

Research Article

Privatisation of Higher Education: A Study on Students' Perspective

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Abstract

Education is globally considered as an important investment in building human capital. Human capital is the means of all technical innovation and economic growth. Providing education to all is considered as primary duty of the government. The government has shifted its focus from higher to primary education, while opening the door for the private sector to participate in higher education, a development known as the privatization of higher education. This has sparked a growing trend of educational privatization across the country. At the same time, the demand for higher education in India is rising rapidly. The government of India realized that public budgets cannot adequately fund higher education need of vast population. So, the government has taken measures such as, hike in student fees, student loans and privatization; in justification of availability and mobilization of resources to expand higher education. These measures have made higher education a lucrative business for industrialists. A large number of private institutions are encouraged to enter in education sector. On the one hand privatization of higher education made education assessable to the masses; on the other hand, it brings fee hike, poor quality, exploitation of professionals etc. There are views for and against privatization of higher education in India. Though some have been criticizing the concept even before it has come to be defined and taken off the ground, others consider it very useful and need of the hour. As students are the most important stakeholders of education system. The present study is an attempt to analyses the attitude of students of higher educational institutions towards privatization of higher education.

Keywords

Human Capital, Economic Growth, Higher Education, Privatization

1. Introduction

At the onset of liberalization, globalization and privatization, many changes are taking place in different spheres of Indian economy. These changes have affected all the sectors of economy including education. Education is a factor which affects all other sectors of the economy, as human capital is most important factor for the development of other sectors. So, the changes in education system need to be observed carefully. Higher education in India is undergoing considera-

ble change. With over 600 million people in India under 25 years of age, the system is under tremendous pressure to expand. (Basu, 12th edition) [2]. Sources reveal that by 2020, India will be the world's third largest economy and will have the second largest graduate talent pipeline globally, following China and ahead of United States of America (USA). Every aspect of higher education is being reorganized and remodeled: funding, leadership and management, accounta-

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bility, relationships with industry, quality assurance, and international collaboration and the way research and teaching are conducted (C. L., 1999) [4]. The Government has already launched plans to transform this sector in coming years. If these will succeed in bringing reform, both breadth and depth of education system will be transformed. The three interrelated key challenges for higher education in India are expansion of the system, equality of educational opportunities and enhancement of the quality of teaching and research in Indian institutions (Yang, 2003) [18].

In order to expand the system, privatization is welcomed in India. Private educational institutions are increasing day-by-day in country. A market of educational services is growing tremendously in the country. This led to the commercialisation of education and making education an attractive business venture. The popularity of courses too being shaped by market forces these days like any commercial product (Mehta, 2018) [11].

Issues Concerning Commercialization of Higher Education

- 1) Higher education in India developed and expanded under the auspicious of the Indian Constitution with two important concepts, secularism and democracy. Higher education is a 'public good' funded by the government. By converting the 'public good' into a 'tradable' service, the basic conceptual structure would be changed to profit making endeavor (Nayyar, 2007) [12].
- 2) The expansion of higher education in India in the post-Independence period had shown that the enrolment ratio in higher education spectacularly increased from 0.2 million in 1951 to 15.8 million in 2011-12 and it has further increased in 2015 (Byindustry, 2016) [6]. The enrolment ratio is quite high in the deprived areas like Northeastern Hilly Region -- Manipur, Nagaland, and Meghalaya, which means that there, is spread of higher education from important nodal points to remote areas. It is not only enrolment even higher educational institutions reached every niche of the country. At present, total number of universities is 532 and number of colleges 33,032 (Kumar, 2017) [8].
- 3) It is not only the geographical area, there are many deprived communities within the society like Scheduled Caste (SC), ST (Scheduled Tribe), OBC (Other Backward Class), etc., who also got the benefit of this public funded higher education policy (Black, 1990) [3]. General enrolment in higher education from these communities reached 17 per cent. However, there was 30 per cent enrolment in urban area, while just eight per cent is in the rural area. This eight per cent students got the opportunity because of government subsidy was available. Disparities still exists, but the withdrawal of the subsidy from higher education and making it as a 'tradable' service will undoubtedly widen rural-urban divide, and the gap between forward and backward classes will also increase many folds. Dichotomy in every sphere will con-

tinue and intensify (Report, 1993) [14].

- 4) At present, self-financing higher educational institutions on many occasions suffer from lack of governances, especially service conditions of the teaching and non-teaching staff, tuition fees for the students, etc. (Aiyer, 2004) [1]. But aided institutions have stipulated norms and governance implemented by the University Acts and the Central rules. These acts and regulations also govern even student fees and other facilities.
- 5) Finally, academic content and management of institutions will be totally in the hand of business communities where profit is the only motive. With the profit motive in place in many cases, corrupt practices will supersede the basic principle and philosophy of management of higher education. Private educational managers are known as educational shark. The students, teachers, and the other employees face tremendous exploitation under the new system (Sethi, 2004) [16]. Under the circumstances, there is a need for organizing against commercialization, centralization, and privatization of higher education.

2. Significance of Study

The North India being highly populated region of country, especially Uttar Pradesh has become target for marketing of educational services. It has attracted business class in the field of education for earning profit and most of them are hardly concern for the quality of education. Lucknow being the capital city of state has observed the most of the impact of this phenomenon. There are number of private educational institutions mushrooming around. On the one hand these institutions are making available higher education at door-steps of students on the other hand they're serious threat to public sector institutions. Students being the most important stakeholder of education system, the investigator has carried out a study on the following topic: "PRIVATISATION & COMMERCIALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION- A study on Students' perspective"

3. Review of Literature

(C. Premsai, 2008) [5] Bangalore Institute of Legal Studies, Bangalore, states that with the entry of the Private Sector in the field of education, the quality of education is bound to get better. Although there are a couple of drawbacks with respect to privatisation of higher education, it is sure to bring in competitiveness and on the whole revamp the present educational system (Levy, 2012) [9]: Adopted analytical study, states that, Particular types of Private higher education (PHE) are particularly vulnerable to certain dynamics, as seen with religious PHE and a decline in societal distinctiveness or with demand-absorbers and declining demographics or rapid expansion of low-status public higher education. A

particular type of PHE may suffer decline while other PHE types do not. We even see situations in which the rising type is rather new and is one cause of the relative decline of an extant type. Notable today is the institutional establishment and growth of for-profit forms.

(Sarmah, 2013) [15]: The study revealed that university students of Assam seem to have positive attitude towards privatization of higher education. Private universities are allowed to set up in the country. A bill has already been passed in the Parliament to allow foreign universities to the country. It is, therefore, recommended that the public higher education institutions need to be critically investigate on the aspects of quality education, infrastructure, curriculum development, curriculum transaction, evaluation, campus environment, campus recruitments and above all students' satisfaction (Ravi, 2015) [13]: Journal of Culture, Society and Development, states that Privatisation increases gap between demand and supply of higher education. whereas it increases the number of higher educational institutions in rural and urban areas. So, the distance between educational institutions and students residential place is reduced in the study area. It generates employment and income opportunities.

4. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the present study are:

- I. To assess the attitude of students towards privatisation of higher education.
- II. To make a comparative analysis of attitude of urban and rural students towards privatisation of higher education.

5. Methodology

In the present study the investigator has gathered data using the survey method and personal interview (koul, 2023) [7]. The Sample of 200 students was selected for this study. The selected students were from either rural or urban colleges from Lucknow district. The selected educational institutes for the study are Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti Urdu-Arabi-Farsi University (UP state govt. University), Integral University (Private university), Basudev Degree college (rural) and Eram Girls Degree College (urban). Researcher selected the sample from institutes of Lucknow district.

Data Collection

The researcher has developed Summated Scales (or Likert-type Scales). In this scale, the respondent is required to respond to each of the statements in terms of five degrees of agreement or disagreement. 34 structured statements/ comments were given, and five options were provided e.g. Strongly- Agree (score=5), Agree (score=4), Undecided (score=3), Disagree (score=2) and Strongly-Disagree (score=1) was adopted. The negative comments were scored in a reversed order.

The sum of scores on all statements of the scale is consid-

ered as respondent's total attitude score. The Score can range from 34 to 170 the higher the total Score on the scale will reflect favourable attitude and vice-versa.

The scale consists of 34 statements. The score of students range from 34 to 170. Neutral response would be 34×3 i.e. 102. The total scores more than 102 shows positive attitude, whereas total scores less than 102 shows negative attitude.

Objective I (a). To assess the attitude of college students towards privatization of higher education.

Table 1. Attitude of students of higher education institutions.

Attitude	Percentage
Negative	65%
Neutral	4%
Positive	31%
Total	100%

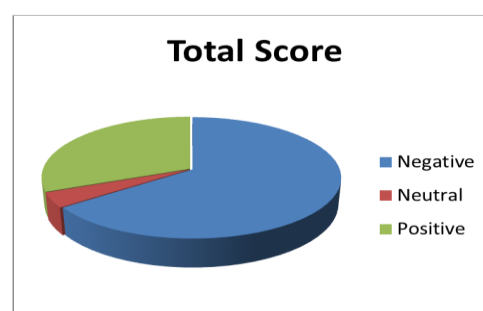


Figure 1. Attitude of students of higher education institutions.

Above table 1 and figure 1 depicts that 65% of students has scored less than 102 score, which shows negative attitude towards privatisation of higher education. 31% of total students have scored more than 102 score (i.e. neutral score) shows positive attitude. This shows students more students have negative attitude towards privatisation of higher education.

Objective I (b). To make comparative analysis of attitudes of students of Govt. and Private Institutions.

Table 2. Attitude of students from government and private institution.

Attitude	Public (%)	Private (%)
Negative	63	37
Neutral	8	11
Positive	29	52

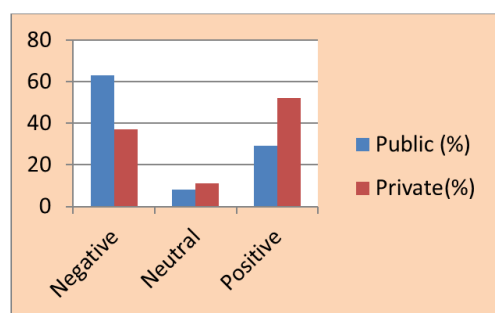


Figure 2. Attitude of students from government and private institutions.

The most interested fact revealed from the study is stu-

dents of Private institutes of higher education has shown positive attitude to private institutes whereas students of Govt. institutes has shown positive attitude towards Govt. institutes. As shown in above figure and graph that 63% of students from Govt. run institutes showed negative response towards privatisation of higher education and 52% of students of private institutes showed positive attitude towards privatization of higher education.

Objective II. To make a comparative analysis of attitude of urban and rural students

Hypothesis: *There exists no significant difference in attitude towards commercialisation of higher education between Urban and Rural students.*

Table 3. Showing the significance of difference between urban and rural college students on measure of their attitude towards commercialisation of higher education.

Locality	N	Mean	SD	df	Calculated t Value	Tabulated t-value	Level of significance	H ₀
Urban	108	102.56	8.923	198	0.307	1.98	0.05	Accepted
Rural	92	104.62	7.342					

6. Key Findings

- I. Most of the students showed negative attitude towards privatization of higher education, 65% students have shown negative attitude. 31% students have shown positive attitude, whereas only 4% students are indifferent.
- II. This trend of attitude towards privatisation of higher education is almost uniform in self-financed, aided institutes and government institutes.
- III. Female students have higher positive attitude than male students towards privatisation of higher education.
- IV. There is no significant difference between urban and rural college students' attitude towards privatisation of higher education.
- V. There is no significant difference between Government and Self-Financed college students towards privatisation of higher education.
- VI. This clearly indicates that today's educated youth have perceived the issue of 'Privatization of higher education' in the same way, whether they hail from the far different parts of the state.

7. Conclusion

The Government of India has taken various measures to control the commercialization of higher education. In this or-

der, UGC has issued the UGC Establishment and Maintenance of Standards for Private Universities, 2003. The para 3.9 of this regulation describes that the admission procedure in Universities and fixation of fees should be in accordance with the norms/guidelines prescribed by the UGC and other concerned statutory bodies. The UGC has also issued the guidelines for Institutions which are deemed-to- be Universities in regulations 2010. According to para 6.5 of this regulation states that, the fees charged for the courses offered in deemed-to-be universities should have a fair relation to the cost of running the course. The fee structure should be clearly mentioned in the institution's prospectus as well as on the institution's website. The UGC Institutions Deemed-to- be Universities, (Amendment) Regulations 2014 has been issued by UGC. According to these amended regulations the deemed to be universities have to mandatorily publish a Prospectus before commencement of admission procedure mentioning the details of the fee structure, the number of seats approved for each course, the age limit prescribed for candidates, minimum qualification etc. The regulations restrict universities from publishing any false information in advertisement encouraging students for taking admission by claiming to be recognized by appropriate authority where it is not so recognized.

The study revealed that university students of Lucknow seem to have negative attitude towards commercialisation of higher education. But the students of private institutes has shown positive attitude towards privatisation which shows the commercialisation of education is able to attract the students and sell education as a product in the market. A bill has already been passed in

the Parliament to allow foreign universities to the country. As a result, traditional universities and courses are bound to face steep competition. Because of unemployment problem, new courses are in heavy demand. So, it is becoming inevitable to maintain quality in all respects. The Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are experimenting new techniques and policies. The apex authority like the University Grants Commission (UGC) has already warned the HEIs to go for changes. Formation of the National Commission for Higher education and research (NCHER) is another step for change.

It is, therefore, recommended that the higher education institutions need to be critically investigate on the aspects of quality education, infrastructure, curriculum development, curriculum transaction, evaluation, campus environment, campus recruitments and above all students' satisfaction.

8. Profile of Sample

- 1) Sample is collected from co-educational institutions. Out of total 53% are male respondents and 47% are female respondents.
- 2) Out of total 46% rural and 54% urban respondents.
- 3) Respondents belong to both Govt. and Private institutions. 46% (Government & Government Aided) govt. institutions and 54% are self financed.

9. Limitation of the Study

- 1) The present study is limited to the institutes of Lucknow District.
- 2) Only institutes of higher education are considered for

the study.

- 3) The sampling size limited to 200 students.
- 4) It is very difficult to cover all the Universities and colleges of Lucknow city therefore four institutes were selected for the present study.

Abbreviations

UGC	University Grant Commission
USA	United States of America
SC	Scheduled Caste
ST	Scheduled Tribe
OBC	Other Backward Class
PHE	Private Higher Education Institutions
UP	Uttar Pradesh
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
NCHER	National Commission for Higher Education and Research
Govt.	Government

Author Contributions

Zaibun Nisa is the sole author. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Appendix

Appendix I: List of Colleges from Which Data Were Collected

Table 4. List of Higher Educational Institutions considered for present study.

Sl. No.	Name of the Instituion	Address	Sample Taken
1.	Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti Language University	Sitapur-Hardoi bypass, Lucknow	50
2.	Integral University	Kursi Road, Lucknow	50
3.	Basudev Degree Co	Amrai Gaon, Lucknow	50
4.	Eram Girls Degree College	C-Block, Indira Nagar, Lucknow	50
Total			200

Appendix II: Questionnaire for Respondents

“Attitude scale on privatisation of Higher Education”

Name of student: _____

Course: _____

Year: _____

University/College: _____

Private/ Government

Answer the following questions rating from 1-5. 1 - Strongly Agree, 2- Agree, 3 Neutral, 4- Disagree, 5-Strongly Disagree

- 1) Privatisation of education is not good for developing countries like India.
 1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐
- 2) Privatisation brings large financial burden on the students.
 1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐
- 3) Privatisation mitigates the corruption in govt. institutes where bribery and money eating are a common feature.
 1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐
- 4) Main purpose of privatisation of education is to do business and to earn profit.
 1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐
- 5) Privatisation of basic amenities like education should not be done otherwise large section of people will be deprived of it.
 1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐
- 6) Privatisation provides high quality education and good faculty.
 1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐
- 7) If all education gets privatised every citizen would not be able to get education, as many people are below poverty line.
 1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐
- 8) Privatisation improves the quality of education.
 1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐
- 9) In totally do you agree with the statement of privatisation of higher education.
 1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐
- 10) Govt. college won't provide a better-quality education as compared to private.
 1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐
- 11) There should be reservation of some seats for the poor in private institutes and govt. should interfere to curb commercialisation of education.
 1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐
- 12) Privatisation in education will lead to expanding the cap abilities of students.
 1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐
- 13) The problem of brain drain could very well be stopped by privatisation.
 1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐
- 14) Privatisation will help in the growth of the economy and the development of the country at a global scale.
 1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐
- 15) In privatisation there is no reservation issues so that there is equal chance for all the students to get admitted into.
 1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐
- 16) Privatisation leads to unaffordable fee structure; poor will be deprived of education. It is against constitutional right i.e. right to equality.
 1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐
- 17) Privatisation will lead to continuous decline of poor from mainstream.

1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐
- 18) Privatisation is good for economic growth of nation. It motivates investors to establish colleges and universities throughout the country.
1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐
- 19) Privatisation provide many options to the youth of country in the field of education.
1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐
- 20) Govt. institutes has no check on work so the quality of work suffers.
1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐
- 21) Privatisation keeps India's future at stake, only those who can afford have secured future.
1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐
- 22) Education ratio of India is less as compared to other countries; govt. has failed to provide good and sufficient education.
1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐
- 23) Privatisation is a compromise for merit v/s money. Where you buy degree which you may not deserve.
1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐
- 24) In govt. sector teachers are more interested in monthly income than to educate students.
1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐
- 25) Govt. run institutes lack proper management and discipline. They lack in even good atmosphere.
1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐
- 26) Privatisation is not required as many of the best institutes of country are govt. institutes such as IIT, IIM, and NIT etc.
1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐
- 27) Govt. institutes provide seats as well as more funds to minority and backward students.
1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐
- 28) Private education are comfortable for rich but not for poor whereas govt. education is comfortable for both.
1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐
- 29) Privatisation of higher education will reduce percentage of students in higher education.
1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐
- 30) Privatisation provides more opportunities for talented students.
1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐
- 31) In this competitive world education need to be standardised. Govt. has far not been able to fulfil to full extent.
1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐
- 32) From most of the private institute's majority of the pass out students lack required skills.
1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐
- 33) Privatisation means quality education and raising standard of living.
1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐
- 34) Privatisation provides great deal of amenities in the field of education with demarcated activities.
1. ☐ 2. ☐ 3. ☐ 4. ☐ 5. ☐

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