

MOHAMMAD PARVEZ
MOHD SHAKIR

Privatization of Teacher Education in India: Some Issues to Ponder Over

ABSTRACT

Education means to know the knowledge. Without this, life of human being does not operate. Education teaches the lesson of humanity. Education is very necessary for every human being. Education does not mean to get specific skill and get employment. But we say that anybody got education, if he/she has developed from every angle. It is the education which carries human being in the way of success. Education is imparted by the teachers; therefore, teachers and their education i.e. teacher education is of paramount importance. But, unfortunately, in our country, India, so many money minded people are degrading the teacher education under the umbrella of privatization of teacher education. Privatization is the transfer of activities, assets, and responsibilities from government/public institutions and organizations to private individuals and agencies. This paper is a humble attempt to discuss the issues of privatization of teacher education in India. One of important things is that there is an urgent needed to stop the practice of commercialization of teacher education, so that quality of teacher education and the quality of teachers can be maintained. In other words, the complete marketization of teacher education should not be there, because it will be a stumbling block in the constitutional obligation of providing equal opportunities of education to all.

Key words: Problems of education in India, privatization, teacher education institution, quality of education, and education for all.

INTRODUCTION

Our nation, India, is on the march towards a bright and prosperous tomorrow. The social organ that had to play the most important role in this respect is education. Without education, one cannot easily differentiate between good or bad, right or wrong, true or false, and lovely or ugly. Education not only prepares individual for livelihood but also prepare a person to face the challenges and harsh realities of life. It develops the individual and also contributes to the growth and development of the nation. With education, human being learns to use brain for taking any decision. In fact, education is not mere wadding of specifics; it is awakening of potential in children for leading a holistic living and leading a prosperous and comfortable life.

Dr. Mohammad Parvez is Associate Professor at the Department of Education AMU (Aligarh Muslim University), Aligarh, 202002 Uttar Pradesh, India; and **Mohd Shakir** is Junior Research Fellow at the Department of Education AMU. They can be reached at: mparvez9@yahoo.co.in and aligarhshakir@gmail.com

The purpose of education is that of giving us the means for upward mobility and success. Teacher is a superior guide. “*Teacher’s worth is not only to teach but also to guide the students*” (Parvez, 2010). Teaching itself is a form of guidance. Students are like rudderless vessels in the ocean of life; and teachers are like lighthouses which help the vessels to reach their destination. Emphasizing the importance of teachers, NPE (National Policy on Education) in 1986 states that:

The status of the teacher reflects the socio-cultural ethos of a society. It is said that no people can rise above the level of its teachers. The government and the community should endeavour to create conditions, which will help motivate and inspire teachers on constructing and creative lines. Teachers should have the freedom to innovate, to devise appropriate methods of communication and activities relevant to the needs and capabilities of and the concerns of the community (GOI, 1986:31-32).

It is rightly said by an educationist that there can be marvelous teaching in muddy walls and muddy teaching in marble halls. What it means is that a school does not mean simply a magnificent building with beautiful gardens and lawns, rich laboratories and libraries, and a large playground; rather, it means a learning environment created by visionary and imaginative teachers (Chauhan, 2008:6-7).

The quality of the education depends upon several factors. India is in need of a large army of efficient and competent teachers for universal, compulsory, and free education for its children. A teacher not only has to be competent in his subject, method of teaching, and in understanding his students but also should have a favorable attitude towards teaching (Saharan & Seth, 2010:76). In this context, the UEC (University Education Commission) in 1948-1949 rightly said that teacher competence is one of the crucial factors and should be given continuous training for the improvement of their performance. Teacher education is something deeper than mere teacher training. It means the acquisition of that type of knowledge, skills, and ability which helps teacher to discharge his professional duties and responsibilities effectively and efficiently. It means reshaping the attitude, habits, and personality of a teacher (Dash, 2004:133).

Kothari Commission (1964-1966) rightly also said that nothing is more important than securing a sufficient supply of high quality recruits to the teaching profession, providing them with the best possible professional preparation and creating satisfactory conditions of work in which they can be fully effective (Dash, 2004:133).

PRIVATIZATION

The term “privatization” is an umbrella term referring to many different educational programmes and policies. As an overall definition, privatization is the transfer of activities, assets, and responsibilities from government/ public institutions and organizations to private individuals and agencies. Also,

privatization is often thought of as “liberalization” – where agents are freed from government regulations; or as “marketization” – where new markets are created as alternatives to government services or state allocation systems (Levin, 2001).

In view of the tremendous pressure on total educational knowledge enterprise for higher and professional in education, in particular, privatization is not an option but a natural evolution. The earlier system, where the state and charitable institutions come forward to open new professional colleges, is obviously unable to cope with the rising demands of a high profile professional education. The infrastructure, managerial, and financial requirements coupled with a high yielding entrepreneurship has made the private sector to take a direct plunge into the educational enterprise (Lunavath, 2005).

In some countries, the origin of privatization can be traced back a few centuries. But privatization has assured greater significance as a policy strategy of the development of education in recent times, essentially but not wholly, due to stagnating and, in some countries, declining public budgets for education; on the one hand and on the other, increasing social demand for higher education, manifested in slogans like “higher education for all”.

The wave of privatization is sweeping across the world. Within an economy, it is aimed at breaking the monopoly of the public sector in a number of areas, more especially areas connected with infrastructure. The essence of privatization lies in the induction of private ownership into publicly owned enterprises. This can range from total denationalization (zero public ownership) to various degrees of private ownership in the form of joint ventures. This is the narrow sense in which the concept is used, but in broader sense, it connotes, besides private ownership, introduction of private management and control into public enterprises.

Barbara Lee and John Nellis define privatization in this manner: “*privatization is the general process of involving the private sector in the ownership or operation of a state owned enterprise*” since the impact of privatization is penetrating all sectors of the economy; it is bound to affect the education sector as well (cited in Gupta, Kumar & Panda, 2005).

Privatization of education is a part of the process of privatization of the economy at large. The motive, which activates private sector, is to gain maximum profits. Therefore, it will invest only in those courses and institutions which will be profitable. As a result, the professional courses will be hot list. But the general education, social sciences, and humanities will be sidelined.

In the privatization of teacher education, following issues are there to ponder over: (1) Mushrooming of Institutes; (2) Paucity of Physical Facilities; (3) Crisis of Values and Morality; (4) Commercialization; (5) Isolation of Teacher Education Department; (6) Regional Imbalances; (7) Irrelevant and Out Dated Curricula; (8) Problem of Selection of Candidates for Training; (9) Problem of Quality Teacher Education; (10) Market Oriented; (11) Lack of Transparency

in Financial Arrangements; and (12) Frequent Movement of Teachers.

First, on the Mushrooming of Institutes. In the name of privatization, several institutes of teacher training were opened. Mushrooming of teacher education institutes with questionable credentials. On every corner, we will find an institute providing training to the teachers. Now, the institutes are in excess due to the mushrooming of these institutions. From 1956 until 1995, there were only 36 deemed universities. Their number rose to 103 by February 2008. Indeed, between March 1995 and March 2008, nearly 400 applications were filed seeking deemed university status. At the time of the freeze ordered by Honorable Mr. Kapil Sibal, the total number of deemed universities stood at 127, of which the highest number 29 is in Tamilnadu, Maharashtra has 21, and Karnataka 15. Many of these universities are a far cry from the original concept (*Frontline*, July 2009:5). The number of deemed and private universities is increasing day by day. Many private deemed universities are predominantly concerned about revenue generation rather than promoting academic and research activities.

Second, on the Paucity of Physical Facilities. Although the leading institutes in private sector provide better infrastructure than the government ones, but rest of the private institutes' infrastructure is worse than the government sector. As we know that in order to provide training to teachers, teacher training institutions/colleges require adequate physical infrastructure. But in some colleges, there is dearth of good classrooms, good textbooks in the seminars of colleges, and some colleges do not have seminar libraries at all; standard reference material is also not available, journals, periodicals are not available to students as well as to the teachers who are teaching in such colleges.

Laboratories are not properly equipped with the needed material; in a way, we can say that teaching-learning environment is not conducive to learning. It has been observed that some teacher training colleges/institutions do not have schools attached with them for practice teaching which is the integral part of teacher training program. Schools are the laboratories of teacher training colleges.

Apart from this teacher educators are less in number and teachers who are available are not as competent as they should be. The persons with B.Ed. (Bachelor of Education) degrees are teaching B.Ed. students on meager salaries. When so many lacunas are there, how can we expect good teachers coming out from these teacher training colleges / institutions? This problem is very serious one because, without adequate number of teachers and other physical facilities, teaching and learning is not possible.

Third, on the Crisis of Values and Morality. Using the umbrella of privatization, private institutes admit those students for training who do not deserve to be in this profession. Consequently, those are admitted who have "less-ability" but "more-payability". As the students are ready to pay the amount, so those students are also admitted who do not value the "values" as

well as “morality”. As a matter of fact, they come under the category of those who “desire” and not in the category of those who “deserve”.

Fourth, on the Commercialization. Privatization and commercialization are the two sides of the same coin. No private individual or groups will come forward to set up educational institution unless some economic interests are involved. So, profit-making has to be a part of private educational initiatives. But the government has to see that commercialization of education does not undermine our efforts to provide quality education and create excellence, especially in the field of teacher education.

There was a time when no fees was charged from the students in the places of learning, but, now fees are so high that teacher education has become a commodity, as the teacher training colleges/institutions are increasing, malpractices are prevailing in the teacher training colleges, in the name of privatization, such colleges are charging very high fees from the students. This fear was well advocated by the World Bank that the motivation for establishing private institutions is always to make money (Douglas & Ziderman, 2000).

Due to high charges, some students can afford but some are not able to afford. Those students who can afford are getting degrees of B.Ed. (Bachelor of Education) easily with good percentages; there are some teacher training colleges from where a student can get degree, even without visiting the school once, just by paying extra amount. Prof. C.P.S. Chauhan has rightly said that taking full advantage of the situation, the clever businessmen abandoned their traditional dealings in onions and potatoes and started B.Ed. colleges in the thatched go downs thus vacated, because they saw in it huge monetary returns for meager investment (Chauhan, 2008).

Due to these sorts of practices in the teacher education, the quality of teacher training is deteriorating day by day; and teacher education has become a good area to invest thus encouraging commercialization of teacher education. It has to be checked from time to time that such private institutions function in accordance with the national policy objectives and public interests. State authority needs to ensure that they do not function as mere factories to produce degrees and diplomas. Quality should be given the highest importance (Mishra & Mishra, 2004).

Fifth, on the Isolation of Teacher Education Department. Teacher Education Institutions are considered “islands of isolation”. They hardly developed linkage with schools, peer institutions, universities, and other institutions (Sungoh, 2005). This problem is also very serious one; teacher training colleges are isolated from the nearby schools, they are also isolated from other teacher education colleges/institutions. It has been observed that the departments of education of the universities in India also remain isolated from other departments of the same university, not to talk about the other universities. Hardly any interaction can be seen between the education department and the other departments of the university. Authors’ own department is also isolated

from other departments of the university.

Sixth, on the Regional Imbalances. Due to unplanned and haphazard expansion of teacher education colleges/institutions, it has been observed that in some areas teachers training colleges are more than needed, and in some areas teacher training colleges are less than needed. In some areas, teacher training colleges are not of good quality.

Seventh, on the Irrelevant and Out Dated Curricula. The curriculum which we have in the teacher training colleges is irrelevant and outdated. Curriculum needs to be made more relevant, need based. In most of the teacher training colleges/institutions, the course content is not revised regularly to update it, so that teacher under training can learn: how to face the upcoming challenges of life? Knowledge is treated as “given”, embedded in the curriculum and accepted without question; there is no engagement with curriculum. Some content in curriculum is useless and there is a need to accommodate things which will help him in teaching effectively.

One thing which is practiced in colleges and institutions is practice teaching which is heavily loaded with specified number of lesson plans, nothing new is here in this exercise, what students actually do they just memorize the lesson plans and present them in the classroom just to complete the requirement of completing 40 or 50 lesson plans. It has become a formality to complete for them. In most of the colleges, the time is not equally distributed only 25% of total time is allotted to practice teaching and the rest 75% is allotted to theory classes. It has also been observed that what teachers learn from the teacher training colleges/institutions, they do not apply in their teaching; there may be two reasons for this: either they have forgotten or they have not learned what they are supposed to learn in order to teach effectively. Except, some, laws of learning, most of the students forget everything, which is learn by him/her in the teacher training college or institution.

Eighth, on the Problem of Selection of Candidates for Training. Defective selection procedures of candidates may lead to deterioration of the quality of products. When input is not good, then, how can we expect that output will also be good? As the input, so is the output. With the coming up of privatization, a lot of universities/institutes, particularly in professional courses, students with low percentages or scores are getting admissions. Here, the admission criteria are not high and students with a very low IQ (Intelligent Quotient) are also getting admissions creating an oversupply of low caliber products in the market. These institutes/universities are just working like a factory, taking more and more substandard students, and producing more degrees of poor quality (Pillania, 2004).

Ninth, on the Problem of Quality Teacher Education. In an environment of global competitiveness, it is more important that the products of the teacher education institutions of our country are as competent as of any other country of the world; but it is very unfortunate that Indian teacher educational institutions

suffer from large quality variation, some institutions are creating very good stuff whereas some are busy in creating teachers who are not competent enough for this profession of teaching. It may be because of problem of selection or other faulty procedures. Many private institutions are relying on part time teachers with little commitment to the institutions and sometimes with scant qualifications (Altbach & Levy, 2005); whereas, it is necessary to enhance the quality of teacher education within higher education (YC, 2009:21-22).

Tenth, on the Market Oriented. Private teacher education institutes focus on market forces to shape their offerings, degree programs, and curriculum. They are totally market oriented, not giving consideration to other factors except market. At the centre of debate lies the issue of quality assurance and the need to provide consumer protection from non-reputable providers or “diploma mills” (UNESCO, 2003). The emphasis is more on profit and it runs on the principles of market and commerce. It is feared that universities will act like industry for grabbing profits. They will be at liberty to raise the course fees in any way they wish including tuition fees, capitation fees, and donations.

It is also argued that complete marketization of teacher education would go against the constitutional obligation of providing equal opportunities of education to all. Only the more advanced sections of population – who have better information, better access to resources, and more capital to bear risk – will be able to derive the benefits from educational opportunities generated by the market forces (Mishra & Mishra, 2004). In effect, teacher education will turn out to be a luxury good and it will be a monopoly of the rich only.

Eleventh, on the Lack of Transparency in Financial Arrangements. Financial arrangements of private teacher education institutions often lack transparency. As a matter of fact, they are primarily profit-oriented institutions, simply interested in earning money for owners, families, for management groups, or for those who are directly or indirectly managing them.

Finally, **twelfth, on the Frequent Movement of Teachers.** There is keen competition among private providers of teacher education to attract trained teachers. But most of these institutions are manned by retired teachers who are unlikely to have enough energy and enthusiasm for new things. These teachers also tend to move from one teacher training college to another at short intervals. Whenever they get better opportunities, they are likely to shift themselves from one institute/college to another. This can definitely affect the quality of teacher educational programmes.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The mushrooming of teacher training institutions should be strictly and honestly checked by National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE). Adequate number of reference books, sufficient number of teachers, and other physical infrastructure in the teacher training institutions should be there, because teaching-learning is not possible without these facilities.

In addition to those who can afford, those should also be admitted who have “more-ability” but “less-payability”. Those students should not be admitted who do not value the “values” and “morality”. Those who really “deserve” to be in this noble profession should be admitted.

There is an urgent need to stop the practice of commercialization of teacher education so that quality of teacher education and the quality of teachers can be maintained. The fee structure should be such that the cost of education should be recovered from those who can pay for it, i.e. the elites.

Certain percentage of seats should be kept for open admission for meritorious students who are unable to pay the fees. Such seats should be allotted either without fees or with a nominal charge. Provision for financial incentives should also be considered for such economically poor meritorious students. The cost for all these social obligations can be derived from / adjusted with the fee structures collected from those coming from elite houses. Private institutions can also raise funds from other outer sources to meet such social obligations. No doubt, profit orientation will remain as one of the features of private players; but it should not be deterministic. Merit should be the only consideration for admission.

Teacher education institutions should not be isolated from other teacher education institutions; also an education department should not be isolated from other departments of the same university. Teachers of other departments should be benefitted from the expertise of the teachers of education department, because teachers of education department are the teachers of teachers.

There is a need to open more teacher training colleges to those places where there is a need and shortage. And also to improve the quality where the colleges are substandard. There should be a proper balance between the time allotted to practice teaching and to theory classes.

Proper selection of candidates for teacher training should be made on the basis of aptitude test, personal interviews, and on the basis of merit, so that more eligible candidates can be admitted in this noble profession which demands hundred per cent dedication, determination, and desire to teach and learn.

In place of part-time teachers, full time and regular teachers on handsome salaries should be appointed. Appointment should be on the basis of merit and scholarship and as per NCTE (National Council for Teacher Education) norms.

Complete marketization of teacher education should not be there, because it will be a stumbling block in the constitutional obligation of providing equal opportunities of education to all. Complete transparency in financial arrangements of private teacher education institutions should be maintained.

Finally, frequent movement of teacher educators from one college to another should be discontinued, so that they can concentrate on their teaching and learning.

Bibliography

- Altbach, P.G. & D.C. Levy. (2005). *Private Higher Education: A Global Revolution*. Netherlands: Sense Publishers.
- Chauhan, C.P.S. (2004). *Modern Indian Education: Problems, Progress, and Prospects*. New Delhi, India: Kanishka Publishers.
- Chauhan, C.P.S. (2008). "Teacher Education and NCTE: Fencing Eats the Crops" in *University News*, 46(23), 15-19 June 19-15. New Delhi, India: AIU, pp.6-7.
- Dash, M. (2004). *Education in India: Problems and Perspectives*. New Delhi, India: Atlantic Publishers.
- Douglas, A. & A. Ziderman. (2000). *Financing Universities in Developing Countries*. New York, USA: World Bank.
- Frontline. New Delhi, India: July 2009, p.5.
- GOI [Government of India]. (1949). *Report of the University Education Commission (1948-1949)*. New Delhi, India: Ministry of Education.
- GOI [Government of India]. (1966). *Report of the Education Commission (1964-1966)*. New Delhi, India: Ministry of Education.
- GOI [Government of India]. (1986). *National Policy on Education 1986*. New Delhi, India: Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development.
- Gupta, S.M., A. Kumar & S.K. Panda. (2005). "Attitude of Students towards Privatization of Higher Education" in *University News*, 43(09), 28 February – 6 March. New Delhi, India: AIU, pp.10-12.
- Levin, H.M. (2001). *Privatizing Education: Can the Market Deliver Freedom of Choice, Productive Efficiency, Equity, and Social Cohesion?* Boulder, CO: West View Press. Available also at: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001330/133075e.pdf> [accessed in Aligarh, India: 27 August 2011].
- Lunavath, N. (2005). "Privatization and/or Commercialization of Teacher Education: Some Consequences" in *University News*, 43(18), 2-8 May. New Delhi, India: AIU, pp.63-66.
- Mishra, B.K. & A.K. Mishra. (2004). "Privatization of Higher Education: A Sociological Interrogation" in *Delhi Business Review*, X, Vol.5, No.2, July-December, pp.1-17.
- Parvez, M. (2010). *School Administration*. Aligarh, India: Kitab Ghar.
- Pillania, R.K. (2004). "Is Privatization Improving the Competitiveness of Indian Higher Education?" in *Delhi Business Review*, X, Vol.5, No.2, July – December, pp.1-11.
- Saharan, S.K. & P. Seth. (2010). "Teacher Competences in Educational Matters" in *Edusearch: Journal of Educational Research*, Vol. 1(2), October.
- Sergio. (2009). "Educating Our Children: What is the Meaning of Education?" in <http://www.brighthub.com/education/k-12/articles/9566.aspx> [accessed in Aligarh, India: 25 August 2011].
- Sungoh, S.M. (2005). "Quality Issues in Teacher Education" in *University News*, 43(18), 2-8 May. New Delhi, India: AIU, pp.37-42.
- UNESCO [United Nations for Educational, Social, and Cultural Organization]. (2003). "Higher Education in a Globalised Society". *Unpublished Position Paper*.
- YC [Yashpal Committee]. (2009). *Report of the Committee to Advise on Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher Education*. New Delhi, India: Human Resource Development.



Picture of Teacher and his Students in India

(Source: www.google.com, 2 May 2012]

Our nation, India, is on the march towards a bright and prosperous tomorrow. The social organ that had to play the most important role in this respect is education.