

## Study Tour India

**November 2009**







Mumbai fishermen



Temple and Isha yoga centre outside Coimbatore



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# Welcome

India is a vast, complex and fascinating country, adjectives which we found also aptly describe its higher education system. It is a country in a state of flux, experiencing rapid economic growth and with a new majority Government keen to take India forward on a journey to become a major world economy. With a bill proposing reform of higher education hotly debated in Parliament, the first AUA study tour to India was very timely. The experience was a very informative and rewarding one and has left a strong impression of a diverse and committed HE sector, ready to embrace change and expansion to meet India's future needs. This report was produced collectively by the study tour team and outlines our findings – we hope you enjoy reading it.

I am very grateful to our Indian hosts, to the tour team for their hard work and professionalism and to the AUA for the opportunity to lead this tour.

*Sonia Virdee*

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# Introduction



The tourist trap, downtown Mumbai



A shrine to 'Amma' at Amrita University



Universities in the UK are increasingly viewing internationalisation and international collaboration, in addition to international recruitment, as part of their core mission.

The cost of UK HE and the rise of international competition for overseas recruitment present significant threats to the UK's position as a leading centre for international recruitment. Long-term partnership and strategic collaboration are seen as the way forward, with less emphasis on recruitment-only arrangements, and a different type of involvement from university management. This scenario suggests collaborative exchanges will increase in prominence in university strategy as a means of securing the long term sustainability of international activity and income. Furthermore, a new Indian HE bill streamlining regulation and opening up the sector to non-Indian providers is in progress and is anticipated as paving the way for expansion and partnership.

The move towards deeper more sustained international collaboration implies that UK universities will engage in a wider range of collaborative activities touching on a broader spectrum of university administrative roles. The India Study Tour was an opportunity to better understand the Indian HE system and to reflect on how HE is managed in India. We hope it provides insights that will help participants and the wider AUA membership to contribute to their universities' international agendas, and to reflect on practice at home as we present HE issues and priorities from a radically different economic and cultural perspective.

The Indian HE system is vast and complex, comprising an array of central/state universities, deemed universities, distance learning universities, institutes of technology, institutes of management, specialist universities and private and partially private universities. The Tour sampled a range of institution types visiting some highly prestigious universities among the best in their class.



The Tamil Nadu countryside

## Facts and Figures

- With a population of 1.13 billion, India is expected to overtake China as the world's most populous country by 2030
- India currently has the 12th largest global economy, but is predicted to be in the top three by 2050
- It has 378 universities, up from 201 in 2002, in three categories: State, Central and Deemed
- It has 18,064 colleges
- There are almost 300 agents representing UK education institutions in India, up from 40 in 1999
- About 160,000 students leave India each year for higher education institutions overseas
- The UK share of the market for Indian students studying overseas is 30%, up from 16 per cent in 1999
- India has 492,000 faculty members and 14 million students
- 40 per cent of its students are women
- Only 21 per cent of the population graduate from upper secondary level and higher education (HE) participation is 10 per cent





Presentation at Fergusson College



Pune outskirts

While the UK is suffering from the global recession, the Indian economy is booming, growing by 7 per cent last year after several years at 9 per cent. India aspires to be a world leader and is alive to the need to overhaul its higher education system to underpin growth and enable it to participate fully in the global knowledge economy. Its competitiveness depends on the availability of high quality graduates and concerns are being raised about whether the Indian HE sector is up to the job. Over the last few years, the Indian government has been debating HE reform, including growing the sector, improving quality, reducing bureaucracy and inviting in foreign providers.

Participation is low at 11 per cent, compared to the world average of 23.3 per cent, and the government has plans to raise this to 30 per cent. HE has grown very rapidly over the last two decades, but demand still vastly outstrips supply and a major expansion programme has recently been approved. Fees are often very low by UK standards and higher education is the most heavily subsidised form of education in India.

However, there is recognition that more funding is needed if India is to recruit the best staff to its universities and increase its research output. The Government's five year plan commits to raise public spending on HE to 6 per cent of GDP, representing a fivefold increase in spending over the previous plan.

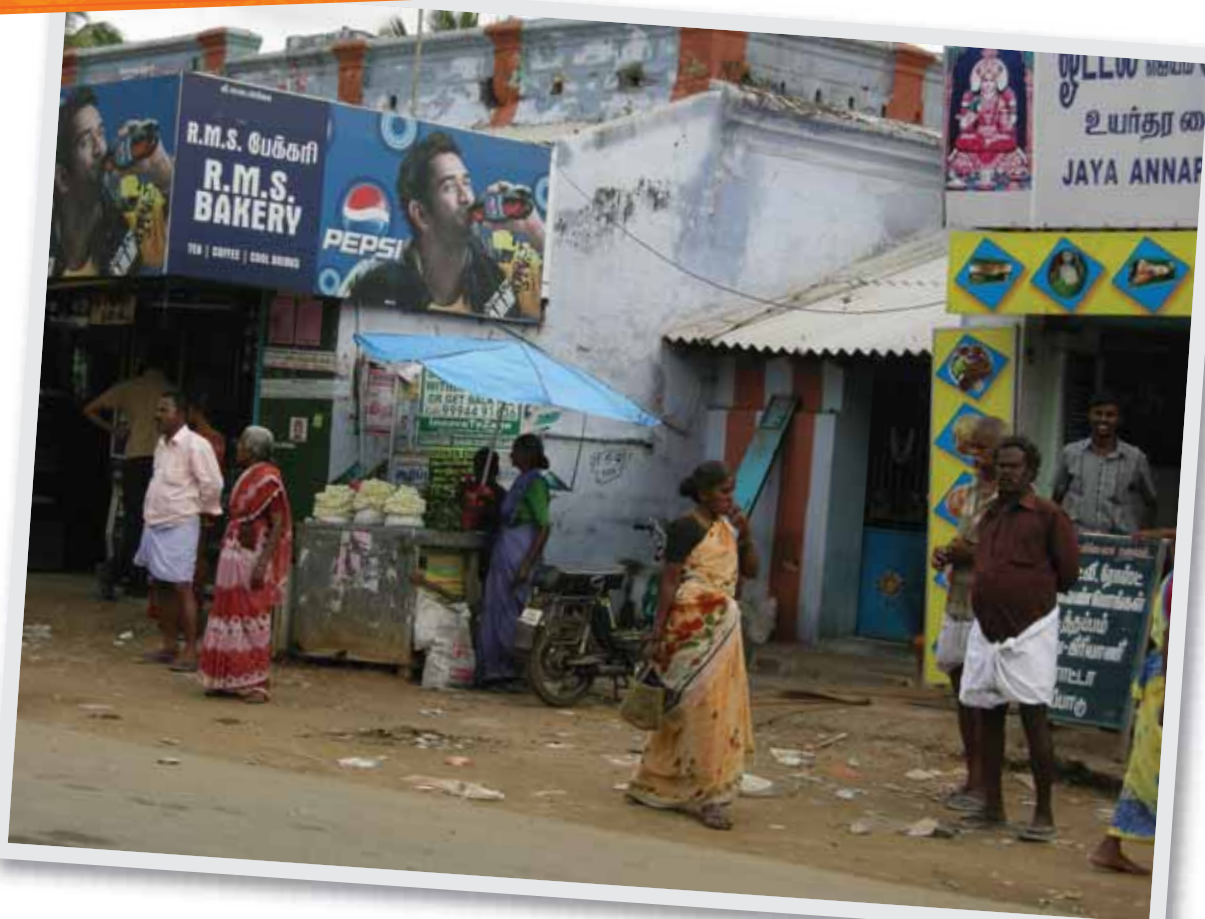
There are moves to reform the regulatory framework to raise standards and enable more flexibility and innovation, both stifled under the current rigid and multi-agency system. This regulation has included restrictions on overseas providers, but this is now set to change and India's doors will be opened to overseas investment, creating opportunities for many UK universities. The new minister with responsibility for HE, Kapil Sibal, has recently visited the UK and talked about a range of joint ventures such as twinning, joint degrees and new campuses. When Sibal announced that he would press for legislative change, he said: "I would hope that come 2010, universities around the world will be sprinting to India."

## Navigating the Indian Sector

In India most universities are established by the various state governments. There are a smaller number of central universities set up and directly funded by the Ministry of Human Resource Development. About half of Indian universities fall into these two categories. The state governments also establish professional and specialist institutions such as agricultural universities and medical colleges. Most universities are 'affiliating universities', which prescribe to the affiliated colleges, the admission criteria and courses of study, hold examinations and award degrees. Colleges can be formally affiliated to universities or established by private or charitable trusts. Some long-standing HE level institutions have been given "deemed to be university" status, although this has been controversial and some universities have recently had this designation withdrawn.



<p><b>Central Universities</b> Multidisciplinary, large city universities and their affiliated colleges, established by an Act of Parliament and funded directly by central Government. Central Government determines policy and emphasises research and teaching of national importance.</p>	<p><b>E.g.</b> University of Delhi</p>
<p><b>Institutions of National Importance</b> These are central universities and include the Indian Institutes of Technology, Indian Institutes of Management and the All India Institute of Medical Sciences.</p>	<p><b>E.g.</b> IITs, IIMs, NITs</p>
<p><b>State Universities</b> Central universities are set up, overseen and funded by state Governments. Can also receive central Government funding for strategic developments and research.</p>	<p><b>E.g.</b> University of Mumbai</p>
<p><b>Deemed Universities</b> Institutions of long-standing and/or high academic reputation. Can be government-funded, privately funded or a combination of both. They have autonomy to award degrees, design their own courses and set fees.</p>	<p><b>E.g.</b> Amrita University (private) Indian Institute of Science</p>
<p><b>Other</b> Includes private universities with or without University Grants Commission (UGC) approval.</p>	
<p><b>Colleges</b> Colleges fall into four categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University Colleges – university-owned, usually on the same campus</li> <li>• Government Colleges – managed by state governments and affiliated to a university</li> <li>• Professional Colleges – mostly medicine, engineering and management, sponsored by either the government or by private initiative</li> <li>• Privately Managed Colleges – governed by their affiliate university, these account for about 70 per cent of colleges; some are state government-funded.</li> </ul>	



Village scene in Tamil Nadu



# Partnerships between Indian and UK HE institutions



Mumbai slum - poverty is endemic in India and even for the better off travel overseas is often out of the question



TNAU. Agricultural universities pay an important role in the Indian economy



Partnerships between British and Indian institutions have been flourishing for a number of decades resulting in success stories but also some unfortunate failures. The regulatory HE environment in India has gradually become protective, complex and restrictive as a result of negative experiences with overseas institutions that were perceived as pursuing financial rather than educational benefits.

Currently, Indian HE institutions that are publically funded do not have much freedom to develop their own curricula, preventing them from entering into partner agreements with foreign institutions and from venturing into new subject areas. Some institutions have been able to create joint degrees but these are still rather rare and not always recognised by the regulatory authorities.

## Collaboration initiatives

The UK government has been very supportive of educational links between the British and Indian HE sectors and in 2006 the former British Prime Minister Tony Blair launched the UK India Education and Research Initiative (**UKIERI**).<sup>i</sup> The Initiative committed £23 million, which has been fully allocated, to support partnerships between UK and India, with additional cash from the Indian Government and “corporate champions” BAE Systems, GlaxoSmithKline and Shell. UKIERI has encouraged teaching partnerships, research cooperation and student mobility programmes.

Other significant initiatives are:

**Afro Asian Higher Education Agency for Development**<sup>ii</sup>

**Promotion of Indian Higher Education Abroad**<sup>iii</sup>

## Student exchanges

There is great enthusiasm in Indian HEIs for student exchange partnerships. There is strong demand for opportunities to internationalise the student population and some of the visited institutions were also very keen to recruit some students from overseas. Student exchange agreements have been proactively promoted and supported by the University Grants Commission (UGC).<sup>v</sup>

The differential in living costs means it is very important to manage students' expectations regarding exchange. Indian students are used to sharing rooms, paying around 3,000 Rs (£40) per month and 100 Rs (£1.30) per meal in the campus canteen. Even when fees are mutually waived, it is unlikely many Indian students could afford the living costs in the UK. Agreements which seek to address this cost differential by equating one Indian exchange student to a larger

number of UK exchange students are often stymied by lack of demand from UK students. Why are our students often so reluctant to travel abroad?

Not surprisingly, very few of the Indian institutions we visited had a student exchange agreement with the UK. However, we saw some impressive programmes in place with other countries: HR College exchanges students with a Canadian partner; the **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)** in Mumbai has agreements with USA, Switzerland, Germany, France, Singapore and Japan and they are trying to set up some with the UK. An impressive student exchange programme is in place at the **Indian Institute of Management (IIM)** Bangalore, with 70 exchange students hosted every academic year supported by its international office. IIM Bangalore prides itself on its c100 exchange partners to which they send about 40% of their students, a fact that will greatly contribute to their EQUIS accreditation.

**Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU)** operates a global student exchange programme with Canada, USA, Singapore, Israel, South Africa, Mexico, Japan and the UK- represented by the University of Reading. TNAU offers an exciting opportunity to the incoming students to carry out a rural agricultural research project in a local village. The expertise and experience gained through such exchange is academically truly invaluable.

## Study India Programme

Affiliated colleges are not permitted to set up partnerships with overseas institutions leading to degree awards; however such colleges are imaginative and enthusiastic when it comes to more informal collaboration such as student and staff exchange. The principal at HR College Ms Shamira was a strong advocate of the Study India Programme<sup>iv</sup> that encourages mobility to India rather than out of the country.

This UKIERI funded programme is delivered jointly by the University of Birmingham and King's College London in partnership with the University of Delhi and **HR College of Commerce and Economics** (an affiliated college of the University of Mumbai). It encourages students from the UK to visit India for three weeks to gain experience of Indian culture, way of life, people, arts, politics, economy and language which may open up opportunities for further study in India. In summer 2009, 200 participants from across the UK took part in the programme.

<sup>i</sup> <http://www.ukieri.org>

<sup>ii</sup> <http://www.aheadonline.org/>

<sup>iii</sup> [http://www.ugc.ac.in/new\\_initiatives/promothe.html](http://www.ugc.ac.in/new_initiatives/promothe.html)

<sup>iv</sup> <http://www.studyindia.org.uk/>

<sup>v</sup> [http://www.ugc.ac.in/more/cultural\\_exchange.html](http://www.ugc.ac.in/more/cultural_exchange.html)



### Staff exchange

Indian universities clearly value academic faculty exchange. This mostly happens on an ad hoc basis linked to specific research areas and personal relationships of the academic staff, however there was also interest in more structured and multi-tier collaborations which encompass teaching partnerships as well as research.

One of the key subject areas for **Mumbai University (MU)** is foreign languages (comprising about 90 languages). As a result of the need for native-speaking lecturers, MU has set up a Residence Programme for overseas faculty with financial support from local embassies and the UGC. The overseas faculty receive rent-free accommodation and teach in Mumbai from three to six months. The MU faculty reciprocate with visits to the partner institutions.

Staff exchange does not only imply academic staff. Senior staff at IIM, Bangalore were very interested in excellence in university administration and in staff exchange. There is scope for an international CPD and staff exchange programme and the AUA is interested in exploring this idea further. Such exchange would benefit both Indian and UK universities and could have many spin off benefits that contribute to institutions' internationalisation strategies.

### Research partnerships

Research partnerships and staff exchange arrangements remain the most popular and developed type of partnership arrangement. However, apart from the UKIERI scheme, there has not been any structured approach to research partnerships. Most of the institutions we visited mentioned ad hoc research partnerships, including some very successful ones. For example IIT Mumbai has secured approximately \$30 million from Monash University, BHP, the Australian Government and the Government Department of Science and Technology in India. This funding will be used over a period of 5 years to carry out joint research and to set up a joint PhD programme.<sup>vi</sup>

**Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU)** has an impressive range of applied research centres benefiting from research funding allocated by the Indian Government and also from the EU. We experienced the climate change centre, biodiesel production, sustainable rice production, even wine making. The British Meteorological Office is involved in a climate change research project which models the impact of climate predictions on local agriculture. Most research partnerships are with the US and they are very keen to explore more opportunities with the British HE sector.

A significant amount of the research carried out at TNAU is commercialised and/or directly relevant to Indian agriculture, to the extent that academics even interact with individual growers.

Research partnerships are a pathway towards academic capacity building for the Indian HE sector and a wider stimulus to joint PhD partnerships. The Indian Government<sup>vii</sup> is supporting joint research projects and funding is available where there is an enthusiastic UK research partner.

### Teaching partnerships

Apart from UKIERI funded projects teaching partnerships are quite rare due to the complex regulatory environment in India. Such partnerships usually require accreditation from the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), or from another regulatory body if the partnership has been agreed with a public institution. Where there is a strong case and clear demand, it is possible to gain approval for joint degree programme delivery leading to a dual award, as in the case of Universities of Mumbai and Westminster (Box). Private institutions are more flexible and we saw some very interesting examples of these double degrees, with joint delivery and two degree awards, at both undergraduate and postgraduate level.



Masters students undertaking lab projects at Fergusson College, Pune

### Meeting Industry Needs Through Collaboration

A unique one year Masters of Science (MSc) in Digital Compositing and Visual Effects has been developed by the University of Mumbai for joint delivery with the University of Westminster.<sup>viii</sup> Why unique? The programme was developed as a result of the booming Bollywood industry in Mumbai and the need for specialists who could follow a variety of careers within film, television, animation, advertising and gaming. Traditionally MSc provision in India is delivered via two year programmes, but increasingly one year Masters degrees and collaborative programmes delivered in India are being developed to minimise the costs for the students. In this case six months are delivered by the Indian partner and six months at the University of Westminster's Harrow campus.



There are a number of dual degrees set up in India that have never been officially accredited. However, when we asked a major Indian employer, Infosys, if they would consider a candidate who graduated from a dual unaccredited degree, they said that they would give the candidate a chance. For employers, any experience abroad indicates a more rounded graduate with improved communication skills.

**Fergusson College**, a highly regarded affiliated college of the University of Pune, was keen to pursue a one year dual Masters degree in Economics. A favoured option was for validation by a UK partner with delivery in Pune, leading to a single award by a UK institution. The reason for this preference was communicated very clearly: local fees and local living costs. Even though dual degrees are very attractive, the cost for the students is still very high when they have to spend some time at the UK partner institution.

We learned about an unusual model of a 1+1 masters degree delivered fully in India at **Amrita University**. Amrita is a private university, run by a charitable foundation and has very good links with the USA. Its Department of Indo-US University Initiatives provides an umbrella for all partnerships with the US<sup>vi</sup> and is lead by Mr P Manoj who came to India from Singapore with an impressive international background. The programme is delivered 50-50 with the State University of New York, initially for HP employees in India. The US academics travel to India and deliver their lectures through EduSat, an educational satellite device that connects Amrita's campuses.

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) has used its research links with Canada as a basis for the development of double degrees at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Students benefit from a 30-50% fee discount over studying in Canada as well as a shortened period aboard. Masters degree students spend three semesters in Coimbatore, India and two semesters at Cornell University, USA. The undergraduate collaboration is with University of Nova Scotia in Canada with students spending six semesters in India

and three in Canada. The University of Nova Scotia offers a very appealing incentive, by arranging a work permit for the Indian students.

We observed a clear trend towards in-country delivery or significant scholarship support offered by an overseas partner. Exceptional cases that we encountered were two consortium programmes co-delivered by the prestigious IIM, Bangalore. These programmes are charged at a premium and have been running for a number of years. Students come from all over the world and they rotate within the

consortium spending time in India, UK, Canada, France, Japan and Korea where each partner delivers a proportion of the programme. The International Masters Programme in Practicing Management is targeted at experienced and mature managers and is co-delivered with a British partner, Lancaster University Management School. The second programme, the Advanced Masters Programme in Management of Global Enterprises, is co-delivered with partners from Italy, USA and Hong Kong. This Masters programme is charged at €20,000, a very different fee model from those described above.

## Key considerations

Indian HE institutions are very keen to develop a wide range of partnership with the UK HE sector but in some cases the regulatory environment does not support such proposals – *Be flexible and open-minded*

The recommended strategy is to start with informal cooperation and mutual visits – *Be patient*

British HE institutions are advised to have clear aims and objectives of what they want to achieve and make this a long-term development – *Be thorough*

British HEIs will struggle to understand all aspects of the regulatory environment in India and British institutions will have to rely on their partner's advice and on other sources e.g. the British Council – *Do your research*

A small class at Fergusson College



<sup>vi</sup> <http://www.monash.edu.au/news/newsline/story/786>

<sup>vii</sup> <http://www.dst.gov.in/>

<sup>viii</sup> <http://www.mu.ac.in/science/cs/DC.pdf>

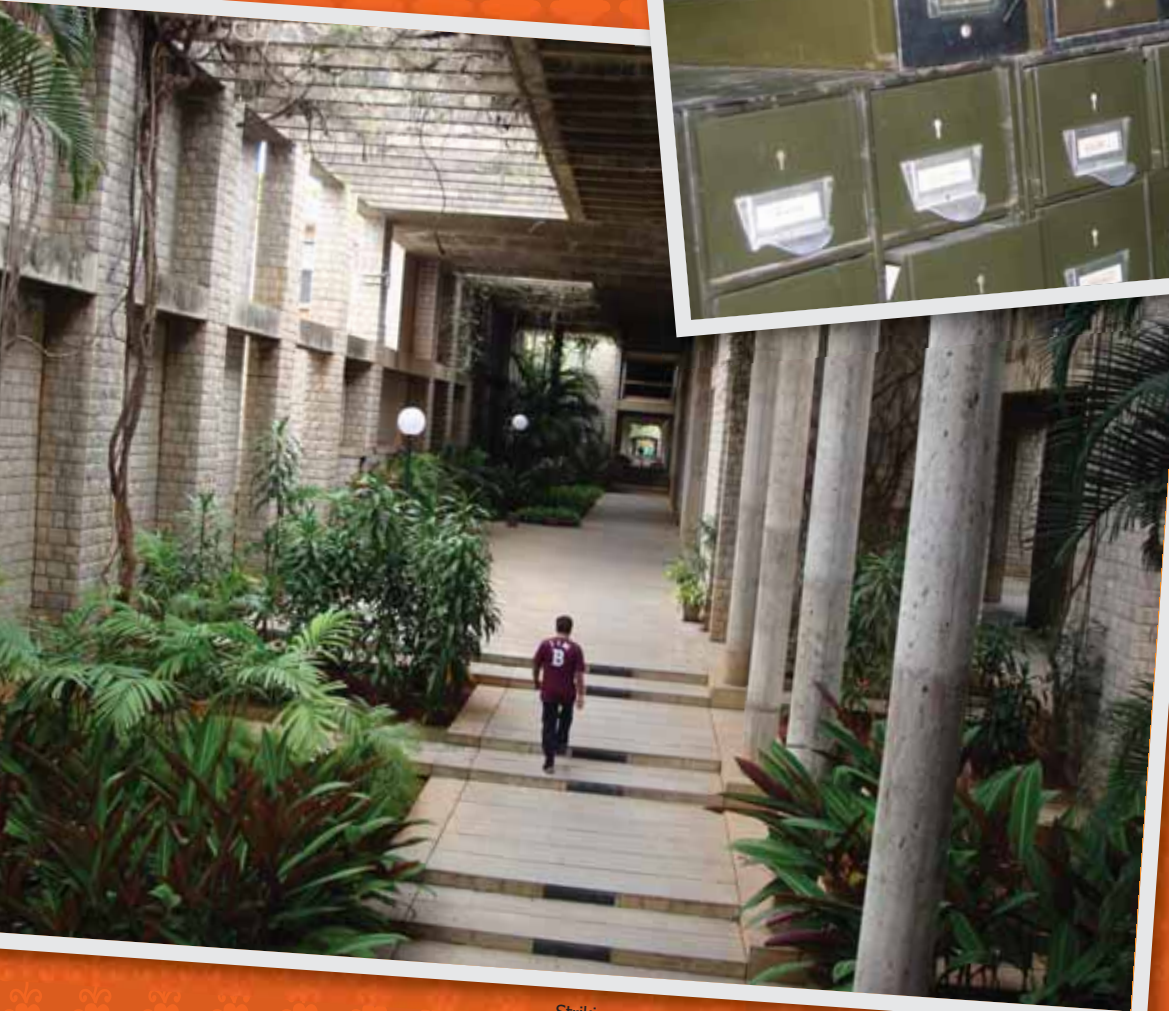
<sup>ix</sup> <http://www.amrita.edu/indo-us/partners-more.html>



# *Student Experience and Widening Participation*



Library catalogue University of Mumbai



Striking architecture at Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Bangalore



## Access and outreach

### Reservation quotas

India is a vast country with a rapidly growing economy where currently only 10% of potential students enter higher education. There is a longstanding concern regarding access to education from under-privileged groups, especially rural populations and people belonging to the perceived “lower” castes. In India a certain number of places at each university are allocated to students from specific backgrounds. These reservations, referred to as an institution’s reserved quota ensure that places are available to students from the various Scheduled Castes/Tribes and Other Minorities. When we visited the quota had recently been raised by the Federal Government from 24% of places to 49%. HEIs are expected to fill nearly half of their places with students from these groups and are not permitted to fill them with students from other backgrounds, even if they struggle to recruit from these categories.

In spite of, or perhaps because of, the strong political and financial pressure to broaden access, we did not observe much activity by HEIs to encourage applications from students from under-represented backgrounds, as we do in the UK in order to widen participation. There is considerably less emphasis than in the UK on outreach programmes, schools liaison activities or other widening participation initiatives. Instead many universities, and the elite in particular, rely on the fact that they are heavily oversubscribed and receive a sufficient number of applications to fill their reservation quotas. It is clear that the more prestigious institutions have a limited approach to outreach, but high demand and the quota system still ensures broad access.

## Outreach

Some institutions recruit from a more local catchment and visit schools and develop links with the community as part of their wider mission. We visited **Fergusson College**, an affiliated college of the University of Pune, which was established 125 years ago by the Deccan Educational Society with the purpose of “cheapening and facilitating education”. It has had an important role to play in generating the leadership capacity needed for the industrial regeneration of the newly self-governing nation and has educated two Indian Prime Ministers. The Society is a powerful philanthropic force in Western Maharashtra supporting a network of schools, colleges, technical institutes and autonomous institutes in the field of management, law, agricultural education and vocational training, using knowledge as a “potent instrument for national regeneration”.

### Tuition fees

Fees at most HEIs are low compared to the UK, and it is this low fee regime that makes HE accessible to many Indians. For example **Mumbai University** charges just 800 rupees per annum for its undergraduate programmes (about £10). This sum sounds low and represents about one eighth of a month’s salary but might well be a significantly higher percentage of an Indian family’s disposable income. The more elite institutions such as the **Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) Bombay** and the **Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Bangalore** can and do charge more. For example, the executive programme at IIM Bangalore is Rs 525,000 for the first year (£7000) and Rs 575,000 for the second year. At state universities, such as the University of Mumbai, fees for reserved category students are claimed from the Government. General category students from households with low income levels can apply for funding from the Special Assistance Programme run by the UGC.

## Admissions criteria and tests

India operates a system of mass testing for university entrance, although some universities will admit on the basis of high school exam grades.

Institutions such as the IITs and IIMs admit students through a specific admissions test which is taken simultaneously at various centres across India. The ratio of applications to places for elite institutions is high; for example, across the seven IITs in India 400,000 applications are received for just 4,500 places. Similarly at the IIM Bangalore just 1% of applicants are accepted. The IITs use what is known as the JEE (Joint Entrance Exam) and the IIMs the CAT (Common Admissions Test). These admissions tests are just the first step in the process with successful students being invited to interview, and a final decision made based also on high school marks and relevant experience. At both the IITs and IIMs the tests are set in a similar way with all institutions contributing questions to the nationwide paper.

Institutions are alert to the pressure on students to do well in these exams and the amount of ‘coaching’ that goes on, whereby students pay third parties to assist them in preparing for the tests based on previous question papers. As a result, the emphasis of the papers has shifted in recent years in favour of testing a student’s reasoning and analytic skills rather than specifically their subject knowledge.

For reservation quota students the entrance requirements are lower than the standards expected for general category students. We found this surprising, but it is generally accepted in the Indian HE sector. Students admitted through the reservation system often struggle with higher level study and a large proportion of them are therefore given extra time in which to complete their degree; in one example from the **HR College of Commerce and Economics**, reservation students are given up to 7 years to complete what would ordinarily be a 4 year Bachelor degree.



### Contact hours

The amount of contact time can be intense. For example at the IIM Bangalore students have classes Monday to Saturday for at least 6 hours a day. Attendance is monitored closely, with students being allocated a specific seat in each class and no students being admitted to the class once the session has begun. We observed the familiar mixture of large lecture classes and smaller practical and seminar sessions.

Government-funded universities and colleges have to operate with compulsory quotas which determine class sizes – for HR College, which is a teaching institution affiliated to the University of Pune, this means classes of 125. A typical teaching load in a teaching-only college is 17 hours per week.

### Open and Distance education

We saw an impressive example of open and distance learning at **Mumbai University** where they recruit a large and growing number of students, with 75,000 students registered in 2009, up from 69,000 in 2008, studying at 60 centres across the state of Maharashtra. The programmes are seen as a way of reaching rural areas. The curricula for these programmes are exactly the same for students in attendance at the University; however, the amount of contact time required is higher than expected from a UK perspective especially at the beginning of the programme when, for the first three months, students attend lectures as part of what is called the Personal Contact Programme. After this time students have access to an academic counselling service if they require any

further assistance. There is no admission test for the Mumbai distance learning programmes, just a minimum high school mark and only nominal fees are charged to students.

Further examples of open and distance learning include the Centre for Distance Engineering Programme (C-DEEP) at the IIT Bombay and the Directorate of Open and Distance Learning at the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU). Some institutions have also developed blended learning, for example at TNAU where in addition to lectures and hard copy materials all students are expected to have a laptop so that they can access an open source website with over 800 hours of streamed lectures. Amrita University delivers a distance learning programme online across its campuses using its EduSat system.



Students Fergusson College, Pune where there was considerable interest in student and faculty exchange





Juhu beach, Mumbai

**Mumbai University (MU)** has two campuses in Mumbai, a sub-centre at Ratnagiri (325km to the south) and 637 affiliated colleges, and through this network is able to reach out to most parts of the state. As a State University it has an obligation to provide high volume, low cost and consistent quality over a wide geographical area, reaching all parts of society. It has an astonishing 650,000 students, with a further 75,000 studying via distance learning. The central hub in Mumbai oversees entrance criteria and prescribes all curricula to ensure consistency.

The University has a special assistance scheme for Chemistry students to help with the purchase of equipment.

## Curriculum development

The curricula for affiliated colleges such as the HR College of Commerce and Economics and Ferguson College are set by the main university (in these cases the Universities of Mumbai and Pune respectively). However, both colleges were seeking autonomy at the time of our visit, to enable them to propose and develop their own degree programmes.

At the University of Mumbai each Faculty has a Board of Studies which oversees curriculum development. As well as academic staff this Board has at least two members from industry to ensure the curriculum is relevant. At the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University the syllabus is revised every 4 years to ensure it keeps up with developments in industry.

## Assessment and Quality Assurance

At the sector level oversight of quality of provision and of quality assurance procedures is maintained by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC). Affiliate Colleges such as the HR College of Commerce and Economics are inspected every five years. These inspections involve member of the NAAC spending 3-4 days at the college, meeting staff, students, visiting any class they choose and conducting a general audit of record keeping to verify student numbers etc.

At the HR College of Commerce and Economics examples of assessment include group presentations as well as essays, written exams and a research element in the final year, thus following the UK trend for a range of assessment. The external examiner system is modelled on the UK and work is assessed by internal markers with an external examiner appointed to review a selection of work. Assessment at federal universities is managed centrally and marking and handling the volume of scripts presents a huge logistical task.

At all the institutions we visited expectations with regards to referencing are similar to the UK. Additionally, in common with the UK plagiarism is considered an assessment offence and institutions use plagiarism detection software such as *Turnitin* or an equivalent.

## Learning resources

The institutions we visited all have library facilities and provide access to some form of electronic resources. The best example of online access we saw was the Indian National Digital Library for Engineering Sciences and Technology, whereby access to a range of electronic journals for a number of institutions such as the IITs and IIMs is paid for centrally by the Ministry for Human Resources.

## Student representation

Each of the institutions collects students' feedback in one form or another and has student representative bodies, such as a student council and student elections. IIM Bangalore has a student website to which issues or problems of any kind can be posted, then fed into the main institution website making senior management aware of any problems. At the University of Mumbai a Student Council, chaired by the Chancellor and organised by the Department of Student Welfare, has around 15 members from different castes, tribes and groups plus class and college representatives. The Student Council has a General Secretary who sits on several boards and committees, including Senate, to represent the views of students. Care is needed to avoid academic issues being influenced by political affiliations – this is particularly important in State Universities where the boundary with state politics can be rather slim.

Teaching staff are required to take a refresher course every 10-15 years in order to maintain their skills as a lecturer and to qualify for pay increments. The course is completed in the lecturers' own time and lasts about 15-20 days, at the end of which they are assessed primarily through a 100 page research project and not peer observation.



### Accommodation

At most of the institutions we visited a large proportion of students were accommodated on site. For example at Amrita University up to 80% of students stay on campus whilst at IIT Bombay nearly all students live on campus. One striking aspect of the Indian system is that a high proportion of teaching staff also have accommodation on site and it is not something just for the Vice-Chancellor. The student accommodation is ordinarily referred to as hostels and each of these hostels tends to have a students' representative of some description to ensure the any issues are reported. The standard of on campus accommodation we saw was basic in comparison to what you might find at a western university.

### Student activities

With so many students staying on campus, hostel based extra-curricular activities are seen as important. The range of facilities and the extent to which the activities were organised by the institution varied, but students at each of the universities had the opportunity to take part in sporting and social activities. There are also several examples of subject specific events such as the Tech Fest at the IIT Bombay where students manage and contribute to an exhibition-cum-competition exploring the impact of technology on society.

We did not see a single student bar during our tour and it was very striking that on-campus social life does not involve the sort of late night party culture we are used to and, in some cases, actively promote, in the UK.

### Student placements

As you might expect, an institution such as the IIM Bangalore has a employment placement rate of 100%, with students placed with a company before they even graduate in a week-long event held at the institution. However, it is striking that a private 'deemed university' such as Amrita also takes the placement of its students very seriously. Preparing students for the work place is integrated into the degree programmes with students taking around 250 hours of soft skills training during their 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years of study. The training programme covers topics such as group work, interview skills, corporate etiquette and verbal and written communication skills. Amrita has a Centre for Corporate Relations, a team of people with the specific remit of maintaining links with over 200 companies to ensure that graduates are able to find work more easily.

### Work experience

Institutions have built work experience schemes into the curriculum to aid employability. A good example was the Rural Agricultural Work Experience Programme (RAWEP) at the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University. This programme forms part of a BTech degree and involves a full semester of work experience whereby students as part of a group are directly involved in practical projects in rural areas.



Well tended outdoor spaces at IIMB



Typical student residences



At the end of the programme, the group (6-8 students per placement) must present their findings and include practical solutions to the problems that they encountered. MU has a placement centre in each faculty, with close involvement of employers.

## Graduate employability

All the institutions we visited take the employability of their students seriously, and in general universities seem to take greater responsibility for the placement of students after they graduate than is usual in the UK.

The issue of the standard of graduates, particularly in subjects such as engineering, was raised in the media when we visited. Newspapers were reporting a study by the trade body of India's IT industry (NASSCOM) which observed that engineering graduates were unfit for jobs. We visited one of India's most successful companies, Infosys, where it was remarked that whilst Indian software engineering graduates have a general perspective on the subject, a graduate from say the US will tend to have more in-depth knowledge. Infosys develops the skills of its recruits through its own training programme and has a Foundation Programme for soft skills and intense subject-specific training in order to bring graduates up to the standard needed for the workplace. Overall, both India and the UK are aware that far more needs to be done to develop communication skills in graduates and that, for certain professions, universities are not equipping students with sufficient practical knowledge.

## Further study

Many students from India find studying in the UK too expensive, both the tuition fees and the living costs. From our visit, it appeared that for postgraduate study students often preferred to go to the US, even though this can be more expensive than the UK, especially when the longer course duration is taken into account. The availability of scholarships and tutor recommendation play a key role. MBA programmes are very popular as a route to well-paid employment, with most students working for a few years after graduation before further study.



The impressive Infosys "campus" at Electronic City, Bangalore

## Inside Infy

*We were fortunate to visit Infosys, the only Indian company listed on the US stock exchange and a beacon for India's rapid economic rise. Infosys has an impressive university liaison programme called Campus Connect, which provides courseware, problem-solving, exposure to software testing and webinars, reaching 40,000 students and staff. The company has representation on educational bodies, works with technical universities and funds research at IITs. It hires 20,000 students per year, mostly straight from placement.*

*Infy staff voluntarily give up their Saturdays to run Spark, an aspiration-raising programme which gives school children experience of a day at Infosys and helps to set their sights on education as a route to a role in a world-class company.*



# Governance and Management of Indian HEIs



Gothic architecture at Mumbai University. MU is one of India's oldest and has well developed research and teaching partnerships



Centralised exam setting and marking creates a huge administrative load

## Influences and Drivers

### The Changing Policy Environment

India operates a planned economy which is now in its 11<sup>th</sup> Plan (each has a five year duration). The Government outlines its priorities for HE to 2012 within this overarching framework, including skills development and training, innovation and technology, environment and climate change. It has a national target to increase the percentage of the population going into HE from 10% to 30% and identifies Rs 4,800 crore (\$1.2bn) for 30 new HEIs (1 crore = 10 million). This target underpins the Government's new drive to encourage more foreign providers to India. A new education bill is in passage which seeks to relax the regulatory constraints on Indian universities, open up the sector to overseas providers and establish 14 new world-class universities<sup>1</sup>. This may include the granting of deemed university status

for campuses established by overseas providers.

Observing that higher education worldwide was in a state of flux, the Indian Minister for Human Resources Development, Kapil Sibal, has said "most of our (Indian) universities need vital changes in teaching and in contributing to local, regional and global economies.... We must ensure that the universities have the independence to teach what they wish to and not be controlled by government." He added that 1 lakh (100,000) students from India go to the USA every year for further studies and such a bill would be a "win-win situation for us".

The Indian HE sector is huge and diverse, consisting of different types of HEI, including state-run, private and those established through public-private partnerships. It has been argued that what is needed to make all of them work

efficiently and serve national goals is one transparent and rational regulatory system. The need to relax India's regulatory environment and to give universities more freedom from central and state government was strongly felt among the institutions we visited.

At present, there are numerous regulatory agencies and professional councils overseeing HE, including the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE). The recent Yashpal report<sup>ii</sup> recommended one overarching regulatory body subsuming all other bodies: a National Commission for HE and Research as an advisory body responsible for continuous reforms in HE. The new advisory body would be 'insulated from political and other external interferences [by] the government of the day' and would report to the Indian Parliament.



Mountain scenery, Tamil Nadu



### Autonomy and Funding

At one end of the scale the Indian HE sector includes HEIs such as the **University of Mumbai (MU)** that are highly influenced by state and/or central government and are almost entirely supported by public funding. MU's primary source of funding is the Department of Science and Technology (DST) which funds the University Grants Commission (UGC). As a State University MU is bound by the 1994 State of Maharashtra Universities Act which prescribes certain things which all state universities in Maharashtra must do, and lists the 'powers of the university'. In practice this degree of oversight limits flexibility and autonomy, for example in the establishment of new staff posts, which can be a very protracted process.

MU is structured as a federal body and delivers most of its teaching through a network of over 600 associated colleges serving the state of Maharashtra. These colleges teach only curricula prescribed by the accrediting university. The MU Senate, with over 100 members, manages the finances of the University and is nominally chaired by the Governor of the State of

Maharashtra (although, in practice, the VC chairs this body). The University has a very good reputation, with research excellence in science and economics; it is one of 13 universities receiving an additional science grant based on research output and citations and a special grant of Rs 100 crore (\$21.5m) for a new world-class centre in Nanoscience.

Other HEIs are more autonomous both in their decision-making processes and funding arrangements. The **Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay (IITB)**, for example, is interesting in particular for the contrast it brings to MU. It is a smaller, leaner organisation which concentrates on a narrower suite of subjects, primarily technology but also some humanities, with aspirations to be a world-leading institute. This mission is helped by significantly more funding per student coming directly from the central Government and distributed by the IIT Council, a national council for all of the IITs. The IITB has another significant funding source, its alumni. In an average year, funding from alumni can reach 15% of total income and in the current climate of austerity the University has been able to mobilise more of that support for

projects on campus and the proportion is nearer 20%. IITB has its own Board of Governors, chaired by the Chairman of the Indian Atomic Energy Authority and there is a strong industrial influence on the governance of the Institute.

IITs were established in 1958 by central Government as elite science and engineering providers, serving the needs of the Indian economy. Eight new IITs are being created, mentored by existing ones, bringing the total to 15. Competition for places at the IITs is very high and only 1% of applicants are successful. Graduates of the IITs can be found in top jobs in large companies all over the world.

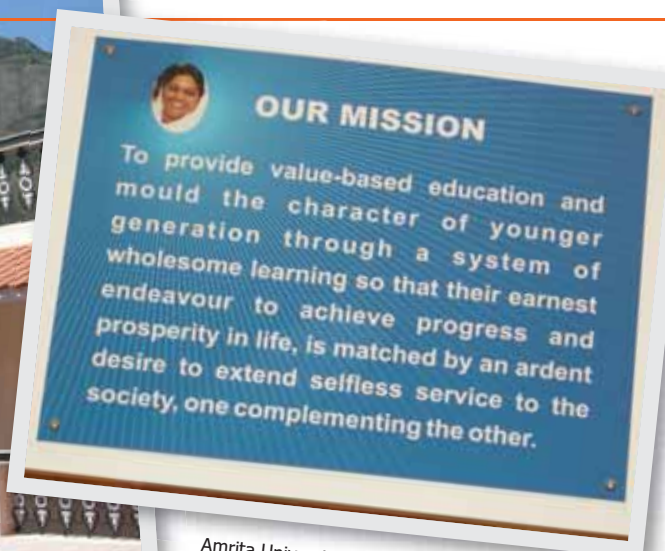
The Indian IIT Council is made up of representatives of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and of industry, and all Directors of IITs. Directors of IITs are appointed by the MHRD. This contrasts sharply with the degree of autonomy that UK institutions enjoy in selecting their leaders, in which the Government's relationship with governing bodies is mediated through the funding councils and, whilst there are national initiatives and directives, institutions are able to set their own paths within that context.



Tour participants Hetal and Nikki being shown state of the art nanotechnology equipment at Amrita University, Coimbatore



The stunning campus at Amrita University



Amrita University Mission for value based education, promoted and funded by a private foundation

At the far end of the funding scale is the **Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB)**, which is now entirely self-funded through fee income. It has an academic faculty that is integrally involved in institutional governance and academic decisions are freer from internal and external bureaucratic controls. However, IIMs are still bound by the national pay scales, the existence of which means that attracting staff must involve other factors, such as facilities, environment, and opportunities for research and consultancy.

The Institute is governed by the IIMB Society, a charitable trust, and has a 28-member Board of Governors, which includes eminent academics and faculty members and is chaired by the Chief Secretary of the State of Karnataka. The Board decides the long term strategy of the institution, monitors financial performance and defines the HEI's relationship with Government. All operational issues are dealt with by the Director and a number of committees.

There is a range of funding and governance systems which have developed differently in India, depending on the history and mission of each HEI. In general the governance structures of the centrally funded HEIs, such as the Central Universities and the IITs, are relatively more autonomous than the State-funded universities. In turn, governance of the IIMs is generally more autonomous than that of the IITs. The influences from both external bodies and

faculty are evident in the Indian institutions' structures. The degree of influence from Government appears to be on the whole greater than that in the UK.

Over 17,000 of India's 18,000 HEIs are privately sponsored and this sector is growing. One of these is **Amrita University** established by the world-renowned humanitarian leader, Sri Mata Amritanandamayi Devi, 'Amma'. As Chancellor of the University, Amma guides its mission and growth and has the authority to influence all aspects of its operation. The emphasis on holistic development of the individual and 'value-based education' pervades all aspects of life at the University, where the endeavour to achieve progress and prosperity is matched by 'a desire to extend selfless service to society'. Yoga is a compulsory part of the curriculum and the campus operates a curfew and "no intoxicants" rule.

One of the largest sources of financial support for the University is a holding trust – the Mata Amritanandamayi Math ('MA Math'), with income largely generated through private and corporate donations. 20-30% of the direct income of the University comes from sponsors and the Trust also runs a private hospital which generates up to 40% of University income. Student fees are around Rs 50k pa (around £700), which is moderately high by Indian standards.

### Deemed Universities

Amrita University is a private institution that is allowed to call itself a university because it qualifies for "Deemed University" status under the Universities Act. This "Section 3" provision has brought much wider availability of high quality higher education to India. However, the rapid mushrooming of Deemed Universities has caused some concern in the academic and policy world as some private HEIs took the deemed route simply to get degree-granting powers and many lack academic credentials. There is currently a moratorium on awarding these powers and in January 2010 the Indian Government announced that the status was to be withdrawn from 44 institutions, causing an outcry from students.

Research at Indian universities is often closely integrated to industry's needs and national and state policy. At **Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU)** the close relationship between university administrators and state officials supports this integration and the degree of influence that some Indian HEIs have on shaping government policy is striking compared to their counterparts in the UK. This is also seen in the IITs which, through their Council, carry significant influence nationally. As the Indian HE sector streamlines its regulatory system and increases its level of autonomy from Government there may be a trade-off in the loss of influence that HE has on Government policy.



### Strategic Direction and Planning

The different regulatory and funding environments for Indian HEIs demand a range of approaches to planning. Centrally controlled HEIs have a five year plan, which is agreed with relevant authorities. This is akin to current practices in England and Wales of submitting a five year forecast to the appropriate funding council, where the plan is continually rolling forward and indicates the financial sustainability of the individual HEI. In the Indian model, whilst there may be some flexibility on the latter years, the expectation is that they will deliver against the plan.

Institutional plans drive funding for Indian HEIs at a much more detailed level than in the UK; pay scales are set nationally and increases are based on time in post. As any new posts need to be in the plan and approved, dynamic recruitment according to need or opportunity is not possible. The lack of flexibility may tend to stifle innovation but the degree to which many parameters are defined (student numbers, staff numbers and salaries) provides stability and a low risk planning environment.

Strategic planning cycles in India can be long by UK standards. IIMB has a strategy for growth to 2020 and institutional planning at IITB is over a 10 and 50 year timescale! At some of the state universities the planning process can be onerous, for example, at MU departmental plans must be accepted by both the University (100 member strong Senate) and the UGC.

For some institutions, such as the IITs and IIMs, the strategic direction is clear although changes may be afoot to widen their remit if the Yashpal report is implemented. IIMB's aim 'to be a world class centre of excellence for searching, nurturing and promoting entrepreneurship with emphasis on start-ups and existing organisations with high growth potential' is expounded in its plan to 2020, which derived from wide consultation and includes time-bound targets. They are planning to increase student numbers (there is demand and presumably government pressure to do so) but they need to increase faculty numbers first.

### The Role of the Administrator

Traditions of administrative support vary in Indian HEIs, with many state governments appointing civil servants as university administrators. At IITB there is a highly professional, modern administrative support system including well developed online services. At other HEIs academics take on administration and management roles, supported by clerical staff. IIMB sees itself at the forefront of university management and is looking at ways in which they can transfer administrative work from academics to administrators and develop expertise in 'educational management'. There was interest here in administrative staff exchange with UK institutions.

TNAU was typical in having senior officer posts filled by academics, in this case serving concurrent three year terms, coming up for renewal at the same time. There is an open competition for these positions, which are seen as prestigious and offer additional staff support for research.

TNAU, where research has a strong applied focus. Here trials are underway to support farm diversification



## Staffing

One of the biggest challenges currently facing the Indian HE sector is the Government cap on staff salaries, which affects public sector HEIs whose staff are no longer on the Government payroll and even the private sector. For example, IIMB receives no income from the Government for salaries, yet is still bound by the nationally agreed salary levels. Although it is free to appoint academic staff, it is restricted in what it can pay them. Despite being a private university and not bound by the national salary structure, Amrita also largely follows this structure as it is in keeping with their benevolent ethos, and several staff (including the Vice-Chancellor) receive no salary at all.

Despite recent substantial public sector pay rises, there are reports of staff shortages and questions about how to staff the Government's 'new universities'. A greater emphasis on professional administration could help to free up academic staff. The Yashpal report recognises in particular the important role that university administrators have in identifying 'the best or next practices in academia globally', but also notes that Indian universities have not been able to attract talented administrators for a variety of reasons. Changing to an open market system would have a major financial impact, although it would also enhance inward staff mobility, and increase the global competition for staff (potentially to the detriment of HE sectors elsewhere).

## Key considerations

Governance structures vary in their degree of autonomy and depend on the history and mission of each HEI. The degree of influence of government appears to be on the whole greater than that in the UK.

Strategic planning cycles vary considerably in duration, and can be between 5 and 50 years. Planning is more exacting and generally less flexible and more stable than for UK counterparts.

Traditions of administrative support vary, with many state governments appointing civil servants as HEI administrators. There are also instances of highly professional modern administrative support systems. However, there seems to be scope to develop further the professionalisation of administration, and potentially an exchange scheme for administrators led by the AUA.

One of the biggest challenges currently facing the Indian HE sector is the Government cap on staff salaries.



Meeting research staff at TNAU- the University has research collaborations with the UK and the US

<sup>i</sup> [http://www.dnaindia.com/academy/report\\_govt-hopes-to-introduce-foreign-education-provider-bill-sibal\\_1318548](http://www.dnaindia.com/academy/report_govt-hopes-to-introduce-foreign-education-provider-bill-sibal_1318548)

<sup>ii</sup> [http://www.academics-india.com/yashpal\\_report.htm](http://www.academics-india.com/yashpal_report.htm)



# Appendices

The Study Tour team at IIMB



Coimbatore where we visited two universities and spent the weekend

## Tour Objectives

- 1. To provide AUA and AHUA members and associate members working in a wide range of roles with an opportunity to investigate contemporary trends, pressures and future directions in higher education in India.**
  - 2. To develop a relationship between the AUA/AHUA and Indian higher education institutions.**
  - 3. To share with colleagues in India views on major trends in contemporary UK higher education.**
- 

## Tour Themes

Tour participants were grouped around three themes, each group with a theme leader:

### **1. Indian Universities' Perspectives on Collaboration with the UK**

We were keen to gain an insight into Indo-UK collaboration from the Indian perspective. Our main aim was to grasp the different types of partnership and the value placed on them by Indian HEIs, with a view to facilitate better understanding and more successful collaborations between India and the UK. Led by Radka Newton, University of Lancaster Management School

### **2. Student Experience and Widening Participation**

We were interested in investigating what widening participation means in the Indian context, given the diversity of Indian society and the barriers presented by caste and rural isolation. We explored a broad range of learning and teaching issues and found some commonalities but also some contrasts with the UK. We asked about student employability and how independent learning is encouraged. Led by Simon Eades, Birkbeck, University of London

### **3. Governance and Management**

The Tour was a great opportunity for comparing the roles of the administrator in Indian and UK HE. We looked at governance and Government and the degree of centralised control versus autonomy in decision making. Recognising that Indian HEIs are often an order of magnitude larger than in UK, we were interested in the effects of scale on provision and administration. Led by Tove Oliver, HEFCW

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## Tour Members

The Tour team was led by Sonia Virdee, University of Essex and comprised participants working in a broad range of HE administration roles from across the country. Selection of the Tour Leader and participants was by a competitive process with applications assessed by an AUA panel; participants had to demonstrate how they would benefit professionally from the Tour, what they could contribute to it and have ideas for dissemination.

### **Dr Sonia Virdee**

Director of Strategic Planning  
University of Essex  
**Tour Leader**

### **Dr Radka Newton**

International Programmes Director  
Lancaster University Management School  
**Perspectives on Collaboration (L)**

### **Dr Tove Oliver**

European and International Manager  
Higher Education Funding  
Council for Wales  
**Governance and Management (L)**

### **Simon Eades**

Programme Manager, Faculty of Lifelong  
Learning, Birkbeck, University of London  
**Student Experience (L)**

### **Catherine Kirk**

PA to Director of Corporate Services  
University of Edinburgh  
**Perspectives on Collaboration**

### **Dr Nicola Horseman**

Assistant Director, Planning Services  
University of Exeter  
**Governance and Management**

### **Hetal Maniar**

Student Records Advisor  
University of Portsmouth  
**Student Experience**

### **Ian Jones**

International Officer  
(Partnership Development)  
University of Nottingham  
**Perspectives on Collaboration**

### **Dr Andrew Young**

Head of Administration, Science  
Agriculture and Engineering  
University of Newcastle  
**Governance and Management**

### **Sue Beckingham**

Learning, Teaching and Assessment  
Support Co-ordinator  
**Student Experience**

L = Theme Leader



### Itinerary

We visited eight organisations and four cities in ten days. The tour started in Mumbai with the University of Mumbai and the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay and then moved East, via Pune and Fergusson College, to Bangalore and the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore and the software systems company Infosys. We headed South to visit a specialist agricultural college in Tamil Nadu Agricultural University and also a private university, Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham University.



The impressive cathedral window in MU Library



Students at TNAU. Most students have laptops and access to online services is good

#### Sunday 8th Nov:

Arrive Mumbai, Orientation Meeting

#### Monday 9th Nov:

Mumbai, University of Mumbai  
British Council

#### Tuesday 10th Nov:

Mumbai and travel by coach to Pune,  
Indian Institute of Technology Bombay IITB

#### Wed 11th Nov:

Pune, Fergusson College

#### Thurs 12th Nov:

Fly to Bangalore, Infosys

#### Fri 13th Nov:

Bangalore, Indian Institute of Management  
Bangalore IIMB

#### Sat 14th Nov:

Fly to Coimbatore

#### Sun 15th Nov:

Free time in Coimbatore  
and visit to Isha Ashram

#### Mon 16th Nov:

Tamil Nadu Agricultural University TNAU

#### Tues 17th Nov:

Coimbatore, Amrita University

#### Wed 18th Nov:

Leave Coimbatore, Return to UK

See our blog at

<http://auaindia2009.blogspot.com/>





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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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