rise in enrolment ratio by 3.3 times.<sup>27</sup> The GER (Gross Enrolment Ratio) of higher education till 1990's has been categorised as the elite stage of enrolment of higher education in India. Varghese was of the opinion that the

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<sup>25</sup>P. Patnaik, Challenges before higher education in developing societies. *Social Scientist*, 37(7/8), (2009). 21-32.

<sup>26</sup> A. Béteille, *Universities at the crossroads*. OUP. 2010.

<sup>27</sup> N. V. Varghese, Challenges of massification of higher education in India. *Research Papers Series* 2015.

decline in the enrolment ratio of higher education in India is marked by the beginning of entry of private players in higher education as against decade of 1960 which was characterised as period of converting the private institutions in to the public.<sup>28</sup> Pawan Agarwal stated that the colleges which were legally private but publicly financed dominated the higher education landscape till 1980's.<sup>29</sup> Hence it was only with the adoption of cost recovery measures by the public institutions, which marked the beginning of privatization led to the massification of higher education in India. Moreover, one can argue that the public funding of the public institution characterized the growth of higher education in its elite state while the process of massification was a market mediated process facilitated largely through private institution and financed from the household.<sup>30</sup> Having said this, till 2000, the GRE in higher education remained below 10% i.e., 8.1% and it reflected the elite nature of enrolment. There were several reasons identified by R.K. Kale for the elite nature of enrolment, first being, the exclusion of many marginalized groups from accessing higher education, only a certain class of people were able to secure a place for themselves in the universities. Despite the existence of reservation policies, the nature of higher education primarily remained exclusionary. Secondly, the GER was 4.7 % in 1980s to 10% in 2000, there was a simultaneity in the process of massification and in the process of elitism in higher education. Thirdly, one could witness 'instead of giving autonomy and academic freedom, the government started regulating education, a tendency that only increased over a period'.<sup>31</sup>

### **The Problem of managing universities: Commissions and Committees on University Autonomy.**

The post independent India, was marked by the scars of 200 years of colonization. There was a yearning in the leaders to make concentrated efforts around areas that could lead to major transformations towards the development of the nation. Importance of education, in the building of human resource, was well recognized in those times. This is a major reason for the establishment of technological institutes right after independence.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid

<sup>29</sup> Pawan Agarwal, *Indian higher education: Envisioning the future*. Sage Publications India, 2009.

<sup>30</sup> N. V. Varghese, Challenges of massification of higher education in India. *Research Papers Series* 1.2015.

<sup>31</sup> R.K. Kale, *Indian Higher Education: A perspective from the margin*, Aakar Publication, New Delhi, 2018.



Throughout 1950's and 1960's it was the congress party who was in power in the centre as well as in maximum numbers of state. The decisions of the central government guided the decisions of state government. The Nehruvian mandate was that, in order to develop the nation the investment must be done with a view to establish technical institutions and scientific research laboratories. The purpose of higher education was however, not solely assumed as an instrument to create human capital in its most rigid sense. With the great changes that independence had brought the academic problems also assumed new shapes. There were wider conceptions of the expectations from the duties and responsibilities of universities. Universities were seen as a birthplace of leaders for politics administration, professionals and commerce. One could derive a sense of the purpose of higher education through a reading of the Radhakrishnan Commission. In a democracy, higher education should lead to a holistic development of an individual's mind, spirit and intellect. It regarded universities as the 'organs of civilization'.<sup>32</sup> Where 'everything was brought to the test of reason, theologies, social arrangements, and a thousand things which are seen as fixed like hills from generations'<sup>33</sup>. The trailblazers of the civilization were to be schooled and trained in the universities. The commission based the premises of democracy on the free development of the individual.

It recognized autonomy as an essential aspect of higher education institutions. It maintained that Higher education institutions should be seen as self-governing organizations which can lead to the path of excellence. Higher education was seen as an obligation on the part of the government, and it was emphasized that government funding should not be confused with government's control. It held that "Higher education is, undoubtedly, an obligation of the State but State aid is not to be confused with State control over academic policies and practices. Intellectual progress demands the maintenance of the spirit of free inquiry."<sup>34</sup>

However, right after the independence there must have existed an aspiration to guide the major institutions of importance, through the regulations of the state, therefore, the

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<sup>32</sup>Ministry of Education Government of India, *The Report of The University Education Commission*, New Delhi, 1950. Pg 28.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid*

<sup>34</sup> N.V. Varghese & Garima Malik. Institutional Autonomy in Higher Education in India. *University News*, 53(03), 2015.

commission also proposed for the establishment of University Grants Commission which would be responsible for the allocation of funds and regulate the university. The commission stated that "Government should assist with funds and should provide general discipline and oversight, as through the University Grants Commission."<sup>35</sup>. It always remained the prerogative of the government to have regulatory bodies through which the standards of higher education would be determined. For this task, the governing bodies were needed and hence the formation of UGC (University Grants Commission). Thus, the primary task of the UGC was supposed to be of a facilitator in the development of higher education.

The UGC currently performs three primary functions: it superintends the distribution of grants to universities/colleges in India; secondly, the UGC provides scholarships/fellowships, covering more than 80,000 beneficiaries yearly, and its third main function is to recognise universities and invigilate conformity to its regulations by universities and colleges in the country.

However, Pankaj Chandra argues, in place of a regulatory body what India has is a 'prison warden' while delineating the difference between the two, he notes, the former broadly defines the boundaries and step in only when they are violated but the latter tends to define and control every single aspect of the administration and functioning of the university the Prison Warden not only demarcates the stringent boundaries within which the university shall function but also choose the pathway on which it has to work, and it shall also determine that all who work on its path look alike<sup>36</sup>. In the context of the establishment of regulatory bodies, Amrik Singh was of the opinion that 'the inability to evolve a new structure is really our inability to live down our history. Regarding history, we have never permitted our universities to function as independent, autonomous units, they always had an umbrella above them'.<sup>37</sup> The foremost function of UGC was to mediate between Government and Universities especially where funds are concerned but what UGC could not delineate was a thin line between academic spirit and government

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<sup>35</sup> ibid

<sup>36</sup> Pankaj Chandra, *Building universities that matter*, orient black swan 2017, pg 26

<sup>37</sup> A. Singh, Restructuring Our Universities. *Economic and Political Weekly*, (1975). 1847-1853.pg:1849

policies. It was supposed to protect the university autonomy to so that the universities could facilitate and freely advance its objectives, unfortunately, AICTE (All India Council of Teacher Education) and UGC began to operate more like an executive arm of MHRD (Ministry of Human Resource and Development). It seeks to regulate every aspect of the institutions from fee to curriculum.

To begin with, the UGC has not taken its task seriously of maintaining and implementing schemes and programmes for enhancing the standards and smoothening the process of university's functioning. The schemes that are introduced do not provide an outcome since the execution process has major drawbacks.<sup>38</sup> UGC is one of the most accessible instrument for the central government through which it can regulate and direct the entire university system of the country according to its whims and fancies. If the highest regulatory body has to function at the impulse of the populist demands, we can only hope that our Institutions and regulatory bodies can remain immune to political interference and bureaucratic inelasticity. The working of UGC has indirectly been an obstacle in the development of robust and purposive academic communities and academic lobby that can resist the illegitimate pressure of the government in favor of academic values fair functioning because universities are heavily dependent on the government and UGC for funds.

The universities in India argues Sudhanshu Bhushan, are over-regulated but under-governed, there are various agencies which are responsible for regulating higher education, and they impose irrational and inconsistent conditions for the establishment of universities as well as for maintaining their standards. The same has been pointed out by the report of National Knowledge commission 2006.<sup>39</sup> However, the structure of the university was such that executive council and academic council are central to the decision-making process, but the ultimate authority lies with the chair of the vice chancellor. Appointment of vice-chancellor is manipulated according to the push and pulls in power structures. This process clubbed with already over-governed

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<sup>38</sup> S.Chitnis, Gearing a colonial system of education to take independent India towards development. *Higher Education*, 26(1), 1993. 21-41.

<sup>39</sup> S. Bhushan, *Restructuring higher education in India*. Rawat Books. 2009.

bureaucratized processes, made the university assume the role of a client and the state acted as a patron. The postgraduate departments and other research centers were directly under the control of university or UGC. Its role has been minimal in maintaining the teaching and research standards in Indian universities. Indian universities suffer from a severe lack of adequate research facilities and traditions even the development of scientific research in India has been a prerogative taken outside the university spaces in the National Laboratories and Institutes of Technology to meet the demand of Engineers during the industrial revolution.

It is often assumed that the concept and Idea of autonomous universities cannot be realized in an immutable an eternal manner and it is necessary for the universities to be seen and evaluated in the light of performance in a given social political and economic context but what is forgotten is a need to recognize that universities can perform and fare much better in an atmosphere where autonomy is seen as an organizational and managerial prerequisite for enhancement and realization of all the responsibilities assigned to them with regard to teaching-learning and research. Anand Sarup argues that the universities 'have to be insulated from the rough and tumbles of populist pressures to be able to catalyze idea necessary to build a better social order<sup>40</sup>'. It is ironical that on one hand universities are expected to be engaged in research and futuristic thoughts but at the same time have to function under a constrained system.

The imperative for the formation of Kothari Commission stems from the fact that in the post independent period there was a task of developing a national system of education and it was marked by an urgency of decolonization. However, the development of national system of education did not mean reorientalism and the rejection of colonial system did not mean rejection of scientific approach. This has been advocated by Abul Kalam Azad, who held that the alternative system of education would be liberal and humanitarian in nature, which means that it will be an amalgamation of the values of both

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<sup>40</sup> A. Singh, & Sharma, G. D. (1989). *Higher education in India: the institutional context*. Stosius Inc/Advent Books Division, 1989.

ancient civilization and colonial modernity.<sup>41</sup> Hence it is in this context that the national education commission or Kothari commission was entrusted with the task of relation between education and developmental problems of a newly independent state and social transformation of the system of education. The report of the Kothari commission was of the opinion that a revolution is necessary in the present system which has been established by colonizers and has been deeply marred by the problems put forward by the feudal society, if it was supposed to meet the goals of modern democratic and socialist society.<sup>42</sup> The objectives of Kothari commission emphasized upon developing self-sufficiency, vocationalization, increasing human resource, improvement of technological and scientific research and economic growth with employment. There was a moderate but significant shift in the conception of higher education from the Radhakrishnan to the Kothari commission.

Having said this, the Kothari commission also stressed upon the imperatives of university autonomy and was of the opinion that only 'autonomous institution, free from regimentation of ideas and pressure of party power politics, can pass your fearlessly and build up in its teachers and students, habits of independent thinking and a spirit of enquiry unfettered by the limitations and prejudices of the near and the immediate which is so essential for the development of the society'. There could be other claims situations which involve an undesirable infringement of university autonomy for instance, wrong if universities were expected to of allegiance to any particular political party or individual, or to further the interest of such parties, on individual it is equally wrong, as in public life and even those within academic community itself sometimes to ensure appointments, and admission of students similarly it is not proper that the state government should try to give directives to universities in academic matters. To feel unhappy at restrictions paces on some of the universities in the country and at some recent attempt to contain their autonomy.

The primary focus of the Kothari Commission was the expansion of higher education as the newly independent state required man power and it estimated to increase the

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<sup>41</sup> K. N. Panikkar, India's education policy: From National to Commercial. *Economic and Political Weekly* 2011.38-42.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

enrolment in under graduate level from 1.5 lacs to 3.5 lacs and post graduate research level from 45000 to 7.5 lacs.<sup>43</sup> The Kothari commission gave importance to the development of human resources as along with physical resources. It was of the opinion that “the development of physical resources is a means to an end (but), human resource is an end in itself and without it, even the adequate development of physical resources is not possible.”<sup>44</sup>

But despite the recommendation of Radhakrishnan commission and Kothari commission, the Gross Enrolment ratio of higher education in 1960-61 was 1.5%.<sup>45</sup> This can be termed as the elite stage of development of higher education as the GER is less than 15%.<sup>46</sup> The reason for this can be situated within the developmental discourse of the nation in which the recommendations were made. The founding fathers of Indian constitution kept education in the state list. This has been done with a view that states will have the autonomy to frame policies on educational matters. To quote Sudhanshu Bhushan- “Central policy favored the growth of IITs (Indian Institute of Technology) as standalone institutions. Besides, scientific research laboratories developed as part of CSIR outside the university system as a result of deliberate choice. Literacy, universal elementary education though important for social transformation was not considered necessary for industrial transformation in Nehru's vision. He (Nehru) wanted industrial revolution first and probably social transformation later.”<sup>47</sup>

Hence these institutions were already put under the union list entry 63, 64, and 65 of Schedule 7 of list 1. The resource crunch was also the main reason for the states to develop independent initiatives for the establishment of schools colleges and universities.

The 1970's was the period of political turmoil in Indian politics. This period was marked by the glimpse of socialistic slogans, end of the long era of congress and the rise and fall

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<sup>43</sup> A. Mathew, *Reforms in higher education in India: A Review of recommendations of commissions and committees on education*, CPRHE research paper 2." *New Delhi: CPRHE, NUEPA* 313 (2016): 17.

<sup>44</sup> K. N. Panikkar, "India's education policy: From National to Commercial." *Economic and Political Weekly* 2011.38-42

<sup>45</sup> Varghese, N. V. Challenges of massification of higher education in India. *Research Papers Series* 1. 2015.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Sudhanshu Bhushan, Yashpal Committee on renovation and rejuvenation of higher education in *Debating Education Against the Neoliberal Thrust*. Sahmat, New Delhi, 2009.

of Indira Gandhi's socialist image. It was in this context that the idea of expansion of education was been questioned by the state governments and they found expansion as non-sustainable without the joint initiative of union and state government. Hence it was in 1976 the constitutional amendment took place which held education under the concurrent list. The constitutional amendment of Schedule 7 and entry 25 under list III stated that 'Education, including technical education, medical education and universities, subject to the provisions of entries 63, 64, 65 and 66 of List I; vocational and technical training of labor'. Entry 63, 64 and 65 of union list (I) mentions centrally funded universities and institutions of national importance, scientific, technical, professional and vocational institutions. Entry 66 of list I notes "Co-ordination and determination of standards in institutions for higher education or research and scientific and technical institutions".<sup>48</sup>

Having said this, in post 1976 scenario, the role of union government was not confined to the constitution of committees and commissions but also to share the resources at the bigger scale. This has been exemplified in the National Policy of Education 1986 which held that- "Union Government would accept a larger responsibility to reinforce the national and integrative character of education, to maintain quality and standards, to study and monitor the educational requirements of the country as a whole in regard to manpower for development, to cater to the needs of research and advanced study, to look after the international aspects of education, culture and Human Resource Development and, in general, to promote excellence at all levels of the educational pyramid throughout the country."<sup>49</sup> The National policy on education did not have much to say in the context of autonomy of universities, one can find a cursory mention of the fact that universities should have autonomy to undertake innovations, make the curriculum, evolve methods of teaching and learning.

In the recent past i.e. in early 1990's the structural adjustment policies were introduced in India with the objectives to stabilize the economy, improvement in the allocation of resources, achieving higher levels of savings along with efficient use of investment

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<sup>48</sup> Sudhanshu Bhushan, Paper presented in the Higher Education conference in Biha.

<sup>49</sup> Ministry of Human Resource and Development. *National Policy On education*. New Delhi 1986.

resources which was believed to increase the rate of economic growth through privatization and globalization.<sup>50</sup> Having introduced the structural adjustment policies in India, the success of these policies depended on higher education sector. This has been best exemplified by Tilak, who was of the opinion that “as with the globalization and international competitions the need for a more educated work force is strongly felt. With an ill literate and ill-educated work force, reforms programs cannot even take off properly.”<sup>51</sup> The above-mentioned proposition entails the opening of economy by government in which the private players will play a significant role and reforms have to be introduced in respect of the regulatory measures.

### **Neoliberalism and its Impact on University Autonomy**

The economic growth theory worldwide before 1960's focused on land, labour, capital and entrepreneurship; but this was changed when T.W. Schultz gave his theory. According to Schultz education is an important component of economic growth. Education provides skilled knowledge which increases productivity which in turn enhances employability which results in higher wages and in turn leads to national economic growth. According to Schultz along with physical capital the human capital is a necessary component of national growth. This theory was challenged in 1990's by the Human Development theorist like A.K. Sen and M. Haq.<sup>52</sup> These theorists held that education should not be a means for development (as in the case of human capital theory) rather it is an end in itself. However, following the neo liberal transformations, education has been increasingly seen solely as skilled knowledge that can contribute to productivity. Worldwide the the stakeholders in democratic transformation recognised higher education as a driving force which can facilitate the process of economic growth and participatory democracy.

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<sup>50</sup> Parthasarathi Banerjee, and Frank-Jürgen Richter, eds. *Economic Institutions in India: sustainability under liberalization and globalization*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

<sup>51</sup> JBG Tilak, Higher Education in India under Structural adjustment, in Banerjee, Parthasarathi, and Frank-Jürgen Richter, eds. *Economic Institutions in India: sustainability under liberalization and globalization*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

<sup>52</sup> N.V Varghese Challenges of Massification of Higher Education in India ,CPRHE, Research papers Centre For Policy Research in Higher Education, NUEPA .2016.



However, increasingly in the recent times, the so-called 'transformation' is becoming more goal driven as countries are focusing towards their participation in the knowledge economy. This knowledge economy is intrinsically linked to profit maximisation, outcome-based research and employment. This trend of securing themselves a place in the knowledge economy has consequences which lead to new styles of academic and administrative management of universities and research Institutes. This leads us to ask questions who is ultimately controlling these academic institutions? How do these institutions manage the tension between institutional autonomy and the shareholder interest?<sup>53</sup> The interest of stakeholders, lead to the decline of autonomy in every aspect of the functioning of a university.

It is in this context, both the NKC (National Knowledge Commission) and YCR (Yashpal Committee Report) notes in their report held that higher education in India is over-regulated. However, both the reports analysed the concept of 'over-regulation' differently. NKC stated that the over-regulation acts as a barrier in the entry and exit of new institutions. It makes the establishment of new institutions a complex process, this, in turn, leads to prevention of competition and lower quality. Minimum regulations will foster the establishment of new universities, create more competition, and lead to improvement of quality. NKC also believed that institutions are regulated to an extent that they have developed inefficiency, and it would be better if the institutions are left free to compete in the market and produce quality results. The NKC's towards knowledge and disciplines is fragmented and divisive. It tends towards dividing disciplines, institutions and academics into different categories. It gives precedence to new generation disciplines with commercial prospects over traditional disciplines and national level institutions of excellence from state-level universities. Thomas Joseph argues, it eventually divided the teaching community into different categories by the market value of their disciplines. The reading of the report provides a sense that creation of knowledge is like a property to be created by an individual or group and an institutional mechanism has to be put in place to protect it. This creation of knowledge is like a differentiated product whose requirement is derived from the market.

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<sup>53</sup> A. C. Bawa, Academic freedom and emerging research universities. *Social research*, 2009. 481-508.

The YCR on the hand argues in favor of organic unity of knowledge. It emphasized upon the need of unity of knowledge through the unity of discipline and advanced the view that different disciplines must flourish in organic unity. Fragmentation of knowledge would not be very conducive for the development of various disciplines and university at large. Therefore, universities shall be autonomous in nature to allow the growth of various branches of knowledge. Over-regulation would have adverse impact on the create obstacles in the process of knowledge generation.

The NCHER(National Council of Higher Education Research) bill proposed by the Yashpal committee noted “it is an Act to promote the autonomy of Higher Education institutions for the free pursuit of knowledge and innovation, and for facilitating access, inclusion and opportunities to all and to provide for an advisory mechanism of eminent pairs in Academia. The Yashpal committee recommended that the key reforms needed are restoring the economy of University by avoiding multiple regulators and preventing politicisation of University administration. Autonomy of universities involves autonomy from Central and state governments as well”. The Yashpal committee argued in favor of autonomy about excellence and maintained that universities should be self-regulating bodies, where teachers and faculty must enjoy complete autonomy in academic matters.

Sudhanshu Bhushan was of the opinion that, the NKC and YCR both had a distinctive understanding of the process of knowledge generation and consequently followed different approaches to identify the problem in higher education. Despite having different approaches, both the bodies argued in favor of preserving autonomy, but freedom for NKC was to directed towards freedom w facilitating the process of decision making in response to the market, but YCR argues for autonomy which can enhance the pursuit of knowledge generation and which is not fragmented but in response of the society.

The reports however had certain drawbacks. The report suffers from the tendency of having a holistic view of all the educational institutions; this holistic view would demand a regulatory system that can treat a range of diverse institution similarly. Taking a holistic view could help to build a universal system of regulation of all the universities, but could

also lead to dismissal of specific needs of certain universities that had to be catered separately.

The report does not define a set procedure about the mode of appointment of the vice-chancellors and their qualification. The university as a body has no say in deciding one of the most vital organs of the university. It would be a mistake to presume that the government would act impartially to define it cannot be assumed that commitment to scholarship can be found as an integral character in any individual. Individuals have varied conducts commitment. One of the reports analysed the limits of UGC support to the universities, the extent and character of the autonomy has to be analysed along with the autonomy of UGC. UGC could retain its control over any institution through the instrument of funding if the Institutions failed to comply with its regulations. While there are basic differences between the brazenly pro-reform approaches of NKC and the humane and the academic orientation of the Yashpal committee recommendations, the major administrative recommendation of both NKC and Yashpal appear to be the same.

The Central Advisory Board of Education (2005) was specially constituted to define the concept and nature autonomy of universities. The committee defined autonomy about an administrative, financial and academic aspect of the university. It notes, academic autonomy is linked to deciding academic issues, like curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation. Administrative autonomy would mean freedom to manage its own affairs, and financial autonomy is to spend the finances the (available at its disposal), with a view of keeping priorities. Good institutions are largely autonomous. They have a roadmap a view, of how they would like to contribute to the society. No institution ever became excellent by implementing the vision of others. The recommendations given by several commission would remain inconsequential unless they are coupled with a will on the part of the government and regulatory bodies to recognize the universities as self-regulatory organizations, which can perform its role best, when left alone at their disposal.<sup>54</sup>

The tendency of the government under the UPA regime was unmistakably one of drenching changes, which would effectively permeate and infuse market principles in the

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<sup>54</sup> Pankaj Chandra, *Building universities that matter*, Orient black swan. 2017.

functioning of higher education. Having said this, there was an emerging trend of maintaining Universities in a corporate managerial style. This has been one of the consequence of the implementation of neoliberal economic transformation. Vally held that, the neoliberal transformation has inevitably led to corporate style management systems in hospitals, schools and universities. The idea here can also be linked to the notion of governmentality. The approach of governing and regulating these institutions and bodies is also linked to the outcome which is anticipated by the government from these bodies. Philip Altbach also stresses upon the fact that a related issue, not usually discussed in the context of academic freedom, is the growth of what some have called "managerialism" in higher education the notable increase in the power of administrators and other officials as distinct from the authority of the professoriate in the governance and management of academic institutions.

The managerial tendencies are ushered in on the wings of accountability, cost effectiveness, efficiency, and the need to "streamline" universities so that they are managed "more effectively" and to ensure that they are more "responsive" to social and economic needs. This corporate type management has further lead to shrinking of autonomy in and of universities, directly and indirectly.<sup>55</sup>

It is often argued that in India there are explicit violations of academic freedom. Most of the times, these violations are tied to political affiliations of the concerned government. As in the rest of the world, these are not counteracted by large public outcries, and this is probably an indication that there is not yet some form of social contract between universities and the broader society on academic freedom. The idea that the Indian government hopes to entrench academic freedom is yet to be realised, since the research universities shall have the least control.<sup>56</sup>

The market principles which were infused in the higher education system had two primary intentions. Firstly, there was a withdrawal of state from the public sector like

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<sup>55</sup>S. Vally, Higher education in South Africa: the market mill or public good? *JHEA/RESA*, 5(1), 2007.17-28.

<sup>56</sup> Bawa, A. C. Academic freedom and emerging research universities. *Social research*, 2009. 481-508.

education health etc. Secondly at the same time the state was also trying to gain more control of the functioning of institutions like universities so that it can derive the intended outcomes. It must be noted at this point, that the regulatory bodies were also responsible for allocating funds to the university. The allocation of funds was manipulated and driven by both, favour and hostility. Secondly, it was in a post liberalization period that there has been a drastic fund cut in the public budgets for higher education. Again, it was the Eighth Five-year plan in which the role of the private capital investment in the development of higher education is recognized. In the government of India Discussion paper, titled 'Government subsidies in India' held that higher education was a categorized as a 'non-merit good'. This reflected the policy orientation of the government in power. It was only in India that such a categorization of higher education was done.<sup>57</sup> The policies that were made during the same time frame preceded the thinking of higher education as a non-merit good, and it was kept under the merit two good, that was not as important to be subsidized as the merit goods<sup>58</sup>.

Due to the scarcity of resources and the shortage of funds in higher education, a large number of universities began to introduce university industry cells in their institutions so that they can promote the relationship between industry and the knowledge that is being produced in the university. This deal was more of a business deal than an example of public, private partnership. This led to a conceptualization of higher education and research as a market-oriented good not as socially relevant good.<sup>59</sup> The rapid growth of commercialization did not only compromise the conceptualization of higher education and led to a rapid establishment of private universities at the cost of quality and original ideal of inculcating knowledge through higher education. They bank more on temporary teachers and bare minimum infrastructure. The argument that it fosters competition and therefore it improves quality has to be taken with a pinch of salt. The market is not only

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<sup>57</sup> S. B. Tilak, Absence of policy and perspective in higher education. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 2004. 2159-2164.

<sup>58</sup> D. K. Srivastava, & H. A Nath,. (2001). *Central Budgetary Subsidies in India*. National Institute of Public Finance and Policy.

<sup>59</sup> S. B. Tilak, Absence of policy and perspective in higher education. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 2004. 2159-2164.

hierarchical for the higher education sector; market is inherently unequal<sup>60</sup>. Secondly, it also places restraints on the autonomy of universities to be able to make decisions regarding the curriculum and function by themselves, and push them to face the wrath of neoliberal transformation. This process leads to a scenario where the original idea of their existence abbreviates and gets subsumed under the notions of 'usable' knowledge production which could facilitate the outcome based knowledge generation. The increased involvement in academe of corporation the growth of privately sponsored research has transformed research funding's and this has implications for academic freedom.<sup>61</sup> There exists an inevitable link between university autonomy and knowledge production, different modes of knowledge can be associated with specific patterns of power which includes funding, objectives, resources etc. They argue this is an era of "academic capitalism" wherein universities are also becoming commercial enterprise, producing and selling research.

The commodification of knowledge forced the universities to adopt the principle of the market. The products of the universities need to be marketable, both the knowledge produced and the students embodying knowledge.<sup>62</sup> JBG Tilak in the same line argues, it is often assumed nowadays that privatization can be promoted since globalization has ushered an era where no field of economy and society is immune to privatization and commercialization. A related assumption is that privatization can be promoted, but commercialization is dangerous. But in proactive both the concepts are not very different. The characteristics of both are profit maximization. What private universities tend to become, are commercial centers with the single most objective of resource mobilization. Autonomy is conceived of as a strategy for facilitating the emergence of unit-based 'providers' of a commodity called 'knowledge' of varying quality. This is certainly not the original idea that can be associated with the concept of autonomous universities.

Moreover, it is imperative for us to understand at this juncture that the academic freedom as an enabling value for a community of scholars. It is the premise upon which the

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<sup>60</sup> Saumen Chattopadhyay, An examination of the proposal to set up the NCHER by the YPCR, *Debating Education IV: Against Neo-Liberal thrust, SAHMAT*.2009.

<sup>61</sup> P. G. Altbach, Academic freedom: International realities and challenges. *Higher education*, 41(1-2), 2001. 205-219.

<sup>62</sup> S. Bhushan, *Restructuring higher education in India*. Rawat Books. 2009.

creation of knowledge and achievement of the highest development of their potential and capacities, should rest.<sup>63</sup> To quote Chomsky here ‘freedom, variety and autonomy are the conditions for human self-realization. Nothing produces the ripeness for freedom so much as freedom itself’. It would be interesting to quote Kant’s perception about the freedom of faculties:

It is absolutely essential that the learned community at the university also contain a faculty that is independent of the government’s command with regard to its teachings;3 one that, having no commands to give, is free to evaluate everything, and concerns itself with the interests of the sciences, that is, with truth: one in which reason is authorized to speak out publicly. For without a faculty of this kind, the truth would not come to light (and this would be to the government’s own detriment); but reason is by its nature free and admits of no command to hold something as true (no imperative “Believe!” but only a free “I believe”).<sup>64</sup>

Academic freedom necessarily embellishes in the ambience of faculty autonomy. Thus, academic freedom and faculty autonomy are intertwined concepts for the consciousness of a university community. However, the distinctive role of universities and faculties in the generation of knowledge has been going through an irreversible change since the structural adjustments policies have been introduced in the governing principles of higher education. With the changes that have been ushered at the policy level, the entire landscape has come to be dominated by the economic factors.

The neoliberals argue in favor of reform that gets the institutions in line with the new public management system based on corporate managerial practices.<sup>65</sup> The way API (academic performance indicator) has been introduced for faculties, reflects the agenda of liberal governance linked to the idea of performativity. The API system has the potential to have adverse implications on the autonomy of faculty and tend to orient teachers towards the competitive and enterprising professional and make them subservient to the

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<sup>63</sup> Umarao Chaudhari Singh , Academic freedom and faculty autonomy, *University news*, 2015.

<sup>64</sup> I. Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties Der Streit der Fakultaten*. University of Nebraska Press, 901 N. 17th St., Lincoln, 1992.NE 68588-0520

<sup>65</sup> Chattopadhyay, Saumen. Performace based assessment: the changing concept of autonomy and accountability. *University news* 2015. 53(03)

incentives and accountability measures. This process might lead to the complete subjugation of the universities to the market force, and the notions of academic freedom and liberal education would vanish from the discourse of academia. Autonomy of teaching and research both might be undermined.<sup>66</sup> Saumen Chattopadhyay argues, the way NPM (New Public Management) has been adopted to govern the universities, reflect how its nature as a double-edged sword. It prescribes more autonomy but at the same time induces more centralized control.<sup>67</sup> The introduction of API about teacher's performances can be seen in the same light of rationalizing the logic of the market and exercising the control from above. The operational freedom theoretically remains with the teacher but under a defined strategic framework. To make self-regulating universities, one has to ensure a self-regulating faculty. Teachers should be left free to decide the optimum time they need to engage in research activity. API has the potential to impinge upon the academic freedom of the universities. It is utmost frustrating for the academic to continue to suffer, the loss of autonomy with respect to research activities. This kind of managerial systems eventually make the faculties subservient to the proposed accountability and incentive measures.<sup>68</sup> API leads to nothing but a feeble scenario of Academic Pharaseism, leading to meaningless proliferation of academic outfit. The quantification of knowledge which is intended through the implementation of these measures is insurmountable.

The several commissions and bills on higher education have been trying to establish a new institutional framework that can meet the requirements of efficiency and quality. But as critiques of this policy and institutional moves argue, the whole framework for this transformation and scheme rests on the idea of higher education as a quasi-private or private good. In an attempt to make this system more efficient, indicators have been developed to measure the quality of higher education, but in fact, echo greater commercialization of the system without paying any attention to formerly relevant

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<sup>66</sup> D. Hartley, The 'McDonaldization' of higher education: food for thought? *Oxford Review of Education*, 21(4), 1995. 409-423.

<sup>67</sup> Saumen. Chattopadhyay, Performance-based assessment: the changing concept of autonomy and accountability. *University news* 53(03) 1995.

<sup>68</sup> Saumen. Chattopadhyay, Performance-based assessment: the changing concept of autonomy and accountability. *University news* 53(03) 2015.



educational goals of social equity and quality and the freedom of academic institutions.<sup>69</sup>

When we try to determine the role of a university, there exists a wide consensus that its task is to 'preserve, propagate and augment knowledge' but what is rarely asked is- what is knowledge and its augmentation, what part is to be preserved and how it is being propagated.<sup>70</sup> It was seldom assumed that neutrality of universities and a free hand to them should facilitate the above processes, but the influence of social political and economic factors on the functioning of the universities, remained unstated and unanalyzed. Its role best, when not left at their own disposal.

### **Debating the idea of Accountability vs Autonomy**

Academic culture can only flourish with the element of self-Regulation and self-discipline and when self-discipline becomes an integral constituent of the universities functioning. However, this idea is often dismissed on the accounts of University being a social institution which has to play a key role in the social, economic development of a country but the social concerns automatically be taken into account, when the individual consciousness is the social consciousness.<sup>71</sup>

It is often though as unconceivable to think of universities, as an organizations that can be left free to operate according to their whims and fancies. They have the responsibility of shaping the young minds and hold the future of the country in social political and economic aspect. Secondly, about their nature as public funded institutions, it is indisputable to not think of them as accountable to the society and state. The contradiction appears when they have to work under constraints that create an obstacle in ensuring their accountability towards the society, and these constraints are forced upon them through different organs of the state itself in the form of political interference, bureaucratic managerialism, rigid structures, and over-regulation. The universities must ensure their accountability, but how are they supposed to fulfil their task if they have to encounter this dilemma of complying to state and responding to the society at the same

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<sup>69</sup> D. Raina, Transformations in the world of Higher Learning, in Rajeshwari Raina (ed). *Science Technology and Development in India: Encountering Values*, Orient Black Swan. 2005.

<sup>70</sup> A. Singh, & G. D. Sharma, (Eds.). *Higher education in India*. Konark Publishers. 1988.

<sup>71</sup> Sudhanshu Bhushan, *Restructuring higher education in India*. Rawat Books, 2009.

time. The two tasks might not be complementary to each other.

Accountability in the simplest words means, holding people or organization responsible for their actions and results. Accountability is the academic, administrative and financial responsibility with defined goals for each constituent of the university (teachers, faculty, vice chancellor etc.), aiming towards quality education. The CABE committee report says that accountability shall give equip to the institutions to regulate the freedom given to them by way of autonomy.

Universities are entrusted to perform too many duties, with little support and cooperation. To secure their accountability, they shall be allowed to function as self-regulatory bodies, who can define their goals and ways of functioning. They must have the pre-requisite conditions of ensuring accountability to state and society. To make this task smoother it is must to ensure academic freedom to the university community consisting of faculties and scholars. Academic freedom is something which is often argued for but what shall be the nature of it remain an ambiguous question. Academic freedom is not something that can be pushed down one's throat from the above, it has to stem from the bottom. For example, a culture of academic freedom begins with the practices like hebdomadal.<sup>72</sup> The culture of weekly meetings at the level of departments giving space to deliberation and discussions, paves the way for a similar kind of meetings and culture at the other level of universities (board of studies, academic council, executive council etc). These practices are seldom found in Indian universities and wherever they are followed, the power structures and those in a position to influence, try to curb these spaces of discussion through arbitrarily conduct of these meetings. This is a major reason responsible for the absence of academic freedom in the university spaces. It is convenient to keep emphasizing upon in favor of accountability of universities, but so far in the recommendations of major commissions, there has been no mention of improving these practices and make sure that universities are able to preserve their academic culture and freedom in order to build a firewall against the external pressures.

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<sup>72</sup> hebdomadal: meeting that take place weekly at organizations, the idea stems from oxford hebdomadal council.

Another problem that arises is that, the universities in India are recognized/created by a charter given to them or by union or state legislatures. They are dependent on the government for the funds but must not, in theory, sacrifice the autonomy for the sake of it. However, the contradiction arises with the fact that this economy is not a legal or constitutional concept the Gajendragadkar report mentioned that universities is not a state within a state and a law unto themselves and does universities are expected to strike a balance between autonomy and accountability<sup>73</sup>, however, those expecting accountability are seldom most of the times responsible for undermining its autonomy in the most subtle ways, through the exercise of political administrative and financial and extra constitutional pressures for example by manipulating the appointment of VC's.

Vice Chancellor is like a keeper of the university and when the chair of the most important figures of the university is decided by political considerations and not by their excellence and capacities the whole process and Idea of autonomy loses its ground. The autonomy of university implies a free hand of the vice-chancellor to sabotage the decision-making process of the university and destroy its deliberative processes. The head of an institutional makes a significance difference in exercising autonomy<sup>1</sup>, When one of the most important procedures, that of appointing vice chancellor, is done by a committee working far away from the boundaries of the university, and everything else that goes in the university has to be decided by the regulatory bodies, in order to justify the standardization of curriculum, governance mechanism etc. what is then the need to expect accountability when every aspect of it is already 'impository' in nature and not exactly 'recommendatory'.

Universities have to be recognized as spaces with fertile ground for the germination and fusion of Ideas. Where learning can be seen as a responsibility of both the learner and the university in the path they should choose for their learning objectives, shall be a matter of their academic discovery.

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<sup>73</sup> R. P. Saxena, Governance of Indian Universities From decay to dynamism? *Higher education*, 20(1), 1990. 91-111.

The world today necessarily operates under the boundaries of a nation-state. As a result, it is also a matter of fact that the existing institutions are compelled to function under the boundaries of this structure, they cannot possibly exist independent of it. The nature of the state is crucial in defining the character and outlook of its educational institutions. The very fabric of the state essentially describes its most important obligations. If its obligations are to satisfy the market and respond to the dynamics of market then it can be argued that, the particular state essentially adheres to the idea of higher education as an instrument of economic development, than the question arises does economic development imply that we necessarily have to equip individuals with skills and training that can help them secure a place in the market. If this is the case, then it is unlikely that the research and university spaces can be left to their own.

The state claims to believe in the idea of higher education as one that can contribute to the political and social upliftment of the individuals, and society. There is a contradiction that can be seen between the claim and the primary objectives of the state, the state stresses upon having a number of regulatory frameworks and nevertheless fails to safeguard its universities from political interferences as well as unnecessary over regulations, on the other hand, it aims to provide conditions which can facilitate the development of knowledge which is unfettered and unrestricted, and does not succumb to the pressures of the power structures.

Ernest Barker writes, the problem arises with the fact that the university has to adjust itself to the educational system, and not the educational system to itself. That educational system is the result of a social ideal, and that social ideal is in the last resort defined by Parliament. The university is therefore bound to conform to the social ideal adopted by Parliament and expressed in the educational system. It has the one consolation of hoping that by its thinking and teaching it is a great force in forming the social ideal by which it is itself controlled.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> E. Barker, The Nature and Condition of Academic Freedom in Universities. *Bulletin, of the American Association of University Professors (1915-1955)*, 10(7), 78-84. 1924.

The idea that universities hope to play an important role in forming the social ideal, through their teaching, learning and research makes them an ivory tower which does not deserve to be marred by practices which are unethical to the extent of delegitimizing the very role of the universities and diminish their stature in the society.

Pankaj Chandra while describing the importance of the university writes:

Universities are places of social development that inspire and provoke, questions and answers, build beliefs and destroy myths that delve into depths of the past and rise into the heights of the future and that debate the metaphysics of existence, yet create models to decode the mind- the university represents a way of life. It is welcoming warm, comforting admonishing and invites one to imbibe its wisdom.<sup>75</sup>

The nature of politics in a country along with its economy, decide state's approach towards the education policies. Indian universities have always slogged under a regulatory framework since in theory they were allowed to exercise autonomy, but in practice, they were a victim of a bureaucratic overarching system which restricted their freedom. This condition of Indian universities seems to have worsened with the era of populist politics in India, which has two major elements of being anti-intellectual and being unprincipled.

The gap between the theory of universities as sites of moral, intellectual development, and its practice has broadened with the rise of populist politics. To ensure the electoral victory, the ruling party initiates those policies which have long-term perilous implications. The ideas of those in power structure have an enormous impact on the policies and approach towards public institutions. From here they begin to operationalise the idea of governmentality through rationalisation of their logic. The power structures tend to redefine the role of these institutions along with the approach they have to follow to fulfill that role, and then in lieu of this further exercise control over these institutions through monitoring and surveillance of their performance, this tendency in the case of

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<sup>75</sup> Pankaj Chandra. *Building universities that matter*, Orient black Swan. 2017.

India has grown with the advent of populist politics. To cite an example of this, it would be interesting to look at some of the points in the national education policy of 2016.

Its content is more or less a replica of NPE (National Policy of Education) 1986, and 1992. But there are a few interesting points in the document that deserve mention here: the report in its opening states, ‘Along with the economic objectives (i.e. creating human capital), education should aim to develop pride in India and in being an Indian. It should foster learning about our ancient history, culture and traditions’<sup>76</sup> Whereas the objective of NPE 1986) reads ‘education should contribute to national cohesion scientific temper, independence of mind and spirit furthering the bones of socialism secularism, democracy, enshrined in our constitution’.<sup>77</sup> It is not unlikely to anticipate that the approach of education system shall be towards the fostering of love for one’s identity community country or people. But then a definition of the same shall also be clarified, and a differentiation has to be made between a visionless belief and a rational approach. The report also prioritizes the ‘economic objectives’ over the socio, cultural or political ones.

Political socialization is a process which cannot be escaped. The process can be an inevitable consequence of the process of knowledge generation or can be subjected to pressures from political forces in an unplanned manner. In such a scenario, how can we expect political neutrality to be reconciled in universities, with the political and social forces impinging upon them? In the same line, JP Sethi argues the compliance of political neutrality with regard to the university system is the worst assumption, this situation could have been avoided if we had prepared and equipped our higher education Institutions, since the very beginning, to respond to the dynamics of change in society and analogously continue to restructure itself, so that they had an inbuilt ability of resisting the political and economic forces, trying to subjugate them.

One of the major reasons for the decline of autonomy in universities is the fact that we have failed to make a distinction between the operational autonomy of the university which means relative autonomy for the components of University and academic and

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<sup>76</sup> *National Education policy*, (2016) MHRD. New Delhi.

<sup>77</sup> *National Policy On education – 1986*. Ministry of Human Resource and Development, New Delhi

political autonomy. The former is a matter of control over funding University charters and strategies role and code of appointment of University executive, the relative importance of universities such as department research Institutions and non-academic employees. Over the years the entire University system in India regarding its operational autonomy has declined at an accelerated pace.

The universities in India are going through one of the most challenging periods marked by political turmoil, political intrusions and scrupulous control. In a very strategic move recently the ministry of human resource and development, granted autonomy to 5 central, 21 states and 24 deemed universities. A closer reading of this 'autonomy' would lead to an understanding of the hidden neo liberal agenda coupled with an intention to exercise a greater level of control on the universities. The autonomy provides financial freedom to the universities to introduce new skilled courses, without approval of UGC, however these courses have to be funded by the universities themselves. Further for the central universities only 70 percent of the fund will be borne by the government and rest 30 percent has to be borne by the universities itself, either with the self-financing courses or by introduction of fee hikes etc.

Another major repercussion of the policies of the current regime can be analysed through the reading of the recent draft of establishing HECI (Higher Education Commission of India) in place of UGC which might end up making the universities more vulnerable to the hands of power structures. This has been argued on the ground that the financial powers which were earlier invested in UGC would now be exercised by the ministry. Non-conformity with the prescribed standards would lead to shutting down of the institution. The so called 'autonomy' or 'freedom', which the government of India want to stipulate, is the freedom to start new courses without the approval of the UGC, or as it may be, the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) in the coming days. But this is not without any conditionality, rather this autonomy will only be allowed and granted on the condition that they avoid taking money from the government for new courses. The

‘Autonomy’ granted to the 60 higher educational institutions previously by the MHRD also intended the same a thrust towards ‘self-financing’ and fee-hike.<sup>78</sup>

While the proposed HECI that is assumed to replace the UGC, and will be authorized to define learning outcomes, academic standards, employability of courses offered in other public funded institutions. It will have the authority to order closure if any institute falls short of the determined standards. This stratagem formulated by the government has the potential of dislocating and disrupting the Indian education system altogether. In such a situation, courses that are appropriate for the profit needs of the sponsoring bodies will be endorsed and this tendency again, do not seem to in tandem with the purpose of higher education.

### **Conclusion**

The advent of neoliberalism in Indian politics has led to the commodification of knowledge. This commodification further tends to promote the proliferation of market-oriented courses. This has again pressurized the universities to conduct their research along the lines of the demands of industry. This can be linked to the concept of accountability about autonomy. Out of other measures to ensure accountability of an institution, the Academic Performance Index is a measure to secure accountability of institutions. This has been understood from the point that the performance of the academicians working in an institution is an indicator that how ‘good’ or ‘bad’ an institution is performing. Having said this, the concept of autonomy oscillates between normative notions and bargaining negotiated through real-world necessities.

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<sup>78</sup> Sucheta De, *Institutes of Eminence: Ploy to promote corporate cronies, strangle public funded higher education.* *Newslick.*



## Conclusion

This study has made an effort to examine the idea of university autonomy with regard to Indian context. The idea of university autonomy remains a contested concept worldwide as well as in India. In the first chapter, we have tried to analyse this debate through the lens of history of the evolution of European universities, as Indian university system is chiefly based upon European models of higher education. The structure and governance of the institutions of higher education did not show major shifts since the establishment of first universities in India.

The idea of modern universities as evolved in Europe (specially in France and Germany) was based upon three central principals, 1) the unity of research and training 2) protection of academic freedom and the freedom to teach (*lehrfreiheit*) and learn (*lernfreiheit*) 3) central importance to the faculty of philosophy. These principles were further developed in the writing of Humboldt, Schleiermacher, Fichte and others. Humboldt was of the opinion that university reflected the ‘moral culture of a nation’ and it would be considered a site where the reunion of objective knowledge with subjectivity leads us to form a better understanding. Schleiermacher held that the mechanical understanding of mainstream enlightenment which advocated the divide of body and soul did not hold ground because freedom is synonymous with self-realisation and it leads to the harmony with nature. The argument put forward by Schleiermacher was the reflection of the German Romantic Movement which held that division of faculties, as advocated in French enlightenment, would lead to specialization and which in turn will culminate in to fragmentation of self in to the whole and this is the primary reason for the division of classes in which the relationship between human beings becomes mechanical and there is an absence of the sense of communion between man and nature and man and man.

Having said this, Universities in the medieval times, acted more as an extended arm of the state or existed as independent guilds, who were largely autonomous. But George Makdisi contested this claim, by stating that there existed a hard-core authoritarian doctrine and the system of knowledge had to be in consistent with the single system of truth. He also contested the idea of tracing the evolution of higher education exclusively

through western tradition. There were two important movements that can be traced back to Islamic tradition of guilds (the then system of higher education) i.e., Scholasticism and humanism. Chad Wellmon held that universities were not supposed to act like an extended arm of the church or the state, though they were sustained and backed by one or the other. Even universities like Oxford did not have an autonomous character they had direction and regulation put upon them by church and state and were undeniably of religious character. It was a difficult task to initiate a secular current in the universities, occasionally when it had happened it was more of a consequence of an individual's intrusiveness, who would find it difficult to accommodate his views in a system driven by ecclesiastical hierarchy.

There has been discontent over the system of universities since fourteenth century, specially in the German speaking lands. Keeping the system intact would be an obstacle in furthering the knowledge of science and scholarship. It would impede the search of true knowledge. One of the consequence of the discontent were the establishment of 'modern universities' in Europe. There were two dominant models existing in those times, Napoleonic model of universities and the Humboldtian model universities. The former was a result of French revolution. The major aims of the university were training people for political and social stability in post-revolutionary state, and to keep a watch at the freedom of intellect if it was seen as inimical to the interest of state.

A very important feature of these universities was the process of secularization and freeing them from the papal controls. The governance of universities was marked by centralization. However, with the respect to autonomy the French universities had to bear the burden of state intervention. The system of higher education in France ran on the idea of merit and hierarchy, this hierarchy was also the basis of bureaucratization, another significant feature of French universities. It has been claimed that even the orientation of research was subjected to the scrutiny of state. the direction of research was supposed to collide with the ideological apparatus of the ruling power, because in the name of bureaucratization it preferred interventionism and in terms of hierarchy it preferred anti egalitarianism which was antithetical to the idea of merit.

The German university model is popularly known as the Humboldtian model, which had its foundation in the establishment of university of Gottingen since it can be regarded as the first modern university. Some of the reforms were: state would determine the faculty appointments', good salaries for teachers, more importance and expansion of philosophy, gradual deviation from the theological doctrines and avoiding hiring people from that field. It is also argued that it established itself in close association with mercantilist policies and administrative interest of the state.

The Berlin university was essentially characterized by the idea of freedom. This idea played a central role in the German romantic movement and the founders of Berlin universities were influenced by the same. They did not adhere to the mechanical understanding of the enlightenment which was propounded by their French and British counterparts. The French universities adhered to the mainstream concept of enlightenment and therefore had separate academies for various subjects. But university of Berlin had a centripetal focus on the unity teaching and research. However German universities essentially had the element of decentralization. Different states were responsible for the management of universities after their establishment. However, German universities suffered through a crisis when they had to stark a balance between technological developments and emergence of different career prospects in their country.

The two models had an immense impact on the structures of higher education and universities in the Europe. However British university system reflects heterogeneity. There were two British universities, and one Scottish university and they were financially backed by the state. On the other hand, there was Oxbridge which still reflected the model of medieval universities. They had relative autonomy from the state, they had financial support from the land held by religious authorities and Anglican church. However, during the second half of nineteenth century they had to keep in pace with the parliamentary reforms and open their doors to non-Anglican students and women.

The universities in Britain were dependent upon grants from the university grants committee however the grant did not impose any supervision or restricted their autonomy through any provision. The Indian university system is majorly influence by the British system, and was established by the colonize East India Company primarily motivated to

train and produce clerks, established a system of higher education. However, the establishment of universities and the mode of imparting education was driven by cross currents of various ideologies in Britain itself.

One cannot foresee the inherent debate in this policy until 1817 when the evangelical pressure and the utilitarian force came to dominate the educational policy in England as well as India. Initially, in the company act of 1813 and in the educational dispatch to Bengal in 1814, there was a presupposition that the natives of caste and reputation would not surrender themselves to the English way of learning. Therefore, Indian predispositions were to be respected. The logical keystone of the argument of the orientalist was that the conquered people were to be ruled by their laws or in other words the British had to legitimize their rule in an Indian idiom<sup>1</sup>. In contrast to the Orientalist view, the Anglicist view was held by Charles Grant in the British Parliament. Grant has also worked in India with Lord Cornwallis as a member of the Board of Trade in early 1780-90. Grant lost his two children and suffered major financial setbacks while working in Bengal and his apprehensions regarding India has this personal vantage point. He was of the opinion that ‘the true cure of darkness is the introduction of light. The Hindoos err, because they are ignorant; and their errors have never fairly been laid before them. The communication of our light and knowledge to them, would prove the best remedy for their disorders; and this remedy is proposed, from a full conviction that if judiciously and patiently applied it would have great and happy effects upon them, effects honourable and advantageous for us’.<sup>2</sup> The gulf between competing claims kept intensifying and came to end with Macaulay’s famous minutes along with William Bentick’s assertion and Auckland’s minute of 1839, both were influenced by the utilitarian thinking of eighteenth century Britain.

The first universities in India were established in 1857, in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. These universities were survived and controlled by the British exclusively, the universities were not autonomous in nature. These are also characterized as the first-generation universities. After the formation of Calcutta university commission some of

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<sup>1</sup> Jawed Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings: James Mill & The History of British India and Orientalism*

<sup>2</sup> Extract from Charles Grant’s *Observations*, dated 16<sup>th</sup> August 1797, in H. Sharp (ed) *Selections from the Educational Records part I 1781-1839*, Calcutta: Superintendent Printing, 1920, 82.

their recommendations were taken into account by the British with regard to more transparency and governance of universities in India. The second-generation universities were the denominational ones, BHU and AMU can be put in this category. However, the concept of denominational universities was itself outdated in Britain but in India the establishment of denominational universities can be seen as a consequence of domestication of university system. The idea of BHU and AMU made the British uncomfortable at its onset. But they were sure that resisting the proposal of these universities would invite unrest among the Hindoos and the Muslims. The founding members of BHU and AMU were not in favor of absolute control of the British over these universities, because their idea and curriculum were imagined differently by the founders. British finally agreed to their establishment as they assumed it can curb the growing anti- government sentiments among the youth.

The denominational universities were also majorly regulated by the then existing governing structures of higher education. A slight break away and changes in the relations of universities and the government came with the establishment of Calcutta university commission, the commission stressed upon the need of having more academicians in the decision-making bodies of the universities and making the nature of the bodies more democratic. They stressed upon having bodies with academic experts. Senate could not take academic decision and syndicate had no statutory status in the 1902 act, and consequently had little decision-making powers. They recommended upon having executive council and academic council. The former should have a real influence and ultimate control over the universities policy. They also stressed upon having a teaching university, the role of the university should not be reduced to affiliating bodies whose primary task was to confer degrees.

Another attempt to negotiate more autonomy from the control of Britishers on the universities, was made by the founders of Mysore and Baroda universities. The main architect of Mysore university, Visveswaraiya who released the final draft to the government of India had two important aspects to it; first, the durbar (the Mysore Regal government) pronounced that the university shall be created through a regulation in legislative council and not by an executive order. Since this would establish an

incorporated body somewhat under the durbar's control but still would remain autonomous having a more populist touch. A university under executive order would directly fall under the control of durbar. The British gave provincial autonomy to Mysore and hoped that regaining the control over the educational institutes in the region would help them keeping a hold on the province and weaken the provincial autonomy.

The model of governing universities is predominantly taken by the colonial government. however, with the changing socio political and economic contexts the aims, objectives and the approach of the state towards higher education kept changing Initially from the 1940s to 1980s the idea of higher education was liked to promoting nation building, national building here would refer to democratizing the participation, increasing the number of people enrolling into higher education and producing individuals who can contribute to the task of nation building, but in the post 1980s the whole idea of nation building itself was much influenced by the neo liberal reforms taking place in India and the world at large. The policy recommendations and approach of the state with respect to education, has to be essentially seen in light of this development. The idea then was to produce people who could be skillfully employed, there was a sudden rise in technological institutions and private and public universities. By the time national knowledge commission delivered its report, the sector of higher education was riddled by commercialization and privatization.

The state the faces this dilemma of letting higher education sector loose and at the same time following the approach of what can be termed as 'preventive Parochialism', by having a number of regulatory bodies. These regulatory bodies essentially define every aspect of the universities functioning, either directly or through political interferences and manipulations. UGC was established in 1956, following the recommendations of Radhakrishnan Commission, it was supposed to maintain and regulate the system of higher education, and was responsible for the allocation of funds. Rather than working as a body that could foothold the development of universities, the UGC essentially worked as a prison warden. Which functioned upon the principle of over regulation and under governance. It became the most convenient instrument available at the disposal of

government and ruling party to intervene in the working of the universities and direct the path of higher education according to their own whims and fancies.

The other major source of assault of higher education comes from the structural reforms which have been implemented as a compulsive outcome of neo liberal reforms. While the state played a critical role in expanding education in the past, the importance of the welfare state and of state-supported education has been declining in recent decades as a consequence of market oriented higher education policies.

The contemporary global debate on education centers around the compulsions of preparing young people for the fourth industrial revolution, on the one hand, and seeking alternatives to state funding for the promotion of education, on the other hand.<sup>3</sup> The golden period of the welfare state came to an end by the 1980s when the market, and market forces, became a unifying ideology both in development debates and in political discourse. It can be claimed that the market became a dominant influence in public policy and decision making. The process of globalization has not constrained the options available to the state with respect to policies, but has also confined the walls of sovereignty. This process leads to the retrenchment of welfare policies in the developed countries and pushed the developing countries to introduce market friendly reforms in order to embrace themselves into the neo liberal economies. The approach of these countries, regarding higher education, essentially underwent a change with these transformations.

There emerged a trend to rely upon research produced by the private and non-government institutions, which ultimately proved to be a threat for the research done to develop criticality an empathy on social issues.<sup>4</sup> Academic research and policy-relevant research that develops in this context. While research done inside the universities developed criticality in terms of educational discourses and teaching, public policy relied on research carried out by some of the public research institutions and non-governmental institutions. The university research was branded as academic research, and the research

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<sup>3</sup> N. V. Varghese, Criticality, Empathy and Welfare in Educational Discourses. *Contemporary Education Dialogue*, 0973184918781209. Pg: 2, 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

by the latter category of institutions was categorized as policy relevant research. In the process, research promoting criticality in approach and thinking has become a casualty and is less relied on as a basis for policy making in India. Having said this, let us problematize the concept of critical thinking in higher education. The thought of critical thinking is directly proportional to the freedom of enquiry or academic freedom or autonomy.

Academic freedom is intrinsically linked to the freedom of faculty and the community of scholars with faculty representing the soul of academia. It sets high standards for the activity of learning and teaching both. 'They are the voice who connects the past to the future. It is through them that the conscience of the university is raised. These are difficult tasks to perform but this is what makes academia a different and difficult profession'.<sup>5</sup> This is the fundamental premises for the demand of academic freedom, the academics can never be involved and do things that they do not preach. The kind of malpractices and restriction that exists today upon academic freedom is due to the belief it has faced from the side of the nation and society, as a consequence the nature of engagement with the academic profession has changed. Krishan Kumar is of the opinion that: 'education signifies cultural wealth; this wealth consists of thousands of successful minds and an ethos shaped by exchange of ideas the reading of books and creative activities. The happiness of teachers forms the centre of such ethos. By denigrating the teachers India has damaged what capacity its system of education had for producing and conserving culture.'<sup>6</sup>

The academic autonomy essentially has to be situated within a contradiction, between the state and the universities. The state is not a value neutral entity, on the other hand the process of knowledge transmission is also not a value neutral activity, it is context based, subjective and many a times ideologically inclined. Secondly in a democracy autonomy cannot be seen as absolute freedom it has to be situated in this constant contradiction. When there is a potential contrast between the values of these two actors (state/academics), the later essentially suffers subjugation.

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<sup>5</sup> Pankaj Chandra, '*Building Universities that Matter*', OUP. 2017.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid



The shift towards the approach of governing universities through principles of new public management has made the concept and practice of autonomy in university spaces much more ambiguous and illusionary than ever before. The government has recently come up with a 14-page draft of establishing HECI (Higher Education Council of India) and disbanding UGC. The HECI will have power to shut down any universities that does not match the quality standards prescribed by them. HECI will not behold any power to allocate funds, the financial powers will be vested directly in MHRD (Ministry of Human Resource and Development).

Another important step of the government of India regarding the question of autonomy of universities was the application of the concept of graded autonomy. As this dissertation comes to an end, the government of India has announced that it will grant 'autonomy' to the 60 institutions through UGC regulation titled 'Categorization of Universities for the Grant of Graded Autonomy'. The institutes have been selected on the basis of ratings given by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council. Those institutes who have their NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council) score of 3.5 and above have been put in to category I whereas those institutes who have their NAAC score between 3.26 to 3.5 have been placed under category II and the institutes who have their ratings below 3.26 were placed in category III.

The government of India held that this 'autonomy' will entail the freedom to the universities to start the new courses, off campus centers along with other academic programs. This will also help the universities to hire foreign faculties, enter in to academic collaborations with different foreign institutions and enroll foreign students under the banner of internationalization of higher education. Again, the institutions will also be free to determine its fee structure if granted 'autonomy'. It is this freedom of determining fee structure is the central feature of the graded autonomy granted by the government of India.

This move will increase pressure on the universities as any new academic programme has been funded by university itself and it will inevitably lead to the fee hike in universities. Scholars were of the opinion that the most of the provisions of the graded autonomy has already been enjoyed by the universities and deemed to be universities and hence this is a

move to push the public funded institutions towards the promotion of self-financing courses which have validated by the market forces. There is also a question of the pattern of rating by NAAC as there is a set uniform parameters for the institutions evaluated but due the difference in teams visiting different institutions have placed varied results as the element of subjectivity along with nepotism and favoritism get involved in the process.

Further, in the provision of graded autonomy, there is an apprehension that the emolument paid to the foreign faculty, if hired, might be more than the existing pay scale of the faculties working in the present system. This will lead to a discontent among the existing faculties which might affect there working pattern and in turn will lead to the decrease in the quality of higher education in India. Again, with the goal of increasing the enrolment numbers in the higher education in general and universities in particular, this 'autonomy' will acts as a hindrance because due to increase in the fee structure of the courses, which might be new courses, the students from the marginal section of society will remain aloof from entering the higher education. The higher education is also a source of social mobility in Indian society ridden with the discrimination based on the practices of caste, class and gender. In this case, instead of making higher education more inclusive by proper implementation of protective policies and granting scholarships for the students coming from the marginal section of society, the move of graded autonomy might work in the opposite direction.

The point to note here is market has become an influential force in last two decades in India. However, it could not exactly succeed in over powering the public universities with liberal nature completely in a direct manner. What market could not do, has become the prerogative of state by employing tools of control and creating governing structure which employ the logic of outcome based approach. Consequently, curbing the freedom and autonomy of the universities to perform their primary function. What we essentially need, are bodies that could make the universities stronger enough to build a firewall around themselves to make them immune from the changing nature of power structures and state.

The unresolved question is whether universities with liberal nature can then assert the virtues of blue-sky thinking and consciousness raising without trivializing the anomalies of teaching, curriculum, and insipid student politics in public universities.

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