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**BROCHURE ON FINANCING AND
CONTROL OF UNIVERSITY
EDUCATION**

**With reference to
The University Grants Commission Bill, 1954**



सत्यमेव जयते

**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
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CONTENTS

	PAGES
Preface	(ii)
I. Genesis of the Bill	1-2
II. The University Grants Committee of Great Britain	3-6
III. Financing and Control of Higher Education in other countries	7-11
IV. Bibliography	12-15

PREFACE

The purpose of this brochure is to provide information about the financing and control of University Education in Great Britain and some other foreign countries, which may be useful during the consideration of the University Grants Commission Bill, 1954, by the Parliamentary Joint Committee. A short bibliography provides a further guide for study on the subject.

NEW DELHI;
The 6th April, 1955.

M. N. KAUL,
Secretary.

THE GENESIS OF THE UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION BILL 1954 (BILL No. 47 OF 1954)

Constitutional Responsibility

Co-ordination and determination of standards in institutions for higher education is the responsibility of the Central Government according to the Indian Constitution¹. There has not been any effective co-ordination in the activities of the Indian Universities and the precarious financial condition of the Indian Universities is inevitably leading to a lowering of standards. Hence the Government has introduced the University Grants Commission Bill to make provision for the co-ordination and determination of standards in Universities².

"The Indian Council of University Education"

The Inter-University Board, consisting mainly of the Vice-Chancellors of Indian Universities was created in 1924 and functioned as an advisory body for co-ordinating the activities of the Universities. The advice of this body did not produce the desired co-ordination. The University (Regulation of Standards) Bill was drafted in 1951 and proposed the setting up of the "Indian Council of University Education". This Bill was dropped for reasons given later.

The Existing Non-statutory Commission

A University Grants Committee, set up on the recommendation of the Central Advisory Board of Education, functioned between 1945 and 1950 and dealt only with the Central Universities³. Its activities were suspended in 1950, pending the consideration of the recommendations of the University Education Commission, popularly known as the Radhakrishnan Commission. In pursuance of the recommendations of the Radhakrishnan Commission, the Government, by a resolution in November, 1952 set up a (non-statutory) University Grants Commission to consider the financial difficulties of the Universities and to give them financial help from the Central exchequer wherever possible and necessary. The recommendations of the Radhakrishnan Commission regarding the composition and functions of the University Grants Commission are elaborately explained in Chapters XIII and XIV of their Report.

¹Constitution of India, Seventh Schedule, List 1, Item 66.

²Speech of Dr. M. M. Das, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Education, in Lok Sabha, on February 22, 1955.

³Speech of Shri K. L. Shrimali, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Education, in Rajya Sabha, on March 15, 1955.

Amalgamation of the Two Objects

A conference of the State Education Ministers and Vice-Chancellors of Indian Universities was held in April, 1953. This conference unanimously recommended the setting up of a statutory University Grants Commission combining the powers of the proposed "Indian Council of University Education" and the existing non-statutory University Grants Commission. The Government accepted this recommendation, dropped the earlier Bill and introduced the University Grants Commission Bill, 1954*.

*Speech of Dr. M. M. Das in Lok Sabha on the 22nd February, 1955.

THE UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMITTEE OF GREAT BRITAIN

Composition

A technique of Treasury aid to Universities has been evolved in Great Britain to meet the rival claims of academic autonomy and of the need for central planning. The medium through which this is done is the University Grants Committee. This Standing Committee was appointed for the first time in July, 1919⁵. Appointments to the Committee are made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer after consultation with the Minister of Education and the Secretary of State for Scotland. The members are selected for their personal qualifications and serve in a personal capacity, and not as representatives. There are no vice-chancellors of Universities or other *ex-officio* members on the British U.G.C. Sir Walter Moberly who was the Chairman of the British U.G.C. for fifteen years was persuaded to relinquish the vice-chancellorship of the University of Manchester in order to become the Chairman of the U.G.C.⁶ From the beginning the Committee has consisted of persons with academic rather than official backgrounds. Most of them have been persons with exceptional academic distinction. Not only did they share the views of the Universities but they also commanded the respect of the Universities. The British Government have regarded the need for continuity within the U.G.C. as imperative⁷. In the autumn of 1943, the Committee was reconstituted and additional members were appointed. Originally the membership of the Committee was restricted to nine persons 'not in the active service of a University'. It now included professors still engaged in academic work; but not vice-chancellors. The Committee is now composed of sixteen members. The chairmanship of the Committee is a full-time salaried job; but neither the vice-chairmanship nor the membership is a full-time or salaried job.

The Terms of Reference

Originally the terms of reference were:

"To enquire into the financial needs of University Education in the United Kingdom and to advise the Government as to the application of any grants that may be made by Parliament towards meeting them."

In July, 1946, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, realizing that the Committee should play a more positive and influential part than in the past in view of the new phase of rapid expansion,

⁵U.G.C Report on the years 1947-52.

⁶Speech of Sir Walter Moberly before the Commonwealth Universities Congress, 1948.

⁷Fifth Report on Estimates (U.K.) 1951-52.

announced in Parliament the following terms of reference for the Committee⁸:

“To enquire into the financial needs of University education in Great Britain; to advise the Government as to the application of any grants made by Parliament towards meeting them; to collect, examine and make available information on matters relating to University education at home and abroad; and to assist, in consultation with the Universities and other bodies concerned, the preparation and execution of such plans for the development of the Universities as may from time to time be required in order to ensure that they are fully adequate to national needs.”

Some responsible persons like Dr. J. F. Mountford, Vice-Chancellor of Liverpool University, have expressed concern about these enlarged terms of reference⁹. The only answer that is being given to such critics is that the basis of confidence that the Universities will continue to be autonomous in future, is the conviction not that the State cannot but that the State will not interfere.

The Committee has appointed a number of specialist Sub-Committees to assist them in considering particular spheres of academic activity. These Sub-Committees include specialists outside the U.G.C. also.

The Unwritten Laws

The proportion borne by recurrent Treasury grants to the total income of the Universities had risen to 64.5 per cent. in 1951-52 and the total expenditure on this vote had risen to more than £25 million. This expenditure is not subject to any form of Government audit. The University Grant is the largest of all the grants which are not accounted for in detail to the Comptroller and Auditor General¹⁰. The accounts of the Universities are audited by their own independent accountants. The Treasury has imposed upon itself a self-denying ordinance and has left it to the U.G.C. to do all the work in connection with the allocation of money amongst the Universities. By convention the Treasury never questions the recommendations of the U.G.C. The Chancellor of Exchequer, in consultation with the Treasury, decides the total sum which he considers Parliament should be asked to vote. The grants are quinquennial. In strict law that is not and cannot be so. The budget is annual and the legal commitment cannot be for more than one year. But from the beginning there has been a gentleman's understanding between the Treasury, the U.G.C. and the Universities that the grants shall be stabilized for periods of five years enabling the Universities to plan ahead. Even in the slump of 1931, no reduction was made¹¹.

⁸The Yearbook of the Universities of the Commonwealth; 1951, p. 4.

⁹Speech of Dr. J. F. Mountford, before the Commonwealth Universities Conference, 1948.

¹⁰Fifth Report on Estimates (U.K.) 1951-52.

¹¹Speech of Sir Walter Moberly before the Commonwealth Universities Congress, 1943.

Not Attached to the Ministry of Education

The U.G.C. is attached not to the Ministry of Education but to the Treasury. This arrangement is regarded to be the pillar of University autonomy. The Universities think that the Education Minister will exercise greater interference through his education experts. The Treasury, unlike the Ministry of Education, does not and cannot claim any educational authority, and it has never rejected the advice of the Committee on any educational ground¹².

The Staff of the U.G.C.

The Committee is assisted by a small staff of twenty-four persons. The policy of keeping the staff small has been purposely pursued. These officers of the U.G.C. contribute to the continuity of personal and informal contact and acquaintance with the University authorities. These methods are preferred to the impersonal methods of a large Government department¹³. The Secretary is not a mere appointee of the Committee. He is a civil servant seconded from the Treasury. His status was raised in 1951 from the Civil Service level of Assistant Secretary to that of Third Secretary.

The U.G.C. Procedure

The U.G.C. exercises control over the Universities in three main ways—through supervision of quinquennial requirements, through the receipt of annual returns of staff, students and expenditure and through continuous personal contact with the Universities. Before the end of each quinquennium, the U.G.C. pays a visit to every University and college and holds frank talks with all the components of the institutions. The Committee annually publishes a statistical abstract of student and financial figures relating to Universities and University colleges, and reports quinquennially on their financial needs and progress. The U.G.C. submits its reports to the Treasury and the Chancellor of the Exchequer presents these reports to the Parliament¹⁴.

The Forms of Allocations

The annual Treasury payments to the Universities take the form of recurrent grants (earmarked or otherwise) and non-recurrent grants. It is the U.G.C. who determines the allocation of the annual grant between Universities which is shown in the Estimates. Any unissued balance is not carried forward or returned to the Treasury, that is, the unused grants do not lapse. The greater part of the recurrent grant is a block contribution to income to supplement the general income of the Universities with a view to meeting their normal regular expenses. These block grants are paid in quarterly instalments. In order to finance particular developments, not of a capital nature, which are recommended by various Committees appointed by the different Ministries, there have been included in

¹²ZU. Ahmad, *Systems of Education*, p. 42.

¹³U.G.C. Report on the years 1947—52.

¹⁴Fifth Report on Estimates (U.K.) 1951-52.

the recurrent grants a number of earmarked grants. The non-recurrent grant is a contribution towards the cost of capital investment¹⁵.

The Sanction behind the U.G.C.

It is the practice of the Committee, when informing each University of the amount of its share of grant for the ensuing year, to indicate any items in the programme suggested by the University that the allocation is not intended to cover. Thus, while the Universities are not required by the Committee to spend their allocation in any particular way, they are well aware of the Committee's wishes. The University authorities are therefore under an implied obligation not to divert the money to purposes which are not favoured by the Committee. They know, too, that in due course they will need another quinquennial grant and that they will stand a better chance of getting what they want if they have made the best use of the money they have received in the past.

The earmarked grants for purposes of national interest can also be used as a handle to force the hands of the Universities. But in no case was a University forced to undertake new work against its will.

The history of the U.G.C. reveals that it does not regard itself to be a collection of supermen making plans for the Universities. It has tried to stimulate the Universities to plan for themselves. The U.G.C. has also served as a clearing-house for information and as a shock-absorber between the Government and the Universities by communicating the requirements of the Government to the Vice-Chancellors' Committee¹⁶. The discussions of the U.G.C. with the Universities do to some extent influence their decisions, but certainly do not dominate them.

Success of the British U.G.C. Analysed

Sir Walter Moberly who was the Chairman of the U.G.C. from 1934 to 1949 and Vice-Chancellor of the Manchester University before 1934, has been associated with the U.G.C. from both sides of the table. He analysed the remarkable success of the British U.G.C. in his speech at the Commonwealth Universities Congress held in 1948. Therein he traced the causes of this success to the national tradition of Britain, which abhors regimentation; to the high prestige which the British Universities have enjoyed for long; to the old-school-tie which binds the Ministers and civil servants to their Alma Mater; to Universities and their grants being kept out of party politics and out of acrimonious party debates; to the confidence commanded by the members of the U.G.C. on all sides; to Britain's being a small island making meetings comparatively easy; to Britain's being a unitary and not a federal State with no problem of Central and State Universities; and lastly to the British character of not pushing abstract doctrines to their absurd conclusions.

¹⁵Fifth Report on Estimates (U.K.) 1951-52.

¹⁶S. J. Curtis: History of Education in Great Britain, p. 451.

FINANCING AND CONTROL OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN OTHER COUNTRIES

An International Verdict

Universities all over the world are facing problems of high enrolment and of finance. The private fortunes that have in many countries financed universities in the past are disappearing, and, more and more, the universities are dependent on governments, and, in the end, on the taxpayer, for support. When funds are largely derived from public sources, the public and its representatives may feel they should have a voice in the development of universities.

The Preparatory Conference of representatives of universities organized by the U.N.E.S.C.O. in 1948, offered the following observations after a careful survey of the various methods of financing higher education in different countries:

(i) There is in general little apprehension, on the part of the countries represented, of the development of sinister aspects of State aid. The danger is always there, but is latent rather than actual.

(ii) It is generally realized that universities must inevitably rely more and more on State aid. It seems that the average amount of such aid is tending to become stabilized at about 60 per cent, although there are many variations on both sides of this figure, ranging from the private universities of the United States to countries in which State aid is almost the sole support of universities. Apart from State aid, an increase in university revenue depends upon the policy adopted towards the taking of fees, and on the possibility of donations from private benefactors. The latter is increasingly remote owing to rising taxation and the disinclination of the wealthy to contribute towards institutions which rely largely upon the State. In some countries donations from private and industrial sources are allowed as deductions from taxable income. The Conference strongly approves of this procedure.

(iii) The Conference emphasizes the great importance of the kind of machinery whereby State funds are disbursed for higher education. The first essential is for universities to be able to plan their own programmes in the certainty of reasonable finances being available. This can be done either by the allocation of a definite percentage of the national budget or through a suitable Grants Committee disposing of "block grants", of fixed amounts on a longer than annual basis. We draw particular attention to the system of "block grants" worked out in Great Britain. There the University Grants Committee draws directly from the Treasury on a quinquennial estimate, and recommends to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, at its unfettered discretion, the details of its disbursements.

(iv) It is not wise to pronounce in general terms upon the influence liable to be exercised on university autonomy by the acceptance of grants, for research or other activities, from governments, industries, professional organisations, or private individuals. There is absolute agreement on the necessity for as complete a degree of university autonomy as is reasonably compatible with the receipt of public funds¹⁷.

The Three Broad Types

With regard to the freedom of higher education every people has its own idiosyncrasies but these may be reduced to three principal types: the British, the American and the European. The British type claims to be able to dispense with a public education service. The American type is non-Federal, leaving the responsibility of higher education to the several States and to private initiative. The European continental type, with some variations among the various countries, is a centralized State system of higher education. Members of faculties are, except in a relatively few private institutions, employees of the State.

The American View

The Report of the Commission on Financing Higher Education in U.S.A. published in 1952, observes: "Freedom is vital to higher education. Freedom involves choice. Choice presupposes diversity of things from which to choose. What most protects freedom of choice in America is the great diversity of its institutions, none of which possesses overriding power. This multiplicity of competing units prevents any single political party, institution of government, corporation, labour union, church, or university from dictating what all men shall do or think. Human beings and their institutions being what they are, total power is not safe in the hands of any single group no matter how well-intentioned."

The structure of American higher education exemplifies this. Its liberty buttressed by the variety of its institutions. No arbitrary pattern, no central plan, has ever been imposed.

Variety is not only a matter of types of institutions. It characterizes their sponsorship and control as well. In a general sense, there are two kinds of control, public and private. The public institution is sponsored by a unit of government, preponderantly state or local. It draws most of its support from direct government appropriation. The private institution equally serves the public interests: its task also is to provide educational services to those who qualify. But it is organized by groups of persons banded together in a private capacity, operating under the general educational or corporation law of the state in which it is situated. The private institutions usually receive no direct appropriation from government. In many instances private sponsorship has been or is religious in character.

¹⁷Report of Preparatory Conference of Representatives of Universities, 1948 (RPCRU) pp. 26-27.

An independent source of income fosters freedom of activity and thought. The well-endowed private institutions tend to have this. Their policies can be adventurous and self-directed. They are free from immediate partisan pressures and may stand up for their principles without the risk of immediate bankruptcy. The public institutions, responsive as they are to the interests of the people who support them often take the initiative in meeting public demands for particular educational programs. State traditions of pride in their universities have often resulted in outstanding contributions to freedom of instruction and research.

The Report of the Commission on Financing Higher Education in U.S.A., published in 1952, observes: "The vigor of higher education depends upon its being free. Higher education is exploratory in nature. Its inquiries are speculative. These characteristics set it apart from primary and secondary education. Monopoly in control is incompatible with the free market of ideas if higher education is to be a forum where ideas are discussed and evaluated, where the student is encouraged to think for himself, it may have a moderator, but it cannot have a single arbiter."

In America, in spite of the efforts of Washington, Monroe and Madison, the Constitution has not granted jurisdiction over universities to the Federal Government¹⁰. American higher education is loosely organized and extremely complex. There is neither centralized planning nor one centralized organization. There are various voluntary associations on a national scale, such as the Association of American Universities, and the Association of American Colleges; Professional schools have national associations, as do other groups with common interests such as the National Catholic Education Association, the Association of Urban Universities, or the American Association of Junior Colleges. There are six regional associations in which membership is a recognition of an institution's acceptability. Teachers are organized in many professional associations as well as in the American Association of University Professors, and the officers of administration, such as deans, registrars, business managers, and public relations officers, have associations of their own. The American Council on Education has been established to provide a clearing-house for the exchange of information and opinions and a liaison between these many associations.

In a world where the complex machinery of society has tended towards more and more centralised direction, this system—where institutions, groups, and associations compete, compromise, and co-operate—represents pluralistic democracy at its freest.

Position in South America

In Latin America one comes across a method of financing universities by allotting to them automatically a certain percentage of the total revenues of the State and not demanding any account of how the money was spent¹¹.

¹⁰Speech of Prof. Georges Schelle, University of Paris (RPCRU). p. 66.

¹¹Speech of Dr. Julian Huxley, Commonwealth Universities Congress, 1948.

Position in Switzerland

Of the nine institutions enjoying university rank in Switzerland, one only, the Polytechnical School at Zurich, is a Federal establishment. The seven universities, properly so-called, and the High School of Commerce at St. Gall are cantonal, i.e., they are financially dependent on the canton governments, which are responsible for all institutions of public education, with the single exception mentioned above. Since the Federal authority does not deal with the universities, it cannot form a connecting link between them. To remedy this defect, a Conference of Rectors has been created, and steps are being taken to give it the requisite stability and permanence. It is intended to serve as a centre of co-ordination for the universities, as a forum for the discussion of their common problems, and as an organ capable of representing them before the Federal authority.

The Swiss universities are essentially dependent for their maintenance on the generosity of the cantons and their upkeep constitutes one of the larger items of the cantonal budgets. In accordance with the liberal tradition, which retains its vitality in Switzerland, relations of mutual trust have hitherto been maintained between the State authorities and the boards of the universities represented by the rectors, who are nominated by their colleagues for an unspecified term of office. The members of the Swiss university staffs are not treated as Government officials, and do not regard themselves as such, for the State gives them complete liberty in the discharge of their duties²⁰.

Position in France

All university degrees in France are awarded by the State. The great majority of the students are in State universities, which are the best equipped. There are 17 of them, but they do not all possess the four fundamental faculties of law, medicine and pharmacy, science and letters; on the other hand, some of them have additional faculties. There are also five free universities, known as "Catholic Institutes".

The State universities are autonomous bodies. The Deans of the faculties are elected by their colleagues. The Rector alone is designated by the State; he is always chosen from among the university professors, preferably from among the Deans. His function is to preside over the University Council the members of which are elected by the faculties. He may sometimes make suggestions, but he does not give orders. No control is exercised over the teaching.

All the faculties, and every university as a whole, have their own autonomous budgets. They may accept donations and grants. The main part of their revenue was derived, until recently from the fees paid by the students. But as the fees have not yet been raised appreciably, the proportion of the university budgets which they represent has shrunk considerably, so that the bulk of the universities' financial resources is now represented by State grants.

²⁰Report by Prof. Andre Mercier, University of Berne (RPCRU), pp. 137-39

This situation is costly for the tax-payers and full of danger for the autonomy of the universities.

The majority of the professors are nominated by the State. But in the faculties of law and medicine they have to be designated as the result of a competitive examination for the whole of France. In the faculties of science and letters they are chosen from a list of persons possessing qualifications laid down by professors, elected by their colleagues, who know well the capabilities of all the candidates in each specialized field. The faculties make their selection on the basis of this list, and their choice is almost always ratified by the State. It may be said that, in this way, the universities of France recruit their staff by co-option.

The State requires the faculties to provide instruction in certain subjects, but even in these subjects the universities frame their own curricula to which the State merely gives formal approval²¹.

Position in New Zealand

The University of New Zealand is a federal University consisting of four University Colleges, and two Agricultural Colleges.

The University is governed by a Senate of thirty persons, of whom the Government appoints only four, in addition to the Director of Education. The Senate has final control of the University, both in academic and in administrative matters. In academic matters, the Senate has the assistance of certain advisory bodies of which the most important is the Academic Board, composed of representatives of the professorial boards of the colleges. The Board advises upon courses of study, upon examinations and upon any other academic matters.

It is almost a tradition in New Zealand that education is the financial responsibility of the Government, and the funds for the university and its colleges, as in the case of primary and secondary education, come mainly from Government grants. This is so in respect of both capital and income. The endowment income is small. Even the fees paid by students come mainly from Government bursaries paid to students who qualify for admission to the university. In the past, the colleges competed for Government grants; now, the University Senate has established a University Grants Committee. It will visit the colleges, estimate their respective financial needs, and present to the Government a budget covering, for example, a quinquennium which will be designed to enable each college to fulfil its function in relation to the university as a whole. Each college will still have freedom to establish any course of study within its constitution, but it is not likely to do so, if its own resources are not sufficient, without being assured of continuous funds through the University Grants Committee. Dependence on Government grants must always carry the possibility of a risk to the independence of a university, but New Zealand Government have not sought to interfere with that independence²².

²¹Report by M. Andre Allix, Rector of the University of Lyons (RPCRU), p. 101.

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