

Who is responsible for the Education? Government or Private sector

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Abstract

The privatization is a popular buzzword today encroaching into almost all areas of public life including education also. This privatization of education is the transfer of government's educational services to the private sectors. Various levels of education are severely affected due to the privatization whereas the education is the grass root place of development of human resource for the nation. The privatization of education has occupied a large place in educational debates since last two decades. In earlier days, the government looked after the field of education, but now the government is interested in transferring this vital field of education to the private sectors. The different needs of so divergent strata of country can be rectified by government of nation only; and not by profit-oriented few private sectors. This privatization of education may give rise more problems than solutions in future. Some of such issues are discussed in this article.

Key words : Privatization, government, private sector, responsibilities of education.

Introduction

The development in all dimensions of education is the pre-requisite of any developed country and this requires a very good its own educational system. Therefore, there is a need of the education system that can provide the legitimate talent for our country in a sustainable manner through education. The own good educational system is the need of the hour where students grow to contribute towards the development of the nation. However, ironically the existing system of the education is far away from this required level. Education is known as the greatest investment both at individual and societal level also. But, the education has never been the priority of the government in India and interdependence of various levels of the education has also been ignored since a long time. We also failed to spend the six percent of GNP on education as commended by Kothari Commission long back in 1964-66.

Concept of the Privatization

Though the process of privatization of education is mainly concerned with financial aspects, it affects the entire field of education multi-dimensionally. The privatization of education is the opposite of nationalization of education. The privatization is the process of converting from government controlled system to a privately run system which is (mainly) profit-oriented system. In privatization, there is

transition from publicly operated institute to the private bodies that are funded by a small group of investors. It is nothing but the transfer of government services to the private sectors.

Today, the government in India is on the way of deviating from its responsibilities of the education at all levels. Now the education is being handed over to private sectors by the government itself. This is the starting of process of the denationalization of education. Is it not a contradiction that the government gradually withdraws educational subsidies and on other hand collects the educational tax also? Nevertheless, the government is firm on the fact that the India will have the greatest potential of youth in future soon. Then, in such cases, is it not the duty of government to nourish the potential of our own youth through the education in a well manner for future of India? Because, the energetic and creative youth of today is the identity of tomorrow's powerful India. Then questions arise, like - why the government is interested in handing over gradually this prime concern of education to the private bodies? How does it become a responsibility of private sector and not of government itself? How does it improve the field of education? And how does the private sector cater the needs of very diversified socio-economic strata of India?

Although the privatization is not new in India, after 1990 it becomes more visible. Since last two decades, the penetration of profit making private sectors in the field of education is tremendously increased. Now it is not confined to engineering, management and medical disciplines, but it is extended to the primary and secondary education level also. The primary education is supposed to be the foundation stone of any education system while the secondary education is the backbone. Nevertheless, the very miserable condition is seen at these levels. These both levels are on the way of privatization. The fact is that the primary education is already privatized to the such extent that the government schools become an option only for those who cannot afford the private schools not only in urban but even in a rural area also.

The different successive governments over the few decades have only pursued the path of privatization, irrespective of their political parties. This results in hundreds of private schools, colleges and other professional institutes set up their campuses in various parts of country which indeed causing a serious damage to various dimensions of education. It should not be forget that many social and educational reformers had devoted their lives to bring out changes in grass root level of society only through the public education. Dr. A.P.J.Abdul Kalam has also stated that the cost effective continuing education possibilities are essential for citizens to be in tune with time. On this background, it is very difficult rather enigmatic to say that the privatization will give the cost effective education for deserving students. Privatization gives rise to more problems rather than solutions. Some of them are discussed as follow –

Some current issues related to privatization

1. After accepting the policies of privatization by the government, the number of private institution amazingly rose up. In such private institution where students have to pay heavy fees is a serious problem. This may create problems in term of access, equity, etc. Then how will be the deprived classes of intelligent younger

from society get benefited from private institutes. Because such private institutes have profit-oriented and not philanthropically established. If the privatization of education creates conflict with the objectives of equity, the state /constitutional intervention would be desirable.

2. Students paying high fees obviously do lack any consideration of national interest. The only objective of these students is to recover the big investment made in education in the form of donation or to move or migrate to the more greener places (other than India), whereas 'the brain drain' is the already unsolved worrying issue in India since last few decades.
3. We still believe that the education is the vital tool to bring out the various changes in society. But now-a-days the process of privatization is so deeply rooted that bring out the change in value system of society, consequently the materialistic young generation is being created through the privatization; which has , in reverse, long term harmful effect on society.
4. Though few private institutions provide some good learning facilities, the persistent demand for compulsory heavy fees, donations, etc. is nothing but one kind of commercialization of education. As far as the quality of education is concerned, the improvement in various aspects of education is necessary in government school and colleges, instead of making them privatized.
5. It is noticeable that some research activities are being conducted at private institutes. It is obvious that there is need for high quality research in Government College and institutions, but presently this need to improve the research atmosphere in it. Upgrading and innovations in the Indian educational system needs strategic actions. Still it is not seen. This may experienced due to the inadequate educational policies, etc. in government institutions.
6. Private schools and other institutes sometimes show better results. But the fact behind this phenomenon is that they admit only the best prepared students. This is a sort of self-appreciation of own cheating.
7. The Private institutions have been responding more quickly and efficiently to the market demands. This is not possible to government schools and institutions because these government institutions have very rigid strategic planning. The teachers from government schools are often engaged in non-educational work (provided by the government itself) and eventually this lead to the unpreparedness of students at earlier levels of education. If these elementary levels of education will prepared up to the expected mark in their performance, then obviously good performance in higher education is seen.
8. Politicization of education also tends to the process of the privatization. Most of the political leaders, directly or indirectly, have their private schools or other institutions, preferably professional institutions. It is observed that the political will is also in the favour of the privatization. However, the larger number of the schools and other institutions are suffering from the acute shortage of teacher and faculty members. Consequently, this results in a decline in quality of education.
9. Some lobbies or associations of non-aided private institutions are in favour of the rejection of government's grant-in-aids. If they do so, they will lose the profit in terms of heavy fees, donations, etc. This tendency is also indication of stickling

the path privatization. This may be one of the reason why shrinking of funds occurs in school and higher education.

10. Private institutions offer subjects/degrees which are presently important in the job market because this financially beneficial for the private sectors. But it is truth that the importance of the fundamental knowledge/subjects should not fluctuate with the buoyancy in the job market. The private sectors are neglecting this aspect because of their profit-oriented philosophy.

Conclusion

As in many countries in abroad, the government may get the help of the privatization to enrich and nurture the wealth of youth for future. But the mere privatization is not a substitute for the same. It is wise to realize that it may be a joint responsibility of the government and the private sector. Foreign schools and universities are already entering in India and implementing their interested curricula among Indian students, which is mostly of westernized kind. To realize and rectify the social and educational needs of India is not their prime objective. We must accept from others their bests but at the same time, we should not lose our best. So, it is not too late to think that India have her own education system run by her, controlled by her and for her in a sustainable manner.

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