
UNIT 5 MANAGEMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION: INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

Structure

- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Objectives
- 5.3 Universities: The Organisational Framework
 - 5.3.1 Structure of universities
 - 5.3.2 Universities according to roles/functions
- 5.4 Governance of universities
 - 5.4.1 Constitution of universities
 - 5.4.2 The Executive council
 - 5.4.3 The Academic Council
 - 5.4.4 Faculty/Schools
 - 5.4.5 The Court (Senate)
 - 5.4.6 Finance Committee
 - 5.4.7 Other Models of Governance
- 5.5 The People Who Manage the Universities
 - 5.5.1 The Visitor/Chancellor
 - 5.5.2 The Chancellor
 - 5.5.3 The Vice-Chancellor
 - 5.5.4 The Pro-Vice-Chancellor/Rector
 - 5.5.5 The Deans
 - 5.5.6 The Registrar
 - 5.5.7 The Finance Officer
- 5.6 The Management of Colleges
 - 5.6.1 Types of Colleges
 - 5.6.2 Colleges and the Universities
 - 5.6.3 Autonomous Colleges
 - 5.6.4 Management of Colleges
- 5.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 5.8 Check Your Progress: Possible Answers
- 5.9 References and Suggested Readings

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous units of this Block, we discussed the growth and development of higher education in India in the context of the emerging global trends as well as the issues confronting higher education in terms of access, equity, relevance and quality. From this perspective, we also took a close look at the prospects that higher education will face in the near future in the Indian context. From this perspective, we looked at the efforts that Indian higher education system has been making in recent years to cope with the emerging problems and challenges – the need for expansion in an environment of shrinking resources, the imperative of widening access without compromising quality and the challenges arising from global competition as well as the increasing trends of commercialisation of higher education.

r focus in this discussion so far has been on the system and its structures l processes. We shall now turn our attention to the micro-management ies in higher education at the institutional level.

5.2 OBJECTIVES

On completion of this unit, you should be able to:

- describe the broad organisational framework within which Indian universities are structured;
- identify types of universities according to their functions;
- analyse the roles and functions of various decision-making bodies and functionaries in universities; and
- explain various issues related to planning and management of universities and colleges in India.

5.3 UNIVERSITIES: THE ORGANISATIONAL FRAMEWORK

You will recall that in unit 1, we discussed the birth of the modern university in India in 1857. For almost half a century, the main functions that universities performed were to grant affiliation to colleges, to hold examinations and to award degrees. It was only in 1904 that Indian universities (there were only four of them) were given the power to establish departments of teaching, appoint teachers and provide for the instruction of students directly enrolled by them. It meant that the number of new colleges seeking affiliation came down; it also paved the way for the establishment of new teaching universities. Some of the new universities at Dhaka (now in Bangladesh), Aligarh, Benaras, Rangoon (now in Myanmar), Patna and Nagpur were established as teaching and residential universities. This was soon followed by similar universities set up by several princely states that comprised British India before independence.

Around the same period, a number of institutions, founded primarily to promote a nationalist system of higher education (as against the modern university modelled on the British pattern) also came up in several parts of the country. These institutions functioned outside the formal structure of the university system during the British period, and were co-opted into the formal system after independence.

The constitutional dispensation that we outlined briefly in the previous unit, did not permit the central government to establish universities till it was revised in 1977. Nevertheless, it was inevitable that certain special institutions that could provide facilities for teaching and research of the highest quality at an all India level, were required to be set up by the central government, and a chain of institutions called "Institutions of National Importance" were soon set up. The Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), etc. came in this category, adding to the variations in structures.

In this unit, we shall examine the management issues associated with Indian universities.

5.3.1 Structure of Universities

India has central and state universities, unitary, federal and affiliating universities, institutions of national importance, institutions deemed to be universities and open universities. The common typology, however, is that of a state university with its finances for maintenance provided by a state government, and its development programmes funded jointly by the state government and the central government through the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).

On a functional basis, institutions of higher education consist of multi-faculty general universities that are engaged in teaching and research in nearly all traditional disciplines, those devoted to teaching and research in clusters of disciplines like agriculture, medicine, law, languages and technology. The broad pattern and structure of governance of most of these universities are similar; the management responsibility vesting with an Executive Council (also known as Syndicate or Board of Management) and the academic responsibility vesting with the Academic Council (also known as Senate).

We shall now take a close look at the different types of universities functioning in India on the basis of their structural patterns

Affiliating Universities

The affiliating type of universities has a number of colleges affiliated to it. In this pattern the bulk of the teaching takes place in the colleges which admit students and impart instruction to them. The majority of Indian universities are of the affiliating type. You will recall that we have mentioned elsewhere in this block that there are about 20,000 colleges in India. Each of these is affiliated to one of the 400 or more universities. It should be noted here that colleges do not have the option to choose the university to which they should get affiliated. Each university has a clearly defined geographical jurisdiction, and colleges located in those territories must necessarily be affiliated to it.

In the affiliating system, the university concerned prescribes the courses of study, holds the examinations and awards the degrees while all the teaching is done by the colleges. The university has little to do with the appointment of teachers, admission of students and the day-to-day academic functioning of the colleges. However, the university concerned does insist that teachers appointed by the colleges should possess the qualifications prescribed by it and that they should conform to the criteria laid down for the selection of students for admission.

Universities generally prescribe a set of criteria under its statutory powers to grant affiliation to colleges. These criteria, among others, include the provision of infrastructure (classrooms, laboratories and libraries, administrative buildings, hostels and residences, books and equipment), number of teachers required for courses to be offered, the qualifications required of the teachers, funding arrangements, management structures and the approval of the state government concerned, where necessary. In the case of colleges offering professional programmes like those in engineering, law, medicine, etc., the approval of the concerned statutory authority is necessary before students are admitted and teaching is started. Once affiliation is granted, and the colleges start functioning, the university sends teams of experts at specified intervals to inspect the facilities provided and to ensure

that all the criteria for affiliation are followed. Any breach of the criteria could lead to the withdrawal of affiliation.

It is the primary responsibility of the university to prescribe the courses of study and to conduct the examinations. College teachers have very little to do in the design of courses or the development of their content. Their role is just to teach according to the syllabi handed over to them. The examinations are set by the universities and college teachers may have the responsibility to assess the answer sheets sent to them by the university though these would not be of their own students. In other words, a college teacher has no role in determining what to teach and how, or in assessing the performance of his/her students. A major criticism of this model is that college teaching is a lifeless process; there is very little interaction between the academic communities in the university and its colleges; and there is no opportunity or incentive for any innovations in teaching.

Though the modern Indian university was born as a purely affiliating and examining body, this model has changed very soon. There are no universities today that are purely affiliating with no teaching of its own. All universities are teaching universities with many among them also affiliating. In other words, there are quite a few universities that only teach with no colleges affiliated to them. We shall now turn our attention to this model.

Unitary Universities

These are of relatively recent origin in India; they are modelled after the European universities or their more contemporary counterparts in the United States. They are essentially teaching campuses where generally post-graduate studies and research programmes are offered; in many cases, they also offer undergraduate programmes. They control all aspects of curriculum transaction, including curriculum planning, teaching and examinations. A typical unitary university comprises several schools or faculties, each of which in turn comprises several departments. The school, faculty and departments are not loose administrative units. They are more academic than administrative organs.

All the teachers are appointed by the university; and they have greater representation on the university bodies and serve much greater roles in shaping the academic decisions of the university. It is much easier in such universities to introduce innovative changes in terms of courses and other curricular and examination practices. It must, however, be admitted that although these universities have contributed significantly to the goal of attaining excellence, their response to the demand for access from a larger number of students has not been as impressive, often leading to the criticism that they tend to be elite institutions.

Federal universities

These universities do not affiliate colleges; instead, they have constituent colleges, whose administrative as well as academic functions are clearly the responsibility of the university. The university controls the design of courses, selection of teachers, and conduct of examinations in the constituent colleges. Teachers in the constituent colleges have greater representation on the university bodies in comparison with those in affiliated colleges. With the pressure of the number of colleges, this model has over a period time become ineffective. For example, Delhi University used to be a federal university, but now it has a more complicated structure with both constituent as well as affiliated colleges in addition to its post-graduate campuses.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Space is given below for your answers.

ii) Check your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

i) What is the major difference between Affiliating and Unitary University? (answer in about 40 words)

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ii) How do you categorize the Delhi University? (answer in about 40 words)

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5.3.2 Universities According to Roles/Functions

We shall now move from the structural patterns to the specialised/functional types among the universities in India.

Agricultural universities

Soon after independence, Indian policy makers recognised the need for modernisation of the agricultural sector. This essentially meant creating an infrastructure for preparation of trained professionals in the field and for generating new and vital technologies related to agriculture through research and development and for making this know-how accessible to farmers. Creation of agricultural universities was primarily to institutionalise the response to the demands on Indian higher education.

There are 27 Agricultural universities in India. Initially, the intention was to set up one Agricultural university in each major state. Later, some of the bigger states set up two or more such universities. Smaller states have now an Agricultural university set up by the central government for their common benefit. All these universities provide undergraduate, post-graduate and research programmes in agriculture and animal sciences. A significant contribution made by these universities is to take the outcomes of their research to the farms through large scale extension work. For example, research findings on new farm practices, high-yielding crop varieties, better seeds and plant protection systems, storage and preservation of crops, better marketing of farm products, etc. are immediately transferred to the farming communities through systematic training programmes. Most agricultural universities are single-campus institutions (some may have more than one campus), and most of them have large experimental farms for trials and testing of new crops and practices. In fact, a large part of the credit for transforming India from a food-deficit country to a food-exporting economy should go to these universities.

Technological/Medical universities

Universities teaching only engineering and technology subjects or medicine and allied professional areas are not new or peculiar to India. Such universities are found across Europe and the Americas. In India too, there are such universities in several states. But some of them are unique in that they have been established primarily to oversee the functioning of a number of affiliated colleges in engineering or medicine. With the establishment of such universities, all existing colleges offering education programmes in the concerned disciplines stand disaffiliated from their parent university, and affiliated to the newly set up technological or medical university.

The main reason for this initiative was the feeling that professional colleges often did not get the attention they deserved in dealing with serious issues of academic significance concerning curricular reforms, modernisation of laboratories, theory-practice integration in teaching, and improvements in the quality of the provision. Burdened as they were with the problems of a large number of colleges teaching arts, science and commerce, many among them very old with their teachers dominating the governing councils and academic bodies, the professional institutions felt neglected. The remedy was to detach them from their existing universities and bring them under the supervision of new universities that could address their concerns swiftly and without being overwhelmed by age-old theories and practices of conventional teaching. In several cases, the new professional universities were authorised by law to affiliate colleges located anywhere in the state in which the new university was established, irrespective of the fact that another university in the state had jurisdiction over those colleges by virtue of its territorial jurisdiction. Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka in the South pioneered this experiment.

Deemed universities

While discussing the evolution of modern university education in India during the 19th century, we mentioned that there were some institutions of higher education in India engaged in teaching and research in indigenous knowledge systems and practices. We had also occasion to mention that during the national freedom movement, a set of new institutions came up in several parts of the country to promote a national system of education as opposed to the colonial system that was transplanted from Britain. After India became independent, it became imperative that these institutions that did not form part of the university system till then were co-opted into the formal Indian higher education system. Since there was no legislative sanction for their establishment, a mechanism had to be devised to incorporate them into the formal structures of Indian higher education. So, when the University Grants Commission (UGC) was established in 1956 under an Act of Parliament, a provision was made in the legislation that empowered the Central Government to notify, on the recommendation of the UGC, any existing institution for higher education that was not a university established by law, as an institution deemed to be a university with all the privileges and benefits that formally established universities enjoy. The institutions notified under this provision (Section 3 of the UGC Act) came to be known as 'deemed universities'.

The UGC had prescribed rigorous conditions that an institution should fulfil to be notified as a deemed university. The claims of an institution are closely scrutinised by a Committee of experts to satisfy that the institution has made significant contributions to higher education and that it richly

deserved the status of a university and such a status, if conferred, would enrich the university system in the country. During the first two decades after this provision was made, just about 18 institutions were conferred this status. Among this category of institutions in India are the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore, the Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS), Pilani and the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai, all of which are centres of excellence in their fields of study and research.

In the last two decades, the situation changed dramatically. Several colleges, especially those established as self-financing institutions in professional fields, wanted to break away from the conventional university regime. Under pressure, the UGC and the Central Government liberalised the procedures and a very large number of colleges and other institutions were conferred the 'deemed to be university' status. The number of this category of institutions rose to 130 by 2009. Many among them that were privately managed exploited their status and indulged in malpractices of one kind or another. Many of them that promised excellent infrastructure and high quality faculty failed to deliver on their promises; some of them collected heavy donations/capitation fees to build infrastructure but failed to make the necessary investments; and some were there merely on the basis of their clout with the political establishment. A recent assessment found that as many as 44 such deemed universities did not deserve to be universities and were told that their status would be withdrawn. These institutions have approached the Court and their case is still under adjudication (2010). The lesson that one has to learn from this experience is that political pressure and patronage can play havoc with well entrenched systems and destroy reputations painstakingly built over decades unless adequate checks and balances are built in as correctives within systems.

Institutions of National Importance

You will recall that while discussing the role of the central government in the previous unit, we have drawn your attention to the constitutional dispensation in education that divided the roles and responsibilities between the central and state governments. We had mentioned that except to a limited but potentially significant extent, the primary responsibility for education was that of the states. Only the states could establish universities; the centre did not have the power to do so (this dispensation changed in 1977 after a constitutional amendment). However, the centre had the explicit responsibility under the constitution to establish and maintain institutions and facilities that were of national importance.

It was under this provision that the central government established under an Act of Parliament in the early 1950s the Institutes of Technology (IITs) as centres of excellence in engineering and technology education. To begin with, there were only five of them, all established in the 1950s and 1960s. Since the 1990s, several new IITs were established in different parts of the country and presently (2009), there are 16 Institutes of Technology. These institutions have established a global reputation and their graduates have found leading positions in high-value markets in the developed world. Admission to these institutions is through a national level common admission test in which over 150,000 aspirants take part for about 3000 places. They also offer Masters and Ph.D programmes.

Similar institutions were established in medical education and research; the All India Institute of Medical Science in Delhi and the Post-Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research in Chandigarh. Another major

institution in this category is the Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata. More such institutions were added in this category in later years; presently, there are 12 of them. Parliament must legislate to create an institution of national importance and, therefore, there is no possibility of this type of institutions proliferating under any pressure. Such institutions when set up are assured of full financial support from the central government and they always maintain high quality in education and research.

Other Institutions

This discussion will not be complete without the mention of a unique category of institutions that do not fall in any of the types mentioned in the previous sections. They are the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), the initial two of which were set up in the early 1960s. This was a joint initiative of the central government and the industry. The Ford Foundation provided the initial support to secure collaboration with well established management schools in the USA. These institutes were set up in Ahmedabad and Kolkata as registered societies to offer education and training in the professional field of management. These institutes do not award degrees; in fact, they have no legislative sanction to do so. Their programmes are known as the post-graduate Diploma in Management (recognised as equivalent to MBA) and the Fellowship of the Institute of Management (equivalent to Ph.D). Two more institutes were established later, one in Bangalore in 1972 and another in Lucknow some twelve years later. More recently, three more IIMs were set up in Kozhikode (Kerala), Indore (Madhya Pradesh) and Shillong (Meghalaya). Seven more are in the pipeline.

From its inception, these institutes have gained tremendous popularity and their graduates are in great demand not just in India but across the world. Multinational companies visit their campuses in the third semester of their four-semester programmes and offer them attractive remuneration packages. Presently, some 150,000 students sit in a common admission test for about 2000 or so places that these institutions offer. Most of them, except the new ones are self-supporting, and the levels of their fees are indeed very high. Students who cannot afford the high fees are provided student loans by banks and other financial institutions and repayments begin soon after the graduates find placement. The experience of these institutions testifies to the fact that degree giving powers are not a necessary precondition for success of a higher education institution; what matters is the relevance of the programmes and their quality.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Space is given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

What did you understand by the major issues related to Deemed Universities at this point of time? (answer in about 40 words)

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5.4 GOVERNANCE OF UNIVERSITIES

The experience of universities in India varies from university to university. The more important variables are their types, the length of time they have been in existence, and the governments that fund them. One thing that is common to all of them is that all of them have been set up under legislation, central or state, and that they are all intended to function as autonomous institutions. The institutions deemed to be universities do not have a uniform pattern and their governance structure varies from institution to institution.

Briefly stated, autonomy of a university is its freedom to organise and administer its affairs as a corporate body in accordance with the law by which it is established. The autonomous character of the university is reflected in its internal management, the freedom with which it can decide its policies and programmes, appoint its personnel, determine their relationship with one another and facilitate their smooth functioning with a view to realising their objectives. You will recall that we had occasion to discuss the issues concerning university autonomy in general in the previous block (unit 2), and noted how, and in what circumstances, this notion of autonomy is often compromised under one pretext or another. We shall not repeat them here.

A university exists primarily for its students and scholars and, through their work, for the society at large. It provides them learning opportunities in a variety of ways through teachers in the classrooms, books in the libraries and experimental facilities in the field or in the laboratories, opportunities for interaction with other students in seminars, tutorials, group projects or in numerous other forums and activities based in hostels, clubs and associations. An important source of learning is actual experience of social and environmental realities first hand, investigation of phenomena and situations and actual participation in activities of a creative and developmental nature. The universities should have facilities, structures, management, and above all, programmes available in sufficient variety so that each student can learn according to his/her inclination, aptitude and need. It is only then that the student can get the best out of the university and the nation its strength to sustain itself.

The concept of education and hence of educational institutions has undergone significant changes in recent years. Education is no longer just creation and dissemination of knowledge; it is also about social concerns and grappling with the problems of contemporary life outside the classrooms. Students and institutions have to get involved in study, work and services related to national development that have come to be known as the third dimension of education (apart from teaching and research). A classic example of this involvement in development initiatives is the extension activities carried by the agricultural universities in India that we mentioned earlier in this unit. Research and creative activities provide a deeply enriching learning experience that turns students into responsible citizens endowed with firm commitment, determination and the will to address the problems of the society of which they are a part. It is through this involvement that the university community pays back to the society handsome dividends on the investments that society makes in human development.

5.4.1 Constitution of Universities

Since the university is a creation of the legislature and legislation is generally the preserve of the government of the day, it is for the government to decide what all should go into the legislation when establishing a university. It is these provisions in the legislation that will ultimately determine the nature and extent of autonomy that a university will enjoy.

It needs to be emphasised again that autonomy is not a legal or constitutional concept; it is, as a Committee on Governance of Universities in India said in 1971, “an ethical and an academic concept”. This concept does not question the sovereignty of the legislature to make laws or to discuss and determine the nature and structure of universities, as well as their rights and obligations. University autonomy does not suggest that universities are a state within a state, and a law unto themselves. The university cannot claim autonomy as a privilege, but as a condition necessary for it to discharge its duties and obligations. Two conditions on which university autonomy are predicated are; (i) autonomy within the university, and (ii) autonomy in relation to agencies and authorities external to it, particularly, the government.

Much will depend on how the decision-making bodies of the university are constituted, and what their composition is. At this point, it is important to remember a major, and perhaps, a unique feature of the functions associated with the management of universities. You will recall that in block 1, while discussing the functions and processes involved in the management of universities, we had drawn attention to a number of components. If you take a close look at those components, you will see that they fall into two categories, namely, (i) functions and processes associated with the administration of the institution, and (ii) the teaching-learning functions and their processes. While the first category of functions (which include the management and administration of personnel, finance, infrastructure), the second category is all in the realm of academic management (curriculum design, instructional system, teaching, student assessment). This latter category of functions does not always lend itself to conventional styles and methods of management.

These two distinctive types of management functions are reflected in the governance structure of universities. Every university has two important decision-making bodies. The Executive Council (Board of Management or Syndicate) is the principal executive body dealing with all the functions of the first category, and the Academic Council (in some cases called the Senate) is the principal academic body, taking all the decisions in areas falling within the second category. This duality in the decision-making processes is the unique feature of university management.

It does not follow that the broad areas of concern assigned to these two bodies are mutually exclusive, and that there are no overlaps between them. Further, the decisions taken by one body may have implications for the other. For instance, if the Academic Council were to decide to launch an entirely new programme, the Executive Council will have to take decisions on the creation of new teaching positions, and provision of other infrastructure. On the other hand, if the Executive Council finds that due to shortage of resources, some of the current programmes need to be reviewed, the Academic Council will have to look at the issues. In other words, it is necessary for the health of the university that the two bodies function organically, with mutual respect and coordination though, in

practice, it is not unusual to see conflicts arising between the two. It is inherent in the nature of functions of the universities that there is always some tension between the academics and the administrators, sometimes also institutionalised in terms of the conflicts between Executive and Academic Councils. Normally, while prescribing the composition and functions of these two bodies, the legislation also takes care to specify the matters on which, and the manner in which, either body consults the other. However, since the execution of any decision requiring funds, people and facilities is in the domain of the Executive Council, this body is perceived to have an edge over the Academic Council in terms of power and authority.

With this understanding of a significant complexity in the structure and pattern of governance of universities, we shall now proceed to take a close look at the constitution of these bodies, the functions they perform and the powers they exercise.

5.4.2 The Executive Council

The Executive Council (also called the Board of Management or the Syndicate) is the authority that takes all executive decisions and implement them. All administrative and financial powers are exercised by this body. Generally the Executive Council consists of the Vice-Chancellor as its Chairman, a Pro-Vice-Chancellor, two Deans, three or four representatives of teachers, two or three representatives (generally Heads) of colleges or institutions affiliated to the university, three or four nominees of the government, and two or three members of the Senate who are external members. There could be minor variations in this broad pattern of composition from university to university. The significant point is that it has the majority of its members from within the university, and an adequate representation of interests from outside. The internal and external representation is generally in the ratio of 3:2 with the total membership ranging between 15 and 20.

The important functions of the Executive Council are:

- Making statutes and ordinances which govern and regulate the functioning of all sub-systems of the university;
- Control of the finances and properties;
- Management of personnel (recruitment, promotion, conditions of service, welfare);
- Supervision over the management of institutions/colleges affiliated to the university;
- Redressal of grievances of teachers, staff and students.

It should be noted however that the power of legislation (rule-making) in all academic matters can be exercised only after consulting the Academic Council and its views are obtained.

5.4.3 The Academic Council

The Academic Council is the principal academic authority of the university. All decisions on programmes, courses, teaching methods, student assessment systems, academic standards, creation of new departments, etc are within the purview of the Academic Council. However, as we have said in the previous section, the scheme of university management envisages a sharing of powers and authority between the Executive Council and the Academic Council, with the former enjoying a slight edge over the latter.

The Academic council is essentially a body comprising the academics of the university. It is chaired by the Vice-Chancellor and consists of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor(s), all Deans, all Heads of Departments, representatives of the Heads of affiliated institutions and colleges, and representatives of all categories of teachers both from the Departments as well as affiliated institutions, and in several cases, also of representatives of students. Depending upon the size and nature of the university, the Academic Council can be a body of 50-150 or more members. Where the number of teachers is large, representation is provided normally through the method of election, and where the number of teachers is small, a system of nomination or rotation is followed.

The important functions of the Academic Council are:

- Laying down the academic policies of the university;
- Supervision over the implementation of the academic policy and giving directions on methods of instruction, evaluation of research and improvements in academic standards;
- Inter-faculty coordination for joint projects, programmes, etc;
- Recommending statutes/ordinances concerning academic matters like establishment of departments, laboratories, research centres, committees for admission and examinations, qualification of teachers, award of degrees, diplomas and other qualifications, conduct of examinations, institution of scholarships, student fees, etc.

Generally, the universities will also have a set of academic regulations that provide for procedures to be followed in various matters like admission, examination, declaration of results, etc. These regulations are also framed by the Academic Council. To the extent that statutes, ordinances and regulations are internal legislations, they require the approval of the Executive Council.

5.4.4 Faculty/Schools

As knowledge expands, and the number of disciplines and specialisations within them multiply, it becomes difficult for large bodies like the Academic Council to usefully devote attention to all the academic problems and concerns of all the disciplines. As a measure of decentralisation of the academic decision-making processes, most universities have constituted faculties or schools to take care of these problems leaving the Academic Council with the larger issue of broad supervision. Faculties/Schools generally comprise related or cognate departments and subjects, and function with a broad measure of autonomy.

Usually, a Faculty/School consists of the disciplines or subjects assigned to it by the Academic Council and consists of the Dean, all Professors in the Faculty, all Heads of Departments, representatives of different categories of teachers (Associate Professors and Assistant Professors), representatives of teachers from other faculties, and a small number of external experts.

The major functions of the Faculty/School are:

- Coordination of teaching and research in the departments assigned to the Faculty;
- Promotion of inter-disciplinary teaching and research;

- Prescribing courses of study and their syllabi;
- Appointment of Boards of Studies and Committees for undertaking research projects;
- Recommending the scheme of examinations and the methods of assessment of student performance.

The Faculties consisting of the members mentioned above generally function as the Boards of Studies in the concerned disciplines. Wherever new programmes and courses are proposed, the recommendations of the Faculty/School go to the Academic Council for approval/ratification. In that sense, the Faculty/School should be considered as a sub-system of the Academic Council with no independent authority or power of its own.

Check Your Progress 3

Note: i) Space is given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

What conflicts do you visualize in the functioning of the Executive Council and Academic Council? (answer in about 40 words)

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5.4.5 The Court (Senate)

The structure of governance described above is the pattern that has emerged in the last four decades or so in India. Prior to that, most universities had a Court (for Central Universities) and Senate (for State universities). This body was the supreme authority of a university. It worked in the older days, but with the growing complexity in the functioning of universities, there was a review and reformulation of the composition, powers and functions of this body.

Traditionally, the Court/Senate consisted of a cross section of the academic community (teachers, administrators and students) and representatives of different sections of the society outside the university (legislators, civil society, representatives of business/industry, the learned professions, former students, and so on). All decisions taken by various organs of the university were subject to ratification by this body; it could also disapprove their decisions that could cause considerable tension within the university community. Over a period of time, this practice became difficult to follow as Court's ratification of all decisions could not be taken for granted. Where the Courts disapproved the decisions, friction followed and the smooth functioning of the university became impossible.

Nevertheless, the significance of such a body, consisting as it does of a cross section of the larger society and members of the university community, was not lost sight of. After all, a university existed for the society, and the needs, requirements and aspirations of that society should find fulfilment from the activities of the university. A body like the Court (Senate) did precisely that: on the one hand, it reflected the society's expectations through the members representing the larger society, and, on the other, it provided a window of opportunity to the university community to inform the general

society about its policies, programmes and problems. This function of building bridges, of reviewing programmes and policies on the basis of informed views and making them responsive to social needs was considered a vital for the management of the university.

In recognition of this role, the Court (Senate) in later legislations was designated as a 'deliberative' body reviewing policies and programmes, making suggestions for improvements and development, and to express views on the overall performance of the university on the basis of its annual performance reports. With this major change in its powers and functions, the Court (Senate) continues to be a body provided in the Acts of most universities in India. Their composition, as indicated above, also remains more or less unchanged.

With this change in the functions and powers of the Court (Senate), it is no more saddled with the burden of having to over-rule decisions of the university. For that reason, some of the more recent legislations have altogether dispensed with the provisions to constitute a Court (Senate) for universities established under them.

5.4.6 Finance Committee

All universities have Finance Committees which prepare the budget, set the ceilings of expenditure and manage the university finances. It decides on investments of funds that may not be required for immediate expenditure, considers and recommends purchase of equipment and stores, construction of buildings, considers and makes recommendations on annual accounts, and so on. The Finance committee of a university is not an independent decision-making body; its primary role is to advise and make recommendations on all financial matters for consideration by the Executive Council which alone can make decisions on them. Some Acts provide that certain matters that involve continuing financial commitments like creation of new positions and revision of pay scales should not be considered by the Executive Council unless the Finance Committee has considered them in the first place, and made its recommendations.

The Finance Committee is chaired by the Vice-Chancellor. But its most important members are the nominees (mostly officers) of the government that provides the finances. There are, in addition, one or two members of the Executive Council and one or two external members on the Finance Committee. In actual practice, however, the nominees of the funding agencies play a dominant role in the proceedings of the Finance Committee.

5.4.7 Other Models of Governance

What we have discussed so far is the pattern of governance that prevails in Indian universities at present. This pattern could be said to belong to the liberal tradition that marked the governance of British universities. However, there are variations to this pattern, specially in respect of the professional universities as well as the Institutions of National Importance. For example, the pattern of governance of the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) which are Institutions of National Importance is as follows:

- The Board of Governors is responsible for the general superintendence, direction and control of the affairs of each IIT. It consists of:
- The Chairman to be nominated by the Visitor;

- The Director ex-officio;
- One person from among technologists or industrialists of repute to be nominated by the government of each of the states comprising the zone in which the institute is located;
- Four persons having special knowledge or practical experience in engineering or science education to be nominated by the Council of IITs;
- Two Professors of the Institute, to be nominated by the Senate (Academic Council).

A Council of IITs, chaired by the Union Minister in charge of higher technical education, and consisting of the Chairmen and Directors of all IITs and a few experts in science and technology education decides the general policies concerning the procedures for admission of students, recruitment of teachers and their service conditions and similar other common concerns.

Interestingly, the Chief Executive (Director) is not the Chairman of the managing body as in the universities where the Vice-Chancellor is also the Chairman of the Executive Council.

Another significant feature of the composition of the Board of Governors is that unlike in universities, it does not have members of political parties and bureaucrats representing the government. In the absence of power brokers within the Board discussions can and do take place in an objective and professional manner.

Further, in the university system, an aggrieved person has practically no court of appeal; the Vice-Chancellor who has made a decision is unlikely to let the issue be discussed freely in a meeting that he/she chairs. In the IIT system, the Board acts as an effective channel to get any grievance against the Director discussed.

One of the administrative innovations in the IIT system is the creation of the posts of functional deans such as Dean of Academic Affairs, Research and Development, Student Affairs, etc. in contrast to faculty-based deanships prevalent in the universities. It has helped to promote interdisciplinary efforts and effective management through better coordination.

The agricultural universities in India also have a somewhat different structure. They have Boards of Management and no Courts (Senates). They are involved in major extension activities and therefore have significantly larger association with the local communities in their work and management.

Check Your Progress 4

Note: i) Space is given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

What are the major differences you have observed in the governance of IITs to that of the Universities? (answer in about 40 words)

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5.5 THE PEOPLE WHO MANAGE THE UNIVERSITIES

In the previous sections, we have looked at the corporate structure of the university, and the powers and functions of its decision-making bodies. By their very nature, these bodies cannot be expected to run the day-to-day working of the university and to remain responsible and accountable for all that they do. This responsibility vests with the officers of the university. We shall now consider who these people are, how they are appointed and what functions they perform in the management of the university.

5.5.1 The Visitor/Chancellor

We have seen in the previous unit that the state performs a broad supervisory function over the universities it has set up. However, in the exercise of this supervisory function, an effort is made to distance the political executive from the university management. This objective is achieved by vesting the supervisory function with the Head of State, President of India in the case of Central Universities and Governors of States in the case of state universities. The university legislations make these provisions.

The Visitor/Chancellor performs the following functions:

- Appointment of the Vice-Chancellor;
- Nomination of the specified number of members on the Executive Council/Syndicate;
- Approval/disapproval of statutes and ordinances, including amendments to them;
- Institution of inquiries into mismanagement, if any;
- Adjudication of appeals against the decision of the university which are perceived to be in violation of the university law.

These functions are vested in an authority outside the university to ensure objectivity and fairness in their performance. Distancing the political executive from the processes associated with the performance of these functions strengthens this view. Nevertheless, the fact that, according to the Indian constitution, the Head of State has to perform his/her functions on the advice of the Council of Ministers, makes this distance more symbolic than real. At any rate, the Visitor - Chancellor cannot be conceived as officers of the university in the sense that they belong to the category of people who manage the universities. Then, who are the real managers? We shall now turn to them.

5.5.2 The Chancellor

The Central universities have a statutory office of Chancellor who is the Head of the University. An eminent person in public life is appointed to this office by the Visitor on the recommendation of the Executive Council. He/she presides over the meetings of the Court and the convocations of the university, and does not perform any other functions or exercise any power.

The state universities do not have a corresponding statutory office. The Governor, who is the Chancellor, also performs these roles. To that extent, he/she is deemed to be an officer of the university. This duality in the role of the Chancellor's office in state universities has often caused considerable ambiguity and confusion.

5.5.3 The Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor is the principal administrative and academic head (Chief Executive Officer) of the university. He/she is normally a scholar-administrator, and is the keeper of the university's conscience, and committed to the university's pursuit of scholarship and of truth. He/she has a crucial role to play in the successful functioning of the university. The success with which a university is able to function effectively and efficiently in the fulfilment of its mission depends largely on him/her. The term of appointment of a Vice-Chancellor of a central university is five years; in state universities, it is generally three years, and in some cases, four years. It is seldom that a Vice-Chancellor gets a second term. The main functions of a Vice-Chancellor are the following:

- The Vice-Chancellor is ex-officio the Chairman of the Executive Council (Syndicate or Board of Management) and the Academic Council as well as the Finance Committee and other statutory bodies like the Planning Board and Selection Committees;
- As the Chief Executive, he/she is responsible for ensuring that the university functions in accordance with the provisions of the Acts, statutes, ordinances and regulations;
- He/she is responsible for ensuring discipline among teachers, staff and students;
- In an emergency, he/she can exercise any power of any authority and report the matter to the authority concerned for ratification of the action/decision;
- He/she can delegate his/her powers to other officers.

The Vice-Chancellors of Indian universities are appointed by the Visitor/Chancellor from a panel of names recommended by a committee of eminent persons specially constituted for the purpose. These committees normally have three members – two nominated by the Executive Council, and one by the Visitor/Chancellor. The committee recommends a panel of three or more persons from whom the Visitor/Chancellor selects one. Generally, the person to be appointed is recommended by the Government to the Visitor/Chancellor.

5.5.4 The Pro-Vice-Chancellor/Rector

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor/Rector is the second level executive officer in a university, who is appointed by the Executive council on the recommendation of the Vice-Chancellor. In most cases, he/she is selected from among the senior Professors of the university though appointments from outside is also possible. He/she exercises the powers and performs the duties that are prescribed by the university or are delegated by the Vice-Chancellor.

The term of office of the PVC/Rector is generally laid down by the statutes; it is normally three or five years, and, in any case, is co-terminus with the office of the Vice-Chancellor.

The PVC/Rector is expected to share the responsibilities of the Vice-Chancellor in the areas assigned to him/her. He/she also officiates for the Vice-Chancellor when the latter is away from the headquarters on official business or on leave. Hence, the prime function of the PVC/Rector is a kind of partnership with the Vice-Chancellor to ensure the effective functioning of the university.

5.5.5 The Deans

Dean of the faculty is the Head of a faculty and is responsible to the Vice-Chancellor for the organisation of the teaching and research programmes as well as maintenance of the standards of teaching, research and extension functions in the faculty that comprises several Departments. A Dean is normally appointed from among the Professors in the Departments that comprise the faculty for a period of 2-3 years through a system of rotation according to seniority or any other means.

5.5.6 The Registrar

The position of Registrar who is the head of the administrative wing of the university is a key position. He/she leads the university's civil service, is the custodian of all university records, and represents the university in all its dealings with the outside world. He/she is ex-officio the Secretary of all statutory bodies of the university, issues notices for their meetings, prepares the agenda and also the minutes of their meetings. These key functions of the Registrar enable him/her to occupy a position of pre-eminence in the university management. He/she is privy to all decisions taken at the meetings of various bodies, and has easy and quick access to all records which together make him/her the most knowledgeable person as far as the university management is concerned. For that reason, he/she is in a position to render useful advice to the Vice-Chancellor and members of various authorities.

The Registrar is normally appointed by the Executive Council (Syndicate) on the recommendation of a Selection Committee presided over by the Vice-Chancellor. Once appointed, he/she holds office till retirement. However, in recent times, appointment to this office is also being made for short tenures of 5 years at a time. Although this method of appointment continues to be in vogue in several universities, the state governments, in some cases, have taken over the responsibility for appointment of Registrar. Where, in a state, there are several universities, a system of transfer of Registrars from one university to another is also in vogue.

5.5.7 The Finance Officer

The Finance Officer is the manager of the university's fund and properties. The finance management practices in the universities in India were traditionally confined to judiciously managing the expenditure since the largest single source of income was the grants given by the governments (almost 90-95% of the total income). This required proper preparation of the budget, setting the ceiling for every item of expenditure, and ensuring that the expenditure did not go beyond the ceilings so set. The pre-occupation of university finance departments was more with accounting and monitoring the observance of the procedures than with mobilising resources and managing the finances.

Since the Finance Officer is a key functionary in university management, and is responsible mainly for managing government funds, an officer from the government used to be appointed on deputation to this position by the universities. It also helped universities maintain close liaison with the government departments in securing timely release of funds, and at times, getting a more sympathetic ear to the demands of the universities for more funds. In recent times, some state governments take it upon themselves to appoint the Finance Officer. The finance officers so appointed are not

employees of the university, and are outside its disciplinary jurisdiction, thus creating new power centres within universities. Though this practice amounted to the university's loss of freedom to choose its Finance Officer, given the dependence on the state for funds, it has to go by the wishes of the governments.

Check Your Progress 5

- Note:** i) Space is given below for your answer.
ii) Check your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

Why distancing the political executive from university management is more symbolic than real? (answer in about 40 words)

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5.6 THE MANAGEMENT OF COLLEGES

While discussing the Indian higher education system, we have repeatedly made references to “colleges”, which constitute over 98% of the system in terms of the number of institutions, and over 80% in terms of enrolment. Any discussion on the management of higher education will not be complete unless one looks also at the management of these colleges.

College education started in the middle ages when the then Muslim rulers set up “Madrasas” for the study of history, philosophy, Arabic and Persian. Towards the end of the 17th century, the British rulers set up more such institutions for the study of English language, grammar, law, geometry, arithmetic and also Sanskrit language. By the middle of the 18th century, many more institutions came up for teaching western education, especially European literature and science. Through the 18th and 19th centuries, several Christian missions founded a number of institutions, mainly to train teachers to begin with, and later to teach European literature, philosophy and science. By the mid-19th century, as we have noted, there were a number of colleges in India offering education in a variety of disciplines and subjects associated with western education along with a number of what was then known as the “oriental colleges”.

One of the major issues that prompted the establishment of universities in India was the need to encourage a regular and liberal course of education by conferring academic degrees as evidence of attainment in different branches of science and arts. The universities were established on the London University model, conferring degrees upon persons coming from any affiliated institution, has pursued a regular course of study for a given time and has passed the prescribed examination. This was the original affiliating university model in which all teaching was conducted at colleges. We have already discussed the working of this model and therefore we shall move straightaway to look at the management of these colleges.

5.6.1 Types of Colleges

In the previous unit, we have had a brief discussion on the relationship between the state governments and the colleges. We had mentioned then that colleges were mainly established by the governments or private trusts or societies. We shall now elaborate on these types.

A government college is one directly established and run by a state government. It functions like any other government department. The expenditure of the college is met directly by the government, through appropriations voted by the legislature; all the teachers and staff are government employees. All their terms and conditions of service are the same as are applicable to the civil service (recruitment, promotion, retirement and staff benefits). Perhaps, one major departure from the conditions of service of civil servants is that teachers in government colleges have vacations.

A private college is established by a Trust or Society registered under the relevant laws of the country. This registration is essential to give the college a legal status. The management of the college then vests in the Trustees, or in the governing body of the society. The Trust Deed or the Memorandum of Association of the Society would provide for the composition of the Board of Trustees or the Governing Body, and the manner of administering the college and its properties. The promoters of the Trust or Society make the initial investments on land, buildings, equipment and staff. In the early stages of expansion of higher education in India, many among these colleges sought and secured financial support from state governments for their maintenance. State governments framed grant-in-aid codes or made legislations to regulate the regime of grants as in many cases, the states' share of expenditure on many of these private colleges went as high as 80-90% of the total revenue expenditure.

As we noted earlier, there has been a significant change in this pattern of financing private colleges. As the demand for higher education places, especially in professional education programmes (engineering, medical and education), rose rapidly and the states found that they could not respond fully to meet these demands, a new category of private institutions were permitted. These are the self-financing colleges that function with no state support and meeting their expenditure from full cost recoveries. It should, however, be noted that these colleges are not allowed to make any profits as education in India is not considered a commercial activity. We have discussed the implications of this approach elsewhere and shall not repeat it here.

There is another category of colleges called the university colleges. These are established and maintained by the universities themselves either on their own campuses or elsewhere in their jurisdiction. Generally, universities do not, on their own, establish colleges; when a new university is established, the state governments transfer the management of certain colleges maintained by them in its jurisdiction to the university. Such an arrangement ensures that a new university has well established infrastructure and teaching programmes from the very beginning and that fresh investments can be minimised on creating new facilities. With the transfer of the management to the university, the colleges become integral parts of the university concerned and all their funding comes from the university. Such an arrangement helps some well known colleges to maintain their identity. In some cases, they are also known as constituent colleges.

5.6.2 Colleges and the Universities

More than a century and a half back, the British said that the purpose of establishing universities in India was to encourage education in European languages and science by conferring degrees on those who have shown evidence of having pursued a course of study in an affiliated institution and has passed the prescribed examination. It is unfortunate that this notion of passing an examination and securing a degree continues to dominate the psyche of many Indian students who enrol in colleges. It is this relationship between the university and the college that is known as 'affiliation'.

What are the main features of this affiliation? Most Indian universities require the fulfilment of the following conditions:

- The college should have a legal status (the management should be by a government or a registered Trust or Society);
- It should be providing instruction for courses of study prescribed by the university;
- It should have the infrastructure and staff to organise and conduct teaching according to the standards prescribed by the university;
- Teachers should have qualifications laid down by the university;
- The management should undertake to meet all the expenditure required for the maintenance of the college.

There could be a long list of these conditions going into minute details of several requirements. It is the fulfilment of these requirements that earns for the college the status of affiliation. And once affiliated, all that the college has to do is to teach the courses prescribed by the university according to the syllabi set by it. After completing the courses prescribed by the university, the college can present the students at the university-held examinations, and those who qualify will get the degree.

We have already said that in this scheme, teachers in colleges have no initiative left to them to decide what to teach and how. This situation often leads to lack of enthusiasm in teaching and indifferent teacher-student interaction. These in turn have serious consequences for the quality of education.

5.6.3 Autonomous Colleges

In order to remedy some of the inadequacies of the affiliating system that we just mentioned, a proposal to convert several colleges into autonomous institutions was seriously canvassed in the National Policy on Education 1986. The substance of this proposal was a transformation of the existing university-college relationship in which colleges could take up a lot more initiative while maintaining their affiliated status. The proposal involved:

- The university concerned declares selected colleges as autonomous colleges after satisfying itself about the record of its performance, its commitment to quality, teachers' qualifications and attainments, the quality of management and its capacity to raise resources.
- On such declaration, the college would be free to prescribe its own courses of study, design the curricula, determine the teaching methods and practices, hold its own examinations and decide its own student assessment systems.
- The university concerned will award the degrees.

The response to this scheme was less than enthusiastic. Though it was envisaged that about 500 colleges would become autonomous during the period up to 1990 (there were over 5700 colleges then), the figure has reached the 150 mark only at the end of 1999 (the total number of colleges had gone up to nearly 10,000 by then). In the next ten years another 100 colleges became autonomous but the total number of colleges had gone up to over 20,000. It is interesting to observe that of the 250 autonomous colleges in the country, about one-third are in a single state, namely, Tamil Nadu. What are the reasons for this tardy progress? There are several reasons:

- College teachers see the proposal as a device to break their collective strength by separating the managements of several colleges from the existing unified management structure of the affiliating university;
- Teachers and employees feel that the management of colleges (government and private) will become arbitrary as they will go out of the governing discipline of the university;
- Teachers apprehend an increase in their workload with no corresponding benefits;
- Students fear that their load will increase and they will have more to learn;
- Innovative assessment systems introduced by the autonomous colleges could be more demanding for the students as against the prevailing year-end examinations;
- Some universities are reluctant to lose their more prestigious institutions from their hold.

Whatever the reasons, the fact remains that a necessary and innovative reform which would have brought the college teachers centre stage in higher education is languishing for want of support from those for whom it was designed and developed.

5.6.4 Management of Colleges

We will conclude this discussion with a brief mention of the system of management of colleges in India. We mentioned earlier that colleges are established by governments, universities or private Trusts or Societies. We also noted that each college has to be a distinct legal entity. While the government and university colleges are managed by the parent governments or universities, it is the management of the private colleges that we shall focus on.

The UGC has prescribed guidelines for universities for granting affiliation to colleges. These guidelines require that each college should satisfy a range of requirements varying from the provision of adequate infrastructure (land, buildings, teachers and staff, books and equipment, and so on) to its management structure. The pattern of management of colleges other than those managed by governments and universities suggested in the guidelines is:

- It should be managed by a Society or Trust registered under the Societies Act or the Trust Act;
- It should have a managing body with its composition, powers and functions specified in the Memorandum of Association or Trust Deed;

- It should have the powers to raise resources, own properties, engage people and should remain accountable to the university that grants affiliation.

While the Society or Trust and the managing body created by it are the legal owners of the institution, its day-to-day management will be in the hands of people who run the college. They are;

- A Principal who is the head of the college. The method of his appointment, the qualifications required of a person to be appointed as Principal, the broad terms and conditions of his appointment, etc have to be specified with the approval of the university. Generally, the appointment is made on the recommendation of a selection committee constituted in accordance with the pattern prescribed by the university, and with its approval.
- There could be one or more Vice-Principals to assist the Principal appointed from among the senior teachers of the college.
- An administrative officer who would be the administrative head of the university and personnel required for the college administration and maintenance of accounts, etc

Check Your Progress 6

Note: i) Space is given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answer with the one given at the end of the unit.

What are the key functions of an autonomous college which distinguishes to that of a college affiliated to a university? (answer in about 40 words)

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5.7 LET US SUM UP

This unit dealt with, in some detail, the micro-management of higher education at the institutional level. We have considered the organisational structure of universities and colleges in India, their governing patterns and management structures and also the relationships among various constituents of the large structures. These discussions have been presented to provide with a deeper understanding of the institutional structures on the one hand, and the people who manage the institutions, on the other. We hope that this presentation would have given you a better appreciation of the principles and values that constitute the culture of higher education management. The last two units of this block would have provided you some insights into the making of that culture which distinguish the management of education from the profession of managing business and industry.

5.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS: POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Check Your Progress 1

- i) To start with affiliating university issues was only examining body, without teaching of its own. Very soon affiliating universities started teaching on the campuses along with affiliating colleges in their jurisdiction. Unitary universities do not affiliate colleges, rather they teach PG concern and offer research programme on campuses.
- ii) The University of Delhi is basically a Federal University with PG campuses and constituent colleges in large number. Over a period of time the structure got complicated with affiliated colleges in addition to constituent colleges.

Check Your Progress 2

The UGC had prescribed rigorous criteria and process for declaring any institution as a deemed university. This was followed for initial two decades of the provision was made. However the situation changed in the last two decades, with emergence of self-financing professional institutions, led to the dilution of criteria and process by UGC and the GOI. The number of deemed universities rose to 130 by 2009; whose number was 18 in the initial two decades of the scheme; itself speaks the quality of the deemed universities and recent controversies surrounded by them.

Check Your Progress 3

Though the administrative and financial decisions with the Executive Council (E.C.), when it comes to Academic matters the E.C. has to consult before taking any major decisions. If E.C. doesn't do then that may lead to conflict between the two learning making authorities which is not good for university's functioning.

Check Your Progress 4

The first major difference is the Vice-Chancellor is the Chair of Executive Council, whereas Board of Governors of IIT is Chaired by a person nominated by the Visitor of the IIT. The other main differences unlike in the Universities Board of Governors of IIT doesn't have member of political parties and bureaucrats representing the government, which provides scope for discussion in an objective manner.

Check Your Progress 5

Visitor/Chancellors functions from outside the University brings in objectivity and fairness, and thus distancing the political executive from University manages it. However, according to the Constitution Visitor/Chancellor has to function on the advice of the Council of Ministers makes the distancing political executive is more.

Check Your Progress 6

The important functions of an autonomous college is – prescribe its own courses of study, design the curricula, decide the teaching methods and practices and decide its own student assessment systems and conduct its own examinations. These functions distinguish autonomous college to that of a general college.

5.9 REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS

(Given below are the titles which have been used to prepare this Block. It is NOT suggested that you should go looking for these books to study them in original. If you can manage, you may look for a few titles, but they are not obligatory for completing the course successfully.)

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