CHAPTER 2

2.1 The University Grants Commission (UGC)

UGC is a statutory organisation established by an act of Parliament in 1956. This is a national body for the coordination, determination and maintenance of standards of University education. The UGC serves as a vital link between the Union and State Governments and the institution of higher learning. In addition to its role of giving grants to universities and colleges, the UGC also advises Central and State Governments on the measures necessary for the improvement of university education. It also frames regulations such as those on the minimum standards of instruction and qualifications of teachers, on the advice of subject specialists and academicians with whom it frequently interacts in connection with the formulation, monitoring, and evaluation of programmes.
The Commission consists of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson and ten other members appointed by the Central Government. The Chairperson is selected from persons who are not officers of Central Government or of any State Government. Of the ten other members, two are selected from the officers of the Central Government, to represent the Government. Not less than four at the time of selection are teachers at universities. The remainder are selected from persons:

(a) Who have knowledge of, or experience in agriculture, commerce, forestry or industry.
(b) Who are members of the engineering, legal, medical or any other learned professions; or
(c) Who are Vice-Chancellors of universities or who, not being teachers at universities, are in the opinion of the Central Government, educationists of repute or have obtained high academic distinction.

Subject experts from universities, colleges, national laboratories and other institutions in the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of its programme also help the UGC.

2.1.1 Powers and Functions of UGC

Section 12 of the UGC Act provides that:

"UGC shall, in consultation with the concerned universities, take all such steps as it may think fit for the promotion and
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co-ordination of university education and for the maintenance of standards in teaching, examination and research. Schemes / programmes are implemented by the UGC for promoting excellence and enhancing standards of institutions of higher education."

It is the general duty of the Commission to take, in consultation with the Universities or other bodies concerned, all such steps as it may think fit for the purpose of performing its following functions (functions related to the present research study are in bold) under this Act, the Commission may:

(a) Inquire into the financial needs of Universities;

(b) Allocate and disburse, out of the Fund of the Commission, grants to Universities established or incorporated by or under a Central Act for the maintenance and development of such Universities or for any other general or specified purpose;

(c) Allocate and disburse, out of the Fund of the Commission, such grants to other Universities as it may deem necessary or appropriate for the development of such Universities or for the maintenance, or development, or both, of any specified activities of such Universities or for any other general or specified purpose:

Provided that in making any grant to any such University, the Commission shall give due consideration to the development of the University
Allocate and disburse out of the Fund of the Commission, such grants to
institution deemed to be Universities in pursuance of a declaration made
by the Central Government under section 3, as it may deem necessary,
for one or more of the following purposes, namely:

(i) For maintenance in special cases,
(ii) For development,
(iii) For any other general or specified purpose;

Establish in accordance with the regulations made under this Act,
institutions for providing common facilities, services and programmes for a
group of universities or for the universities in general and maintain such
institutions or provide for their maintenance by allocating and disbursing
out of the Fund of the Commission such grants as the Commission may
deem necessary.

(d) Recommends to any University the measures necessary for the
improvement of University education and advise the University
upon the action to be taken for the purpose of implementing such
recommendation;

(e) Advise the Central Government or any State Government
on the allocation of any grants to Universities for any general
or specified purpose out of the Consolidated Fund of India or the Consolidated Fund of the State, as the case may be;

(f) Advise any authority, if such advice is asked for, on the establishment of a new University or on proposals connected with the expansion of the activities of any University;

(g) Advise the Central Government or any State Government or University on any question which may be referred to the Commission by the Central Government or the State Government or the University, as the case may be;

(h) Collect information on all such matters relating to University education in India and other countries as it thinks fit and make the same available to any University;

(i) Require a University to furnish it with such information as may be needed relating to the financial position of the University or the studies in the various branches of learning undertaken in that University, together with all the rules and regulations relating to the standards of teaching and examination in that University respecting each of such branches of learning;

(j) Perform such other functions as may be prescribed or as may be deemed necessary by the Commission for advancing the cause of higher education in India or as may be incidental or conducive to the discharge of the above functions.

2.1.2 Power of UGC to Make Regulations

The Commission may, by notification in the Official Gazette, make regulations consistent with this Act and the rules made thereunder.
regulating the meeting of the Commission and the procedure for conducting business for example, as under (Sub-paragraphs in bold are those that are directly connected with the present research study):

(a) Regulating the manner in which and the purposes for which persons may be associated with the Commission under section 9.

(b) Specifying the terms and conditions of service of the employees appointed by the Commission.

(c) Specifying the institutions or class of institutions, which may be recognised by the Commission under clause of section 2.

(d) Defining the qualification that should ordinarily be required of any person to be appointed to the teaching staff of the University, having regard to the branch of education in which he is expected to give instruction.

(e) Defining the minimum standards of instruction for the grant of any degree by any University.

(f) Regulating the maintenance of standards and the co-ordination of work or facilities in Universities.

(g) Regulating the establishment of institutions referred to in clause (ccc) of section 12 and other matters relating to such institutions;

As explained UGC issues guidelines to all universities in India with a view to improving the educational standards and bringing in uniformity across India.
2.1.3 National Assessment and Accreditation Council

The University Grants Commission (UGC) established the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) in September 1994, at Bangalore, in pursuance of the National Policy on Education and the Programme of Action (POA), 1986.

NAAC is an autonomous Institution under the UGC entrusted with the task of performance evaluation, assessment and accreditation of universities and colleges in the country.

The philosophy of NAAC is based on objective analysis and continuous improvement rather than being punitive or judgmental, so that all institutions of higher learning are empowered to maximise their resources, opportunities and capabilities.

2.2 Role and Responsibilities of University

The UGC grants the status of University or Deemed University to an Institution as discussed above. Each University has to operate within the rules of respective State Governments. Universities have to engage the colleges that are affiliated to it and frame the rules and guidelines of its own for the conduct of teaching and examinations. These rules have to be as per the guidelines issued by UGC from time to time.
The status of each university is autonomous and thus there is no direct control of the Government in the academic functioning of the university. The university while framing the rules has to take into account the following points:

(a) Rules should be implementable in all the colleges affiliated to it.

(b) Rules should be able to allow the students to study well and score better grade(s) in the examinations.

(c) There should be no room for malpractices.

(d) The performance of the university should remain consistent and pointing towards improvement.

(e) There should be a mechanism to redress grievances of the students, if any.

(f) The rules should be fair to all the classes of society.

2.3 GENESIS AND NEED OF PROPOSED RESEARCH STUDIES.

2.3.1 This researcher recalls his own experience in October 1972 when he had attended an interview at Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh in a PSU dealing in R&D and Production of electronic equipment. This PSU had asked for candidates with certain qualifications in first class (Those who had scored over 60 % marks in aggregate). Though he was third in the order of Merit in Maharashtra yet he had only 62 % marks. On the day of
interview when he interacted with other candidates he discovered that he was the only candidate from Maharashtra. He also noticed that most of the candidates had over 75% marks in their qualifying examination. Having known such high percentage of marks scored by others he felt that he stood no chance of getting selected for the job.

As a part of selection process the PSU had planned to conduct a two hour long written test. Based on the performance in this written test, merit list was to be drawn. They were to call about top 50% candidates from this merit list for the interview immediately after the written test. Out of the total of 64 candidates who attended this selection process only 30 (including this researcher) candidates were interviewed over the next two days. Of the 34 candidates who could not make it to interview at least 15 had over 75% marks. It was indeed difficult for this researcher to reconcile as to how a candidate with 62% marks could do better in the competitive written test as against those who had over 75% marks. Only noticeable difference was that all the candidates came after qualifying from different Universities/Boards. If common written test was not conducted and in stead had the PSU short-listed candidates in the decreasing order of percentage points scored in the qualifying examination, this researcher would have been rejected ab-initio.
Ever since then this researcher had been having a feeling that some mechanism should be in place so that inter-se merit of students can be accurately determined. Such a mechanism ought to be besides the written test and by simply comparing % marks obtained by applicants in qualifying examination(s) particularly when they come from different Boards/Universities.

2.3.2 In 1997 this researcher undertook a management consultancy project in an Institution responsible for recruiting scientists in one of the Central Government Departments. The role of this Institution was akin to that of UPSC. The consultancy project after completion was to provide solution on:

(a) Streamlining the recruitment process so that from the time a need for an employee is recognised to the time when a suitably selected person joined the organisation could be reduced to about two months, which otherwise was as high as 10 to 14 months.

(b) How to ensure that meritorious candidates with aptitude in R&D could be attracted and selected since the recruitment used to be for R&D Organisations.

(c) How a balance could be maintained after recruitment with adherence to statutory requirements such as reservations against Scheduled Castes, Tribes etc. and to maintain the
National Demographic Balance in composition since the Institution served Central Government Organisations.

In the process of studying the prevalent system of recruitment it was discovered that against every one vacancy the Institution used to invite 15 candidates for personal interview, hoping that at least 12 will turn up and selection of one candidate could be made out of these 12 candidates.

The recruitment used to be made in the following two different ways:

(a) Common written test for all aspirants, applicable for entry level (mass) recruitment. Candidates were merit listed based on the result of such a test and were called for interviews in the ratio of 15 candidates per vacancy.

(b) Piecemeal recruitment by only interviews.

On further studying the system it was revealed that whenever piecemeal recruitment was undertaken the Institution used to shortlist the applicants for inviting them for the interview. The criterion for short-listing used to be % marks scored by the candidates in the qualifying examination(s).

Interaction with some of the candidates who had come there to appear in the interview(s) against mass recruitment it was very strongly suggested by them that comparison of marks of candidates to decide their inter-se
merit particularly when they came from different Universities was not appropriate and certainly some mechanism was required to work out the inter-se merit with more emphasis on their actual merit instead of just considering the % marks scored.

2.3.3 Important. It was distinctly visible that most of the candidates who could make it to getting short-listed (in piecemeal recruitment) came from a short set of Universities. Going through the list of candidates who could make it to the interviews against mass recruitment, it was found that students coming from this short set of Universities were in negligible numbers. This aspect was quite intriguing. It was difficult to reconcile as to how the students scoring better % marks in qualifying examinations lacked behind those with less % marks in their qualifying examinations when it came to getting tested on a level playing field.

Ever since then this researcher was looking for an opportunity to address this issue and undertake research study to find a practical, workable and acceptable solution, which addressed this problem and provide an alternative.

By above-mentioned two examples, it was clear that only marks scored by students coming from different universities could not be a criterion to decide their inter-se merit.
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The following illustrative situations will indicate different anomalies where comparing only marks scored by students may not be justiceable.

**Situation # : 1**

Imagine there is a vacancy for one lecturer (Chemistry) in Amravati University, and qualitative requirements demand that applicant should be M.Sc. (Chemistry) with over 55% marks, candidate must have qualified from Amravati University only (To drive home the point this restriction is included) and age below 28 years (The condition of relaxing age limit by five years for reserved categories not included).

With the above criterion in mind students in the age group of 23 to 28 years will be eligible to apply. Let the University ends up receiving over 100 applications. Since there is only one vacancy let it be intended to invite only 12 candidates for interview. How these 12 candidates for inviting for the interview are to be selected? It is extremely difficult preposition. **Equate marks scored by candidates having same qualifications and qualifying from same university but in different years would not be in order while deciding their inter-se merit.**

**Situation # : 2**

There are various postgraduate courses in different universities where students graduating from different universities seek admissions. Invariably
number of students seeking admissions is much larger than the number of seats for the courses. In case common written test is conducted for such admissions it is a different case but if only % marks scored in graduation is the criterion for selection of students then again same anomaly results, which needs to be addressed. There again if normalisation of marks is done prior to making selection and merit list is formed after taking in to consideration the normalised score then justice would be done with students seeking admissions.

Situation # : 3

Consider in Situation # 2 above that the post graduation course allows graduates of different disciplines e.g. studies in faculty of Law or management etc. The problem becomes still more severe. Comparing % marks scored by students of different faculties to select students for admission will be extremely difficult and will provoke the students not getting admissions. For example, an arts graduate with 60% marks cannot be equated with a student having just 50% marks in engineering. Possibly, if common entrance test is taken an engineering graduate may score more marks than an arts graduate may.

Going by the above discussion it is evident that the normalisation technique intended to be evolved should be able to address the following:

(a) To normalise marks of the students of the same university in the same faculty but in different years.
OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

2.4 This research study encompasses the following:

(a) Study of the existing evaluation system in five selected universities.

(b) Point out the dissimilarities, if any, in the above system.

(c) Study pattern of marks scored in these universities for comparison amongst themselves, keeping following points in mind:

➢ For deriving worthwhile, authentic and accurate inference set out the criterion with which equation of grading systems in universities could be done. (This would later become the hypothesis.)

➢ Identify the factors, which determine the marks, scored by students in universities. Verify if these factors vary from one university to the other.

➢ Study the pattern of marks scored and check if these vary from year to year in the same faculty of the same university.
Study the pattern of marks scored and check if these vary from faculty to faculty every year in the same university.

SCOPE OF RESEARCH STUDY

2.5 Research outcome would be useful to all those recruiting agencies that find that the number of applicants far exceeds the vacancies and conducting a common written examination is tedious. In such cases these agencies will be able to use normalization technique and short list candidates for interviewing on a rational basis.

This will provide an easy approach for UGC to judge any university in terms of adherence to UGC norms in grading the students. Consistency of performance to national average could be set as a yardstick.

Each university would be able to apply certain corrective measures so as to attain reliable standards so that their students neither have inflated marks nor are they under-rated.

Selecting candidates for higher studies in academic institutions particularly when they come from different universities would become easy and non-discriminatory.
Selecting candidates for higher studies in academic institutions particularly in those disciplines where students of several disciplines can seek admissions, e.g. Management Studies, Law etc. when the students come from the same or different universities, would become easy and non-discriminatory.

References:

1. University Grant Commission, India : Home Page www.ugc.ac.in
