

Privatization and Quality in Teacher-Education: A Study of Policies and Practices

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ABSTRACT

The neo-liberal policies in early 1990s have led to several drastic changes across the sectors in India. Education in general and teacher education in particular have also received gradual attention by the private sectors. However, privatization in professional higher education received early attention especially in the Engineering sector, ITs and Management education sector, whereas privatization in teacher education sector received late attention especially after 2000-01. Universalization of school education with the largest educational programme, i.e. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (2001) gave rise to an increasing demand for teacher education programmes in India. Increasing private self-financing teacher education institutions during early of last decade (2002-03 to 2007-08) posed a larger threat to the quality of teacher education in India (SBCR-MHRD 2008, Siddiqui 2009, JVC 2012 & Pritam 2009). Various reports, committees and commissions negatively identified privatization and its correlation with quality education in the last decade. As a result, NCTE on Justice Verma Commission Report 2012 made an attempt to reform entire teacher education policy, its curriculum and respected deliberations.

This paper attempted to gaze into the increasing gap between policies and practice in education in general and, particularly in the teacher education sector with special emphasis on the role of privatization in policy making and vice versa. It further supplements the increasing gap between policies and practices in teacher education with the empirical data related to privatization, quality concerns, and practices of Norms and Standards of NCTE in self-financing teacher education institutions.

Keywords: Teacher Education, Privatization, Policy, Practice, Quality

At one hand, privatization has improved job prospects among professionally-educated manpower on the other hand; there seems a mushroomed and unplanned production of professional education institutions. It further led to the production of a large number of unemployable degree-holders as well, which certainly has some connotation for degrading quality in education. Unplanned and mushroomed growth of teacher education institutions, decreasing Norms and Standards for the establishment of institutions, lack of professionally qualified teacher educators and several other indications have contributed much to deteriorating quality in teacher education institutions in the recent past. Hence, there is an immediate need to study the

quality concerns, especially in self-financing teacher education of institutions (SFTEIs).

The contemporary knowledge through available sources such as researcher's academic experiences and research readings, other research reports and literature in related areas of the study streamline towards the burning issue of privatization in teacher education focusing quality concerns. Documentary evidences gained through the Sixth Survey of Educational Research (2006-07), Sudeep Banerjee Committee Report (2007), Justice Verma Committee Report (2012), Pritam (2009) and Singh (2002), Supply and Demand Study (2011) of NCTE, etc. have repetitively emphasised that increasing privatization led to commercialization, which

questions worrisome quality concerns in teacher education. Based on these evidence and researchers' own educated hunch, the idea of conducting this study was conceived in order to find out the gaps, differences, and similarities in policies and practices in teacher education, largely through Norms and Standards of NCTE. Besides, the study also probes into the causing factors of privatization in teacher education and trends of privatization in the post-independent era.

Rationale of the Study

The existing literature on privatisation and teacher education (Singh 2002; Powar 2004; Pritam 2009; Batra 2012; Kumar 2009, etc.) evidently reveals that privatization has a strong footprint in the teacher education sector, and have played a greater role in commercial practice leading to quality degradation in education in general and teacher education in particular. Although a few studies have been conducted in the area of teacher education, privatization of education and higher education in general yet, there is very little literature available on privatization, self-financing institutions of teacher education and its impact on the quality of education in the Indian context. So, this study tried to explore the less explored area of privatization in teacher education with a particular reference to its impact on the quality of teacher education. On the backdrop of the present scenario of privatization in teacher education, the knowledge gap and significance of the study, it is essential to investigate the quality of teacher education programme, especially in self-financing institutions.

Objectives of the Study

Based on the literature survey, knowledge gap and justification of the study, following objectives of the study are described below:

1. To find out growth trends of privatization of teacher education in India
2. To differentiate between policies and practices of teacher education
3. To locate the status of quality teacher education in the larger context of privatization.

Methodology

A descriptive survey method was used for the study whereas; the nature of the data consists of

both qualitative as well as quantitative. For the primary data, teacher education institutions of the Central National Capital Region of Delhi consist of population of the study. On the other hand, teacher education institutions of entire country consist of sample for the secondary data and 30 teacher education institutions from the CNCR consist of sample for the primary data. Sample consists of teacher educators, students (pupil teachers), Principals/Heads and eminent professors/experts of teacher education. The study used a questionnaire, observation schedule and semi-structured interview as research instruments.

RESULTS

Trends of Privatisation in Teacher Education

Private initiatives in teacher education, which was a rare phenomenon until the end of the 1980s, have moved towards a well-established system with the extensive privatization in this sector especially 2001-02 onwards. There was unplanned and mushroomed growth in self-financing teacher education institutions in the last one and half decades. Such growth in private institutions also led to regional inequality in the availability of teacher education (NCTE, 2011). Although this growth catered to regional demand for teacher education, on the other hand, it also failed in maintaining quality in self-financing teacher education institutions.

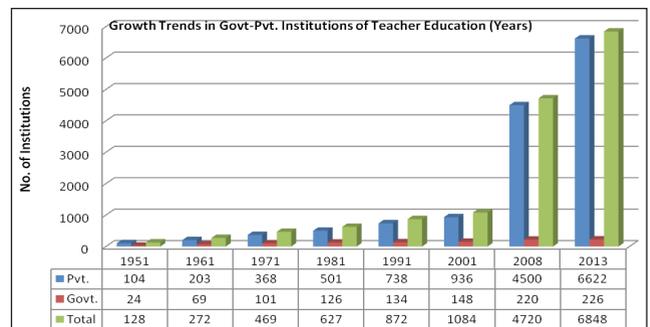


Fig. 1: Growth in Private Teacher Education Institutions

Regional imbalances in terms of establishment of teacher education institutions were another big concern and outcome of privatization in this sector. Such regional disparity in the availability of teacher education institutions also led to students' migration from Eastern India towards educational hubs located in different parts of the country. Further, the eastern part of the country started attracting back

Table 1: Institute and Intake in Govt. and Private Teacher Education

Regions	D.El.Ed.				B.Ed.				M.Ed.			
	Govt.		Private		Govt.		Private		Govt.		Private	
	Inst.	Intake	Inst.	Intake	Inst	Intake	Inst.	Intake	Inst	Intake	Inst.	Intake
Eastern Region	234	13679	174	8950	56	5533	482	49855	12	420	19	380
Western Region	246	12190	2388	116344	37	3700	1505	149990	27	915	298	10278
Northern Region	160	12240	1256	82771	91	12770	2774	295492	15	705	243	6275
Southern Region	124	7121	2710	154049	42	3828	1861	272981	18	620	277	7243
All India	764	45230	6528	362114	226	25831	6622	768318	72	2660	837	24176

Source: MHRD-NCTE (2013).

students/ parents by establishing low standard self-financing teacher education institutions in almost stakeholders' geographical proximity. Bihar and Jharkhand have started many sub-standard teacher education institutions both in the government as well as private sector especially 2004-05 onwards. As a result, the students' migration from eastern India has decreased remarkably in the last few years. These self-financing teacher education institutions charge similar fee structure as in the education hubs located in the Western and Northern India. Now, students retained back in the institutions of their respective states i.e. Bihar and Jharkhand, Eastern part of Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal as fee and living cost in the migrated places in Western and Northern educational hubs are much higher as compared to the cost of education, locally, in the eastern India.

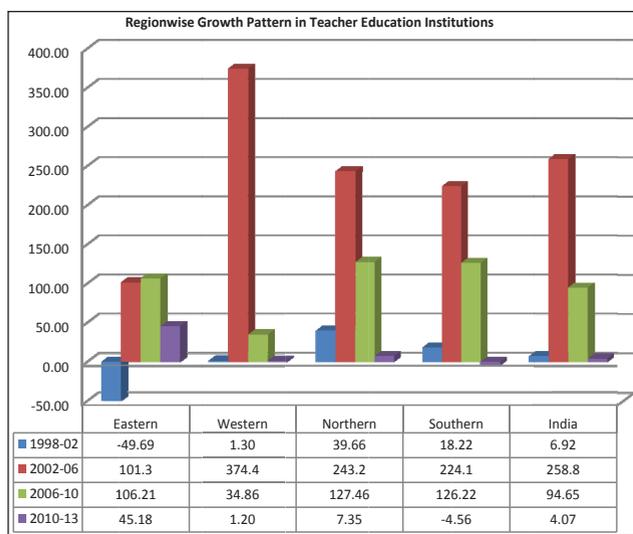


Fig. 2: Regional diversity in the growth of teacher education institutions

Trends in growth of private secondary teacher education institutions reflect that, since the

establishment of NCTE (1993-95) as an apex body, there was a routine growth in teacher education institutions till 2001-02. In fact, negative growth was registered during 1998-2002 in the Eastern region of the country. The growth recorded a remarkable increase in the establishment of new self-financing teacher education institutions during 2002-03 to 2009-10. Further, It was highly supported by the privatization friendly Norms and Standards of NCTE in 2001-02 and 2007. The significant upsurge in the unplanned growth of self-financing teacher education institutions was registered mostly due to diluted eligibility criteria for teaching manpower and physical infrastructure requirements.

Further, substantial regional variance was found in the availability of self-financing teacher education institutions in different geographical areas of the country: the northern, western, and southern regions have an oversupply of teacher education institutions whereas the eastern part of the country, despite having the highly dense population, lacks in a sufficient number of teacher education institutions. The present condition in the Southern, Northern and Western region of the country shows closure of many institutions due to an oversupply of B.Ed. institutions and under-demand of these courses.

Privatization Friendly Norms and Standards of NCTE for B.Ed. Programme

Norms and Standards are considered to be the constitutions of any institution in order to conduct a programme prepared by the respective apex/ professional body. Norms and Standards for B.Ed. programme of NCTE has been diluted several times in favour of the private sector since its inception. But the major violation was registered especially during 2001-02 to 2007-08 when

Table 2: Analysis of Norms, Facts, Perceptions and Policy Implications

Quality Dimensions	Indicators/ Items/ Aspects	Norms and Standards (NCTE)	Facts (College Profile by the Principal)	Perception of Teachers/ Students and Observation of Researcher	Gap (Identified by the Researcher)	Policy Implication (based on primary data)
Manpower	No. of teachers	7/14	6-7/12-13	5-6 teachers/ course	Inadequate manpower hampers quality education	Teaching manpower was below the norms which need special attention in terms of supervision by the NCTE and affiliating universities for quality maintenance in SFTEIs
	Qualifications	NET/M.Phil. / Ph.D.	M.Phil.-Ph.D.- NET	-- do --	Teachers with sheer minimum qualification for lesser salary	
	Non- teaching staff	4/8	3-4/each course	2-3 staffs	Understaffing for financial benefits	
	Supplementary skilled staffs	4/8		1-2 staffs	Do- exploiting existing teaching and non-teaching staff	
	Class norms	2-3 per day	2-3/day	3-4/day	Exploitation with minimum staff and maximum workload	
ICT and Infrastructure	Infrastructure	2500/3000 sq ft. 8 classes, indoor and outdoor games, 4 other rooms	Physical infrastructure adequate/ Mixed infrastructure	Mixed infrastructure/ unutilised infrastructure	Largely adequate physical infrastructure but lesser built-up the area and unutilised facilities	Infrastructural norms and their proper utilisation need to be regulated by the concerned authorities for quality maintenance. ICT facilities not available neither utilised to be properly monitored.
	Library	2/4 rooms, 3000/6000 books	2/4 rooms, 3000/5000 books	1000-3000 books, 1-2 rooms	Lesser resources for library and largely underutilisation promoted	
	ICT	20/40 comp with the internet	12 comp. with the internet	10-15/course but majority non-functional	Minimum ICT facilities available, underutilisation promoted, multi-courses institutions discriminated ICT resources from B.Ed. students	
	Multi-media	Audio, video, projector, others	Adequate	Majority non-functional/ non-availability	The majority of institutions do not have, lesser in quantity and underutilisation promoted.	
Professional Development	Journals etc. for PD	20	8 journals	Very few appeared	No research culture, majority of institutions do not value journals rather textbooks only	Professional development avenues are completely private affairs, no facilities available from institutions needs to be monitored and promoted by the concerned regulatory bodies and less performing universities
	Seminar/ workshop	One/year	In-house/ outside	Majority outside	Hardly organises any professional development activities, sometimes many institutions do it together for namesake	
	Orientation/ refresher	Once	No	No	No opportunity by the institutions but few faculty did with self-initiative	
	Financing for PD	Registration, transportation	No	No	Majority of faculty did with self-financing for PD	
	INTEL-NCTE	Oriented, trained	Few	Very few	Limited number of institutions did such collaboration because it will widen the scope of ICT usage	
	Micro-teaching	Before practice teaching	yes	Very few	Majority of the institutions do not practice micro- teaching sessions	
Inclusiveness	EWS enrolment	Govt. norms	Yes, as per Govt. rules	Very few	Seats are not filled with EWS students due to high fee and other supplementary financial expenditure	Inclusiveness not taken care of properly by many institutions to be monitored
	Financial assistance	Institution/ govt.	No	Very few/ no	Limited financial support available	
	Working website		Very few	Very few/none	The majority of the institutions do not have a personal website, a few have but non-functional status.	Technical facilities need to be installed
	Photocopier/ Fax	One in working condition	12/30	Very few/none	The majority of SFTEIs did not have functional photocopier/fax machine, etc.	

Note: Here (/) is used above to distinguish single unit and double unit Institutions. Single unit institutions require 7 Teacher Educators and double unit institutions require 14 teacher educations and likewise.

Source: Analysed and concluded based on primary data by the researcher.

Table 3: Quality Dimensions and Institutions of CNCR Delhi

<i>t</i> -test: Dimension-wise Analysis of Responses						
Quality Dimensions	Institutions of CCSU Meerut – MDU Rohtak		Institutions of MDU Rohtak – GGSIPU Delhi		Institutions of GGSIPU New Delhi-CCSU Meerut	
	Teacher Educators	Students	Teacher Educators	Students	Teacher Educators	Students
Professional Development	2.7**	.921	0.54	5.46	2.96**	5.155
Manpower	0.615	.418	2.53**	3.51	2.77**	3.412
Inclusiveness	2.04*	3.00	0.991	2.00	3.73**	.591
Infrastructure	0.371	3.88	2.64**	5.07	2.55**	2.409
ICT	1.65	6.82	3.56**	.153	4.56**	7.070

** $p > .01$, * $p > .05$.

privatization and commercialization in this sector took place rapidly. Major degradation in Norms and Standards of NCTE was registered in the area of Manpower and infrastructure. Violating the norms in educational qualifications of principal and teacher educators, and physical infrastructural norms had major connotations for commercialization and lowering quality in teacher education. Progress in education goes hand-in-hand with development in physical infrastructure for quality and sustainable development (IIR 2012) but, NCTE itself played a non-constructive role in maintaining quality in such institutions by lowering Norms and Standards of B.Ed. programme.

The issue of non-utilisation of the available resource is usually observed as the characteristics of government institutions, largely due to lack of adequate financial support services. Similar conditions were found with self-financing teacher education institutions but by the deliberate under-utilization of available resources. It has been accompanied by a lack of motivation of students and teachers to invest time and knowledge capital for the utilization of available resources. Under-utilisation of resources also creates a win-win situation for every stakeholder; Institutions, teachers and students in the larger arena of privatization in teacher education. Non-utilisation or under-utilization offers less time investment by both; teachers as well as students, on the other hand, the institutional resources are preserved which makes a profitable position for the management of the private organization.

There is a mismatch between demand and supply of teacher education institutions and teacher educators. Differences also exist between the

several bodies, such as data from the colleges, NCTE and affiliating Universities on the availability of adequate manpower resource, especially the teaching faculty. There was also continuous change and degradation in eligibility criteria for teacher educators done by NCTE itself. It may occur due to the influence of private forces on the apex bodies for such change (primarily during 2002 to 2007). The private management justified the decision of lowering norms by NCTE for teacher educators and principals of Self-Financing Teacher Education Institutions in the line of AICTE. Norms for lecturers of engineering colleges were also relaxed from M.Tech. to B.Tech (with 60 percent marks).

Policy and Practice in Teacher Education Institutions: A case of teacher education institutions located in the Central National Capital Region of Delhi is analysed in the below given in table 3.

Regional variances in the quality practice of Norms and Standards were also found in different sub-regions of CNCR Delhi. The analysis was based on the jurisdiction of university affiliation in CNCR Delhi region. Self-Financing Teacher Education Institutions of GGSIPU Delhi performed much better, followed by MDU Rohtak, and lastly, the CCSU Meerut. Opinions and facts related to quality practices based on Norms and Standards of B.Ed. programme of NCTE, teachers and students significantly differed between SFTEIs and CCSU Meerut and SFTEIs of GGSIPU.

Discussion of the Results: The quality of education and quality of educational institutions are interdependent and intertwining. Generally, it is difficult to separately analyze both, because the quality of education is largely a pedagogical phenomenon whereas, the quality of institutions

is largely systemic concerns and outcome which also consist of pedagogical aspects. The quality parameters such as manpower resource, ICT, and infrastructure, professional development and inclusiveness were largely found compromised across the institutions of sub-regions in CNCR. There is a significant gap between policies and their implementation in terms of quality practices by these Institutions. It further suggested the strong policy implication for quality maintenance and excellence, especially in the context of recent reforms in teacher education, through a two-year teacher education curriculum.

Teacher education at the secondary level has a unique position in school education and higher education, due to its intrinsic linkages with higher education at study level and school education at the practice level. Privatization is playing a major and quantitatively increasing role both in school education as well as higher education in India. Therefore, the study undertaken here has made an effort to examine quality in teacher education under the larger umbrella of privatization in self-financing secondary teacher education institutions of Central National Capital Region of Delhi.

Uniformity in policy and duality in practice has become the classical slogan of the functioning of privately-managed teacher education institutions. The basis of such duality exists largely due to the financial justification of private institutions, i.e., the huge gap regarding the sum of capital investments for the institutional establishment by the private sector and the following financial gain/return amount received through students' fee, etc. The private managements believe that the kind of financial investment required to build an institution needs a quick rate of return as well, which is not possible without commercial practices. Although none of the private institutions accepts the degrading status of quality in such institutions, due to its inherent for-profit/commercial practices. On the other hand, there has been a huge gap in terms of research on how much profit/gain are permitted to incur by private institutions *vs* how much exactly institutions are gaining/incurring every year. Non-utilisation of resources proves a nexus practice of deliberate attempt to decline quality practice in self-financing teacher education institutions in the recent decade. Since, non-utilisation of available resources paves the way for a win-win situation for all, self-financing teacher education institutions,

teachers as well as students, therefore, commercial practices have been flourishing in these institutions.

CONCLUSION

The study is an attempt at looking into the quality of secondary teacher education in CNCR Delhi in the context of privatization. It has tried to examine the status of privatization in teacher education, and the increasing institutional growth in the last decade, along with probing into the probable reasons for such privatization in this sector and its impact on quality. It further goes into the policies NCTE. The Norms and Standards for B.Ed. programme set by NCTE were analyzed, and found the critical linkages between the dilutions and degradations in norms and standards for B.Ed. programme and widespread privatization in teacher education. Privatization in teacher education also has positive linkage with commercialization and quality degradation. Lastly, it also attempted to explore the status of quality in private institutions through the stakeholders' opinion. It has been revealed that the majority of the private institutions do not follow the quality practices based on defined quality aspects and norms and standards of NCTE. Largely quality was measured and concluded based on the perception of stakeholders on the quality of manpower resources, physical infrastructure, ICT resources, professional development of teachers and inclusiveness, based on availability and utilization. The private higher education sector in India continues to face many challenges, such as poor quality of education at all levels, low quality of research, inadequate basic physical infrastructure, teacher apathy, low quality of training, and lack of autonomy and accountability (Basu 2013).

As a conclusive outcome of the research, it can be said that this study has made an attempt to examine the quality practice from the policy perspective in teacher education. The effect of privatization in teacher education needs immediate attention through supervision and audits by the NCTE, NAAC and concerned universities. Apart from this, special attention is also required from the state governments in order to maintain the dignity of teacher education¹. The stakeholders of teacher

¹Sudeep Banerjee Committee Report (2008) along with Justice Verma Commission Report (2012-13) has repeatedly referred the diluting role of NCTE and affiliating universities and its effect on quality degradation in teacher education in India.

education; largely the students, teachers and principals along with the management bodies of private institutions need to make collective efforts in order to make teacher education as a professional discipline of high quality and also curb the menace of commercial practice to restore the lost identity of the discipline.

Policy Implications

The study conducted here is largely concern with an analysis of policies of teacher education and their implications in the larger context of privatisation and quality issues. Some of the policy implications for the regulatory bodies and related agencies of teacher education are as follows:

- (a) NCTE and affiliating universities must regulate the mushrooming growth of private self-financing teacher education institutions, especially from the regional imbalance point of view.
- (b) Frequent changes in the norms and standards of NCTE for the establishment of teacher education institutions/courses must be stopped off, and NCTE requires thorough introspection before making any such changes in order to prevent commercialisation in this area.
- (c) A time-bound monitoring and supervision of self-financing teacher education institutions by the combined group of experts from NCTE, NAAC, and affiliating universities will ensure quality practice in such teacher education institutions.
- (d) The state government along with NCTE must play an important role in restricting affiliating universities to allow self-financing teacher education institutions based on demand and supply.
- (e) The UGC must devise a mechanism and direct the universities to ensure minimum eligibility criteria for the university itself, and for affiliating institutions according to university's own capacity (inspectorate for education or based on the number of faculties in particular department to supervise institutions) and to supervise the affiliated institutions. It should not be merely a commercial activity to affiliate institutions.

Suggestions: Whether private sector influence on teacher education was an extended phenomenon of market forces from professional education to teacher education or, government along with regulatory bodies acted like opportunist which let private sector play with the supply-demand chemistry in teacher education emerged due to temporal goals of universalisation of schooling in India through programmes such as DPEP, SSA, RMSA need further theoretical investigation.

(This is to state that the article has been published priviously but not with any of the ISSN Journals)

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