

Report of the Committee to enquire into the working of the Central Universities

**UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION
NEW DELHI**

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PREFACE

The University Grants Commission appointed a Committee in January, 1982 to enquire into the working of the Central Universities. The composition and terms of reference of the Committee are as under:—

COMPOSITION

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| 1. Dr. (Mrs.) Madhuri R. Shah | <i>Chairman</i> |
| *2. Professor Rais Ahmed
formerly Vice-Chancellor,
Kashmir University,
Department of Physics,
Aligarh Muslim University,
Aligarh. | <i>Member</i> |
| 3. Dr. (Mrs.) Ashima Chatterjee
Department of Chemistry,
Calcutta University,
Calcutta. | <i>Member</i> |
| **4. Dr. G. Ram Reddy
Vice-Chancellor,
Osmania University,
Hyderabad. | <i>Member</i> |
| 5. Dr. Ramesh Mohan
Director,
Central Institute of English &
Foreign Languages,
Hyderabad. | <i>Member</i> |
| *** Shri R.K. Chhabra
Secretary, UGC. | <i>Secretary</i> |

TERMS OF REFERENCE

- (a) To examine whether the Central Universities are fulfilling the objectives set for them in their Acts and Statutes;
- (b) To examine the general state of discipline in the Central Universities, causes of periodic disturbances in the campuses and remedial action therefore;

* Since appointed Vice-Chairman, UGC.
** Since appointed Vice-Chancellor, Andhra Pradesh Open University.
*** Since appointed Consultant, UGC.

- (c) To examine the adequacy of the machinery in the Central Universities to deal with the grievances of students, teachers and the administrative staff and suggest measures for strengthening corporate life in these universities;
- (d) To examine the desirability of evolving a code of conduct for political parties and to set limits to their involvement in the University affairs; and
- (e) to suggest such other measures of reform as are necessary for the efficient functioning of Central Universities and promoting an academic atmosphere conducive to study and scholarship on the campuses.

Programme of Work

The Committee met on February 10, 1982 and also had a meeting with the Vice-Chancellors of the Central Universities on the same day. In the course of its deliberations, the Committee considered the scope of its terms of reference and reviewed the purposes which lead to its appointment. The Committee also gave thought to the nature of situations and forces which tend to reappear with untiring frequency, vitiate normal academic activities and divert academic energies to lesser pursuits, which are ugly and barren.

The Committee was not insensitive to the colossal and costly waste of irreplaceable human and material resources and to the blighting of promising talent, as well as halting of processes vital to national growth, and well being, caused by the state of indiscipline in the universities. However, the Committee felt that it would be futile to list the-already-well-known-factors which block normal life of the universities. It considered it prudent to confine its major concern to what it felt was necessary to help the universities to reorient and realign the manner of their functioning, to enable them to realise more effectively the ends for which they were established and the expectations for which the nation strains to pay the heavy cost on their maintenance.

The Committee is alive to the general aims of university education which are hallowed by tradition and sanctified by centuries of experience, and it reiterates that essentially the universities are centres of free and untrammelled thinking and that their function is to create and preserve a climate of reflexion essential for free and bold pursuit of truth, irrespective of where it leads. As such, a university is both a centre of conservation and innovation as well as a pace-setter in regard to cultivation of national character, habits and tastes. However, the Committee feels that it should not confine its consideration only to those objectives which in accordance with the Acts and Statutes of each of the Central Universities define its special role, but should also consider the wider and universally accepted purposes which are connoted by the term 'University' and which inspire all university charters and acts.

The Committee feels that constant rethinking of the purposes of the university, especially in the light of the needs and challenges of the age, is one of the major roles of the university.

The Committee decided to collect certain statistical information, views and suggestions of the Vice-Chancellors, representatives of the Associations of Teachers, Students and non-teaching staff of the universities on the various terms of reference. A press note was also issued inviting views and suggestions from the general public.

The Committee had discussions with regard to the terms of reference with a number of distinguished persons. These persons included the Vice-President of India, Chief Justice of India, Speaker of Lok Sabha, Lt.-Governor of Delhi, previous Vice-Chancellors, eminent educationists and journalists whose list is given in Appendix.

The Committee visited the universities and discussed its terms of reference with senior academics and the representatives of the Associations of Teachers, Karamcharis and Students. The Committee also met the representatives of the Association of Principals of Delhi Colleges.

The visits (which in certain cases had to be postponed for various reasons as constraint of time and convenience of the persons and universities) to the different universities were arranged as follows:

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|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. University of Hyderabad, | August 19, 1982 |
| 2. Jawaharlal Nehru University | September 25, 1982 |
| 3. North-Eastern Hill University | December 6-8, 1982 |
| 4. Banaras Hindu University | January 1-2, 1983 |
| 5. Visva-Bharati | January 18-19, 1983 |
| 6. Aligarh Muslim University | May 20-21, 1983 |

The Committee had decided to visit Delhi University on October 7, 1982 but in view of the strike in the University it met the various representatives in the UGC office.

The Ministry of Education was also requested to send a note indicating their perception of the problems besetting the Central Universities. We were informed as follows:

“We have carefully considered the matter. The terms of reference of the Committee are clear and specific. These terms of reference do not indicate that the Committee has to consider any problem that the CENTRAL GOVERNMENT faces *vis-a-vis* the Central Universities. We are not therefore sure of the scope and the nature of the note sought by the Committee. We are of the view that while the Committee is free to seek any information on specific points from various sources, including Government, which the Committee may require in connection with its deliberations and arrive at their

own conclusions on the basis of such information, it may not be appropriate for the Government to identify a set of problems and refer it to the Committee for consideration, in view of the specific nature of its terms of reference.”

However the Ministry of Education referred certain matters for the consideration of the Committee which we have dealt with or taken into account in the following Chapters.

We are grateful to all those whom we have met. Our discussions with them have not only helped us in understanding the existing situation in the universities but also in formulating some of the recommendations contained in this Report.

The Central Universities are in a state of perpetual crisis and are faced with problems some of which are beyond their competence to solve. We have to ask many questions in order to appreciate the causes of the crisis. Is it due to lack of clarity in understanding the aims of university education on the part of the people, the academics or the decision-makers?

Is it true that the universities are subjected to continuing pressures from within and without? What forces and powers prevent disciplinary action against and punishment of the guilty in the universities?

Is the administrative machinery of the universities competent to face the problems which it must? If not, how can it be revitalised?

These and a number of other issues demand clear answers. Ordinarily, the role of the universities is bound by what is allowed to them by law. Nevertheless, as a national sanctuary for free-thinking and as setter of standards of morals and values, its authority may be invisible but unlimited. Unfortunately, the intellectual, cultural and ethical values, which the universities are expected to uphold and preserve, are easily subordinated to lesser concerns on the part of the university community. The Committee, however, is hopeful that, when facts are properly presented and understood in the light of long term national interests and wider human good, and when there is awakening of respect for lasting human values—the earnest involvement of the university community, concerned institutions and the Government, it will be possible to stem the rot that has set in, and reverse the distressing trends.

We hope that a series of inter-connected recommendations which we have made here after careful thought and much consultation, when implemented by the Government, the UGC and the universities, will bring about a healthy all round change in the university atmosphere.

We are forwarding this Report with the expectation that prompt action will follow its submission.