

IS PRIVATIZATION IMPROVING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION?

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T HIS is an era of privatization and globalization of Indian higher education, the second largest HE system in the world. India produces the second largest annual output of scientists and engineers in the World, behind only the United States (Biswas, 2004). We are in the knowledge economy and talking of making India a developed country by 2020. For this the HE has to play the crucial role. "At any point of time, weakening of higher education sector would weaken the forces of competitiveness and efficiency in the functioning of different sectors of economy..." (Panchamukhi, 2002). But is IHE competitive enough to face these challenges and take advantage of the emerging opportunities. In this paper I am trying to analyse whether Privatization is improving the Competitiveness of Indian Higher Education using M. Porter's Diamond Model.

Demand Conditions

There is a huge demand for high quality education in India. For IITs total seats of around 2000 every year 1,00,000 plus students take JEE. Similarly, for IIMs and leading universities and colleges for various streams the trend is the same. It is estimated that during the tenth Five-year plan period 2002-07 there will be a tremendous pressure of numbers on this system and a large number of additional students will be knocking at the doors of higher education institutes in the country (Recommendations of the UGC Golden Jubilee Seminars-2003).

There has been a rapid expansion in higher education, with student enrollment growing at about 5 percent annually over the past two decades (Table1). This growth is about two-and-half times the population growth rate and results from both a population bulge in lower age cohorts as well as increased demand for higher education.

The gross enrollment ratio of Indians in institutions of higher education is approximately 7 percent of the age group, which is considerably higher than developing country averages, but lower than the average for Asia as a whole (11 percent) and much lower than OECD countries. The bulk of students (nearly two thirds) are enrolled in arts and science, with another 18 percent in commerce/management (Table 2). This is crucial because most "private investment" in higher education is concentrated in professional courses. Enrollment ratios vary across Indian states, with the Southern and Western states faring better than their Eastern counterparts. Women now constitute about 40 percent of all student enrollments, varying from a low of 24 percent in Bihar to a high of 60 percent in Kerala.

Is Privatization helping in further improving the quality of demand?

It is more no than yes. 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 I.Q. are also getting admissions creating an over supply of low caliber products in the market. These institutes/universities are just working like a factory, taking more and

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**Table1: All India Growth of Student Enrolment
(1983-84 to 2002-2003)**

Year	Total Enrolement	Increase over the preceding year	Percentage
1983-84	33,07,649	1,74,556	5.6
1984-85	34,04,096	96,447	2.9
1985-86	36,05,029	2,00,933	5.9
1986-87	37,57,158	1,52,129	4.2
1987-88	40,20,159	2,63,001	7
1988-89	42,85,489	2,65,330	6.6
1989-90	46,02,680	3,17,191	7.4
1990-91	49,24,868	3,22,188	7
1991-92	52,65,886	3,41,018	6.9
1992-93	55,34,966	2,69,080	5.1
1993-94	58,17,249	2,82,283	5.1
1994-95	61,13,929	2,96,680	5.1
1995-96	65,74,005	4,60,076	7.5
1996-97	68,42,598	2,68,593	4.1
1997-98	72,60,418	4,17,820	6.1
1998-99	77,05,520	4,45,102	6.1
1999-00	80,50,607	3,45,087	4.5
2000-01	83,99,443	3,48,836	4.3
2001-02*	88,21,095	4,21,652	5
2002-03*	92,27,833	4,06,738	4.6

* Provisional

Source: University Grants Commission.**Table 2. Student Enrolment by Academic Discipline (2002-2003)**

Discipline	Total Enrollment	Percent of the total
1. Arts	41,58,606	45.07
2. Science	18,34,493	19.88
3. Commerce/Management	16,60,238	17.99
4. Education	1,32,572	1.43
5. Engineering/Technology	6,92,087	7.5
6. Medicine	3,00,669	3.25
7. Agriculture	55,367	0.6
8. Veterinary Science	14,765	0.16
9. Law	2,98,291	3.23
10. Others	80,745	0.88
Total	92,27,833	100

Source: University Grants Commission.

more substandard students and producing more degrees of poor quality. As justified by the following observations at international and national level:

This fear was well advocated by the World Bank. “The motivation for establishing (Private) institutions is always to make money. British and Australian institutions have been active internationally as a way of making up for budget cuts at home” (Douglas and Zideman, 2000).

The Draft Guidelines for a Model Act, UGC admits that, “Due to the commercial nature of their activities, their number and nationwide spread are likely to increase in the coming years” (Draft Guidelines for a Model Act, UGC, 2003).

The scope of control and regulation of private institutions of HE should be carefully determined to limit the commercial interest on the one hand and ensure the principles of equity and norms of quality on the other (NIEPA, 2004).

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).

Supply Conditions

There is a huge shortage in supply for high quality educations in India. The seats are insufficient particularly at Indian apex institutes/universities. This lack of quality is accepted by UGC. UGC recommended that “Strong quality control measures to assure performance above an acceptable benchmark is essential for the institutions. We are at the moment weak in this regard. A regulatory system to set the benchmarking with sufficient powers to close down non-complying institutions are the need of the hour” (UGC, 2003).

There has been a considerable increase in the spread of educational institutions during the period 1950-51 and 2001-2002. This is evident from Table 3. The number of Colleges for general education and professional education increased by about 24 and 12 times respectively while the number of Universities increased by 10 times during the period.

Table 4 gives the faculty wise list of colleges in the country for 2001-02.

This lack of supply of quality education is supported by international studies also. In a survey done by EduWorld, an Australian research firm, Indian students were not forced to look outside of their home country to find their desired course of study .as the case of many Asian students. Instead, the quality of education and the perceived value of an overseas degree appear to be the most significant factors influencing students decisions to study outside India (Arnold, 2001).

A large number of Indian students are going abroad to countries like USA, UK, Australia, and Canada for higher education. There are about 110,000 Indian students studying abroad-nearly 75,000 in the US, about 14,000 each in UK and Australia, and at least another 5000 in Canada and New Zealand. Indians are spending between Rs 3,5000crores on higher education abroad (Kapur and Mehta, 2004) .In academic year 2002/03, there were 74,603 students from India studying in the United States (up 11.6% percent from the previous year) (Table 5). For the second year in a row, India remained the leading place of origin for students in the United States.

The total no of foreign students studying in India were more than 8000 in 2002-03 (UGC).

Can Privatization help in further improving supply?

Here the privatization drive helps to some extent. The private are able to provide alternate source of education to the aspiring youth. But most of these efforts are limited to the professional courses. In the Medical and Management education the private players are coming up like anything (Table 6) and some of them are providing the quality education like Manipal group in medical or S.P. Jain in Management.

Table 3: Growth of Recognised He Institutions from 1950-51 to 2001-2002

Years	Colleges for General Education	Colleges for Professional Education (Engg., Tech., Arch., Medical & Education colleges)	Universities/Deemed University/Institute of National Importance
1950-51	370	208	27
1955-56	466	218	31
1960-61	967	852	45
1965-66	1536	770	64
1970-71	2285	992	82
1975-76	3667	3276	101
1980-81	3421	3542	110
1985-86	4067	1533	126
1990-91	4862	886	184
1991-92	5058	950	196
1992-93	5334	989	207
1993-94	5639	1125	213
1994-95	6089	1230	219
1995-96	6569	1354	226
1996-97	6759	1770	228
1997-98	7199	2075	229
1998-99*	7494	2113	237
1999-2000*	7782	2124	244
2000-2001*	7929	2223	254
2001-2002*	8737	2409	272

* Provisional

Source: IAMR, MHRD website. <http://education.nic.in/htmlweb/iamrstat.htm>

Related and Supporting Industries

There is a huge deficit in quality related and supporting industries.

Lack of quality faculty: Faculty is the most important requirement for quality HE. But there is a lack of quality faculty in general. Lamenting over the shortage of high quality faculty for prestigious management and technical educational institutions in the country, Infosys Technologies Limited chief mentor N.R. Narayana Murthy has said a mechanism should be devised to enrol and retain quality faculty by providing them more incentives and research facilities. Saying that the quality of the faculty in engineering colleges was “abysmally low”, the software wizard said not even five per cent of job seekers in Infosys were from the faculty in engineering colleges across the country. “They cannot even compete with their own students”, he said (Murthy, 2004).

There are two things a) Well qualified faculty are leaving govt. institutes for lucrative offers from abroad or private sector and b) well qualified \bright young people are opting for more lucrative jobs in industry/abroad. Member states and higher education institutions should, nevertheless, be conscious of the exodus of higher-education teaching personnel from the developing countries. They should, therefore encourage aid programmes to the developing countries to help sustain an academic environment which offers satisfactory conditions of work for higher – education teaching personnel in those countries, so that the exodus may be contained and ultimately reversed. (UNESCO, 1997).

Table 4: Type-Wise Number of Colleges in the Country: 2001-2002

Type	Number
- Arts, Science, Commerce & Oriental Learning Colleges	: 11128
- Teachers Training	: 784
- Engineering/Technology/Architecture	: 1077
- Medical	: 1253
of which	
Allopathy	: 262
Ayurveda	: 189
Homeopathy	: 141
Unani/Tibbia	: 29
Dental	: 142
Nursing	: 122
Pharmacy	: 241
Psysiotherapy	: 120
Natuurotherapy	: 5
Public Health	: 2
- Agriculture	: 106
- Veterinary/Animal Science	: 50
- Law	: 368
- Others*	: 671
Total	15437

*Others includes Colleges exclusive for Library Science, Physical Education/Yoga, Music/Fine Arts, Social Work, Journalism/Mass Communication etc. & Colleges for which type is not available.

Source: University Grants Commission

Note: The data was valid as of January 1, 2002

Table 5: Indo-US Education Trade

Year	# of Students from India	% of Total Foreign Students in US	# of US Study Abroad Students Going to India
2002/03	74,603	12.7%	n.a.
2001/02	66,836	11.5%	627 (down16.4%)
2000/01	54,664	9.9%	750
1999/00	42,337	8.2%	811
1998/99	37,482	7.6%	707
1997/98	33,818	7.0%	684
1996/97	30,641	6.7%	601
1995/96	31,743	7.0%	470
1994/95	33,537	7.4%	409
1993/94	34,796	7.7%	382

Source: Open Doors: Report on International Educational Exchange, published annually by IIE, with support from the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, 2003.

Table 6: Management structure of Engineering and Medical Colleges across States (2003)

State	Medical Colleges		% Private	Engineering Colleges		% Private
	Govt.	Private		Govt.	Private	
Andhra Pradesh	14	14	50	10	213	95.5
Assam	3	0	0	3	0	0
Bihar	6	2	25	4	3	42.9
Chattisgarh	2	0	0	2	9	81.8
Delhi	5	0	0	7	7	50
Gujarat	8	4	33.3	9	16	64
Haryana	1	2	66.6	7	29	80.5
Himachal Pradesh	2	0	0	2	3	60
Jharkhand	0	2	100	4	2	33.3
Karnataka	4	22	84.6	13	99	88.4
Kerala	7	8	53.3	31	51	62.2
Madhya Pradesh	5	1	16.7	6	47	88.7
Maharashtra	19	18	48.6	16	133	89.3
Orissa	3	0	0	6	38	86.4
Punjab	3	3	50	11	27	71
TamilNadu	12	7	36.8	16	234	93.6
Uttar Pradesh	10	2	16.7	25	58	69.9
Uttaranchal	0	2	100	5	4	44.4
West Bengal	7	0	0	15	37	71.2

Source: Medical Council of India and AICTE.

Good faculty is a must for any higher education institution aspiring for quality. It is high time that an Indian Higher Educational Services, along with the lines of the IAS, is formed. This has the advantage of quality control of the teaching faculty for higher education. This could ensure that there is a continuous infusion of young blood in to the teaching cadre; which is not happening at the moment (UGC, 2003).

Lack of industry support: The linkage between industry and academia are quite weak in India as compared to US or other developed countries.

Lack of research: Indian universities/institutes barring a few are more of a teaching centre than of a research oriented centre of excellence. Research is the most important input for quality education but it has not received that importance in Indian HE institutes, particularly in the private sector. Though the universities are producing a large number of PhDs as shown in Table 7 but these are mainly for other reasons instead for research sake.

Lack of infrastructure: The infrastructure facilities at the universities/institutes are not sufficient.

Is privatization helping at developing related and supporting industries?

Faculty: Some of the private institutes have been able to pull faculty from the govt owned institutes/universities. Specially, the retired faculty is working with them. So they do provide an alternative option to the faculty who wants to work outside the govt. system.

Table 7: Faculty-Wise Number Of Doctorate Degrees Awarded During 2000-2001 And 2001-2002

Faculty	No. of Doctorate Degrees Awarded	
	2000-01	2001-02**
Arts	4398	4545
Science	3727	4012
Commerce/ Management	621	704
Education	399	427
Engineering/Technology	778	747
Medicine	221	192
Agriculture	889	781
Veterinary Science	110	90
Law	105	108
Others*	296	293
Total	11534	11899

* Others includes Music/Fine Arts, Library Science, Physical Education, Journalism, Social Work, etc.

** Provisional

Source: UGC

But what about the development of new faculty?

Most of the private institutes' don't focus much on faculty development.

Industry interaction/support: The private institutes put more efforts at interactions with the industry as compared to govt ones. But these are generally focused more on placements or summer training or some occasional seminars etc.

Majority (64%) of the institutions are not getting support from outside agencies. One is getting support from AICTE, UGC, State Govt. and Industry. One is getting support from Govt. of India and international agencies. Other one has sent proposal to AICTE for support. One talks about getting information help from companies. And one respondent has no idea about it (Bhattacharya, 2004).

Research: The performance of the private institutes at research is quite pathetic. They are not helping in that. These are some of the interesting findings based on a survey on the participant in a National Workshop for Business Schools:

1. There is an overwhelming support to the idea that research is very important for excellence in business education. A very high majority (86%) of the respondents rates it at 5 i.e. very important and seven percent rates it at 4 i.e. Important on the 5-point Likert Scale and only a very small (7%) group feels that it is not important at all. Nearly half of the respondents (43%) say that they are not doing research. The type of research carried at various institutions varies.
2. Ironically about half (43%) of the institutions don't have a research policy and a good number (14%) of people have no idea about it. Forty three percent of respondents say their institution has a research policy. And the policies mentioned are quite vague as they talk only about research papers/publication awards and PhD degrees of faculty members.
3. Nearly half (49%) of respondents say their institution provides organizational support for research and this is mainly in the form of moral support, leave and some internet/library access. Forty three percent of

the institutions don't provide any organizational support to the faculty for research. A small percentage (7%) has no idea about it.

4. Majority (64%) of the institutions are not getting support from outside agencies. One is getting support from AICTE, UGC, State Govt. and Industry. One is getting support from Govt. of India and international agencies. Other one has sent proposal to AICTE for support. One talks about getting information help from companies. And one respondent has no idea about it.
5. Lack of top management support (57%), lack of research culture (50%) and lack of faculty motivation (50%) are the major reasons for lack of quality research at B-schools in India. Lack of recognition/rewards (36%), shortage of research staff (29%), lack of resources (29%), lack of support from industry (21%) and lack of govt. support (21%) are the other major problems for quality research at B-schools in India. There is more than one major reason for lack of quality research at most of the institutions (Bhattacharyya, 2004).

Infrastructure: The leading institutes in private sector provide better infrastructure than the govt. ones but rest of the private institutes' infrastructure is worse than the govt sector.

Nearly half (49%) of respondents say their institution provides organizational support for research and this is mainly in the form of moral support, leave and some internet/library access. Forty three percent of the institutions don't provide any organizational support to the faculty for research. A small percentage (7%) has no idea about it (Bhattachryya, 2004).

The private sector can do more on this. "The private sector should be encouraged to invest more in creating infrastructure for higher education" Murthy (Murthy, 2004).

Firm Structure, Strategy and Rivalry

Most of the private institutions are owner controlled. Particularly in management field, they lack a professional management and a visionary leader.

There is tough rivalry among the private universities/institutes. This is the area where privatization is helping. The competition has increased. This is further supported by the increasing expenditure on advertisement. Registered double digits in advertisement spending to the tunes of Rs. 250 cr on Print and Rs. 28 cr on electronic media in 2003 (Gupta and Zachariahs, 2004).

Role of Government

The role of Indian Govt in HE is not promising in the recent past. There are two major issues on which it has failed.

Lack of vision and long term policy

Higher Education in India is being de facto privatized on a massive scale. But this privatization is not a result of changing ideological commitments of the key actors – the state, the judiciary or India's propertied classes. Rather, this privatization has resulted from a breakdown of the state system and an exit of Indian elites from public institutions, to both private sector institutions within the country as well as abroad. Private philanthropy in higher education, which was supportive of public institutions in the past, is also increasingly withdrawing its support. Consequently the ideological and institutional underpinnings of this form of privatization remain exceedingly weak. Instead of being part of a comprehensive program of education reform, private initiatives remain hostage to the discretionary actions of the state. As a result, the education system remains suspended between over-regulation by the state on the one hand, and a discretionary privatization that is unable to mobilize private capital in productive ways. The result is a sub-optimal structuring of higher education (Kapur and Mehta, 2004).

The govt polices in recent past has created more confusion and giving a concrete guidance and set up for higher institutions in the private sector. The bill for private universities though introduced in 1995 in

Rajya Sabha is still pending. There are states like Chhattisgarh making its own Private University Act in 2002 for private universities and leading to mushrooming of universities with questionable credentials. Lately, UGC has come up with UGC (Establishment of and Maintenance of Standards in Private Universities) Regulations 2003. And it has issued list of private universities denotified. The issue of recognition of foreign universities campus giving degrees in India also created a lot of confusion. The absence of a coherent long-term policy perspective on higher education has been the hallmark of Indian higher education in the 1990s and even in the present decade (Tilak, 2002).

Finance: The percentage expenditure on University and Higher Education to GDP, which was 0.77 % in 1990-91 shows a gradual decrease to 0.62% during 1997-98 and rises to 0.88% in 2000-2001. The percentage share of higher education to total expenditure remained between 2.32% to 2.96% in the last decade (Educational statistics IAMR).

**Table 8: Public Expenditures on Higher Education
(Share of GDP and Total Education Expenditures)**

Country	Year	Tution & Fees	Govt. subsidy	Private donations & others	Endowment Income	Sales & services	Total
U.S.A	1990	39.6	19.2	13.3	5.3	22.6	100*
Japan	1987	70.4	13	6.5	10	0	100
Canada	1993	14.2	65.2	6.8	4.8	8	100
Korea	1988	82	3	10	5	0	100
Philippines	1990	51	40	6	0.1	2.1	100
India	1987	12.4	80.5	6.5	0.43	0	100
Kenya	1991	80	7	2.5	0	9	100

*Note:** Based on the new series of GDP with base 93-94=100; ** Quick estimates of GDP.

Source: Analysis of Budgeted Expenditure on Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development.

**Table 9: Public Expenditures on Higher Education
(Share of GDP and Total Education Expenditures)**

Year	Expenditure on Education as % of GDP	Expenditure on HE as % of Total Expenditure on Education	Expenditure on HE as % of GDP
1981-90	3.59	15.6	0.34
1991-92	3.44	9.78	0.41
1992-93	3.78	10.79	0.4
1993-94	3.68	10.97	0.39
1994-95	3.61	10.81	0.37
1995-96	3.6	10.14	0.35
1996-97	3.57	9.77	0.35
1997-98	3.53	10.01	0.38
1998-99	3.85	9.93	0.46
1999-00(R)	4.35	10.63	0.48
2000-01(B)**	3.91	12.14	0.6

*Note:** Based on the new series of GDP with base 93-94=100; ** Quick estimates of GDP

Source: Analysis of Budgeted Expenditure on Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development.

Higher education in India is in deep financial strain. The share of higher education in total planned resources increased from 0.71 % in the first Five-Year plan to 1.24 % in the fourth Five-Year plan. But ever since, it has declined continuously to 0.53 % in the seventh Five-Year plan and further down to 0.35% in the Eighth Five-Year plan. Thus higher education in India is characterized by massive public investment, this investment is still regarded as much below the optimum (Joshi, 1998).

The Govt. of India for the first time in 1997 put higher education and secondary in 'non merit good', govt. subsidies for which would need to be reduced drastically. It argued that social rates of return are higher in primary education than secondary or higher education (GOI, 1997).

It is heartening to note that a recent Task Force of the World Bank, while fully supporting the continuation of larger investment in primary and secondary education rebutted the traditional economic argument, which is based on "limited understanding of what higher education institutions contribute". The Task Force challenged the notion that public investment in higher education is socially inequitable. It said: 'Rate-of-Return Studies treat educated people as valuable only through their higher earnings and the greater tax revenues extracted by society. But educated people clearly have many other effects on society: educated people are well – positioned to be economic and social entrepreneurs, having far reaching impact on the economic and social well being of their communities. Rates of return analysis entirely misses the impact of university based research on the economy – a far reaching social benefit that is at the heart of the argument for developing strong higher education system". (Douglas and Ziderman, 2000).

The funding of Higher Education requires both public and private resources.. and the role of the state remains essential in this regard. Public support to higher education and research remains essential to ensure a balanced achievement of educational and social missions (World Conference on Higher education,1998).

Strong regulatory mechanism to monitor and control private university activities with the objective of ensuring quality and social accountability is required. Those with commercial interest dominating over the quality education interests and ethics of higher education shall be eliminated (UGC, 2003).

The global pattern of funding clearly shows that higher education remains very much a state dominated sector. In OECD countries such as Denmark and Holland, public funding provides 98% of the resources in this sector; the figure is almost 90% for Canada and 78% in US (Kapur and Mehta, 2004).

All these statements makes it very clear that the policy of GOI leaving HE completely in hands of private sector, that too in this era of services economy in which HE is essential, is faulty and will have far reaching consequences.

Conclusion

Private sector has played a crucial role in the higher education in many countries. In US almost half of the institutes/universities for higher education are in private sector. There is a lack of vision and long term policy on privatization of higher education in GOI. In general, the privatization has not been able to improve the competitiveness of Indian higher education to a great extent. Though it is providing an alternative to the supply constrained higher education, increasing competition and providing an alternative platform to the senior faculty from govt. institutions.

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