

Effects of Globalization and Isomorphism on Higher Education Institutions in India – Pathways of Academic Autonomy

Yogesh Bhalerao^{1,2,3}, Dan Davies⁴, Sunil Karad⁵, Mahesh Nagarkar^{6,7}

¹ School of Management, University of Bath, Bath, UK.

² School of Engineering, Faculty of Science, University of East Anglia, Norwich Research Park, Norwich, NR47TJ, UK.

³ MIT Academy of Engineering (MIT AoE), Pune, India

⁴ Associate Professor, Management Strategy and Organization, School of Management, University of Bath, Bath, UK.

⁵ Executive Director, MIT Group of Institutions, Pune, India.

⁶ Rajiv Gandhi College of Engineering, Karjule Harya, Takli Dhokeshwar, Ahmednagar, India.

⁷ Postdoctoral Research Scholar, University of East Anglia, Norwich Research Park, Norwich, NR47TJ, UK

^{1,2,3} y.bhalerao@uea.ac.uk

⁴ D.J.Davies@bath.ac.uk

⁵ sunilkarad@mitpune.com

^{6,7} maheshnagarkar@rediffmail.com

Abstract— Globalization has interaction on each and every connection of life, people. Higher education is not an exception from these transformations. Effects of globalization on higher educational institutions (HEIs) include student mobility, faculty exchange, research, rankings, academic collaborations, diverse cohorts and international enrolments. Globalization also brought isomorphic pressures on HEIs to become equivalent and comparable. This paper discusses isomorphism which leads to Indian universities becoming more homogenous and thus consequently losing autonomy and in turn individual identity. Secondly, it discusses the constraints on academic autonomy of new HEIs due to peer pressure isomorphism. with their academic autonomy. This report is based on university affiliated HEIs which opted autonomous status under the new schemes and policies. In this report two case studies, Government College of Engineering, Pune and MIT Academy of Engineering, Pune, are presented.

Keywords : Isomorphism; Higher Education Institutes (HEIs); Academic Autonomy.

1. Introduction

Globalization has led to cross-national interactions in the trade of goods and services, business partnerships and co-operation, cultural homogenization and many other attributes. Globalization is related to the connection of people, different societies and industries across the world which results in to global cultural, political and economic integration (Fox and Hundley, 2011). Trading between the people can be traced historically since ages from the start of movement of the human being (Marginson and van der Wende, 2009). However, the major shift of globalization can be seen from 15th Century onwards. Globalization affected all parts of life and world came closer to each other and boundaries are remaining on map only. Globalization brought radical changes in thinking, economies, innovations, politics and societies. Higher education is not an exception from these transformations. Effects of globalization on higher educational institutions (HEIs) include factors such as student mobility, faculty exchange, research, rankings, academic collaborations, diverse cohorts and international enrollments. Globalization also brought isomorphic pressures on HEIs to become equivalent and comparable.

Yogesh Bhalerao

School of Management, University of Bath, Bath, UK.
y.bhalerao@uea.ac.uk

Isomorphism is the neo – institutional theory that explains why organizations or firms with similar business fields tend to look same over time (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). It also explains how institutional changes try to become similar to other institutions in the process of homogenization. It also reflects proliferation of best practices which results in all products and services look more and more alike. Isomorphism can be related as the key driving factor in HEIs across the world. Different types of isomorphic mechanisms play important role in driving changes and bringing transformations across the HEIs globally.

For the progress of HEIs and achieving high standards of academics and research, complete autonomy to the HEIs is very important. Most of the autonomous HEIs across the world secured global excellence. Autonomy means decision making ability for HEIs. Government regulations are changing globally to give more autonomy to the HEIs. Autonomy of HEIs can be considered as the self-designed path for achieving the excellence by HEIs for its stake holders. Higher education system in India, also called as tertiary education (post higher secondary certificate) is highly regulated and centralized. Most of the HEIs in India, which are having degree awarding powers are either centrally governed by the human resource ministry or state governed by higher education ministry. There are many private colleges started in early 1980s in India but most of them are affiliated to government universities and don't have any degree awarding authority. HEIs in India are classified as government, government-aided and private educational institutions.

Globalization and isomorphism changed the higher educational Institutions in India radically. Indian higher education sector consists of various actors like 965 universities divided in to state, deemed to be, central and private universities (University Grants Commission, 2020). There are also more than 40000 affiliated colleges or institutions which are part of this system (Niazi, Shuriah; Sharma, 2020) and these affiliated colleges are depending on the parent (affiliating) university for the award of the degree which is either state or central university. Private universities are not yet allowed to open multiple campuses and affiliate colleges for awarding the degree. As no institutions from India is figuring in the global rankings, government of India has taken lots of initiatives for changing this scenario. The

appointment of National Knowledge Commission – 2005, academic autonomy scheme, National Institute Ranking Framework, revised accreditation framework, institute of eminence scheme, private universities, PPP model (Public – Private – Partnership) and the recent National Education Policy – 2020 are some of the testimony of the efforts taken by Indian Government. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), giving incentives in terms of fund and autonomy to the performing HEIs and mandatory accreditations for ensuring minimum standards are the moves which recently government has taken, which are well received and welcomed by academic fraternity (Sarin and Dholakia, 2016). As India is a large country with huge diversity, in terms of students, type of education, it is not possible for every HEIs to become university and to achieve degree awarding status. Few years back University Grants Commission (UGC) which governs higher education in India, introduced concept of autonomous institutes. Recently the affiliated accredited colleges were allowed to become autonomous. These institutions were given limited powers to design their own curriculum and assessment methods while the degree is awarded by the parent University. However, the parent University will not have any role in the day to day activities of the autonomous Institutions. This concept was not well received initially but in last few years some HEIs proved that if one uses the autonomy properly, highest standards of quality can be achieved and HEIs can become institutes of eminence.

This report will try to discuss this journey of autonomy and how globalization and isomorphism affected the autonomous institutions in India Two case studies from Pune will also be discussed in this report to further reflect on how autonomy is now considered as the key factor for the development of the institutions. Autonomy allow HEIs to be experimental and design own curriculum and pedagogy as per the global needs however because of the isomorphism pressures in the HEIs all of them try to explore the similar experiments and become same which is really limiting them to use their autonomy. This report aims to find the answers of the two important research questions ‘How do institutional autonomy, globalization and isomorphism interact in Indian higher education systems?’ and ‘Is the impact of isomorphism causing pressure on the university structures, processes and functions which is limiting autonomy in the HE sector in India?’. This paper will first examine whether isomorphism has led to Indian universities becoming more homogenous and

consequently losing their autonomy and individual identity. Secondly it will also review what do newly autonomous HEIs in India do with their newly found autonomy and do they get constraints in using autonomy in the right spirit by isomorphic pressures. The report is based on the affiliated colleges and institutions which are part of affiliating universities opting autonomous status under the new schemes and policies and does not discuss the universities.

2. Globalization In Higher Education

Globalization is the word invented in the late 1970's. The revolution in the transport and digital technologies are the key drivers for the spread of globalization in recent years. The world is becoming one global community now. Globalization influenced higher education in terms of their outlook, teaching, learning, culture, problem solving and research. Industries also prefer to recruit graduates who can interact with the world, work with the people from different countries, visit and live in any country and able to solve global challenges. New graduates expected to have knowledge of various disciplines, cultures and societies. Hence HEIs look globalization not as the influencing factor but as an opportunity for global market, reputation and high ranking for better recognition. Student mobility, international enrollments, faculty exchange, collaboration in research, joint programs and academics are making HEI more global. Recent pandemic proved that through use of technology, collaboration and mutual understanding HEIs can reach across the globe to offer higher education and attract better students. Because of the globalization modern universities are becoming more corporate universities (Kwiek, 2001) bringing fierce competition among the globally ranked universities. There are social, political, cultural and economic effects of globalization on the HEIs across the globe. Simon Marginson (2011) (King, Marginson and Naidoo, 2011, chap. 2) put forward the fact that globalization is the process of forming global dimension. It is important to note that even though globalization is influencing and reshaping the HEIs, local and national dimensions are also equally important along with the global dimension. Each of these dimensions affect each other and HEIs are in 'glonacal' era (Marginson and van der Wende, 2009). It is like global thinking with local impact. Globalization is the primary way of modernizations for HEI and it also makes HEIs globally more engaging (Marginson and van der Wende, 2007), competitive and futuristic in terms of approaches,

policies and academic experience to the students.. In the last 20 years global comparisons of the performance of HEIs, and based on that of national systems, established, secured media prominence (Hazelkorn, 2008)(Hazelkorn, 2015). Globally highly ranked universities are getting good support in terms of funding from the government and get good quality students which contributes to the reputation and economy of the country. Many countries have introduced new reformation in the higher education policies to promote and motivate HEIs for globally ranked. Government is providing huge funds to HEIs in some countries for creating research culture and attract best faculties for improving rankings. Some HEIs are also experiencing pressure from the stake holders for securing the rank. Globalization is changing the vision and planning of the HEIs. In order to remain competitive and to achieve reputation, HEIs need to response to the globalization and act accordingly. Some of them are becoming transnational with multiple campuses across the different continents. Globalization is the integral part of the academics now as global skills are required for solving problems of the world and globalization is going to stay and flourish as the world comes closer to each other. In countries located in Central and Eastern Europe globalization of HEIs witnessed abrupt and fast paced impact resulting in social, political and economic transformations including nation – building (Dobbins and Kwiek, 2017). Bologna process, recommendation of European commission, and reports of international organizations like UNESCO, World Bank, WTO, IMF and OECD are also quite influential in forming the government policies related to higher education in this area. Through globalization emerged new technologies (Morace et al., 2017) like artificial intelligence and cyber physical systems. Countries are designing their higher education systems to create graduates in context of the world economy. Innovation is at the driving seat now for the higher education sector throughout the world. Higher education is also changing to emphasis more on social and intercultural competencies. Further, millennial learners are now getting replaced by generation Z with different learning requirements. Generation Z students along with digital natives like millennials, enjoy community engagements (Seemiller and Grace, 2017). HEIs across the globe has to design philosophies and practices to educate these generation Z by understanding their characteristics and empowering and educating them for solving the problems of tomorrow.

3. Autonomy And Its Importance For Higher Educational Institutes

In the last 50 years, there has been a rapid transformation in the tertiary and vocational education, and this change has been intensified with the evolution of new technologies along with more demanding expectations from the new generation of students. Gul et al (2010) proposed that today's HEIs as 'center of information triangle', where the three corners are education and research, innovation and creativity which are changing continuously with different driving factors. Some of the key drivers responsible for the transformation of higher education include massification of the HE sector, globalization, diversity, multiculturalism, digital revolutions especially in Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), fiercely increasing competition between the HEIs for attracting better students, increasing collaboration, transforming financial models, privatization, changing landscape of higher education from knowledge to skills, increasing demand, and rankings (Vlasova, 2019). Because of the changing nature and for appropriate response to these driving factors, today's HEIs needs to be more autonomous, open and competitive. In order to reform and deliver high quality education to satisfy future demands, it is very important that HEIs are autonomous in the way that they operate and in their decision-making processes. Autonomous is basically consisting of two Greek words 'autos' and 'nomos' which means self-law, freedom, independent from external supervision. Autonomy is a notion which includes localization, privatization, delegation, devolution and decentralization. Institutional autonomy means governance and operations in HEIs are managed and controlled by the institutions themselves without any intervention or influence by any other external bodies such as government agencies, political bodies or policies. Institutional autonomy is a broad term and includes academic autonomy with subsequent control of curriculum and assessment, financial controls including course fee rates and structures and staff salaries and oversee of the institution's infrastructure and operation. Autonomy also includes decision making at the local level related to organizational and personal issues connected to the all stakeholders of the HEIs like faculty recruitments and promotions, students admissions and fees or human resource policies. Currently, there is a global trend to make HEIs more decentralized so that they can respond to the new challenges of the complex and rapidly changing

higher education sector (Erçetin and Fındık, 2018, p. 463). Autonomy may enable HEIs to respond more effectively to rapid change by optimizing and streamlining decision making, and aligning student needs with the growth in demand for HE education (Raza, 2009) (Estermann, 2015) (Chandran-Wadia, Leena; Sivakumar, 2015). HEIs are the important driver for the social development and economic growth of any nation (Yeravdekar and Tiwari, 2014b). Institutional autonomy may therefore provide the vital component to ensure HEI meets the needs and demands of its nation. It enables HEIs to manage their own affairs (Fielden, 2008) in an effective way. Increasing number of government supported and private HEIs make higher education sector more complex and challenging to monitor for the government agencies. Hence the old traditional model of controlling the HEIs from a central agency is proving outdated and unsustainable and is being replaced globally by supervising the HEIs for their performance and outcomes. There is a direct relation between the performance of HEIs and autonomy. Autonomy enables HEIs to achieve high quality standards, ranked high and fulfill its aspirations (Sahasrabudhe, 2014). Many countries follow a model of autonomy along with accountability to govern HEIs in better and effective manner.

Globally there are different trends in the four main dimensions of HEIs autonomy. In the majority of the European countries (Estermann and Nokkala, 2009) HEIs are having complete academic autonomy but very few have complete financial, staffing and organizational autonomy. The United Kingdom and Netherlands have an effective autonomous system for HEIs in all dimensions of autonomy. In 2007 European university association started collecting data on university autonomies based on four major dimensions of autonomy. The recent report published by European University Association (Puvot and Estermann, 2017) presents scorecard of autonomy for 29 participating countries. This report reveals the non-uniform trends of autonomy in Europe. In many countries institutional autonomy depends on government policies and political will. In USA, Canada, Australia and Singapore many HEIs are having institutional autonomy (Anderson and Johnson, 1998) with limited intervention from the government. In many countries government wants to interfere in the HEIs for administration and financial matters, academic standards, student's related issues while very little interference is observed on curriculum and teaching related matters. Eaton (2020)

discussed in detail in context of USA, Canada and Mexico, how autonomy play an important role for creating the knowledge driven societies. Autonomy is given in many countries along with accountability and HEIs are answerable to its stakeholders. In fact, it can be argued that autonomy is one while accountability is the other side of the same coin. Autonomy and accountability always interact and sometimes being answerable contributes for the better performance. For creating progressive HEIs and for enabling these HEIs to achieve academic excellence, it is very important to create a governing structure which gives complete autonomy to HEIs with appropriate level of accountability (Raza, 2009). The importance of the institutional autonomy in many respects is explored globally (Hayden and Thiep, 2007) (Yang, Vidovich and Currie, 2007) (Hartley et al., 2016) (Estermann, 2015) and it is a commonly accepted fact that institutional autonomy is a key factor for building the reputed HEIs.

4. Theory Of Institutional Isomorphism And Higher Education

Organizations including HEIs are influenced by other organizations or HEIs. This can be considered as external pressures from other HEIs and it is the tendency of the HEIs to respond. This is one of the important assumption in institutional theory (Greve and Argote, 2015). All organizations become the same over time or they adopt the same strategies which is called isomorphism. HEIs also witnessed the isomorphism and some of the example in support of that can be participation in global rankings, recruitment of international students and faculties, developing similar pedagogies and courses, accreditation and industry relations. In fact, there is a vivid process of isomorphism which can be seen induced in HEIs for becoming the best in the world. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) observed that organizations become homogeneous not because to improve the efficiency, competition or for structural changes but there are external forces like bureaucratization responsible for that. Isomorphism is a constraining force which makes organization with same environment to become homogeneous or similar to each other or copy each other in terms of policies, business strategies, customers, costing etc. It can be attributed to different isomorphic pressures. First is coercive isomorphism which basically means that behavior of an organization in a particular way is not because it is the excellent or most efficient idea but

because of externally affecting pressures like expectations of the customer. It can also be the response to the legal or political demands which shoots from political influence and the legitimacy problems. When a new law or regulation is adopted and passed by the government all the organizations have to follow it. Coercive isomorphism can be considered as formal pressure (Zoljargal, 2020) like policies or informal pressure like cultural expectations, submissive environment. Second is mimetic isomorphism which means when an organization is in an ambiguous or indefinite circumstance, they look normally outside to other organizations for identifying the best practices in the world and then responses to uncertainty by imitating them. This can be also argued that an organization just copy the successful strategy of the competitor which works well for them. This pressure is modeling successful organizations either intentionally by recruiting people from that organization or hiring the same consultancy or unintentionally. Third is normative isomorphism associated with educational pressures or pressures of professionalization and follow guidelines specific to an industry. It can also be linked to the professional network which key people from HEIs are part of. All types of isomorphism are significant in driving the changes in higher education across the world. Isomorphism explains well the pressures of homogenization but cannot explain the different ways of the organizational responses to face these pressures. That is the main limitation of the isomorphism.

Many researchers studied the theory of isomorphism and its impact in the higher education sector. It is argued that (Mejía, Del Val and Àngels Dasí Coscollar, 2020) because of globalization and fiercely competitive market, higher educational institutions are also becoming organization actors and higher education is more like a business rather than the missionary social process. Theory of isomorphism coming out of traditional institutional theory is therefore perfectly applicable to HEIs also. There are different inside and outside pressures acting on HEIs in a process of homogenization. The process already happened and started from regions and slowly it is becoming a global phenomenon. Coercive isomorphic pressure can be considered as national and institutional governance policies which are quite demanding like accreditation, rankings, minimum infrastructure requirements or faculty norms. Some HEIs just copy their competitors and adopt their successful policies with a hope to attract more

students. This applies mimetic isomorphic pressure on these HEIs. HEIs just try to copy successful course, curriculum or governance and academic strategies of the successful institutions to become better and just like them. Normative isomorphic pressures are also observed by HEIs across the globe and people from specific profession, specialized groups and similar interests or background are trying to apply their thought process to drive the HEIs and that bring changes in HEIs. Universities throughout the world are agile and changing its vision, goals, purpose, functions and missions as per the needs of the changing world. In spite of differences like history, geography, political regime and mission, there exist lots of similarities among HEIs. Isomorphic pressures are major reason for the same. Many universities are currently in the quest of becoming 'World Class University' which is one type of isomorphic persuasion. Marginson (2010) discussed the global knowledge economy and how the culture of comparison in HEIs is becoming more status symbol. Naturally every HEIs go through these isomorphic pressures and tend to become similar over a period of time at the cost of diversity, autonomy, character and self-identity.

5. Autonomy – A Revolutionary Idea In Indian Higher Education

According to UNESCO academic freedom and autonomy of HEIs are the degree of self-governance which enables them for effective decision making related to the academic and research work, governance in consistent with public accountability with respect to funding, human rights and academic freedom (Vlasova, 2019). Autonomy to HEIs is having broad meaning of academic, financial and administrative autonomy. The concept of autonomy to HEIs in India is in discussion from last five decades and it is more ethical and academic. Autonomy means it is appropriate for democratic legislature not to interfere in the administration of the HEIs, both academically and non-academically (Sancheti, Sandeep; Pillai, 2020). Indian higher education is one of the biggest and a very complex sector with multiple actors and controlling authorities (Altbach, Reisberg and Rumbley, 2009). Indian higher education consists of government and private universities, standalone institutes and affiliated colleges. Few premium institutes of India established by government got certain privileges and autonomy in governance. The

affiliated colleges do most of the teaching work and the assessment and degree conferment are done by the affiliating parent university. Autonomy concept was first introduced by UGC after the recommendations of Education Commission (1964 – 1966) and the National Policy on Education (1986 – 1992). Autonomy to the universities in functioning without much interference from controlling authorities is a discussion point since formation of UGC in 1956. Universities in India are having complete autonomy now. The current discussion focusses on a unique and biggest part of Indian higher education system, the affiliating HEIs which are attached to the degree awarding universities with quite limited autonomy in functions. These affiliated colleges are in existence since independence and having roots in the education system during colonial rule. These are like teaching centers without any major focus on research. Choudhary (2008) criticized this model as developed by Macaulay based on University of London model for creating clerks and teaching colleges should follow exactly the affiliating university guidelines in creating a class of subservient. Sankaran and Joshi (2016) further argued that this model was proposed to create bureaucracy in the higher education and was not at all created any mandate of innovation. Surprisingly even after 73 years of independence this model of higher education is still in existence in India. Indian higher education sector is handicapped with multiple controlling authorities, lots of intervention by the government bodies resulting in quantitative expansion with huge paucity of quality, innovation and research. The importance of changing this system felt with increasing number of unemployable graduates passing out of this HEIs without any practical knowledge or problem-solving skills.

To achieve academic excellence, to build innovation culture and for reaching the global quality norms autonomy to the HEIs is of prime importance. By realizing this UGC introduced the scheme of autonomy in late nineties for affiliated colleges. This was initially not well received by colleges as it was considered as 'double – edged sword' and few colleges fulfilling the quality norms were given autonomy by UGC till early 2000. However, this autonomy was limited to academics. Initially colleges were reluctant to get autonomy. The main challenges were continuing the trust of the stake holders, quality of faculties, stringent norms of apex bodies, and increase in academic and administrative workload. Many colleges preferred to remain as affiliated and

continue only as teaching learning centers. However, slowly because of globalization, market demands are changing, and colleges are coming forward to become autonomous. Isomorphic pressures, new flexible norms of UGC, benefits of being autonomous and student's outlook towards autonomous colleges are the other key drivers. In last few years, many old colleges in India converted into universities. These universities are having highest level of autonomy and to compete in such changing higher education market, colleges are preferring to become autonomous. There are many benefits and incentives proposed by the UGC autonomous colleges (University Grants Commission, 2018). These new steps by UGC are considered as the revolutionary steps in the Indian higher education and motivated many good colleges to come forward for being autonomous. Autonomy brought competition for global quality and excellence with highest flexibility. Autonomous colleges can act like 'mini university' having all working structure and powers just like university and only depending on Parent University for awarding degree. The new National Education Policy (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2020) accepted by Government of India proposed to give graded autonomy to quality HEIs. In spite of many new good initiatives by UGC and government, there are still different controlling bodies for these affiliated autonomous colleges like AICTE, state higher education departments and hence the autonomous colleges are still struggling for the complete freedom. Because of the role of the state government in deciding the fees of the colleges and admission process autonomous colleges are still not having complete financial and administrative autonomy. In spite of all these challenges, many good colleges are becoming autonomous for achieving global excellence. This is a very good start in Indian higher education which is majorly having the role of affiliated colleges and their autonomy and functioning like mini university will definitely prove as a turbo booster for the progress of the higher education in India for reaching to the global standards. Autonomy is the dynamism of the HEIs to react to the changing global demands of the market. Autonomy to the colleges opened the door of progress based on own objective and performance for HEIs.

6. Interaction Between Globalization, Isomorphism and Autonomy in Indian Higher Education – Key Driving Factors, Mechanisms And Implications

Indian education system is three-fold - primary education, secondary education and tertiary education. India is a developing country and achieving global standards in higher education is the biggest challenge for it (Adithan and Creese, 2010). Globalization and Isomorphism had brought lots of new challenges to the tertiary education in India and changing the character and culture of HEIs like nature of education, curriculum, students, faculty, governance, pedagogies, research, recognition in the society and funding. Public expectations and available resources for tertiary education are also undergoing radical shifts. Reforms are needed with emphasis on ICT, research and development, skill courses, entrepreneurship, incubation activities and innovation to build human capital. Humanity is witnessing transition from industrial society to information society developing new social, globalized and economic culture. The information age which is also recognized as knowledge age brought aspiration to India to become knowledge super – power of the world. Highest attention has been given to improve the quality, standards and to bring excellence and competitiveness in Indian higher education which witnessed incredible growth after the independence period. The globalization of higher education system in India has its historical roots from the 5 B.C. and 5 A.D. where Takshashila University and Nalanda University marked their global excellence and attracted students from across the world (Yeravdekar and Tiwari, 2014b). Many HEIs in India still attract a lot of students from SAARC countries, African continent and Middle East. However, the higher education system in India currently has many challenges like financing, fair governance, accessibility, equity, relevance to the current and future needs, less focus on sustainability, values and ethics and quality curriculum and assessment, accreditation lack of freedom and autonomy, burden of affiliating and controlling bodies and too many statutory norms. It is also affected by political interference, poor quality of infrastructure (physical, digital and human resource), unplanned growth, absence of academic leadership, obsolete curriculum design, theory focused teaching pedagogies, inadequate student support, inefficient teaching, dearth of trainings programs for faculties, administrators. It is important to resolve these issues for pursuing its aspirations to build knowledge-based information society of the 21st Century. Globalization has a potential to bring melodramatic and positive changes to the higher education systems in India

which was quite stable in view of political, social and institutional expectations. Education is considered as backbone of the Indian society and higher education is the apex of the Indian education process pyramid. Globalization also created the awareness of higher education for all creating opportunities the deprived class of the society. This made HEIs accessible and democratic. Different elements of globalization like knowledge society, ICT, global economy, liberalization, effective and transparent governance affected Indian higher education significantly and brought thought autonomy and decentralization require for effective governance to achieve global excellence. Globalization also brought to the country high living standards, high quality in education and medicine, advance technologies and access to the global market. The five major guiding principles in front of HEIs in India arises due to globalization and isomorphism are access, equity, diversity, accountability and quality. India fought well against momentous challenges of poverty, inequality and illiteracy after independence by using higher education as an important tool. Because of globalization and isomorphism, HEIs in India are under tremendous pressure of improving the quality measurable in terms of accreditation, student's success, rankings and autonomy status. There are lots of divisions in HEIs in India. Government of India is supporting the best performing HEIs by giving rankings and autonomy enabling them to become competent and expecting more from other HEIs by raising the quality index. Isomorphism pressures are making HEIs look alike but at the same time the diversity in terms of pedagogies and courses is depleting. Many HEIs instead of using their autonomy in terms of achieving innovative academic excellence in a long way or doing something differently, are trying to mimic the reputed successful HEIs for getting the short-term returns. However, on the positive side, some very good experiments of academic and governance excellence have emerged in different parts of the India, globally influenced but quite practical and relevant in Indian context in terms of development and innovation required by the society and industry. Globalization is having progressive effect on the quality, quantity and growth and advancement of the knowledge by amplified interactions among various stakeholders across the world (Deshmukh, 2017). Higher education in India is changing as per the need and demand of the globalization and becoming competitive and commercialized. Even though many HEIs in India are

enjoying academic, administrative autonomy, financial autonomy is still a huge debate point in India and government wants control in deciding the tuition fees of HEIs. Higher education in India is not only remained as education sector but becoming business sector governed by corporates where many HEIs are marketing their courses, new initiative and achievements to attract quantity and quality of students and to bring more business and finances and for building the reputation. Use of print, digital and social media from HEIs in increased drastically in last few years. There is a huge pressure on HEIs to design and deliver a curriculum which is having global standards and practical exposure for its students. HEIs in India trying to attract talented and experienced people from across the world having exposure to such systems and have passion for academics. HEIs in India, earlier failed to forecast and understand future demands of higher education, required skills, global competition and many even could not create local impact by solving societal issues. Government of India always considered higher education as the national priority and keep on reforming the policies as per the need and in response to the influence of globalization and competition among HEIs across the world. Government of India is having a clear vision of building world class HEIs. The objectives of higher education reform in India are expansion, excellence and inclusion. In that pursuit, there is a substantial requirement of improving the quality and standards of Indian higher education. Government of India is offering highest autonomy of functioning and financial support to the potential universities to convert them in to world class universities of research and innovation (Tilak, 2016). A long-term commitment, highest efforts and huge financial support is required for getting place for Indian HEIs in the global ranking tables.

India definitely got advantage from emphasizing on higher education development after independence and growth of IT sector is one example which enabled the country as emerging economy in the world (Kamat, 2011) (King, Marginson and Naidoo, 2011). However, the higher educational policies in India also created lots of social and economic inequalities. The HEIs in India are having ambitious plans to enter in the era of world class education for its stake holders with massive expansion and quality improvements but it requires huge investments and support from the government which is currently unbalanced. On the other hand, isomorphism pressures are making HEIs

underperform and is becoming a stumbling block in the progress of HEIs. Coercive Isomorphic pressure is coming from government which are seemed to be good but becoming more administrative and quality improvements are not happening through this. Many HEIs in India are affiliated to state universities and very few are autonomous and private universities and this distribution is highly unequal across the country. Most of the autonomous institutes are government supported. The affiliated colleges just try to mimic government or other successful colleges to achieve minimum standard for survival and that again create an issue of quality of higher education. Few normative isomorphism pressure examples are also seen which are further contributing in one dimensional vision of the HEIs and limited success. Globalization definitely created competitive approach among HEIs in India and created positive effect for its stake holders. Isomorphism promised minimum standard of higher education but created challenges of introducing innovative and futuristic vision. India witnessed phenomenal growth in last two decades in higher education in terms of students enrolment and number of HEIs (Panikkar and Nair, 2012). The number of private institutions is increasing, and education is becoming a trade business for profit to impart employable skills. India is now open for foreign universities to open their campuses on Indian soil and that is further bringing a new dimension to globalization impact on higher education in India other than student mobility, staff collaborations, research funding and joints degrees. Globalization brought new opportunities to the professional education like engineering and technology. Indian computer professionals are working throughout the world and quality of graduates of many HEIs from India are considered as at par with the global standards. There are enormous benefits of globalization and it is imperative that HEIs of India are trying their best to achieve global excellence. In spite of all these developments and on the background of internationalization, still there is a question which attracts academic debate regarding relevance of world class universities and rankings in developing countries like India. Yeravdekar and Tiwari (2014a) argued that India has scarce resources and it is not a good idea to spend it in building few world class universities while the country is facing problems related to even basic education for masses. The issues in front of higher education in the country are many but there has to be a start at some point, autonomy can definitely bring a positive change in that direction for the progress.

Globalization and isomorphism interact greatly with autonomy of the HEIs in India and create an opportunity for HEIs to reinvent themselves and innovate to respond to new challenges. Autonomy brings lots of new opportunities and flexibility to the various stake holders of HEIs. Globalization allowed HEIs across the world to interact and collaborate with each other. However affiliated colleges could not do that because they have to depend on different controlling agencies for all such decisions. With increase in privatization in the HEIs and fierce competition, universities across the India are changing their curriculum, teaching pedagogies, introducing new courses, philanthropic scholarships as a response to the market demands and needs. Their infrastructure investments are also huge with excellent physical, digital and human resource. However affiliated colleges were failed to respond globalization. Naturally the stakeholders at these colleges were at disadvantage in terms of progress, exposure and flexibility. The important reason for this unfortunate state of education was highly controlled structure which offer no flexibility for any academic or administrative decisions. Because of this Indian HEIs other than few good universities could not respond well to the globalization and eventually could not excel to the global standards. This picture started changing drastically in last few years with rise in number of new states, central and private universities and the revolutionary concept of autonomy to the affiliated colleges with revised guidelines. Autonomy of HEIs can be the perfect response to the globalization and isomorphism which interacts with each other. In response to the globalization, autonomous colleges can design their curriculum, decide teaching pedagogies and assessment techniques, introduce semester abroad or semester in industry in structure, semester exchange, joint degrees, credit transfer, student and faculty exchange, industry delivered courses, work experiences. Many academic decisions can be taken at local level without any interference from any controlling authority. UGC also gave complete financial and administrative autonomy to the college and hence college local management can decide whether to introduce new courses, how much fees to charge and whom to recruit. This complete freedom to the autonomous college came with responsibility and accountability. It brought great opportunity for these autonomous colleges to excel up to the global standards and it also gave lots of freedom to its stake holder like students can have mobility without compromising their course duration or can learn interdisciplinary or

multidisciplinary courses which is the requirement of the current market. It made students more employable and better ready for higher education opportunities globally. It also gave global platform to faculties for collaboration and research. Autonomous colleges could bring global education experience for their students in local settings and low cost which is the biggest success of this scheme as there are 780 autonomous colleges (University Grants Commission, 2020). This is still just under 2% of the total affiliated colleges where majority of the Indian students pursue higher education. Demand for global quality, academic standards, flexibility in curriculum, freedom in course choices, international experience, need of skills focus courses, changing government policies and fierce competition these are the key driving factors in the Indian higher education sector. With autonomy, HEIs can respond to the globalization and isomorphic pressures very well. In a healthy competition each HEI wants to establish its own reputation in terms of academic excellence. If they are free to take their own decisions for their destiny at local level, their response to the challenges of the globalization and isomorphic pressures, will be aggressive and proper. This is the key for the success of the HEIs in India to achieve global excellence and recognition. If the HEIs don't use the conferred autonomy to build their future for creating academic excellence, then autonomy is pointless. Few autonomous HEIs in India are not using their autonomy in the right spirit because of the isomorphic pressures and just try to mimic others or follow the paths of the successful institutions. Such HEIs are not really exploring the advantages of being autonomous for achieving the global excellence and creating self-identity. Autonomy is not mimicking the other HEIs or thinking one dimensional or taking decision under pressure or thinking limited. Autonomy is spreading the wings, throw away all the pressures and achieve top heights with proper decision making, planning and implementation. Isomorphic pressures can be easily handled by using the autonomy. Autonomy will also help to create a system which is based on a culture of academic meritocracy and research. HEIs in India must consider globalization and internationalization as a national and institutional importance and mandate rather than treating it as matter of choice or discretion (Yeravdekar, 2020). HEIs in India should look for nurturing students who are global citizens and sensitized to 'global' issues.

7. Case Studies of Autonomous Colleges From Pune, India

Pune city is the cultural capital of Maharashtra and has historical importance. It was the capital of Maratha kingdom and considered as political center of India. It is also the birthplace and workplace of many freedom fighters, scholars, authors and intellectual people who marked their impact in many fields of life and culture of the country. Post-independence, Pune city emerged as educational capital of India and with the presence of many reputed HEIs which are world famous for traditional and diverse education, it is rightly called as 'Oxford of east'. The city is also known globally as the automotive and manufacturing center, intellectual city and information technology hub of India. There are hundreds of affiliated colleges in Pune connected to Savitribai Phule Pune University and few private universities. College of Engineering Pune (COEP) is oldest engineering college in India became autonomous in 2002. COEP was given complete academic, administrative, managerial and financial autonomy which proved as a milestone. Today COEP is considered as highly rated college in India preferred by best merit students for admission and ranked second in the state of Maharashtra after IIT, Mumbai. With a well constituted board of governors selected from eminent personalities from education, industry, finance and human resources COEP transformed in to the center of global excellence in engineering education (Chandran-Wadia, Leena; Sivakumar, 2015). After autonomy, COEP transformed curriculum, teaching pedagogies, introduced global exposure, improved industry and alumni linkages, inculcate research culture and achieved accolades in various technical competitions and highest student's placement in reputed industries. COEP is the perfect example of an opportunity of autonomy (Sahasrabudhe, 2014) given to one college which achieve premium status with properly executing its strategic plan. Many private and government institutes in and around Pune area are opting to become autonomous institution for building their own destiny of academic excellence. Institute like MIT Academy of Engineering (MITAOE) which is located in the rural area of Alandi near Pune, is the recent example of transformation of the affiliated college into the autonomous college which pursue the path of highest academic standards. Autonomy enabled MITAOE to introduce interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary courses with unique pedagogy of problem and project-based learning in engineering, solving problems of the society. Blending the engineering education into the design education is one bolder and out of the box step which MITAOE could take because of autonomy.

8. Conclusion

Globalization changed the higher education across the world and HEIs have become more flexible, open and forward looking. Globalization attracted students to good performing HEIs from across the world in the pursuit of getting excellent academic path for building and securing their bright future. This started the fierce competition among the HEIs across the world for getting global recognition and attracting the best students. Globalization made the higher education in the world as a single market and while there is fight for existence for few HEIs, others are trying their best to top the rankings. Theory of institutional isomorphism is very significant in higher education and there are different types of isomorphic pressures in existence in every country which apply on HEIs. Most significant isomorphic pressures are coercive pressure which acts through various government policies and expectations. While ensuring minimum quality and standard of education, it is actually making many HEIs look and work similar without any innovation and new thought process. Many HEIs try to mimic successful or highly ranked HEIs and hence actually sometimes neglect local or national needs. Globalization and isomorphism are two critical parameters which are affecting higher education throughout the world and creating new challenges, threats and opportunities. Autonomy to the HEIs is the enabling factor for the progress and achieving the global excellence. Most of the HEIs globally ranked high are autonomous. Autonomy consists of freedom in faster decision making at the local level for different issues and the response of the HEIs to the needs, opportunities and challenges become swift. This makes autonomous HEIs better ready to achieve global excellence and ready for the future.

Higher education system in India is quite complex with a major role of affiliating colleges. This affiliating colleges are working in a command and control type of environment and hence not having any type of autonomy in their day to day functioning. Globalization and isomorphism brought new challenges, threats and opportunities in front of Indian HEIs also. The inability for the affiliated HEIs to respond to these challenges made many HEIs in India quite traditional and most of the curriculum they teach is outdated or theoretical. Granting autonomy to the deserving HEIs in India was debated for more than 50 years and the trend of granting autonomy to the quality institutes in India is increasing in last 5 years. This has brought new opportunities to the stake holders of

autonomous institutions to think out of the box, opportunities for global exposure and collaborations (Aithal and Aithal, 2019). Autonomous institutes are taking the complete benefit of their autonomy and doing some splendid work in increasing their academic standards.

Globalization, isomorphism and autonomy interact at different levels in Indian higher education systems. While isomorphic pressures enable HEIs to respond and raise their standards, many HEIs are becoming same. Some autonomous institutions are using their autonomy just for mimicking other successful institutions without really understanding or using their own potential. In such scenario, it is observed that isomorphic pressures are becoming limiting factors for these HEIs for using their autonomy to the fullest and these institutions are missing the boat of achieving excellence. This raises a natural question about the quest for getting autonomy for such HEIs and are there any benefits of becoming autonomous if HEIs are not using that freedom to the fullest. After studying globalization, isomorphism and autonomy closely in the context of HEI in India the quality and standards of the higher education are improving. Autonomy to the HEIs in India, especially to the affiliated colleges without having degree awarding powers is a historical and revolutionary idea in the development of higher education in India. All three types of isomorphic pressures are actively present and in existence in Indian higher education system. However, with autonomy to the HEIs, the reply of it to these isomorphic pressures can be rapid and proper. Autonomy is the perfect answer for the effects of the globalization and isomorphism, and it is also the perfect way of getting the benefits of opportunities it brought to the higher education sector in India. It is very important that after getting the autonomy and independence HEIs in India should use that freedom in the right direction and to the high responsibility. By studying the good practices across the world and understanding the regional, local, national and international needs, if such autonomous HEIs build their future looking curriculum, inclusive pedagogies, practical exposure, global experience, collaborative approach and innovative thought process among its students, definitely it can bring great reputation to these HEIs in terms of global rankings and recognition. Positive and negative effects are observed on the higher education in India because of the interaction between globalization, isomorphism and autonomy and further research will help to understand its detail implications on various

stakeholders. However, using the autonomy in the right way with full potential can convert all challenges and problems brought by globalization and isomorphism into the opportunities and answers. Many government and private universities and eminent standalone institutes in India are trying to do that and now it is the turn of affiliated colleges to first rise to the standard of achieving autonomous status and for autonomous colleges to play their role in making India as a knowledge super – power. New government policies are quite supportive and futuristic and HEIs should use this newly found autonomy for building the culture of creativity, critical thinking and knowledge creation. Because of the interactions of globalization, isomorphism and autonomy, entire education system in India including primary, secondary, tertiary and vocational are transforming, reinventing and reviving. A long-term commitment and consistent efforts by all stakeholders including government, private and public will be required to enable Indian education to achieve its well-deserved highest reputation by creating impact of academic excellence and exceptional contributions of research and innovation in the coming decades.

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