PRIVATISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN TODAY’S SCENARIO

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ABSTRACT
Imparting higher education to the citizens is incumbent on the government of India. Thus the government is accountable not only to bestow accessibility of higher education to the commoners but also to enrich the level of excellence of providing education. The dearth of resources delimits the endeavors of the government and makes it in capacious to enhance the quality and accretion of the education to masses. Large investment is required to overcome this inadequacy. The shortage of necessary funds has lead to the urgent need of privatization of higher education in India. This would enable to raise the standard of higher education in the country by fulfilling the essential requisites of the students and thereby providing them quality education. The present paper would throw light upon the need of privatization of education and its significance in India.

Keywords: Accountable, excellence, enhance, inadequacy, investment, standard, accessibility.

INTRODUCTION:
Education has become an indispensable part of human life which plays a momentous and valuable role in the upliftment of the mankind. After China and United States, India has the privilege of providing a platform of higher education which constitutes to be the world’s third largest in terms of students. However, India has an edge over China as it promotes English as the primary language of higher education and research. India provides higher education to approximately 11 percent of its youth as compared to that of China. University Grants Commission (UGC) is a regulating body which ensures coordination between the centre and the state universities and its constituent colleges, administers its standards and advises the government. According to the current scenario, there are 227 govt. recognized universities in India and amongst them, 20 are central universities and 109 deemed universities. These universities have affiliating colleges which are running various undergraduate courses. However, Jawaharlal University is an eminent exception to this rule. Department of Higher Education, Govt of India, consists of 16885 colleges with 1800 exclusive women’s college. These institutes include 457 lakh teachers and 99.54 lakh students.
Higher education institutions also encompass distinctive private institutes offering multifarious professional courses in India. Distance education is also as essential component of the education system.

Some of the renowned institutes perceive international acceptance and acknowledgement for gaining Excellency in education and Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) stand as ideal prototype for such standards.

Above 8000 students get enrolled to these institutes annually which add to the growth of both private as well as public sectors in India. However, the comprehensive worldwide level of excellence in the higher education is still superlative as compared to the higher education imparted in India. Therefore there is an imperative need to improvise the quality standards of country’s educational institutions. Customarily, the quality of these institutions could be measured by their resources viz; experienced faculty, number of admissions, no of books in the library or by its outstanding outputs such as generating standard results.

Technological advancement has heightened the exigency of well educated and competent personnel. The obstacles faced by the public sector are inadequate resources which lead to their inefficiency in fulfilling the needs and requisites of industry and other sectors. Rostow has rightly said that the world is passing through industrial revolution constituting communications, genetics, lasers and innovative industrial appliances along with various technical products incorporating the microchips. In order to reach the heights of excellence it has become utmost important that the private sector should come up with the endeavors to produce competent and efficacious manpower and utilize hi tech opportunities.

There are certain demarcations and limitations in the public sector, such as structural and operational rigidness to market signals or market demands for efficacious manpower. However, privatization can reciprocate expeditiously to the needs and requirement of various sectors and would also take sufficient measures to aggrandize human resource development. Knowledge industry has become fundamental factor to expedite the process of development. Breakthrough in knowledge is augmenting rapidly all over the world. Therefore underdeveloped countries should endeavor to cognize and update themselves with the knowledge industry. Investing in education can thus prove to be a highly beneficial bestowal to human resource development. Private sector can have a great contribution in aggrandizing the knowledge industry as compared to the public sector.

**IMPACT OF PRIVATIZATION ON EDUCATION**

Various committees were appointed to assess the impact of Privatization on education. Punnayya Committee, set up by UGC in 1993, and Swaminathan Panel constituted by AICTE in 1994 have concurred that the fee is the dominant source of income and the fee level should be escalated by the institutions in such a way that 15% to 25% of annual recurring cost per student is recovered in the form of fee and from other sources at the end of ten years.

The Prime Minister’s Committee, chaired by Mr. M. Ambani and Mrs. K. Birla recommends substantial transformation in education sector. The full cost recovery from students is empathically propounded through hike in fees, even in public higher education institutions.
The committee emphasized that it is incumbent on private sector to take the liability of higher education and the government should primarily concentrate on the progress of fundamental education only.

The quality of higher education is deteriorating day by day. The reason being that the private institutions are focusing much more on the quantity than on the quality. As the number of private professional institute is increasing catering to the rising educational needs, simultaneously the quality is also depreciating. Such circumstances can increase the possibility of commercialization of education. Therefore government should not give enough liberty to the private institution. Such ignorance on the part of government can lead to degradation of the education resulting in taking advantages of the professors, increase in the fee of the students and raising capitation fee. A huge imbalance among different streams of learning would be created with the commoditization of education. Employment, skill and corporate oriented courses would be given weightage neglecting tremendous conventional knowledge and basic sciences.

Privatization in education has aggravated exploitation and has made teaching an unpopular profession. The teachers and professors are not paid suitable remuneration as specified by the governing bodies like UGC. This is diminishing the quality, standards of teaching as the teachers and professors show reluctance in making appropriate efforts and ultimately the students are found to be at the suffering end. It has also been noticed that to increase the quantity of the students, the private institutions have started employing various unscrupulous practices. The students are charged exorbitantly in the name of capitation fee and various protocols of seeking admission, such as entrance test, merit, interviews etc, are ignored. This creates huge impediments for the deserving and the intelligent students to excel in their respective fields as the excessive capitation fee becomes unaffordable for them.

Taking into account the affirmative side of privatization, it offers a lot of benefits also. The private institutions are free from political interventions. In accordance to the Supreme Court, the unaided professional institutes are autonomous bodies and can take administrative decisions on their own. They have to follow certain liabilities as per the regulating agencies regarding recruitment of staff, examination and admission.

As the government is incapacitated to provide adequate funds and suitable grants for the higher education, therefore, privatization in education is the only accessible alternative for catering the educational needs. As far as teaching is concerned, the teachers would feel a sense of responsibility for imparting quality education to the students as their salaries would be paid from the fee collected from the students. At the same time, the non serious, casual and salary minded teachers would also be subjected to dismissal from the job because their salary, promotion and the sustenance of job would strictly be on the basis of their everyday performance.

Along with the aforementioned benefits privatization can also result in excelling the quality of higher education due to rise in competition. It would also improvise the use of advanced technology and
innovative methods for teaching. Privatization will also lead to earlier access to higher education in developing countries.

CONCLUSION:

The progression of privatization has been on large scale since 1990s with the endeavors, dedication and financial support from some of the leading universities in India like Banaras Hindu University and Aligarh Muslim University. Government is accountable to provide free and compulsory education and cannot afford to be negligent on this part. So government should take an initiative to increase the investment and funds for the improvisation of primary education. The direct outcome is the reduction of expenditure on higher education. But this does not imply that higher education is not necessary. Government cannot exculpate itself from the duty of managing private institute. Some regulating agencies need to take initiative for ensuring excellence in higher education and they should not consider profitability as their sole motive. These governing bodies would also look forward to impart quality education assuring transparency at the same time.

It would be thwarting for a private investor to run an institute if it is unable to recover its costs. Instead of running it at loss, he would prefer to close it down. Subsequently, private institutions should be allowed to be commercialized up to some extent. If the private institutions ensure transparency, they will not have to compromise with profit as well as the quality of providing education.

It has become utmost important that equal contribution is bestowed from both the public as well as the private sector to raise the standard and quality of education. The government should show their earnestness toward spending more on higher education such that the lower strata of the society also avails access to education. Although, privatization of higher education offers a lot of limitations and restraints but it would definitely improvise the present educational system.

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