



PRIVATIZATION AND COMMERCIALIZATION OF TEACHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

The involvement of private sector in higher education has brought drastic changes in the field as education is fundamental to every constituent of the society irrespective of gender, physical, economic, geographical, cultural, or linguistic differences. Factors responsible for Privatization of higher education are need for competitive efficiency, growth in population, for providing quality education, to produce skilled manpower, technological advancements etc. In the privatization of teacher education, the various issues to ponder over are mushrooming of Institutes, Paucity of Physical Facilities, Crisis of Values and Morality, Commercialization, Isolation of Teacher Education Department, Regional Imbalances, Irrelevant and Out Dated Curricula, Problem of Selection of Candidates for Training, Problem of Quality Teacher Education, Market Oriented, Lack of Transparency in Financial Arrangements and Frequent Movement of Teachers. An improvement in the standards of education could be achieved through a balanced relationship between public and private sector. There is a need for careful planning, enhanced financing and evolving an enabling policy framework to make Teacher education accessible, equitable and qualitative. It is necessary to encourage research, vocational courses and provide high-quality education.

Key words: *privatization, commercialisation, teacher education institution, quality of education*

Introduction

At the time of independence India declared itself a socialist democratic state. Public sector undertakings were initiated and developed with the aim of development. But the nineteen eighties witnessed disillusion with socialist economics which led to dissatisfaction with the public sectors. As a reaction to the inefficient working of the state-owned enterprises, the wave of privatization has spread all over the world, including India. The idea of privatization was seen as panacea to all the

problems. The involvement of private sector in higher education has brought drastic changes in the field as education is fundamental to every constituent of the society irrespective of gender, physical, economic, geographical, cultural, or linguistic differences. Due to globalization, liberalization and privatization lots of changes are taking place in the country and outside the country which are affecting the very basics of the higher education in the India. Today over 60% of higher education institutions in India are promoted by the private sector.

The Corporate Sector discovered a huge and ever-growing services industry in education. In this industry with huge global market students, teachers, and non-teaching employees constitute resources for profit-making. Here, the students are consumers, teachers are service providers and expert speakers, and the institutions or companies catering to education services are organizers, and the teaching-learning process is no longer for the building of a nation but a business for profit-making. The first decade of the twenty-first century witnessed world over large-scale and bitter protest from the students, teachers and people at large against the privatization and commercialization of higher education and bringing higher education sector under General Agreements on Trade in Services (GATS) and World Trade Organization (WTO) by their governments. This paper attempts to understand the nature of privatisation of teacher education in India, to find out the impact of privatisation and commercialization of Teacher education and to examine the efficiency and quality concerns of Teacher Education Programmes.

Privatization of Teacher Education

The term "privatization" refers to the transfer of activities, assets, and responsibilities from government/ public institutions and organizations to private individuals and agencies. The areas of shift in the education sector are mainly decision and responsibility of money, administration and a relevant curriculum of high quality.

In view of the tremendous pressure on total educational knowledge enterprise for higher and professional education, in particular, privatization is not an option but a natural evolution. The earlier system, where the state and charitable institutions come forward to open new professional colleges, is obviously unable to cope with the rising demands of a high profile professional education. The infrastructure, managerial, and financial



requirements coupled with a high yielding entrepreneurship has made the private sector to take a direct plunge into the educational enterprise (Lunavath, 2005).

There are various factors responsible for Privatization of higher education like need for competitive efficiency, growth of population, problem of finances with the public sector, desire for more autonomy, for quality improvement, for producing skilled manpower, for technological developments etc.

Hence, privatization of Teacher education is a part of the process of privatization of the economy at large. The motive, which activates private sector, is to gain maximum profits. Therefore, it will invest only in those courses and institutions which will be profitable. As a result, the professional courses will be hot list. But the general education, social sciences, and humanities will be side-lined. In the privatization of teacher education, there are various pertinent issues that need to be discussed here:

Issues Related To Privatisation of Teacher Education

1. **Mushrooming of Institutes:-** In the name of privatization, several institutes of teacher training were opened. There was mushrooming of teacher education institutes with questionable credentials. From 1956 until 1995, there were only 36 deemed universities. Their number rose to 103 by February 2008. Indeed, between March 1995 and March 2008, nearly 400 applications were filed seeking deemed university status. At the time of the freeze ordered by Honorable Mr. Kapil Sibal, the total number of deemed universities stood at 127, of which the highest number 29 is in Tamilnadu, Maharashtra has 21, and Karnataka 15. Many of these universities are a far cry from the original concept (Frontline, July 2009:5) and are predominantly concerned about revenue generation rather than promoting academic and research activities.
2. **Paucity of Physical Facilities:-** Although the leading institutes in private sector provide better infrastructure than the government ones, but in rest of the private institutes, infrastructure is worse than the government sector. As we know that in order to provide training to teachers, teacher training institutions/colleges require adequate physical infrastructure. Laboratories are not properly equipped with the needed material; in a way, we can say that teaching-learning environment is not conducive to learning. It has been

observed that some teacher training colleges/institutions do not have schools attached with them for practice teaching which is the integral part of teacher training program. Apart from this teacher educators are less in number and teachers who are available are not as competent as they should be.

3. **Crisis of Values and Morality:-** Using the umbrella of privatization, private institutes admit those students for training who do not deserve to be in this profession. Consequently, those are admitted who have "less-ability" but "more-paying capacity". As the students are ready to pay the amount, so those students are also admitted who do not value the "values" as well as "morality". As a matter of fact, they come under the category of those who "desire" and not in the category of those who "deserve".
4. **Commercialization:-** Privatization and commercialization are the two sides of the same coin. Profit-making has become a part of private educational initiatives. But the government has to see that commercialization of education does not undermine our efforts to provide quality education and create excellence, especially in the field of teacher education. As the teacher training institutions are increasing, malpractices are prevailing in the teacher training colleges, in the name of privatization; such colleges are charging very high fees from the students. Due to high charges, some students can afford but some are not able to afford. At the same time the quality of teacher training is deteriorating day by day.
5. **Isolation of Teacher Education Department:-** Teacher Education Institutions are considered "islands of isolation". They hardly developed linkage with schools, peer institutions, universities, and other institutions (Sungoh, 2005). It has been observed that the departments of education of the universities in India also remain isolated from other departments of the same university, not to talk about the other universities.
6. **Regional Imbalances:-** Due to unplanned and haphazard expansion of teacher education colleges/institutions, it has been observed that in some areas teachers training colleges are more than needed, and in some areas teacher training colleges are less than needed. In some areas, teacher training colleges are not of good quality. So there are wide regional imbalances.



7. **Irrelevant and Out Dated Curricula:-** The curriculum which we have in the teacher training colleges is irrelevant and outdated. Curriculum needs to be made more relevant and need based. In most of the teacher training colleges/institutions, the course content is not revised regularly to update it, so that teacher under training can learn: how to face the upcoming challenges of life? Knowledge is treated as “given”, embedded in the curriculum and accepted without question; there is no engagement with curriculum. Some content in curriculum is useless and there is a need to accommodate things which will help him in teaching effectively.
8. **Defective selection procedure:-** Defective selection procedures of candidates may lead to deterioration of the quality of products. With the coming up of privatization, a lot of universities/institutes, particularly in professional courses, students with low percentages or scores are getting admissions. Here, the admission criteria are not high and students with a very low IQ (Intelligent Quotient) are also getting admissions creating an oversupply of low calibre products in the market. These institutes/universities are just working like a factory, taking more and more substandard students, and producing more degrees of poor quality (Pillania, 2004).
9. **Problem of Quality Teacher Education:-** In an environment of global competitiveness, it is more important that the products of the teacher education institutions of our country are as competent as of any other country of the world; but it is very unfortunate that Indian teacher educational institutions suffer from large quality variation, some institutions are creating very good stuff whereas some others are busy in producing teachers who are not competent enough for this profession of teaching. It may be because of problem of selection or other faulty procedures. Many private institutions are relying on part time teachers with little commitment to the institutions and sometimes with scant qualifications (Altbach & Levy, 2005).
10. **Market Oriented:-** Private teacher education institutes focus on market forces to shape their offerings, degree programs, and curriculum. At the centre of debate lies the issue of quality assurance and the need to provide consumer protection from non-reputable providers or “diploma mills” (UNESCO, 2003). It is feared

that universities will act like industry for grabbing profits. It is also argued that complete marketization of teacher education would go against the constitutional obligation of providing equal opportunities of education to all. Only the more advanced sections of population – who have better information, better access to resources, and more capital to bear risk – will be able to derive the benefits from educational opportunities generated by the market forces (Mishra & Mishra, 2004).

Conclusion

The overwhelming participation of the private sector in higher education has given a fillip to the under-represented communities who now have better access to education. While the role of the private sector in Indian higher education is undeniable, it is also a painful trend with more and more venturing into the stream with the sole intention of profiteering by disregarding stipulate norms and severely compromising on quality on several fronts. This has adversely affected the delivery and sustenance of quality with the end result that most students are no better after their higher education than they were before. Hence, an improvement in the standards of education could be achieved through a balanced relationship between public and private sector. There is a need for careful planning, enhanced financing and evolving an enabling policy framework to make Teacher education accessible, equitable and qualitative. It is necessary to encourage research, vocational courses and provide high-quality education.

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