

Quality improvement in Education

Vidyadevi Patil

Principal – Jai Ganesh College of Education, Pune, Maharashtra, India

Abstract

In this note we have tried to explain the need and tools for quality improvement in Education of India. As per the Indian census data 2001, the overall literacy rate was 64.8%, male literacy rate 75.3% and female with only 53.7%. The figure goes much lower in the rural areas. Overall literacy rate in rural areas was 58.7%, rural male literacy rate was 70.7% and female with as low as 46.1%. There is a vast scope to improve this literacy rate through various means. One of the effective tools for improvement is Privatization. In this context the process of Privatization is going to play a vital role in improvement of quality of education.

Introduction:

Recent years have brought a global increase of interest in privatization. The interest has been evident in all sectors of the economy and society, including education

Developing the quality in education is a systemic and continuous process that involves strategic and action planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating. Quality of education is dependent upon quality of staff, curricula, students, infrastructure, management, systematic evaluation, regulation, funding and forms of co-operation.

Privatization has been widely advocated as a mechanism to improve efficiency, cater for pluralistic preferences make institutions more accountable to their clients and reduce government expenditures. Privatization may have several meanings. Primarily, it is the process of transferring ownership of a business, enterprise, agency, public service, or public property from the public sector (a government) to the private sector, either to a business that operates for a profit or to a nonprofit organization. It may also mean government outsourcing of services or functions to private firms, e.g. revenue collection, law enforcement, and prison management.

Concept of Privatization:

Privatization is a process of moving from less public ownership financing and/or control to more private ownership financing and/or control. However privatization is a complex and ambiguous concept, a clue to this is given by the reference to three dimensions of change:

- i. Ownership
- ii. Financing and
- iii. Control

The literature defines and discusses the privatization of education in a wide range of ways. Laitsch, for example, sees that it encompasses three elements:

- Contracting out of services
- Bringing in private companies to run schools.
- Privatization of governance and funding.

Privatization may enhance efficiency in education in three different ways; first competition among providers may reduce the cost and improve the quality of services. Second, government financed services may more closely match consumer preferences, if consumers have opportunities to sort among an array of options. Third, private producers may more easily enlist the participation of consumers in the co-production of the services, thereby enhancing service, quality and effectiveness.

Types of Privatization:

There are main four type of privatization:

a) Transfer of ownership of public schools:

Deliberate transfer of ownership of existing public schools to private hands is the most striking form of privatization.

b) Increased Government Funding and support for private schools.

Government may strengthen the private sector by giving financial and other support to private schools.

c) Shifting sectoral Balance without redesigning existing institutions.

This type of privatization occurs through a more evolutionary shift in the balance of types of institution. Thus, the number and size of government schools might have held constant but the number and size of parallel private schools might be permitted or encouraged to increase. Alternatively, the government sector might expand, but the private sector might expand more or the government sector might contract, but the private sector may not contract so much, might remain constant or might expand.

d) Increased Private Financing and/or control of Government schools.

In this privatization, schools remain nominally under Government ownership but the proportion of finance and/or control by non-government sources is increased.

The National Knowledge Commission's (NKC) report recommends that to focus more on private investment to set up new institutions in higher education, the government should provide the land and the private sector should provide finances. Currently, there is no private investment which is not for profit. It recommends autonomy to colleges, either as individual colleges or as cluster of colleges.

Privatization succeeds and fails for several reasons of relevance to the Indian situation are four factors:

- a. Commitment
- b. Competition
- c. Transparency
- d. Mitigation.

These factors interactively make privatization yield the necessary results of these four factors, India scores highly on competition and transparency. But it scores poorly on commitment and mitigation

Outcomes and Issues arising from privatization:

The principle outcomes and issues arising from privatisation will be considered here under 5 headings:

1. Efficiency:

Efficiency has been focal point of policy debates about privatization of education in both industrialized and less developed countries. Most of the evidences indicate that private schools are more efficient than public ones. The study which contradicted these findings was focused on primary school mathematics and indicated that fully private schools were the least cost effective.

2. Accountability:

The arguments about accountability chiefly rest on the suppositions that (i) When parents pay for schooling, they are more likely to demand satisfactory performance from the principals and teachers, and (ii) In turn the principals and teachers will be more disposed to listen to the views of parents when they know that those parents could withdraw their custom if not satisfied.

Accountability is particularly visible in elite private schools, the clients of which are generally well educated and articulate.

3. Diversity:

Good schools often attract clients by offering curricula which emphasis sports, music and arts as well academic subjects. This can of course happen in public as well as private schools, though it is often more obvious in the private sector compared with elite and alternative curriculum private schools, second chance private schools are less likely to promote diversity

4. Access:

Where private schooling only substitutes for schooling, leaving the total number of places constant, atleast in macro terms the private sector cannot be said to expand excess. However in many settings the private expands the total number of places. This is particularly obvious in the case of second chance institutions.

5. Equity:

Issues of equity are perhaps of most important in the private schooling.

Dimensions of Privatizations:

The most important dimension is socioeconomic, but other important dimensions concern rural/urban disparities.

- Socio-economic dimension:

Access to elite private institutions is controlled by ability to pay the fees. Moreover, best teachers may prefer good private schools than the public sector schools. Some elite private schools offer scholarships to students from families who would be unable to pay the fees. Social inequalities can be observed in privatization process across generations.

- Rural/Urban dimensions:

Private schools are more common in urban areas than in rural areas. Now- a- days a number of private schools are established in rural areas also.

In the above manner, privatization develops quality in education. Moreover privatization is undoubtedly a global trend, not only in the economic sphere but also in social sectors including education.

Conclusion:

Developing the quality in education is a systemic and continuous process that involves strategic and action planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating. Quality of education is dependent upon quality of staff, curricula, students, infrastructure, management, systematic evaluation, regulation, funding and forms of co-operation.

Privatization is one of the effective methods to improve the quality. Change in ownership, financing and control will help improve the quality of staff, students, curricula, infrastructure, management, etc.

References:

1. www.censusindia.gov.in
2. Quality in Education – Jerome S. Arcaro.
3. Quality Education – UK. Singh, K.N. Sudarshan
4. Education and privatization – G. Bhabesh Sharma.
5. Privatization of Higher Education is the main aim – Vijender Sharma (NKC Report 2006)