

ANALYTICAL AND CONCEPTUAL STUDY FOR THE IMPORTANCE OF PRIVATIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN INDIA

Sushil Kumar Thakur, Ph. D.

Associate professor and Registrar, Lingaya's Vidyapeeth (Deemed to be University)

Faridabad (Haryana)

Abstract

Globalization has brought immense opportunities in the field of Higher education but on the other hand it is felt that the benefits of Higher education flow to them who can pay for it. Higher education in India has not become a commodity, and if at all it has, for those who are able to pay as much as high demand price which is not possible by large section of the potential Indian people, of course not affordable. Students are central to the teaching-learning process.

The Analysis of this study reveals that higher education has become a gateway to earn more money rather than uplifting the Higher education and research.

The preference for studying in public universities precedes the preference for private counterparts. The annual fee range of the private Universities or Institutions providing Higher educations for all courses is much-much higher than the Public Universities or Institutions at every level of higher education of the graduate , post Graduate level. A rational fee regulation mechanism should put in place by the government to be followed by all the Private higher education institutions.

Providing education to all is considered as primary duty of the government. But the government has diverted its focus from higher education to primary education and welcomed private sector to enter the higher education sector, which is termed as privatization of higher education.



Scholarly Research Journal's is licensed Based on a work at www.srjis.com

INTRODUCTION:

The concept of privatisation in educational institutions means running the institute without taking financial subsidy from the government. However they are required to take recognition from the concerned authority of the government. These schools are run by private societies or trusts/individuals.

The term privatization of Education refers to many different educational programs and policies. It is a process which can be defined as the transfer of activities, assets and responsibility from Government, Public Institutions and organizations to private individual and agencies.

Privatization of formal education in India is not new; it existed even before independence in the form of so-called public schools (like Doon School, Mayo College) and Christian missionary schools and colleges. They used to be run by their own Board of Management without much interference by the government.

After independence, there was an expansion of education including higher education and Research. Central and state governments both took initiatives to establish state-owned or government-aided schools. Teachers at all levels have their salaries determined according to national or state wage scales. After 1990s interlinked processes of globalization and liberalization have also tremendously affected the educational process in India

These have encouraged many forms of privatization and aided schools through processes like rise in private tuition, subcontracting the publication of textbooks to private agencies, selection and appointment of teachers by their own management boards on their own terms and conditions, etc.

These processes have created new situations which in turn had brought both opportunities and challenges to educational institutions in India. The process of globalization has recently encouraged many foreign universities and educational institutions of repute (e.g., Oxford, Harvard) to start exploring the possibilities of establishing their branches or counselling centre in India.

Although the demand for higher Education has increased among the people of all the strata of society, including the marginalized, over the years, standards of government organizations have declined considerably. Despite an increase in enrolment, the content and quality and process of Higher Education and Research are not only degrading but discriminatory also.

There is an utter lack of infrastructural facilities in government HEIs, such as Research labs facilities, Library, students' desks, tables, stools, carpets, Qualifies and trained teacher's, chairs, Modern teaching and Research aids, smart classes, drinking water, limited space with or without constructed class rooms, lack of play grounds etc.

All these shortcomings, along with the defective Education system, have deleterious effects on the education of students. Moreover, the procedure of appointment of teachers in state HEIs is also very faulty. The truth is that politicians sell teaching jobs for a handsome price. Such teachers, who are appointed for life, are protected and believed that there is no need to teach with such perverse incentives accountability disappears.

India spends a respectable 3-4 per cent of GDP on education and even in the recent budget proposals (2021), spending on education (school Education and Literacy and higher education) has increased and allocated 4.6 % of GDP to Educational sector in 2021 which is increased by 35 per from the last year Educational budget,2020.

India's average literacy rate is 77.7 per cent with Kerala emerging as the most literate state, but only 38.7 per cent of the population in the country has managed to complete secondary or higher education, according to a survey by the National Statistical Office (NSO).

The survey also indicated that gender disparity and the urban-rural divide in literacy was high. At 63.8 per cent, national capital Delhi has the highest population of people who have completed secondary or higher secondary education.

Delhi is followed by Kerala with 56.9 per cent and Himachal Pradesh with 55.8 per cent. Jharkhand is the worst performer, with only 28.7 per cent people having completed secondary or higher secondary education.

In three of India's largest states, i.e., in urban Maharashtra 66.9 per cent, in Tamil Nadu 66.3 per cent and in Uttar Pradesh 65.1 per cent children are in private schools. It is estimated that urban India as a whole has the highest number of private educational institutions in the world. Children seek admission in private institutions due to the failure of state-run schools to provide quality education and many other reasons as stated above. Parents, even with meagre income (lower, middle income group), prefer to send their children to comparatively less expensive, private schools.

Hence, 53 per cent urban children and 18 per cent of rural children now attend private schools. This is very high by world standards. Even Chile, which privatized education in 1981, has achieved 46.5 per cent share of private enrolment after 40 years. Likewise, Holland, which has always believed in giving choice between private and public schools to its children as a matter of state policy, has only got a private school share of 68 per cent.

In India, the students, who are the most important stake holders and beneficiaries of the higher education system, clearly prefer private universities to public. This is mainly because the private universities offer more with respect to enhancement of the employability aspect of the student's repertoire. Moreover, private universities generally offer choices in programs that are career oriented such as engineering, management, and architecture, compared with public universities, which mainly focus on "general education" programs in humanities and social sciences.

The advancement of private higher education in India has been driven by a very compelling demand in the higher education demographic, and not public policy. The last decade has witnessed phenomenal growth of the private sector: In the year 2002, India had nearly 4400 professional colleges of which about 3150—upwards of 70 per cent—were in the private sector (Powar & Bhalla, 2005, as cited in Powar, 2012). This growth has continued unabated:

More importantly, the private sector has recorded growth at the broadest level: in the year 2012, as many as 64% of higher education institutions were in the private sector. This growth was reflected in other parameters as well—59% of student enrolment in higher education was in the private sector. Notwithstanding the above, the Indian Government reserves its most stringent regulatory measures for the private institutions. Even more bizarre is the case that public universities, which receive government funding to the tune of millions of rupees, are allowed to operate with only minimal regulations. In an ironic twist, public intuitions, which do not enrol students to full capacity, are left off the hook, whereas private universities, which are highly selective in their student intake in spite of higher tuition, are burdened with inordinately heavy regulatory mechanisms.

The recent nation-wide debates and protests over the University Grants Commission's stand on four-year undergraduate courses is a case in point. The fact of the Commission's attack on some such programs, without a modicum of investigation into the structure and components of the programs and the manner in which it was carried out, with shocking disregard for the students and institutions can only be considered worrying. Also curious is the case that the regulatory agencies come down the hardest on institutions that enjoy solid reputations for quality and integrity: the IITs, IISc, Symbiosis International University, and the Lingaya's Vidyapeeth (a deemed to be University). Indeed, it is because these institutions have enjoyed greater autonomy that they tower over the legion of low-achieving state universities, which are the way they are partly because they enjoy far less institutional self-governance.

One wonders what conceivable purpose is served by the government agencies' harmful interference, other than, of course, providing the bureaucrats an opportunity to make a show of being engaged with the higher education system. Carl Lewis' thought comes to mind: "The task of the modern educator is not to cut down jungles, but to irrigate deserts."

Increasing role of private participants in the wake of "Massification":

Much like the rest of the world, the emergence of private contributors to higher education in India is an all-too prominent phenomenon. Private institutions make the largest and the fastest

growing segment (EY-FICCI, 2012). The chief lever of this trend is “massification”—the shift in access to higher education from “elite” to “masses,” denoting a shift in both the extent and nature of demand for higher education. The other accounting factors also run common across India and other countries.

First, state expenditure in higher education has borne the axe; meager public investments in higher education invariably presage undesirable outcomes. India’s public expenditure on higher education as percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) is a low 0.6%. For this reason alone, it is important to open the system to competition from non-governmental sector and allow enough transparency that the “best man wins”. This will also facilitate surplus capital to be invested back into the sector, and draw in enterprise and talent.

Second, the co-relation between higher education and employment has consolidated—a development to which private institutions has responded in a more timely fashion. Indeed, it is the dynamism of the Indian private sector that has allowed it to spawn and capture forte segments in higher education, even in the face of “over-regulatory” government fiats and missing policy direction. This is in stark contrast to the scenario in neighbouring countries to the south east, especially Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand.

Third, the private sector, all across the world, has risen to the challenge of quality assurance. Of the top ten US universities in the QS World University Rankings® 2013-14, all are private institutions. In India, deemed universities, the vast majority of which are in the private sector, received higher grades by NAAC, an assessment and accrediting agency, than public universities (Powar, 2012). Fourth, internationalization, the new sine qua non of higher education, is also propelled forward by private universities in India. Cross border higher education, the most prominent expression of internationalization, has made its biggest impression on the private sector. In fact, the increase in inbound mobility of international students is to be credited, at least partially, to the emergence of private participants. The specific expression of internationalization in India, as in much of South Asia and the Gulf region has been in the form of privately owned and managed international branch campuses. In a research study of Indian branch campuses in popular source countries, the OBHE (2006) noted that the vast majority of them were private institutions (Agarwal, n.d.a).

CONCLUSION:

Despite impressive reforms elsewhere, Indian higher education sector remains the most tightly controlled and least reformed sector. Deep ideological and vested interests have made reform

in India's Higher Education sector all but impossible. Indeed, for the next generation of reforms in India, this is the central puzzle. The rapid rise in skill premiums in India in the last few years has exposed an important paradox about India's labor markets. Despite its enormous size, the pool of skilled labor is relatively shallow, the result of a deep crisis in higher education despite the success of a few professional schools. The veneer of the few institutions of excellence masks the reality that the medium higher education institutions in India have become incapable of producing students with skills and knowledge.

The process neither serves a screening or signalling function for the vast bulk of students, nor prepares students to be productive and responsible citizens. Consequently, students are forced to spend more years (and, increasingly, larger resources) to acquire some sort of post-graduate professional qualification, as they desperately seek ways to signal their qualities to potential employers.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that India's current system of higher education is centralized, politicized and militates against the production of general intellectual virtues. The fact that the system nonetheless produces a noticeable number of high-quality students is due to the sheer number of students and the Darwinian struggle at the high school level to gain admission into the few good institutions. The most acute weakness plaguing India's higher education system is a crisis of governance, both of the system and of individual institutions.

We have argued that precisely because there are few clear analytical criteria to the central question of what is "good" higher education, a regulatory system than emphasizes diversity, flexibility and experimentation is in the long run most likely to succeed. Such a system will also need a different conception of accountability than the one currently prevailing in the Indian system, which can be characterized as a vertical command and control system, with state authorities empowered to enforce accountability from the top.

Instead India needs to move to a regulatory system which has more horizontal accountability that empowers students to take better informed decisions. The crisis of governance in Indian higher education is most visibly manifest in the acute shortage of qualified faculty. The generation that was inspired by a broad commitment to the public good has retired or will do so soon. There is little likelihood of sufficient replenishment, given entrenched mediocrity in institutions with lifetime appointments, few competitive pressures and abysmal governance. The result has been the academic equivalent of Gresham's law—the bad drives out the good. The prevailing political ideological climate in which elite institutions are seen as anti-

democratic, finds its natural response in political control to influence admissions policies, internal organization, and the structure of courses and funding.

As quality deteriorates, students are less and less willing to pay the very resources without which quality cannot be improved. In India's case, the answer has been the growth of private sector higher education institutions and increasingly the consumption of education abroad. However, as our analysis suggests, private sector investment has been confined to professional streams, bypassing the majority of students. Furthermore, private institutions are also plagued by severe governance weaknesses, raising doubts as to their ability to address the huge latent demand for quality higher education in the country. This crisis of governance is not going to be amenable to merely technical solutions. The burden of this paper has been to argue that higher education is so deeply implicated in politics, so deeply inflected by large ideological objectives that have little to do with pedagogy that it would be the height of optimism indeed to think that there is a technocratic solution to this crisis. But we hope that when the appropriate opportunity arises there will be serious and more rigorous reflection on all the aspects of education that need to be regulated: entry, access, quality, accreditation, institution formation.

Fundamentally, Indian policy makers have to recognize two things. First, the competition for talent is now genuinely global. If the design of institutions is not commensurate with this reality; if the freedoms, incentives and quality benchmarks on offer do not allow you to compete on a global scale, building quality institutions will remain a chimera. There is, in principle, no reason why India could not become a global education hub, if it got its regulatory system in order. Second, a vibrant system requires enlisting the energies of a whole range of actors. It also requires responding to a diversity of challenges and unexpected opportunities. Only a system that draws on the competitive energies of the market on the one hand, a flexible and supple state system on the other, and a genuinely committed non-profit sector as a third leg will be able to meet India's challenges. The scale of demand in India is such that it needs to draw resources and energies from all sources rather than engage in a politics that benefits incumbents, constrains supply and rewards mediocrity with regard to quality.

References:

- Banerjee, Abhijit, Pranab Bardhan, Kaushik Basu, Mrinal Datta Chaudhuri, Maitreesh Ghatak, Ashok Sanjay Guha, Mukul Majumdar, Dilip Mookherjee and Debraj Ray. 2002. "Strategy for Economic Reform in West Bengal," Economic and Political Weekly, October 12.*
- Adams, J., Pendlebury, D., & Stembridge, B. (2013). Building bricks exploring the global research and innovation impact of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Korea. Thomson Reuters. Agarwal, P. (2009).*

- Indian higher education: envisioning the future. Thousand Oaks, US: Sage Publications. Agarwal, P. (n.d.a). International India a turning point in educational exchange with the US. Retrieved January 13, 2013.*
- Privatization and internationalization of higher education in the countries of South Asia: An empirical analysis. New Delhi, India: Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) Altbach, P. (1999).*
- Tilak, J.B. G. 1997. "The Dilemma of Reforms in Financing Higher Education in India," Higher Education Policy 10 (1): 7-21.*
- Tilak, J.B. G. 2000. "Higher Education in Developing Countries," Minerva. Vol 38, p..233-240.*
- Wolf, Alison. 2002. Does Education Matter? London: Penguin. World Bank. 1994.*
- Higher Education: The Lessons of Experience. Washington, DC: The World Bank.*
- Internationalisation of higher education focus on India. New Delhi: Amity University Press Powar, K. B. (2012).*
- Indian higher education: A conglomerate of concepts, facts and practices. New Delhi, India: Concept Publishing Company Powar, K.B. (2003).*
- Higher education in India: Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-2017) and beyond. Kolkata, India: Ernst & Young Pvt. Ltd. Gupta, D. & Gupta, N. (2012).*
- from <http://www.ugc.ac.in/oldpdf/alluniversity.pdf> UNESCO. (n.d.).*
- <http://www.usief.org.in/USIHEC/Chapter%204/Internationalization%20of%20Indian%20Higher%20Education.pdf> Agarwal, P. (n.d.b)Private Prometheus: Private higher education and development in the 21st century*
- Mani, Anandi and Sharun Mukand. 2007. "Democracy and Visibility," Journal of Development Economics 83 (2): 506-529.*
- Mitta, Manoj. 2004. "AIIMS is now free to appoint its profs," Indian Express, April 4. Modi, H. and Mukhopadhyay A. 2000.*
- An Analysis of Tax Concessions of Charitable Organizations. NIFP Delhi.*