

## Education at Market Place: Present Status of Commercialization in India

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### ABSTRACT

Ancient India was renowned for the concept of Gurukuls where the guru would teach his shishya everything. Fundamental purpose of education is the same at all times in all places. In the present paper, the concept of commercialization of education, its effects at school and higher level is explored by the author.

**Key words:** Education, Commercialization of education, Fundamental right

### 1. INTRODUCTION:

“Vidhya vihinah pashuh” (Bhartrihari) devoid of education we are mere beasts (Epictetus) said only the educated are free “sa vidya ya vimuktaya” (Mahabharata). Nothing gives us such an unfailing insight as education. From the vedic age, the central conception of the Indians has been that, education is the source of illumination giving us a correct path in the various spheres of life. So was the importance of education that in order to be called a human being one must be educated. Aristotle was asked how much educated men were superior to the uneducated “As much “said he” as the living are to the dead.”

It Trans figures the human personality into a pattern of perfection through a synthetic process of the development of the body. The enrichment of the mind, the sublimation of the emotions and the illumination of the spirit. An old Sanskrit adage states: “That is education which leads to librations” Librations from ignorance which shrouds the mind; Libration from superstition which paralyses effort, libration from which blind the vision of the truth.

The entire ancient history is full of evidences to prove that education was given as a charity, free of cost and a pious obligation of the academics and a part of Raj Dharma. Stipulation for free education was vehemently condemned in ancient India. Importance of educational institutions was recognized as:

Victories are gained, peace is preserved, progress is achieved, civilization is built up and history is made not on the battle fields, where ghastly murders are committed in the name of patriotism. Not in the council's chambers where insipid speeches are spun out in the name of debate, not even in factories where are manufactured novel instruments to struggle life but in educational institutions which are the **seed beds of culture**, where children in whose hands quiver the destinies of the future, are trained. From their ranks will come out when they grow up, statesmen and soldiers, patriots and philosophers, who will determine the progress of the land.( by justice Mohan)

Unfortunately, now these seed beds of culture i.e educational institutions are being equated with industrial enterprises. The Mahabharata observes: “Janami Dharmam na ca me pravrttih, Jana my adharmam na ca me nivrttih” “I know the right but I do not adopt it, I know the wrong but I cannot of abstain from it. These lines of Mahabharata well explain the dilemma of our educational planning that in spite of education being a fundamental right. It's privatization and commercialization has become inevitable. (An sari 2009)

## 1.1 CONCEPT OF COMMERCIALISATION OF EDUCATION

“The act of making something into a business run for profit”(Tejaswani, A)

To render commercial, make a matter of trade or the subject to commercialism. To commercial or business methods to , or to make use of or exploit mainly for profit, especially at the expense of quality or to imbue with commercialism. (<http://www.investopedia.com/terms/c/commercialization>)

**Commercialization** is the process or cycle of introducing a new product or production method into the market. The actual launch of a new product is the final stage of new product development, and the one where the most money will have to be spent for advertising, sales promotion, and other marketing efforts.(Oxford dictionary)

**Commercialization** is the process by which both places at educational institutions and educational courses/qualifications are sold directly to those customers. This “selling” can involve everything from parental choice of schools to actual direct payments – as in student fees, employer funding of university courses etc. And of course, there’s also the “co modification” of the labor power of that workforce again.

Thus the word commercialization shows the profit as the main motive behind any activity. Since educational institutions are considered as non- profit making bodies and cannot enter into sale of the services produced by them, funds for their manage have necessarily to come from sources other than the receivers of education i.e students. Educational institutions along with supplying the needs of individual consumer i.e students impart a kind of training and skill which is socially useful and economically productive. Precisely for this reason, education is categorized by education planners as a “merit want” or a good which is useful to the society along with its usefulness to the individual receiver. This being so, financing of education has a long been the responsibility of society as well so to some extent of the individual receiver of education.

Thus if there is sale of services or profit motive behind imparting of education or funds come mainly from the receivers of education. We can easily say that there is commercialization of education. (Bennis 1990)

## 1.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In India since ancient time education has been working like a pendulum between **vidya- dana and dana-vidya**. The free education or a natural flow took education and in particular the educational institutions to the ever rising heights of excellence but this long culture in Indian tradition was polluted in view of population explosion and industrial implosion. The changing scenario of education has brought in the education a commercialized approach. Thus the educational shops started coming up at first in those parts of the country which were more industrially developed and gradually this disease spread throughout the country. Today those states or places which were untouched by commercialization of education through law and this attempt the highest legislative authority of India parliament is also moving in this direction once commercialization of education starts it will have wider ramification on the status and quality of the people of India and, in particular the education of this country. If education has to be sold at the Bania’s or Marwadi shops, then one can understand the fate of education and its effect on literacy drive in India.

### 1.2.1 AT VEDIC PERIOD:

In south, the Ennayiram temple colleges supplied free boarding and ration allowed per head. Each Vedic student received about one seer of rice per day and this quantity was sufficient for the daily meals. He also received annually an allowance of about one eighth tola of gold, which was probably intended to cover the clothing expenses.

### 1.2.2 AT MEDIAVAL

Society which had frowned upon the practice of charging regular fees as a mercenary and unworthy procedure used to succeed in getting ample support for the cause of education by appealing to the religious and charitable

instincts of the public. Vidya –dana or a gift ,possessing a higher religious efficacy than even the gift of land. Religion had a great hold over the public mind in ancient times and this spiritual exaltation of Vidya-dana secured so wide and ample response to become possible to impart free education to all poor students, wishing to derive its benefit. (Dubey 1987)

### **1.2.3 PAYMENT OF FEES**

Stipulation for fees was vehemently condemned in ancient India. No student could be refused admission even by private teacher simply because he was too poor to pay any fees.

It is interesting to note that there existed a similar prejudice against the charging of fees in ancient Greece for a long time. Neither Socrates nor Plato charged any fees.

Jatakas show that rich persons like merchants and prince's used to send the whole amount of school fees in advance when they used to send their son's to Takshashila.

Bhisma also had paid his honorarium in advance before he had started the education of Kaurava prince's (Mahabharat).

## **2 .PRESENT SYSTEM AT SCHOOLS**

The notion of a public school is confusing one. They are cropping up all over the country like shops with hefty tuition fees, arbitrary selection procedure and demands of donations, educating the child seems to be the farthest thing on their minds. A middle class parent is made to shell out Rs. 1500-2000 every month to educate their child in a good school which in effect means a public school. In the guise of doing service to society, they have become money spinning institutions. Educating children is a profitable business just like any other shop.

According to survey, India has the largest number of children out of school between the age group of 4-16. Out of every hundred child who join class one barely 35 complete class fifth: 28% of schools have either one or no teacher and 35% schools have no drinking water or toilets.

In contrast to this, there are the marble floored swank, high rise buildings of the so called elitist schools which spend crores of rupees on constructing the buildings alone. These buildings resemble five star hotels and offer the same facilities at exorbitant fees.

Many unscrupulous elements with a motive to earn money become active with the arrival of the season. A few semi-literate teachers are employed, charged hefty sums as tuition fees, constructing swimming pool, computer fees and building funds. Most of the schools lack basic amenities like play grounds, proper lights, and black board. An honest profession of teaching has been transformed into money making endeavor by these cash hungry sharks.

The fleecing begins at admission time when the schools make a cool sum through over priced admission forms. Because of the risk factor involved parents are compelled to fill up more than one form but still there is no surety of admission. It has been experienced that a father spends more than rupees 10,000 on admission forms alone but still may not be able to get their son admitted to any school in Delhi because he could not arrange for donations or get the right contacts. (NPE)

### **2.1 Risks of commercializing education:**

Children are now bombarded at school with wall advertisements, daily television commercials, promotional samples, school fund-raising schemes, contests requiring students to claim prizes at local franchises, internet banner advertisements on every website seen at school, and large printed advertisements distributed to children to use as book covers. Commercialism of education is inherently damaging for the development of children and ultimately for the future of democracy. The damage to children's development falls into three general categories –physical, psycho-social, and intellectual. A brief look at these three areas shows why education must become commercial-free. (TOI)



### **2.1.1 Physical Development**

Schools promote sales of soft drinks containing high levels of sugar and caffeine. Their 'empty calories' can take the place of nutritionally valuable food or lead to weight gain. The foods and beverages advertised and sold to children at school present added risks for obesity, diabetes, bone fracture, cardiovascular disease, and dental caries.

### **2.1.2 Psycho-Social Development**

Advertising is designed to create a sense of insecurity -- which can only be relieved by buying. Clearasil give distorted images about identity and interpersonal relationships to both girls and boys.

### **2.1.3 Intellectual Development**

The clutter of advertising throughout the school environment does more than distract children from reflecting on important lessons and focusing on necessary skills. The subtext of all ads is that problems are best solved by spending money. (Mccarthy 1995)

## **3. COMMERCIALIZATION AT HIGHER LEVEL**

Higher Education has become a commodity that is something to be produced, packaged, sold, traded, outsourced, franchised, and consumed. The "mercization" of Higher Education is at the root of this "communization" and redefines its nature by transforming it from a collective public good to a private investment. In consequence, universities suffer from a series of disadvantages; in their organization, management and governance; in their relations with society at large and in particular their own students who have no become clients or consumers; and in their financial relations with the state.

Rapid globalization affects all aspects of society, including the status of higher education in society, and how education is delivered and received. As technological innovations "relentlessly compress the world in space and time and our economies become rapidly impelled into the highly competitive environments of global markets, educational institutions are being challenged to follow suit." The same globalizing trends mean that higher education is "drifting into a market-oriented system" and is increasingly being seen as a "commercial product to be bought and sold like any other commodity.

( Pradip Bhattacharya, "Urbanization, Globalization and Consumerism," (2003),

### **3.1 Status of MBA & Engineering College**

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 condition do prevail in other professional colleges in India.

In many cases, situations even become worse and students feel cheated at the end of courses. However, in India this trend has full support of our government because many big political leaders and industrialists are running these colleges. Therefore, they easily get the required certificates to run these colleges without providing proper educational infrastructure. At the end, we can say that for these people education has today become an option to make money only than providing quality education to students.

However, recently a new trend has started in India of making money by selling education and now top institutes like IIM Ahmadabad are also becoming part of this mad race. Few days back, IIMA top business school in India increased it's annually fee by 300%. Soon IIM Bangalore also followed this trend and in future, we can hope similar response from many other IIMs and various universities in India. If all this is allowed to happen then

time is not away when getting higher education will become a distinct dream in India .

Institutes like IIM get huge amount of grants and subsidies from state and national government, now if they are increasing fee in this manner then what we can expect from other private colleges. Today, India desperately need educated youth for maintaining a top position in world, however, by making education beyond the reach of common people, we are only create dark future for millions of youth and India.

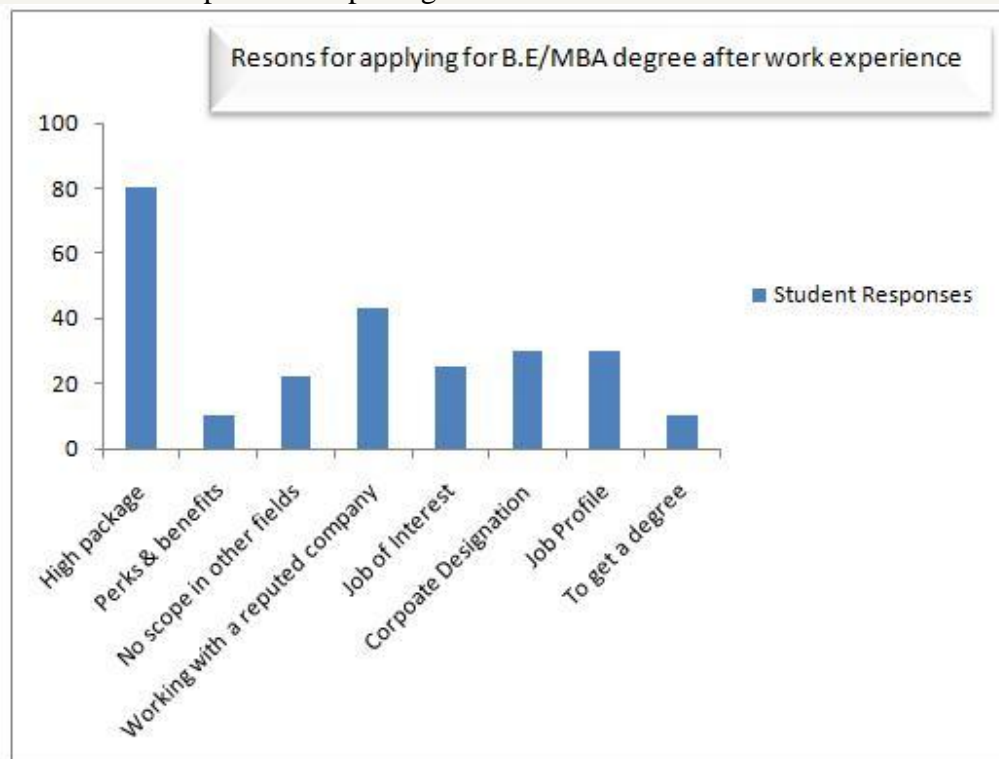
### 3.1.1 Quantity output but where's the quality?

In India MBAs and engineers especially in the software field are available in large numbers and resulting MBA pass out people are doing other work, which is not related with MBA studies. We say it 'Forced' as they are less skilled for the high end jobs but better connected than the section of people who should be doing that job.

Due to high growth in professional education in India, characterized by the mushrooming of management and engineering institutions all across the country. Although AICTE try to control the quality of such institutions in order to provide an approval, they have only created quantity of approved institutions, and not quality in the name of higher education.

### 3.1.2 The Nature of Competition

A survey conducted by NOVONOUS showed that 80 respondents (Graduates) wanted to do MBA after they completed one or two years in job because MBA increases the prospects of a higher paying job. Around 43 respondents aspired to work with reputed organizations and about 22 respondents opted for an engineering/management course since there was no scope for other fields in India. Baring a few respondents, most of them had lack of inclination towards management/engineering but still wanted to do an MBA, simply because they want to get a degree and fancy designation. These students are equally clueless so as to what kind of job they would want to take up after completing their studies.



**Exhibit 1.1-** Responses and attitudes of B.E/B.Tech/MBA aspirants about professional education Source: NOVONOUS Insights

### **3.2 STATUS OF MEDICAL COLLEGES**

Indian medical education system has seen rapid growth in the last two decades. Private medical colleges now account for more than half of the 270 medical colleges in 2009. This unregulated unequal growth brings two issues to focus: the failing quality of medical education and implementing effective solutions to address an artificial faculty shortage due to faculty mal-distribution. The menace posed by the unfettered mechanization of medical education has to be controlled and efforts should be made by the Government to ensure maintenance of standards and check the unplanned growth of substandard medical colleges and substandard education norms in universities or their constituent medical colleges. Since Indian Independence, MCI nor the University Grants Commission nor the constituent universities including the health sciences universities have never attempted to grade medical colleges as per their quality standards hence in the absence of health education quality standards, the student output from recent, hurriedly established recent science institutions is definitely substandard.

British India had just 19 medical schools with an output of 1200 doctors (10). By 1965, there were 86 medical colleges in India with only a few private colleges (7). The college total increased to 112 by 1980 (at a rate of 30%), to 143 in next decade (rate of growth of 28%) and since 1990 over past 18 years the number has increased to 271, an increase of 90% compared with the figure in 1990 (7).

Today, there are 271 medical colleges out of which about 31,000 medical graduates pass out every year and private sector medical colleges have grown to account for more than half of all medical education institutions in India (13). (Instances)

### **4. THE BENEFITS OF COMMERCIALIZED HIGHER EDUCATION DEGREES**

**1:** Students are treated with more respect. At a commercialized school, the student is the customer; that is why private schools still thrived back when they were thrice or more the price of state schools. The most horrific student experiences come from a university's sense of entitlement, that they owe nothing to the student that helps fund them.

**2:** Students receive a better product, or education. Commercialized education means that schools are competing more than ever for whole can provide quality education at a reasonable price. Like any other market, this healthy competition is a benefit to the buyer, or in this case, the student.

**3:** Students of different ages and backgrounds will study together. The enmeshing of private schools, public schools, and the costs associated with each means that students of all walks of life will start attending both forms of education. Higher education degree options that once were mostly available to male, upper class citizens will become more available to other students; and higher education degrees that once were only pursued by adult learners will be pursued by all ages.

**4:** Students will have more say over the educational system. Since commercialized education means that students are paying more for education than the government, the direction of education will lie more in the hands of students and teachers and less in the hands of government officials only interested in a process.

**5.** Private schooling in India is demand-driven. Parents choose private education because they believe they provide better education and future opportunities for their children than the government schools. Supply-side factors have little statistical relationship to private schools; private schools exist because parents demand them.

**6. Better education:** Private schools not only provide better education but they also do it in a more cost-effective manner than government schools. Also, private schools are accountable and responsive to parents: for example, they offer English-medium schooling that parents prefer.

**7. Rural private schools:** Tired of teacher absenteeism and lack of accountability in government schools, both the rich and the poor are increasingly rejecting free government schools and choosing to pay for education in fee-charging private schools. The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2009 shows that close to 22 percent of children in rural India attend private schools. This number is much higher in urban areas. In the metros, at least half of the children are in private schools and in states like Punjab and Haryana, 70 percent are in non-state schools. More than a third of India's children, a conservative estimate, now study in private schools and that the number is rising by the day.

So how is it that the poor can afford these private schools? Most of these children study, not in elite schools, but in budget private schools in poor neighborhoods. These schools some recognized and some not, charge an average monthly fee of Rs 70-150 in rural areas, and up to Rs 350 even in highly expensive metros. Budget private schools are the fastest growing segment in India's education eco-system.

**8. Minimal or practically no political intervention** –less interference of the government in management

**9.** It may update the curriculum according to market needs thus making higher education relevant. It will also avoid wastage of resources and will put higher education on the path of cost reduction. It will inculcate skills oriented education.

**10.** It may put more emphasis on vocationalisation and job oriented courses. There will be a global market for the students. (Sharma 2011)

## **5. THE DRAWBACKS OF COMMERCIALIZED HIGHER EDUCATION DEGREES**

**1:** The traditional educational subjects are downgraded in the name of occupationally-sound degree options. In commercialized learning, higher education degrees focus more on the job role they fulfill and less on the traditional academics, such as sciences and liberal arts. This isn't necessarily a bad thing for you, the online learner, if you're going to school to acquire a degree for a new job opportunity.

**2:** The pursuit of knowledge is not considered as much of a community source. When state schools become more expensive and compete with for-profit schools, this means that knowledge–pursued and created–isn't available to the lower classes. Student loans and grants help fix this problem, however.

**3:** Schools are there to make money. As education becomes commercial, there's no denying the purpose of the higher education degree: for schools to make money. For-profit schools are based on financial gain and, while this grants benefits to the student such as customer respect, it also means that students will not be attending universities that exist solely for academia.

**4:** Education is simply more expensive. There's no avoiding the fact education is more expensive than it used to be a decade ago. Private colleges seem more affordable — after all, they're not much different from the price tag of state universities these days — but the education industry is spiking its costs across the board as commercialism comes into the picture.



**5:** Education is heading in an unknown direction. Since the commercialization is relatively new, it makes predicting the direction of education less predictable. (Sharma 2011)

Overall it can be concluded that, there can be some steps which government and individual can take to overcome the effect of commercialization of education...

- 1) Foreign and NRI student should be encouraged to study in India. It will help the country to earn considerable amounts of foreign exchange. Foreign students pay higher fees, which may be used to subsidize the fees of Indian students and to offer free seats to the poorest Indian students.
- 2) At least 6% of GNP for education should be provided, which has not been so far provided.
- 3) The fee increased should be appropriately linked to at least the cost of recurring expenditure and levels of income of the parents of the beneficiary.
- 4) Urgent need to work in co-ordination between different groups to sort out fees, admission procedure and quality of education.
- 5) Checking of Brands like horlicks, bournvita, cartoon network etc which have high focus on school activities.
- 6) Reviewing Advertising space being sold even on notebooks, stationery etc
- 7) Number of foreign schools/colleges entering India.
- 8) Strict actions plan for unaffiliated school/colleges.

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