Academic Freedom and Indian Universities

NANDINI SUNDAR

Academic freedom is increasingly under assault from authoritarian governments worldwide, supported by right-wing student groups who act as provocateurs within. In India, recent assaults on academic freedom have ranged from curbs on academic and extracurricular events to brutal assaults on students. However, the concept of academic freedom is complex and needs to be placed in a wider institutional context. While academic freedom was critical to earlier visions of the Indian university, as shown by various commissions on higher education, it is now increasingly devalued in favour of administrative centralisation and standardisation. Privatisation and the increase in precarious employment also contribute to the shrinking of academic freedom.

An earlier version of this article was delivered as the Malcolm Adiseshiah Memorial Lecture at the University of Madras on 21 November 2017.

Nandini Sundar (*nandinisundar@yahoo.com*) teaches at the Department of Sociology, Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi.

> Theirs (the universities') is the pursuit of truth and excellence in all its diversity—a pursuit which needs, above all, courage and fearlessness. Great universities and timid people go ill together.
>
> —Kothari Commission Report (1966: 274)

As Indian universities reel under the multiple batteries of privatisation, Hindutva, and bureaucratic indifference, it is useful to recall older visions of the Indian university and the centrality of academic freedom to defining this idea. Historically, the goals of the Indian university have included training human resources for national growth, reducing inequality by facilitating individual and community mobility, pushing the frontiers of research and knowledge, and keeping alive a spirit of enquiry and criticism. The last, however, is no longer seen as important.

Ostensibly worried by India's plummeting rank in international higher education comparisons,[1] the government has proposed to set up "world class" educational institutes (UGC 2016), and grant autonomy to 60 specified institutions (MHRD 2018). Both these world-class and autonomous institutions would be free from the regulatory restrictions imposed by the University Grants Commission (UGC) on the rest of the university system, and would have the freedom to start new courses, recruit foreign faculty and students, etc. Under the "world-class" scheme, government institutions would get ₹500 crore each. This, of course, begs the question of what the government has in mind for the rest of the university system, which by implication will not be world class but third class, not autonomous but subservient. In any case, it is sheer gall to graciously grant "autonomy" after having taken away the right of universities to decide on basic aspects like appointments, admissions, or syllabi in the first place, and appears to be no more than a sugar-coated way of referring to the devolution of financial responsibility.

Funding and "autonomy," however, are not the only factors that matter—the question I ask here is whether it is possible to have institutions of excellence without academic freedom?[2]

The Endangered Academic

Unlike journalism, academia is generally not seen as intrinsically dangerous. However, the organisation Scholars at Risk has documented 333 attacks on students and faculty of higher educational institutions in 65 countries between 2011 and 2015. Whereas there were 257 attacks in 35 countries in 2016–17. These attacks range from killings, violence and disappearances, to loss of positions, prosecutions, imprisonments, travel restrictions, etc, by both state and non-state actors, with the university authorities or state often failing to provide the

necessary protection against vigilante actors (Scholars at Risk 2015, 2017).

In Turkey, 7,023 academics have lost their jobs and are banned from public service and travel abroad; 1,404 staff, 407 faculty and students have been criminally charged; 294 graduate students have been expelled from their Turkish institutions while studying abroad, and 60,000 plus students have been affected by university closures after the failed coup of 15 July 2016 (Scholars at Risk 2017: 15). While many of those dismissed were signatories to a peace petition calling on the state to stop excesses in its war against the Kurds and negotiate peace, others have been identified on the basis of social media posts, audio records of lectures provided by students, and a variety of evidence indicative of an enhanced surveillance state after the alleged coup (Özkirimli 2017; Anonymous 2017). In India, the threat to academic freedom may be more creeping than in Turkey, but it is both part of a wider assault on the freedom of the citizenry and a specific attack on critical thought as embodied in universities.

This article is divided into the following sections. First, I attempt to define academic freedom. Second, I look at previous higher education commissions on academic freedom. Third, I list some of the assaults on academic freedom on Indian university campuses today—ranging from book bans, curbs on seminars, to the manner in which student protests are dealt with. Fourth, I look at the broader institutional context which enables these infringements on academic freedom to go relatively unchallenged, that is, the everyday structures of power and surveillance through which academic work must be produced and which progressively saps the will of the university.[3]

Landscape of the Indian University System

The number of institutions imparting higher education in India has grown from 500 colleges and 20 universities in 1947 to 38,498 colleges and 760 universities in 2017 (MHRD 2016a: 106–07). Of the 315.6 lakh students enrolled in 2014–15, 82.26% were enrolled in undergraduate programmes, 11.09% in postgraduate programmes and 0.67% in research degrees (MHRD 2016a). Despite the seemingly large numbers in absolute terms, when compared to India's population, in 2011 only 5.63% of all Indians were graduates (Sinha and Chowdhury 2016).

"Arts" is by far the most popular or accessible subject, taken by 37.09% students, followed by the Sciences (18.64%), commerce/management (17.57%), and engineering/technology (16.05%). Professional degrees like education (3.60%), law (1.84%) and medicine (3.52%) far outstrip those who want to study agriculture (0.48%) and veterinary sciences (0.14%) (MHRD 2016a: 106–07).

The All India Survey on Higher Education reports that 78% of colleges are privately managed and 60% are located in rural areas (MHRD 2016b). College density (per lakh of population) varies from seven in Bihar to 60 in Telangana while the all-India average is 28, suggesting not just the differential weight of the middle and entrepreneurial classes in these areas, but the very different political economies in which privatised education is embedded (Upadhya 2016).

Defining Academic Freedom

> Freedom in research and training is the fundamental principle of university life, and governments and universities, each as far as in them lies, must ensure respect for this fundamental requirement.
>
> — Magna Charta Universitatum, Bologna 18 September 1988[4]

Defining academic freedom is not an easy task, both in relation to the academy and in relation to other kinds of freedom (see essays in Bilgrami and Cole 2015; Carvalho and Downing 2010). Is academic freedom an attribute of individual teachers and/or students within a university or should it be understood in more institutional terms? Is academic freedom a subset of the wider fundamental right to freedom of expression, or is it an entirely different kind of animal, resting on criteria that are unique to the university?

A common argument made for academic freedom is that it leads to greater knowledge as contesting ideas compete. Robert Post (2015) argues against this "marketplace of ideas" justification, pointing out that while the First Amendment protects free speech in the United States (US), academics are bound by evidence as constituted by their disciplines. Universities cannot allow faculty to teach wrong historical facts or false theories like creationism in the name of freedom of speech. Academic freedom lies in creating the kind of space where judgments are made not under political or funding pressure but according to the standards of the discipline and the university itself. In other words, academic freedom requires that the university be a self-regulating space, according to whatever contract has been drawn up between individual faculty, students, and governing boards (Post 2015).

In 1915, the American Association of University Professors in its Declaration of Principles on Academic Freedom and Academic Tenure, seen as one of the foundational charters for academic freedom in the US, defined academic freedom as including not just the freedom of enquiry and research, and freedom to teach within the university, but also "freedom of extra-mural utterance and action" (Carvalho and Downing 2010: 4). The relationship between what a teacher says outside the classroom/university and what she says inside is a tricky one, especially in these times when private views are circulated widely through social media. In Max Weber's classic formulation in "Science as a Vocation" (1919/1948), it is important to keep one's politics out of the classroom. However, it is equally important to be able to express oneself freely outside the classroom:

> When speaking in a political meeting about democracy, one does not hide one's personal standpoint; indeed to come out clearly and take a stand is one's damned duty ... But the true teacher will beware of imposing from the platform any political position upon the student, whether it is expressed or suggested. (Weber 1919/1948: 145–46)

Thus, a teacher who is denied tenure for political views expressed outside (whether through social media or by way of speeches) has a right to ask whether it is on *academic* grounds, and relates to his or her work within the university.[5]

What then is the relationship between academic freedom and institutional autonomy? While the two are mutually reinforcing, in practice, the issue is far more complicated. A uniform reservation system for the country may seem like a curb on institutional autonomy but can individual academic institutions be allowed to ignore national goals like inclusiveness? Conversely, how do universities avoid being reduced to a mere extension wing of policies already decided by governments or funders, and retain the space for basic science and social science, and the setting of new agendas?

While courses, determination of standards, etc, must be within the purview of the university system alone, one can legitimately debate whether academic freedom should be allowed to be the freedom of the ivory tower, or whether it is conditional upon some sense of social responsibility, especially in a country with scarce resources (see the discussion in Kothari Commission 1966). Who is to define the nature and kind of engagement that academics should have with the world around them? In practice, the government or the funder, the public at large, university administrators, and academics themselves, all play a role in negotiating the kind of research that gets done and how. The key issue, then, is what are the appropriate spheres of each?

A question that is often asked is whether the social sciences and humanities lead to intellectual advancement, and if so, for whom—for the persons studying these disciplines who might emerge with more cultivated minds, or for society at large? One charge is that a liberal arts education creates a class of elites who place a life of fine-grained argument on a higher pedestal than a life of involvement in the affairs of the state or business.[6] Another is that it perpetuates existing hierarchies of class, caste, race or gender, whether through the choice of certain classics as foundational texts (Kimball 2010) or by seemingly neutral institutional procedures (such as insisting on the PhD being a full-time programme, thus closing off higher education to working people). As Pierre Bourdieu (1989: 17–19) reminds us, it is not just a coincidence that the values that the academy prizes conveniently happen to be the values of its elite. What appears to be the disinterested upholding of educational standards is often the upholding of privilege. It is for this reason, too, that the university cannot be the sole arbiter of admissions and curricula, based on some notion of "merit."[7] On the other hand, it is the university itself, which is best placed to debate these issues on academic and not extraneous grounds.

In the Indian context, another important question is how we can have, following J P S Uberoi (1968) what one might call *swaraj* or self-rule and independence in academic thought. How does one challenge academic colonialism without becoming national–chauvinist or simply isolated from wider currents? In the 1960s and 1970s, American influence on the way research problems were shaped through funding, patronage and academic programmes, was a major concern (Uberoi 1968; Uberoi et al 2007: 15–18). While new think tanks like Brookings India or Carnegie India give grounds for reiterating these early concerns (Sarkar 2017, 2018), the dominant national mood now is content to follow American interests.

Finally, one must ask whether one can have academic freedom without political or economic freedom, when students and teachers alike are worried about people banning books, or whether they will have jobs or funds to study.

Revisiting Commissions on Higher Education

India has had a long tradition of academic debate and dissent, such as in the 5th-century BCE Nalanda university (Sen 2005; Vajpeyi 2017). However, in the colonial space in which contemporary Indian universities originated, the question of academic freedom was closely tied up with one's position on political freedom. While some educational institutions like Presidency College, Calcutta (now Presidency University, Kolkata), Elphinstone College, Mumbai, Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), Aligarh, and St Stephen's College, Delhi were embedded in the colonial project of inculcating English knowledge among the natives, there were others like Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, or the *vidyapeeths* set up by Gandhi in Kashi, Ahmedabad and Patna, which had an explicitly nationalist project, and in which the ideas of political freedom coalesced with the ideas of pedagogic freedom. Even in the more statist colleges, both students and faculty periodically strayed to the nationalist cause, especially during the non-cooperation movement of 1921–22 and Quit India Movement in 1942, boycotting classes, or participating in strikes (see essays in Hasan 1998).

In the postcolonial context, the idea of universities as spaces of critical knowledge and academic freedom were subordinated to the idea that educational institutions must be sites of nation-building. This was exemplified in the setting up of the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and the Indian Institutes of Managament (IIMs), as "institutes of national importance." However, all the three major interventions in higher education—the S Radhakrishnan Commission report (1948–49), the Kothari Education Commission report (1964–66), and the Yashpal Committee report of 2009—dealt centrally with the notion of both equity and academic freedom, while envisioning what Indian university education could be.

The Radhakrishnan report (1962) has numerous references to the freedom of conscience and university autonomy as might be expected in a document produced so soon after independence:

> Higher education is, undoubtedly, an obligation of the State but State aid is not to be confused with State control over academic policies and practices … Professional integrity requires that teachers should be as free to speak on controversial issues as any other citizens of a free country. An atmosphere of freedom is essential for developing this "morality of the mind." (p 42)

The Radhakrishnan report (1962) also emphasised democracy within the university and the importance of extracurricular activities and engagement with the surrounding environment in inculcating values of fraternity and fair play among students:

> Students cannot learn these if the institutions are run on authoritarian lines. We cannot teach the lessons of freedom by the methods of servitude. Students should be encouraged to participate in the social and cultural activities of the areas in which the colleges are situated so that they may become alive to the needs of the society in which they live. (p 46)

Two decades later, the Kothari Commission (1966: 275–76) was equally clear that dissent was an integral part of the university: that it must serve as the "conscience of the nation," that "universities are pre-eminently the forum for a critical assessment of society—sympathetic, objective, unafraid—whose partiality and motives cannot be suspected," that faculty should live by the values they teach, and should resist becoming "organisation men" eager to suck up to the powers that be.

In the Kothari Commission's view (1966), it was imperative for Indian universities to impart a sense of Indian heritage, and to be independent:

> At present, the "centre of gravity" of Indian academic life is largely *outside* India. That is to say, our scholars and scientists working in fields which are internationally cultivated still tend to look outside India for judgment of their work, for intellectual models of the problems which they study, for the books they read, and for their forum of appreciation and approval. (p 280)

The desire for independence, however, was not at the cost of critical thinking, dissent or competition in international arenas: the idea was to establish a sense of equality rather than dependence. To this end, they advocated the creation of elite institutions, including in engineering and the agricultural sciences, and "centres of advanced studies." It is another matter that the IITs and IIMs have mostly bred wannabe non-resident Indian (NRI) engineers and managers (Subramanian 2015).

University autonomy was key to the preservation of the university as a space of knowledge as well as critical thought or dissent. This autonomy was to be found in three spheres: selection of students, selection of faculty, and selection of courses as well as themes of research. There were three levels at which this autonomy was to be exercised: autonomy within a university (autonomy of individual departments), autonomy of a university with relation to the university system as a whole (that is, UGC), and autonomy of the university system as a whole (including UGC) in relationship to the state and centre, that is, the funding agencies (Kothari 1966: 326–27). While autonomy was important, this also had to be balanced with national goals such as training humanpower or carrying out research that addressed social and economic needs (Kothari 1966: 328). Managing this balancing task required developing appropriate conventions and attitudes on all sides (Kothari 1966: 333). Ultimately,

> Its (the university's) business is not primarily to give society what it *wants* but what it *needs* and obviously they are not always identical. It is not a "community service station," passively responding to popular demands and thereby endangering its intellectual integrity. Nor is it an ivory tower into which students and teachers can withdraw for a time for teaching or research, accepting no responsibility for the improvement of society. It has to maintain an ambivalent position, balancing itself carefully between commitment and detachment—commitment in action, detachment in thought. (Kothari 1966: 276)

By 2009, when the Yashpal Committee on higher education submitted its report, the hope of the early years was yielding to concern over the diminishing space for dissent:

> For a considerable length of time following Independence, institutions of higher learning succeeded in providing a space where dialogue between rival social forces and ideologies could take place in a peaceful atmosphere. However, over the last few decades certain distinct signs of the erosion of this space have surfaced quite often in different parts of the country. … Not only organized youth but the official machinery of the university has been deliberately used to obstruct or subvert the possibility of peaceful debate and inquiry resulting in a long-term institutional damage to their capacity to serve as sites of peace. (Yashpal 2009: 16)

For all three commissions, freedom of thought, expression and research was central to the university, and institutional autonomy was one of the key instruments to maintain this freedom.

Closing of the Indian University

Belying the hopes of the education commissions, which talked repeatedly of engagement between the university and wider society, the Indian university has become progressively more closed in its orientation. If the entire emphasis of society is on promoting bookish education at the expense of lived practices, this will lead to a fundamental blockage. Even though the *Nai Talim* designed by M K Gandhi, and *Azad Talim* (independent thinking) was to be the fundamental basis of a university like Jamia, with vocational training in agriculture, carpentry, etc (Talib 1998: 163), most universities have succumbed to the standard examination model which trains graduates to be members of the white-collar middle class, and evaluates their success on the basis of marks. We are constantly told by the government and corporates alike that people must leave their farms and migrate to cities, thus leaving their knowledge behind; artisanal, pastoral, fishing and forest communities are made to feel their occupations are inferior. The only question that appears to excite the minds of our educational authorities is how best to fill existing jobs with suitable personnel. Of course, graduates need employment, but an education policy that confines itself to the less than 10% of employment that the formal sector constitutes, is bound to shortchange the remaining 90%.

Even as the IITs have been lauded for creating India's software revolution and earning foreign exchange, there has been little attention to India's other skills and knowledge. The People's Linguistic Survey of India found 780 languages and 66 scripts (Biswas 2017). The National Knowledge Commission (NKC) mentions 40,000 plant-based drug formulations in the documented Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha, and Tibetan medical systems, and all the non-documented tribal systems of medicine. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research has documented 4,502 agricultural practices. To quote the NKC (nd),

> (p)rincipled commercialisation of our cultural, creative and legacy practices has the potential of generating employment for at least 100 million people and an annual revenue of at least ₹6,00,000 crores per year.

Of course, not all traditional practices are good, and many have inbuilt gender, caste and class biases. The critical point is to avoid locking people into traditional caste occupations and yet prevent what D R Nagaraj called technocide, or the disappearance of many traditional occupations along with the skills they embody (Nagaraj 2010; Mishra 1995).

While we have hardly begun to grapple with the larger and more important questions of how Indian universities can expand—both in terms of the social background of graduates

as well as in the kinds of societal knowledge they engage with, the current problem is a very immediate one—of severe restrictions on what can be said or taught—and rising instances of direct confrontations between students and university administrations as well as between student organisations of different political persuasions. Many of these conflicts have arisen over issues of academic freedom, but they also have to do with different visions of the university—as primarily a space of credentialing versus one of research and innovation—as an arena of caste, class and religious assertion (by both upper castes and exploited sections) or a space of cosmopolitan imaginings, a space where as Dalit student leader Rohit Vemula said in his suicide note, a person can be treated as a mind and not merely as a number, a thing or a caste identity (Vemula cited in *Wire* 2017a).

National security rhetoric and academic freedom: Universities, like other institutions, are deeply affected by the national security rhetoric; with some students and faculty feeling they must be part of the national war effort—external or internal—and, correspondingly, stigmatising or victimising pacifists and critics of the ruling regime.

In the US, the McCarthy period was notorious for its curbs on allegedly communist academics, many of whom were reported by their own colleagues (Schrecker 1986). But even during World War I, several pacifists were denied tenure (see Aby and Kuhn 2000). Of late, sympathy for Palestine has become the new stick with which to deny American academics tenure (see Mearsheimer 2015; Salaita 2015). Conversely, academics have been alarmingly willing to put their research at the service of national security goals (see Price 2008; Wax 2008).

In Germany, Robert P Ericksen (2012) describes the almost complete lack of opposition to the National Socialist regime within universities in the 1930s. Even Nobel Prize winners did not survive the purge of Jewish, pacifist and communist professors and far from widespread outrage, it was the rare individual who protested that got pilloried. Long-standing traditions of democratic self-governance within the university gave way easily to control from the government, hiring practices were subverted to allow mediocrity in appointments, curricula were fashioned to suit the new ideology, and there was even support for the 1933 mass book burnings. While the older generation kept silent, the younger generation of scholars collaborated actively in order to advance their careers.

As for students, they were the most active supporters of the Nazis on campus, keeping a watch not just on the racial background and politics of their professors, but actively demonstrating against professors considered pacifist or critical. By 1931, two years before the Nazi takeover, the National Socialist Students Association had achieved dominance across German campuses. Academics, moreover, were not just passively involved, many of them actively contributed their expertise to the programme of forced sterilisation, euthanasia, and legal regulations by which citizens were denied rights. As Ericksen (2012: 159) writes: "it is impossible to imagine certain specific horrors of the Holocaust absent in the training and expertise provided by German universities."

The 'heckler's veto': In India, increasingly, with or without any overt war, the national security rhetoric is being invoked, with the mere threat of disruption resulting from national–chauvinist passions as well as "hurt sentiments" becoming a common ground for restrictions on academic freedom. The courts have taken a stand on this, but to seemingly little effect. Gautam Bhatia (2016: 152) cites the European Court of Human Rights on the "heckler's veto, a legal system which applies restrictions on human rights in order to satisfy the dictates of public feeling—real or imaginary—cannot be regarded as meeting the pressing social needs recognised in a democratic society." In *Rangarajan v P Jagjivan Ram* (1989), the Supreme Court too held that potential threats to law and order predicated on the protests of unreasonable or hypersensitive people could not be a reason to ban a film, and that the administration must provide security.

Despite the stated law, the bans on books have only got more frequent.[8] The heckler's veto is also increasingly applied to the holding of university events—scholars have had their seminars disrupted, been dragged into threatened legal controversies for their comments, and in many cases, simply been disinvited by university authorities or had their talks cancelled at the last minute for fear of potential disruption (see Annexure I, p 57, for an illustration).

Many of the talks targeted by protests and bans are about social issues like caste or gender discrimination, while others explicitly focus on India's democracy and the Constitution. Yet, all are deemed too subversive to be allowed, perhaps not surprising, when there is talk by senior Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) leaders of changing the Constitution itself (Vishwadeepak 2017). This kind of cancellation and disruption not only has the effect of preventing academic exchange but also is used to stigmatise a whole range of people either because of the university they are employed at (especially Jawaharlal Nehru University [JNU]), the discipline they engage in (usually the social sciences), or their alleged ideological leanings. The very idea that contentious speech can be listened to without disruption and countered by speech is under severe threat.

One way to avoid the opprobrium invited by the frequent use of the heckler's veto is to portray what are essentially one-sided attacks on academic freedom as examples of "clashes" between student groups, thus requiring the administration to clamp down in the name of neutrality. This is assisted by the media which is either apolitical, inefficient in that it fails to follow up previous stories as part of routine reporting, or actively sympathetic to the right wing. For instance, in a February 2017 attack by the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) on a seminar in Ramjas College, University of Delhi, female students testified to physical violence and sexual abuse by the ABVP (*Wire* 2017b). However, the dominant narrative that gained ground in the press was that it had been a "clash" between two student groups, the leftist All India Students' Association (AISA) and the right-wing ABVP, with the latter incensed by "anti-national slogans."

Rather than clamping down on the disruptors or providing security to ensure the democratic rights of students were not

compromised, University of Delhi has gone on to make it difficult to have any extracurricular activity, other than commodified college festivals.

The emerging landscape of restrictions is not only affecting speech but also extends to a redrawing of physical space itself. Along with proposals to install army tanks on campuses to instill patriotism, or 200 metre high flags, Indian campuses are being transformed to look more "disciplined," more "nationalist," and more corporate. There is a corresponding downgrading of the need for open spaces where students can gather for extended conversations at odd hours.

Demands for quality and equality: Despite the influential role that student politics has historically played in India, starting with the freedom movement, the Jayaprakash Narayan-led *Navnirman Andolan* in the 1970s and various state-specific movements like the All Assam Students Union or the All Jharkhand Students Union, surprisingly, there is very little sociological analysis on student political behaviour in India. We have limited empirical information on how Indian students regard politics, the forms in which they organise, and their social backgrounds and aspirations. In terms of "normal" student politics, especially as it plays out on large university campuses like University of Delhi, student unions are essentially wings of their respective political parties, and buy votes through handouts, celebrity concerts, caste affiliations, and promises of student welfare (personal observations; Nair 2017). Student volunteers are paid to canvass, huge posters are put up and hordes of young men (there are few women) go through campuses in sport utility vehicles. In University of Delhi, for many years, the candidates have been chosen from Jat and Gujjar backgrounds, and the bulk of the voting takes place in the outer Delhi colleges, where these communities dominate (Nair 2017). Victory in the University of Delhi elections is seen as a stepping stone to national politics.

Since 2014, however, there has been a new wave of student activism across India, focusing both on student problems (quality of education and inequality of access), and wider social issues. In part, this reflects the expansion of the university with more women and first generation learners;[9] in part, it reflects the increasing importance of formal credentialing at a time when agriculture is seen as increasingly unviable as a career; in part it reflects greater obduracy by university administrators selected for their ideological leanings, whose archaic visions diverge from the aspirations of the young. Unlike the US, United Kingdom or Australia where students are increasingly seen as consumers, especially in private universities, and the fees from overseas students are central to their business plans, the tendency within the Indian public education system is to see the students as (undeserving) beneficiaries of state largesse. Against the background of all this is the increasing privatisation of higher education, as well as what Marilyn Strathern (2000) has called "audit cultures" within the academy.

Some of the more well-known protests include the 139-day strike in 2015 by the students of the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) in Pune, against the appointment of an FTII board whose main qualification was proximity to the ruling party; the 2015 Occupy UGC struggle against the UGC's decision to scrap the non-National Eligibility Test predoctoral (MPhil) and doctoral (PhD) fellowships, which, meagre as they are, are an essential lifeline for the majority of graduate students; and the successful, if hard-won opposition (in the face of police brutality), by Panjab University students in April 2015 to a drastic fee hike.

Police brutality against legitimate student demands was earlier seen in Jadavpur University in the Hok Kolorob Movement of September 2014 and in Banaras Hindu University (BHU) in September 2017. In both cases, the protests arose out of sexual molestation on campus. Women students across the country were demanding library access on the same terms as male students (AMU, BHU, University of Mumbai), fewer restrictions in terms of hostel timings (BHU and Pinjra Tod Movement), and in the case of BHU, being able to eat non-vegetarian food in their messes like the men. The dietary despotism sweeping the country has been an important source of student unhappiness, reflecting as it does not just restrictions on personal lifestyle, but also upper-caste hegemony. Osmania University hostels were raided and students detained for organising a beef festival in December 2015 (Janyala 2015), while in May 2017, a PhD scholar, R Sooraj of the Ambedkar Periyar Study Circle (APSC), suffered a severe eye injury after being beaten up by ABVP students for participating in a beef festival in IIT Madras (Kumar and Varshinii 2017).

However, the two prominent media moments of student resistance in the last few years have been the protests over casteism on campus sparked by Rohith Vemula's suicide in University of Hyderabad, with Ambedkarite and left student groups protesting across campuses in solidarity, and the protests over JNU students being charged with sedition and jailed in February 2016. Student leaders like Kanhaiya Kumar and Shehla Rashid have become new symbols of a rising youth with Kumar's (2016) speech going viral.

Indeed, JNU has emerged as the ultimate battleground for control over academic space between the RSS, through its vice chancellor, M Jagadesh Kumar, and existing students and faculty. After doing its best to make JNU synonymous with terrorism, anti-nationalism, free sex and the waste of taxpayer money on the politicisation of students[10] (as if the ABVP was also not involved in politics), the RSS is also trying to capture the pre-eminence the university enjoys by recruiting its own sympathisers in faculty positions. On the other hand, students and faculty have shown remarkable resilience—in the face of fines, expulsions, administrative enquiries, and even violence (*Wire* 2018)—against a series of administrative and political measures designed to destroy the autonomy and conventions of the university.

A common factor in all these disruptions and blockages is the ABVP, which was set up in 1949. The ABVP (2018) is the student wing of the RSS, with "national reconstruction" as its main goal. While it shares some similarities with the National Socialist German Students' League in the way it deploys violence and

the threat of violence to silence all alternative voices on campus, it also appeals to a large mass of apolitical students for whom it is just another student union.

The Context Which Enables Silencing

> The core of the governance problem lies in the nature of the highly centralized state regulation of higher education that seeks to micromanage who can teach what, to whom and at what cost.
>
> — Kapur and Mehta (2017: 11)

While the narrative above has dealt with direct restrictions on thought and freedom of expression, there is a larger institutional context of the devaluation of academic life which enables this silencing to occur and equally, to go relatively unchallenged when it happens, especially by faculty who at times have more to lose than the students. A major factor for the quietude of the higher education sector as a whole regarding academic freedom in India is the preponderance of private colleges (78%) (MHRD 2016b: iii), where faculty are paid less than UGC scales, and do not have permanent contracts, and therefore, questions of dissent are limited (see also Chandra 2017: 240 on the private institutional model).

In central and state universities, the higher pay scales go under successive pay commissions, the more permanent faculty are tied to keeping jobs safe and therefore, keeping silent. At the other end of the scale, in what is a global problem (Gill 2009; Berube and Ruth 2015) academic freedom is threatened by the increasing precarity of academic employment, reflected in the rise of contract employees such as ad hocs or research associates, and the lack of secure employment and fellowships for young research scholars and recent PhDs.[11] In University of Delhi, 40% of the teachers are ad hoc or temporary. As one such temporary teacher told the *Indian Express*:

> As an ad hoc, I am supposed to work twice as hard as permanent teachers, pick up after them, make sure I am on good terms with the college principal and the teacher in charge. I have to be at every invigilation and answer sheet checking duty I am assigned so that I am not debarred from my job. To appease my principal and colleagues, I have to teach longer hours, do clerical work assigned to teachers and make the semester timetable. Even then, I can be removed from my position after four months if the college deems fit. (Joshi 2016)

Even as the government is carving out "world-class" and "autonomous institutions," the university system as a whole is becoming ever more strangulated. Courses take years to be passed, and are often arbitrarily changed at the level of the Academic Council; faculty are told how many students they can supervise for PhDs and MPhils; what kind of questions to set for entrance exams (multiple choice only). The UGC has specified a list of journals to ensure the quality of PhD publications, but one outcome has been a proliferation of predatory journals (Manuel 2017).

Even as university faculty must follow a set criterion to shortlist candidates for recruitment (depending on whether they got a first or second class in their undergraduate degree) rather than allowing their own sense of departmental needs and individual competences to guide them, universities are seeing an increasingly vitiated selection process where the basic norm of selecting experts from a panel forwarded by the department is ignored and "experts" are handpicked to produce certain kinds of appointments. While proximity or at least acceptability to the ruling party is not a new factor in the appointments of vice chancellors or heads of institutions (Mustafa 2017; Chandra 2017), there is a greater systematicity to the imposition of faculty at all levels now in central universities.

Even in terms of investment in higher education, India performs much lower than countries like China (Hatakenaka 2017). Higher education also cannot be taken out of the context of education as a whole. It should not fall on a university, as it currently does, to make good the basic skills a child should have learnt in school. Further, there is no ecosystem to enable graduates from centres of excellence to disperse across the country. In many places, committed college teachers face considerable odds, including long hours of lowly paid teaching, no time for research, long commutes, no library facilities and teaching first generation learners for whom there are no regional-language textbooks.

The world over, professional courses like business management or engineering have superseded the basic sciences and humanities. In particular, the humanities are seen as threatened (Nussbaum 2010). In part, this is because they are seen as less "useful" in a world where an economic calculus reigns supreme, but also in part because they are deemed to be more critical and therefore more trouble for university administrations and governments at large.[12] The threatened withdrawal of funding by UGC to women's studies centres as well as other interdisciplinary centres such as those on social discrimination or human rights (Khullar 2017; *Wire* 2017d) suggests that these issues are seen as dispensable, and even dangerous.

Despite all the emphasis on welcoming foreign faculty and students in its "world-class" spaces, Patricia Sauthoff, an American scholar, was told her course on the history and politics of yoga at Nalanda University would not be extended, with Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) National Secretary Ram Madhav tweeting on 9 September 2017 that he was "stunned" to hear that a course on yoga was being taught by a "foreigner" (*Wire* 2017f). In March 2017, Nigerian students were trashed in Greater Noida, adding to the fears of African students across the country who say they routinely suffer racism (*Indian Express* 2017). The total number of foreign students enrolled in higher education in India is merely 45,424, the bulk of which come from neighbouring countries (MHRD 2016b). The difficulties of getting research or conference visas to visit India, coupled with the extra points given in API (Academic Performance Indicator) scores for attending "international conferences," have reduced the idea of an international conference to a farce, where the participation of even one foreigner or NRI is used to get the "international" tag.

Conclusions

In sum, while academic conventions developed over several years are important to university autonomy, there is a serious danger at one end of lapsing into bureaucratic rigidity, and at the other end, of not being robust enough to prevent university leaders who want to bulldoze the process. While the

conditions for academic silencing were set much earlier in the regulatory framework, in recent years, the problems have greatly intensified.

As successive education commissions have reminded us, academic freedom is central to the idea of the university, as much as generation of knowledge and equal access. The term itself has no simple definition, but like many other such concepts, we can recognise it by its absence. Academic freedom takes the form not only of a direct freedom to research, teach and take political stands outside the university, but is intrinsically connected to secure employment within the university, the freedom to shape syllabi, recruit faculty and students, etc. What this article has tried to bring to light is how easily academic freedom can be subverted, and how important it is to uphold, in order to fulfil our obligations as both scholars and citizens.

NOTES

1 On India's ranking, see Prashant Nanda (2017). The system of ranking, however, is problematic (Vasudevan 2015) and the refereeing process which ensures publications and citations also has endemic problems and biases (Rose and Boshoff 2017; *Times Higher Education* 2015).

2 This is, by no means, a self-evident issue, as seen, for instance, against the background of Nazi science and technology which was considerably advanced, if later tainted by association (see Ericksen 2012). In India, however, scientists too are facing many of the same problems as the social sciences in terms of funding, research, and the scope for dissent (Padma 2017).

3 The expansion of coaching colleges and the instrumental use of university hostel and libraries to study for civil service exams, results in an administration which does not value the basic university system as such, since it has seemingly not played any role in its own success, other than by way of infrastructure and basic credentials.

4 The Magna Charta Universitatum is a charter signed by the Rectors of European Universities in Bologna in 1988.

5 At the same time, scholars (of both left- and right-wing persuasions) using their professional standing and institutional affiliations to legitimise their political views raises an interesting problem (see Sundar 2014: 177).

6 See Stone (1988) on why Athenians were angry with Socrates.

7 See Deshpande and Zacharias (2013) on a variety of issues regarding equal access.

8 The books banned or threatened on the ground of "hurt sentiment" include, in recent times, Wendy Doniger's *The Hindus* (2009), James Laine's *Shivaji: Hindu King in Islamic India* (2003), Kancha Ilaiah's *Samajika Smugglurlu Komatollu* (Vysyas: social smugglers), Perumal Murugan's *One Part Woman* (2015)*;* Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar's *The Adivasi Must Not Dance* (2015).

9 Women now constitute 46.2% of the total enrolment in higher education (MHRD 2016b).

10 Accusing JNU students of profligacy is, however, not a new phenomenon (Karat 1975).

11 Even senior faculty are defenceless, if on contract, as shown by the termination of the Magsaysay award winner, Sandeep Pandey, from IIT BHU on the grounds of being "anti-national" and showing banned films. Although this was quashed by the Allahabad High Court in 2016, he was never reinstated.

12 In Indian universities, the arts and social sciences tend to vote more liberal or left-wing in faculty and student union elections than the sciences and professional courses, suggesting that a detailed examination of society, politics and history tend to sensitise one to multiple views.

REFERENCES

ABVP (2018): "History," Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, http://www.abvp.org/history.

Aby, Stephen H and James C Kuhn (2000): *Academic Freedom: A Guide to the Literature,* Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Anonymous (2017): "State vs Academy in Turkey: Academy Under Surveillance," *Surveillance & Society,* Vol 15, Nos 3–4, pp 550–56.

Berube, Michael and Jennifer Ruth (2015): *The Humanities, Higher Education and Academic Freedom: Three Necessary Arguments*, Westport, CT: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bhatia, Gautam (2016): *Offend, Shock or Disturb: Free Speech Under the Indian Constitution,* New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Bilgrami, Akeel and Jonathan R Cole (eds) (2015): *Who's Afraid of Academic Freedom?,* New York: Columbia University Press.

Biswas, Soutik (2017): "The Man Who 'Discovered' 780 Indian Languages," *BBC,* 27 October, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-41718082.

Bose, Adrija (2016): "ABVP Students Burn Lucknow Professor's Effigy, Threaten to Garland Him with Shoes Over FB Post," *Huffington Post,* 26 February, https://www.huffingtonpost.in/2016/02/26/jnu_1_n_9323756.html.

Bourdieu, Pierre (1989): *The State Nobility: Elite Schools in the Field of Power,* Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Carvalho, Edward J and David B Downing (2010): *Academic Freedom in the Post 9/11 Era,* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Chandra, Pankaj (2017): "Governance in Higher Education," *Navigating the Labyrinth: Perspectives on India's Higher Education*, Devesh Kapur and Pratap Bhanu Mehta (eds), New Delhi: Orient Blackswan.

Chettri, Shradha (2017): "Delhi School of Economics Refuses Permission to Students to Hold Panel Discussion," *Indian Express,* 30 August, http://indianexpress.com/article/education/delhi-school-of-economics-refuses-permission-to-students-to-hold-panel-discussion-4819933/.

Deshpande, Satish and Usha Zacharias (2013): *Beyond Inclusion: The Practice of Equal Access in Indian Higher Education,* New Delhi: Routledge.

Ericksen, Robert P (2012): *Complicity in the Holocaust: Churches and Universities in Nazi Germany,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gill, R (2009): "Breaking the Silence: The Hidden Injuries of Neo-liberal Academia," *Secrecy and Silence in the Research Process: Feminist Reflections*, R Flood and R Gill (eds), London: Routledge, http://platform-hnu.nl/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/gill-breaking-the-silence-2.pdf.

Hasan, Mushirul (ed) (1998): *Knowledge, Power and Politics: Educational Institutions in India,* New Delhi: Roli Books.

Hatakenaka, Sachi (2017): "What Is the Point of Multidisciplinary Research Universities in India?" *Navigating the Labyrinth: Perspectives on India's Higher Education,* Devesh Kapur and Pratap Bhanu Mehta (eds), New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, pp 70–99.

Indian Express (2017): "Nigerian Students Attacked in Greater Noida: Here's What Happened That Night," 29 March, http://indianexpress.com/article/india/nigerian-students-attacked-in-greater-noida-timeline-of-events-4590300/.

Janyala, Sreenivas (2015): "Osmania 'Beef Festival' Row: Police Raid Hostels, Detain 30 Students, BJP MLA Raja Singh," *Indian Express*, 11 December, http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/beef-festival-row-bjp-mla-arrested-8-organisers-detained/.

Joshi, Mallica (2016): "Delhi University Ad-hoc Teachers: Four Months at a Time," *Indian Express,* 28 November, http://indianexpress.com/article/education/delhi-university-ad-hoc-teachers-education-4398822/.

Kapur, Devesh and Pratap Bhanu Mehta (2017): "Introduction," *Navigating the Labyrinth: Perspectives on India's Higher Education,* Devesh Kapur and Pratap Bhanu Mehta (eds), New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, pp 1–37.

Karat, Prakash (1975): "Student Movement at Jawaharlal Nehru University," *Social Scientist*, Vol 3, No 10, pp 47–54.

Khullar, Amanat (2017): "National Convention Highlights Role of Women's Studies, Urges UGC to Continue Financial Support," *Wire*, 23 August, https://thewire.in/education/national-convention-highlights-role-womens-studies-centres-urges-ugc-continue-financial-support.

Kimball, Bruce (2010): *The Liberal Arts Tradition: A Documentary History*, Maryland: University Press of America.

Kothari Commission (1966): *Report of the Educational Commission (1964–66): Education and National Development*, chaired by D S Kothari, Ministry of Education, Government of India, New Delhi.

Kumar, Kanhaiya (2016): "English Translation: Full Text of Kanhaiya Kumar's Electrifying Speech at JNU," *Wire*, 4 March, https://thewire.in/politics/english-translation-kanhaiya-kumars-electrifying-speech-at-jnu.

Kumar, Pradeep and Amrutha Varshinii (2017): "IIT Madras Student Who Participated in Beef Fest Assaulted," *Times of India*, 31 May, https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chennai/iit-madras-student-who-participated-in-beef-fest-assaulted/articleshow/58912686.cms.

Mahaprashasta, Ajoy Ashirwad (2016): "Threat of Sedition Charges Looms as ABVP Objects to Mahasweta Devi Play on Campus," 27 September, https://thewire.in/politics/abvp-central-university-haryana-draupadi.

Manuel, Thomas (2017): "At Least 82 in UGC's List of 'Preferred' Journals Can Be Classified as 'Predatory,'" *Wire,* 25 January, https://thewire.in/education/predatory-journals-ugc-research.

Mearsheimer, John (2015): "Israel and Academic Freedom," *Who's Afraid of Academic Freedom*? Akeel Bilgrami and Jonathan R Cole (eds), New York: Columbia University Press, pp 659–94.

Mishra, Anupam (1995): "The Radiant Raindrops of Rajasthan," translated by Maya Jani, the Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology, http://www.indiawaterportal.org/sites/indiawaterportal.org/files/radiant_raindrops_of_rajasthan_english_translation_by_maya_jani_0.pdf.

MHRD (2016a): "Annual Report 2015–16," Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, New Delhi.

— (2016b): "All India Survey on Higher Education 2015–16," Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, New Delhi.

— (2018): "In a Historic Decision: 60 Higher Educational Institutions Granted Autonomy by UGC: Shri Prakash Javadekar," 20 March, Press Information Bureau, Government of India, http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=177751.

Mustafa, Faizan (2017): "Indian Universities Should Be Able to Appoint Their Own Vice Chancellors," *Wire*, 6 October, https://thewire.in/education/university-vice-chancellor-amu.

Nagaraj, D R (2010): *The Flaming Feet and Other Essays: The Dalit Movement in India*, Ranikhet: Permanent Black.

Nair, Aditya (2017): "Kabhi Gujjar, Kabhi Jat: Here's How Delhi University 'Caste' Its Vote," *News18,* 24 September, https://www.news18.com/news/politics/kabhi-gujjar-kabhi-jat-how-delhi-university-caste-its-vote-1526577.html.

Nanda, Prashant K (2017): "The World University Rankings 2018: IISc Slides, No Indian Institute in Top 200," *Livemint*, 6 September, https://www.msn.com/en-us/money/highereducation/the-world-university-rankings-2018-iisc-slides-no-indian-institute-in-top-200/ar-AArlmdH?li=AAggbRN.

NKC (nd): "Recommendations on Knowledge Applications, Traditional Knowledge," National Knowledge Commission, http://knowledgecommissionarchive.nic.in/focus/traditional.asp.

Nussbaum, Martha C (2010): *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities,* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Özkirimli, Umut (2017): "How to Liquidate a People? Academic Freedom in Turkey and Beyond," *Globalizations*, Vol 14, No 6, pp 851–56.

Padma, T V (2017): "2017—When Cows Came to Indian Labs and Scientists Took to the Streets," *Wire*, 30 December, https://thewire.in/science/2017-cows-came-indian-labs-scientists-took-streets.

Post, Robert (2015): "Academic Freedom and the Constitution," *Who's Afraid of Academic Freedom*? Akeel Bilgrami and Jonathan R Cole (eds), New York: Columbia University Press, pp 300–64.

Price, David (2008): *Anthropological Intelligence,* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Radhakrishnan, S (1962): *The Report of the University Education Commiss*ion (1948–1949), chaired by S Radhakrishnan, Ministry of Education, Government of India, New Delhi.

Raman, Anuradha (2016): "Academics with JNU Pedigree Find Their Speeches Cancelled," *Hindu,* 20 March, http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/academics-with-jnu-pedigree-find-their-speeches-cancelled/article8375155.ece.

Rangarajan v P Jagjivan Ram (1989): 2 SCC 574.

Rose, Michael E and Willem Boshoff (2017): "The Peer-review System for Academic Papers Is Badly in Need of Repair," *Conversation*, 27 February, https://theconversation.com/the-peer-review-system-for-academic-papers-is-badly-in-need-of-repair-72669.

Salaita, Steven (2015): *Palestine and the Limits of Academic Freedom,* Chicago: Haymarket Books.

Sarkar, Urvashi (2017): "Carnegie Endowment in India: Promoting US Leadership with Indian Corporate Wealth," *Wire*, 31 August, https://thewire.in/business/carnegie-india-think-tank-role.

— (2018): "Brookings Demystified: Overlapping Networks and the Business of Influencing Policy," *Wire*, 3 January, https://thewire.in/diplomacy/brookings-business-influencing-policy.

Scholars at Risk (2015): "Free to Think," June.

— (2017): "Free to Think," September.

Schrecker, Ellen (1986): *No Ivory Tower: McCarthyism and the University,* New York: Oxford University Press.

Scroll (2016): "JNU Professor Attacked by Protestors from BJP Youth Wing in Gwalior," 21 February, https://scroll.in/latest/803954/jnu-professor-attacked-by-protesters-from-bjp-youth-wing-in-gwalior.

— (2017): "Jodhpur: University Professor Suspended for Inviting JNU's Nivedita Menon to a Conference," 16 February, https://scroll.in/latest/829577/jodhpur-university-professor-suspended-for-inviting-jnus-nivedita-menon-to-a-conference.

Sen, Amartya (2005): *The Argumentative Indian*, New York: Farrar Strauss & Giroux.

Sinha, Amitabh and Sagnik Chowdhury (2016): "42.7% Muslims Illiterate Says Census," *Indian Express*, 1 September, http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/muslim-illiteracy-rate-india-census-report-education-3006798/.

Stone, Irving (1988): *The Trial of Socrates*, New York: Anchor Books.

Strathern, Marilyn (ed) (2000): *Audit Cultures: Anthropological Studies in Accountability, Ethics and The Academy,* London: Routledge.

Subramanian, Ajantha (2015): "Making Merit: The Indian Institutes of Technology and the Social Life of Caste," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol 57, No 2, pp 291–322.

Sundar, Nandini (2014): "In Times of Civil War: On Being a Schizophrenic (Public) Sociologist, *Current Sociology,* Vol 68, No 2, pp 168–80, Monograph 1.

Talib, Muhammad (1998): "Jamia Millia Islamia: Career of Azad Talim," *Knowledge, Power and Politics*, Mushirul Hasan (ed), New Delhi: Roli Books, pp 156–88.

Times Higher Education (2015): "The Worst Piece of Peer Review I Have Ever Received," 6 August, https://www.timeshighereducation.com/features/the-worst-piece-of-peer-review-ive-ever-received.

Tribune (2017): "Seema Azad: She Came, Spoke, Went Unnoticed," 4 March, http://www.tribuneindia.com/news/chandigarh/community/seema-azad-she-came-spoke-went-unnoticed/372510.html.

Uberoi, J P S (1968): "Science as Swaraj," *Contributions to Indian Sociology,* No 2, pp 119–23.

Uberoi, Patricia, Satish Deshpande and Nandini Sundar (2007): "Introduction," *Anthropology in the East: Founders of Indian Sociology and Anthropology,* Uberoi, Sundar and Deshpande (eds), New Delhi: Permanent Black, pp 1–63.

UGC (2016): "UGC (Declaration of Government Educational Institutions as World Class Institutions) Guidelines, 2016," http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/upload_document/ugc_guidelines.pdf.

Upadhya, Carol (2016): "Engineering Equality? Education and Im/Mobility in Coastal Andhra Pradesh, India," *Contemporary South Asia*, Vol 24, No 3, pp 242–56.

Vajpeyi, Ashok (2017): *India Dissents*, New Delhi: Speaking Tiger.

Vasudevan, Mukunth (2015): "How Small Universities Can Game Rankings," *Wire*, 28 June, https://thewire.in/science/how-small-universities-can-game-rankings.

Vincent, Pheroze L (2017): "D-school Withdraws Event Nod," 25 August, https://www.telegraphindia.com/1170825/jsp/nation/story_169066.jsp.

Vishwadeepak (2017): "We Should Remove Secularism, Socialism from the Constitution: Govindacharya," *National Herald*, 2 October, https://www.nationalheraldindia.com/eye-on-rss/we-should-remove-secularism-socialism-from-the-constitution-govindacharya.

Wax, Dustin M (2008): *Anthropology at the Dawn of the Cold War: The Influence of Foundations, McCarthyism and the CIA,* London: Pluto Press.

Weber, Max (1919/1948): "Science as a Vocation," *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology,* H H Gerth and C Wright Mills (eds), London: Routledge.

Wire (2017a): "My Birth Is My Fatal Accident; Rohit Vemula's Searing Indictment of Social Prejudices,"

EXPANSION

EPWRF India Time Series (www.epwrfits.in)

State-wise Agricultural Statistics

The Economic and Political Weekly Research Foundation (EPWRF) has added State-wise data to the Agricultural Statistics module of its online database, India Time Series (ITS).

State-wise time series starts from 1960–61, depending upon data availability, and covers:

- Area, Production and Yield (APY): Foodgrains, Oil seeds, Fibre crops, Spices, Horticulture crops, Plantation crops and Other crops
- Land-by-Use and Area under Irrigation (source-wise and crop-wise)
- Production and Use of Agricultural Inputs: Fertilisers and Electricity
- Procurement of Foodgrains
- Livestock Statistics: Production and Per Capita Availability of Milk, Eggs, Fish, Meat and Wool
- Livestock Population: Rural and Urban areas
- Value of Output from Agriculture and Allied Activities, with different base years

Following statistics have been added to the All-India data series:

- Minimum Support Prices (MSP) of Crops
- Livestock Population: Rural and Urban areas

The EPWRF ITS has 17 modules covering a range of macroeconomic, financial and social sector indicators on the Indian economy.

For more details, visit **www.epwrfits.in** or e-mail to: **its@epwrf.in**

17 January, https://thewire.in/politics/rohith-vemula-letter-a-powerful-indictment-of-social-prejudices.
— (2017b): "Ugly Reality at Ramjas: Female Student Testimony vs Tepid Police FIR," 26 February, https://thewire.in/education/reality-ramjas-student-testimony-vs-police-fir.
— (2017c): "After Ramjas Violence, University in Baroda Postpones Workshop Fearing Backlash," 8 March, https://thewire.in/uncategorised/university-baroda-caste-workshop-backlash.
— (2017d): "UGC Funded Research Centres Safe for Another Year," 29 March, https://thewire.in/education/ugc-funded-research-centres.
— (2017e): "Jamia, IIT Madras Criticised for Cancellins Student-organised Events," 15 September, https://thewire.in/education/jamia-iit-madras-events-cancelled.
— (2017f): "Allahabad University withdraws Permission for Literary Event after 'Pressure' from HRD Ministry," 18 September, https://thewire.in/politics/allahabad-university-withdraws-permission-for-literary-event-after-pressure-from-hrd-ministry.
— (2017g): "Nalanda University Wants American Scholar Who Taught Yoga Course to Apologise for Critical Comments," 7 October, https://thewire.in/education/nalanda-unversity-yoga-patricial-sauthoff-yoga.
— (2018): "JNU's Long March Ends in Chaos as Police Lathi Charges Students," 24 March, https://thewire.in/education/jnu-lathicharge-long-march.
Yashpal (2009): *The Report of the Committee to Advise on Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher Education in India,* chaired by Yashpal, Government of India, New Delhi.

Annexure I: Academic Events Cancelled or Disrupted 2016–17

Date	Venue	Speakers	Subject of Talk	Nature of Action	Ostensible Cause
20 February 2016	Bal Bhawan, Gwalior	Vivek Kumar, sociologist, JNU	*Baba Saheb Ke Sapno Ka Bhartiya Samaj* (Baba Saheb's Vision of Indian society)	Talk disrupted by Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM)	Reported as a clash between BJYM and Ambedkar Yuva Morcha; BJYM described Vivek Kumar's speech as "provocative and anti-national"
February 2016	Lucknow University	Rajesh Kumar, sociologist	Sharing article by a University of Delhi professor on Facebook on the subject of JNU students	Effigy burnt, attacked by ABVP	ABVP threat
March 2016	Jharkhand University, Ranchi	M N Panini, retired professor of Sociology, JNU	Challenges of nation-building	Talk cancelled	ABVP threat
21 September 2016	Central University of Haryana	Snehsata Manav and Manoj Kumar, English department	Draupadi play staged in memory of Mahasweta Devi who passed away in July 2016	ABVP burnt effigies and staged protests, mobilised army men from neighbouring villages, filed a police complaint, demanded sedition charges resulting in the reprimanding of the teachers	Anti-army/anti-national
1–2 February 2017	Jodhpur University	Nivedita Menon and Rajshree Ranawat	History Reconstrued through Literature: Nation, Identity, Culture	Ranawat suspended for inviting Menon; police complaint filed against Rawat for hosting and Menon for anti-national remarks	On 3 February, ABVP called for a university bandh, demanding suspension of Rawat and police action
3 March 2017	Panjab University, Chandigarh	Seema Azad and Jagmohan Singh	Centenary celebration of the 1917 Russion Revolution	The university cancelled the meeting; but Students for Society (SFS), a student group, managed to hold the meeting under enormous pressure; 49 people including the SFS president, were arrested	ABVP threats and pressure on the university by ruling government (then led by the Bharatiya Janata Party–Shiromani Akali Dal coalition)
6 March 2017	Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda	Ghanshyam Shah (organiser)	Workshop on the Politics of Caste and Social Movements	Cancelled/postponed	Official: "No particular reason" Unstated: threat of disruption
August 2017	University of Delhi	Cultural programme by Sumangala Damodaran and others	Celebrating 70 years of Indian Democracy	Programme cancelled at last minute	Security concerns (threat from ABVP)
September 2017	University of Delhi	Lawyers, academics	Seminar on Right to Privacy (after Supreme Court judgment)	University of Delhi Conversations refused space in Delhi School of Economics	No reason given Seminar finally held on 10 October 2017
23–25 September 2017	IIT Madras	Nandini Sundar, K Stalin, and Adhik Kadam	National Service Scheme (NSS) Seminar Series (Adivasi rights, casteism, children in conflict)	Disinvited by faculty in-charge of NSS	Speakers deemed controversial and themes unsuitable for IIT Madras
14 September 2017	Jamia Millia Islamia		Shrinking Democratic Spaces in Universities	Programme cancelled	Students told they could not invite outsiders
18 September 2017	Allahabad University	Satish Deshpande, Maya Rao, Sonam Khalra, and Abha Bhaiyya	Jashn-e-Samvidhan (celebrating the Constitution)	Programme cancelled	ABVP called the speakers for being "anti-state" and "anti-national"

Source: *Scroll* (2016, 2017); Bose (2016); Raman (2016); Mahaprashasta (2016); Chettri 2017; Scroll (2017); *Tribune* (2017); Vincent (2017); *Wire* (2017c, 2017d, 2017e).