
UNAFFORDABILITY OF EDUCATION IN INDIA - A MAJOR BLOW TO THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF INDIA

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*Education has become a commodity. Those who can afford to buy it buy it,
and those who can sell it make money out of it.*

- Kailash Satyarthi¹

ABSTRACT

Education is the key for the upliftment of society and overall development leading to the all round of development of a nation especially in the case of India. After the independence in 1947, and subsequent LPG (liberalization, privatization and globalization) policy of the union government, it makes the way for the accessibility of private education and the competitive environment between govt. and private institute. As the time progress, we see the new challenges already coming in front of all of us. Not only impacting the individuals but also society as a whole. From recent phenomena of covid-19 pandemic to the current challenges of A.I. it posted a challenge and opportunity to tackle this challenge and pave a way for the progress of individuals as well as to the whole nation. But recent deteriorating situations of educations in india to the whole posted a great challenges in front of us. Due to the continuous changes in the international policies and war going on in some part of the world with addition to inflation, it poses a survival challenge to the poor and middle class especially lower middle class sections. Education must be accessible to all with affordable prices.

¹ NOBEL PRIZE WINNER- <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2014/satyarthi/facts/>

Definitions

The term privatization of education² refers to many different education programs and policies. In this there is a transfer of activities and responsibilities from govt. to private and individual agencies.

This term is clearly refers to different programs and policies which give some power to the private entity to take appropriate step in matter of education and its impartment in these private education institute. Here the govt. role is limited in privatization with regulatory measures rests with govt. while others measures is given to private institutions or entity.

Private institute now spend in educations institute which ultimately serves them leading to provide best available talent and maximization of profits of private sector and industries

Why privatization

- **Need for competitive efficiency:** Due to competition, it provides a healthy environment to the citizens in the matter of education, innovation, skill, sustainable development etc. Privatization is somehow able to solve the problem of govt. red tapism as they are very efficient in matters of allotment of work and resources.
- **Growth in population:** To serve the population of 1.45 billion, without privatization it is not possible.
- **Financial burden on government:** There is constant pressure on govt. to allocate budget in other importance matters such as health, infrastructure, connectivity, etc. so there is need of contribution from private sector. Current spending on education in India is not more than 3.5% of GDP. The center itself concedes that the minimum should be 6%. Very little is being spent on education. Therefore there is a need to evolve policy through which private resources are mobilized.
- **Education is an Economic good:** It is not only a social service to the society but also a economic investment which gives lakhs of job to the citizens.

² Dr. Bhanubhai D. Parmar, Shree P.M. Patel Institute of Business Administration, Anand (vol. 7, issue: 8, August:2019) ISSN:2321- 2853

- **Quest for Quality:** In some extent private education is able to maintain quality of work and proper utilization of resources for all. In order to sustain and maintain good qualitative infrastructure and equipment like furniture, buildings, different types of laboratories and qualified and competent academic staff etc, there is a need for privatization.
- **Growth of school education:** As the no. of private school increases it raised demand for higher education in the society.
- **The need for skilled manpower:** Private sector able to take decision more rapidly and advanced courses introductions in private sector is proving a game changer for the industry.
- **Eliminating the corruption:** In many cases it was seen that private sector has less corruption as compared to public sector in India. So it brings a sense of accountability and discipline.
- **It's time for information based economy:** Due to the advancement of latest technology like AI and machine learning, there is need for collaboration between research institute such as higher education institute, R&D institute and other funding agencies. These all are achieved through privatization.
- **Technological developments:** Information revolution has been brought about and strengthened due to technological developments such as microchips, genetics, communications, robots, lasers, growth of satellite TV and computer technologies and advancement of AI. Due to limited resources public sector cannot meet the demands of the industry and other sectors of economy. Thus private sector should undertake to train manpower in technology and respond to market demands.

Positive Impact of Privatization in the Indian Education Sector- As per govt. report as of 2022 and report by Statista, it was drawn that as of 2022, there were 1168 universities, 11,779 stand-alone institutes, 17 woman exclusive universities and approx 55000 colleges in India.

Privatization has due to some extent solve many problems related to educations and increased the competition between the institute. Due to the population of India of 1.45 billion citizens

(Approx.) it helps in increasing the accessibility to the people. Due to the presence of highly qualified citizens, it works like an asset to the govt. which give society a max. profit in the long run. No country is developed without the proper education of its citizens

- Increased accessibility of education even in the remotest locations.
- Decreased financial burden on state and central government.
- Generation of employment and income opportunities to educate youth.
- Teaching skills that are highly demanded in the current job market.

Negative Impact of Privatization in the Indian Education Sector- Due to the increased effort of privatization, it leads to increase the expenses and cost of education on both school and higher education level. Although it reduces dependence of govt. on education but it increases the cost for general public.

Many private institute are found to charge high fees so that their income and profit is maximized. Not only charging high academic fees but also charging futile expenses like parking fees, computer fees, development fees etc. which too not utilizing for the cause they are charging.

These unbridled power of charging fees leading to corruption at high level. And govt. despite knowing the same not taking any concrete actions against these institute.

- Poor infrastructure facilities lack basic amenities such as clean drinking water, hygienic toilets, labs, hostel, dormitories, libraries, etc.
- Low quality of teaching and underpaying to teacher leading to institutional exploitation.
- Turning noble profession of education into commercialization of business like any other business.
- Not seriously giving importance to academic education into institute and proper evaluation of students leading to more problem to the solution.
- Test, exams, assignments are not guided properly and giving pass certificate to students

who are fail at their institute.

- In many cases there are no innovation are being held between students and teachers. Only teaching how to pass a particular exam.
- There is chance of mushrooming fake education institute in the cases of private one. These institution are giving fake degrees to bogus students for money.

Current Issues in Education in India

- **Expenditure on education are rising** – Due to the rising costs of education, current spending of current is not enough. Although many appreciated step has been taken by govt. but there are some areas which need more considerations.
- **Gross enrolment ratio (GER)** – There is need of following of strict adherence of policy of UN and other specialized education institute in india in the matter of GER.
- **Capacity utilisation** – There are lots of talent and creativity in india the only need is to identification of that talent and encouragement and provide opportunity to make a useful to the students as well as society.
- **Boosting the Infrastructure** – There are lot of thing should be done to provide better and world class infrastructure to the school includes better classroom, playground, washroom, staff and teachers room, Lab, internet, ICT communications etc. both in rural and urban areas.
- **Public- Private Partnership (PPP) model** – These models are should be adopt in well designed manner so that it give fruitful results and innovation which overhaul the education system in India. Not only it leads to development but it also provide an inspiration for others.
- **Student-teacher ratio** – There is need of maintaining the student-teacher ratio because as the better ratio, it leads to better education in the school and colleges. There is also need of qualified and independent teachers who dedicate their time in academic purposes.

What is education inflation, and how does it impact costs in India?

Inflation prices raising the cost not only in food, clothes, medicine, house etc but also in education sector also. Due to this phenomena, poor people and students unavailable to afford the education which is basic necessity of every human being. In many cases students specially small children has to left the education so that they can support their family financially. Rising costs makes difficult to students and parents who are dreaming the their son or daughter will gets best education and fulfill their dreams.

For example, the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) doubled its fee from 90,000 to 2 lakhs for an undergraduate course in 2023.

India's consumer price inflation has indeed remained relatively stable, fluctuating between 5% and 5.6% over the past few years.

But education expenses are rising sharply between 8-10% annually which ultimately leading to exclusion of millions of students who are solely depend upon education for the betterment of their life.

Inflation in education- Due to the uncertainty of the international economy due to the threat of tariff war from the newly elected president of the U.S. and ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine and war like situation in middle East, there is sharp increase of inflation and uncertainty which can be feel by all people in the whole world. Because of this it raises educational expenses which are now excluding the poor people out of education.

These factors come from a higher cost of living to increased tuition fees, from administration costs to technology & infrastructure, etc. Not only this, after all these costs come the hidden charges like exam registration fees, transportation costs, accommodation & food costs add further to it.

Rise in Abroad Education – Due to deterioration of education in India and extremely competitive environment of selection of few people over lakhs of people, people are going for further studies in abroad as in some cases it is very cheap in comparison to the India example- medicine education is costly in India but cheapest in Russia, Ukraine, China etc due to which students are preferring education out of India.

According to The Hindu, “Last year, including visa, college fee, and other charges, a student would spend around 20 to 25 lakh per annum. This year, it will cost around 25 to 40 lakh per annum.

Many of you must have seen that viral but heartbreaking video of Salem city of Tamil Nadu in which a woman walking quietly on the side of the road suddenly moves forward and goes in front of an oncoming bus. After a strong hit by the bus, she falls on the road and dies. According to reports, 46-year-old Pappathi came in front of a bus and died to pay her son's college fees because someone had told her that compensation is given in case of death in an accident.

She sacrificed her life to educate her son. This is not just a tragic and heartbreaking story of a mother's sacrifice. It is also a tragic and bitter story of education becoming increasingly expensive in the country and going out of the reach of ordinary poor and working class families.

There are many stories like her and millions of poor, middle class, lower middle class parents who are sacrificing not only necessary expenses for themselves but also even their life. People want to do every possible act which can educate their children by reducing expenses on food, clothes, medicines, selling the properties, taking up loans and what not.

As per psychologist these are "aspirational class" people who has realized the importance of education. This class has understood that their and their children's liberation lies in good and higher education. Due to this, in the last one and a half to two decades, enrollment from primary to higher education has increased, the percentage of registration in higher education has increased, the gender gap has reduced. This is a big achievement.

Huge hike in fees of professional courses-

there is exorbitant increase in the education especially higher education leading to unaffordability of education to many depressed class people. Fees of professional courses such as engineering, medicine, research in top of the higher education institute etc has skyrocketed leading to the decline of access of education to poor class.

In many govt. survey such as NSSO, NITI Aayog report and other think tank report, it is become a dream for poor, working class and lower middle class people to get affordable education nowadays without any hardships.

According to these surveys:

- 38 percent of the average monthly income of a temporary worker in urban areas is spent on the education of his two children.
- In rural areas, about 15.2 percent of the total monthly income of a temporary worker is spent on education.
- Similarly, 14 percent of the average monthly income of an urban regular worker
- 6.5 percent of the income of a permanent worker in rural areas is spent on the education of two children.

As reported by many think tanks and other research institute, there is sharp increase in the education expenses between june 2014 to june 2018, a sharp increase of 30.8% and 27.4% is recorded in education expenses leading to beyond reach of poor people.

Even the fees of government IITs and IIMs are skyrocketing. From this, the fees of private universities and institutes can be estimated. Entrepreneur and publisher Maheshwar Peri had revealed in a Twitter thread last February that the fees of IIM (Ahmedabad) have increased from Rs 4 lakh per annum to Rs 27 lakh per annum in 15 years between 2007 and 2022, which is an increase of 575 percent. According to Peri, the average annual fee of the country's four major IIMs is more than Rs 25 lakh, while the average annual fee of IIT management schools is more than Rs 12 lakh.

When the fees of govt. eminent institutions are so high one can think about the more higher fees in the private education institute. Even the govt, is reducing their expenses in education and budget for different type of fellowship is reduced leading to moral exclusion of poor class people.

People are taking private coaching as the low quality of teaching in schools in both govt and private sector with the long lasting effect of covid-19 pandemic it accelerates the dependence on coaching institute. Parents are cutting down the expenses so that their children get best education in coaching institute. In the states such as UP, Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan etc states, it become a tradition of the students to go to the coaching institute after school classes.

Similarly, the coaching industry is booming up in the whole country on the grave of the poor condition of neglected education system. As per a report by The Print, the size of the coaching industry in the country has increased to Rs 60000 crore, which will increase to Rs 150000 crore by the year 2028.

Reason of increasing dependence on coaching institute due to a little quality of education in the conventional college and school as it is very difficult for a person to qualify prestigious entrance test for UG and PG like JEE, NEET, NIFT, CLAT etc. without the guidance of coaching

The reason is that it has become difficult to get admission in good engineering, medical, management, law or other professional colleges without sending children to coaching.

Due to the high inflation rate, education has become only accessible to rich and only a dream for poor and middle or lower middle class. As the case of municipal worker we mentioned above, we have to provide affordable education to all leading to the whole and complete development of India. In India we are the people of 1.45 billion citizens in which its 70% population is young and working class people. Increasing cost of education is further deepening the growing economic inequality in the country. It is pushing the country from a state of demographic dividend to a demographic disaster.

Suggestions:

- To improve quality and standards of education system as a whole, regulatory bodies should be empowered with more power and independent regulations because education is the responsibility of both State Government as per constitution of India. Powers such as deciding college fees in both govt. and private educational institutions keeping in mind the suggestions of various stakeholders. Not only fees but conditions of teachers such as salaries, environment etc. also be decided by any regulations.
- Penalize and closure of such mushroom and fake educational institutions who give fake degrees for money leading to the commercialization of a noble education.
- Teachers in Government schools should encourage the parents and society to send their wards in Government Schools. There is a need of identification of talent and correct

opportunity to that talent leading to holistic development as a whole. If invested by private sector more in the education sector then it will maximize their current profits.

- Power, infrastructure or telecommunication and financial support to all educational institute with the help of Public- Private Partnership model (PPP) if provided then it to lead the growth and progress of educational organization .
- there is no freedom for innovation for teachers and students in educational institute as many times the management which governs them involve some persons who themselves are not qualifies to run even a school. So it compromises the educational institute quality leading to the decay or death on institute. Privatization has provided them job opportunities but not job satisfaction. Due to Government and regulatory bodies not able to check these institute, educational institute especially private institute are growing daily. We can see one school in one street.
- The govt. must empower regulatory bodies with appointment of efficient administrators and policy maker who adopt stricter norm in case institute not follow the regulatory guidelines and unable to maintain quality of education and provide opportunity to those who are leading in innovations.
- Commercialization of education is compromising the quality of education. Overall it should be regulated to keep private institutions in checked and ensure quality control.

Conclusion

In conclusion, addressing the rising cost of education requires a multi-faceted approach involving government intervention, financial assistance, and systemic reforms. By prioritizing affordable and inclusive education, India can strive towards providing equal opportunities for all students, regardless of their economic background, and pave the way for a brighter and more equitable future. The current education system in India can be described as “Education for the rich and privileged,” as it prioritises commercialisation, centralisation, and communalisation. It is crucial to resist these policies and strive for a student-centred education system.

We need to advocate for inclusive education that provides equal access to all students without any discrimination.

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