

**PART FINAL REPORT¹
OF THE TASK FORCE
CONSTITUTED
TO PREPARE
AN ACTION PLAN
FOR IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE
RECOMMENDATIONS OF
THE REVIEW COMMITTEE
ON INSTITUTIONS DEEMED
TO BE UNIVERSITIES**

¹ The Report is Part Final as the Task Force is yet to give their Report on the second Term of Reference "advise the Central Government on the draft UGC Regulations in regard to institutions deemed to be universities in the light of the Report of the Committee constituted to review the functioning of such institutions".

Action Plan for implementation of the recommendations of the MHRD Review Committee on Deemed to be Universities

I. Background

The Committee¹ appointed by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India reviewed the functioning of 126 (out of 130) institutions 'deemed to be universities' in the light of the criteria mentioned below and submitted its report to the government of India in October 2009. This review of the 'deemed to be universities' has revealed that some of them do not merit the status of a university as envisaged in the original concept enunciated in the Report of the University Education Commission (Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan Commission report 1948-49) and the subsequent guidelines framed by the University Grants Commission (UGC) under Section 3 of the UGC Act 1956. As a part of the review exercise, the Committee adopted certain key criteria on the basis of the existing UGC guidelines (2000) for considering proposals for declaring an institution as 'deemed to be university'. A list of these criteria along with the relevant provisions of the UGC Guidelines is shown below:-

- *Consideration of the idea of a university [Articles 4(a) (ii), 4 (a) (iv) and 4 (b)]*
- *Whether all present academic activities / programmes could have been carried out without being a deemed university; how the status of deemed university became a stimulus for better performance? [Articles 2 and 4 (b)]*
- *Conformity to the provisions of the UGC Act and the UGC Guidelines for the recognition of an institution 'deemed to be a university' [Articles 4(a) (i) and 16]*
- *Aspects of Governance [Article 4(a) (iv)]*
- *Quality of and innovations in teaching – learning process [Article 4(a) (ii)]*

¹ By notification dated 6/7/2009 [No.F-9-26/2009- U3A], the Government of India constituted a Committee of experts to review the functioning of the existing institutions 'deemed to be universities'. The Committee submitted its report to the Government on 20/10/2009.

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- *Research output and its impact (research publications, books, monographs, patents, etc)* [Article 4(a) (i)]
- *Doctoral and other research degree programmes* [Articles 3 and 4 (a) (i)]
- *Faculty resources* [Article 9(b)]
- *Admission processes and award of degrees* [Article 13]

These criteria are elaborated in terms of the UGC Guidelines (2000) in the attached Chart (Annexure 1), a copy of which was furnished to the Ministry in response to its communication dated 26 October, 2009 from the working papers of the Review Committee.

A key conclusion of the review was that the existing 'deemed to be universities' fall into three groups² (listed in Tables 1,2 and 3 of the Report of the Review Committee) namely –

- Group 1. - those institutions which, on an aggregate of their achievement and performance as well as potential, justify their continuation as deemed universities (Table 1);
- Group 2. - those which on an aggregate were found to be deficient in some aspects which needed to be rectified over a three year period for their continuation as deemed to be universities (Table 2); and
- Group 3. - those which, neither on past performance nor on their promise for the future have the attributes to retain their status as universities (Table 3).

The Review Committee suggested that a "Task Force" may be constituted to propose an Action Plan for implementation of its recommendations. Accordingly, the Government of India constituted a Task Force³ with the same members and Convener as that in the Review Committee with the following terms of reference –

² In the Report of the Committee to review the functioning of existing institutions 'deemed to be universities', such institutions have been categorized into three groups [Annexure I (a), I (b) and I (c) of the Report].

³ A copy of the order constituting the Task Force with its Terms of Reference is at Annexure 2.

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- (i) preparing a plan of action, by way of abundant caution, to safeguard the interests of students enrolled in any institution 'deemed to be a university' whose declaration is, or may be, revoked in public interest and accordingly, would be required to cease operations as an institution 'deemed to be university' under any law for the time being in force; and
- (ii) advise the Central Government on the draft UGC Regulations in regard to institutions deemed to be universities in the light of the Report of the Committee constituted to review the functioning of such institutions.

The Task Force met on 17/11/2009, 18/11/2009, 23/12/2009 and 24/12/2009 to propose an Action Plan necessary in respect of the deemed universities in Table 3 of the Review Committee Report. During its deliberations, the Task Force also took into account the relevant observations of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of Prof. Yash Pal & Anr. vs. State of Chhattisgarh & Ors [WP(C) No. 19 of 2004] in regard to protecting the interest of the students enrolled in institutions which were directed by the Apex Court to be closed down.

II. Issues before the Task Force

In the event of the Government accepting the report of the MHRD Review Committee, we assume that the consequent step of withdrawing the status of "deemed to be University" from institutions in Group 3 mentioned in its Report, is likely to be taken. While this will be an enormously significant and positive step in the direction of removing very serious aberrations that have crept into our higher education system, the inevitable fallout of this will be the future of students who are pursuing various degree programmes in these institutions. It may be recalled that in a similar circumstance⁴, the Hon'ble Supreme Court has given clear directions to safeguard the interests of the students. Given the unfortunate circumstances, it may become necessary for the Government to take measures to ensure that the studies of legitimate students are not disrupted. It is also the social responsibility of all institutions including the University Grants Commission and State Governments to come to the aid of the students. However, the plight of these students must not be allowed to become a reason for considering the possibility of totally undeserving institutions retaining the status of university. Such a course will be incalculably harmful for the future of higher education in the country.

⁴ Prof. Yash Pal & Anr. vs. State of Chhattisgarh & Ors [WP(C) No. 19 of 2004]

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A majority of students who will be affected are those studying for the Bachelor's and Master's degree in professional as well as in general purpose programmes. Some of the deemed universities have also indiscriminately launched numerous degree programmes in the distance mode, including in such disciplines as engineering, technology, etc., which are not exactly amenable to being imparted in the distance mode, with disproportionately large enrolment. It is also expected that students pursuing research degrees such as MPhil and PhD would also be affected. It is worrisome to observe that in specific cases the research programmes have no academic viability and are in violation of all established norms. But even in such cases, the students would need special assistance to continue their research pursuits.

Thus, the issues before the task force are the following:

- (i) How best to protect the interest of students who are in the middle of their degree courses in general purpose bachelor's and master's degree programmes?
- (ii) How are students pursuing their degree courses in various technical and professional programmes to be rehabilitated?
- (iii) What can be done for students in institutions with a narrow focus such as ancient art and antiquarian studies, linguistic and cultural heritage or sports and physical education or institutions with significant historical legacy which have failed to live up to the ideal of a university?
- (iv) How are students pursuing degree and diploma courses in the distance mode to be re-located?
- (v) How is the continuity of MPhil and PhD research to be ensured?

III. Proposed Road Map

The task of charting a roadmap to be followed in case of the deemed to be universities not found suitable to continue as a university, was greatly complicated by the fact that many of these institutions having acquired 'deemed university' status, misused the autonomy. This resulted in misguided proliferation of courses, indiscriminate admission of students and dilution of the academic standards, thus making the process of rehabilitation of both students and institutions extremely difficult.

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III.1 Classification of institutions

For the purpose of addressing the student-related issues listed above, the deemed universities in Group 3 (Table 3 of the Review Committee Report), can be sub-divided as shown below. The post-withdrawal status, of the affected deemed universities, is also indicated.

III.1. (i) Some 'deemed to be universities' offer only Arts, Science, Commerce, Law and Management programmes, such as B.Sc., B.A., B Com., LL.B., B.B.A., M.B.A., etc.. These courses are routinely offered in colleges / institutions affiliated to State universities. Such institutions were originally started as arts, science and commerce colleges and thereafter these obtained regular deemed university status and continue to run same or similar programmes that are no different from those offered by colleges affiliated to State Universities. Such colleges can be affiliated to the State University having territorial jurisdiction after meeting the requisite norms and standards for affiliation. Fresh admissions to the (re)designated /reverted colleges or institutes will be governed by the norms of the affiliating universities.

Institution under this category is mentioned in Table 3 of the Review Committee's Report at serial number 63.

III.1.(ii) Some 'deemed to be universities' under Group 3 that offer programmes only in Engineering and Technology disciplines, such as B.E., B.Tech., B Arch., M.B.A., and M.C.A., etc that are no different from the hundreds of engineering colleges in India. These can be (re)designated/reverted as Engineering colleges or Technical Institutes. The (re)designated/reverted colleges can then be affiliated to the State Technical University or other State University having territorial jurisdiction. The affiliating university will then be able to guide these institutions in correcting the aberrations and deficiencies (mentioned above) that have crept into these institutions after acquiring the 'deemed university' status. The students already enrolled will continue their on-going academic programme and receive the degree from the affiliating university. It will be incumbent on these colleges to suitably restructure their academic programmes to 'meet the requisite norms and standards' for affiliation so that the students' interests are fully protected. Fresh admissions to the (re)designated colleges / institutes will be governed by the norms of the affiliating universities.

Institutions under this category are those mentioned in Table 3 of the Review Committee's Report at serial numbers 44, 51, 111, 116, 124 and 125.

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III.1.(iii) Some 'deemed to be universities' offer programmes only in Medical and Allied fields, such as M.B.B.S., B.D.S., B.Pharm., Nursing, Physiotherapy, etc. that are no different from other such colleges and are under the purview of various Statutory councils. These institutions were originally started as medical or dental colleges and thereafter obtained either regular or *de-novo* deemed university status. These can revert back to their earlier status as colleges in their respective disciplines. The (re)designated/ reverted colleges can seek affiliation to the State Medical Universities or any other State University having territorial jurisdiction after meeting the requisite norms and standards for affiliation. The students already enrolled will continue their on-going academic programme and receive the degree from the affiliating university. Fresh admissions to the (re)designated colleges / institutes will be governed by the norms of the affiliating universities.

Institutions under this category are those mentioned in Table 3 of the Review Committee's Report at serial numbers 48, 57, 58, 59, 76, 77, 102, 113, 119 and 126.

III.1.(iv) Several institutions were started as deemed universities offering programmes in one or more disciplines such as engineering, medicine, dental, arts, science, management etc. Subsequently, they brought under their ambit several other disciplines coming under the purview of different regulatory bodies. Among these, some are offering courses in both on-campus and off-campus. These institutions can be affiliated to the respective state universities as follows:

- Technology Disciplines - State Technical Universities or other State Universities having territorial jurisdiction
- Medical and allied disciplines - State Medical Universities or other State Universities having territorial jurisdiction
- Arts, Sciences, Commerce, Law etc. - State Universities having territorial jurisdiction

Institutions under this category are those mentioned in Table 3 of the Review Committee's Report at serial numbers 49, 50, 61, 64, 69, 80, 85, 87, 88, 101, 104, 105, 107, 108, 112, 114, 115, 118, 120 and 127.

III.1.(v) Some 'deemed to be universities' started in one State but established 'Off-campus' centres in other States as well as several locations within the state, and even in foreign countries all coming within the ambit of the same deemed university. Most of these universities offer programmes in multiple disciplines

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like engineering, medicine, arts, science, law, management etc. Their courses are no different from those offered by general and professional colleges in the country. These off-campus institutions / colleges should be reverted to their earlier status where applicable and in any case, designated as colleges or institutes in the appropriate discipline and affiliated to the corresponding technical, medical or general or open universities in the State where they are located. Programmes run in foreign countries have to be affiliated to one of the State universities, if permissible under the law governing such universities, else, dealt with under the relevant local laws of the host country.

Institutions under this category are those mentioned in Table 3 of the Review Committee's Report at serial numbers 82, 94, 98 and 109.

III.1.(vi) Some institutions which were established primarily to preserve and promote special areas of Indian heritage of art, language and culture as well as sports, youth development and so on or have significant historical legacy were given the status of deemed to be university. Though such programmes are important in their own right, however, in actual practice, their present activities do not meet the attributes expected of a university level institution. Such programmes should seek recognition or affiliation from an appropriate State or Central University – alternatively, where publicly funded, the appropriate Ministry or State Government, as the case may be, should consider establishing them as statutory universities of appropriate legislatures after overcoming their present inadequacies.

Institutions under this category are those mentioned in Table 3 of the Review Committee's Report at serial numbers 3, 25 and 33.

III.1.(vii) Any new institution / college established after acquiring the 'deemed to be university' status, which did not have any prior affiliation to any university at the time, would have to seek fresh affiliation to an appropriate State university. The number of such institutions cuts across the above categories.

III.2 Migration / Reassignment of students

a) We have to recognize that some of the State Universities may not accept some institutions falling under Group 3 (Table 3 of the Review Committee Report) referred to above for affiliation for not meeting the standards of quality of faculty and facilities. In such cases, it will be necessary that the students of such institutions should be assigned to other affiliated institutions under the State University.

b) Some of the deemed to be universities categorized in the Review Committee Report in Group 3 (Table 3) may have management common to deemed to be



