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## Attitude and Skills Learning of College Students Community in Tamil Nadu – A Case Study of Students from Autonomous Colleges of Thoothukudi District

Dr. HENRY PANDIAN. S

Associate Professor

Post-Graduate Department and Research Center in Economics,  
Pope's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi District.

V. AROCKIA AMUTHAN

Assistant Professor

Post-Graduate Department and Research Center in Economics,  
Pope's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi District.

*Innovation is apparent in all spheres of life and education is also experiencing a paradigm shift in this aspect. An innovative curriculum is needed in the present-day context not only to enhance the growth and competitiveness of an individual but also it responds to the numerous and varied opportunities for using knowledge creatively and productively the existing one. In general university common curriculum development are facing the problems of lack of conceptual understanding and problem-solving skills, poor application of knowledge, continuing unemployment crisis are expected to be set right by introducing an innovative curriculum. Autonomous institutions are blessed with an opportunity where introduction of innovative curriculum is possible more frequently than in an affiliated institution and can be done more precisely at intuitional level. Colleges. This study tries to analyze the student's perceptions about curriculum of autonomous colleges and to list out the problems associated with curriculum innovation by student community in autonomous, Methodological framework of this study, primary data collected from 75 students representing two autonomous colleges in Thoothukudi District of Tamil Nadu. The study measured to student's attitude towards functions autonomous institution in the field of curriculum development and its uses. Provisionally this study found that majority of the students of autonomous colleges get high marks in higher secondary education, sound parental education background, participation of various extracurricular activities in their academic performance. Autonomous colleges facing various problems related academic reform i.e. financial, examinations standards, academic reforms, etc., A careful approach to these problems and a meticulous planning of strategies to tackle the challenges will definitely make the autonomous system an effective way of building knowledge-based society.*

Keywords: Autonomy, Education, Attitude and Students.

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## Introduction

Starting with three Universities –Madras, Bombay and Calcutta –with colleges affiliated to them, India today has 575 autonomous colleges affiliated to 178 universities in 23 States as of 2016. The move towards autonomy started in the early 1970s as suggestions of the Kothari Committee Report were taken into consideration. The Kothari Committee - 1966, identified that the affiliating system led to large inefficiencies and contributed substantially to the widening gap of India's quality of education with respect to global standards. The delay in decision making process by universities as they struggle to manage the numerous colleges affiliated to them, the rigid academic curricula which has not been revised as per changing trends, economic needs and tastes of students, the stagnant, low level of research carried out in colleges and the lack of global competitiveness in the wake of increased number of foreign universities establishing their institutes in India are some of the problems identified by the committee in its report submitted to the Government of India in 1966.

The UGC defines autonomy to be a functional status conferred upon colleges by it, granting them greater flexibility towards purely academic development for the upliftment of academic standards and excellence. The Government encouraged the granting of the status of autonomy to more colleges as suggested by the Kothari Committee Report. The Madras University was the first University to grant the status to colleges affiliated to it.

### Functions of Autonomy

A college on being granted the status of autonomy is separated from its parent university, though not completely. The extent of autonomy depends on the kind of status granted to it. There are three broad classifications of autonomy

### Academic Autonomy

Academic autonomy helps the college achieve the primary goal of granting autonomy. It enables the college to design its own curricula and devise its own methods of teaching. It also enables the college to design its own method of evaluation. Academic autonomy confers upon the college granted this status the right to

- Formulate its own curricula based on relevance
- Revise existing curricula based on relevance
- Introduce new courses based on relevance and demand
- Conduct examinations
- Publish results
- Introduce new systems like the choice-based credit system

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Academic autonomy is considered to benefit higher education as it enables the college to keep up with its potential without being constrained by the common systems proposed by the university.

Academic autonomy permits the college with greater potential to improve its quality of education as under the previous system, such colleges suffered, as the university made common systems that could be followed by all colleges, and the college with greater potential found it impossible to realize its capabilities. Academic autonomy does not permit the college to grant degrees, which is continued to be granted by the parent university. The university also plays an important role in ensuring that the quality of existing as well as newly introduced course is good.

#### Administrative Autonomy

Administrative autonomy enables the faculty to participate in the decision-making process of the college. These decisions were earlier taken by the parent university and pertain to the general administrative functioning of the college, including working hours and infrastructure.

#### Financial Autonomy

Financial autonomy enables the college to allocate its funds, including the UGC grants. It enables the college to generate internal funds through the introduction of self-financing courses and to allocate funds granted to it by the UGC and the State in ways it deems fit. The parent university closely watches the allocation and utilization of grants received by the college. Financial autonomy permits the college to set the fees for its self-financing courses. The direct payment agreement between the Government and aided colleges is upheld even after conferring financial autonomy to a college to ensure that it does not remain skeptical of increasing financial burden upon being granted the status of autonomy.

#### Importance of the Study

This study tries to analyse the student's perceptions about curriculum of autonomous colleges and to list out the problems associated with curriculum innovation by student community in autonomous colleges. The study measured to student's attitude towards functions autonomous institution in the field of curriculum development and its uses. Provisionally this study found that majority of the students of autonomous colleges get high marks in higher secondary education, sound parental education background, participation of various extracurricular activities in their academic performance. Autonomous colleges facing various problems related academic reform i.e. financial, examinations standards, academic reforms, etc. A careful approach to these problems and a meticulous planning of strategies to tackle the challenges will definitely make the autonomous system an effective way of building knowledge-based society.

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### Objective of the Study

- The study measured to student's attitude towards functions autonomous institution in the field of curriculum development and its uses.
- To examine the subject knowledge of autonomous college students in Thoothukudi District.

### Source of Data

The data and information for the purpose of the study have been collected through primary and secondary sources. The primary data has been collected by administering structural questionnaires. Primary data collected during November 2017. Data collected from 75 students of autonomous colleges in Thoothukudi District. Secondary data collected from UGC records and reports.

### Students Perception of Autonomous College

In Thoothukudi District two autonomous colleges are functioning under affiliation with Manonmaniam Sundaranar University. In the year of 2009-10 academic year St. Mary's College granted autonomy from UGC and 2016-17 academic year Pope's College reached autonomous status. These two colleges come under the religious Christian minority institutions. The two colleges are served to the rural student community. Students are hails from vulnerable societies in general majority of them are first graduate from their families in particular.

Table – 6.1 Analyses to the student's perceptions among autonomous colleges. Nearly 56 percent of the students are strongly agreed to good reputation of the institution because reputation are getting from autonomous status of the college. In the context of selecting of the degree courses by students 85.33 per cent were consider that employability of the course and 90.66 per cent of the students are consider the institution offers a variety of courses in students' field of interest.

Table – 6.1

## Students Perceptions about Autonomous College

Sl.No	Statements	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1	The institution has a good reputation for academic excellence.	42	33	-	-	-	75
2	The course I have chosen has a good reputation.	56	08	02	09	-	75
3	The institution offers a variety of courses in my field of interest.	68	07	-	-	-	75
4	A large number of alumni had acquired jobs in their respected fields.	14	47	03	11	-	75
5	The institution offers various extracurricular activities in a regular basis.	71	04	-	-	-	75
6	The institution has clear cut rules and regulations.	41	12	14	08	-	75
7	The institution's admission system is highly competitive.	64	09	-	2	-	75
8	The institution has a good reputation for high technology in all its infrastructure and teaching and learning facilities.	11	52	12	-	-	75
9	The Institution syllabi are updated periodically	69	06	-	-	-	75
10	The institution has a good reputation for producing quality graduates.	58	17	-	-	-	75

Source: Primary Data, 2017.

Note: 1- Strongly Agree 2 - Agree 3 - No Opinion 4- Disagree 5 - Strongly Disagree

All the respondents are focused to the various extra-curricular activities offered by colleges such as NCC, NSS, Youth Red Cross, Red Ribbon Club, Cultural Clubs and Sports. Autonomous college's students are actively participated in all extra- curricular activities in their academic performance because autonomous colleges are giving more freedom in other academic activities.

For example, in the month of October, 2017 Department of Economics, Wavoo Wajeewa College of Arts and Science for Women organized Economics Festival – 2017 most of prize winners are from autonomous colleges not only for this one function if considered all extra-curricular activities autonomous colleges students were top listed in prizes distribution.

Almost 54.66 per cent of students are considering about clear cur rules and regulations of college admission and academic performance. The observation of 85.33 per cent of the students by

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institution admissions system are highly competitive and all the students are focused about institution syllabi are updated periodically in general and unit wise updated/added of current issues or topics in particular.

Most of the students are such as 69.33 percent are considering about the institution has a good reputation for using of high technology in all its infrastructure and teaching and learning facilities and 77 percent of the students are focused the institution has a good reputation for producing quality graduates.

#### Discussions of this Research Experience

Students are very important in knowledge transformation and pillars of our nation. Results of the study reveal that much emphasis has been placed on students' perceptions of the autonomous colleges are given more academic freedom of their career. Students who are studied autonomous colleges their performed better in extra-curricular activities.

The research revealed that students are considering syllabi of colleges because of most of the autonomous colleges are updating and adding new subject in their syllabi once in three years and twice in a year updating their syllabi in subject/unit wise. The functioning of autonomous colleges is given academic freedom, quality of the syllabi, high standard of examination question pattern, evaluation methods are highly appreciable, students participation of syllabi creation, faculties get freedom of make a new syllabus or updated/adding new title/topic may be include in their handling subjects.

#### Conclusion

It is seen that academic autonomy has been implemented well in colleges with respect to the conduct of examinations and evaluations. The autonomous colleges have successfully conducted credible examinations and published results on time, much to the satisfaction of the students. The universities have not been able to publish results on time, resulting in delays up to an academic year or more, under the affiliation system.

Though it is necessary to ensure the quality of academics in autonomous colleges, making university approval mandatory defeats the very purpose of academic autonomy. While most teachers and students feel that granting academic autonomy is a much-needed change to the affiliation system, under which performance of colleges deteriorated year after year, it did not stop them from pointing out that the autonomy enjoyed by colleges in Tamil Nadu is glaringly inadequate. They cited the interference of the university in introducing and restructuring courses to point out that academic autonomy as implemented in Tamil Nadu ensure limited freedom even in terms of academic matters.

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