

Best Practices in Higher Education in India:  
**“A STUDY OF BEST PRACTICES IN AFFILIATING SYSTEM IN  
 UNIVERSITY OF MUMBAI”**

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**Introduction :**

Higher Education System in India is being planned by the Ministry of Human Resource Development of central government and the ministry of department of higher education of the respective state governments. And it is regulated through various regulatory bodies like University Grants Commission (UGC) & Affiliating Universities and educational policies are practically implemented by the colleges affiliated to Universities. The affiliating Universities seems to be the apex bodies of affiliated colleges and they, universities are expected to confine with post graduate teaching and advanced research work in addition to regulate the affiliated colleges. However, the affiliating universities are practically more busy in the process of regulating work and in affiliation work of the affiliated colleges and very less time is left out for the universities for quality research work and post graduation teaching. Consequently this resulted in burdening administrative work both the affiliating university and the affiliated colleges real-world situations.

The system of affiliation originally was introduced long back when number of colleges was small and the basic objective of affiliation was to help, guide and mentor the colleges for effective implementation of educational policies and make higher education worth creating human resource.

However the system of affiliation has become today so monotonous and has no relevance with making educational standards worth for developing employable graduates. The affiliated colleges have become more dependent on the affiliating university even for a small aspect of academic evaluation of students. The number of affiliated colleges in each university has increased to the extent that the affiliating universities have become overburdened with the regulatory work only. The University of Mumbai was regulating 749 affiliated colleges during the year 2014-15 and this was the third largest number of affiliated colleges in the State of Maharashtra

The Universities in India are categorized by the Ministry of human resource development in four categories. One category is Central Universities which are less in number (47) and take away around 60 percent of the UGC grants per year. Second category is State Universities which are also can be known as affiliating universities and are large in number (350) which are funded by the state government and UGC, third category of university is Deemed-to-be Universities with third largest number (123) and many of them are self financed, around 22 of them get funding from the UGC and fourth category of university is private universities which are second largest in number (239) funded and managed by the private trusts or societies. There

are around 74 institutes in operation and known as Institutes of National Importance and are autonomous in nature and working with government funding and own funding. State Universities are large in number and follow the affiliating system for the colleges. The Colleges happens to be the centres of higher education which are involved in implementation of the educational plans and policies of the government and policies of apex bodies like UGC, University. Thus the Role and functioning of the colleges is equally important rather much more important than the role of affiliating universities in making higher education system more effective and qualitative oriented. The colleges in Indian higher education system are categorized as government colleges which are very few in number and managed by the government organizations, privately managed colleges also known as affiliated colleges which are large in number and university colleges which are managed by the universities. The colleges managed privately are either granted colleges or self financed (non-granted) colleges which are affiliated to some affiliating university. These colleges are large in number (40760) enrolling more than 70 percent of the total enrolment. Central government has introduced a new concept in XIIth plan called community colleges with full grant and presently around 157 community colleges are in operation in the country. The concept of community colleges is borrowed from developed countries like USA and these colleges are expected develop employability skills based on the requirement of local jobs market. As many as 40760 colleges of higher education were affiliated with either state universities or central universities during the year 2014-15. All the

affiliated colleges were confined with enrolling the students for mainly for undergraduate and post graduate programs of the affiliating university. Out of the total enrolment of 265.85 lakhs during the year 2014-15 around 240.00 lakhs enrolment was for undergraduate courses and 25.00 lakhs was for post graduate programs. Affiliated college enrolled around 88 percent of the total undergraduate programs and 71 percent of the total enrolment of post graduate programs during the academic year 2014-15. Thus affiliated colleges are the foundation of higher education system in India and quality education in affiliated colleges will lead to better quality education in higher education in the country. Affiliated colleges are being regulated by the affiliating universities in all respect right from admissions, eligibility, enrolment, examination, appointment of staff, affiliation, continuation of affiliation and so on. College administration has to spend lot of money, time and energy in just completing the formalities of the affiliating university which are repetitive in nature and time consuming. And many a times it is experienced that there is no direct correlation between completion of formalities of the affiliating university and the quality of education in the colleges. Affiliating universities due to many reasons are satisfied with colleges in completing formalities and not much bothered about the quality of education at college level. Affiliated colleges also give more importance for fulfilling the formalities of the affiliating university and quality of education is not taken care as it has to be. Therefore affiliating system of university should follow and adopt certain best practices which will help the affiliated colleges to follow the system with less efforts and least cost and

can give more importance to the quality of education at undergraduate level. An attempt is made in the present study how the affiliated colleges are facing various problems and experiencing various issues in getting first affiliation, in getting continuation of affiliation and in completing the various compliances of the affiliating university.

### Review Of Literature

Best practice in affiliating system is a subjective term and different experts have explained it in different way. Best practices are the methods or techniques that have been generally accepted as superior to any alternatives because they produce better results. Another meaning of best practices is the procedures that are accepted or prescribed as being correct or most effective. Best practices as per NAAC, quality enhancing, academic/administrative infrastructural strategies adopted by highly accredited institution of higher learning. However the common meaning of best practice it is a standard way of complying with legal or ethical requirements

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has specified certain eligibility criteria and regulations on affiliation of colleges by the university. As per the UGC Act 1956 Regulation 2009 rule 2.1 the term affiliation is defined as “affiliation together with its grammatical variations, includes, in relation to a college, recognition of such college by, association of such college with, and admission of such college to the privileges of, a university”

1. As per Prasad V. S. & Antony Stella, in the article Best Practices Benchmarking in Higher Education

for Quality Enhancement, it is traditionally used to justify budgets or obtaining more funding and little has been used to improve quality of higher education. Since the colleges during pre-liberalization period were funded by the government the affiliation system was in existence. Best practices in higher education as benchmarking of towards quality education. As per the authors, finding and implementing the Best Practices would lead to significant improvement in the quality of educational provisions. They have explained four basic characteristics for successful best practice and they are, Identification, Sustainability, Dissemination and Adaption of best practices.

2. Abolish affiliation system said by Jak Tareen, in daily 'The New Indian Express dated 29<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2011'. As per the writer three manor tumbling blocks are in attaining excellence in higher education. Affiliating system of colleges to universities is the third important bottleneck for the autonomy of the college and the writer is concerned about absence of world-class Indian university in International ranking. He compared Indian Universities with the universities of developed countries like United States of America, France and United Kingdom. The author has highlighted how the resources, financial and infrastructural, are concentrated with very few institutions of higher education. 20 central Universities who eat away more than 60 percent of the public funding have around 158000 students with more than 18,000 acres of land.

The system of affiliation of colleges to universities has become a problem to colleges to grow and has become the cause for unfair practices in higher

education. He suggested abolition of affiliating system and advised creation of college cluster multiple campus-universities by clustering 5-20 colleges with a voice-chancellor and administrative system. Quality assessment of the institution begins with tangibles (infrastructure) and followed by relevance and disciplined error free timely delivery of programs

3. Dr. Youghes Kumar Singh and Ms. Ruchika Nath in the book ' History of Indian Education System ' have highlighted the importance of colleges in higher education. Real teaching work is done by the colleges and the affiliating universities are more concerned about the administrative work. Hence colleges are more important in quality enhancement of higher education the need to be given autonomy and some relaxation in affiliating system. As per the authors the function of affiliating universities is to hold examinations in the colleges affiliated to them. The task of teaching is performed by the affiliated colleges. The university exercises administrative and academic control.

4. University affiliation system to undergo an overhaul, said Dr. Sam Pitroda, chairman of National Knowledge Commission Government of India in 2009. The commission suggested dismantling the current university affiliates colleges structure and advised new board to administer the colleges offering undergraduate courses. The main aim is to reduce the burden of university on administration, examinations etc. and to concentrate on Research and post graduate studies.

5. V. N. Rajshekharan Pillai, the past director of NAAC, delink colleges from affiliation system. In an article published in The Hindu Ness paper dated January, 5<sup>th</sup> 2002 he said affiliation system is suitable when number of students were less, University is busy in administration and colleges are more busy in waiting various schedules from the University. Hence good colleges should be allowed to work independently and be encouraged for quality higher education

6. The UGC guidelines for Autonomous Colleges during XIIth plan highlights that ' the only and better way to improve the quality of undergraduate education is to the link most of the colleges from the Affiliating Structure'. The guidelines further say that the affiliating system of the college with universities will be effective only when number of affiliated colleges is less. The affiliating universities in the present days finding difficult to regulate, attend the problems of individual affiliated colleges. Colleges are experiencing numbers of problems, inconveniences in fulfilling the various rules and regulation of the affiliating university.

7. Best Practices Regarding University – Affiliated Foundation Relationships, Advisory Task Force Report was prepared by the University of Texas System made recommendations on clear relationship between the university and affiliated foundation, preservation of mission alignment over time and periodically review assess and adapt with changing conditions. The universities and their affiliated foundations should work together to implement practices that increase transparency,

and the task force report has also recommended good governance practices.

8. As per K. Yatish Rajwat, “higher education has collapsed in India, we just don't know yet”. Thousands of Indian students every year go abroad for college education thinking that foreign education is better than college education in India. European Universities and even the European governments have been plans to accommodate more Indian students. Graduation degree in India is just a stepping stone for master's degree. Students spend time in Indian colleges for other than education. As per the private study done, only around 18 percent of the engineering graduates other than IITs/NITs are employable and only around 5 percent of other graduates are actually employable. Thus, concluded that college education is collapsed. This deteriorating quality of college education in India has created an opportunity for European universities to attract Indian students for college education.

9. As per Dr. Devis George in his article “Higher Education in India-Emerging Issues and Future prospects” the affiliating system in higher education has become more regulator rather than facilitator. Affiliating universities have become more harassing bodies than mentoring and guiding apex body. It is said that affiliating system has become over-regulated and under-governed. Affiliating system was introduced when the number of colleges was small and the university could regulate effectively the colleges from all aspects including academic standards. However the present affiliating system has been adversely affecting on

the academic development of colleges. The gives the university power to manipulate, put hurdles and creates more dependency of the colleges

### Objectives Of The Study

The system of affiliating the colleges to the university is useful to the colleges to certain extent like to maintain uniform standard of education among all the colleges affiliated to one university. But the affiliating system has created number of inconveniences for the affiliated colleges and making adverse impact on educational standard at college level. However the following the objectives of present study

1. To analyse and understand the inconveniences faced by the colleges due to present system of affiliation
2. To analyse and understand the problems of university in affiliating system
3. To make recommendations both to the affiliating university and affiliated colleges to minimize the inconveniences

### Methodology

The methodology followed for the present study is mainly based on secondary source of information. Due to advancement and development in information and communication technology (ICT) it is easy to get information. The type of data required for the study is available through authentic

secondary source of information hence information is collected from secondary source. The circulars, notifications and letters issued by the affiliating university to the affiliated colleges regarding continuation of affiliation, extension of affiliation, admission schedule, enrolment, eligibility, filling of examination forms, submission of internal marks, reevaluation of answer sheets, revised syllabus, submission of various types data to the university and to other government agencies and other related communication are used as source information.

However some information is also collected from primary source from the affiliated colleges based on the real problems colleges faced on day today administration during the past while fulfilling the university regulations like online submission of examination forms semesterwise, submission of admission forms, submission of enrolment list, filling marks of lower examinations, payment of various types of fees, contributions etc to the university. Personal experiences of the author about the problems faced by the colleges from university and university sections in the past also used during the study

### University Of Mumbai

The University of Mumbai is one those first and oldest universities established in 1857. The university had 749 affiliated colleges as on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014 with total enrolment more than 600000 students inclusive of all courses. Out the total affiliated colleges there were around 450 colleges in general education of Arts, Commerce and Science with enrolment of around 500000 students and the rest were involved in various other courses

like engineering & technology, management, and other specialized courses. The colleges having permanent affiliation were around 211 (around 28 percent of the total colleges) and remaining 538 colleges were having yearly affiliation. University of Mumbai was the third largest in the state of Maharashtra, in terms of number of affiliated colleges, after University of Pune, with 811 affiliated colleges as the largest number of affiliated colleges and Rashtra Sant Tukdoji Maharaj University, Nagpur with second largest affiliated colleges with 800 affiliated colleges, in the year 2013-14

Out of the total colleges affiliated to University of Mumbai, around 443 colleges (59%) did not have regular and eligible principals during the year 2013-14. The colleges without principal included, 29 granted and 414 colleges non-granted (self financed). One of the basic and solid reasons for not appointing the eligible principal in self financed (non-grant) college was for cost cutting. The non-grant colleges without principal were running both, traditional courses in Arts, Commerce and Science and professional like B. Com with Accounting & Finance, Banking, Insurance, I. T., Computer Science, B. M. S. and so on. Majority of these colleges were located in Mumbai Metropolitan City and its suburb areas

### Issues Of Affiliating System

#### 1) Admissions

Admissions for first year classes (entry point) of three years undergraduate

Post graduate programs for all faculties and for all subjects like Arts, Commerce & Science are through online registration. A common admission schedule was declared by the University initially for period of



16 days from 14<sup>th</sup> June to 30 June which extended till 30<sup>th</sup> of August 2016 due to administrative problems of the university. As per the admission schedule there were three rounds of admissions. All the affiliated colleges need to follow the admission schedule. Only few colleges from Mumbai city were able to complete their admission in first round only and they started their academic activities immediately. However majority colleges had to wait till third round to get students admitted which takes more than two – three weeks during this period no academic activities were started. There were two important issues, one loss of working days (teaching) during admission period and the second is waiting period for admission during which use of many more man days for completion of admission procedure as per the university guidelines

## 2) Enrolment

After completion of admission procedure from the candidate side lot of online work from college side is required to be done like inward of pre-admission registration form through college login, uploading of information, generating list of admitted students online, getting print out of list, getting print out of inward form for each student through college log in, verification of documents and attaching the documents with print out and submission of forms with list of students to the enrolment department of the university with stipulated enrolment fee within a stipulated date. If there is delay in filling online data due to internet problem, due to some technical problem and problem from students side the university charges fine to the colleges for late uploading of data on university link. And such fine

is additional cost to the college because such fine cannot be collected from the students. Even submission of enrolment proposal requires at least two to three visits to the enrolment section due to either miscommunication from the university or heavy work on a specific day.

## 3) Examination Forms

The university has introduced online filling of examination forms of majority courses for which university conducts the examinations, mainly final year of undergraduate programs and post graduate programs. For filling such online exam forms, the college has to complete certain prior online work through college log in, like update of marks of lower examinations, marks of all four semesters at undergraduate course, generating list of admitted students, generating examination form of each student, filling such generated examination form, uploading on the university link through college log in, generating the list of such students and getting print out of list with examination form, getting examination form verified from each student and submission of list and examination form to the university with prescribed examination fee within stipulated date declared by the university. If there is delay in such work due to technical problem the university charges late fee and super late fee to the colleges. Such late fee and super late fee becomes an addition cost burden on the college

## 4) Submission Of Documents

After completion of admission process and filling of examination forms, all the necessary papers like pre-admission registration print out, enrolment list,

examination forms, list of students etc. are to be submitted to the respective departments or sections of the university. These departments ask for certain papers like a letter of continuation of affiliation issued by the university, receipt of affiliation fees paid by the college, etc. But many a times the university doesn't issue such yearly affiliation letters to the college and the concerned section insists for such letters it shows that there is lack of proper coordination among the departments and one department doesn't listen to other department due to affiliated colleges face the problems

#### 5) Delay In Communication

University being affiliating and regulating authority keeps on changing various rules, regulations, revises syllabus but which many a times such changes are conveyed late to the affiliated college and some time few college don't receive such communication. In the absence of any clear information the affiliated colleges act as per prevailing rules and norms and after completion of the work by the college the university departments insist the colleges to follow the new rules. Such communication gap creates confusions among the affiliated colleges and needs additional time and resources for re-doing certain work as per changed norms of the university.

#### 6) Absence Of Good Governance

Good governance has to be basic prerequisite for transparent and efficient implement of educational policies and to make education system more

effective towards social development. However the present system of affiliation of colleges lacks in transparency in many areas like reports of Local Inquiry Committee (LIC) on visit to the colleges for continuation of affiliation, getting first affiliation for new colleges and new courses etc.

#### 7) Importance To Income Generation

In the present affiliation system, the affiliated colleges are made to work more on regulatory aspects and colleges only are doing more than 90 percent of the work of affiliation. A proposal for affiliation and continuation of affiliation is prepared by the college and is to be submitted to the university 6 hard copies for each course containing more than 80 pages for each course and each file for which colleges have to pay fees to the University for each proposal separately. Enrolment proposal is prepared by the college with document verification and to be submitted to the university with certain fee within certain date, examination forms for final year classes are filled by the college and to be submitted hard copies with examination fee within stipulated date and late fee is charged for delay in submission due to technical reason. Cost of conduction examinations is incurred by the college but still college has to pay to university 25 percent of exam fee collected from the learners. In addition to these fees each affiliated college has to contribute to the university around Rs 150 per student per year as various types of contributions. This shows that the affiliating university is more concerned about the activities of income generation from the affiliated colleges





**RECOMMENDATIONS :****1) Reduce Paper Work**

The University has introduced online filling of certain forms like examination form, pre-admission registration form, eligibility form, etc. but this system has increased the work and cost of the colleges and reduced the cost and work of the university. University should introduce a system where maximum work is done online without paper so that each college can save paper and stationary cost of Rs. 2500 to 3000 each year for the proposal on continuation of affiliation

**2) Reduce Cost Burden On Colleges**

The affiliated colleges in present system need to adhere with the regulations of the university, in which university regulates the fee to be charged by the college from the learners but on the other side university has been increasing various contributions to be paid by the college to the university. And university expects college must incur all the costs as per university norms. Particularly Non-grant colleges are facing lot of financial problems due the present norms of various types of contributions to be paid to the university

**3) Fee Revision**

Financial needs of non-grant (self finance) colleges are expected to be met from the income received from the learners in the form of fee. However, the university regulates the fee structure to be charged

to the learners by the college for each course and colleges are not allowed to charge fees more than the fee decided by the university. However, such regulated fee is not revised for many years (no fee revision since 2008-09 till date) by University of Mumbai, but university contribution is revised. University should allow freedom to the colleges to increase fee to certain level depending up on the increase in input costs

**4) Good Governance**

University must introduce a system of good governance in it's working which will assist both the university and affiliated colleges in their routine work so that colleges can save time and cost. Fair reporting by the members LIC on their visit to colleges for continuation of affiliation, college should get a copy of LIC report, importance to paperless and online work

**5) More Importance On Academic Activities**

University being apex organization of affiliated colleges has to regulate more on the academic activities of the affiliated colleges due to absence of self regulations among majority of the colleges. The activities like teaching methods, actual number of days spent for teaching, proper evaluation system of academic performance of the students etc. should be regulated

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