CHAPTER V

Contours of University Governance in Private Deemed-to-be-University

*Self, But Not Shared Governance*

Introduction

In the previous chapter, the study illustrates an analysis of higher education policies in India across two temporal dimensions. Reforms have continued to emphasize on addressing challenges and opportunities in the expansion, equity, and excellence in the system of higher education. The system, in comparison to its inception, has evolved into a complex structure of several types of universities envisioning their mission and objectives. Among these types of universities, the Private Deemed-to-be-university and the Public State University types constitute the major component of the higher education system regarding their numbers juxtaposed to other types of universities in the country (discussed in the previous chapter).

This chapter examines the evolution of the Private Deemed-to-be-university in the Indian higher education system and empirically analyze the governance structures and processes of one of the oldest Private Deemed University in the state of Karnataka (hereafter University-II). Open-ended interviews and observations in the field (University-II) from – administrators, faculty members, students, faculty administrators, alumni and students along with observations during and post-field visits are discussed to develop narratives on expansion, equity and excellence and its interaction with the governance mechanisms within the private deemed university set-up. The main objective here is to discuss the perceptions of University-II’s actors on management and resources for expansion, equity, and excellence in teaching, research and service/extension. The descriptive analysis proposed here and conclusions therein, provide insights into the main objectives of the study:
(1) to understand the internal and external processes (governance mechanisms) among State universities and the Private Deemed-to-be-universities in the state of Karnataka and,

(2) to analyze university governance mechanisms in the context of the main themes in higher education reforms - equity, excellence, and expansion.

Deemed Universities and Higher Education: Idea, Structures and Processes

Higher education in India has undergone unique adaptation and mitigation. These changes are accepted and criticized by series of actors engaged in this ecology, across the country. No one type, or system responds to everyone’s need. The system of higher education in its present form is complex. In addition to the increase in numbers, the complexity of the ecology further witnessed in the types of universities. In the previous chapter, a detailed discussion of these complexities, are illustrated.

Universities or higher education institutions are a center for a new kind of learning and the setting for a new kind of social life. The University Education Commission (1948) shared this idea while laying out its recommendations to expand the university education system. However, the idea of a university since then, has undergone changes in its objectives, scope, and governance (management and resource provision), however, the overall function of the university remains unchanged – teaching, research, and extension (service) – though the priority of these functions across myriad types of university may vary.

A University, in India, can be established through an Act passed by the Parliament, the State Government, and through an “executive decision” by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), GoI. The Government has established many central institutes (such as an IITs and IIMs) through Central legislation. There are, especially in the last one decade, many Private State universities, established through state legislation. The MHRD, GoI can declare
an institute to be “equivalent to a university” based on recommendations of University Grants Commission (UGC).

A university could be established only by a statute, passed by Parliament or the State legislature, according to the UGC Act, 1956. The statutory backing is essential to ensure accountability and maintain standards. In recent years, particularly the post-1990s, the rate of growth has increased exponentially with the privately managed institutions outpacing the public ones. The private-run professional colleges popularly known as self-financing or ‘capitation fee’ colleges (Tilak, 1994) were a trend in Southern India, who pioneered the idea of privatization (self-financing colleges) in higher education. These private colleges, experienced constraints in their expansion and growth, from their respective affiliated universities (Varghese, 2013). To overcome these limitations, many of these colleges sought autonomous status or the status of the deemed-to-be university from the UGC. However, most of the policy makers at the time of Independence expressed their predicament regarding two modes of establishing higher education institutions – by efforts of private philanthropy and through the statutory provisions. While many colleges had come up through the statutory route, a few had come into being through the voluntary efforts of philanthropists and had, over a period, proved their excellence and deserved to be recognized as universities. The Radhakrishnan Commission (1948) recommended that the government should consider adopting a strategy of creating universities by charter, then statutory provisions.

According to the UGC Act, 1956, University means an institution “established or incorporated by or under a Central Act, a Provincial Act or a State Act and includes any such institution as may, in consultation with the University concerned, be recognized by the Commission in accordance with the regulations made under the Act” (sec. 2(f) of the Act).18

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Further, section 3 of the Act, 1956 states that “that any institution of higher education, other than a university, shall be deemed to be a university for this Act, and on such a declaration being made, all the provisions of this Act shall apply to such an institution as if it were a university under Section 2(f)”. Paragraph 2 of the UGC guidelines, no doubt, succinctly conveyed the objective of Section 3. It said:

“this provision has been made in the Act to bring under the purview of the UGC institutions which for historical reasons or for any other circumstances are not universities and yet are doing work of a high standard in specialised academic field comparable to a university and that granting of the status of a university would enable them to further contribute to the cause of higher education which would mutually enrich the institution and the university system.”

To this end, it is critical note that the idea of Deemed University is quite different from other universities – State and Central Universities and Private Universities. It operates under the purview of the guidelines laid down by the UGC under Section 3, but it has a certain degree of autonomy that other universities seldom have. The Deemed University according to the UGC Act, exercise administrative autonomy, autonomy in curriculum and evaluation and awarding degrees. Section 3 of the Act was applied in the rarest of the rare case. Some of the instances of implementing this act were in conferring the Deemed university status to Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore and the Indian Agricultural Research Institute; New Delhi conferred deemed university status in 1958.

Post-1990s, a shift in policy, regarding the emergence of some universities along with new types of universities was witnessed in the Indian higher education sector. Post-independence, as discussed earlier, inclusive education along with the expansion, was the core agenda, i.e., appreciating the supply-side of the higher education system. However, the post-liberalisation
phase, policy directives indicate a programme for reform that reflects expansion, equity, and excellence – an elusive triangle – of the higher education system. The proliferation of private and deemed universities demonstrates one of these directions.

The National Policy on Education, 1992 and the Punnayya Committee of 1992-93 suggested certain solutions overcome the perceived crisis in higher education - structured by a tension between questions of accessibility and concern for quality. While there is a crisis, there is considerable disagreement about the nature of this crisis and its solutions. The privatization and ‘dramatization’ of higher education were perceived to be as one of the potential solutions to the crisis along with reforms in the education management processes within the university. As a result of these solutions (discussed in detail in the previous chapter), the proliferation of Private Universities and Government and Private Deemed Universities has been the order of the day post-1990s. Between the 1990s to 2015, 79 private deemed universities and 23 government deemed universities have established or conferred the status by the UGC.

The government saw in Section 3 a possibility to provide autonomy in the higher education sector in the guise of establishing and conferring deemed university status to colleges engaging in quality teaching, research, and service. Hence, the novel intention of Parliament in enacting Section 3 – to confer deemed university status on higher education institutions was diluted considerably (Venkatesan, 2009).

As discussed above, the status of the deemed university provides more freedom in administrative and academic processes. Further, the scope of the deemed universities is not limited to the respective state/region but across the country and globe as per the regulations laid down by the UGC. For example, Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani has an offshore campus in Dubai. These deemed-to-be universities, largely owned by the private trust, have the unlimited freedom to determine their fee structure, expansion and charge capitation
fee from students. The Section 3 of the UGC providing statutory support to such practices, becomes a potential source of gaining profit. The rapid expansion and exploitation - regarding numbers, diversification subject-wise and exuberant fee structure have raised concerns from academics and public as a whole.

To examine these malpractices, the MHRD, constituted a Committee for Review of Existing Institutions Deemed to be Universities (2009), popularly known as the Tondon Committee report. The Tondon Committee (2009) report findings indicate violations in the governance structure of the university by calling it as “undesirable management architecture” – where personal or subjective preferences rather than a person with merit control the overall functioning of the university. The committee in its findings also reported that the very objective of the conferring academic freedom to Deemed-to-be- universities achieved limited success because there was limited evidence of excellence in research. In addition to this, some of these universities lacked essential infrastructure towards engagement in the larger functions of the university – teaching, research, and extension.

The committee raised concerns about the overall academic culture and intent among actors in the University – limited emphasis on research and misuse of autonomy by increasing fee, intake and programmes. In several institutions, undergraduate and postgraduate programmes had been fragmented with concocted nomenclatures. Further, many private deemed universities have prescribed fee structures considerably higher than those recommended by the official fee structure committees. Concerns about their quality performance, exclusionary practices as noted in the Tondon Committee (2009) challenging the UGC of having engaged in malpractices in conferring private colleges/institutions with Deemed-to-be-university or Deemed University status.
In addition to governance system and fees structures, the Deemed University Act of 2010, lists criteria for infrastructure facilities within the Deemed University. According to the Act, the Deemed University shall have the necessary financial and infrastructural viability for administering and maintaining the institution as an institution Deemed to be University and the management capable of contributing to the university ideals and traditions and enhancing the quality of teaching, research and extension activities.

According to Dr Thorat, Former Chairman of the UGC, there is not only increase the growth and scope of privately funded deemed universities, but there is growing diversification of Deemed Universities across specific subject areas (Planning Commission, 2012). These institutions “have expanded the base of higher education in the country and are offering education and research facilities in various disciplines such as Medical Education, Physical Education, Fisheries Education, Languages, Social Sciences, Population Sciences, Dairy Research, Forest Research, Armament Technology, Maritime Education, Yoga, Music and Information Technology, etc.” (Planning Commission, 2012:45). The 11th plan (2007-12) “suggested that an appropriate balance in the number of state-supported universities and privately managed Deemed Universities should be maintained”. Further, the plan indicated that “selected Deemed Universities should be provided grants for infrastructure development”.

The overall rationale and the proliferation of Deemed universities, particularly the Private ones, have been arguably a major phenomenon for reforms in the higher education system and its processes. However, this model is not devoid of problems or challenges. Issues related to expansion, equity and excellence are critical, considering potential shifts in its meaning and impact both at the level of policy and its practice across various types of universities. Such shifts are significant to examine the changing paradigm of higher education and its relevance to the constituency engaging in higher education and its institutions.
Notwithstanding, the findings of the Tondon committee in 2009, deemed universities continue to proliferate, considering there is demand for them. The private deemed universities, in particular, are popular among the aspirants since they provide current curriculum, in many cases, the entry requirements have been relaxed for prospective students availing ‘payment’ or ‘management’ quota by-passing the entrance tests (if any). Further, these institutions offer state-of-the-art infrastructure along with almost one-hundred percent job placement. However, with limited or no scholarships available in these universities (as witnessed in University II, discussed later), unlike the public institutions, enrolment in the private institutes witnessed phenomenal growth. Figure 7 below illustrates such a trend in the country.

*Figure 7: Enrolment in Government and Private Higher Education Institutions (in millions):*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Private</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>12.8</td>
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*Source: 12th Five Year Plan (2012-2017), Planning Commission, GoI.*

On the one hand, there is an unprecedented growth of the private universities in numbers responding to increasing demand, and series of amendments and commissions have been set-up by MHRD to review and evaluate the functioning of these universities in response to grievances raised by the stakeholders, on the other. Given this context, it is critical to examine
private and private deemed universities in the country. As a prelude to such a comprehensive exercise, the following section examines the case of one of the private deemed university in the state of Karnataka. The setting discussed below, examines the organisation, its processes and the perceptions of the actors within the structure of the private deemed university, regulated by the Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956 and other regulatory bodies.

*The Setting: University II (Private Deemed University) in the state of Karnataka*

The state of Karnataka is home to the one of the oldest Public Deemed University and Private Deemed University, established in 1958 and 1993, respectively. Since the 1990s, the State has encouraged private sector participation in higher education – many of the existing private self-financing colleges, particularly in the domain of engineering and medicine most of them have claimed the status of Private University under the Private Universities Act (passed through the Act of State Legislature) and Private Deemed university or Private Deemed-to-be-university, established under section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956 (with amendment 2010, discussed above). According to the AISHE report (2016), the role of private sector in higher education in Karnataka is significant. There are 06 private and 11 private deemed universities out of 45 universities, followed by 2451 private and 624 government colleges (AISHE, 2016).

The case-in-point here is one such institution, which has deep historical roots since the 1950s, in the field of medical education, followed by engineering programme in mid-1960s. Consequent to its incessant contribution to the field of higher education, the institution was recognised and awarded the status of Deemed University by the UGC in the year 1992. The University, managed by a private trust, offers programmes in almost all the academic disciplines, unlike many specialised deemed university, particularly under the *de-novo* category – the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, for instance.
In the following section, I propose to discuss the evolution of the case of Private Deemed University (University II). While the university evolved itself from a private-unaided-college or self-financing professional college to a private-deemed-university, it is interesting to describe the internal structures and processes, in the last two-and-a-half decades of its existence as a private deemed university. Every actor of the university engages in organising, negotiating and resisting –in their daily functions of the university – teaching, research and extension. Each of these functions contributes to ensuring expansion, equity and excellence as the primary areas of reforms in higher education in India.

**Historical Trajectory**

Before the seeking, the status of the private deemed university, University II, was affiliated with three state universities including the Vishveswaraya Technical University (VTU), for professional education. The University II is located in a large township in the State of Karnataka and is among the State’s most popular and largest universities. It has received many accolades for its excellence in higher education from the national and international accreditation agencies. Among the universities in Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) region, this university ranks in the top-five universities. Further, the university is ranked No.1 among the private deemed universities in the country in 2014. University II houses more than 30 constituent institutes/colleges spread across the town in Southern Karnataka, each of them hosting range of courses in the field such as engineering, medicine, commerce, pharmacy, social work, humanities and social sciences, management, nursing, natural sciences and so on. It is important to note, that the medical, management and engineering programmes, i.e., professional programs are the most popular choice among students enrolling in this university. Such a trend reverberates the fact that professional programs are highly recognized

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19 Consortium of developing countries – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.
in India as ‘prestigious’ courses in comparison to non-professional courses – arts/social sciences, considered to be ‘not-so-prestigious’ courses (Chaudhary, 2010).

In addition to these constituent institutions, the university hosts numerous autonomous research institutes affiliated to University II to recognise their doctoral programmes, across the State. Beyond the state and the country, the university has several international campuses, claiming to be an institution of ‘international repute.’ In fact, during an interview one, the Registrar of the University indicated that the ‘international outreach, diversity of faculty and students and one hundred percent job placement’ to be ‘the USP’ of the university to be the most popular destination for higher studies’ (U2RESADMIN03).

University II offers courses across various levels that include, starting from bachelor’s to Doctoral programmes. Each of these constituent colleges/institutions is headed by the Director, Associate Directors/Deputy Directors and Assistant or Joint Directors, Head of the Departments (HoDs) along with faculty members (professors, associate professors, assistant professors and lecturers (non-selection and selection grade), students and other non-teaching staff members.

The university with its vast domain of specialisations, a large number of teachers engaging in these domains along with ‘state-of-the-art’ infrastructure, and its admission policies, attract a large number of students from various parts of India and abroad. The geographical diversity and its constant emphasis on excellence in education are enshrined in its vision - “Global leadership in the human development, excellence in education and healthcare” (University II, NAAC-SAR Report, 2015) embedded in the routine function of the university. To substantiate this, it is critical to note the action plan adopted by the university in implementing this Vision:
• Consistent focus on research, training and development of faculty members, Design and development of new academic programmes which are innovative in nature and are in demand globally.

• Providing world-class state-of-the-art infrastructure facilities in the form of classrooms, laboratories, teaching hospitals, etc., to facilitate administration/implementation of its academic programmes.

• Providing facilities and opportunities for its students for all-round development, not only in the academics but also in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities including sports, arts and cultural activities.

The implementation process is monitored at various levels by Board of Studies, Academic Senate, Academic and Administrative Heads meetings, use of several measurable parameters - semi-annual evaluation of performance in Management Review Meetings.

The action plan mentioned, and the process of monitoring mentioned- above, are further reflected in the interviews and observations during the field visit at University II, discussed in the subsequent section. To illustrate evidence from the field, I have interviewed the range of actors, along with observations in University-II, to collate their perceptions of expansion, equity, and excellence in higher education and embedded into the function of the university. Each of these actors is assigned codes per their role and position, to maintain anonymity. Below, figure 8, illustrates this in detail.
Given the historical trajectory and its contemporary form, University II has evolved into a complex organisation and governance structure. Figure 9, below illustrates the main personnel/office engaged in the governance of the university in its present form. The flowchart represents the organisational model according to the researcher’s observations and perceptions collated from interviews with university employees, students and members of the community, about structures and procedures of the university.
The university is organised into a particular system of governance. It is worth to resonate the idea of governance discussed earlier, to examine the current setting:

“…governance is the manner in which power and authority are exercised in organisations in the allocation and management of resources” (Kennedy, 2003: 67)

Governance constitutes following components - the organisational structure and the hierarchy of and amongst personnel and management of resources in meeting its functions.
In University II, ‘power and authority’ vests with the top-management (also known as University Leadership), i.e., core members of the Trust (includes Chairman and the Chancellor), the Executive Committee and the Board of Management. The University top-tier consists of the Executive Committee and the Board of Management. The mid-tier of the governance consists of Directors, HoDs and Boards of Studies led by the Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and the Registrar and their offices. The lowest-tier in the governance hierarchy, are the faculty, followed by students. Gathering insights from the interviews and observations, the governance structure of University II, appears to be highly centralized. The governance mechanism is clearly laid out at various levels across the main administration block and other constituent colleges (see figure 9). One of the faculty member of the constituent college while discussing the decision-making process, opined - “it is the Head of the Department (HoD), in this institution which is the first point of contact for the teaching staff in the administrative hierarchy. The HoD then reports to the Director of the institution, then the Director reports to the Registrar and Registrar (Evaluation), Deputy Registrar and other top management personnel” (U2RESFM09)

For instance, one of the members of the university administration asked (anxiously), “did you meet the Vice Chancellor, for permission, after our last email exchange? We have to go through the proper administrative channel to give the authorization to conduct the interviews and also to seek permission for me to give you an interview” (sic). To substantiate this further, I approached the Vice Chancellor of the university to apply for permission to conduct interviews and access the library during my fieldwork, since he is the head of the institution. However, to my surprise, the Vice Chancellor, could not provide permission because he had to verify my request with the Executive Committee and the Pro-Chancellor through the Office of the Registrar, stipulating hierarchy in the decision-making process in this university.
Beyond personal experience, interviews and observations with faculty and administrative members of the constituent colleges of the University (located few meters away from the main administrative block of the university), provide insights into the organisational dynamics of these colleges in particular and interactions of Heads of the Colleges (Director/Principal) with the main administrative members and top management. As illustrated in figure 9, the Director is the head of the constituent college, assisted by Assistant Directors and the Head of the Departments (HoDs) and faculty members. Faculty members and the students are the main constituents within the organisation of these constituent colleges. Hence their experiences are critical to describe the organisational dynamics and its potential impact on their role and function in the college. However, there exists cooperation and conflict among faculty members and the administrators at the level of actual practice, especially the day-to-day functioning of respective colleges. The Controller of Examination of the constituent college commented:

The present Director of our College is an alumnus of one of the Indian Institute of Technologies (IIT’s). Such exposure is important to think differently and bring in more reforms. Our Director has introduced many reforms in streamlining the procedural aspects of the college. It is important to note, for reforms to be implemented need consensus among the HoDs and senior faculty members. In the absence of such consensus, the Director cannot move forward in implementing these reforms. There exists a strong network of teachers, and one could (if explored seriously) see a pattern in such consensus among certain group faculty members which is often recurring and a similar trend in among another group of faculty members who resist to such reforms. The decision of consensus and resistance may vary, but the groups remain constant. I strongly think that the college is governed by a bunch of people who like or dislike each other, rather than ‘objective’ policies or plan. (U2RESFADMIN02).

Following this, a junior faculty member of the constituent college, while discussing the challenges of working in a hostile environment for decision-making, he said:
The understanding between the HoD and the Director(s) within these respective institutions is critical – there are instances when HoDs and Director have had heated arguments during the staff meetings … Unfortunately, the HoD of our department does not have good relations with the Director, which is evident from Director’s indifference to our department regarding limited financial allocation to our department and showing a lack of interest in handling department grievances and so on… In the last one year, we had three departmental events about student’s project presentations, faculty research progress presentations and a special lecture by the CEO of a reputed company – none of these events were presided by the Director when invited. Whereas, he was able to chair events organized by other departments in the same week. These are some of the examples of indifference shown by the Head of the Institution, i.e. the Director and other senior officials. So HoDs and their role and relationship within and outside the department is an important aspect of governance in the university and its overall functioning (U2RESFM09).

The understanding between the actors of the university determines the effectiveness of the organizational structures and processes. These ‘routine’ differences at the departmental level are usually unreported or noticed by the top management (according to their view expressed in the interview). The top management of the university is keen on achieving its mission/vision by setting up an effective and efficient centralized administrative setup. An efficient centralized administrative system on one hand and hostile working environment at the departmental level, on the other, is a major conundrum for the university. Such practices at the micro level can be observed in many departments/centers of the university.

However, in contrast, there are employees of the university who expressed their contentment towards the top management and members of the administration for being very efficient and effective in governing this university. Director of one of the constituent Centre remarked:
The university is governed by the sense of commitment, passion, professionalism, and ownership, of the employees. The top-management of the University believes in providing ownership to the second tier of the governance, i.e., Directors and Principals of the constituent institutes and colleges. In fact, each of the institution and colleges under the university is asked to draw upon their own vision/mission and objectives, to ensure their space (U2RESADMIN12).

Extending remarks on the efficiency, Senior Professor at one of the constituent centre of the University, commented “an important aspect of governance in this university is less reliability on paperwork, unlike the public universities, here we rely on emails. Less paperwork contributes to the larger environment policy, in addition to enhancing fast and efficient decision-making” (U2RESFM18).

Another faculty member of another constituent Centre of the University (U2RESFM19) shares her recent experience in engaging with university administration in organizing a National Seminar. She evokes,

We are blessed to have been associated with such a university, two student volunteers, and I could manage the organization and coordination of the entire seminar with more than 150 delegates. Thanks to our administration at the department and the main administration department of the University. We just had to provide them with our requirements and they executed them without any hassles… I have heard many bad experiences of my friends in other universities; they literally curse their administration personnel for being rude and lethargic…such a system of administration is critical for us to focus on academic issues, rather than administrative matters (U2RESFM19).

Commenting on the effective coordination between the top management and the actors in the University, Senior Professor of the College of Communication, revealed that:
The university on the one hand and the department/colleges on the other are two important units within the system of governance – setting the rules, regulations, and standards for the overall functioning of the University. The top management, particularly the Pro-VC are well connected to the Principal/Director of the constituent colleges, enabling constant update on the day-to-day functioning of the college, to the top-management (U2RESFM02).

It is interesting that members of the university who appreciate the administrative setup and the leadership of the university, are associated with the centres and the college directly governed by the central administration – the Pro-Vice Chancellor. Such mixed perceptions among the actors unpack critical perspectives on the organisation, leadership, and governance of the university. In the following section, the study describes the mixed meaning and practices expansion, equity and excellence?

University Actors and Expansion: *Mandate and Need*

As mentioned above, University II was first established as a private professional college affiliated to a state university in the region. In the 1990s, the college was conferred the deemed-to-be-university. From the early 1990s to 2015, University II has evolved to become a national and a global brand, providing access to students from India and abroad. The university has established off-shore campuses, actively supplying to the growing demand for higher education around the globe. The year 2014 witnessed an enrollment of 6476 students out which as many as 61.4 percent came from outside the state of Karnataka. Around eight percent of these were Non-resident Indians (NRIs) or foreigners, representing 59 different nationalities. However, the representation of students from marginalized communities is abysmal, in comparison to other categories. Below, Table 5 illustrates the enrollment numbers across four academic years, demonstrating expansion regarding student enrolment by categories.
### Table 5: Student Enrolment by categories and gender (last four academic years) 2011-2014

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<tr>
<td>OBC</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>NRI/Int’l (PG)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>NRI/ Int’l (UG)</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>3098</td>
<td>2186</td>
<td>3019</td>
<td>2256</td>
<td>3156</td>
<td>2184</td>
<td>3479</td>
<td>2527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2112</td>
<td>2606</td>
<td>3357</td>
<td>2406</td>
<td>3498</td>
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<td>Grand total</td>
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<td>5896</td>
<td>6476</td>
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Source: Data collated from University II, Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) cell in March 2015.

Note: According to the Director, IQAC, of the University – “University admits Students by merit without considering their status as SC, ST or OBC. However, students admitted through quota reserved for Karnataka Government through the Common Entrance Test (CET) for UG and PG candidates may include students under this category.

Though the number of faculty members employed in the university is large, there is lack of social diversity as such. The university has employed 2272 faculty members as on 2014-15. The university claims to have an effective student-faculty ratio (01 faculty member: 10 students for PG and 01 faculty members: 15 students for UG) per UGC guidelines. However, having a closer look at the profile of the faculty members, it is critical to highlight the fact that majority of the faculty members (1020 of 2272), i.e., 45 percent of them are an alumnus of the University. Figure 10, below illustrates such a phenomenon.
From the statistics illustrated above, the university has grown manifolds regarding student enrollment and faculty recruitments. The quantitative increase in student enrollment sans diversity, there is a limited representation of students from marginalized communities (SC/ST/OBC). A detailed analysis of such a phenomenon is provided in the following sections.

It is important to note the lack of diversity across faculty members regarding their profile. Most of them are ‘from the same university.’ Some of the members of the university opine, this could be the strategy of the university top-management to check the rate of attrition. Considering the university town is in a not-so-conducive climate with limited facilities unlike cities in metropolitan faculty-members and other staff members from the local region are most preferred. However, the category of ‘from the same university’ does not constitute members of the local regions only, former students of the university from other regions of the country are represented here. The majority of them are pursuing their Doctoral research in the university and engaged in teaching. Hence, language, culture, climate and academic aspirations (especially completion of PhD) motivate faculty members to retain their services to the
university. However, such a strategy could lead to limited cultural diversity in the campus and lose out on hiring talented individuals as faculty members. Hence, such strategies result in myriad advantages and disadvantages for the university.

For this chapter, expansion, refers to the quantitative growth of the university regarding student enrolment, faculty members, administrators and other non-teaching staff working along with infrastructural developments within the university campus and beyond. Expansion of the university in engaging with its core functions of teaching, research and extension.

University II is an institution that has evolved long way since its inception as a professional college in the 1950s. One of the senior administrator (Director of a popular constituent college) of the University points out the benevolence of the founder in envisioning a grand university:

This institution was the result of charitable contribution and vision of our founder. His commitment for over two decades resulted in setting-up a college for a professional education. Today after five decades, the Institute has grown into the comprehensive university which has received global accolades. Our founder had dreamt about the university, and we are living it (U2RESADMIN12).

Other members of the administration (Deputy Registrar, Academics) share his experience on the deemed university system and expansion; he opines that:

In the deemed university system, we have to own the institution, unlike the affiliation with the state university where the owner is different. The expansion is difficult under the affiliation system, under such system we strived hard to expand, today we are a deemed university, where the constituent institutions are merged, under a single administrative set-up – resulting in robust expansion. Today we have 21 constituent institutions under the
university, the total number of students, faculty and non-teaching staff has increased manifold (U2RESADMIN05).

Correspondingly, one of the administrators (in the finance department), shared his opinion about the growth trajectory of the university in the last decade or so, attributing the ‘transformation’ to the top management of the University. For him:

In the last 16 years, the university has undergone rapid transformation. This transformation is across all the aspects of the university – first, it becomes a University – a private deemed university in 1993. Secondly, the rapid expansion regarding students, faculty and administrative personnel intake was very high and finally the infrastructure, and the overall campus development expansion has been very impressive. The top-management according to my experience and from what others discuss informally has been very enthusiastic to bring in series of reforms infrastructure services have been the priority in the university (U2RESADMIN04).

The Director, Admissions section of this University, shared the following remark on the some of the key reasons for the overall growth of this university:

I have been associated with this Institute since the early 1990s, in the last two decades or so, I have seen this university growing regarding its infrastructure, student enrollment, faculty members, administrative staff and the town itself has also grown beyond its actual boundary and abuts the nearby city. One of the main reason for such a growth in the last 15 to 20 years, is the commitment to quality of teaching, research and other administrative activities of the university among its stakeholders. Every stakeholder in the university plays a major role in making this is one the successful model in the country today (U2RESFMADMIN09).

The Vice-Chancellor of the University substantiates the link between top management and their commitment towards expansion with excellence. In his opinion:
Since much of our decisions come from members of the university – we can think of critical discussions and time-bound implementation reflected in the recommendations of the Executive Committee members. Such efficiency and professionalism have no doubt benefited this university in last two decades, which is evident from its massive expansion in India and abroad, as one of the most popular and high ranked private deemed university and so on (U2RESADMIN01).

Further, it is critical to invoke the remarks made by the Registrar (key administrator of the University), corroborating the above:

I have been associated with this university (then it was college) since the early 1980s. The university has expanded from a couple of constituent units to 21 constituent units in the last 15 years. I attribute such growth to the vision and commitment of our Chancellor, and other members of the top management and the sense of ownership employees have shown towards this university. In addition to this, I strongly think, that the administrative processes in this university, are streamlined and transparent, as a result of this there are no delays in the overall functioning of the university, contributing to the aspect of expansion with excellence (U2RESADMIN06).

Here, the Vice-Chancellor, the Registrar and other members of the administration in University II, describe the strong link between the passion of the top management (Chancellor and members of the Trust) and transparent and efficient administration process, leading to such transformative growth in the last few decades.

Expansion of the university is not limited to the boundaries of the campus, the state and the nation; it has spread its wings across the globe. University II claims to have four international off-shore campuses, with more than 500 NRI/International students enrolled at its main campus in the state. The Registrar (Academics), ardently attributed this achievement to the present Pro-Vice Chancellor of the University. According to him:
The university administration system is streamlined and the top-management under the authority of the Pro-Vice Chancellor, has excelled in enabling an international outlook for the university. Our Pro-Vice Chancellor has set up a dedicated team; he has organised a new international relations office lead by him…which is one of the main reasons facilitating the internationalisation programme of the University. This has been remarked as one of the best practice in the university, and I think such a practice will be the model of other universities, expanding its reach across the world (U2RESADMIN04).

When I spoke to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor about the overall expansion of the internationalization programs of the university, he said:

I have been focusing on expanding the universities reach across the borders, for ten years we have established 04 off-shore campuses in 04 countries, under their countries respective ministry or higher education regulatory councils. We have got a tremendous amount of learning and sharing with such an expansion. We have recently started this twinning programme, where students can have joint-degrees, part of their course will be on this campus, and part of it will be in the off-shore campus, of choice (U2RESADMIN05).

With such constructive remarks about the progress regarding the expansion of the university, hitherto, few expressed their discontent on some of the concerns with such loop-sided expansion or limited scope of expansion, in particular for students. Senior Faculty at the College of Communication remarked that:

According to me there in no doubt, that the university has witnessed and is witnessing expansion in terms of student and faculty enrolments and in a number of off-shore campuses, at the same time the leadership could engage more in bringing in social equity measures, in addition to what it offers. (U2RESFM02)
On a similar note, one of the faculty members with the College of Engineering at the University, expressed her content and discontent, with the overall expansion and skewed expansion, respectively. She remarked:

Yes, it is true, that the university has seen large-scale expansion. However, such an expansion is only in quantitative terms, not in quality. If you think of the kind of students who enrol here, while looking at the overall increase in numbers, you can see a skewed grouping of aspirants who can get an admission here – for instance, there are only two categories for admission process: general and NRI/Foreign Students category only, there are no other categories mentioned. Similarly, the university claims to have increased the number of faculty to a total number of students. However, if you see the quality and capacity of the faculty members, only a few of them are serious about their profession, and it is only because of these faculty members and few administrators, this university and its departments are surviving even today (U2RESFM06)

Correspondingly, one of the senior faculty members in the School of Management, also, expressed his concern with the growing number of students, while the number of faculty members is almost static. Comparing his early academic engagement as students in this university to the current scenario, he mentioned:

Another aspect of such a shift could be a huge expansion of the university about opening new branches of study or specialization as a result of this; there is expansion in some students. When we were studying in this institution, we were 800-850, today there are more than 2500 students across the branches available for students. This becomes a major hindrance for effective teaching and learning - more students mean limited scope for effective teacher-student interactions. Also, there is no uniformity in numbers and heterogeneity (class, caste in particular) in the profile of the students across batches in this institution (U2RESFM10).
The discontent among the faculty members, unlike the administrators and top management of the university about expansion and growth in the last few decades, is highly witnessed. Another faculty-administrator of the College of Nursing in this University expressed her problem of increasing work related to administration than teaching, remarked:

However, a similar expansion in large scale is not witnessed in the number of faculty members, particularly in the medical college. The university top management along with the main administrators of the colleges should take some measures to have more faculty or provide Teaching Assistants or have a dedicated team that will help in assisting the faculty to overcome their administrative work (U2RESFMADMIN03).

The issue of limited faculty members in comparison to some students remarked by many faculty members is one of the biggest problems of loop-sided expansion. One hand, there are limited faculty members and the new one’s recruited lack commitment and quality in the teaching and research, on the other. Hence, it is not just the need for teachers in this university; it is teachers with good quality and skills, are the need of the hour. Remarks by Professor of Medical Sciences (U2RESFM03) followed by a faculty member of in the School of Life Sciences (U2RESFM08) express their trepidations about expansion, below:

The university has grown in length and breadth in the five years, at least as I have witnessed it. Today the university accommodates more than 20000 students, from 10000 approx. During my tenure as a student. Such massive growth has resulted in huge infrastructural reform and the popularity of the across the world. However, according to my experience and interactions with students and other members of the faculty who claim that the university has not been able to achieve credibility in getting efficient and talented faculty members. This is the biggest challenge that the university is facing today (U2RESFM03).

Aligned to this one of the faculty members further opined that
“The most significant problem in universities today is the absence of good quality teachers, if there are good teacher’s things will only improve. There is a huge shortage of good quality teachers, and there is a need to attract the best talent into teaching. In the Universities and colleges, there is an acute shortage of faculty, and the number of students is increasing enormously and due to many reason recruitments is almost stopped, in this situation the age of superannuation should be 65 years, not 62 years” (U2RESFM08).

A faculty member from the Department of Pharmacy, while sharing his recent experience about changes in the administrative processes in the context of growth, made an interesting observation:

With expansion in the last few years, the university has become more ‘rule’ bound body than ‘principle’ oriented body. Rule and standards are the only way that the university can govern such huge numbers of students and issues related to them (U2RESFM10).

To substantiate the above, the top management of the university has issued directives to heads of the institutions and departments in the constituent colleges/centers, on making PhD degree mandatory for the faculty members to seek tenured position and promotions/increments. In this regard, the Vice Chancellor of the University remarked:

In the last Executive Committee (EC), members reached consensus on ensuring that present faculty members should enroll and complete their Doctoral degree (PhD) at the earliest. The university plans to extend them full support to pursue their PhD. In addition to this, the University shall permit them to continue their teaching services with full salary, for those who will register for their PhD in this University. In fact, employs of this University, qualified to apply for PhD are encouraged to pursue their PhDs. Faculty members who have their PhD degrees will be eligible for promotions as per university guidelines (U2RESADMIN01).
Consequently, the Registrar (Evaluation) of the university remarked that the overall enrollment of PhD in the university was limited to 20-25 registrations annually, he further commented that:

In the last few years, the overall number of PhD registrations has reached nearly 200 per year, and we have made all the efforts to match this with increase the rate at which the universities award doctoral degrees. In addition to the new directive from the top-management, mandating PhD for a tenured position, we have had many affiliations from many research institutes in the country. Such an expansion is possible because we have a rigorous process, like publication and completion of PhD and a dedicated team planning and monitoring the progress of research and collaboration under the supervision of top-management (U2RESADMIN05).

Today, the University boasts of having hundreds of PhD registrations and submissions, suggesting an expansion in the domain of research. U2RESADMIN05 attributes the success to the organization and leadership for carefully planning the PhD scheme. However, one has to be critical about the fact that, out of 200 registrations per year, the majority of them are junior faculty members of the University. Among them, many have expressed compulsion for tenure track appointment, then academic aspiration as the motive to pursue their research. With such an attitude, it is important to deconstruct the meaning of quantity and quality of research reflected through some of these doctoral degrees awarded.

Given the growth trajectory across Undergraduate, Postgraduate and Doctoral program regarding student enrollment and infrastructure – the campus has evolved and grown many folds and has generously spread across the town. An alumnus (employed in the local printing press – owned by the University), recalls:
I graduated in the year 2010, with a degree in Bachelors (2004-2008) and Masters (2010) in Community Medicine. In my six years of experience, I have witnessed the enormous growth and expansion of this university over the years. The number of students and staff has increased, along with this, the campus has more buildings. I’m native to the neighbouring town; there are many changes to this town as well – because of this university. According to the local people, the town constitutes the university, and the university itself is a town – we cannot make out the difference as such. In fact, the name of the university and the town have become synonymous – we cannot isolate one from other (U2RESALU02).

Subsequently, a retired employee of the local bank, residing in the vicinity of University II, remarks:

This university has transformed the region into one of the most popular centres for academic pursuit in the country today. People in this region are proud of the founder and his vision. It is great to have such recognition to the town which was unknown to people in the state. From the early 1950s, when the college was established, there has been an increase in the overall employment in this region and the surrounding regions. The college has trained one of the best doctors and engineers in the world, from this region, and it continues to do so, as one of the recognised university in the world (U2RESCOMM01).

However, the same member of the community and a student belonging to the locality expressed their discontent over negative influence on their children and culture, due to the influx of students from other regions in the country. Such strong notions of segregations are observed in the town as well. I have during my field work, an observed number of region-specific restaurants around the campus, with a handful of them from the local region, surviving. The majority of these restaurants are owned and managed by migrants.
Students in this university town organise festivals - *Durga Pooja, Onam and Holi* are the most popular ones. These festivals are not popular among the local community. Not many from the local community, including university staff, participated in these festivals. Such instances indicate a disconnect between the students and the local community. The local community is proud to be associated with the university for its achievements in the field of education and development. However, the direction in which the existing culture, norms and ethos are changing is a matter of anxiety for the local population.

The member of the community expressed his concern about shifting in the traditional culture of the town by commenting:

> Another important aspect that is emerging among social circles – the university in the last one decade has been proactively seeking students from North Indian and international students. Due to students coming from varied cultures have their practices and habits, which may cause harm to the local system and practices. People in the locality are critical and unhappy with such activities like – alcoholism, drugs, abusing girls and engaging in live-in relations. Local residents do not want their children to study in such environment; often they are sent to Bengaluru, Mysore and places in the neighbouring states. They fear the influence of such practices and behaviour on their children. These issues are constantly taken up at Rotary club meetings and other social clubs, where members of the university are always present (U2RESCOMM01).

Similarly, among the students, one of them expressed her displeasure over the increasing size of the students, limiting the area of the campus and facilities for the students. She observes:

> The campus area is very limited to accommodate a huge number of students. We do not have sufficient sports and hostel facilities. Many of us hardly get time to talk to our faculty members and mentors - we have to wait for long hours to meet them, considering that each
University II has emerged as one of the leading providers of higher education in the country, in the last couple of decades. The nature of expansion witnessed today is the result of passion and commitment of the top management of the University. The university today employs more than 5000 teaching and non-teaching staff, accommodating 6000 plus students on the campus. As opined by some of the respondents, mentioned above, the university and the town where it is located have evolved together, and today they constitute each other. Further, the outreach of the university is not limited to town, but to other parts of the state, country and world, evident from its branch and off-shore campuses.

University Actors and Equity: *Mixed Perceptions*

For more than a few decades ago, there has been growing concern that opportunities for higher education to the socially marginalised and economically deprived sections of the society are limited (Deshpande, 2009). Such marginalization is manifested in rural and urban disparities; male and female enrolments; economically weaker sections; baffling admission procedures; limited support from the government and more over lack of social and political sensitization on campuses. Such manifestations of inequities are reflected in public and private universities. The less privileged students to go mostly for public institutions with a relatively low-quality standard when their better-off counterparts enjoy wider options to choose from a variety of private institutions with better quality standard (Saleth, 2015).

In this chapter, the perception and practices of actors in University II related to equity are described. To engage in this, equity means - equitable distribution by gender, caste, class, language, income and physical ability in the university and its function - Research, Teaching and Extension.
In University II, the discussion around the issue of equity or related issues of caste, gender and class led to series of responses from the actors in the university. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor in the interview, while discussing the aspect of equity, firmly remarked that:

In our university there is no reservation policy as such, here we value the only merit (U2RESADMIN06).

In addition to no reservation policy statement, the Registrar, upholding the Pro-VC’s remark, pointed out that:

Appointment to top administrative positions in the university is based on performance and merit. There is no reservation at all, whoever performs well, will be recognized and promoted. Performance is the only criteria – any post is for three years; the idea is everybody should get an opportunity to come to such top managerial positions (U2RESADMIN03).

The Pro-VC’s and the Registrar’s statements indicate the policy directives towards addressing the issue of inequity in University II. According to them, performance and merit are a priority.

Observations and responses of the actors in the constituent colleges are described below, to unpack the perceptions and practices toward equitable distribution while engaging with the functions of the university – teaching, research, and extension.

The Director of the Engineering college, while discussing the quality of instruction and learning, noted that the:

The larger profile of the students – curriculum reforms, are in alignment with third generation students. In this institution, we have an energetic crowd of students and equally demanding parents here (U2RESADMIN08).

In line with this, Assistant Professor in the same college remarked:
Students enrolled in our university are second, third and sometimes fourth generation learners, they are usually self-directed learners, and not often dependent on their classmates and us (U2RESFM06).

According to them, as a result of such profile of the students, innovations in curriculum and its delivery, are not at all challenging, and hence, the quality of teaching and research is self-evident. The process of admission of students is an interesting reality in University II, arguably the most important reason contributing to a specific profile of students discussed above. An official in-charge of the Admission process, observed:

One thing I have noticed during admission time – parents who come seeking for their children’s admission majority of them belong to an affluent family – majority of them are Non-Resident of Indians (NRI), they usually don’t belong to this region, and more importantly parents (both Father and Mother) are well educated. Another important thing to share – the population of male students who apply is more than female students, particularly for the international program/twinning program (U2RESADMIN11).

Further, U2RESFM08, Associate Professor of Life Sciences in University II, highlights some of his experience during admission period, last year. According to him, irrespective of no reservations or quota for the socially marginalised and economically challenged sections, he claims that the demand for enrolment in this university is very high. Often parents, willing to pay the full fees, return empty hand. In his opinion:

During admission time, we interact with their parents – the majority of them have sound knowledge about the course and preferences. They engage in detailed discussion about their children’s choice of course and prospects. From my experience, I have hardly witnessed parents complaining about the fee structure here. They are clear about what they want from the course and the university. Also, they are happy about the hostel and other services offered for the amount remitted for the same to the University (U2RESFM08).
One of the senior most faculty member, commenting on the ‘no reservation policy’ practised in University II, pointed that there is a policy for economically challenged in University II. U2RESFM01 remarked:

Yes, we do have policies augmenting equity in the university – for instance, our department and other departments across the university, provide scholarships to Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) of the society, i.e., students whose parents have an annual income less than 4-5 lakh, approx., are eligible to apply for the scholarship. Among the applicants, based on merit we shortlist the candidates – the main idea is to encourage the applicant who has the potential to grow in the academic world, but due to financial constraints cannot avail such quality education. However, some members think that these scholarships are usually awarded to relatives of any of the senior faculty members or administrative staff belonging to the prominent caste/community in the university. Hence, scholarships are usually, limited to this region and certain specific population – there is a limited reach to the needy and deserving. However, these are some of the concerns in the recent past […] in this university; faculty appointments are made on performance, there are no reservation/quotas as such (U2RESFM01).

With ‘no reservation’ and affirmative policies in University II towards ensuring equity, the university has opened up avenues of inequities of many kinds. Some of the practices about appointments of administration and faculty, admission processes and so on, are instrumental in such inequities. Students enrolled in the university expressed their opinions while sharing their experiences. U2RESSTU15, a student at the College of Engineering, shared his ordeal of being part of this university while sharing his difficulty in surviving on the campus, considering his background. For him:

Coming from a very small town, it is hard to adjust to such cosmopolitan and diverse campus life. Students in the medical and engineering schools, come from various regions
of the country and are from well to do families. The life on campus is very expensive, and I cannot afford it, many of my classmates eat food in restaurants. I always make it a point that I come to the hostel mess to get my meals, regularly – even if I have to miss my class. The hostel is a bit far from my college, and I do not have a vehicle to finish my lunch in less than one hour, sometimes. For my family, the fees charged for this program was very high; we had to take a loan to pay this amount (U2RESSTU15).

To address such concerns, the university has introduced various scholarship schemes. However, according to U2RESSTU11, a student enrolled in the MBA program, opined:

The fee for the MBA program is very high. Recently, the university has initiated scholarships for students belonging to Economically Weaker Sections of the society, those with less than Rs. Three lakhs, income annually. My parent’s income is higher than Rs. Three lakhs, but not sufficient to pay huge amounts as fees. We had to take a loan to pay my fees (U2RESSTU11).

With ‘no reservation’ and limited scholarship policies considering exorbitant fees, students and parents desire to associate with the University II for higher studies. Below, a comment by a student enrolled in the pharmacy program, substantiates the demand for this university:

I was keen to get into this university, to pursue my higher education in the field of Pharmacy. Among many universities and colleges in the state, this is considered to be one of the best in India – in fact, this is ranked No.01, among private universities in research. I worked hard for my Common Entrance Test (CET) to get admission on merit. However, unfortunately, I could not make it to the merit quota and relied on the fee-based quota. The fees for the MPharm program was very high, but the counseling sessions convinced my parents, about good job placement, there was no other thought then, joining this university (U2RESTU09).
Further, in addition to good infrastructure for research and job placement, the opinion of family and friends based on caste and community affiliations of the founder-trustee of the University.

Among my friends and family members, there was always a good opinion of this university. Moreover, we belong to the same community and caste of the founder of the university – my parents have high regards and affinity to this university and the founder’s family and their work to the society. I wrote the State Common Entrance Exam and fortunately, could get a score that could avail me a seat in this university. We decided to get admission in this university and visited the campus for the same (U2RESSTU08).

Such limited policies hinder socio-economic and cultural diversity on the campus. Ideally, a university should hail such diversity. According to U2RESSTU06, there is some diversity one can experience, but it is limited only to regional. According to her:

After few weeks of my admission, I could witness the regional diversity - my classmates came from various parts of India, Dubai, Malaysia and so on, very few (hardly 2 or 3) of us came from this region. To experience such diversity was fascinating. However, the diversity was limited to geographical representation only. Many of our classmates, belonged to well-to-do families – many of their parents are senior civil servants, some of them from rich business families and children whose parents are well-known Doctors in the country. I belong to a middle-class family, my Father works as an Accountant in the nearby Chemical factory, and my Mother is a homemaker. Overall, exposure to such diversity was fun and also intimidating, wondering how I will cope with the group considering their economic well-being and social background (U2RESSTU06).

The university administration is strict in ensuring decent behavior on the campus. Acknowledging the fact that students come from various regions in the country and world, one needs to respect practices of different cultures on the campus. However, with such variegated cultural practices, the university has to ensure some level-playing field. Commenting on this,
U2RESFMADMIN12, the Controller of the Examination and faculty member of the College of Engineering, remarked:

Students here come from varied cultures and regional background. Since students who enroll here are adults, the university does not have ‘uniforms’ to students. We allow them to come in their color dress – however, as a responsible faculty and member of the university, I think it is my duty to ensure that students do not expose themselves by wearing short clothes. If I see any student boy or a girl wearing short clothes, I will warn them. After the repeated warning, even if they continue to wear such clothes, I have sent them to their hostels to change and come. This is the best way to teach them to be disciplined and maintain some dignity in the college and in the university campus. Because of this, I’m very unpopular in the college and the university, but I do not matter to me – it is my duty to guide them to appropriate living, and I shall do this until I’m in this profession or until somebody convinces me that such disciplining is wrong? (U2RESFMADMIN12)

Few students in University II, when asked to share their experience about any discrimination on the campus, U2RESSTU18 commented:

Hitherto, I have not experienced any issues related to caste-discrimination. The kind of students who enroll in this university with such huge amount of fees particularly the professional and technical courses, who constitute the bulk of the university, do you think we can witness any discrimination related to caste – basically the students come from rich families, and they usually don’t bother about any caste in making friends or enemies, but they do care about money and the region we belong too…there are regional groups thriving in the campus. The Telugu group is the most popular group often engaging with quarrels with the Punjabi group (U2RESSTU18).

In addition to such response, a student pursuing her M. Com in University II shared her opinion on caste-based inequities on campus:
I am pursuing my final semester in Master of Commerce...In this university, there is no scope for reservation of any kind (except for children or relatives of faculty members or administration personnel). Here I have never experienced any sort of discrimination by caste. However, I believe I have not experienced such discriminations since I have not revealed my caste affiliations to my close friends as of now. Also, at this university, there are other kinds of discriminations - like rich vs poor, urban vs rural students (U2RESSTU17).

Although, the Pro-VC and Registrar per their interview, mentioned above, claimed that the university top management does not have any policy of reservation or preference in appointing members to managerial positions based on ‘super-appointments’, apart from merit and/or performance, the Deputy Registrar (Academics), Commenting on these appointments, remarked:

The members who are nominated to the managerial position largely come from the local region and are alumni of this university. According to the executive committee members, an alumnus and a member of this region, at the higher administrative position can be more committed and trustworthy, then an outsider. Since we have the freedom to appoint our own team as a private deemed University, the top-management identifies the second-tier leadership in the administration. In our university, we do not have any caste-based nominations as such, but implicitly alumni get some consideration (U2RESADMIN05).

Beyond policy, at the level of practice, U2RESFM02, comments on the faculty recruitment process in University II, suggests an emphasis on merit and performance with implicit preferences to natives, U2RESFM02, unpacks this issue, further:

Faculty appointments are made by general qualification and academic achievements. I have not come across any caste based or class-based criteria to fill in my job application; it was not mandated. However, if you observe the general population of the faculty and their
background – a lot of them come from this region. They are usually a native population of this region and belonging to certain community or caste. I do not know whether this is the universities policy, or a conventional process followed in the university from many years (U2RESFM02).

The clear representation of faculty members belonging to the local region and alumnus of this university are illustrated in figure 10. Such an illustration is the result of University policies for recruitment based on the perceptions of the top-management, as observed by U2RESADMIN05, discussed above. Expressing her discontent with the lack of diversity among faculty members, Assistant Professor at the Centre for Philosophy and Humanities, commented:

Students who come from various part of the country and abroad, provide a rich diversity within the campus. However, such diversity has not been possible with the administrative and the teaching fraternity of this university. The majority of the faculty members are from the locality and usually an alumnus of this university. This is very daunting and uninteresting for individuals coming from distinct parts of the country (U2RESFM04).

To this end, the meaning and practice of equity are highly contextual to policies and the nature of actors in University II. There is limited consensus on the significance and practice of equity among actors engaging the day-to-day functioning of the university. The ‘no reservation’ and pro-regional preference for faculty-members/administrators is a critical factor to situate the discussion on equity in University II, amongst other observations discussed above.

**University Actors and Excellence: State-of-the-aspiration and State-of-the-practice**

Recalling the policy discussion, in the previous chapter, the National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 addressed the issue of ‘deterioration in the quality of higher education.’ Successive Five-year plans have engaged in dealing with this issue. The Twelfth Five-year Plan (2012-
2017) provided a comprehensive framework for quality education. The plan states: that a strong leadership backed by bold vision, clear strategy, creativity, competition, innovative governance and a process drove approach, ensure quality in higher education institutions. The meaning and practice of excellence or quality in the higher educational establishments vary case-to-case basis; in other words, it is highly contextual. The search for a universal definition of excellence/quality and a statement of law like the relationship has been unsuccessful (Reeves and Bednar, 1994). However, Excellence or quality revolves around few central ideas: Quality as absolute, Quality as relative and quality as a process, and Quality as a culture (Barnet, 1992). Excellence means quality assurance and improvement, effectiveness/efficiency, the culture of performance, outcome orientation, world-class(ness) and so on. The excellence of and for teaching, research and extension or service in the university. Such an understanding is unremittingly adopted and adapted by the actors in pursuing their functions within the university set-up. In other words, the relationship between the vision/mission of excellence and the process of achieving that vision/mission lies between the complexity of aspirations and realities, respectively. To substantiate this further, the Director (Head of the Institution) of the Engineering College in University II, remarked:

What is a measure of excellence? There is no standard or one measure of excellence? There is no standard measure of ranking? Also, the university at the top-management level has one measure of excellence, and at the lower level, the institution/departments and schools, faculty, student have another measure of excellence, this is not a linear or simple process as such – where will these differences converge? (U2RESADMIN08)

Below, in this section describes the understanding of excellence among the actors in University II. To illustrate this, ‘excellence’ is operationalised as follows: the quality/excellence in university function – Research, Teaching, and Extension – and governance processes ensuring
these functions. The central vision of University II is to achieve - “Global leadership in the human development, excellence in education and healthcare.”

This vision of excellence, no doubt, embellished in the everyday functioning of the university. For some of the actors within the university, the gap between aspiration and reality is thin, and for few others the gap is thick. The majority of them suggest that it is the commitment of the top management and the academic culture in the university, with efficiency and effectiveness among the actors of the university to meet the desired outcomes. The Director of European Studies Centre, University II, while expressing her contentment on the governance mechanisms in achieving excellence, commented:

Commitment to quality is not just an aspirational value, but we can witness this in practice. The University top management has streamlined the internal mechanisms to coordinate, monitor and evaluate quality parameters, across stakeholders and their performance in the university. The university has established a full-fledged Quality and Compliance department, towards coordinating all and any quality related matters in the university. The Quality and Compliance department collects and collates data across all the constituent institutions and the departments. The top-management has ensured such effective organization for examining the quality and further coordinating it across all the institutions. The QMR’s are at each department level; this is an example of the top management's interest in decentralizing the overall administration process of the University (U2RESFMADMIN09).

A Senior Faculty-administrator, Head of the Electronics Department working since the 1980s, expressed his reverence for the university leadership for ensuring participation of all in drawing the vision/mission of the university by collating vision statements from the constituent colleges, based on consensus. He recalls,
When we moved to the deemed university set-up, head of the institutions along with the head of the department was asked to draw up, institutional visions. The vision: “Excellence in technical education, through innovation and teamwork,” was formulated in 2003, by former Director of the Institute, who was an ex-IITian. The vision should be generic enough and long term, to provide an insight into the governance processes of the Institute. A similar exercise was done to at the university-level. We do not have consultants and not copied from somewhere, like many other colleges and universities (U2RESFMADMIN12).

The university leadership’s planning, and coordination among the actors of the university are the results of particular processes and mechanisms evaluating the performance of the actors in the university. One of the senior faculty member (former HoD) in the Department of Pharmacology, informs that:

In the past, I have held the position of HoD of the department and an active member of the Quality and Compliance Department of the University. I’m very much aware of the university excellence initiatives. The top management is committed to achieving academic excellence across all the departments of the university. There is a vision/mission objective, set for each of the constituent institutions, and there are processes and mechanisms to continuously assess the direction towards achieving the objectives: performance management system, rewards/incentives and promotion/recognition and so on. There is a full-proof process towards enhancing the quality of teaching and learning (U2RESFM01).

U2RESFM01, Professor in the School of Management Studies, shared her views on the nexus between effective governance mechanism established in the university for ensuring quality. According to her:

Faculty members are assessed on their performance through the Performance Management System (PMS) which is evaluated by the Head of the Institution. The PMS system assess
us on following broad parameters: Personal Qualities (loyalty, self-motivation, communication skills...); Academic Activities (work ethics, course plan, student evaluation of faculty...); Professional and Allied Competencies (Teamwork, involvement in department activities...) and Continuous learning and self-development (organising conference, initiatives for acquiring higher qualifications, participation in seminars ...).

Student feedback on teaching-learning processes is also one of the components of PMS. With such full-proof evaluation system, we have no choice, but to give our fullest potential to achieve set outcomes. End of every month, we have to update information about each of the broad heads mentioned in the PMS (U2RESFM11).

In alignment with this, the Pro-Vice Chancellor, considered to be one of the key decision-makers in University II, shares his opinion for setting up such a system and ensuring quality in the functions of the university. He said:

I believe that autonomy is the foundation for building quality in research and teaching, to build a world-class university. If the employees do not have autonomy to organize their work and set their goals, there is no commitment and passion in their work; it is important to give them their space to work and operate accordingly. I have, at least, those institutions in my domain, provided substantial autonomy in academic matters and administrative and financial matters, including hiring faculty members for the institutions. In consultation with the heads of the constitute institutes, I set the goals and objectives, for each of the institutes, and provide them autonomy to organize and to coordinate their functions. With such autonomy, the Heads of the Institutes/Directors are entrusted with accountability measures (as return on autonomy) – we expect efficiency in the overall performance of the faculty and students and better quality of research/teaching, and more importantly, institutions should be able to collaborate with international universities. Hence, there is expected a return on the autonomy provided to the members of the University (U2RESADMIN06).
Returning to the discussion on the vision of the university, the top-management in the year 2010-11, undertook an exercise in re-drawing the vision of the university – a shift from teaching-based University to research intensive university. Such a change was necessary to identify this university as one of the world’s best universities, according to the world ranking of universities. Providing further details on this, the Vice Chancellor, shared his thoughts on the proposed reform(s) in reorienting the University:

After having series of consultation with experts and senior staff members of the university, we wanted to shift our focus from excellence in teaching to excellence in research and research for teaching in the university. Internally the key decision makers of the University discussed the modalities of making this university a ‘World Class Research Centre’ by 2020. This was the vision with which I set forth my office in 2010. With the efforts of a dedicated and professional team of academic and non-academic staff, today in 2014 we have been ranked 85th in the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) University rankings in BRICS region and 190th position in Asia. We have reached to Asia’s top-200 universities, and we are not far from our vision to be in the top-200 league of universities in the world, according to the world ranking of universities. I’m confident that our academic and non-academic staff are capable of this feat. In the country, we are ranked first among the private deemed universities. Our research and publications achievements have sought many accolades for being the No. 01 among the private deemed universities country (U2RESADMIN01).

The period of crisis marked by the proliferation of unrecognized and fake private universities, sustaining ourselves was the sole agenda; in addition to ensuring effective governance mechanisms and reforms therein, the university must extend quality education in order to overcome the crisis. Along with infrastructure and services for the actors to ensure quality and excellence in their work, the university has to seek legitimacy from the students and parents/guardians. Without legitimacy of being a university of repute - infrastructure and
services, the vision/mission and so on, will be less important. The Vice-Chancellor of the university in this context shared:

The general opinion of the public about private and deemed universities was not favorable; this was a matter of concern. However, with the efforts of our leaders and staff are able to showcase our worth by continuing to provide quality education to the students and engaging in path-breaking research work. Today we stand tall as one of the most preferred private deemed university in India and some parts of the world (U2RESADMIN01).

In alignment with this, the university and its top-management have continued to strive for excellence and today, it has state-of-the-arts facilities in the campus, attracting aspirants from almost all corner of the state, nation, and the world. To discuss this in more detail, one of the faculty member of the University, Department of Philosophy Studies, suggested that:

The university, no doubt provides one of the best infrastructure services for research, teaching, and sports. There is state-of-art sports facility available and so on. The university provides all possible services for excellence in teaching and learning (U2RESFM06).

Further, U2RESSTU09, a student member of the University, presently pursuing his Bachelor’s in Pharmacy, expressed his desire to associate with this university, bearing in mind the facilities and brand of the university in the country. He remarked:

I was keen to get into this university, to pursue my higher education in the field of Pharmacy. Among many universities and colleges in the state, this is considered to be one of the best in India – in fact, this is ranked No.01, among private universities for research and publications. I worked hard for my Common Entrance Test (CET) to get admission on merit. However, unfortunately, I could not make it the merit quota and relied upon the fee-based quota (U2RESTU09).
On a similar note, expressing his intent to enroll in this university, despite, high fees, a student from the school of life sciences, said:

The library, laboratories and faculty members are the most important part of the university. Initially, I thought the fee is very high, but I do not have any complaints about the fee since the university offers excellent infrastructural facilities and quality faculty members (U2RESSTU10).

Another student from the engineering college, sharing his rationale for opting to enroll in this university, irrespective of high fee structure, said:

This university, unlike many Government colleges, has excellent infrastructure, cordial faculty members, safety for girls and prospective students. My parents and I were impressed with this and decided to get enrolled in this university. However, the admission fees including the hostel charges and miscellaneous were exuberant – my parents had to take a loan to facilitate this amount. The fee was not a major deterrent to seeking an admission since the university is known for best job placements, there was a way to earn and pay back my loan. I plan to settle down in this part of India – to pursue my professional career, eventually(U2RESSTU05).

The link between the success of the university in creating demand by ensuring job placement as a result of its quality framework is evident per above discussion. To substantiate further, U2RESSTU01, a student enrolled in the school of management, share her thoughts on why she chose to pursue her higher studies in this university:

I had got admission in a couple of colleges in my hometown and few of them in abroad, I ignored these options and chose to enroll in this university. One of the main reason to do is its popularity for good placement record. Some of the success stories, of our earlier students, some of them within our family and friends circle were motivating and
reassuring, and hence, I made my mind pursue my higher studies in this university (U2RESSTU01).

U2RESADMIN04, a member of the core administration team of the university in the Planning and Monitoring section, employed for the last 24 years, opines that:

The top-management according to my experience and from what others discuss informally has been very enthusiastic to bring in series of reforms, in particular, infrastructure services have been the priority in the university. In fact, students and parents when they come for admission or pre-admission, are very impressed by the quality of infrastructure – incubation center, classrooms, library, hostels and most importantly our administration building – the state-of-the-art infrastructure is the USP of our institution… Locally, parents complain that the fees are very high, but the facilities offered by the University is of high quality, it is worth the money invested for their children’s education (U2RESADMIN04).

The main objective of such interest and investment in infrastructural development, as observed and understood from various actors in the university is two-fold: firstly, to provide state-of-the-art facilities to students and faculty member to pursue their functions efficiently and secondly, with quality infrastructure, the brand of the university is enhanced, increasing demand, which is reflected in higher enrolment, irrespective of exorbitant fee structure.

In this context, it is important to recall the Vice-Chancellor’s (U2RESADMIN01) statement on a strategic shift in the university vision towards ‘world-class research center by 2020’, mentioned above. Such a vision has resulted in series of changes in the overall governance mechanisms in the University, fetching support, and opposition from the actors within the university. To describe one of the noticeable shift introduced as a strategy to achieve the ‘world-class research center’ status by 2020, was to prioritize research over teaching – which is reflected in faculty members investing more time in research publications/patents/projects)
and to increase the overall research output through the doctoral program. According to the Registrar of the University:

PhDs are one of the visible outcomes of excellence in research, PhD is a valve which provides research output, and hence provide global visibility in the world ranking system. Today we are ranked some 85th in Asia and among top-100 in the BRICS region, as a result of our efforts in standardizing our research output (U2RESADMIN03).

The Dean (Research), of the University, commenting on the change in policy directions, remarked:

One of the main reform proposed by the top-management along with precise directions to all the Deans, HoIs and HoDs, is to enhance the quality of research. We get regular circulars from the publication section to update the MIS with faculty and researcher’s publication data. My role of Dean (Research) is to motivate and in some cases, persuade the relevant departments to engage in research projects and publish their research. PhD scholars are supported and motivated to publish and attend seminars and conferences. The top management has the vision to make this university as one of the best research university in the world. This is an ambitious vision but considering the support and motivation from the top management regarding finance and autonomy, we are not too far from achieving this vision (U2RESFMADMIN08).

URRESFM02, Assistant Professor in the school of Hotel Administration, shared her experience, in response to changes in the university policy. She observed:

Our HoD and the Head of the Institution often mention that research output is an indicator of quality, and we must give more attention to this. I am doing my PhD since last one year my HoD wanted me to register for PhD; it is important to complete our PhD to seek promotion in the job. Our HoD says, ‘if you do your Ph.D., you can get some publications from your thesis which could be essential for getting your promotion and increments.’ The
university and our department are severely persuading every one of us to publish, register for PhD and engage in conference/seminars, to figure in the top-100 universities in the world, in alignment with University World Ranking metrics (U2RESFM02).

The opinions and experiences shared by the actors in the university about excellence/quality described above, specify positive remarks on the vision and practice of excellence. The following section provides a description of perceptions opposing the top management’s vision and strategies to implement the same, by actors in the university. Coming down on the new strategy for improving the quality of the university set forth by the top-management, one of the senior faculty member (U2RESFM06), with the Centre for Philosophy and Humanities, expressed her discontent on the model adopted by the University. In her opinion:

The new policy direction for quality taken by the top-management aligns more with the western model of evaluation of quality, and we are just copying such a system…the university should take its method and performance metrics, based on the reality out here…the institutional set-up and the composition of the stakeholders and their background are different here compared to the western set-up. Localized metrics will be beneficial for the university and its overall agenda of enhancing the quality of teaching and research (U2RESFM06).

Subsequently, sharing observations on the local context, the Head of the Department of Public Health, expressed his opinion about the overall culture of functioning within the university. He emphasized on the fact that, a culture based on ‘objective-consensus’ is de-facto a requirement for encouraging excellence in the function of the university. According to him:

I strongly, think the college is governed by a bunch of people who like or dislike each other. There is a lack of objectivity in any consensus at least from what I have experienced until now. Such groups or collectivism based on community, caste, gender and ideology
should change, and all of us have to work towards excellence in academics for the larger
good of the students and the university as the whole (U2RESFMADMIN03).

Under this claim, U2RESFMADMIN08, HoD, Department of Mechanical and Manufacturing,
College of Engineering shared his views about lack of coordination between actors in the
university, resulting in a gap between aspiration and reality. He claims:

To meet the vision set by the top management for 2020, there is a commitment from the
top management, but similar passion and interest is lacking among 2000 plus faculty
members. We often don’t collaborate with other departments – there is a lot of potential in
working with the institution/college or departments, but due to egos and attitudes among
faculty and HoDs including Directors or HoIs, we do not see this potential unleashing
(U2RESFMADMIN08).

Voicing his discontent, U2RESFM15, Associate Professor at the College of Engineering,
commenting on the gap between aspiring for excellence and actualising the same in practice,
said:

Our Director and the top management, particularly the Registrar of the university, don’t
get along well. They have in many cases different views on the vision of the college and
how the college should work towards this vision, i.e., achieving academic excellence…our
Director wants the college, and it is functioning to be autonomous from the university (in
practice) and the Registrar and some members of the top management, think that the
college should work towards the agenda set forth by the university and its mission
(U2RESFM15).

Further, faculty members of the University shared their displeasure in changes in the university
policies and practices. U2RESFM13, Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities and
Management, remarked:
The new direction suggested by the top-management of shifting the foci from teaching to research, given the context of the global race for ranking, is problematic. According to me, such a system will not encourage faculty to be ‘good teachers,’ but may make them ‘good researchers.’ We are not a research institute, but university which is supposed to provide good teaching and research environment and engage with the society (extension). With the new direction of this university, in prioritizing research over teaching, we will seriously hinder the quality of instruction, which will have an impact on quality of students in the course of time (U2RESFM13).

Corroborating this remark, U2RESSTU06, master’s student in the same department, shared his experience in the context of faculty members being pressurized to complete their doctoral research:

The faculty members are busy pursuing their doctoral research which is now mandatory as per the university order, as told by one of the faculty members. Since they are busy with doctoral research work, we cannot get to meet them often, as it was the case during my undergraduate days, and at the same time, we are not having regular revisions in the syllabus as such. Another important point that comes to mind in the context of pressure on the faculty to pursue their research –students is asked collect data/information for their research…in fact, a couple of faculty members asked us to do our assignments on topics that relate to their doctoral research. Students should have the freedom to choose their assignment topic; this should not be dictated by the faculty. However, again, there is nobody/agency to take this matter for resolution, and even if we take this forward, we are not sure if this will be kept confidential(U2RESSTU06).

Beyond these concerns as a result of shifts in policy directions, U2RESFM17 pointed to a critical change. Sharing his experience as an alumnus in the affiliated system of governance to the presently deemed university model as a faculty member, he commented:
The exams are conducted internally, and the practice of external examiners is completely missing. Some of the colleagues suggest, such a change was introduced to cut down costs and delays in relying on external examiners. Also, some opine that the university wants maximum students to pass since this will reflect the overall quality of teaching in the university. There is an implicit nexus between senior faculty and the administration in this regard (U2RESFM17).

As discussed above, job placements constitute an important criterion for aspirants to choose University II to pursue their higher studies. Such is an opinion before or during admission. At least this is the case for U2RESSTU13 and U2RESSTU22, master’s students at the School of Management and Social Work, respectively. U2RESSTU13, expressing his opinion about the pressure on faculty members of the school by the top management to ensure 100 percent job placement and its impact on the students, he said:

This university, particularly our school claims 100 per cent campus placements. It is true, but there is a problem. Some of the senior student-friends, sat through the placements last year, they were asked to join company ‘x’, some of them were not interested in joining. The placement officer along with a couple of faculty members called and convinced them to join company ‘x’ for few months, and then they could decide whether to continue or not. However, when they joined, they had to sign a contract stating they will work with the company for one year. There is some pressure for the university and the school to excel in placements and the faculty members are always busy and tensed organizing this round the year (U2RESSTU13).

U2RESSTU22 shared her opinion about the overall quality of job placements in University II:

I am looking forward to completing my PG and look for a job with a good salary so that I support my family. This university guarantees 100 percent placement, but the quality of
the placement is not good…the companies and the pay packages are not
good. Hence, we have to work hard get good marks and avail better
placements in the market (U2RESSTU22).

Conclusion
In sum, the framework for quality in education provided in the Twelfth Five-year Plan with
particular reference to reforms institutional strategies along with bold leadership are evident
in the case of University II. From streamlining administration to the provision of state-of-
the-art infrastructure and shift in the university policy direction from teaching to research
foci, are important aspects of excellence in University II. It is interesting to note the
perceptions of the actors from the interview suggest that there is a thick gap between
aspirations of the top-management and practice/reality among majority actors in the middle
and lower tier. Faculty member and students are the most critical actors in general, in
comparison to top-management, administrators and faculty administrators in University II.
From the above description, the key emphasis of University-II is on expansion and
excellence. Also, the organizational structure and processes indicate –top-management,
centric symptomatic of self, but not shared governance model. The presence of private
deemed universities can certainly help stabilize quality/excellence on the one hand and
offer wider options and opportunities to the aspiring students by expanding its scope on the
other, however, such a trajectory and development has been devoid of ensuring equity or
inclusiveness, given lukewarm response from the administration and top-management in
addressing these issues, with only a few faculty members and students, sharing their
concerns with limited or no policies on effective engagement in ensuring equity in the
campus.