
PRIVATIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA: A BOON OR BANE

Dr. K. Subramanian*

INTRODUCTION

“People must come to accept private enterprise, not as a necessary evil, but as an affirmative good”.

-Eugene Black, Former President, World Bank

Education is the real eye opener to the society for the empowerment of rural as well as urban population. Education is universally recognized as an important investment in building human capital, which is a driver for technological innovation and economic growth. India has the second largest higher education system in the World and the third largest pool of skilled manpower. The right of access to higher education is mentioned in a number of international human rights instruments. The UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966 declares, in Article 13, that "higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education". In Europe, Article 2 of the First Protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights, adopted in 1950, obliges all signatory parties to guarantee the right to education. Higher education is an educational level that follows a completion of a school providing a secondary education, such as a high school, secondary school, or gymnasium. Tertiary education is normally taken to include undergraduate and postgraduate education, as well as vocational education and training. Colleges, universities, and institutes of technology are the main institutions that provide tertiary education (sometimes known collectively as tertiary institutions).

*Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, (Centre for Research), Saraswathi Narayanan College, Perungudi, Madurai

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After the Second World War (1945) and in the Indian context of post independence (1947), the World has seen an enormous expansion of higher education. Everyone needs to be educated and that is the main idea of our country. In the modern society, it is very important to have higher education. Now a days, school education is not enough to get a better life style. In the Third World countries, under the structural adjustment programme by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank in the 1970's and 80's, the structure of higher education buckled under pressure, and flood gates were opened for privatization of the higher education systems. Our former president Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam has rightly pointed out that the future of India is in the hands of our youth. To make our nation number one, our youth should improve their knowledge only by education tirelessly.

In the past, a very few colleges were there for higher education. During those days only Government Institutions were there. In order to meet the growing needs of the student population for higher education in the country, it is imperative for the Government to privatize higher education. The new education policy was introduced by the Former Prime Minister Rajeev Gandhi. With this policy, privatization of education especially in higher education moved rapidly. During the late 20th century, that is during 1990's, our Government has granted approval for starting Private Institutions to offer higher education to the citizens of India. A lot of private organizations have come forward to offer higher education. Certain individuals, who know the importance of education have started their own institutions and provided quality education in a very reasonable cost. Now-a-days both the economically sound and poor parents are also able to provide higher education for their children. This is because of the establishment of private educational institutions. Owing to these private institutions only, our younger generation are able to become Doctors, Engineers, Software Developers, Lawyers, Economists, Sociologist, demographers, etc, and in turn, their life style is also upgraded on a par with that of Western countries. So it is good to have privatization in Higher Education and with the help of these private institutes, we are able to produce a great number of Engineers, Doctors, Chemists, Software and Information Technology professionals to improve the status of our India amidst the developed countries. India is a poor country where a large number of population are living below the poverty line. They are deprived of even basic amenities like food, clothing, water, health and housing facilities on which the survival of human being depends. In this time the Government

Institutions are very low. At the same time private colleges have been growing in number. Further private institutions, particularly in the area of management, engineering, medical and computers, have been coming up in large numbers.

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The people are spending thousands and lakhs of rupees to get a degree. So the private higher education institutions create situation in adverse effects. The professors in private higher education institutions get very low salary and are required to do more and more work. Since government employment opportunities are very low, professors in private sector institutions accept the job despite knowing the fact that they receive a very little salary. Since the professors in private higher education institutions are paid low when compared to aided institutions, they will not work efficiently. Further, most of the private institutions are started without adequate infrastructure. With the help of pull and push factors they get affiliation.

Fees structure in the private higher educational institutions is also high when compared to aided institutions. Even though the Government fixes the fees structure, the private higher educational institutions unofficially collect more. Thus, it will be unworthy to talk that the private higher education institutions provide quality education to our people. From this point of view, education is an extension of business and industry.

The problem on privatization of higher education system is mainly a matter of hot debate and concern amongst all affected groups. Hence it is called as “Trading of education”. In private higher education institutions, higher education is being treated as a product and the students as consumers. There should be free competition in the market place. This has led to the entry of “For Profit” entrepreneurs in the market of higher education. But the Supreme Court ruled that educational institutions like the Delhi University, could not be considered as “Industry” as defined under section 2 (J) of the Industrial Disputes Act. Mr. Justice P.B. Gajendragadkar said: “Education in its true aspect is more a mission and a vocation rather than a profession or trade or business. The creation of a well educated, healthy young generation imputed with a rational progressive outlook on life, the sole aim of education, could not at all be compared with or assimilated into what might be described as an industrial process, His Lordship added.”

CONCLUSION

The private higher education of a country plays a vital role in determining the shape of social, economic, political and industrial development of a nation. But private enterprise must be

ensured that the entry into the scene does not lead to commercialization. Effective implementations of rules and regulations of private higher educational institutions should be made for effective higher education. However an improvement in the standards of higher education could be achieved only through a balanced relationship between the public and private sectors.

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