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## **An analytical study on commercialization of education system in India**

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### **Abstract**

In any education system, higher education encompassing Management, Engineering, Medicines etc., plays a major role in imparting knowledge, values, and developing skills and, in the process, increase the growth and productivity of the nation. While the Government is committed to providing primary education and certain facilities/subsidies for higher education, given the higher cost involved in the establishment of higher education institutes, we are witnessing the entry of private sector to run educational institutions.

Many Corporate groups like Reliance, Nirma, Tata, Sterlite etc. have promoted Management Institutes. Some reputed foreign universities are also coming to India. But Government should issue some guidelines so that fees structure remains within certain limit and those who are from economically poor background have same opportunity. So, researchers have tried to find out the impact of commercialization of education in India.

**Keywords:** Higher education, private sector, commercialization, government

### **Introduction**

Education was something that was always driven by devotion and thought. Helped by their own volition, teachers were successful potters moldings men and women into the embodiment of an intangible divine force, of rectitude. Sadly though, the twin foundations have penetrated the department of education as well, subverting it, leading to the establishment of a commercial education system that manufactures solipsists but doesn't nurture altruists.

While it is true that education must evolve as time passes but commercialization of education is the worst thing that could ever have happened. It is tantamount to decide. Depressingly, we are not averse to the idea of commercialization. India has become a dirt-pool where „educational“ institutions proliferate like mushrooms. And there is none to cleanup! Foremost among these are the engineering and medical colleges which have become clubs of incompetent youngsters. It is only because of such „institutes of technology and of medical sciences“, which turn out maladroit people, that the BPO and IT industry is thriving in our country. Because, lets face the truth, our education system doesn't make us competent enough. The word IIT might have sprung

up in your mind, but I don't think they are paradigms of the ideal education institute. They sure equip you with technical knowledge that this age requires but certainly don't imbibe the intellectuality that every age demands.

### **Role of teacher in education**

Central to this issue is the changing equations of the role of the teacher. The most sacred and the most important job in the world is that of the teacher. A teacher, hidden in the shadow of the student, must guide him to move ahead and resurrect our broken society. From the time when education started its first phase of commercialization, the responsibilities of the teacher too, have been compromised.

It is painful to note that people are beginning to view it as just another job which pays them and feeds them. When a person graduates, more often than not, the last job that he/she applies for is the job of the teacher.

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While we are a society built with the bricks of fallacies concrete of misguided principles, the notion, that the job of a teacher is a lesser one, filled with so much ignorance and falsity can only be equated with sacrilege and blasphemy. The repercussions of such a situation, in which the teacher's indifference towards his job juxtaposed with demands of money-mongering institutions they work in, are clearly demonstrated by cases such as the La Martiniere suicide. The case was widely reported because it happened in an elite Kolkata school, but what about the myriad cases of physical assault in lesser schools in towns and villages? Certainly every case cannot be reported. The teacher knows this and thus assaults with impunity. I do not seek to label the whole community of teachers diabolical. There, certainly are a lot of people who are walking definitions of how a teacher should be. But their number is fast dwindling.

### Scenario of education in India

In India, over the years, there have been private initiatives in education initially for philanthropic reasons and eventually in professional and even in general higher education not only to meet the growing demands but also to realize the huge and quick profits potential. This was situational because government has shortage of funds so for the benefit of nation government allowed private institutions. Privatization of higher education has emerged in several forms and types in the recent decade in India. One, privatization within government higher education institutions take place in the form of introducing self-financing courses within government institutions; two, converting government-aided private institutions into private self financing institutions; three, allowing to expand self-financing private institutions with recognition and also without recognition, which may be termed as commercial private Commercial private higher education emerges from market forces and tied to economic and global forces.

They thrive on the principles of commercialism, primarily focus on vocational courses and highly pragmatic. Their commercial thrust is training jobs, indeed, part of the curriculum is industrial training. Not only training for jobs but also place their students in well-paid jobs. This indeed speaks about the strong industry – institution linkages. They are narrowly focused, rather micro-specific in designing their course and training. This narrow focus is their strength as well weakness. It is strength as long as there is demand for such specific nature of the courses and a weakness once such a demand is satiated. Moreover, the built-in set up / infrastructure do not allow them to diversify. They cater to the unmet demands or rather demand- absorbing from the non university higher education sector.

We can divide these institutions in to various types, like of the self-financing engineering colleges and management institutions are affiliated to the conventional universities In which, the course structure, design, curriculum, and the pattern of examination fall within the purview of the national or state pattern. On the other side, several of these self financing private institutions are also non-affiliating to any universities and cater to the demands of the corporate sector nationally and internationally.

This privatization has its negative impact also. Student is acting as market force. Student is the power while faculty is weak in these private institutions. Indeed, the faculty lacks the position, power and autonomy as they traditionally enjoyed at universities. Basically they serve to students and their practical orientations in commercial private institutions. These institutions rely on part time faculty and may be drawn from full-time faculty at public universities (and hence do not add to further employment opportunities). When employing full-time faculty, they pay meager salary. Perhaps many of them have neither practical nor academic expertise and lack training.

**Table 1:** Expenditure on education

Country	Spending on education as a % of GDP	Country	Spending on education as a % of GDP
Switzerland	5.8	South Africa	5.3
U S	5.7	Thailand	5.2
France	5.6	Chile	4.2
U.K.	5.3	Brazi	4.2
Malaysia	8.1	India	4.1
Mexico	5.3	Russia	3.8

**Note:** Government education expenditure as a percentage of GDP (2000–2002).

**Source:** United Nations Human Development Programme.

### Commercialization of education

But Education today is an object of business which has serious and negative effects on our society. The more one can pay, higher the education he can get. Every year, number of students going for higher professional education is increasing in India and therefore, good opportunity exists for all these colleges to make money by offering such courses. In many cases, situations even remain much worst and students feel cheated at the end of courses. The best example is given in a movie, Path shall a in which some rules were set for the school's profit. We can easily give the example of flourishing MBA colleges across India where average annual fees is around 5-10 lakh rupees; however, the facilities provided by these colleges are much below average levels. Most of these colleges remain more interested in making good bucks than providing quality

education to students. Every year, number of students going for higher professional education is increasing in India and therefore, good opportunity exists for all these colleges to make money by offering such courses. Same conditions do prevail in other professional colleges in India. Under the new scenario, Government – Private partnership is becoming important in Management Education. Now India is a transforming country. We are near to achieve status of developed nation. The demand for higher education has been growing rapidly with comparatively faster growth in enrolment in higher educational institutions than the growth in number of higher educational institutions.

### Gross enrolment pattern

At present, in India, there are about 1.86 crore students enrolled in various streams of higher education including

Business Management.<sup>3</sup> Despite the large number of students studying in various streams, we have not seen any major shift in the productivity as skills and talents are deficient to support economic activities and, hence, there is a serious concern on employability of these educated persons. The gross enrolment ratio (GER) for higher education in India was 12 per cent in 2010. However, the enrolment level varies across states. We also need to recognize that our enrolment level is far below several other countries. For example, according to a Report, GER is 23 per cent for China, 34 per cent for Brazil, 57 per cent for U.K., 77 per cent for both Australia and Russia and 83 per cent for the U.S (Annex 1). In this context, the attempt of Government authorities to increase the number of students by 2020 so as to reach GER of 30 per cent becomes a big challenge. No doubt, the launch of new institutes like JRE School of Management can play a catalyst role in addressing the challenge of increasing GER in India. As a positive step, for the remaining duration of Eleventh Five Year Plan, the Government has taken initiatives to incentivize States for setting up/expansion of existing educational institutions, establishment of 8 universities, expansion of colleges to achieve a target of 1 lakh students enrolment and schemes for setting up model colleges in regions which are below national average of GER.

### Quality of education

Given that we need to compete globally in the 21st century, our education system should adopt certain benchmarking techniques for improving instruction models and administrative procedures in universities/colleges to move forward. I suggest that we need a thorough study and evaluation of models implemented elsewhere and work out strategies to adopt such models in our system. Benchmarking in my opinion would provide benefits to our education system in terms of reengineering, setting right objectives, etc. The country is showing consistency in economic growth pattern, leading the world in terms of information and technology, modernization various economic activities and pushing for higher share of industries and services sectors of the economy but there is one area which needs reform is "education system". While it is true that some investments are taking place in the country's higher education system, we are yet to establish world class research facilities, recruiting profound academicians in universities/colleges/research institutions, etc. to sustain and forge lead in economic development. It is important to understand that countries like China, Singapore, South Korea, etc. are moving fast in investing in education system. Therefore, it is imperative that our educational institutions are equipped with the desired quality and standards which are essentials for transforming the younger workforce into productive ones. Needless to reiterate that in the higher education system focus on use of technology for effective learning by students also need to be encouraged to have cutting edge over our competitors in the globalised world.

### Making education affordable

In India, if education has to reach all deserving students, it should be made affordable. The fee structure in Government owned/sponsored institutions is inexpensive in India. However, in some private sector institutions, which have the freedom to prescribe fee structure and despite broad

guidelines from certain state governments, fees are beyond the capacity of poor and deserving students. Ideally, the fee structure should vary for such economically weaker students. I would urge the educators to keep in mind that education should not become prohibitively expensive and ensure that no deserving candidate is denied admission just for the fact that he or she does not possess the necessary financial resources.

### Ethics in education

In my opinion, the most important objective of any educational institution is to equip the students with ethical values besides imparting knowledge and skills. Today, I find that this basic human quality is slowly eroding. Illustratively, while the RBI as well as Government of India is formulating progressive policies to ensure funds do not pose a major problem for education, I observe some disturbing trend in respect of repayment of loans by students. It may be noted if the loans are not repaid after it falls due, the non-performing assets of banks will increase and in the process, banks are likely to be skeptical in sanctioning educational loans. It is, therefore, important that the repayment schedules are adhered to by those students who have taken loans. It is understood that to encourage banks to give educational loans to all deserving students, the Government is looking into the issue of setting up of a system of insuring educational loans. To reduce default of education loans, I strongly feel that the School Alumni Association of students can become active in inculcating ethics and values among students. They can provide the required synergies and linkages in addressing challenges relating to non-payment of outstanding education loans.

### Current problem of education

Autonomy has been granted to some colleges. This may seem good, but it has been failure in many colleges, as uniformity of standards has not been maintained. Further, malpractices have increased. This can be seen in the evaluation of answer scripts and declaration of results.

Science subjects require a continuous use of lab material and their costs have led to a limited use of their facilities. Science is a fast developing field, and its current advances are beyond the reach of a common student precisely due to lack of communication and cost.

At the school level, the problems could run into several volumes.

1. Overcrowded classrooms, where it is impossible for a teacher-student relationship to be established. The teacher's voice is confined only to the few front benches.
2. Computer education is compulsory but, in many cases it is imparted on the black board with a minimum or no practical use of computers.
3. Because of the non detention system in the schools, students are promoted to the next class on the basis of their attendance. As a result go up to class x, unsure of certain alphabets, spelling and basic math.
4. The syllabi have been increased, but have the teachers especially at the school level been simultaneously upgraded? Many of them give up by saying that " the standard is too high", especially for science and maths-or leave the topics untouched. As a result, the burden falls on the parents, who begin to hunt frantically for tuitions.
5. The medium of instructions in the regional language upto high school is okay. At the college level, it should be in English, so that the students will be able to read

and grasp the books written in English which will help them to widen the horizon of their understanding. Encouraging residential schools and colleges has shown that the government is also commercial. Many of these institutes, without proper infrastructure hold exams and produce degree holders. They prepare the students to achieve material wealth. Moral values and character are given no priorities.

6. There is a lack of proper co-ordination between objectives of education and methods of teaching. Most of the teachers are not aware of the objectives of education. Procedure is given more importance than good results are emphasized more than imparting knowledge and bringing about behavioral change.
7. Education is not student oriented. A lack of opportunities for students to develop their given less importance to discipline, character building and skill development.
8. Students are burdened with lots information but no experience. Even after a university education, they are wanting in self-confidence.
9. Research is limited to getting degrees. In most cases, research is not socially relevant. The suggestion of a researcher is often not seriously taken by the government, and there is proper co-ordination between research centers and social and industrial organizations.

### Practical Organizations

There are solutions to those complex problems; but these solutions are not simple.

1. Education should become vocational and skill oriented. "Education calling for dedication and service should be revived". Our education system should be revised to raise awareness and develop confidence in the students so that they may make use of their knowledge to build up society.
2. It is urgent need for the syllabi to be revised. Teachers, parents and government should sit together and decide on syllabus revision; curriculum at school level should be planned to meet the needs of every child.  
Primary level- Importance should be given to language and arithmetic.  
Upper Primary level- Social and General Science.  
High School Level- Human Anatomy and physiology, with sex education forming a part of it.
3. Student counseling cells, which are still in their infant stage, have to be encouraged and set up in every educational institution.
4. Selection of teachers with proper aptitude and training to handle the primary classes is of great importance. If primary education is founded on solid ground, youngsters would develop a good character.
5. Value education should be strictly introduced at the school and undergraduate level.
6. Parents should make their children realize that schooling is not a period of luxury, but training towards dedicating themselves to the nation. The media, literature, teachers, social workers and religious leaders should bring in this type of attitudinal change among parents.

An attitudinal change and "our enthusiasm for learning more than what we know today:", must be the basis for any reforms.

### Recommendation to improve education system

Since Independence, there has been a lot of discussion and debate on educational reforms. Several commissions subsequently appointed made many recommendations. Unfortunately, many of these reforms and recommendations remained on paper. There was no political will to make any serious improvement in education. Political parties have misused educational institutions and destroyed the future of millions of young people to build their own party organization. They have turned the college and university campus into their party office.

We could consider a few proposals to improve the system.

1. Free the educational department and institutions from political interference. Only people with character and merit should be appointed to manage these institutions.
2. Make sincere efforts to implement recommendations forwarded by various commissions to improve the quality of education in all aspects, and on all levels.
3. Provide more funds to improve primary education in rural areas.
4. Reduce the subsidy for higher education. Improve university education by introducing selection by merit only.
5. Introduce expiry date for all degrees. Create a system to renew the validity of degrees by introducing selection by merit only.
6. Make law which ban teachers from becoming members of political parties and fundamentalist organizations.

### Conclusion

Education is to bring out the potential in a learner by providing the learner the most congenial physical and social environment to help him realize his fullest potential. Education on the other hand is an industry and its commercialization is here to stay. At the end, we can say that for these people education has today only become an option to make money than providing quality education to students. There is strong need to change the basics of the education system, not its pattern, in order to revive education's real importance.

I, therefore, would like underline three major areas to be focused to ensure that our education system is sustainable and meets global standards:

1. Quality of Education – in terms of infrastructure, teachers, accreditation, etc.
2. Affordability of Education – ensuring poor and deserving students are not denied education.
3. Ethics in Education – avoiding over-commercialization of education system.

Let me take this opportunity to again wish JRE Group of Institutions in establishing JRE School of Management which I am sure will play an important role in the 21st century in the Indian education system by providing world class education at an affordable cost to the young students and achieve success in all frontiers of educational activities.

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