

Privatization of Higher Education in India: Issues, Challenges and Suggestions

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ABSTRACT

For the economic and social growth of both established and developing nations worldwide, higher education is of utmost importance. In order to prepare people for positions of responsibility in both the public and commercial sectors and to ensure the quality growth of society as a whole, higher education institutions have a bigger obligation (Gupta, 2008). There has been a mushrooming growth of private institutions to address these requirements and goals since the government has been unable to act rapidly in response to the demands of a changing society and the aspirations of individuals and learners. This essay examined the causes and effects of India's privatisation of higher education. The Indian government does not have a defined strategy for privatising higher education. Several private higher education-related proposals introduced in Parliament are now blocked at various levels. A precise policy is urgently required for the creation and upkeep of private higher education institutions. Before the private sector is permitted to enter the educational sector, regulatory arrangements must be made. But the only way to raise the standards of higher education is for the public and private sectors to work together in a way that is fair.

Key words: *Privatization, Higher Education*

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Introduction

Private higher education is one of the most vibrant and rapidly expanding sectors of postsecondary education globally at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Private higher education is now in the spotlight due to a combination of the unprecedented demand for access to higher education and governments' incapacity or unwillingness to provide the required support (Albatch, 1999). Private higher education is expanding globally in response to various factors and with a variety of goals, including meeting the demand for advanced levels of knowledge and technological skills that exceeds the supply, offering more choices or differentiated products to meet the specific demands of the students as consumers and clients, more feasibly implementing variable fee structures on the basis of ability to pay, and adopting business management practises to increase accommodations (Gupta, 2008; James, 1993; World Bank, 1999; Rose, 2002).

The expansion of higher education in the majority of nations during the past three decades can also be attributed to the private sector. It can give the wealthy a top-notch education, the poor a vocational education, and those who don't deserve or can't afford a better education a low-quality education. Through distant learning or online learning, it can also offer education to people who are already working on an "anytime, anywhere" basis (Gupta, 2008).

Concept of Privatization

One of the major trends in higher education across the globe is privatisation. Simply put, privatisation refers to the

implementation of market ideas in public higher education institutions. The act of privatising an organisation or institution refers to the beginning of private ownership, management, and control. Control is exercised over decision-making, handling of finances, and administration. The progressive conversion of public enterprise into private enterprise is the most notable aspect of privatisation. Therefore, it is a process that can be described as the transfer of tasks, authority, and management of resources from public institutions or organisations to private individuals or agencies.

Need of Privatization in Higher Education

The need for privatisation in higher education can be summed up in the following ways: to improve the competitive efficiency of the public sector; to meet the rapidly increasing demand from students for higher education; to lighten the financial burden on the government and to decentralise educational institutions; to provide quality education by tailoring the curriculum and methodology to the needs of global, national, and local communities; and to meet the demand for skilled workers.

Present Status of Higher Education in India

With 993 universities, 39931 colleges (affiliated and constituent institutions of Central and State Public Universities), and 10725 stand-alone institutions, India operates the world's third largest higher education system, trailing only the United States and China. An estimated 37.4 million people are enrolled in higher education overall, with 19.2 million males and 18.2 million women. 48.6% of all enrolled students are women. The Gross

Enrolment Ratio (GER), which is calculated for the 18-23 age range, for higher education in India is 26.3%. GER is 26.3% for men and 26.4% for women in the population. In comparison to the national GER of 26.3%, it is 23% for Scheduled Castes and 17.2% for Scheduled Tribes. [AISHE Report, 2018-19: All India Survey on Higher Education] Even though higher education plays a variety of roles in the rapidly shifting global and local landscape, institutions of higher learning face significant obstacles and challenges, including the unprecedented demand for access to higher education and the governments' inability or unwillingness to meet this demand, inadequate funding, demands for accountability, weak institutional management and infrastructure, a lack of an effective administrative body, and weak and inexperienced administrative staff (Gupta, 2008; Bharathi, 2013).

Finding a balance between commercial pressures on economy, efficiency, and competition on the one hand, and preservation of traditional values, autonomy, their position as social critics, and being a political vanguard on the other, is one of higher education's main issues in the twenty-first century (Gupta, 2008). Despite significant investments in higher education, India's higher education system continues to be in a state of financial crisis due to rising costs and systemic requirements that are outpacing available resources. As a result, several policy suggestions have included privatisation (Singh, 2003).

Issues and Challenges of Higher Education in India

The most crucial factors for all stakeholders to accept the constraints prevailing in higher education are the issues and challenges in higher academic institutions. The educational system is supported by a wide range of advantages and disadvantages, which alter educational outcomes. The educational system needs to be adjusted to meet the demands of the labour market and modern society. Institutions may fall short of meeting student expectations and the need for professional skills. Here are the gaps that need to be filled after the ongoing changes to pedagogy and curriculum:

Inadequate Infrastructure in Higher Education: An organization's foundation is crucial to the effectiveness of its learning results. The state has been dealing with underdeveloped infrastructure, such as poorly built educational facilities, subpar classrooms, subpar services, and underdeveloped educational infrastructure.

Demand-Supply Gap: In the 21st century, the nation's laws, particularly those governing education, alter to reflect the times. Some educational institutions are experiencing a demand and supply dilemma, and the administrators are unhappy about how the many requirements of students and society are not being met. It is not a simple effort for educators to achieve the goals of education and fulfil the varied learners' demands.

Untrained and unqualified Teachers: In some educational institutions, the teachers lack fundamental professional competencies and training resources, which has an effect on the educational outcomes. The success of

the educational system depends on how well the students are raised. Teachers are the backbone of the country, since they mould the skills of young, aspirant minds and only bring about positive changes in the person or learner.

Student Enrollment Rate: Although India's enrollment rate has improved over the past ten years, it is still quite low in certain of the nation's educational institutions. The low student enrollment reflects the people of the state's lack of interest in completing basic higher education.

A lack of learning resources: Human resources are essential for achieving higher education goals and raising educational standards. In many schools and universities, the Indian government has fallen short in providing the necessary learning tools, such as lab apparatus, a suitable library, and a conducive reading environment. The state's failing educational system is also a result of the adoption of educational resources and practises from other developed states in the nation, which may not be appropriate in India due to its particular characteristics.

Lack of Transportation: Access to 158— Privatization of Higher Education in India: Higher education in the state is hampered by a lack of transportation. Because the majority of students come from remote areas where access to roads is a pipe dream and many must commute on foot, vii) there is limited internet access for stakeholders, which is critical for knowledge dissemination and is required for stakeholders to learn a wealth of knowledge, facts, and information in today's world. Poor-quality higher education is also a result of inadequate communications in isolated villages. When educational institutions fail to meet the

needs of students and society, problems in the educational system arise. Only having access to modern technology can improve higher education.

Suggestion for quality improvement in private higher education institution.

The following recommendations are crucial for enhancing the quality of private higher education institutions.

Along with the UGC, NAAC, NBA, and NIEPA, a new regulatory agency should be set up at the central and regional levels to keep an eye on private institutions. The government must keep a watchdog group in place to make sure that private universities and colleges don't waste the money they get from the government. All private universities should promote voluntary participation in the institution's evaluation process, which includes self-evaluation and external assessment by a variety of certified organizations, including the NAAC and NBA. Some universities may use common entrance exams to decide who gets in, and terminal degrees may not be given until students pass a national competency test. Selected colleges in the private sector may be granted autonomy in terms of academics, finances, and administration based on their prior performance and evaluation by an accreditation organisation like NAAC. Bright pupils in sections with lower test scores should receive free schooling. Without the consent of the government, private institutions shouldn't increase their charging schedule. Some people from the government should be on the board of trustees that runs private universities. Private institutions must not have any unstated fees.

Private universities and colleges should make an effort to get in touch with alumni and solicit their invaluable assistance in boosting the financial resources of the institutions. The value of research should be realised through institute-industry cooperation, it should be said. The research should be useful in some way. The cost of research should be related to the project's usefulness. Students must be given low-interest study loans to help cover the cost of their education. There can be no objectivity in the way students are graded.

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