



Association of Indian Universities (AIU) and its Role in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

Association of Indian universities (AIU) is an organization and association of major universities in India. It is located in Delhi. Since 1925, it works for the cause of higher education . It assesses the courses, syllabi, standards and credits of foreign universities pursued abroad and equates them in relation to various courses offered by Indian universities .It is mainly concerned with the recognition of Degrees/Diplomas awarded by the Universities in India, which are recognized by the UGC, New Delhi, and abroad for the purpose of admission to higher degree courses in Indian Universities. The main objective of the AIU is to protect and promote the interest of universities and facilitate university activities especially by way of sharing information and increasing cooperation in the field of culture, sports, and allied areas, and help universities in mutual recognition of degrees AIU manages its routine activities through several functional divisions in the AIU Secretariat viz, Administration, finance, Evaluation, Research, student Information services, sports division, Library and Documentation, and Publication and Sales Division. Each of these Divisions is entrusted with important assignments of national and international level. Affiliation, exchange of views, information bureau and platform for solution of problems are the major functions of AIU.

Key words: *Administration, Affiliation, Association, Higher Education.*

INTRODUCTION

The Inter University Board (IUB) was established in 1925 and was renamed as the ASSOCIATION OF INDIAN UNIVERSITIES (AIU) in 1973. The need of an organization in India for equivalence of degrees between the universities in India and abroad was felt since long, after the establishment of three premier Universities (Bombay, Calcutta and Madras in 1857) and therefore, the Inter University Board was formed as an Autonomous Body. The main objective of the AIU is to protect and promote the interest of universities and facilitate university activities especially by way of sharing information and increasing cooperation in the field of culture, sports, and allied areas, and help universities in mutual recognition of degrees. After independence it assumed its role as a valued source of research-based policy advice institution to the Government of India in the field of higher education. Since then it is enjoying the privilege of being the singular largest body of academics in the country having its presence in almost all the landmark decisions of Indian higher education system including the Committees and Commissions. Membership of AIU is given only those universities whose courses and curriculum are recognized by the Govt. of India. AIU membership is the hallmark of authenticity, quality and lifelong security from career perspectives. AIU is also an implementing



agency for the agreements signed under the Cultural exchange Programmes executed between India and other countries in the field of education, insofar as it relates to the recognition of foreign qualifications (except for medicine and allied courses). Its opinion as to legitimacy or recognition of any foreign qualification is not binding upon anyone, as it is neither a statutory body, nor a part of the government. It is in fact a society registered under the societies act. A UK postgraduate degree, for which thousands of Indian students aspire for every year, is not recognized in India as a PG degree and candidates holding such degrees may be rejected by the universities for higher studies like PhD programmes in India. AIU indicates that master Degree programmes which are less than two years in duration of foreign universities will not be accorded equivalence and AIU does not issue Equivalent certificates in such cases. The stand taken by the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) and the British Council that guides Indian students on UK education too seem to corroborate this view. Interestingly, AIU is the only recognized body in India for granting academic equivalence of degrees and diplomas not only within the country but also to other similar bodies in foreign countries. It acts as a bureau of information exchange in higher education and brings out a no. of useful publications, including the “universities Handbook”, research papers and a weekly journal titled “University news”. The “University News” is a weekly journal carrying a variety of articles on different aspects of higher education. While some of them are of factual nature and local interest, others delineate current national and global thinking. A proper appreciation of various problems of higher education is facilitated if articles on a given theme are read together. The Association has introduced a new series “Selections from University News” in which articles on similar themes are brought together. The past records of AIU reveal that it has carved a niche for itself by playing a proactive role in the areas of equivalence of degrees/qualifications of Indian and foreign universities, Research, sports, Promotion of Youth Affairs apart from cooperating and coordinating among universities and national and international bodies in matters of common interest. It is the only university association in the world which organizes student centric activities establishing direct contact with students. Organizing zonal and National Vice Chancellors Meets/Conferences is one of the regular activities of the AIU. In the recent past it has organized conferences and National Seminars of Vice Chancellors on some very important topics like ‘Higher Education: A perennial Quest for Excellence’, ‘Bridging the Gaps in Higher Education’, Traditional knowledge Systems’, Reforms and Innovations in Higher Education: A March Towards World Class Standards, Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan : Understanding the Essentials etc.

The AIU has close links with the following agencies: University Grants Commission, Indian Council for Agricultural Research, Department of secondary and higher education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Indian Council for Cultural Relations, National Assessment and Accreditation Council, Distance Education Council, All India Council for Technical education, National Council for Teacher education, Education Departments of various states and State Councils of Higher Education. At the time of its Annual meeting, the AIU organizes a joint meeting of Vice-Chancellors/Directors of Member Universities, /Institutions with the heads of apex bodies to consider important policy matters concerning higher education. The AIU maintains close relationship with international organizations in the field of higher education including the commonwealth of Learning, Association of Commonwealth Universities, International Association of Universities, and the Commonwealth Secretariat. In recent years, it has signed Memorandums of Understanding with Hochschul Rektoren Konferenz (HRK), Germany; Australian Vice



Chancellors Committee (AVCC), and the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Directors(CVCD) of Sri Lanka, for mutual cooperation in various areas of higher education.

The Association has signed a Memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development acting through its World Bank Institute for collaboration. An important international event hosted by AIU recently was the Global Meeting of Association on the topic “Internationalization of Higher Education: New Players, New Approaches” organized by International Association of Universities. The membership of AIU embraces all types of recognized universities existing in the country. At present, 529 Indian universities are its members. In addition, to Indian Universities, it has six Associate Members, one from each Nepal, Bhutan, Malaysia and Dubai and 2 universities from Mauritius. The Association is substantially financed from the annual subscription of the member universities. The Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development provides grants for meeting a part of the maintenance and development expenditure, including research studies, workshops, training programmes for university administrators and orientation programmes.

II.HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The idea of bringing together all the universities on a common platform emerged from deliberations of a conference of the Vice Chancellors of Universities convened by Lord Reading, the then viceroy of India at Shimla in 1924. The AIU was originated in our country according to recommendations of Saddle Commission-1917. The Inter-University Board (IUB) of INDIA was subsequently formed on March 23, 1925, with the view of promoting university activities, especially by way of sharing information and co-operation in the field of education, culture, sports and allied areas. Inter-university Board acquired a legal status with its registration in 1967 as a society under the Societies Registration ACT, 1860. In 1973, it assumed its present name: The Association of Indian Universities (AIU). Since then it has been acting as a representative body of universities of India to liaise with the universities and the government (central as well as state) and to co-ordinate among the universities and other apex higher education organizations of the world. The membership includes traditional universities, open universities, professional universities, Institutes of National importance and deemed- to-be universities. In addition, there is a provision of granting of Associate Membership to Universities of neighboring countries.

III.ORGANISATIONAL SET UP

The General Body of the AIU is constituted of Vice Chancellors/Directors of the recognized Indian Universities. AIU's organizational set up consists of President, vice President and Secretary General and other functionaries. The President is the Head of the Association and the Secretary General, the principal Executive of the Association.

DIVISIONS IN THE AIU: Some important divisions in the AIU are as under

Administration



Governance of AIU is committee based. The Standing Committee is responsible for the overall governance supported by sub-committees. The President is the Head and the Secretary General, the principal Executive of the Association. The Administration Division provides personnel, material and usual administrative support to the activities of AIU. It maintains the plan, Equipment, essential service, does human resource management and deals with legal matters.

AIU has its own building with beautiful glazed tower built on a 0.340 acre plot of land in the institutional area. Though it is located ideally at the centre of the city, it is free from hustle and bustle of the city. The building accommodates all divisions. A guest-house is maintained at the second floor which is exclusively meant for use as Rest Room-cum-office for the visiting vice chancellors/Directors of member universities/Institutions. The AIU house is situated near ITO, just opposite to National Bal Bhawan. All the three major rail-heads viz New Delhi, old Delhi and Hazrat Nizamudin: the Inter State BUS terminal And the Indira Gandhi International Airport are at easily approachable distance from AIU.

Finance

The Accounts Division provides financial support to the activities of the Association to carry out the programmes in the field of education, culture, sports and allied areas. It provides adequate planning, budget formulation, monitoring and disbursement of funds for the activities and maintains proper accounts and records. The Association is funded by Grant-in-aid from the Ministry of Human Resource Development and Ministry of Youth Affairs and sports and internal receipts on account of Annual subscription, sale of publications, advertisements, subscription of weekly journal-university news, Equivalence fee from students etc.

Evaluation:

The Evaluation Division deals with the work of evaluation and equivalence of degrees and diplomas awarded by the accredited foreign universities for admission to higher courses at Indian universities. The Division provides expert assistance on the status of foreign qualifications to the students, universities, central and state agencies including Ministries of the Government of India.

The Division also provides assistance to evaluation agencies of the foreign countries. The Division examines proposals received from the Institutions outside the purview of the Indian Universities, for granting academic equivalence to Two year Full-time Postgraduate Diploma courses in the area of Management (AIU as a matter of policy do not accords equivalence to PGDM programme offered through Distance Mode)

The Division issues Equivalence Certificates to the students with foreign qualifications to facilitate their admission in Indian universities.

IV.RESEARCH DIVISION:



The Research Division undertakes research studies on problems and issues related to higher education in emerging areas of concern. Earlier the division has developed question banks on several subjects. A regular activity of the research division is to organize workshops/training programs for University Administrators. The Division also organizes Roundtable Conferences and National Level Seminars. The Division publishes volumes on different themes of higher education under the series “selections from university News” annotated bibliographies on contemporary issues and statistical data on various aspects of education. The information about the Doctoral thesis awarded by Indian Universities is disseminated in the regular column “Theses of the Month” in AIU journal “University News”.

Student Information Services Division:

Student Information Services Division of the Association of Indian Universities serves the students, academics, parents, other stakeholders and visitors to AIU House by providing them information on the status of Indian institutions of higher education, professional bodies etc. and on the courses offered by Indian Universities and other institutions recognized by statutory bodies like AICTE, NCTE, and MCI. It provides extensive information through Universities Handbook regarding accredited courses conducted by Central and State Agencies, teaching staff of university department, constituent/affiliated colleges, etc. it also brings out other professional handbooks like Handbook on Engineering education, Management education, Medical education, computer education and Distance education.

Sports Division:

The origin of the Sports Division can be traced to 1928 when Inter-University Board (IUB), after its existence of only 4 years, decided to undertake a survey regarding the position of the infrastructure of sports facilities existing in the universities and colleges. A follow up action an “Inter-university Athletic Board” with its headquarters in Patna, was set up in 1929. The Universities of Allahabad, Banaras, Calcutta, Dacca, Lucknow, Madras and Patna were its founder members. The games initially taken up for organizing Inter-University Competitions were cricket, football, hockey and tennis.

AIU has been organizing Inter-University Tournaments. Participation of university students in these tournaments generates a spirit of healthy competition. It is, therefore, necessary that the Inter-University Tournaments are governed by a set of “Rules and regulations”, which are updated from time to time. AIU had framed “Rules and Regulations” from the inception of the programme of Inter-University Tournaments in 1941. The first edition of the “Rules and Regulations” was published in 1941.

Library and documentation:

The Library and Documentation Division is a research library in the field of higher education. There are about 20,000 documents and 150 current periodicals available in the library. The library is particularly rich in its collection of different government commission/committee reports and other government policy documents. The annual reports, calendars, handbooks and Act of the various universities and Supreme Court of India judgments



in the field of education are available in the library. The library is mostly used by the research scholars in the field of education as a discipline and by the students seeking admission to the higher education.

Publications and Sales Division:

AIU is the sole publisher of the Books as placed in the AIU website and also, being printed in the issue of University News Journal from time to time. No part of any publication is to be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by means, mechanical, electronic or otherwise without express written permission of the publisher. All the publications are being sold directly from AIU with its office at 16, Comrade Indrajit Gupta Marg, New Delhi-110 002 and also are available from the Booksellers & Publishers /Agencies to whom AIU sells a smaller quantity of these publications on cash/bill basis.

Objectives of AIU:

1. To serve as an Inter-University organization,
2. To act as a bureau of information and to facilitate communication, coordination, mutual consultation amongst universities.
3. To act as a liaison between the universities and the government (Central to as well as the state government) and to coordinate with other university boards of national or international in matters of common interest.
4. To act as the representative of universities of India.
5. To promote or to undertake such programmes as would help to improve standards of instruction, examination, research, textbooks, scholarly publications, library organization and such other programmes as may contribute to the growth and propagation of knowledge.
6. To help universities to maintain their autonomous character.
7. To facilitate exchange of members of the teaching and research staff.
8. To appoint or recommend where necessary a common representative of the Association at any Conference, national or international, on higher education.
9. To assist universities in obtaining recognition for their degrees, diplomas, and examinations from other universities, Indian as well as foreign.
10. To undertake, organize and facilitate conferences, seminars, workshops, lectures and research in higher learning.
11. To establish and maintain a sports organization for promoting rapport among member-universities.
12. To establish and maintain organizations dealing with youth welfare, student services, cultural programmes, adult education and such other activities as are conducive to the betterment and welfare of students or teachers and others connected with universities.
13. To act as a service agency to universities in whatever manner it may be required or prescribed
14. To undertake, facilitate and provide for the publication of newsletters, research papers, books and journals.

V.MAJOR FUNCTIONS OF AIU:



Affiliation:

Association of Indian universities grants affiliation to the universities established through the acts of state and central government. The Association reserves the right of refusing affiliation if it is not satisfied by the standards of a particular university. The Association also helps Indian students in seeking admission abroad by certifying the bonafides of the university in question. So it maintains proper liaison with the foreign universities.

Exchange of views:

The Association acts as a forum for the meeting of vice-chancellors for exchange of views on matters pertaining to system of education, curriculum, admission, examination system and research works etc. for bringing about suitable reforms in the field of higher education.

Coordination:

The Association establishes proper liaison, cooperation and coordination between the universities. It also helps in providing facilities with regard to the efficiency.

Information Bureau:

The Association also acts as an information bureau to provide authentic and valid information to call universities pertaining to new schemes, changes and reforms being made in the field of higher education. It also helps to provide information with regard to facilities being extended by the foreign universities to the Indian students.

Platform for solution of problem:

The Association provides platform for discussing university problems and seek their solutions and helps to implement them in universities. It is a platform where all the vice-chancellors meet and discuss academic problems and evolve a common policy to be implemented in future. The Association of Indian universities is an important institution that helps in the development and improvement of higher education. It acts as a central agency for the government.

VI.CONCLUSION

Association of Indian Universities (AIU) is one of the premier institutions of the country working for the cause of higher education. It maintains proper liaison, cooperation and coordination between the universities. It helps universities to obtain their autonomous character. It is a platform where all vice-chancellors meet and discuss academic problems and evolve a common policy to be implemented in future. It is an important institution that helps in the development and improvement of higher education. It acts as a central agency for the government.

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