



## **IS AUTONOMY THE WAY TO INNOVATION CENTERED TEACHER EDUCATION?**

**Ms. Sheetal M. Zalte<sup>1</sup> & Ms. Sushmita Patro<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, Smt. KapilaKhandvala College of Education, [smzalte@gmail.com](mailto:smzalte@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, School of Education, Central University of Karnataka



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The institution which are being granted autonomy have to prove themselves and have to go through a rigorous procedure

In pursuit of intellectual excellence autonomy becomes essential requirement. In fact it is a key factor provided it is implemented with accountability by all the components of the educational institution in their own sphere of activities. Greater autonomy ensures better academic performance. It is visible in case of central universities, IITs, IIMs etc. According to N. R. MadhavaMenon, (Chancellor, Guru Ghashidas Central University, Chhattisgarh, and former Vice Chancellor of National Law School of India University, Bangalore) the objectives of the XIIth plan like emphasis on quality improvement and diversification of higher education opportunities to meet the demands of employers and to provide wider choices to the youth can be achieved only if institutional autonomy is granted. Having worked in many of the institutions of repute he shares his experience that Central universities enjoy greater autonomy as compared to state universities and show relatively better academic performance. Similarly IITs and IIMs endowed with still greater autonomy can claim higher levels of academic excellence and work culture.

### **Competitive excellence:**

Teacher autonomy and student autonomy are important aspects of institutional autonomy. According to Yashpal committee recommendations, in academic matters the teacher should have complete autonomy to frame the course and determine the way to assess the performance of the students. Thus autonomy should also be available to the students who should be allowed to take courses of their choice, if necessary from different institutions and then awarded the degree on the basis of credits they have earned. This can generate habits of independent thinking and a spirit of enquiry unaffected by any kind of prejudices. To enjoy

this kind of autonomy a teacher must be a true scholar who is capable of shouldering the responsibility of autonomy with desired accountability.

Interaction of any educational institution largely depends upon the autonomy experienced by the institution. The degree of autonomy of the institution decides the nature of interaction the institution has with other institutions and units of the society.

**Objectives for autonomous colleges:**

The National Policy on Education (1986-92) formulated the following objectives for autonomous colleges. An autonomous college will have the freedom:

- To determine and prescribe its own courses of study and syllabi, and restructure and redesign the courses to suit local needs.
- To prescribe rules for admission in consonance with the reservation policy of the state government.
- To evolve methods of assessment of students' performance, the conduct of examinations and notification of results.
- To use modern tools of educational technology to achieve higher standards and greater creativity.
- To promote healthy practices such as community service, extension activities, projects for the benefit of the society at large, neighborhood programmes, etc.

Autonomous colleges are showing significant qualitative characteristics like increased self-confidence, Clarity of vision, reforms in examination and evaluation system, focusing on students oriented teaching technique etc. It is a very good opportunity of to establish self-governance. It is also observed that the quality of education is relatively better in institutions which enjoy greater autonomy in governance.

In case of affiliated colleges all syllabi are approved by the University they are affiliated to. The syllabi should cater to the local needs of all the students from different social strata, elite as well as downtrodden. Need of time and place should be taken care of which is possible in case of an autonomous institutions.

Since autonomous colleges have freedom and authority in academic matters they can decide their own direction and pave their own way towards their goal. In the affiliated system of university, bringing in any change is a sluggish process since hundred permissions to be

taken and formalities to be completed whereas an autonomous institution can bring in any change in the system with immediate effect.

Due to the vast number of colleges and colleges situated at extreme locations (South Mumbai and Goa) under the governance of the university it has become a challenge to supervise and maintain the desired quality. An autonomous institution has to maintain its standards in order to sustain their distinctive place in the field.

### **Challenges faced by autonomous institutions:**

To keep their place intact in the field these institutions have to be vigilant, creative and research oriented. There is no point in replacing one theoretical course by another theoretical course under the name of creativity or innovation. While introducing any new course all the stakeholders should be involved, research needs to be done for new trends. They need to be vigilant towards any single change happening in the field. Examination and evaluation are two important areas for an autonomous institution as they decide the quality of the institution and helps in creating USP. Autonomy gives them the freedom and authority to bring in reform in these two areas which has to be used wisely.

There are questions to be answered in case of autonomous colleges like is the autonomy implemented in its true spirit? Are the autonomous institutions achieving their objectives given by UGC? Are the apex authorities reviewing and monitoring standards in autonomous colleges regularly and objectively? If the answer to these questions is yes then autonomy is definitely working wonders in our educational system. If the answer is no then we have a long way to go in the pursuit of academic excellence.

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