

## **Private Universities in India and Quality of Education**

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**Abstract:** *Private universities are different in size, enrolment, course offered, funding authority, financial and managerial capacity. However, the private universities are playing an important role in spreading the opportunities of higher education in our country India. But, only a few private universities are providing quality education and some are not quality concerned. Public universities are the best options of the students for higher education and then come private universities. Private universities emerged as an alternative to cope up with the expanded demand of higher education. Now-a-days private universities represent the fastest growing sector in higher education. The general objective of this study is, to explore the quality education of the private universities in India.*

**Keywords:** *Private universities, quality of education.*

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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

"Private university" in India means a university duly established through a state/central act by a sponsoring body eg; a society registered under the Societies Registration Act 1860, or any other corresponding law for the time being in force in a state or a public trust or a company registered under Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956.

According to Section 2 (f) of the UGC Act, 1956, 'University' means a University established or incorporated by or under a Central Act, a Provincial Act or a State Act, and includes any such institution, as may, in consultation with the University concerned, be recognized by the Commission (UGC) in accordance with the regulations made in this behalf under this Act (e.g., deemed universities under Section 3, UGC Act) (UGC 2002: 6). This means that, other than the deemed university route; universities need to be legislated into existence, by parliament or state legislature (Amlanjyoti Goswami, 2012).

Private universities are different in size, enrolment, course offered, funding authority, financial and managerial capacity. Only a few universities are providing quality education and some are not quality concerned. Public university is the best options of the students for higher education and then comes private university. Private university emerged as an alternative to cope up with the expanded demand of higher education. Only a few of them are maintaining standard but a huge allegation are being raised against the rests.

### **2. BACKGROUND OF THE PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA**

Higher education in India has largely been the preserve of the government till recently in terms of both funding and provision of education. In the 2000s the government of India realized the need for setting up private universities as it was clear that the public universities in India would not be able to meet the increasing demand for higher education. It was a milestone in the history of higher education. Private universities are established by philanthropic, religious, and private organizations and foundations, and by not-for-profit organizations. At present there are 165 private universities in India. Some are providing world standard education. These quality institutions have prepared a ground to compete each other about the quality of education they are providing.

However, the private universities are playing an important role in spreading the opportunities of higher education in our country India. But in recent years a widespread allegations were raised against private universities that easy-to-get degrees, high tuition fees, etc. In this context this study is an initiative to explore the education quality of private universities that is offered by them. On this ground reality, this study has taken an initiative to know the issues related to education quality of the private universities.

### **3. HIGHER EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

It is well known education and development are intertwined. Through education, a country develops its productive human resources that serve as the engine of social and economic transformation and carry forward national development. Only when human resources-their skills, talents, energies, and knowledge are effectively developed and harnessed, a nation can attain the capability and credibility to bring about positive social changes and much needed economic growth. To achieve the development of the country we need skilled, knowledgeable manpower. Only quality education can ensure expected level of human resource (Md. Abu Naser, 2013).

### **4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM**

Despite the rapid increase in the enrolment in higher education during the last decade the quality of education remains a serious cause of concern. Education especially higher education has an important role for the development of a country. The basic objectives of the universities are providing education, conducting research and creating new knowledge. Andaleeb (2003) says that, higher education is of strategic importance not only as an engine for human resource development and as a facilitator of growth through forward and backward linkages, it also serves as an incubator and repository of knowledge with untold potential.

Research is a neglected issue in a private university. There is no established culture for research. Faculties have no scope, allocation for doing research. Faculties those who have interest do not get facility. Authorities have no initiatives and budget allocation for this. Some faculties are doing research on their own initiatives for their academic development. Research is part of higher education. But private universities deduct it from their mission and vision. This trend affects the quality of an institution.

### **5. QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The term "quality" is derived from the Latin word "qualitas," which means the degree of excellence of a thing (Oxford Dictionary, 2003). Coombs (1985) defines the word quality as: qualitative dimensions means more than the quality of education as customarily defined and judged by student learning achievements, in terms of traditional curriculum and standards.

Defining quality in higher education is proved to be a challenging task. Cheng and Tam (1997) suggest that education quality is a rather vague and controversial concept and Pounder (1999) argued that quality is a 'notoriously ambiguous term'. At the broadest level, education quality can be viewed as a set of elements that constitute the input, process and output of the education system, and provide services that completely satisfy both internal and external strategic constituencies by meeting their explicit and implicit expectations (Cheng and Tam, 1997).

One of the prime goals of quality education is to build knowledge, life skills, perspectives, attitudes and values of the students to transform the society into a more productive, sustainable one. Quality education attempts to uphold and convey the ideals of a sustainable world. It takes into consideration the social, economic, and environmental contexts of the country and helps shape the curriculum or program to reflect their respective unique conditions. To achieve general and specific goal quality education is needed for every country (Aminuzzaman, Salahuddin M, 2008).

Quality higher education develops leadership qualities in people of different professions and develops awareness in the learners to protect independence, sovereignty and integrity of the country. A high quality assurance in education in India is not only imperative for her internal human resource management but also to survive, compete and succeed in the globally competitive environment.

## 6. IMPORTANT FACTORS FOR QUALITY EDUCATION

Quality of education depends on various issues. The broad areas are management, teaching quality, faculty resources, method of teaching, technology support, update curriculum, direct and indirect infrastructure, etc. With all these, university should have specific mission and vision to its goal. We have some success stories in private universities in India. Md. Abu Naser (2013) suggests that these are the some important factors for quality education:

- i. Faculty member: Teacher is the central focus of the whole educational set up. Skilled and experienced teacher and their dedication to teaching can motivate students to achieve their goal. A teacher is a change maker; he is mentor and harbinger while the students are followers. With good academic background teaching method is also important. Teaching is an art, how interestingly a teacher can involve his/her student in learning process depends on his skill, devotion, technique and communication skill. So, quality teacher is immensely needed for an institution for maintaining education quality.
- ii. Promotion and salary package: Thinker's opinion is- a few good teachers are born; most must develop. To enhance teaching skill needs training and research. Motivation is another important factor related to skill development and satisfaction to work. If teachers don't get logistic support, remuneration, recognition, teaching-friendly environment, related support service then all devotion and experience may not carry any result.

Promotion prospect is another important thing to recognize the quality and devotion of faculty members that creates enthusiasm to the profession and speed-up their career. Proper and justice oriented recognition creates space for teacher to dedicate themselves in their profession. Otherwise it may reduce their interest and hinder to grooming up in teaching that finally results negatively in their output level.

- iii. Teaching: Teaching forms the backbone of any educational system. The objective of teaching is the transmission of knowledge from the teacher to the taught ones. Apart from classroom lectures, more innovative teaching can be imparted through other modes including discussions, case study analysis, presentations, field projects, role play, and simulation methods amongst others. Teaching methods in synchronization with the learning objectives will facilitate better teaching-learning process.
- iv. Research activities: One of the major aims of higher education institutions is knowledge creation. Research is the only way to create knowledge and develop or enrich the existing knowledge. Higher education institutions follow the combination of theoretical and practical knowledge to create professionals who have the conceptual clarity, analytical skill and academic knowledge to face successfully development challenges. Institutional support is more important to promote and nourish the research culture. Without support and recognition of research activities faculties cannot do it successfully. In reality there is no research culture developed in private universities in India till now.

Research focuses on exploration of the knowledge. In an educational system of any country, research has been stereotyped to be part of higher education system. Research facilitates new insight into the subject matter. It is related to innovation. It has been evidenced that many scientific innovation were led by research, which were followed by commercialization of products. It is therefore imperative that a good research system not only promotes scientific and rationale thinking, but also leads to economic well being in the long run.

- v. Infrastructure facilities: Physical facilities are very important for higher level education. Quality education develops leadership quality. Jamal (2002) in his study, emphasized on some issues for judging the standards of a university, physical infrastructure is one of them. There are some direct facilities pertinent to education and research. A well-structured and education-friendly campus, sufficient classroom, rich library, laboratory for research and lab-based courses, internet facilities is very much relevant. With these some other facilities must be needed for tertiary level. As students are the future leader of the nation, they need proper mental development. Club activities like debate, environment club, nature study club, photography, cultural organization, language club, social

activities club, etc enrich them to know and to involve the relevant issues of development. These activities help them to develop social responsibility. In-door and out-door games facilities should have in a campus. Library is a part and parcel for education and research. It is hub of knowledge. In library sufficient reference and text books, journals, online journals, audio-visual items and congenial reading environment are also important for higher level of education.

- vi. Extension: Extension activities are primarily aimed on the application of the developed knowledge to address the common problems of the society. A good higher education serves to solve the problem of the society. It serves to promote local community development by involving the locals.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

Private higher education in India is getting more competitive with the remarkable increase in the number of academic institutions in the country. Despite the relentless and continuous effort of private educational institutions, quality has not yet achieved at the desired level. The cost of private education is another dimension to consider, as it is unaffordable in India, and more effort needs to be made if costs are to be lowered.

The goal of higher education is not only to create new knowledge and disseminate it, but also create skilled forces for the country to face development challenges. Quality and balanced education system can help to achieve this goal. Still there is no research culture developed in private universities. In job market, job providers do not think graduates/post- graduates have same skill from every university. Only few universities graduates/post -graduates have high demand in job market and they are capable enough to fight in global market. Researcher and academician said that though few private universities of India have gained both national and international reputation, but not all of them are functioning with the same level of efficiency.

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