

The Marketization of Higher Education

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Abstract- Higher education initially a government –supported service has entered the marketplace. Many countries have encompassed the notion of marketization of higher education. A commodity economy driven by market ideology has motivated the students to perceive higher education as a medium to gain meaningful employment, attain professional growth and social status. Universities are big businesses that are aggressively marketing themselves to turn into a brand. Funding of higher education is transferring gradually from the government to the students. Market ethic as an ideological force in higher education policy though has enhanced the participation rates, but the equity in educational opportunities has come under threat. Another challenge that higher education systems across the world face is that of quality education. It is important both economically and on equity grounds, for increasing the number of government funded universities as against private higher education institutions several of which provide education of debatable quality.

Keywords— Education as commodity, Higher Education, Marketization, Neo-Liberalism.

I. INTRODUCTION

The market –oriented higher education system is right out front. The increased demand for higher education has led to changes in the supply. Higher education initially a government –supported service has entered the marketplace. In the wake of globalization and technocratization, universities and colleges have undergone a major transformation and are in stiff competition with each other in the global market for higher education.

Under neo- liberalism, education is treated as a “consumable commodity and experience” (Kumar, 2011, p.38). Smillie and Minear (as cited in Schugurensky, 2006) explained that “many institutions are becoming ‘commercial enterprises’ or ‘humanitarian enterprises’ promoting the “business of humanitarianism” (p.301-302). The neo-liberals advocate privatization of higher education based upon market ideology. It has assumed a great role in response to the shrinking role of the state.

With marketization of higher education comes competition and the need to attract students who possess the fee paying capacity for academic programmes that are ‘customized’ to their needs. Universities are big businesses, marketing themselves in the world-wide education market (Salter & Tapper, 2002) by hiring ‘image creators’ to give themselves an academic face lift and turn into a ‘brand’. This may also be referred as the ‘industrialization of higher education.’ “Once the universities are governed by market- driven policies, the public good nature of higher education linked to communitarian and collective concerns shifts to more individualist, privatized interests” (Rhoads, Torres & Brewster, 2006, p.195). The public universities are “recurrently faced with budget crises forcing them to raise tuition and fees and freeze staff positions. Paradoxically, this happens at the same time that universities are marketing themselves as institutions committed to teaching and learning” (Zemsky, 2004).

Governments are not thinking much on how the universities are managed (Couturier, 2002; Salter & Tapper, 2002; Shattock, 2002). This has been happening largely due to

privatization of higher education. Heald (as cited in Kenway, Bigum & Fitzclarence, 1993) identified four overlapping components of privatization that have been central to the emergence of education markets in the post- modern age. These components are “de-nationalization and load shedding by sale of public assets and transfer of the existing state functions to the private sector; privatization of production and provision of education; liberalization and deregulation to enable the private players in the markets exclusively provided by the state; and privatization of finance through cost – sharing mechanisms with the users of the educational services” (p. 110-111).

It has been reasoned that for increasing access to higher education to the masses and reducing the gap between the wealthy few and the impoverished many, the ‘cult of privatization’ presents itself as an enlightened project. All over the world, privatization has been accepted all too well in ‘consensual silence’ as it offers an exit route from the dark cave of budgetary constraints. It is believed that private buyers would reduce public expenditure and manage the expensive public service of higher education more efficiently than their public counterparts. This rationale of ‘the public of private interests’ justifies the increasing privatization of higher education (Nixon, 2011).

Tilak (1991) explained that privatization may take four forms. First, is the extreme form of privatization implying ‘total privatization’ of higher education. This includes colleges and universities managed and funded by the private sector with little government intervention. These are also known as the unaided private institutions. These institutions provide financial relief to the government in providing higher education but at huge long-term economic and non-economic costs to the society. The second form is of ‘strong privatization’ which implies that cost recovery is completely made from the users-students, their employers or both. This kind of privatization is not desirable and empirically feasible. The third type of privatization is ‘moderate privatization’ which implies public provision of higher education with reasonable level of financing from non-governmental sources. Finally, the last form of privatization is known as

'pseudo-privatization' which includes private aided institutions. These institutions can be created by private bodies but receive nearly whole of their expenditure from governments. In other words, these institutions are privately managed, but publicly funded. The governments meet almost all their recurrent expenditure.

From being independent and self-directed, the universities in the marketplace are apparently caught in between the trap of two contradictory dimensions- laissez-faire and interventionism. The universities are changing into 'heteronomous' from 'autonomous' (Schugurensky, 1999). The heteronomous model encompasses elements of both a 'controlled university' and a 'commercial university' having the following features that maybe summarized in the form of ten C's - (1) cultivation of private and foreign universities, (2) customer fees, (3) client-oriented programs, (4) corporate rationality, (5) cooperation with business, (6) casualization of labour (7) contracting out (8) cutbacks, (9) conditional funding and, (10) coordination that combines dynamics of collaboration and competition in the system. The heteronomous university can lead to the development of new priorities that would widen the gap between the rich disciplines and poor ones" (ibid, p.306-310). While LaBelle (2002) supported the view and talked about the rise of 'pseudo-universities' that operate for profit, standardize on a few subject areas and are tailored to meet licensure and needs of the market place; Altbach (2001) presented a powerful standpoint by asserting that the 'pseudo-universities' should not call themselves as universities as they have no interest in teaching and research and should not be permitted to offer academic degrees. Extending their argument against the rule of the market in education, Power and Frandji (2010) stressed that "...because education is a positional good, there have always been elements of competition for educational opportunities which have unevenly privileged different social groups...however, neoliberal-inspired policies have brought about an intensification of these processes" (p.385). As a consequence of marketization of education, the new politics of recognition has emerged and this has been increasingly fatal towards breeding educational inequalities (ibid.).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many countries have encompassed the notion of marketization of higher education. Sanyal (1994) presented an outline of changes that took in the higher education management of the Russian federation with the gradual adoption of 'market ethic' as an ideological force in higher education policy. Market ideology has had a negative influence on the perception and the attitude of the youth to such an extent that success in life is measured in terms of monetary success and a diminished importance of education. The academic community is also facing tremendous lack of incentives in the higher education system and has suffered drastic cuts in their purchasing power. This is resulting in their disinterest and hence moving out of the teaching profession. Disciplines like law, philosophy, sociology, economics, political science and history have been seriously affected. New courses such as international economics,

marketing and enterprise management, trade and investment strategies and stock market operation have been introduced. To gather the social scientists' experiences of academic freedom within an environment of commercialization of Australian universities Kayrooz and Kinnear (2001) collected data through administration of questionnaire and conducting interviews with social scientists drawn from 13 universities across four states from various disciplines such as Sociology, Economics, Commerce, Education, Political Science, Management and Industrial Relations, and Media and Communications. Percentage analysis was conducted to quantify the analysis of data. Chi-square was also employed to find the significance of difference. The respondents were of the view that commercialization had raised the need for the universities to seek funding from sources other than governments like expanding market flexible fee-based courses for international and domestic students in vocational streams, attracting research funds from industry by engaging into 'safe, well defined' areas of research, rather than speculative ones, the sale of consulting and other university services; and a new corporate style of university management. They expressed their concern about the deterioration in their academic freedom due to commercialization. Faculty complained of work overload and reduced independent research time. They reported that they were expected to spend considerable amounts of time writing competitive tenders and developing and marketing commercial courses, in addition to their normal workload. The production of knowledge as a commercial enterprise appeared to be challenging the intellectual ownership of academic knowledge.

Hauptman (2002) explained what it meant to rely on market forces in shaping higher education policies. He emphasized on developing a quantitative approach in terms of an index of privatization which would help in comparing countries in terms on their reliance on market forces. A country may be said to have higher index of privatization, if, private resources account for relatively high proportion in funding private higher education systems; the institutions have a high level of autonomy in spending and setting fees and; there is a high level of reliance on students loans with relatively low subsidies. Such a country may be said to be pre-dominated by market forces.

While there is a market of education in English in most of the countries of the world, there is no market in America for education in other languages. Altbach (2003) explained why the United States will not be a market for foreign higher education products. This is because the American system of higher education is large, diverse and efficient. It would be difficult for any foreign provider to succeed in penetrating in the American education market. English has also been the language of instruction overseas and has helped in ensuring the American dominance in the academic world.

In the present times, the higher education systems all over the world are witnessing the growing role of commercial entities in certain aspects of teaching and learning. Garrett (2003) explained the emerging relationships between public companies and non-profit higher education in the context of the rise in borderless higher education. The public companies entering the higher education system may be classified into

three types: first, as direct competitors that have little or no relationship with the non-profit sector (for example, independent for-profit universities and college networks); second, indirect competitors that serve the market of generally minor or potential interest to the private sector (for example, e-learning and human capital development firms focused on corporate and the government sector); and third, service providers and clients that either offer services to the non-profit higher education or benefit from services provided by the nonprofit higher education (for example, companies providing services like provision of learning material software, marketing on-line courses and learning materials etc.).

Assessing the market mechanisms for higher education in New Zealand and Australia, Hauptman (2003) found that in both the countries has enhanced the participation rates, equity in educational opportunities has come under threat. Another challenge that both the systems of higher education face is that of quality education. While New Zealand has been more erratic and aggressive in relying on market forces, Australia has been more traditional and consistent in adopting market-based strategies.

Prewitt (2003) discussed the pressures of marketization that have been pulling away the African universities from providing higher education as a public good. The universities have been reforming curriculum to market needs, promoting fee-based financing, providing rewards to entrepreneurship, subcontracting educational services to the private sector, managing the universities according to the standards of the for-profit private sector.

The commercial criteria is being increasingly used for restructuring higher education. The universities are increasingly being incorporated into industry. The fusing of the university with the industry is represented as an integral part of the development of the 'knowledge economy'. The increased use of commercial criteria may be regarded as an extension of capitalist principles into the running of universities. The 'economic rationalist' model is inappropriate for higher education as market principles combined with corporate managerial practices affect employment relationships, challenge the conventional notion of professionalism and lead to the 'commodification' of academic labour (Stilwell, 2003).

The marketisation of teaching profession would impact to such an extent that all three 'Rs' (recruit, retain and re-train teachers) will be under pressure. It will prove increasingly difficult to attract graduates into teaching profession, given the combination of relatively low pay, the prohibitive cost of housing and the high student debts that will be incurred (Gilroy, 2005).

Goel and Malik (2005) studied the perceptions of college teachers regarding the educational, economic, political and social impact of commercialization and internationalization of higher education in India. A majority of teachers perceived a favourable impact of commercialization of higher education in term of its positive educational impact on both the students and educational institutions. A positive economic impact would be harnessing the national economic resources in the best possible way. A negative economic impact of commercialization was perceived in the form of

maximization of profits, wastage of economic and human resources, accumulation of wealth in the hands of the few, fall in the quality at the time of admissions, hike in fee, deprivation of poor students from higher education and growth of unregulated foreign investors and institutions in India. The teachers viewed loss of social, cultural identity and linguistic diversity, dominance of English language, decline in the rights and dignity of teachers, deterioration in student-teacher relationship and the widening gap between deprived and privileged classes as negative social impact of commercialization of higher education. Regarding the work culture in educational institutions, many teachers viewed that commercialization would eliminate laissez-faire state of work culture and promote reward based performance. However, a negative impact may be deterioration in quality and rise of exploitation in working environment for the teachers. They viewed that the political impact of commercialization would be powerful countries exercising their supremacy and control through their educational agenda over the higher education systems of the developing countries. Higher education would be left to the mercy of the private sector and the countries would be forced to follow the World Bank mandates. All this would work against the constitutional obligations of equalizing access to higher education.

Kolesnikov, Kucher and Turchenko (2005) deliberated the commercialization of Russia's higher education has led to its degradation and security. It has made general and higher professional education inaccessible to families with low or medium income and to their inability to compensate for gaps in their school education on a free basis and especially enrolled in institutions of higher learning on a tuition basis.

Molesworth and Scullion (2005) conducted an exploratory focus group research with 28 undergraduate students from marketing, advertising, public relations and communication courses in a department of a new university in the United Kingdom. The university only delivered vocational courses and conferred its students' vocational degrees and had an excellent record in graduate employment. The findings of the study revealed that the students were undergoing range of internal and external tensions that were similar to those of a consumer. Just like a consumer, students desired high quality at lower prices and wanted more features but wanted the products to be easy in use with fewer additives, better taste and a longer shelf life.

Ning Ru (2005) studied China's Education Marketization Policy. It was observed that the business and social organizations had invested heavily in the higher education sector. Over recent years, the demand for higher education has been growing rapidly, while the supply is far away from satisfying it. The imbalance has made the already fierce entrance examination to university much fiercer. With a shift from the long-standing shortage of supply to oversupply, demand constraint has become a major obstacle to economic development in China recent years. Yet given the negative effects, it should be kept in mind that pursuing market-based education blindly would cause irremediable losses.

Kim and Lee (2006) investigated the role of state in market competition among higher education institutions in Korea and concluded that the government has been playing a pro-

active role in incorporating more market-based policies in order to upgrade the existing teaching and research standards in all the higher education institutions in Korea.

Roosevelt (2006) argued that the growing commercialization of education in the United States and the simultaneous decline “liberal education” would limit the range of political discourse and thus have negative effects on civic life. With today’s new emphasis on marketable products, measurable outcomes and business skills, many institutions of higher education are unlikely to expose students to visions of justice and equality that challenge the ethics of the market system.

Lomas (2007) undertook research to investigate the perceptions of the academic staff on who they and their institution considered as ‘customer’ in universities. The study was conducted in three pre- 1992 and three post- 1992 universities in the United Kingdom. Data was collected from ten randomly selected academic staff members through semi-structured in-depth interviews. The qualitative data collected was analyzed through the use of constant comparative methodology. The results of the study revealed that although the academic staff was uncomfortable with the term customer, they acknowledged the growing influence of the student. The students’ attitude has changed from ‘What should I do?’ to ‘What can I get?’ The selection of the academic discipline has its influence in shaping the attitude of students to see themselves as customers. Also, the new universities (post- 1992 ones) appeared to be more customer-oriented than their pre-1992 counterparts.

Washer (2007) enumerated the key marketable skills that need to be enhanced in the learners ‘to sell themselves’ to employers. The key skills that need to be enhanced in the learners include: communication skills; working with others; problem solving; numeracy; the use of information technology’ learning how to learn; and personal and professional development. However, the skill agenda poses a threat to the concept of a liberal education and devalues traditional notions of a university degree.

Ngok (2007) explained that ever since has China opened its doors to the outside world in the late 1970s, China's education has experienced great changes due to the impact of market-oriented economic reforms and other developments. These changes have changed the relationship between the central and local governments and also the role of the state in education. The increasing responsibility of local governments for educational investment has reduced the role of central government in educational planning and administration. Introduction of fees and the adoption of multiple-channels of funding have diminished the central and local governments’ responsibilities for educational financing.

Maximova-Mentzoni (2009) conducted a study to understand what marketization meant in the context of the Russian University. Case study method was employed and documents from both primary and secondary sources were used to gather data. Interviews were conducted with faculty staff, former students who studied in 1997-2005, managers and administrators and other university employees. University newspaper was also reviewed to get facts concerning how the university maneuvered the transition period. The study revealed that marketization of the Russian University was inseparable from an overall marketization of society. It

originated as a desperate move, as a need for survival, as a needed initiative from the university itself, the only way to continue functioning and developing.

Mok (2009) explained that in order to enhance the global competence of the Chinese population in coping with the challenges of the knowledge – based economy, the higher education sector has been going through restructuring along the lines of marketization, privatization and decentralization. Responding to the globalization challenges, the Chinese government has opened up the education market by allowing private higher institutions and overseas universities to offer.

Oplatka (2009) undertook a qualitative explorative study to examine Israeli academics perceptions of the introduction of educational markets and particularly their attitudes towards academics role and responsibilities in the new marketing led university. Criterion sampling was employed to select the data for this study. Data was collected from 15 academics from universities and colleges in the centre and south of Israel. It was found that academics displayed contradictory standpoints. While several believed that academics should play some role in open days (a marketing strategy used to enhance public relations with candidates aspiring to study in the higher education institutions and related promotional activities), the others resisted any kind of academic involvement in this. Most of them considered quality teaching and fruitful research as an academics major contribution to the marketing of the higher education institutions.

Altbach and Reisberg (2011) highlighted the strategies adopted by universities across the world in pursuit of international students in a commercialized world. Since global student mobility creates big business, the motivations of countries and universities in recruiting international students have become highly commercial. Many universities balance their academic budgets on international student enrollments. The emergence of agents and recruiters who work for specific universities are hired on commission basis and provide dubious assistance and also help applicants to prepare fake credentials.

Altbach and Welch (2011) used the example of Australia to explain the perils of commercialism in higher education. With internationalization of higher education in Australia becoming an industry, the sector has become an income generator for the nation. Marketization of higher education through internationalization, declining state support, charging exorbitantly high fee from international students has led to breaches in academic standards and paved way for numerous problems.

Barandiaran (2012) explored scientific research at a for-profit university, the University Andres Bello (UNAB), Chile. Data were obtained from public sources and complemented by interviews with local university and science scholars in July- August 2009. It was observed that the research efforts of UNAB were mimics of traditional universities. This was done so that UNAB could legitimize itself as a ‘research university’.

Schofield, Cotton, Gresty, Kneale and Winter (2013) investigated the various marketing strategies employed by universities and further education colleges in the United States and came to a conclusion that the higher education is

provided in a crowded marketplace. This is because the higher education policy in the United States has been rigorously promoting marketization of higher education and the funding is transferring gradually from the government to the students. While traditional institutions continue to trade owing to their well established reputation in the education market, the newer universities are more receptive and influenced by the government policy agenda.

Birds (2014) examined the increasing emphasis given to entrepreneurialism in a higher education by the policy makers in the United Kingdom. Through an ethnographic study of a university commercial enterprise it was concluded that this concept that has been borrowed from the industrial environment can be practiced by the employees successfully to resolve various issues.

The aforementioned researches highlight the idea of marketization has deeply permeated the higher education systems across the world.

III. MARKETIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

The universities of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay were established in 1857 to train human resources to the needs of the labour market in British India. As an architect of British Education in India, Thomas Macaulay (cited in Sharma, 2007), an arch-racist, articulated his infamous minute of 1835 to form an educated “class of persons Indians in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, words and intellect” (p.26). Today, 150 years after the establishment of these universities, there is indeed the ‘Revival of Macaulay’ as “big businesses and policy makers are responding to market demands and marching all out towards commercialization of higher education in India” (ibid., p.26-27). Post-independence, the first Education Minister of India, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad conceptualized the creation of a national system of education based on liberal and humanitarian values and to develop a ‘national mind’ that would depart from the system that India had inherited from the colonial rule. Several landmark recommendations spelt out in the reports of committees and commissions on education charted out a roadmap for educational development and social development of India (Panikkar, 2011).

However, the economic reforms of 1991 led to increasing liberalization of government policies towards a free market in goods and services. Ever since, it has become an accepted and welcome feature of India’s polity and industry (Christo, 2004). The government’s share of funding higher education has been declining since the 1990’s in the wake of structural adjustment. The educational policy that the government has enunciated since the economic reforms period has three distinct features- centralization, privatization and entry of foreign education providers. Under the dictates of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Government of India (GoI) has been withdrawing state funding through extensive privatization, commercialization and deregulation. Although access to higher education has expanded manifold since independence, yet the twin challenges of equitable access and quality at present seem to

a distant goal (Gupta, 2004; Panikkar, 2011; Sharma 2007). The growth of self-financed private colleges, deemed universities and private universities has been taking place and this has been promoted through various legislations. Many judgments by the Supreme Court have taken a tough stand against capitation fees and profiteering by the private professional colleges. Alliances among politicians, business and academia have sustained commercialization of higher education for private gain despite these legal rulings (Gupta, 2004). With privatization of higher education, academic institutions have transformed into ‘entrepreneurial universities’ and ‘commercial institutions’ (Tilak, 2004).

The open door policy towards embracing capitalist modernization, particularly in higher education, has made history undergo a full cycle, leading India towards a process of ‘re-colonization of an entirely new genre’. ‘Private education has become a synonym for commercialization’. This ‘enclavised modernization’ policy which is a highly distorted and oppressive phenomenon, if pursued rigorously, would encourage cultural and intellectual capitalism, promote commercialization of education by private players and foreign education providers and may hinder social justice by depriving majority of eligible students from access to higher education (Panikkar, 2011, p.40-41).

The marketization of higher education in India mainly through the private sector (with the support of the government) in the globalized era has added to the disparities in educational opportunities and educational attainment by the ‘rich’ and the ‘poor’. It bears a potential threat to divide the society into the ‘rural elite’ and the ‘rural poor’ and also the ‘urban elite’ and the ‘urban poor’.

As per the Indian Constitution, education is not meant for business. The role of the universities is to compete with each other for academic prestige or distinction and not for marketing education as a commodity. With the dominance of the neo-liberal market ideology in higher education in India, achieving the objectives expansion, inclusion and excellence would be daunting. Application of the features of a market in terms of freedom to consumers (viz. freedom to choose the provider; freedom to choose the product; adequate information on prices and quality and; direct and cost-covering prices) and freedom to the providers (viz. freedom of entry; freedom to specify the product; freedom to use available resources and; freedom to determine prices) of higher education may have a detrimental effect on the entire system of higher education (Chattopadhyay, 2009). Prasad (2005) was of the view that the concept of commercial autonomy promotes privatization of the system of higher education. The dominance of the market model makes knowledge a commodity whose quality depends upon the consumer’s ability to pay. The withdrawal of the state funding from higher education and invitation to foreign direct investment to enter the Indian education market is indicative of the extent to which academic autonomy within higher education is being seriously compromised by the neo-liberal agenda. Commercialization of higher education radically alters the character of the institutions by gearing them to cater to the private needs, mainly vocational and monetary, of the students. Eventually, the mission of the education system becomes to serve the vested interests of clients and owners

rather than the social contribution of higher education to important sectors like elementary and secondary education, the medical services, and the development of democratic consciousness (Prasad, 2008).

While the Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012) stated its three major objectives of achieving expansion, inclusion and excellence in the higher education system of India; the Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-2017) envisaged its inclusive and qualitative expansion. However, the neo-liberal market ideology in education would make the achievement of these objectives a daunting task. This is because, "Higher education in India is been *de facto* commercialized" (Sharma, 2005, p.9). There seems to be a "lack of political will" for the inaction of the government (Tilak, 2008, p.523). "The matter in short is one of priorities and the government lacks *ipso facto* the political will to spread universal literacy through the curtailment of resources for higher education" (Patnaik, 2011, p.189). The successive Indian governments seem to have surrendered to dictates of the World Bank and resorted to promotion of commercialization through facilitating trade in higher education (Sharma, 2005, 2007). The Ambani Birla Report (2000), the National Knowledge Commission Report (2007) and the Yash Pal Committee Report on Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher Education (2009) upheld the neo-liberal agenda in higher education. The neo-liberal assault was further intensified by introducing a spate of bills in the Parliament - such as The Foreign Educational Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operations) Bill, 2010; The Educational Tribunals Bill, 2010; The Prohibition of Unfair Practices in Technical Educational Institutions, Medical Educational Institutions and Universities Bill, 2010; and The National Accreditation Regulatory Authority for Higher Educational Institutions Bill, 2010. These bills were out rightly condemned on the grounds of promoting pro-market and pro-corporate agenda; facilitating and legitimizing profiteering from education through promotion of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Public-Private Partnership (PPP) in education (All India Forum for Right to Education, 2010). The Narayana Murthy Committee (2012) constituted by the Planning Commission of India spelt out its recommendations for corporate sector participation in higher education. Whether, the government would be successful in roping socially-conscious corporate organizations that have a history in genuine philanthropy in higher education; is still debatable (Mathews, Chittuparamban, Joshi & Dey, 2013). Recently, the NITI Aayog's "Three Year Action Agenda 2017-18 to 2019-20" suggests Indian universities to follow Singapore and China's model to transform into 'world class universities'. The proposal of a three tiered system of higher education governance calls for reduction in government funding, focus on providing more grants to promote innovations in science and technology in comparison to humanities and social sciences (Kundu, 2018).

IV. CONCLUSION

The universities that were entrusted the responsibility of 'nation building' have been deeply influenced by the market-ideology. Conventional universities all over the world are transforming into corporate universities and students are being viewed as 'customers' or 'clients' and teachers as

'service providers'. A 'commodity economy' driven by market ideology has motivated the students to perceive higher education as a medium to gain meaningful employment, attain professional growth and social status. The crucial role of higher education for social and character development has been undervalued. Higher education has transformed from a 'public good' to a 'consumable good'. Market - forces have enhanced the demand for and access to professional and technical education for commercial interests. Admissions are done for money rather than on the basis of merit. The growing marketization and commercialization has led to a decline in demand for liberal education. This business behaviour in higher education has added to the problem of inequality of educational opportunities especially for the socio-economically disadvantaged. It is important both economically and on equity grounds, for increasing the number of government funded universities as against private higher education institutions that provide education of debatable quality.

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