

Privatization of Education: The Emerging Trends in India

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‘Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education. The human mind is our fundamental resource’.

– John. F. Kennedy

I.INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the most important needs of human beings. It is the process which is aimed at the all round development of individuals. Human development is the real indicator of the advancement and promotion of a society. An educated population is the precondition for economic prosperity of any nation. A well developed system of higher education promotes quality learning and as result of both teaching and research is pivot for success in the emerging knowledge economy. The developed countries understood much earlier the fact that individuals with higher education have an edge over their counterparts. Indian education system is traditionally built on the core principle that it is the State’s responsibility to educate its citizens. The present approach towards higher education is governed by the National Policy on Education (NPE) of 1986 and Programme of Action of 1992. Two landmark reports, Radhakrishnan Commission Report (1948–49) and Kothari Commission Report (1964–66), in fact laid down the basic framework for the National Policy on Higher Education in the country. Government of India has continued to invest in creating new educational institutions as well as enhancing the existing institutions. The 12th plan five year plan focused on higher education in the country to make it more relevant to the global needs and make it accessible amongst various social groups

II.OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

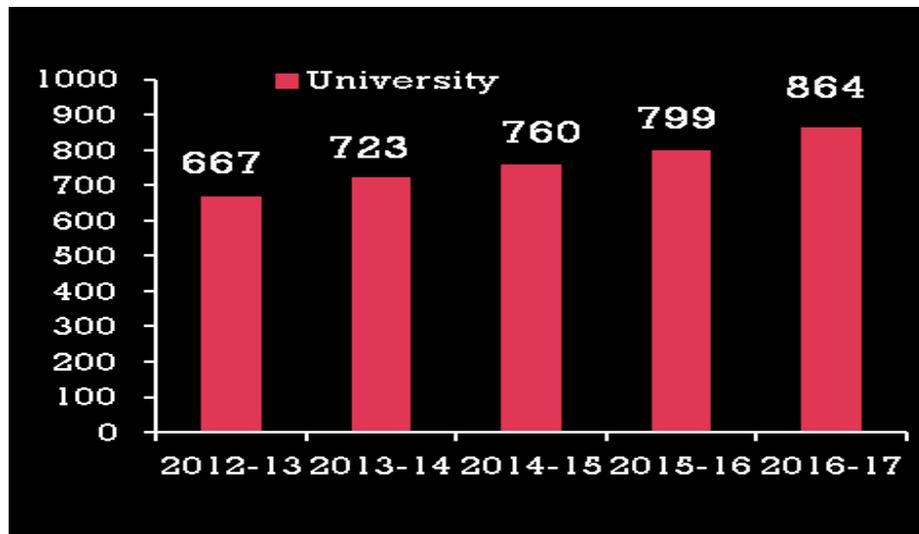
- To study the current status of Indian higher education
- To study the challenges faced by Indian higher education
- To analyze the need of privatization of higher education
- To study the impact of privatization on higher education

III.CURRENT STATUS HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

Higher Education is that Education which is provided after the completion of secondary education and the entrants are about the age of 18 years. It occupies a special position in education system because it is at the apex of entire educational structure and thus influencing all levels of education India's higher education system is the third largest in the world next to China and the United States. University grants commission (UGC) is main governing body at the higher level of education which maintains its standards, advises the government, and helps coordinate between the centre and the state. Universities and its constituent colleges are the main institutes of higher education in India. India has certainly come a long way from 28 universities and 578 colleges in

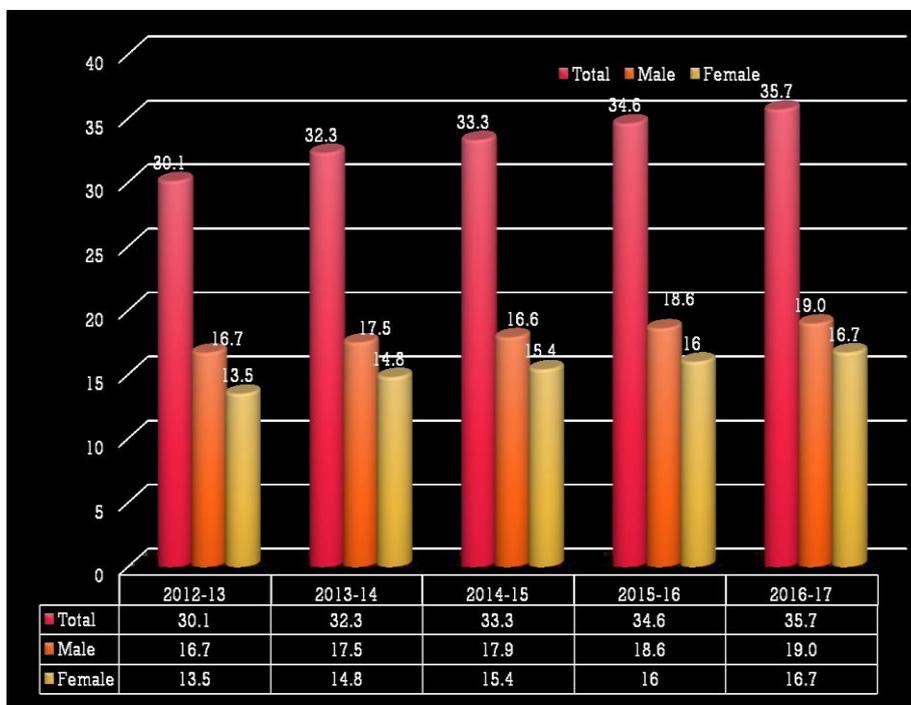
1950–51 to over 864 universities and more than 40026 colleges at present and close to 35.7million students are enrolled in higher education in which males are 19 million and 17.7 million are females.

Increment in number of universities

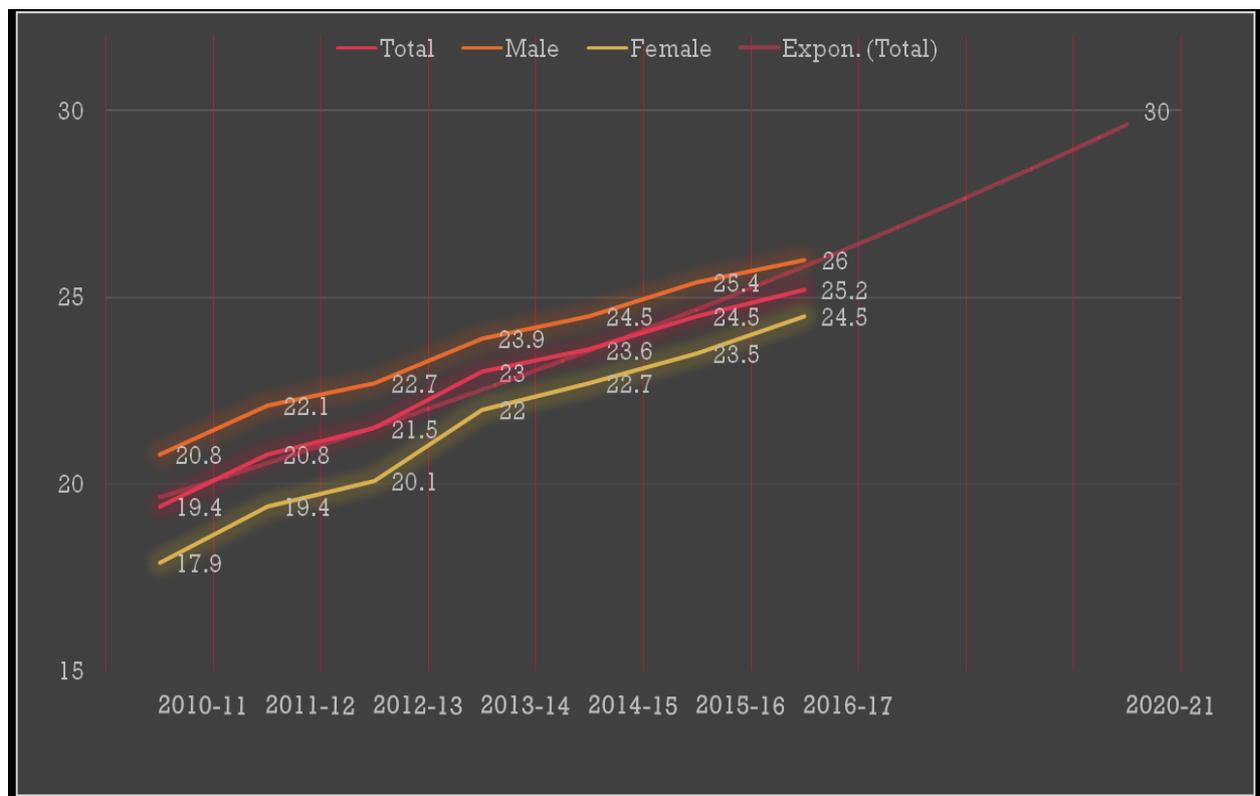


Source:http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/New%20AISHE%202017-18%20Launch_Final.pdf

Enrollment of students in millions



Source:http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/New%20AISHE%202017-18%20Launch_Final.pdf

Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in Higher Education

Source:http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/New%20AISHE%202017-18%20Launch_Final.pdf.

IV. CHALLENGES BEFORE INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

For all the progress made, even 70 years after India's independence, higher education faces challenges in the critical areas of Access, Equity and Quality.

Access

Presently 15–35 years age bracket has a population of more than 350 million, which is expected to peak at about 485 million in 2030 (Altbach and Jayaram 2010). Essentially size of population is not the matter, but its age structure. It would be a lost opportunity if this opportunity cannot be converted into an advantage. Providing affordable, good quality, globally relevant higher education to such huge numbers remains one of the biggest problems facing India. In the words of Narendra Jadhav, member of Planning Commission of India, would lead to a 'demographic disaster, just adding mouths to feed, not hands that can work' (this statement was made at a Penn State University meeting, see Lane and Kinser 2011).

Equity

There is a wide disparity in Gross Enrolment Ratios (GERs) of higher education across states, urban and rural areas, gender, and communities. According to All India Survey Higher Education (AISHE, 2017) the GER of SC students is 14.3%, 5.2% is for ST students and 34.4% is for OBC students. Tamil Nadu has highest GER of 46.9% whereas Bihar lags behind at 14.9%. India is already reeling under the rich–poor and rural–urban divide.

Education can perhaps be the best tool to bridge the gap between the haves and the have-nots. Yet, as these statistics show, there are glaring inequalities in access to education which only further accentuates the divisions in the society.

Quality

National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) emphasised that most of the higher education institutions face an acute problem in terms of shortage of academic and physical infrastructure. Lack of innovation, redundant curriculum, an overemphasis on theory, less importance to research and social sciences, de-motivated teachers and researchers. Quality monitoring in the education system are prime reasons for such a dismal state of affairs. Hence, it was not at all surprising when a National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM)–McKinsey Report (2005) found out that a mere 25 per cent of technical and 10 per cent of non-technical graduates are actually employable. Indian higher education unquestionably faces huge challenges. While on one hand there is a need to bring as many young people as possible into the higher education fold, on the other it is required to significantly focus on building quality and global competitiveness.

Privatization

privatization is the transfer of management, responsibilities and control from government/public institutions and organizations to private individuals and agencies'. The control is in terms of decision making and responsibility of money and administration. In education, privatization can be seen as expansion of private sector's control. Providing education to one and all has been one of the primary duties of the government. But there is a wave of privatization of education in our country. Actually government has diverted its focus from higher education to primary education and urged private agencies to enter this sector which is termed as privatization of higher education's. Kapur and Mehta (2004) described the evolution of privatization in Indian higher education using a phrase, "from half-baked socialism to half bake capitalism." They argued that much of the massive privatization has not resulted from ideological commitments of key actors but is instead a result of collapse of the state system resulting in weak ideological and institutional foundations.

V.NEED FOR PRIVATIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

1. To increase competitive efficiency of public sector.
2. To meet the growing demand of higher education with rapid growth in population.
3. To reduce financial burden on government and for decentralization of educational institutions.
4. For imparting quality education and training and shaping of the curriculum according to global, national and local needs.
5. To fulfill the need for skilled manpower and to fulfill the need of the country in liberalization, privatization, and globalization.
6. To facilitate technological developments and information based economic development

VI.IMPACT OF PRIVATIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Private institutions put focus on expansion of quantity not on quality. This is one of the reason that quality of higher education is degrading day by day. It is justified that due to the privatization, number of private professional institutes has increased but this has been affect on the quality. Government has given autonomy to private institutes which would lead to the “commercialization of education” and these institutions are acting as “Degree Mills” This would give rise to many problems like hike in students fee, capitation fee, and exploitation of professors etc. Besides, commodification of education may lead to the excessive emphasis on skill, employment and corporate-oriented education. Private institutions also exploit the teachers and professors by paying those amounts which are not according to the amount specified by regulating agencies like UGC etc.

This may lead to slackening in the efforts of teachers and professors and may finally result in the fall of standard of education. This has also made teaching as unpopular profession. Sometimes, private institutes also employed unethical practices to increase the number of students in their institutes. They admit the students by charging exorbitant amount as capitation fee and ignore standard admission procedures like entrance test, merit list, interviews etc. This practice harms those who cannot afford capitation fee of the institutes and ultimately brilliant students remain deprived of higher education. But there is also another side of coin . Some positive effects of privatization are also noted. Private colleges are almost independent of political interventions. According to Honorable Supreme Court, unaided professional institutes are autonomous in their administration and decisions. . But they have to follow necessary guidelines notified by regulating agencies regarding admission, examination. Better quality of higher education can also be provided by private sector.

As we know government institutions is facing acute shortage of funds and grants. On the other hand demand of higher education is increasing. Only the way which can curb the demand of higher education and maintain the standard of higher education is public private partnership.

VII.CONCLUSION

Free and compulsory education is the fundamental right of every citizen and government cannot neglect it . So government has to invest more and more funds in development of education. as the demand for higher education is very high so neither Government nor private sector can solve the problem alone . So, some regulating agencies have to be formed by the government which can assure quality and transparency and prevent profiteering. There is also a fact that private investors would not run an institute a loss. If a private sector educational institute cannot at least recover its costs, it would be closed down. At the least, private institutions must be allowed to be commercial i.e. they must be allowed to break-even or make a small fair profit. If they are allowed to do so transparently, there would be no need to disguise their profit and the institute will not compromise with quality. To ensure access to higher education by weaker section of society, government

has to increase public expenditure on higher education. On the whole, an improvement in the standards of education could be achieved through a balanced relationship between public and private sector.

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