

Privatization of Higher Education: Merits & Demerits

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ABSTRACT

Higher education is a powerful tool to build knowledge based society for any country. With growing size of higher education in field of management and technical courses, it has become utmost important to build an efficient database on higher education. Higher education has witnessed tremendous changes in education system, privatisation is one of them. Privatization of higher education in India was initiated in 1991 with the initiation of the Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization (LPG) Policy. Gradually over the years the policy has worked its way to bring about the targeted change with the constant support of the government. Across the country more and more private unaided courses are flourishing. Government has been supporting this agenda vigorously.

Privatization in education has been widely embraced by governments around the world and often supported by certain inter-governmental organizations, transnational corporations, and non-governmental organizations. However, the idea of privatization has been interpreted

and translated into educational practice in many ways and the forms that privatization takes at different levels of education varies across systems, as do the rationales used to justify them. This paper provides an overview of the debates around the privatization of education; it presents the arguments that have historically been laid out for and against this process, and problematizes its effects on social inequality and the uneven distribution of educational opportunities. The paper concludes that, since education can no longer be entirely funded and provided by the state, the question is less about whether or not private engagement in education is commendable, but more about the extent to which the activities of private actors should be regulated by the state, how this should be, and to what end.

INTRODUCTION

Education is universally recognized as an important investment in building human capital. It is a key to technical innovation and economic growth. Providing education to one and all has been one of the primary duties of the government. But there is a



wave of privatization of education in our country. Actually government has diverted its focus from higher education to primary education and urged private sector to enter this sector which is termed as privatization of higher education. Government has trickled down its expenditure on higher education in particular. In the tenth five year plan document, it was stated that, —Since budget resources are limited and such resources as are available, need to be allocated to expand primary education, it is important to recognize that universities must make greater efforts to supplement resources from the government.

India has third largest higher educational system in the world, next to China and to United States. It grows rapidly after independence. In terms of the number of educational institutes, India has an upper rank in the world. Changing patterns have altered regulations, equity, efficiency and quality of higher education. Indian society is a mixed society consisting of a large number of haves and a same number of have-nots. So in Indian social structure, educational system cannot be privatized like as in the developed states of the world. It is necessary to allow the private players to enter in the field of higher education under such provisions that the basic concept of the welfare state should be

protected and it remains in the reach of every citizen. The size of increased demand and its projected growth, clearly indicate the need of new institutions imparting quality education in the subject areas of contemporary relevance and job opportunities.

Privatization in a narrow sense indicates transfer of ownership of a public sector undertaking to private sector, either wholly or partially. But in a broad sense, it implies the opening up of the private sector to areas, which were reserved for the public sector. Such deliberate encouragement of investment to the private sector in the economy, while emphasizing to a lesser degree the expansion or growth of the public sector will, over a period of time, increase the overall share of the private sector in the economy. The purpose is to limit the areas of the public sector and to extend the areas of private sector operation, including heavy industries, infrastructure and education.

Privatization of education in India introduced new policies and programs to increase employment, outcome and income opportunities and achieve economic development at National and International level. It has brought about a rapid change in the educational scenario of

India. Privatization encourages the individual and society to establish school, colleges and private universities to meet the growing demand for education. As a result, private educational institutions are growing day by day throughout the country.

Meaning Of Privatisation

Privatisation means initiation of private ownership, management and control of organisations. The control is in terms decision making and responsibility of money and administration. The education privatisation can be seen as expansion of private sector's control. Privatisation of higher education has emerged in several forms and types in the recent decade in India. Privatisation within government higher education institution takes place in the form of introducing self financing courses within government institution and converting government aided private institutions into private self-financing institutions. This may be termed as commercial private higher education institution. Private players are mainly engaged in setting up of state private universities, deemed universities and academic institutions with foreign collaborations.

Objective Of Privatisation In Education

- Providing Quality Education
- Promotion of technological advancement
- Reducing gap between Industry and Education
- Achieving widespread private ownerships in the society and reduce the burden of Government.
- Providing education in remote area and small urban area.
- Generating highly skill personnel for development in India.
- Meet the education for International Standards.

Need Of Privatisation In Education

- To increase competitive efficiency of public sector.
- To meet the growing demand of higher education with rapid growth in population
- To reduce financial burden on government and for decentralization of educational institutions
- For impart quality education and training and shaping of the curriculum according to global, national and local needs.
- To fulfil the need for skilled man power and to fulfil the need of the

country in liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation.

- To facilitate technological developments and information based economic development.

Challenges & Issues in Education

Since independence we are facing challenges to establish a good and strong education system. Various governments tried to establish new and effective education policies in the system but they were not sufficient for our country. Still Indians are facing lot of problems in the education system. There are many basic problems faced by higher education system in India. These include inadequate infrastructure and facilities, vacant seats in academic field and poor faculty thereof, low student enrolment rate, out dated and old teaching methods, declining research standards, unmotivated students, overcrowded and small classrooms and widespread geographic, income, gender, and ethnic imbalances.

- **The demand-supply gap:** India has a very low rate of enrolment in higher education (18%) as compared China (26%) and 36% in Brazil. There is huge demand-

supply gap. By 2020, the Indian government aims to achieve 30% gross enrolment in higher education, which mean providing 40 million university places with an increase of 14 million in six years.

- **Inadequate facilities and infrastructure:** In India, many of the universities don't have adequate infrastructure or facilities to teach students. Even many private universities are running courses without classrooms. Internet and Wi-Fi facility is still out of reach of many students.
- **Lower level of teaching quality:** Our education system is torture by issues of quality in many of its institutions and universities. Many of the issues like shortage of faculty, poor quality teaching, Traditional teaching methods, outdated and rigid curricula and pedagogy, lack of accountability and quality assurance and separation of research and teaching are raising questions on Indian education system.
- **Research constraints:** India has a very low level of PhD enrolment. India does not have enough high quality researchers. In Indian

education system there is a lack of early stage research experience; a weak ecosystem for creativity and innovation, and low levels of industry engagement.

- **Uneven growth and access to opportunity:** In India, access to higher education is uneven in enrolment across population groups and geographies. This uneven growth of higher education is major challenge for India. India has the largest number of out-of-school students in the world, more than the whole of sub-Saharan Africa, and also 69% of India's population still lives on less than 2 dollar per day. The World Bank categorises India as "an extreme dual economy".
- **More concentrated on theories and rather than practical knowledge:** Indian education system is more focused on theoretical knowledge rather than practical knowledge. In many jobs there is also a minimum requirement of percentage which is high.
- **Lack of involvement in and control of educational matters by Professors:** Most of the professors or higher authorities do not like to

take part in education related activities. They stick to their own growth.

- **Traditional methods of teaching:** Professors still stick to those old methods of teaching like board, marker. They don't like to use audio visual aids in teaching. Also they are not up to date with the information available and what global industry demands.
- **Abroad settlement after education:** Many students after doing IITs and IIM try to search opportunities in foreign countries like Australia, USA, and Canada etc. They look forward for MNCs and get settled abroad. There must be a fix criteria that students after higher education have serve his country first.
- **Quota system:** Bringing the reservation and quota system for different categories in education lost its quality. Even deserving candidates of general categories are ignored and on quota we have to select other person from reserved category even though he is not suitable.

Merits & Demerits of Privatisation in Higher Education

Privatization will release the huge amount of capital that is locked up in the higher education sector and the same can be diverted to the primary educational sector where there is a dearth of funds to meet the goal of education for all.

- Privatization enables the government to downsize the administrative machinery.
- Higher economic growth can be secured by privatization.
- Privatization results in better management of the educational institutions.
- Educational institutions can work in a liberal way.
- Quality of education can be enhanced.
- The teachers can be encouraged by making them responsible for the quality of education and the results of examinations.
- Curriculum can be changed according to the individual, regional, national and international requirements.
- Any changes can be made without the fear of interference of higher government officials.
- Academic year will not be wasted.
- Good discipline can be maintained.

- Investments can be made only on productive courses instead of unproductive courses.

DEMERITS

- Education has become a business and educational courses being used as commodity in the market.
- Caste and creed are being given priority in private educational institutions.
- The rate of illiteracy has increased among the poor.
- Since education has become a business; private institutions are being started only in the developed areas but not in the backward areas.
- Degrees are being given without the basis of merit.
- Students are losing national feeling and are developing regional feeling.
- The poor and the down trodden are not in a position to receive quality education and higher education.
- The students and the teachers will be at the mercy of private management.
- Privatization leads to corruption in the form of donations etc.
- Private institutions try to achieve better results by resorting malpractice.

Suggestion for Improvement in Education

- To maintain quality and standards of education, regulatory bodies should be established in the state because education is the responsibility of State Government as per constitution of India. It should decide the fee structure as per Government norms. It should check the salaries and status of the teachers for minimizing their exploitation. Only then our education system gets reformed in the private sector.
- At higher education level, Mushroom Colleges have grown rapidly. Such colleges are becoming the center for selling degrees. After paying money, you need not attend the classes. Such institutions are more in professional courses like Engineering, Pharmacy, Education and Management courses. Due to this, employers get low wages. So government should check these kinds of colleges in control.
- Teachers in Government school should really toil to bring the name up so that people get encouraged to send their children in Government Schools.
- The sort of educational management, the private entrepreneur can also utilize their business training for educational reforms.
- Power, infrastructure, telecommunication and financial support, if provided from private sector will able to lead the growth and progress of educational organization in the country.
- In most of the institutions, there is no freedom for innovation in teaching. The private schools have their own set of rules and methods which teachers have to follow. Many a time one has to obey the management where most of the members are not qualified. In this kind of situation, privatization has provided them job opportunities but not job satisfaction. It can be achieved only if the management takes them into account.
- Due to Government's policy of referring quantity over quality, private colleges are growing daily. We can see one school in one street. To minimize the wastage and stagnation, government should check private bodies seriously otherwise future of our children will be in dark.

- Over commercialization of education is ignoring the quality improvement. It should be regulated to keep private institutions in check and ensure quality control.
- Health care and education are the two sectors where India can become a world leader. By providing high quality health care and professional education, India can become a world leader in these sectors.

Conclusion

After independence, there has been tremendous increase in higher education institutions of learning in all disciplines. But still India is way behind in providing world class education. Today, India is one of the fastest growing countries of the world with the annual growth rate going above 9%. In order to sustain that rate of growth, there is need to increase the number of institutes with quality education. To achieve and reach the future requirements there is an urgent need to relook at the Financial Resources, Education Policies, Access and Equity, Quality Standards, Relevance and at the end the Responsiveness.

To attain and sustain international quality, certain components are particularly relevant. There must be careful selection of staff and continuous staff development, in particular through the promotion of appropriate programs for academic development, including learning methodology or teaching. We must focus on mobility between countries, between higher education institutions and the world of work, as well as student mobility within and between countries. So that they can learn about working environment. Internal self-evaluation and external review must be conducted openly and periodically by independent specialists, if possible with international experts.

If we are talk about India, we are providing skilled and educated people to world. We are unable to utilize their potential to covert our country from developing to developed country. We must create some parameters, to indulge educated people for driving our economy forward. We are moving towards an era which would be defined by the parameters of knowledge.

We need an educational system that is modern, liberal and can adapt to the changing demands of a changing society, a

changing economy and a changing global world. Indian higher education system and regulatory bodies must identify the key issues and quickly make policies to remove those hurdles. Only one or two universities can't make much difference. If the government welcomes such initiatives which drive our education system forward, then future will be ours. We will be able to match and compete with other countries and the dream to be the world's greatest economy won't be difficult to achieve.

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