



Fifty Years of Higher Education in India: The Role of the University Grants Commission

Amrik Singh

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`A very useful reader, providing an excellent and authentic perspective on higher education and UGC in India' - *Educational Review*

The University Grants Commission, which began functioning under an executive order in 1953, enters its Golden Jubilee year on 28 December 2003. From the time the UGC was set up, there has been an exponential growth in the number of higher academic institutions which today employ more than 400,000 teachers with a student body in excess of 9 million. The present chaotic situation is compounded by the recent mushrooming of private educational institutions.

This study of the functioning of the UGC and, indirectly, of fifty years of higher education in India critically examines the way in which the UGC has performed since its inception and determines the reasons for its failure. Dr Amrik Singh maintains that the powers given to the UGC are severely limited and this, combined with poor internal management, has made it a largely ineffective body.

The author offers a number of practical solutions that could go a long way towards ameliorating the problems facing the UGC today. These include:

- Amending the UGC Act to grant it more statutory powers
- Adequate financial and administrative support from the Ministry of Human Resource Development
- Expanding the UGC's role of accreditation
- Strengthening the educational structure at the state level
- Designing and implementing new modes of testing in universities and colleges
- Giving priority to postgraduate teaching and research
- Encouraging teachers to take a greater leadership role
- Developing mechanisms for student assessment of teachers

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