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THE EMERGENCE OF PRIVATISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA: THE CHALLENGES AND THE PROSPECTS

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ABSTRACT

The present study has been based on the challenges by the private universities in India and also the scope for them. The effective role of private universities in the attainment of higher education mission in India cannot be overemphasized. The burden of higher education on the Government has been reduced by the entry of private universities. The private universities have made a great contribution in the production of well- disciplined and also highly ethical students in undergraduate as well as post graduate levels. The present study has revealed that the private universities have an outstanding capability for providing the uninterrupted academic teachings through-out the calendar year. These universities have greatly reduced the financial burden of government institutions and state governments as well as are producing highly talented and disciplined youth for both public and private sectors. Thus the privatization of higher education has directly influenced the economy of state. In consideration of problems faced by private universities, the study has emphasized on financial issues which are the higher cost paid on training to develop effective faculty, problems in retaining qualified faculties, lack of resourced for the arrangement of laboratory materials, equipment and infrastructure. The problems of arrangement of well-equipped libraries also exist due to the lack of adequate funding.

KEYWORDS: Privatization, performance, higher education, cost- effectiveness, finances, etc.

INTRODUCTION

During the past 1-2 decades, there has been a commendable endeavor to augment the higher education accessible for every citizen of the country. The participation of entrepreneurs in the

field of higher education has brought a revolution in the field of higher education in India. The entry of private institutions has influenced the educational policies of the government. The mission of an inclusive educational development in the country is on the way of completion with the vision of social responsibility and research programmes by both, the public and private sectors. The transformations in the educational sector over the post-independence years and also the demand increasing day by day for well- educated and highly disciplined youth in every sector of national economy, either it may be a private or public sector has highly increased the demand for direction and emergence of private institutions and private universities in India. The widely accepted and phenomenal approach of past few years is the emergence of private universities in approximately all the states of nation.

The greatest achievement of private universities is the higher percentage of reckoned provision for un-interrupted teaching programme throughout the calendar year. The better management and control of man power as well as financial resources is the greatest merit of private universities over public funded universities. The management of manpower is efficient due to the small size of work force. Due to small size of work force, the workers take active part in the execution of university policies and task. They do not participate in strikes, hartals, taalabandi etc. The small size of university is also a merit of private university as a problem can be identified easily and also can be sorted out in short duration and in an effective manner. The efforts are made by the owners to earn a maximum profit by running the academic activities through-out the calendar year. The management in private universities is of the higher order due to their competitiveness with the public counterparts. But after the above better provision being available with the private universities, there are some challenges also. Most important among them faced by these universities are profit-orientation nature of proprietors in place of true welfare of society. These universities also face the problem of qualified faculties to work in rural areas. The profit earning nature of proprietors creates inequality for access of poor students to quality education. Refresher courses for teacher and other development courses are lacking in these universities.

Review of related literature

The history of development and emergence of private universities in India is not very old. It is only last 1-2 decades that the government has been agreed for the emergence of private universities has taken place on a large scale. The privatization of higher education has reduced the burden of government institutions for educating youth. The production of highly talented and well- disciplined youngster has become possible without over burden on the

shoulders of state government. **James (1991)** has defined a 'private university' as an institutions in the hands of the private sector specially in the dimensions of funding and management without financial support from the government organizations. But the government organization may assist the private university during need. **Kitaev (1999)** however has a broader view on the definition of a private university. He has argued that the private university is not only a narrow view of only determining the its various kinds and in different countries but in a broader context, a private university may be defined as the a university that does not come under the purview of government or public institutions. These universities may also be name as non-public, quasi-public or non-government universities etc. **Altbach (1999)** opines that the most important principle for the establishment of private universities is their efficiency in being an active partner in the policies of government to finance higher education. He has attributed the emergence of private universities to the ideology of present privatization approach and the global market economy.

Sawyer (2004) is of the view that the transformations in the educational sector over last few years and also the day by day increasing demand for well- educated and highly disciplined youth in every sector of national economy, either it may be a private or public sector has highly increased the demand for direction and emergence of private institutions and private universities. **Varghese (2004)** has identifies some core patterns for distinguishing characteristics of the ownership pattern of private universities which are (a) The Universities being operated as the private firms in the boundaries of a country and are also owned by the national, (b) Universities owned and managed be the religious organizations, (c) Universities established through the public universities in collaboration with foreign institutions. The factor (a) is very important in deciding the nature of a university being public or private. To reduce the overburden on government for the funding and providing infrastructure for public universities, the government has decided to permit the private sector for participating in the higher education. **Ahemba (2006)** is of the opinion that the emergence of private universities has taken place due to the inability of public universities to provide higher educational facilities for all in African nations. According to him the overcrowded hostels and lecture halls and deteriorating conditions of laboratories and libraries in public universities are the witness to show the shortage of investment and funding in these universities. Due to poor funding the talented and disciplined teaching staff is hard to be available for these universities that results in the downgrading of higher education. In the viewpoint of **Owusu-Dankwa (2009)**, the establishment of a private university is attributed for fulfill some objectives which are (a) Educational objectives, (b) Profit earning objectives and (c) Spiritual objectives.

The private universities also face many challenges. **Barnett (2009)** has identified some major challenges faced by these universities some of which are the transformation of missions of education, the system of governances, their relationship with the major economies on regional, national as well as global levels and finally the production of highly talented and disciplined youth benefitting the economy of nation. **Santosh (2010)** revealed that the transformations in educational mission are related to paradigmatic transition being faced by all the universities as well as societies on a whole.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following objectives were laid down for the present study-

1. To find out the important causes behind the emergence of private universities in spite of public universities.
2. To analyze the advantages of establishing the private universities over their public counterparts.
3. To analyze the important challenges that are being faced by the private universities at present times in our country.
4. To suggest the measures to tackle the obstacles in the way of development of private universities.

Significance of the study

The present study deals with the emergence and the performance of private sector in the management and control of private universities and also participating in providing quality education to youth of the nation. The study has also uncovered a few major challenges which hamper the proper development of private universities to fulfill their objectives of providing quality education and producing talented, highly disciplined and well educated young men for serving the developing economy of the nation. In the study it has been observed that these institutions are highly credible in case of provision of an unbreakable calendar of academic year, in the production of more ethical and disciplined youth and by providing a quality education as compared to the government run universities. The problems as faced by public universities like the provision of adequate funding, infrastructure facilities and problems of accreditation are also same for private universities but due to better and efficient management in private universities, such problems are tackled without causing much harm to quality education. Thus the present study of great benefit for the higher educational managers and planners.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on both empirical and theoretical research methods. The present has been based on the reasons behind the emergence of privatization trend in higher education. Where the points of introductory and observatory nature exist, the descriptive method has been applied. Regarding the social and economic conditions of teaching and non-teaching staff, the method applied has been analytical. This study includes the study of university's financial control and management, attitude of teaching staff towards the production of highly disciplined and well-educated youth and the feeling of students towards the teachers and the curriculum of the university. So the empirical research method used.

Reasons behind the establishment of private universities: Several educational thinkers have put their view in this regard like Varghese (2004), Ahemba (2006) but the most important one among them is the view of Owusu-Dankwa view. Owusu-Dankwa (2009) proposed the following reasons behind the emergence of private universities:

- (a) To help address the problem of paying for the development of higher education.
- (b) The government invitation to private sector to participate in the development of higher education.
- (c) To bridge the between few educated and a mass of millions who demand for university education.
- (d) Provision of innovation, diversity and autonomy by government in higher education as a response to public pressure on entering university.
- (e) The introduction of latest teaching strategies using information technology for providing quality education to youth of society.
- (f) The provision of latest and special instructional programmes which aim for self-employment.
- (g) To respond for the global call for free market opportunities, privatization and ownership of establishments.

Advantages of establishing private universities

The private universities are beneficial for both society and the nation as a whole. Some important benefits behind the establishment of private universities can be enumerated as below;

- (a) Government investment for higher education:** The burden of providing higher education to all the able citizens of the country is a costlier affair for the government of a nation. The government has to invest a large amount of fund for the establishment of

universities, colleges, libraries and laboratories etc. in order to provide a better higher education. The establishment of private universities changes the role of government from being an executive body to advisory body in educational system. The huge funds which were to be invested for establishment of educational facilities can now be arranged for other social betterment purposes.

(b) Reducing inequality for access to higher education: The private universities are mostly located in such areas which are poor in educational facilities or the government educational organizations are not available. In these areas access to higher education is poorly available for poor people due to their location and rigid school hours arrangement. The educational inequality in society can be reduced due to the establishment of private universities in such poorly educated areas.

(c) Effective management and control: The arrangements for teaching and learning conditions at private universities are flexible. The managing system at government run universities is highly bureaucratic and there are rigid regulations for administrative functions. In contrast to it, the private universities have democratic managers and administrative regulations are easy to follow.

(d) Management of teaching and administrative staff: The rules and regulations for the management of teaching as well as non-teaching staff at private run universities are flexible. The staff being small in numbers is easy to control and also their welfare can be seen in a better way.

(e) Control of extra expenditure on staff: The private universities tend to arrange their faculties on part time basis for nearby areas. The faculty management and control measures are flexible enough to motivate them to do their best for the betterment of the organization on minimum cost.

(f) Educational standard and assessment procedure: The private universities are established with the objective of earning maximum with lowest cost. Hence these universities aim at providing a higher educational standard and better assessment procedure to fulfill the aspirations of parents and also the society in contrast to public universities.

(g) Maximum utilization of available resources: The private universities aim at utilizing the available resources to its maximum. The private universities have limited finances and man power. So they have limited facilities for library, laboratories and other facilities for students. Hence these universities tend to fulfill the needs of all the students with these limited resources. Thus the wastage of resources are minimum and these universities prove to be more cost effective than their public counterparts.

Challenges in the way of private universities

Instead of various advantages, the private universities in India are facing certain challenges today. Some of these challenges can be listed here as follows-

(a) Practice of Tuitions: The proprietors of private universities aim at earning maximum from their investments in educational institution. Therefore they provide very low remunerations to the staff. The result is the practices of forcible tuitions by the teaching staff. The teachers take less interest in teaching activities in the classroom. The students are forced to attend tuition hours at their homes. This inhibits the students to attend the classes at university.

(b) Lack of Funds: The private universities are established by the private proprietors with their own resources. The owners of these universities have less financial resources as compared to their public counterparts. Due to unavailability of adequate financial resources these universities face the problems of poor infrastructure, availability of books written by good writers and adequate laboratory materials.

(c) Obstacles in equal opportunities to all: The private universities aim at earning maximum profits and this is the reason that proper facilities for the students are neglected. The management tends to charge maximum fee from students. The students from poor backgrounds are denied to attend educational facilities if the scholarships from government bodies are not provided for a semester/academic calendar year. This creates an obstacle in the path of providing equal educational opportunities to all citizens.

(d) Problems of qualified teaching staff: Due to lower salaries, the highly qualified teachers are attracted towards these institutions. The practice of referencing of forcible persons and relatives of owners enables poorly qualified person to obtain higher salaries in comparison to more qualified staff. This demoralizes the qualified and efficient staff to give their maximum for the institution.

(e) Unsuitable assessment methods: The aim of private proprietors is to earn maximum benefits. The students know this in a better way. The students have no pressure to learn and perform sufficient to get passing marks. The policy of private university to qualify each student in examinations creates the habits of indiscipline and lack of learning abilities. The passing out of untrained and poorly qualified students is a very harmful affair for the individual as well as the national economy.

(f) Unsuitable curriculum: The curriculum by maximum private universities is prepared by untrained staff serving at lower remuneration. Thus they tend to prepare the curriculum by copying the same from two or more other universities. The curriculum of first and above

standards is mixed up and this created high confusion for the sequencing of learning of different related topics.

CONCLUSIONS

The present study has been based on the importance of the private universities in India and also the scope for them and challenges being faced by these universities. The effective role of private universities in the attainment of higher education mission in India cannot be overemphasized. The burden of higher education on the Government has been reduced by the entry of private universities. The private universities have made a great contribution in the production of well- disciplined and also highly ethical students in undergraduate as well as post graduate levels. The present study has revealed that the private universities have an outstanding capability for providing the uninterrupted academic teachings through-out the calendar year. These universities have greatly reduced the financial burden of government institutions and state governments as well as are producing highly talented and disciplined youth for both public and private sectors. Thus the privatization of higher education has directly influenced the economy of state. In consideration of problems faced by private universities, emphasis have been given on financial issues which are the higher cost paid on training to develop effective faculty, problems in retaining high quality faculties, lack of resourced for the arrangement of learning materials and laboratory equipment and infrastructure. The problems of arrangement of well-equipped libraries also exist due to lack of adequate financial resources.

Recommendations for betterment of private universities:

The present study has recommended following measures for the betterment of private universities-

- (a) The arrangement of finances can be made available by taking advantage from various insurance schemes. The insurance facilities can also provide security for the resources available in the universities. So better utilization of resources can be made by the management through taking benefits from the insurance policies.
- (b) Incorporation of existing and also newer programmes should correspond to the availability of financial resources of the private universities. This availability of finances should be ensured by the academic council before incorporating programmes.
- (c) The assessment methods should be flexible and according to the norms. The assessment should be motivative for the students. These institutions should not only aim at

earning maximum financial benefits but it should aim at producing the best human resources.

(d) The arrangement for refresher course and other development programmes for faculties should be arranged time to time. The remunerations provided to the staff should accord their qualifications and experiences. The partiality due to referencing from relatives and forcible persons should not be given priority against performance of individual staff.

(e) The managers should arrange for the monthly or quarterly conferences with all the staff and should take suggestions from them, listen to their problems and take maximum possible steps to solve them. This can motivate the staff and their belongingness for the organization may be enhanced.

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