

IMPACT OF PRIVATISATION ON TEACHER EDUCATION IN PUNJAB

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ABSTRACT

The present educational scenario of 21st century has become prone to stressing more on 'quality' than on 'quantity'. The quality of life of the people of any age largely depends upon the quality of existing system of Education and the quality of education in turn depends upon the quality of their teachers. The quality of teachers depends upon the quality of teacher education institutes. Teacher Education day by day is being governed by privately managed institutes. Privatisation is a global term that reduces the involvement and sharing of government agencies. The term refers to the shifting of activities, assets and responsibilities from the government to the private sector. The mushrooming of private teacher education institutions in India and particularly in Punjab in the last one and a half decade reflects the extent of privatisation. It has to come to stay in the system as after various reports of higher education, government of India seemed failure to provide higher education; specifically teacher education to all, rather allowed the private parties to play their major role in it. On one hand, government has permitted the private agencies to open the teacher education institutes and on the other hand, it has also lost control over their proper functioning and monitoring. To overcome the side effects of privatisation of teacher education, it is necessary that the private participation in teacher education with proper control & monitoring by the public agencies can be permitted so that teacher education develops a sound sustainable and equitable grounds and is made accessible to each & every section of the society.

Keywords: Privatisation, Its Impact on Accessibility and Quality of Teacher Education in Punjab.

The Present educational scenario of 21st century has become prone to stressing more on 'quality' than on 'quantity'. The quality of life of the people of any age largely depends upon the quality of existing system of Education and the quality of education in turn depends upon the quality of their teachers. The quality of teachers depends upon the quality of teacher education institutes. Teacher Education day by day is being governed by privately managed institutes. As per the NCTE Act, 1993, the term teacher education means programmes of education, research or training of persons for equipping them to teach at primary, secondary and senior secondary stages in schools. In other words, teacher education refers to the policies and programmes designed to equip prospective teachers with the knowledge, attitude and skills they require to perform their tasks

effectively in the classroom, school and community at large.

On the other hand, if we discuss privatization. It is a global term that reduces the involvement and sharing of government agencies. The term refers to the shifting of activities, assets and responsibilities from the government to the private sector. The mushrooming of private teacher education institutions in India and particularly in Punjab in the last one and a half decades reflects the extent of privatisation. According to Statistical Abstract of Punjab (2004), in 2001, Punjab had 23 Teacher Training Colleges (B.Ed.). There were only 14 private educational Colleges and Universities in Punjab in 2004 and it increases to 171 in 2013-14 in Punjab. The total intake of B.Ed students has increased from 2700 in 2001 to 27000 in 2013-2014. It clearly depicts the increasing growth of privatization in teacher

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Education in Punjab.

It seems that now privatization of higher education especially teacher education is something that cannot be ignored. It has to come to stay in the system as after various reports of higher education, government of India seemed failure to provide higher education to all rather allowed the private parties to play their major role in higher education. Consequently, the number of private teacher education institutes has increased exponentially. On one hand, government has permitted the private agencies to open the teacher education institutes and on the other hand, it has also lost control over their proper functioning and monitoring. The question that now arises is as to what extent and in what form and with what safeguards? Privatization has to be accepted only if it contributes to the innovative developments in teacher education without making compromises in the aspects of equity and quality. Everyone is skeptical of the claims of privatization with regards to relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of teacher education and is concerned about accessibility, equity and quality issues which I feel would get neglected with complete privatization.

Need of Privatisation in Teacher Education

1. Due to the explosion of knowledge and technological innovations, the existing institutions have not sufficient resources, both human & physical to meet the demands of the industry and other sectors of the economy.
2. Due to universalization of education or right to get education, there is an increasing demand of trained B.Ed. teachers but the existing government & govt. aided colleges are not in sufficient number to meet this demand. These demands of society and the market can be fulfilled with the opening of the private teacher education institutes.
3. In privately managed institutions, there is no interference of government in administration, management and financial matters. These institutes generate their own funds through high fee charges, donations & other useful resources.
4. Privately managed institutes are innovating

daring, dynamic and proliferating as the given government is unable to support the system. Higher education in India is in great financial crisis. The current spending on higher education in India is not more than 3.5% of the GDP which is very low as compared to the amount being spent by developing countries.

5. After the completion of one year B.Ed./M.Ed. or Two years E.T.T. course people get employment as a teacher in primary, secondary & senior secondary schools easily as compared to other professions. Teaching is also considered as one of the pious and noble professions.
6. India is a highly populated country, out of which the highest population is of the youth. Parents of the youth are ready to get their wards admitted even in management quota seats in these colleges as they think that it augments the matrimonial prospect as well as future security of their ward. Besides, investment in higher education especially professional education is treated as a factor contributing to the development of human resources.
7. Privatization is favoured on the ground that it would provide better quality in teacher education. Everybody expects that the competition between the public funded and privately funded institutes would result in improvement in quality & efficiency.

Impact of Privatisation on Teacher Education

Although the number of privately managed teacher education institutes has increased from 14 in 2004 to 171 in 2013-14. They are in majority against the government and government aided institutes. The impact of privatisation can be seen with regard to the various issues of success & quality of teacher education as follows:

1. **Lack of Quality Students:** The number of seats in the teacher education institutes outnumbered the number of students willing to take admission in these institutes due to the proliferation of privately owned teacher education institutes. According to new norms and standards of admission in B.Ed, almost every student of any graduate faculty has been made eligible for taking admission. These

institutes have given birth to another category of students for admission i.e. Non-attending category. Their main purpose is to collect the hefty fees and fill the seats only. Moreover, these institutes admit the students on first come first serve basis. The credit goes to these private teacher education institutes as they have produced a large number of unemployed and so called trained teachers. The teacher trainees also get the benefit of studying as a regular student in these privately owned colleges of education without even attending a single class. It's a serious issue for all of us who are concerned about preparing efficient and humane teachers so that the quality of education can be improved.

2. Lack of Quality Education: Privately managed teacher education institutes suffer from lack of quality education. Students are getting the degrees without attending any class and just by appearing directly in the final examination in these institutes. They neither prepare nor deliver the lessons practically in the various schools assigned for teaching practice. As a result of it, every year only 2 percent are deemed fit to qualify PSTET and mere 13,428 candidates out of 7.5 lac appeared candidates qualified CTET, 2014 conducted by CBSE, New Delhi which is prerequisite for getting employment in government or government aided schools. The various regulatory bodies for monitoring quality standards in the institutions under their preview like UGC, NCTE, NAAC etc. suffer from two major deficiencies- 1st the quality norms of such councils are not comparable with international standards especially its curriculum. Secondly, their implementation is not stringent. Almost all the private colleges of education even with inadequate physical infrastructure and unqualified faculty got recognized by the universities as well as NCTE. It's a big challenge to check the credibility of those who have been deputed to inspect these institutions.

3. Cost of Education: The private teacher education institutes have been allowed to take over the responsibility of imparting teacher education. It has added to the cost of education significantly and made teacher education a commodity available at a very high cost. Those with the ability to shell out more money often tend to get admitted in these

institutes without even fulfilling the basic eligibility requirements. Though the education loan has been made easy to facilitate teacher education, still the terms & conditions imposed by banks in terms of grantee and criteria of minimum income of family restrict the talent coming from the poor family to go for teacher education. The purpose of privately managed institute is to earn maximum profit from few elites that leads to exploitation of poor students. It will be a great step to exclusion of those economically, socially and geographically disadvantaged/unprivileged sections of the society and those get the degrees, by paying high fees look upon teacher education as commodity and are unlikely to feel any dedication towards the nation such as service of the poor mankind. The flexibility provided to the private institutions in the matters related to the fee structure would provide legal cover to the private institutions which increase the fees exorbitantly and also push the public sector institutions to follow their counterparts in private sector, eventually making it more difficult for those poor students too who are somehow managing to get teacher education in government or grant in aid colleges.

4. Exploitation of The Teaching Faculty: Privately managements negotiate on salary matters for the appointment of teaching staff. The private self-financed institutions of higher education exploit the teachers by paying them salaries which are not in consonance with the grades specified by various state government or central government agencies like UGC. They appoint ineligible & less qualified teaching staff who do not fulfill even the essential qualifications as per UGC/NCTE norms. Their sole purpose is to pay low salary forcing even the universities and other regulatory bodies to relax the conditions for these appointments. In addition to it, the basic working conditions are far from conducive for efficient functioning. The teachers are kept deprived of their basic rights like wages, holidays, freedom, study leaves & other incentives and have to work in highly insecure conditions with bare minimum administrative support & other perquisites. Thus, the privatization in teacher education led the teaching career neither socially nor financially rewarding. It has developed the commercial and

profit making mentality in the present and would be teachers community.

5. **Traditional and Unrevised Curriculum:**

Traditional and unrevised curriculum is being followed in the teacher education institutions affiliated to different universities. This compromises the standards of teacher training in the absence of exposure to the new international standards & innovative techniques of teaching & learning. There is also conspicuous lack of inter & intra disciplinary interaction which again contributes to parochial & shallow orientation towards teaching.

Privatization of teacher education programme should be planned in the light of the following under given suggestions:

- For controlling the proliferation and improving the quality in privately owned teacher education institutes, there must be centralized state level entrance test for getting admission in ETT or B.Ed. or M.Ed. course after the completion of senior secondary school examination or graduation so that candidates are freed from multiple entrance exams and manipulation by individual institutes for their personal interests. Merit should be the only criteria for admission in colleges of education & university and it must be the sole responsibility of the centralized state level admission committee to fill all the seats according to the merit. No seat except the management quota seats should be allowed to fill up by the colleges themselves.
- A centralized mechanism is required to put into practice for effective monitoring the recruitment of the faculty and ensure their salaries as per state government or UGC norms, redressing the genuine grievances and all kinds of exploitation of the teaching and other supporting staff working in privately owned teacher education institutes. Besides, there must be a state regulatory examination system to plug the chances of nepotism and favouritism.
- NCTE should conduct incidental visits to these institutes without any prior information to the visiting college. No compromise should be accepted by the NCTE on the grounds of requisite infrastructure and qualified faculty.

Moreover, No conditional recognition should be granted by both the university and the NCTE. Video films and written affidavits from the managements should be taken by the inspection committee. An exemplary punishment should be given to the defaulters including inspection committee members.

- Teacher education programmes at all levels need to be so moulded that they reflect professionalism in the process of teaching & training meaning thereby that the teacher education course should have specialized knowledge skills & inheriting code of ethics.
- There should be balance between number of training institutes, number of employment opportunities and emerging new schools. RTE Act should be strictly implemented in the various states of India.
- The governments (Centre as well as state) must play their respective role to ensure that the students are getting the academic and lodging facilities in consonance with the fees being paid by them. Moreover, the private teacher education institutes must be graded either by the respective state or other government sponsored regulatory body like UGC or NAAC or NCTE in the ascending order starting from 1 tolast. No two teacher education institutes must be ranked at par irrespective of being governed by public sector or by private sector so that a clear picture may emerge with regard to the ranking of the institutes. The present system has a major drawback as it categorizes the colleges of education only in four major categories like A+, A, B+, B etc. But in the new system if there are for example 171 colleges in Punjab, those will be categorized from number 1 to 171.
- The teacher education institutes constitutes an important link (both intra & inter disciplinary) in the entire education system. The services of the entire faculty members irrespective of their working in public or private teacher education institutes should be taken for revising and improving the curriculum so as to make it more innovative, practical and according to the

needs of the society. They should also analyze understand and suggest ways & means to make improvement in processes, procedures & practices of school education.

- Faculty members working in the private teacher education institutes should also be provided with incentives & scholarships for their international exposures, research & innovation in teaching. Moreover, there must be a clear comparison on yearly basis between public funded and privately owned teacher education institutes for their quality research of national and international repute so that it may become easy to evaluate their real worth for their contribution in the education field.

Conclusion

Providing education to all is a basic duty of government and it cannot be neglected. So government has to invest more and more funds in development of education and more particularly teacher education. The opportunities of teacher education to the weaker section should reach them as a matter of right bestowed on them by the Indian constitution. It will help to develop among the teacher trainees a sense of commitment and dignity towards their nation. To overcome the side effects of privatization of teacher education, it is necessary that the private participation in teacher education with proper control & monitoring by the public agencies can be permitted so that teacher education develops a sound sustainable and equitable grounds and is made accessible to each & every section of the society.

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