Looking at Indian universities a century after their foundation, one cannot but help feel that they have failed to adapt themselves sufficiently to the vast and unique opportunities which surround them; they seem to have lost enthusiasm and initiative under the crushing problems which have beset them. Despite three major commissions, they have not been able to extricate themselves from their own brief history. With a few notable exceptions they remain examining bodies and their students naturally regard success in examinations as the sole end of their under-graduate career. As universities multiply in number, their academic standards—relative to those elsewhere—do not improve. And something even more serious than this happens: the universities remain alien implantations, not integrated into the New India as the writers of the Radhakrishnan Report (in its brilliant second chapter) hoped they might be. This is one reason why, to the observer from outside, the Indian intellectual remains a culturally displaced person, nostalgically treasuring his threads of communication with England. Notwithstanding the
fact that the leadership of modern India is in the hands of statesmen more intellectual than perhaps are to be found in any other nation, there is in India (as Edward Shils recently wrote) 'no intellectual community'. This is due in part to the lack of a hierarchy of cultural institutions in the country; and this in turn is related to the fact that the universities have responded too weakly to the challenge of Asiastic culture.

- Sir Eric Ashby