

## 14. WHITHER STATE TECHNICAL UNIVERSITIES?

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A wise person doesn't make mistakes, a pragmatic one learns from the mistakes of others, but a fool doesn't learn from his own blunders.

What is wrong with the present System of Several Affiliating Multi-discipline Universities (SSAMU) in the state, each having suitable headquarter and serving higher education needs of its geographical jurisdictional neighborhood areas?

- Is a University in SSAMU catering to the Faculty of Technology among others unwieldy? No, in fact proposed State Technical University covering all engineering colleges in the State would be too unwieldy for governance, leave apart good and effective governance.
- SSAMU provides for multidisciplinary platform for academics in higher education; State Technical University (STU) would be just isolated one-dimensional institute; it is contradiction in terms and spirit to call it a 'University'.
- SSAMU promotes several every time active nuclei of innovation, experimentation and 'sense of belonging' of faculty and visibility of contributions by the enlightened faculty of each University.
- Quality maintenance and enhancement have been possible through SSAMU; STU would simply not have wherewithal, reach and acceptance of its monolithic structure and dictates.
- Uniformity of curriculum and standards of examinations are not positive attributes to be built-in; in fact, it could be counter-productive as run-of-the-mill teaching-learning system. IITs and IIMs do not have any such uniformity by design; yet, they make the mark in the academic and professional world.
- It is often claimed that STU will provide best, modern and relevant curriculum of international standards. For that you don't need STU; www can easily fulfill that need through access to this information. Though good, relevant and internationally acceptable curriculum has its merit and today each University under SSAMU is doing its best, what is more important is how well the curriculum is treated at the delivery point-in classrooms, laboratories and project works. University of SSAMU today accomplishes this very effectively.
- In SSAMU in Gujarat, we have seen universities experimenting-of course conforming to the macro guidelines of UGC and AICTE- in interdisciplinary electives, credit system, fast-track movements of bright students, choice-based cafeteria system of learning options and various innovative measures for system of

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examination. With STU this not possible.

- It is amusing to note that the mother of affiliating university system - British Higher Education System - has done away this affiliating system; STU seems to enlarge this scope in the land of legacy of British system.
- National Policy on Education in mid-eighties has not mentioned STU, not by default but by design. The issue was debated, but in light of its recommendation for promoting as many institutions being made autonomous with all autonomy and accountability, the STU was adjudged to be anathema to the perception of academic decentralized freedom to grow as per collective wisdom of academicians of an institution.
- National Knowledge Commission has also reiterated and reinforced this need to provide autonomy to the institutions.
- No regimentation, No strangulating regulations, No fall-in-the-line commands. Every academician, worth is salt, has intellectual pride, has focus on students and reasonable knowledge of the ground reality. An external regulating system may define mandatory exit attributes of graduates in general terms, it may also specify entry attributes of learners; apart from these external parameters, it should be left to the institutions / SSAMU how to design and provide processes within - without compromising standards and credibility.
- It is interesting to note some of the States which launched State Technical Universities earlier are now decentralizing region wise - realization has dawned on them that STU is not workable proposition.
- Several Universities of the State of Maharashtra have international reputation for quality and excellence; they also have eminent alumni all over the world-do we expect these universities to lose their recognition and identity? If so, for what?
- If the State is keen to establish State Technical University, it may be given non-affiliating status, having its constituent schools and departments of post graduate studies and research. It may also have apex think-tanks to suggest pilot projects of innovations for guidance to the faculty of Technology in the State Universities.

