Unit 20
Crises in Indian Higher Education

Contents

Learning Objectives

This unit is intended to trace the development of higher education in India since independence and identify major issues and problems faced by it. It also analyses the factors responsible for cirses in higher education. At the end of the unit, you should be able to:

- identify the major policies related to higher education;
- trace the developments and expansion (both quantitative and qualitative) of higher education since independence;
- analyse the major factors responsible for crisis in Indian higher education; and
- present the future of Indian higher education.

20.1 Introduction

The Indian education system has come a long way from the days of Gurukul Pathashalas in the ashrams of Rishis/Gurus and learned people, where students used to go and stay with the Gurus till they were educated/gained a certain amount of skills and knowledge. Today these are government-funded schools (including residential schools in remote and rural areas) and privately managed public schools. The post-independence era has seen the expansion of education in all dimensions at all levels – primary, secondary and higher education. Expansion of higher education has been phenomenal during the last five decades. The manifold quantitative expansion of higher education facilities has fulfilled many goals and produced manpower required for various sectors. At the same time it raised many issues, posed a number of challenges and problems and resulted in a crisis situation on many aspects. This unit deals with a brief history of various policies related to higher education; presents existing scenario and analyses major issues responsible for crises in Indian higher education. It also suggests a few alternatives to overcome the emerging crisis in higher education.

20.2 History and Evolution of Higher Education

Indian higher education has a long history with universities like Nalanda and Takshashila. However the modern system can be traced back to the establishment of three universities at Bombay, Calcutta and Madras in 1857. The British promoted higher education to produce manpower which suit the colonial administration. After independence in 1947, priorities for national development were drawn up and, accordingly, the objectives of higher education were formulated and the system was expanded and developed. At the time of independence there were 17 universities and 400 colleges. Expansion during the last 50 years resulted in over 300 universities and more than 14,000 colleges with about 10.5 million students and around 0.35 million teachers, representing one of the largest higher education systems in the world.

The growth of institutions, enrolment and teachers in higher education is given in the table below:

Table 20.1: Number of institutions of higher education, Enrolment and teachers (10th Plan, vol. II)

Year	Number of colleges	Number of universities*	Students (In 000)	Teachers
1950-51	750	30	2,63,000	24,000
1990-91	7,346	177	49,25,000	2,72,000
1996-97	9,703	214	67,55,000	3,21,000
1998-99	11,089	238	74,17,000	3,42,000
2003-04	13,500	304	105,00,000	3,50,000

* Includes institutions that are deemed to be Universities, but excludes other institutions.

Source: UGC Annual report 1996-97 and 1998-99 and Selected Educational Statistics, Ministry of HRD

In addition to that there are many professional institutions – agriculture universities/institutions, medical institutions, technological and engineering universities/institutions established during the post-independence period to produce professionally trained manpower in respective areas. There were only 46 engineering Colleges and 53 Polytechnics in 1947 with an annual intake of 76,240 students. In 2001-02 AICTE. approved technical management institutions has risen to 4,791 with annual intake of 6.7 million students (10th plan Vol. II).

Higher Education Policies at National Level

The Indian higher education system is one of the highly reviewed subjects by various committees and commissions from time to time. The major ones were – University Education Commission of 1948-49, Education Commission of 1964-66 (also known as Kothari Commission) and New Education Policy 1986. In addition to these Commissions, many committees and groups reviewed higher education and suggested measures for improvement of various aspects. Many of the measures have been implemented and many more recommendations are yet to be implemented. Particularly, the recommendations related to access, standards and quality of higher education. Relevance and job orientation of the higher education courses are yet to be implemented on a large scale with intensity. Though these issues are crucial to the development of higher education, efforts to bring reforms in these areas are not significant. Some of the recommendations of these commissions, though not implemented due to various reasons, are still valid and appropriate to the present context. This indicates the vision shown by these commissions for the development of higher education. At the same time reforms brought so far by these national policies in the following areas are worth mentioning:

- introduction of semester system;
- implementation of national eligibility test (NET) as a pre-requisite for appointment of university and college teachers;
- examination reforms;
- introduction of autonomous colleges concept;
- administrative staff colleges for continuous professional development;
- establishment of centres of advanced studies for quality research;
- use of modern technology for improvement of quality of teaching;
- development of open and distance education system etc.

The above reform and policy direction of various commissions/committees in the National Policy for Education, 1986 and Programme of Action 1992 are reiterated by 9th and 10th five years plans for the improveement of higher education system in India.

In addition to the above mentioned efforts at the national level, many state governments also set up committees to look into various aspects of higher education such as examination reforms, management of universities and colleges, financial management etc. All these efforts indicate that Indian higher education has been subjected to rigorous review to empower it for self-renewal and to cope with ever changing socio-economic conditions in the society.

Reflection and Action 20.1

What are the reforms mosted by the national polices on education to for an efficient higher education structure in India

Expansion of higher education

The expansion of higher education system is closely associated with the huge expansion that had taken place at other levels of education during the last five decades. The thrust shown by the Union Government was evident with the allocation of 7.86% of the total plan outlay on education in the First Five Year Plan (1951 - 1956). However, the level of allocation for education declined gradually in subsequent plan periods. The proportion of allocation for higher education to the total outlay for education increased from 9% in the First Five Year Plan (1951-1956) to 25% in the Fourth Plan period (1969-1974) and then fell to 8% in the Eighth Plan (1991-1996). This fluctuation in the allocation to the education sector is because the priorities of the government shifted to other sectors. The same is the case with in the education sector – priority for primary education over higher education.

In spite of all the hurdles and challenges, the Indian education system's tremendous growth can be seen in Table 2 (Panda 2005) below:

Table 20.2: Growth of Education in India (Panda, 2005)

	Institutions (thousands)		Students (millions)		Teachers (thousands)	
Levels	1950-51	2003-04	1950-51	2003-04	1950-51	2003-04
Primary	210	638	0.19	114	538	>1,900
Upper primary	13.6	206	0.31	42.8	86	>1,500
Secondary and Senior Secondary	7.4	126	0.15	27.6	127	>1,800
Higher education	27U[a] 590C[a]	304U[a] 13,500C[a]	-	10.5 (C + U)	-	350 (C + U)

[a] Actual figures (not in 000s); U = university, C = college.

Source: Powar (2003); Chaudhary (2003)

In addition to the above network, India has premier institutions like the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) which produce high quality human resources, who are competing with the best in the world. Agriculture Universities and Institutions are contributing to the growth of this sector through research and extension activities. The last two decades have seen the growth of quality institutions established largely by private initiatives in the area of information and technology in the country, producing high quality human resources, who are in demand in many developed countries along with other countries.

Reflection and Action 20.2

How do you interpret the growth of Indian higher education so far?

20.3 Major Issues

Indian higher education is confronted with many problems such as – lack of adequate infrastructure, relevance of the curriculum, quality of education provided, access and equity, resources etc. We shall briefly discuss these issues in this section.

Infrastructure

When we talk of infrastructure in educational institutions we talk of land, buildings, equipment, laboratories, libraries, personnel – both academic and administrative, their accommodation and hostel facilities etc. Looking at the number of institutions, teachers and students involved in higher education system facilities required are huge in terms of quantity and quality. The higher education institutions are mainly dependent on either central or state government funding. Recently privatlly funded institutions are emerging very fast. The older institutions need modernization of its infrastructural facilities, whereas the new ones have to start from scratch, both requiring a lot of resources. Government funding to these institutions is increasingly becoming difficult. Moreover in the wake of economic liberalization, most of the educational institutions are urged for self-generation of resources. Institutions located in rural and remote places are hard hit due to lack of government funding and at the same time not in a position to generate resources on their own, which adversely affects the infrastructure and overall quality of education imparted by these institutions.

There are many government-funded institutions with reasonable physical infrastructure, but when it comes to qualified teachers, either they are not available (particularly in rural and remote areas) or vacancies are not filled for long period due to various reasons. Teachers recruited long back do need exposure and continuous development to update their knowledge and skills. Those who have the facilities of books and other technologies are at an advantage; those without these facilities do remain with the disadvantage. To overcome this weakness, Academic Staff Colleges (ASCs) were established by UGC. These colege are responsible for organising seminars, workshops, orientation and refresher programmes for colleges, and university teachers. To sum up all the universities and colleges are not at one plane as far as infrastructural facilities are concerned this situation seriously affects the quality of education provided and students produced by these institutions.

Relevance and Quality

The above analysis indicates that we have a large and diverse nature of institutions along with a few institutions of excellence in the IITs, IIMs, the Indian Institute of Science etc., which compete and collaborate with the best in the world, and upgrade/update and modify the curriculum to suit the ever changing societal needs. But a large number of higher education institutions, both colleges and universities follow a curriculum developed long also without appropriate changes to suit the ever changing societal needs. In the process these institutions produce a large number of graduates in general education courses – who are neither professionals nor skilled to get a job in the market. Hence a large number of them remain unemployed.

The picture is dismal particularly at the first degree level, whose enrolment accounts for 88% of the total enrolment for higher education. Out of this 80% represent general education programmes of Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, Commerce and Sciences - products of diverse institutions marked by

indifferent quality, irrelevant curriculum and lack of relevance to societal needs. Professional programmes at the first degree level represent 20% of the enrolment, whose relevance and quality is relatively better.

In this context, it is very important to mention that quality is a collective societal concern and it ought to be adhered to by all the providers of higher education. Against the backdrop of economic liberalization and GATS on the one hand and of the increasing demand for higher education on the other, several institutions, both national and international, have come up as providers of higher education. Unfortunately many of these institutions do not ensure the required quality of higher education. Though many of these institutions and their educational programmes are being derecognised by the UGC, DEC and AICTE, a vast number of them still exploit the innocence of the students.

The contribution of Indian Universities is mainly to post-graduate education and research, with acceptable levels of quality and standards, but this segment represents only 12% of higher education enrolment the remaining 88% belongs to under-graduate education with varying degrees of quality (Mukhopadhyay, 2001). Even the post-graduates in some social science subjects and a few science disciplines remain unemployed due to lack of opportunities. The picture can be attributed to lack of relevance of the curriculum in these subjects, even at this level, to societal needs.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) had undertaken certain measures in the late eighties and nineties to restructure the curriculum and diversify the courses, particularly at the under-graduate level. There was some progress on this front – some institutions have changed the combination of the courses and restructured courses offered at the first degree level. But there is a long way to go, with the majority of institutions yet to start the journey in this direction. The UGC has embarked on a plan to promote quality and relevance of higher education by initiating complementary skill-oriented courses.

As we discussed in the initial sections of this unit higher education in India has been subjected to thorough and comprehensive reviews by several commissions and committees. The result of these reviews were good ideas and intentions to address crucial issues, but implementation has been lax due to lack of will and commitment at various levels. Thus qualitative reforms have not penetrated Indian higher education. Such reforms are really the need of the hour to overcome the crisis situation.

Access and Equity

Access and equity are major issues in Indian society which represents the most diverse socioal economic and cultural settings in the world. Particularly in a democratic society, all groups and segments of the population should have access to higher education to provide them with equal opportunity. Let us examine the situation with the help of facts.

India has the second largest system of higher education with more than 300 universities and 14,500 colleges catering to over 10.5 million students and 3.5 million teachers. This large network is catering to about 6% of the population in the relevant age group of 17-23 years. The main objective is to raise this from 6% to 10% by the end of Tenth Plan i.e. 2007. This rate of participation in higher education is much less in comparison to developed countries (about 40%) and even to some of the developing nations (about 19%). What about the rest of the population in the relevant age group? How to provide access to this large population to democratize higher education?

In terms of gender about 35% of the students are women, and about 12% belong to disadvantaged communities (Panda 1999; Powar 2000). Economic power and merit equally determine access to higher education. Almost 80% of

the seats in higher education go to the top 30% of the income brackets (Mukhopadhyay 2001).

The Government has taken measures to reduce disparities and provide access to various social groups to participate in higher education through reservations, scholarships and establishing exclusive institutions for women, minorities and other weaker sections. There is another point of view among the educationists to this focus on access and equity in higher education – that quality and standards are compromised. Balancing both by the governmental mechanisms/ measures is the only way; otherwise with increasing globalization and competition disparities between advantaged and disadvantaged communities are bound to grow.

Reflection and Action 20.2

How will improving access and equity in the field of higher education will help the mainstreaming of marginalised in Indian society? In your opinion what are the possible strategies that can be adopted?

Resources in Higher Education

The major issues and challenges faced by higher education, which are explained above are on one side, and the issue of resources in higher education alone on the other side with equal importance or more. Let us examine the facts. At present about 4% of GDP is devoted to education. Assurances of 6% of GDP allocation for education promised by various central governments in the past were never kept. Korea (21%), Thailand (17%), Malaysia (23%), Nepal (14%), and the US (8%) spend more on education than India in terms of GDP (TOI 2006). When it comes to budget allocation for higher education was a steep fall from 25% of the total education allocation in the Fourth year plan (1971-76) to about 8% in the Ninth Plan. With increasing governmental priority for basic and primary education, financial allocation to higher education is decreasing rather rapidly. Universities are under pressure to mobilize resources and adopt measures of financial stringency and efficiency. This trend is evident even in the budget, for the fiscal year 2006-07. Of the Rs. 24,115 crores allotted for education, elementary education alone would get Rs. 16,892.50 crores. The emaining amount has to be shared by adult, secondary, higher and technical education (TOI 2006). With increasing pressures from world bodies, the impact of the General Agreement in Trade Services (GATS) and liberalization within the country, the government is seriously taking measures to reduce the subsidy to higher education. Another argument from critics of subsidy is that higher education largely benefits the upper-middle class and upper segments of the society, hence, it has to go.

There have been several suggestions by education planners. One extreme view has been that the users should pay. There has been the suggestions for a fee hike, and increasing the income of institution through linkages with industry and offering of consultancy services, etc. But whenever there is an increase in fees, one can watch the militancy among students with full support of all political parties without any exception. Thus, we still charge Rs. 18 as monthly fee as fixed about 45 years ago in some of the colleges. It a remotely located college or university has to collaborate with industry, to mobilize resources, which industry we are talking about? Thus we are putting higher education institutions under a lot of pressure; and at the same time we expect them to perform and excel in the field. In some regions of the country, we hear that teachers get their salaries not every month, but once in a few months or whenever institutions get/receive funds from the government. Facing this crisis boldly, we are still producing through our higher education institutions, human resources which are essential to the socio-economic development of our society and also exporting to other countries to shine flourish there.

Another dimension to the resources in higher education institutions are under utilization and misutilisation of funds. Underutilization largely occurs due to the inefficiency of the personnel at various levels, whereas misutilisation is the result of wrong priorities of the leaders/heads who run the institutions. Measures to remedy these situations may be difficult to suggest or to take, but teachers have to be utilized fully as stipulated by the UGC i.e. 40 hours of stay and work per week for teaching, preparation, and research. How can higher education institutions face these grave crises with piecemeal approaches to major issues? Concerted and concrete efforts are needed to face this crises situation.

The crisis situation analysed above is likely to continue and affect the future of higher education as well. In the following section an attempt is made to bring out those issues.

Reflection and Action 20.3

List some more issues (other than those listed above) that Indian higher education is facing.

20.4 Emerging Challenges and Search for Alternatives

The major issues and emerging challenges in higher education along with the search for alternatives are presented in this section.

Globalisation

With the opening up of the Indian economy in the 1990s a large number of universities from developed countries opened centres in India and started offering programmes and courses to Indian students. The response to these programmes particularly from the middle and upper classes of society, who can afford high fees charged by these institutions, is gradually increasing. In the process have emerged the large number of fake universities announcing their programmes with addresses/collaborations with foreign universities, in different parts of the country, to exploit the growing demand for higher professional education. WWe have witnessed in the recent past in of Chhatisgarh and some other parts of the country the overnight mushrooming of universities, without any sort of infrastructure and credibility. Some of the institutions were setup in a one room garages in commercial places which are meant for fancy, and grocery shops. With intervention of the central government and courts of law, some of these "educational shops" had to close down. There must be proper mechanisms to address and promote the entry of foreign institutions in the era of globalization and GATS agreement. What we are witnessing in the name of globalization is total commercialization of higher education leading to further widening the disparities between the education haves' and haven'ts.

To check this trend, the government constituted the 'Committee on Promotion of Indian Education Abroad (COPIEA) in April 2002, with the mandate to monitor the promotion of Indian education abroad and regulate the operation of foreign institutions in India (10^{th} plan, vol. II). To arrive at and to fully address the correct position on this is important issue, consultations among providers of higher education has been intensified during the Tenth Plan.

Privatization

Private initiative is not new to the Indian higher education system. Private colleges both general and professional (medical and engineering) were established during the last few decades by educational trusts/societies with the noble objective of spreading education and to cope with the increasing demand for higher and professional education. In the capitation fee, medical

and engineering colleges only the rich can afford to enrol, the meritorious poor cannot. Though courts pointed this out and took objection to such blatant commercialization, the process is continues in one form or the other. The quality offered by some of these institutions with limited expertise and inadequate infrastructure and the products produced by such institutions, are always under the scanner of employers. Some of these institutions are being accorded the status of 'deemed to be' universities by the University Grants Commission. Many of the big corporate houses, media corporations and others are awaiting for the clearance of the 'Private University Bill' which is pending in the parliament. One of the reasons, probably, for delay in clearing the bill by the parliament, is the complexity of the issue - allowing private institutions in higher education may further increase commercialization in the absence of proper controlling mechanisms (who would do it and how to do it etc?). Experts observe that the "Private players are inevitable in higher education. However, the Government should propose schemes and regulations which would not only regulate their functioning but also give them space to flourish" (Mungekar 2006).

State-run bodies like AICTE, MCI, and DEC should also be empowered to assess private institutions and accredit them from time to time on the lines of state funded higher education universities and institutions, or the government should appoint a separate regulatory authority for private universities. As education is a Concurrent subject, the Union and States Governments should collaborate in inspection of universities and in implementing the regulatory mechanism.

Reflection and Action 20.4

Can you think of some more challenges due to globalization and privatization of Indian higher education?

Emergence of Open and Distance Education

As elaborated above higher education in India has faced numerous challenges, This has led to the development of open and distance learning (ODL) all over the world This has emerged as an effective alternative response to these challenges. Let us examine a few of the issues that have led to the emergence of the ODL system.

- In spite of tremendous expansion of higher education, demand is increasing; and the existing network of higher education is not in a position to accommodate the growing demand. This led to search for alternatives in the form of distance learning by the Central and State Governments and private institutions. Accordingly the Government set the target of 40% of higher education students to be accommodated is distance-learning institutions in the 10th Plan.
- The participation rate in higher education of the eligible age group is about 6% only; to raise it to 20% as planned by the Government and to provide access to various groups and communities, existing institutions alone will not suffice, Hence one of the major alternatives is distance and open learning.
- The continuous decline in funding of higher education by the state, left the institutions to mobilize their resources by research and consultancy and offering programmes through distance learning etc.
- Relevance and quality are two important issues faced by higher education institutions particularly at the undergraduate level. Many of these institutions could not diversify their programmes and improve the quality on accepted levels. At such a juncture ODL institutions with flexibility and innovativeness started offering job-oriented programmes with best quality reaching for flung areas where, conventional institutions could not reach.

- With increasing competition from within and outside due to globalization, most of the existing higher education institutions are forced to be innovative and change their practices, operations and ultimately nature of academic programmes. In this process most of the institutions are using information and communication technologies, the concept of continuous professional development (CPD) and life long learning, quality benchmarking and development of linkages and partnerships with other agencies and institutions. The listed reforms and innovations are more effectively used and on a large scale by open and distance education institutions than the existing higher education institutions due to the flexible nature of their systems and extensive use of technologies.
- Training of teachers at higher education level was never thought of till Academic Staff Colleges (ASCs) came into existence recently. Even these ASCs are not in a position to meet the growing needs of training of university and college teachers. The situation at school level for training of untrained and continuous training of trained teachers is grim and a major challenge to be addressed. Both at school level and tertiary level - planners are looking forward to using distance and open learning methodologies to impart training for continuous professional development.
- To make the higher education programmes and courses more relevant to societal needs and for gainful employment, the Government and the UGC had introduced measures for curriculum updating, diversification and restructuring of programmes and particularly at first degree level. Some effort has been made in this direction by a few institutions, but a lot has to be done by the majority of institutions and universities. Research and extension, which are two significant components of university education, are yet to achieve the rigour required for overall improvement of the tertiary education systems.

Many of the issues and challenges faced by Indian higher education institutions as explained above, and for continuous search for alternatives resulted in the following developments:

- The first Correspondence Course Institute was established at the University of Delhi in 1962 with the intention of catering to those who missed conventional higher education or who could not afford it. Since then many other conventional universities followed suit and established correspondence Course Institutes/Directorates of Distance Education. Now there are about 106 CCIs/DDEs in India catering to the growing higher education demands, and thus contributing to access and equity issue. Another major contribution of the CCIs/DDEs is generation of additional resources to fund conventional education and research of the concerned parent university, which are affected by the severe resource crunch. The CCIs/DDEs have some major limitations such as – lack of autonomy in operations, and inability to utilize the resources generated by them for improvement of quality and for self-development etc.
- To overcome these limitations of CCIs/DDEs and to address mony other challenges faced by conventional higher education, another significant development occurred with the establishment of the first singlemode open university in India i.e. Andhra Pradesh Open University (APOU) in 1982 at Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh. Its name is now changed Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar Open University (B.R.A.O.U). Many other state governments followed suit and established state open universities to make use of the full potential of the open and distance system.
- Another major milestone in the historical development of the distance education system in the country was establishment of a national open university, i.e., Indira Gandhi National Open University, in 1985. IGNOU transformed the face of Indian higher education with its innovative instructional system, flexible admission features, offering unconventional

and job oriented academic programmes across various disciplines, catering to over one million students at any point of time, throughout the length and breadth of the country and also in several other countries.

- There are 14 open universities and 106 CCIs/DDEs which offer programes through distance mode to more than 2.8 million higher education students i.e. 25% of the total enrolment in higher education (Panda 2005). The 10th plan target is to increase the per centage of DE students to 40, by the end of the plan.
- The open and distance education network in the country addressing the many issues and challenges of Indian higher education, which we discussed elaborately in the earlier sections of this unit. The contribution of this network can be seen in
- offering unconventional programmes in various disciplines to make it more relevant to societal needs with job orientation;
- reaching rural and remote areas thus contributing to access and equity issue;
- providing best quality of education to diverse clientele groups, geographically widespread including remote areas, with the use of multimedia and latest satellite technologies;
- contributing in the direction of democratization of higher education.

Reflection and Action 20.5

Do you agree with the emergence of ODL system as one of the alternatives to face challenges in higher education? What implications you are visualising in this process, to Indian higher education?

20.5 Conclusion

Indian higher education system is one of the largest in the world in terms of number of institutions, students and teachers. Any system with a huge network operating in a diverse social, economic and cultural setting is bound to face numerous issues and challenges, the same is the case with Indian higher education. These issues are related to the relevance of the programmes to changing societal needs and the quality of the programmes offered by diverse nature and types of institutions – which are mix of a few institutions of excellence/premier institutions, many standard ones and large number of average institutions. Infrastructure facilities possessed by these institutions, resources at their disposal etc determine the ultimate efficiency and effectiveness of these institutions. Particularly with declining funding from the state, the higher education institutions are left to generate and mobilize their resources, which is a major challenge and does affect the performance of these institutions.

Globalisation and privatization are other major issues faced by Indian higher education leading to commercialization and exploitation of the students of higher education. To overcome the crisis situation a search for alternatives continued. One of the major alternative that emerged is the growth and development of the open and distance education system.

The above issues, challenges and alternatives in front of the Indian higher education system have been dealt with length in this unit. As a student if you are interested in in-depth reading of these issues, vast literature is available on higher education, particularly policy documents of 1964-66, 1986 and 1992.

20.6 FURTHER READING

Chaudhary, S. 2003. *EduSat for Distance Education*. Indian Space Research Organisation. Ahmedabad

Unit 21
Expansion of Professional Education and Private Sector

Contents

Learning Objectives

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- understand the need for the participation of the private sector in the field of professional education;
- comprehend the extent of expansion of the field of professional education;
- appreciate the contribution of the private sector in the expansion of professional education; and
- reflect on the concerns regarding the rapid growth of private professional educational institutions

21.1 Introduction

In the decades sicnce we became independent, the field of education has undergone rapid expansion. Expansion has been witnessed at different levels and in different types of education. There has been expansion not only in terms of facilities but also in terms of enrolment at the different levels of education. The field of professional education is no exception. From just a few institutions at independence, today the number of such institutions runs into thousands. There are many more institutions offering professional education and the enrolment in these institutions has also multiplied several times since independence. Apart from these factors, there has been diversification of subject areas and several new areas have come up. There are new areas of specialisation that are today taught in the institutions offering professional education. Thus, in comparison to the period immediately after independence, expansion in the field of professional education has been phenomenal.

Participation of the private sector education is not new. But its entry and massive growth in the field of professional education is a relatively new phenomenon. This has resulted in great expansion in professional education. The reason for such expansion is the changes in the socio-economic order of our country and of the world. There is a rising awareness of the importance of knowledge as the propeller of the new economic order in the globalised world. The economies of the world are getting integrated and are mainly knowledge driven. The transition to a knowledge-based societies requires continuous supply of professionally skilled manpower. The educational institutions run by the Government being too few, they not enough to cater to the needs for the huge supply of professionals to serve the different sectors of the economy. Therefore, certain policies were framed by the

Government to encourage the participation of the private sector in the field of professional education. In this unit we shall concentrate first on the issue of participation of the private sector in the field of education. Thereafter let us study certain issues that are related to the expansion of professional education and the participation of the private sector therein.

21.2 Private Sector in the Field of Education

Educational institutions in our country are under different types of administration. Some are under the administration of the Government, the rest are under private administration. Education in the Concurrent list and is hence the joint responsibility of the states and the central government. Among the educational institutions under Government management, some are administered by the state government like schools, colleges and some professional institutions, while some are under the administration of the Central Government such as the Central universities, educational institutions of national importance, certain categories of schools such as the Central Schools, Navodaya Vidyalayas, etc. In the category of educational institutions under private management, there are schools, colleges, deemed universities, institutions of professional studies, etc. These institutions are run by individuals, trusts, religious bodies, non government organisations, corporate houses and so on.

The presence of the private sector in education is not a new phenomenon it has been there since historical times. It was not uncommon for the wealthy people of society to open educational institutions and run them. Even today there are many educational institutions like schools, colleges, institutions offering professional programmes that are run by such individuals. Today non-government organisations are active in providing educational opportunities to the deprived sections of society and are complementing the efforts of the Government in its educational endeavours. Among the private administrators of educational institutions, religious organisations have been active in promoting the cause of education for several centuries. The followers of different faiths have been running educational institutions since long back .We have had seminaries like madrasas, monasteries, etc. since historical times and the practice continues today. Christian missionaries too have been running schools and other educational institutions for the last few centuries in our country. There are also educational institutions run by the Khalsa group, the Arya Samaj, the Ramkrishna mission, etc. Thus, people in their individual capacities as well as groups, representing their organisations, societies, communities have been promoting the cause of education (Verma 1984).

Today corporate houses are actively involved in the educational scenario. Renovned industrialists like the Tatas, Birlas, the Reliance group, and many other such business houses have made forays into the field of education. Schools, colleges, deemed universities and other educational institutions that provide general education and professional education are being run by them. There are a number of institutions offering teacher education, technical education, management programmes, etc, that are run by corporate houses.

We thus see that the presence of the private sector in the field of education is not a new phenomenon. It existed in the past and does so now. Not only in our country but also in several others, the responsibility of providing education is shouldered by the private sector along with the public sector. However, in the past in India the private sector was mainly involved in providing school education. It was also involved to some extent in providing higher education that was of a general nature. Its role in providing professional education was limited. With the libelaralisation policies of the government regarding the participation of the private sector providing higher and professional education, more and more private bodies are getting involved in providing professional education.

Besides government policies, a factor that has led to the rapid growth of private educational institutions providing professional education is the changing socio-economic environment of the world and also of our country. With globalisation, the economies of the world are getting integrated. The revolution in of information technology is making the world a global village. In the new economic order, there is need for our society to undergo a transition to a knowledge-based society where knowledge would be the driving force of the economy. Rather than men, materials and capital, knowledge – its generation, utilization and upgradation – are important. There is a paradigm shift and from the labour intensive economic model, one that stresses professional knowledge and skills is in. Therefore, there is a rising demand for professionals in different fields. At the same time the demand by a huge number of aspirants seeking professional education cannot be fulfilled by the public sector alone. Hence, the active participation of the private sector is needed to cater to the emerging need for preparing future professionals. As a result today individuals, religious groups, welfare organisations, corporate houses, and other such bodies are running educational institutions that are providing professional education.

Yet another factor that has led to the mushrooming of private institutions in education, whether it is school education or higher and professional education is that today according to certain estimates, the world over, the business of education involves over trillions of dollars. In India too the field of education has become a lucrative area. Investments made in the field of education are rewarded by high returns. The monetary returns are motivating more and more private players to venture into the field of education. With increasing awareness regarding the indispensability of education for improving the quality of life, growing number of aspirants are seeking quality education. This is true not only of school education, it is all the more so for higher and professional education. India with its over one billion population and a sizeable student population, is attracting educational entrepreneurs even from across jurisdictional boundaries. The provisions of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) are further facilitating such entry of multinationals in the field of education. The economies of the world are opening up to allow the entry of foreign educational services. Hence, private educational institutions from within the country as well as foreign institutions are rapidly growing in number.

The involvement of the private sector in education is thus undeniably on the rise. The area of professional education is a relatively new field into which the private sector is making forays. Although the entry of the private sector into the field of professional education is a recent phenomenon, its growth has been rapid. There is a boom in the institutions offering medical, engineering, technical, teacher education and other such professional programmes during the last few decades in our country.

Reflection and Action 21.1

Broadly classify the different types of management that govern professional institutions. What were the needs that propelled the expansion of the field of professional education in India?

21.3 Need for Private Sector Involvement in Professional Education

In the previous section we have discussed the involvement of the private sector in the field of education and especially its growing involvement in professional education. Now let us discuss the dimensions of private sector participation in professional education.

The government has an obligation to provide education to one and all but the task is not easy. The government sector alone cannot shoulder the responsibility

of providing education to the huge population of learners. This is not a new problem. It was a problem even during the British period though much smaller per centage of the population enrolled in educational institutions them. In 1882, the Hunters Commission had presented its report. It had recommended the careful withdrawal of the government from the field of higher education, and its being taken over by the private enterprises while the state paid more attention to primary education (James and Mayhew, 1988). The need for the government to concentrate its efforts and resources on elementary education is all the more important because of the obligation imposed by the constitution to provide universal elementary education to all children in the age group of six to fourteen years. Hence, resources left for higher and professional education are limited. The Government has to concentrate its efforts in developing educational areas such as elementary education, vocational education, non-formal education, etc. so as to build the basic foundation of the educational system. It is felt that the task of carrying out vertical growth upon the foundation thus built can be left to the private sector to some extent.

This prompted the government to welcome private initiatives in the field of higher and professional education. In order to support the initiatives of the private sector in the field of education, recognised schools and colleges under private management are provided with aid by the government. Owing to the constitutional provisions, even the educational institutions run by religious and linguistic minorities are entitled to receive aid from the government. This encouraged the private sector to get involved in the field of education and there was a spurt in the growth of private educational institutions.

Another reason for the proliferation of privately managed educational institutions is the presence of a section of the population, which is capable of paying the fees charged by the private educational institutions, especially schools. It is often expressed that private schools with their better infrastructure and accountability, offer better quality education. Such feelings justify the overwhelming presence of the private sector in the field of school education. In the field of higher and professional education too there are a number of institutions that offer quality education. In recent days concern has been expressed by a body of surgeons about the deteriorating quality of surgical education in government medical colleges in comparison to the private ones (Falaknaz 2005). Therefore, private professional institutions that can afford better infrastructure, enriched curriculum and research facilities are needed to develop the field of professional education and provide quality education.

The limited facilities under the Government can not accommodate the large number of aspirants seeking professional education. For instance, there are just a handful of IITs and IIMs. Only a few thousands are accommodated by these institutions. In order to stem the outflow of resources and students we need to have adequate number of educational institutions that offer quality education. This facilitated the large scale entry of the private sector into the field of professional education.

In recent times there is an increasing flow of educational services from abroad. This complements the existing private sector in the field of education. As we have already discussed, on account of GATS, foreign entrepreneurs cannot be stopped from providing educational services. They are already actively offering educational services to the student population of our country. Today there are thousands of aspirants who can afford high expenses and avail of foreign educational services.

We shall now discuss the second apprehension regarding the cross border provision of educational services. As we know, education is a potential means for influencing the culture of the people. It is the means for cultural conservation and transmission. Today there are apprehensions that there would

be cultural dominance as a by-product of cross-country educational services. It is well known that the developed countries have a greater share in the globalised economy while the developing nations, at the periphery are still struggling to reach its core. In the field of education as in the case of other goods and services there are apprehensions that there would mainly be a one-way traffic of educational services from the developed western nations to the developing countries. Even in the field of distance education, due to the digital divide the technological haves are the main education providers while the technological have-nots are the receivers. There is a concern that educational inflow from abroad would be a potent means of ushering in cultural imperialism also called neo- colonialism. There would be cultural hegemony and to some extent there would also be cultural homogenisation due to the intermingling of cultural elements with loss of uniqueness and diversities of different cultures. Such apprehensions can be allayed if educational import can be countered by adequate educational facilities within the country provided by the private sector and the public sector working together.

The need for private sector participation in the field of education is thus undeniable because of the budgetary and other constraints of the government. It is well known that in view of the ever-increasing demand for professional education and limited resources of the government, the involvement and growth of the private sector in the field of professional education is indispensable to bridge the gap between the facilities available and the demand for educational opportunities and bring about rapid development of the human resource of the country.

> Reflection and Action 21.2
>
> How can the growth of professional education help us to curb the outflow of resources? Do you think the expansion of professional education is essential for the globalised economy? Why?

21.4 Expansion of Professional Education

Education in the last few decades has undergone considerable expansion. The number of students enrolling in different levels of education has increased by several times in comparison to that at independence. It is indeed heartening that such a rising trend in enrolment has also been witnessed among the marginalised sections of society. Enrolment of women and students from the backward sections of the society has increased considerably during the last few decades in institutions offering general education as well as in those offering professional education. Expansion has also been due to the increase in the number of professional institutions offering different types and levels of education. The third dimension along which there has been expansion is the diversification in the areas of teaching and learning and the emergence of new areas of specialisation. Today there are professional educational programmes in new areas such as nano technology, biotechnology, educational technology, etc. In Table (21.1) below, the data reflects the expansion in the field of education in terms of the growth of the number of educational institutions. The sixth column reflects the growth in the number of institutions offering professional education.

Table 21.1: Growth of Recognised Educational Institutions from 1950-51 to 2001-2002

Years	Primary	Upper Primary	High/Hr.Sec/ Inter/Pre. Jr. Colleges	Colleges for General Education	Colleges for Professional Education (Engg., Tech) Arch., Medical and Education Colleges)	Universities/ Deemed Univ./ Instt. of National Importance
1950-51	209671	13596	7416	370	208	27
1955-56	278135	21730	10838	466	218	31
1960-61	330399	49663	17329	967	852	45
1965-66	391064	75798	27614	1536	770	64
1970-71	408378	90621	37051	2285	992	82
1975-76	454270	106571	43054	3667	** 3276	101
1980-81	494503	118555	51573	3421	** 3542	110
1985-86	528872	134846	65837	4067	** 1533	126
1990-91	560935	151456	79796	4862	886	184
1991-92	566744	155926	82576	5058	950	196
1992-93	571248	158498	84608	5334	989	207
1993-94	570455	162804	89226	5639	1125	213
1994-95	586810	168772	94946	6089	1230	219
1995-96	593410	174145	99274	6569	1354	226
1996-97	603646	180293	103241	6759	1770	228
1997-98	619222	185961	107140	7199	2075	229
1998-99*	626737	190166	112438	7494	2113	237
1999-2000*	641695	198004	116820	7782	2124	244
2000-2001*	638738	206269	126047	7929	2223	254
2001-2002*	664041	219626	133492	8737	2409	272

* - provisional data

(Source:http://www.education.nic.in)

We see that the number of institutions offering professional education has risen rapidly during the last several decades. Owing to the rapid expansion of the knowledge base and the emergence of new methods and techniques of doing things, advancement in the field of professional education has been tremendous. As mentioned earlier, the demand for people equipped with the professional knowledge and skills is increasing in the knowledge driven modern world. In the globalised economy there is free movement of skilled people, knowledge and information and there are many people of our country who have been rewarded with offshore jobs following education from professional institutions. Therefore, for private educational institutions to be actively involved in this expanding field of professional education and undergo rapid growth is quite natural. It is in fact a part of the ongoing process of evolution of the field of education.

We find that mainly two factors have resulted in the expansion of professional education. The first is the rising demand for skilled professional in the new economic order. The second factor is the headway made in the earlier stages of education, namely elementary and secondary education. Since independence, the number of students successfully completing school education and desiring higher and professional education has increased massively. To accommodate the ever-increasing number of aspirants, the number of professional institutions too had to be increased. It was felt that the number of institutions run by the Government is too few to accommodate the huge number of aspirants who could contribute effectively to the economic development of the country after professional. This led to the policies that provided encouragement to the private sector to enter the field of professional education.

The credit for the significant expansion of professional education goes mainly to the growth of private professional institutions. It is the entry of the private sector that has brought about the tremendous increase in the number of educational institutions offering professional education. Such increase has been the great increase in enrolment for professional education. Today the number of Government institutions is far outnumbered by those under private management. The different states of our country have been opening up professional education to private entrepreneurs. The governments of some of the states have been inviting participation and cooperation of the private sector including Non Resident Indians in opening institutions for professional studies. To solicit the participation of the private sector in this area, incentives for instance land at conussional rates, is provided to those opening professional institutions.

Reflection and Action 21.3

What is your view regarding the under representation of women in institutions of professional education, especially those offering technology based education? What steps do you suggest in this regard?

21.5 Private Sector in Professional Education

Today there exist different types of professional educational institutions. One category comprises professional institutions under the management of the Government, for instance Government run teacher education institutions, institutions offering technical education, etc. The second category comprises institutions under private management but receiving government aid. The third category comprises self-financing institutions, which are institutions under private management that do nor reczeive any aid. However, they are also recognised institutions. Let us study the expansion of professional education in terms of the growth of institutions offering professional educational programmes of different categories with the help of Table 21.2.

Table 21.2: Growth of institutions of Professional Education of Different Categories

Type	1961	1971	1981	1986	1991	1996	1997	1998
1) Degree Standard and above Professional and Technical Institutions for:								
a) Agriculture and Forestry	35	59	61	70	80*	90	NA	NA
b) Engineering, Technology and Architecture	111	134	171	248	351	422	607	NA
c) Medicine*	133	179	249	288	346@	437	NA	NA
d) Veterinary Science	17	22	22	22	27+	46	NA	NA
e) Teacher's Training	147	274	341	432	474	633	697	848
2) Below Degree Level Professional/Vocational and Technical Institutions	4,145	4,401	4,808	5,381	5,739	6,513	6,542	6,561

+ Related to the Year 1998(IAMR – Working Paper)
@ DGHS – Health Information of India – 1993
* Medicine includes Allopathy, Homeopathy, Ayurveda and Unani.

The data in this table reveals that there has been considerable expansion of professional education in the part four decades. In the British period the foundations for professional educational programmes such as medical education, technical education, law, teacher education, etc., had been laid but not much effort was made to expand the facilities. Professional education was not considered as a potent means of nation development and prosperity. Therefore, the number of institutions for professional studies and enrolment were not adequate. Initially there were a few institutions offering technical education. They mainly aimed at developing skilled people who could contribute towards infrastructure development such as constructing bridges, canals, roads, etc. Starting with civil engineering, later on education in other branches of

engineering such as electrical and mechanical engineering was started. However, the professionals thus educated were meant mainly to function as foremen, overseers and such officers who would occupy comparatively lower ranks in the hierarchy. Those occupying higher positions were usually British who had received professional training abroad.

Following independence there was a shift in the paradigm from the primarily agrarian economy to an industrialized one and moves were made towards industrialization. In order to accelerate industrial development, growth of technical education was considered to be essential to supply the manpower needed. Institutions for imparting technical education were established at the national level, regional level and also at the state level. Institutions of national importance were also established. Aided and unaided private institutions as well as the non-formal sector in the field of technical education came up. Later on emphasis was laid on information technology and a number of institutions offering programmes related to information technology came up. Now we are moving towards a knowledge-based economy that requires constant generation and use of knowledge. (Kalam 2005). Hence, there has been goal oriented and planned efforts to expand the field of technical and other professional education. These measures led to the expansion of the field of professional education.

Similar has been the case with institutions offering other types of professional education. A number of medical colleges have been come up. There has been a phenomenal growth in the number of institutions offering management programmes, those related to business studies and teacher education. Besides the proactive role of the government, we owe the growth of the number of institutions and corresponding rise in enrolment also to the private sector. The policies of the Government have nurtured the growth of the private sector in the field of professional education. The judgments of the Supreme Court regarding fee rationalization, especially the recent one on admission of students in self financing institutions have encouraged the participation of the private sector and its contribution towards the expansion of education.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has decided to encourage self- financing private institutions offering higher and professional education by conferring upon the promising ones that are yet to fully comply with all the statutory requirements the provisional status of deemed universities. Thereafter these institutions can apply to the UGC through the Ministry of Human Resource Development for the status of deemed universities. This move will encourage not only private sector participation but will also motivate them to function as centers of excellence and provide quality education in emerging areas. India has been a heavy importer of foreign educational services but to encourage their export, private educational institutions have also been empowered to operate multi campuses and open foreign campuses so as to enroll foreign students. Besides this the decision has also been taken to reserve 15% of the seats in private professional educational colleges for students who are Non-Resident Indians (Gautam 2000).

For the expansion of professional education credit goes not only to the large number of institutions offering education in the conventional mode but also to those that offer professional education through the distance mode. Today professional educational programmes are available to distant learners. There are professional programmes on technology, medical sciences including surgery, nursing, agriculture, veterinary science, animal husbandry, teacher education, etc. offered through the distance mode. The state open universities, and especially Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) has a number of programmes that are meant to provide professional education to thousands of students who for a variety of reasons cannot attend conventional institutions. Professional education is thus available to the students at their home. There are study centers and programme centers to take care of the practical

component. Thus distance education has been playing a significant role in the expansion of professional education.

With increase in the number of institutions offering professional education, especially those under private management, it was felt that the respective professional councils should monitor the functioning and standards of professional educational institutions. The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) established in 1948 as an advisory body in matters related to technical education was vested with statutory authority in 1988 for planning, formulating and maintenance of norms and standards, accreditation and ensuring coordinated development of technical and management education. In the case of institutions offering programmes on pharmacy and architecture there are the respective councils to oversee the functioning of educational institutions in these areas. Similarly the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) is a statutory body to facilitate the planned and coordinated development of teacher education throughout the country. It formulates norms and sees to their adherence by the teacher education institutions. Similarly there are professional councils for medical studies, law, etc., to monitor and guide the functioning of the educational institutions of their respective areas.

We thus see that there has indeed been an expansion of professional education. In comparison to the scenario that prevailed a few years after independence, the number of institutions offering professional studies has shot up. The changing socio-economic needs shaped the policies of the government, which in turn facilitated the expansion of professional education with the help of the private sector. Today private institutions offer a wide spectrum of educational programmes. They not only cater to the numbers but with their greater resources and autonomy they can experiment and develop new programmes that are need-based. Therefore, there is a growing popularity of private institutions among students.

Reflection and Action 21.4

From a state of your choice collect information on the ratio of:

- Government technical education institutions and private ones and
- Government teacher education colleges and private ones

21.6 Concerns Regarding Private Sector Participation

We have been discussing in the previous sections the need for the participation of the private sector in professional education and the expansion of this area as a result of the entry of the private sector. Although participation of the private sector is today the need of the hour, nevertheless certain concerns are expressed regarding the rapid growth of educational institutions under private management. In this section we shall discus some of the major concerns.

a) **Under-representation of the weaker sections**

Expansion of educational facilities cannot be deemed to be satisfactory unless it is holistic. People from the marginalised sections of society are still to catch up with the rising trend in enrolment in institutions offering professional education. Students from rural areas, those belonging to the backward communities, and female students are still behind when it comes to proper representation in these institutions. Women's participation is still below fifty per cent at all stages of education and in institutions offering professional education it is no better. Besides lower enrolment of women another trend being noticed is the relatively much lower enrolment of girls at the higher secondary level and above in the science stream and in technological courses.

As per the data given for enrolment in Engineering/Technology/Architecture by levels and sex all over India, by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, in 1971, there were 84025 male graduates in these areas while the female graduates were only 820. In 1998 there were 285137 male graduates in these areas while the female graduates were 57958. The level and sex wise enrolment data given by the MHRD reveal that in India in Medicine (including Allopathy, Homepathy, Ayurveda and Unani) in 1971 the total number of male graduate, post-graduates and doctorate degree holders was 72205 and for females it was 18742. In a time span of two and a half decades, that for males rose to 97591 and for females it rose to 42383. In the case of agriculture and forestry, in 1971 the number of male graduate, postgraduate and doctorate degree holders was 24934 and for females it was just 177. But within 26 years women fared much better than before and the number of female graduate, post graduate and doctorate degree holders rose to 3362, while for male students it was 41738. In 1971 the number of male graduates in teacher education programmes was 34798 and female graduates were 21234. In 1998 the number of male graduates was 64416 and female graduates were 48857. A similar trend with lower enrolment figures for women in comparison to men is observable in the fields of business management, journalism, law, library science, physical education, etc.

From the prevailing data it is clear that there has indeed been expansion of professional education and enrolment of women in professional institution has also increased considerably but still a lot has to be achieved to attain parity between genders.

Reflection and Action 21.5

In your opinion is the private participation in the field of professional education a welcome move? How can private participation in the field of education contribute towards curbing cultural dominance and homogenisation of cultures?

b) Skewed distribution of professional educational institutions

We have seen that the number of educational institutions offering professional studies in different states of our country have grown considerably. Now let us study with the help of Table21.3 the state wise distribution of professional institutions in the year 2002-03.

Table 21.3: State wise distribution of professional institutions - 2002-03

State / UT		Number of Professional Institutions
1)	Andhra Pradesh	359
2)	Arunachal Pradesh	1
3)	Assam	49
4)	Bihar	47
5)	Chattisgarh	5
6)	Goa	15
7)	Gujarat	123
8)	Haryana	70
9)	Himachal Pradesh	13
10)	Jammu & Kashmir	18
11)	Jharkhand	13
12)	Karnataka	356
13)	Kerala	127
14)	Madhya Pradesh	79
15)	Maharashtra	525
16)	Manipur	5

17)	Meghalaya	2
18)	Mizoram	2
19)	Nagaland	2
20)	Orissa	51
21)	Punjab	84
22)	Rajasthan	76
23)	Sikkim	3
24)	Tamil Nadu	215
25)	Tripura	3
26)	Uttar Pradesh	224
27)	Uttaranchal	4
28)	West Bengal	88
29)	Andaman & Nicobar Island	1
30)	Chandigarh	9
31)	Dadar & Nagar Haveli	0
32)	Daman & Diu	1
33)	Delhi	44
34)	Lakshadweep	0
35)	Pondicherry	16
	India	2610

As we can see from this table, in some of the states there are hundreds of professional educational institutions while in some states there are as few as one or two. There has thus been a lopsided development in this field. There is greater number of institutions in the southern region of the country but much less in the northeast region. This reflects regional imbalance.

Reflection and Action 21.6

In your view has the expansion in the field of professional education been satisfactory? Justify your answer. What are the reasons that cause concerns regarding the quality of education provided by some of the private educational institutions?

c) **Quality of education**

As we have been discussing earlier, there has been phenomenal growth in the field of professional edzucation with the opening of a number of private institutions providing education in technology, engineering, computer sciences, medicine, teacher training, etc. Concerns are being expressed as to the quality of education that is being provided by many of these institutions. It is a general belief that private schools usually offer quality education. The higher fees charged by the private schools do not deter parents from choosing them because of the opinion about the quality of education. In the field of higher and professional education, however such generalisation cannot be made. Unlike private institutions that are more sought after at the school level, the reverse is true for higher education. Private institutions are seldom the first choice of those aspiring for higher and professional education. Even today many institutions of excellence in the sphere of professional education are run by the government. Premiere institutions of engineering, technology, medicine, management, etc. enjoy a great degree of autonomy but are nevertheless under Government management.

There are allegations that the quality of education offered by many private professional educational institutions are not up to the mark in spite of the hefty fee charged by them. It has been alleged that unlike Government organisations like the IITs, IIMs, engineering colleges at Roorkee, Jadavpore,

and many others and also many private aided institutions that are providing quality education, there are several unaided private institutions that are not providing quality education due to the lack of proper infrastructure and faculty. It is further alleged that in the field of technical education and engineering the amount spent per student per annum by the IITs is satisfactory, that spent by the regional colleges is comparatively less yet does not violate the AICTE norms but the amount spent by several self-financing institutions is much less than that stipulated by the AICTE. Such institutions have failed to enhance the quality of professional education and the growth in the number of such institutions could result in serious decline in a educational standards (Ragesh, 2003). Similar allegations have been made against several private teacher education institutions. There are allegations about the undermining of quality due to mass enrolment and lack of adequate facilities in several of these institutions.

Reflection and Action 21.7

From any three types of private professional educational institutions of your choice, collect information about the regulations regarding the fee charged from the students and policies regarding admission.

Such allegations however do not imply that the growth of self-financing institutions should be discouraged. Rather, the professional councils have to effectively monitor and supervise them. It is to be ensured that if the self-financing institutions are generating surplus funds then they are spent on the development of the organisation. As stated by Dasgupta, Secretary, Urban Affairs & Employment, the NPE (1986) laid special emphasis upon the qualitative as well as quantitative development of technical and management education. Guidelines were issued as to the establishment of linkages amongst the concerned agencies, manpower assessment, cost effectiveness, modernization, removal of obsolescence in laboratories and workshops, etc. It has been further underlined that the quality of the infrastructure with laboratory facilities, that of the faculty, research facilities, etc. of many private professional institutions is not up to the mark. The faculty has to be adequate in number and possess the right type of qualification. Provision of regular in-service education is also needed for professional growth. Teaching methods adopted should encourage independent learning, innovations, creativity, problem solving, etc. The laboratories and workshops too need modernization. Research and extension services should also be encouraged in these institutions. These institutions also need to develop self-renewal capacity. It is also necessary for them to network amongst themselves, with other related organisations and industries within the country and abroad. Such networking with provision for the sharing of human and material resources and administrative experiences, transfer of credits, launching of joint programmes can lead to the capacity building of these institutions. Networking and multiple utilization of the infrastructure will also lead to the optimum utilization of resources.

You may be feeling why the onus of providing quality education should be on the private sector when there are serious concerns regarding the quality of education provided even at Government-run institutions. As we have already discussed, it was reported that concern has been expressed about Government medical colleges, which were once the pioneers of surgical techniques but are today struggling to keep pace with the rapid technological advance. The archaic syllabus and techniques and outdated infrastructure are taking a heavy toll of surgical training, education and patient care and as a result they are losing out to private medical institutions. Therefore concerns regarding quality are there for both Government and private institutions. However as stated repeatedly in this unit, the expansion of the field of professional education owes a lot to the private sector. The number of Government institutions in certain areas is outnumbered by private ones. Therefore lowering of standards by these

institutions will adversely affect the concerned area. It has been rightly pointed out by Mukhopadhyay (2000) that the biggest challenge for the private sector and the biggest reason for it to enter the field of education are not merely to deal with the huge number of aspirants but mainly to provide quality education. There are certain private non-university institutions that are models in catering to quantity while maintaining quality. Therefore, professional educational institutions have to maintain quality and the private sector being new entrants in this area, more is expected of them.

21.7 Commercialisation of Education

Another serious allegation often made against the private professional educational institutions is that they are commercialising education and that students as well as the faculty are exploited in these institutions. Commercialisation, in the field of education refers to the motive of making money or generating finances by devising commercially profitable procedures such as mass admission without ensuring requisite facilities/services for imparting sound education (Anand 1997). Education is thus not provided with the motive of achieving social development but for minting money. High fees charged are not justified by the quality of educational services provided. There is an apprehension that the rise in such institutions would lead to money rather than merit becoming the deciding factor for enrolment. Professional education would thus become the means for the progress of the individual rather than of society and be the privilege of only the moneyed class.

Earlier several institutions enrolled thousands of aspirants seeking teacher education without adequate infrastructure, teacher-student ratio and student support services. This not only affected the quality of education but the process was akin to commodifying education and selling degrees to a huge student population every year. B.Ed. through the correspondence mode was especially misused. Now these programmes are under the supervision of NCTE and Distance Education Council. There is at presentlly a ban on the charging of capitation fees by private institutions and profiteering of any sort is also unacceptable. The generation of surplus funds by these institutions is allowed but on the condition that it is applied for the upgradation and development of the organisation. Policies are also being framed by the government to regulate the fee charged by private institutions.

It is a well known fact that moneyed individuals like rich farmers, traders, contractors, politicians, those already in the business of running public schools, etc. today often prefer to invest their surplus money in the field of professional education because of the heavy returns. It is well known that there are professional educational institutions where teachers are hired and fired at will, not adequately compensated, those without proper qualifications are recruited, money is extorted from the students on various pretexts, necessary infrastructure is not provided and other such malpractices are carried on. It is, however seen that the renowned corporate houses that are providing professional education are maintaining better standards. There is a strong linkage between educational institutions and industries. They have an added advantage that they are aware of the present industrial scenario and can project the future needs of industries.

Therefore, a more proactive role has to be played to ensure that education is not for sale. The government, the professional councils, the accreditating agencies and the stake holders need to be active in this regard.

Reflection and Action 21.8

What is the major social impact of commercialisation of education? Explain any two steps that can be taken to improve the quality of education provided by institutions offering professional education.

21.8 Conclusion

We have discussed that the participation of the private sector in the field of education has been there for a long time. Religious bodies, missionaries, charitable groups, wealthy people of the society and other such groups and individuals have been active in providing education. In the period following independence, schools and colleges run by the private sector was common. However, the massive participation of the private sector in the field of professional education is a relatively new phenomenon. This has been in response to the emerging need for private participation. The Government is under an obligation to provide universal elementary education, which is a task of gigantic proportions and the resources are limited. The private sector is needed to complement the efforts of the government. Keeping pace with the globalised economy demands learning societies with knowledge driven economies. For this a work force equipped with professional knowledge and skills is required. Government institutions are too few in number to supply the manpower needed. There is need for active participation by the private sector for human resource development. Moreover today with globalisation, providers of education from abroad are many in number. Import of educational services in our country is considerable. The result is not only the outflow of human and financial resources but there is also the danger of cultural hegemony and homogenisation through the education provided by the developed nations. To reduce import and enhance export of educational services adequate expansion of the field of professional education is required and the private sector can help in this direction.

Since independence the number of Government and private institutions providing professional education has risen considerably. Aided as well as self-financing institutions have come up in large numbers. The supportive policies of the Government and its agencies such as the UGC and the rulings from the judiciary have encouraged expansion in this field. While such expansion is the need of the hour, there are also some concerns about it ,especially about the rapid growth of private institutions. It is felt that the marginalised section of society including women, students from rural areas, backward communities, etc. are yet to benefit significantly from such expansion. Secondly there is regional imbalance in the distribution of these institutions and there are certain regions with only a few institutions. Thirdly, the quality of education provided by some of the institutions is also a matter of concern. Allegation are also leveled that with the increase in the number of private institutions, especially the self-financing ones education is being commercialized. It is agreed that expansion of professional education is the need of the hour and private participation in this field is indispensable. Therefore, it is necessary to address the issues that are the causes of concern so that the expansion of this sector is healthy in all respects.

21.9 Further Reading

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Unit 22
WTO, GATS, ICTS and Higher Education

Contents

Learning Objectives

This unit aims to examine the

- Interlinkages among the processes of globalisation, knowledge economy and higher education,
- Coverage of higher education under the GATS,
- Emerging social processes affecting the structure and functioning of higher education in the globalised world,
- Developing a critique of the free market philosophy on higher education.

22.1 Introduction

Education as a social process and an institution influences the processes of social progression, economic growth, political articulation, intellectual and human development and technological advancement of a society. Education also operates in time and space embedded socio-cultural, techno-economic and politico-administrative processes, which widely influence its course and direction. The emerging composite social processes have brought forth new opportunities and challenges to the education system in general and to the ODL in particular by way of fostering a new paradigm of economic, technological, cultural and political development and discourse.

In the wake of globalization and the exponential expansion of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) driven service and knowledge economy, and fast flow of human and commercial capital all over the globe, contemporary societies have been marked by an extension of trade in all areas of human creativity, including education. With the increasing intensity of the human and capital flows, communities are no longer solely described in geographical terms, rather ordered across time and space in terms of cultural decontextualisation. These altogether have set in motion processes of fast diffusion of human resources, creativities and educational knowledge and their commercial integration globally. The formalization process of trade liberalization through the WTO and its General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) have introduced trade in education with several new dimensions attached to it, which were hitherto unknown to the world of education, especially in the developing countries. In the changing socio-cultural and techno-economic environment, the higher education system, which has long been considered to be a potential force for achieving development in arts, science and technology and finishing higher levels of human potential and promoting human-centered development for a vast section of the population, has now largely emerged as an important vehicle for commercialization of knowledge globally.

In this background the changing state of higher education and its commercialization are required to be understood in the context of globalisation, advancement of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), emergence of knowledge economy and the expansion of market forces all over the globe. Some of these processes we have discussed at length in Book-II of MSO-003. Let us discuss them further to contextualise higher education within these processes.

22.2 Globalisation, ICTs and the Emergence of Knowledge Society

The process of globalization has both ideological and empirical dimensions. Ideologically many scholars have seen it as an expression of the capitalist ideology (Ferguson 1992); as the alternative expression of cultural imperialism, and as the process of construction of transnational domination. According to Bartekson (2000) empirically it involves at least three processes– a process of 'transference' of exchange of things across existing unit boundaries, a process of 'transformation' of the identity of the unit, and also 'transcendence' that dissolves the divide between inside and outside (Bartelson 2000: 184-86). Globalization indeed is a plural phenomenon that includes the processes of economic integration, exchange of goods and services, and mobility of resources and adaptation to the structural adjustment programme of the IMF and the World Bank, transnational cultural flows and communication to territorialize culture (viz Americanization, hybridization etc cf. Barber 1992, Appadurai 1996), planetarisation of ecology (Meadows 1972), cultural extension and technological connectivity. Globalization, moreover, takes place in different socio-historical contexts, which provide very different meanings and implications in various parts of the world. It is posited in composite economic, technological, socio-cultural and political connectivity, 'with multiple tendencies to a worldwide reach and connectedness of social phenomena or to a world-encompassing awareness among social actors' (Therborn 2000: 154).

The process of globalisation needs a faster flow of goods and services across the globe. This is possible only with the help of advanced technology. Globalization is thus closely linked with the process of technological transformation and innovations. Human advancement is closely associated with technological advancement. Contemporary society is witnessing revolutionary innovative advancements in the field of technology, especially information and communication technologies (ICTs), which is characterized by phenomenal expansion of computer communication, and electronic technology. ICTs tremendously increase the pace of globalization and these together make a far- reaching impact on every aspect of society including economic, social, cultural political etc. A major outcome of this is the emergence of a knowledge society or information age where knowledge or information becomes the driving force for the all-round advancement of humanity. Gaining knowledge and applying it for knowledge production become the basic necessity for economic advancement.

Box 22.1: Social Development and Technological Advancement

History has proved that every form of technological transformation and innovation is linked to the emergence, proliferation and sustenance of a distinctive form of economy. The advancements in ICTs that is witnessed in the present day society is also linked to a new variety of economic activities which is a characteristic form of knowledge economy. Let us elaborate on this a little more. The process of knowledge generation, production and dissemination are challenged in the age of new ICTs. In the ICT-led knowledge economy, according to Romar (1990) as distinct from peasant and industrial economy where economic wealth is produced by using human manual labour and machines respectively, the processes of

generation, dissemination and exploitation of knowledge produce economic wealth predominantly. In the emerging society the ICTs have been envisioned as breaking the barriers to knowledge to develop human capabilities in all areas throughout the globe and among the poor and the rich alike. This is reflected in the work pattern of the society. Unlike the domination of the agricultural sector in the pre-industrial society and the industrial sector in the industrial society, in the ICT age knowledge-based service sector takes the dominant place. The service sector is marked by the creative use and exploitation of knowledge, which in turn depicts a significant role for the institutions that deliver knowledge.

By now the interlinkages between the expansion of globalisation, ICTs and knowledge economy must have been clear to you. You should also know that globalisation, ICTs and knowledge economy need a distinct variety of workers with educational process, which are linked to world market. This educational process is deeply embedded in commercially inclined life-long learning.

Box 22.2 : Knowledge Workers and Education

The knowledge economy and the workers have distinctive features and specific educational requirements. Let us examine some of the features of the knowledge economy and their relation with education:

a) The knowledge workers of the knowledge society are the "symbolic analyst" who manipulates symbols rather than machines. Significantly their emergence is becoming faster than ever before with ever increasing productivity in all sector of the economy.

b) The workers of the knowledge economy get access to work and social through formal education and training.

c) Formal education and educational institutions occupy the centerstage of the knowledge society in a way similar to acquiring and distribution of property and income have occupied in the age of capitalism.

d) In knowledge economy people are to learn throughout their life making the state of acquiring of knowledge a life-long process rather than an age specific affair.

e) Knowledge society is far more competitive than the earlier society, as knowledge is the key competitive factor for career and earning opportunities.

f) Knowledge workers own the tools of production. Unlike the capitalist society, true investment in the knowledge society is the knowledge of the knowledge workers, without knowledge the whole production process is unproductive. The higher the quality of education and training, the higher the demand of the knowledge worker.

Life-long learning is an important dimension of the knowledge society. New skill and knowledge are required to be imparted to meet the changing need of this society. Hence to fulfil this need several systems of education – convention system, open and distance system – dual mode system (combining both the conventional and the open and distance mode together) – have emerged across the globe. Significantly all these educational systems now draw heavily on the information and communication technologies (ICTs) both for the generation and dissemination of knowledge. There have emerged virtual universities and expansion of borderless education through ICTs. Indeed the ICT driven education system have acquired a place of prominence in present society.

The interlinkages among globalisation, ICTs, knowledge economy and education have not only thrown open new challenges to higher education, but also several opportunities that could be harnessed socially, economically and

politically. Thus there have emerged the following potential opportunities:

- Using of education as a tradeable commodity.
- Expand the boundaries of this trade all over the world.
- Institutionalise trade in education by creating new national and international arrangements. The new arrangements are those of the GATS and others.
- Extensive use of ICTs for the expansion of trade in education.

In the following sections of this unit, we shall be dealing with all these issues. As the ICTs are important components to deliver education across the globe and to commercialise education, let us examine the form and extent of ICTs use in the contemporary world.

Action and Reflection 22.1

Explain the significance of education in the knowledge economy. Discuss the relationship between the technological change and globalisation

As there has been greater realization about the potential of knowledge economy in the developing countries and the roles of ICTs therein, many of the multinational organizations including the World Bank, UNDP, International Telecommunication Union (ITU), etc., have fostered multiple initiatives in the Third World countries to create a framework for influencing policy formulation, opening up markets, introducing competition and deregulate the ICTs market (Balakrishnan 2001: 966). Since old structures and arrangements (like UN) are unable to accommodate the emerging flow and speed of economic engagements and interactions, now new structures are evolved to accommodate them. Now let us briefly explain the process of trading of education through the GATS.

Reflection and Action 22.2

Explain the major trends of access to ICTs in the contemporary world

22.3 General Agreements in Trade in Services (GATS) and Education

The emerging processes of globalization, expansion of ICTs and knowledge economy show an implicit and explicit relationship with commodification of education through GATS. Under the WTO regime education is a tradable service and this is to be traded in a unitary framework across the globe.

Box 22.3: GATS and Service Sector

The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) is the first and only set of multilateral rules governing international trade in services. The GATs was negotiated in the Uruguay Round, and was developed in response to the huge growth of the services economy over the past 30 years. In the global economy the service sector accounts for 60% of the global output, 30% of the global employment and 20% of the global trade (WTO 2005). If you look at the developed countries like the UK, the USA and Australia more than 72% of their GDP is earned from service and around 75% of the employed persons are engaged in the services economy (World Bank 2006 UN DP 2005).

The idea of bringing rules on services into the multilateral trading system was floated in the early to mid 1980s. The agreement was developed within the framework of rules and also in terms of the market access commitments. The GATs covers all traded services - for example banking, telecommunications, tourism, education, professional services etc.

The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), a set of multilateral rules governing international trade in services, is governed by principles relating to coverage, principle of trade and issues of protection of patents and copyrights. The various modes of trade in services in general and education in particular governed by GATS shall be understood in the backdrop of the basic principles of GATS. Let us see them briefly here.

a) **Most-favoured-nation (MFN) treatment:** MFN means treating one's trading partners equally on the principle of non-discrimination. Under GATS, if a country allows foreign competition in a sector (for example education), equal opportunities in that sector should be given to service providers from all other WTO members.

b) **Commitments on market access and national treatment:** Under the GATS all countries committed to open markets in specific sectors - and how open those markets will be - are the outcome of negotiations. Through these negotiations the member countries can increase market access (for example allow foreign universities to operate in the domestic market), limit the market access and decide the national treatment (i.e. whether or not the foreign universities be given all the opportunities which are given to the domestic/national universities).

c) **Transparency:** GATS says governments must publish all relevant laws and regulations, and set up enquiry points within their bureaucracies. Foreign companies and governments can then use these inquiry points to obtain information about regulations in any service sector.

d) **Regulation by Government:** As per the GATS, the government shall be using objectivity, reason and impartiality. A commitment to national treatment, for example, would only mean that the same regulations would apply to foreign suppliers as to nationals. Governments retain their right to set qualification requirements for doctors or lawyers, and to set standards to ensure consumer health and safety.

e) **Recognition:** National governments can negotiate on the issue of recognition of each others educational qualifications to make them comparable. However, according to GATS "the recognition of other countries" qualification must not be discriminatory, and it must not amount to protectionism in disguise" (Ibid).

f) **International Payments and Transfers:** Once a government has made a commitment to open a service sector to foreign competition, it must not normally restrict money being transferred out of the country as payment for services supplied in that sector.

g) **Progressive Liberalization:** The WTO commits itself for progressive liberalization of trade including trade in services. Liberalisation of trade in services through the GATS requires more negotiations, which began in early 2000 and are now part of the Doha Development Agenda. The goal is to take the liberalization process further by increasing the level of commitments made under the GATS.

As already indicated, GATS covers a wide range of subjects. Work on some of the subjects started in 1995, as required, soon after GATS came into force in January 1995. Negotiations to further liberalize international trade in services started in 2000, along with other work involving study and review. The Articles of GATS which specify the broad guideline for negotiation has wider ramifications on services like education. Now let us learn more on the modes of trade in services in general and education in particular.

Box 22.4: WTO's Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS)

Another important international agreement relating to knowledge creation and education that falls under WTO is Trade Related Property Rights (TRIPS). TRIPS, negotiated in the 1986-94 Uruguay Round, introduced intellectual property rules into the multilateral trading system for the first time. The WTO recognizes that ideas and knowledge are increasingly becoming parts of global trade. The creators must be given the rights to prevent others to use them without acknowledging, rewarding and recognizing the creators. Internationally there are variations on the extent of protection and reinforcement of these rights. TRIPS aims to bring uniformity in this aspect. TRIPS laid down that patent protection must be available for inventions for at least 20 years. The agreement describes the minimum rights that a patent owner must enjoy.

The areas covered by the TRIPS Agreement are:

- Copyright and related rights
- Trademarks, including service marks
- Geographical indications
- Industrial designs
- Patents
- Layout-designs (topographies) of integrated circuits
- Undisclosed information, including trade secrets (WTO 2005)

It is now established that the remaining services economy needs an educational arrangement and programmes that can be traded across the border as commodity both through the ICT based distance and conventional education. Privatisation of education, production and promotion of market driven self-financing educational programme, quick adoption of ICTs, repackaging of available course materials, development of collaborative arrangements with foreign universities to trade education are some of the recent trends not only with the distance learning but also with several conventional universities. The hidden potential of the open and distance learning especially its flexible structure, capacity to produce innovative academic programmes and its wide adherence to the ICTs based virtual and online learning have attracted the attention not only of the proponents of the knowledge economy but also the multinational corporations (We have discussed about ODL in the last block of this book).

In the given context the higher education scenario has been characterised by

- Increasing demand in higher education in India
- Emergence of a demand for lifelong learning
- Emergence of open and distance learning system as important providers of education
- Emphasis on ICTs aided learning
- Growing emphasis on dual mode education system whereby conventional education system also provides education through distance mode. In India of the 327 regular universities, 176 now also provide education through distance mode. More than 20% of students in India are now enrolled in the open and distance learning system.
- Increasing commercialisation of education through ICTs.
- Proliferation of 'for profit' private providers of higher education especially in the technical and professional cover.
- Proliferation of foreign universities campus.

In the developing world while the democratic states perceive education as service with social commitment, emerging market forces influence the state to redefine the function of education as a potential tradable commodity - a trade that can be transacted across the globe with the help of ICTs. In the context of the changes in the economy and the GATS the state's approach to education has undergone a phenomenal shift. Let us see the implication of this on higher education in India.

22.4 GATS and Modes Education

The GATS suggests four "modes" of trading of all internally traded services - for example banking, telecommunications, tourism, professional and education services, etc.

Mode 1: Service supplied from one country to another officially known as "cross-border supply"

Mode 2: Consumers or firms making use of a service in another country, officially known as "consumption abroad"

Mode 3: A foreign company setting up subsidiaries or branches to provide services in another country, officially described as "commercial presence"

Mode 4: Individuals traveling from their own country to supply services in another officially "presence of natural persons" (WTO, 2001)

Under the GATS the modes in which education could be traded globally is shown in Table 4.

Table 24.1: Mode of Supply of Education under GATS

Mode of Supply According to GATS	Explanation	Examples in Higher Education	Size/Potential of market
1. Cross Border Supply	-the provision of a service where the service crosses the border (does not require the physical movement of the consumer)	-distance education -e-learning -Virtual universities	-currently a relatively small market -seen to have great potential through the use of new ICTs and especially the internet
2. Consumption abroad	-provision of the service involving the movement of the consumer to the country of the supplier	-students who go to another country to study	-currently represents the largest share of the global market for education services
3. Commercial Presence	-the service provider establishes or has presence of commercial facilities in another country in order to render service	-local branch or satellite campuses -twinning partnerships -franchising arrangements with local institutions	-growing interest and strong potential for future growth -most controversial as it appears to set international rules on foreign investment
4. Presence of Natural Persons	-persons traveling to another country on a temporary basis to provide service	-professors, teachers, researchers working abroad	-potentially a strong market given the emphasis on mobility of professionals

Table 5: Classification of education services under GATS

Category of education service	Education activities included in each category	Notes
Primary Education (CPC 921)	-pre-school and other primary education services -does not cover child-care services	
Secondary Education (CPC 922)	-general higher secondary -technical and vocational secondary -also covers technical and vocational services for the disabled	
Higher Education (CPC 923) Adult Education (CPC 924)	-post secondary technical and vocational education services -other higher education services leading to university degree or equivalent -covers education for adults outside the regular education system	-types of education (i.e., business, liberal arts, science) are not specified -assumes that all post secondary training and education programs are covered -further delineation is needed
Other Education (CPC 929)	-covers all other education services not elsewhere classified -excludes education services related to recreation matters	-needs clarification re coverage and differentiation from other categories -for example- are education and language testing services, student recruitment services, quality assessment covered?

Source: Night, J. 2002

As we have seen earlier under the principle of GATS all member countries will provide equal market access and national treatment to all WTO members and guarantee equal conditions for foreign exporters and importers of education and investors in this to do business. The member governments are to make all relevant laws and regulations to suit this requirement of GATS.

The contemporary world has been conspicuously worked by a) sharp decline in public funding in higher education, b) sharp increase in the number of adults student seeking specialized educational training to start newer or to advance present career, c) proliferation of ICTs-based distance learning educational institutions and private corporate houses, e) increase in the potential of profitability of global market of education which is currently estimated to be US $ 50 billion industry, f) increase in the 'for - profit' providers of higher education. Against this backdrop, higher education which was considered a public good and agent for equal opportunity considered by many a lucrative business in the 'service economy. For-profit providers and investors visualize the WTO and GATS as essential to dismantle what they consider to be barriers to trade in educational services and maximise their profit making opportunities on a global scale (public citizens 2006). Thus there have been serious efforts to transform higher education from a public good to a global services market" through the GATS. These have several implications.

Implications

- The provision of national treatment emphasizes that both the foreign and domestic providers of education be treated equally. The developing countries in particular and all the countries in general have a special commitment to provide subsidies in education to the weaker section of society. There are also facilities of freeships, scholarship for the students in Government-run or non-profit educational institutions. Under the national treatment provision either these protective subsidies be extended even to the providers of education or be withdrawn to ensure national treatment to all providers of education.
- Cross border education services are to be recognized by members of the WTO and provided accreditation. Refusal and delay may give rise to trade complaints. The stringent provision in providing accreditation, which may be a necessity on the part of some countries to protect their specific cultural and societal interest, could be challenged in the WTO tribunals as "more burdensome than necessary to ensure quality of service".
- As cross-border education has provided enormous opportunities of making profit by trading education, there are possibilities of proliferation of fraudulent institutions. The online education service without proper accountability, standard and recognition would emergeas a tool for unscrupulous providers of education to exploit innocent students.
- It is also highlighted that the GATS has endeavoured to deregulate education to the advantage of the multinational firms by dismantling many of the domestic policies. Cross-border education and trade in education "does not simply entail students studying abroad to wide horizons and add depth, spice and culture to higher education experience". This rather ensures effective elimination of "trade barriers" for the benefit of large multinationals and standards and policies are relegated to the category of "non-tariff barriers to trade" (Public Citizen 2006)

It is significant in this context that the initiative to include education under GATS has not come from experts in higher education, but from corporations and bodies like Global Alliance for Transnational Education, a subsidiary of a multinational telecommunication firm whose interest was to promote 'for-profit' education institutions abroad.

22.5 ICTs, Marginalised People and the Higher Education in India

"Education as an enabling mechanism" is a corollary to the processes of empowerment of the marginalized people. *The National Human Development Report* 2001 writes: "Most importantly, education is a critical invasive instrument for bringing about social, economic and political inclusion and a durable integration of people, particularly those excluded from the mainstream of society"(GOI 2001:48). Marginalized people like the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, educationally backward minorities and women have always got low access to education in India. In recent years there have been serious debates on the issue of access of marginalized sections of society to higher education. India has high dropout rates at the primary and secondary levels of education. These dropsout rates are highest among the marginalized groups.

The large section of these populations lag behind educationally at all levels. State policies on education is mandated to promote the educational well being of these people who have been relegated at the margin of society and are excluded from the mainstream economically, politically, culturally, and socially.

Even though India spends around 20% of total educational budget on higher education, of the total student population only 5.7% go to the colleges and higher levels of studies. In terms of age group, in India only 7% of the population of age group of 17-24 attain higher education as against 92% in the US, 52% in the UK, 45% in Japan (UNESCO 1999). In India, students' enrolment in higher education has significantly increased in recent years from less than 0.2 million in 1950 to around 10 millions by the year 2002. There, however, has been a very slow rate of increase of the Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Trib and educationally backward students in higher education. For example the per centages of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled tribe students in higher education has been increased from 7% and 1.6% in 1950 to 7.78% and 2.7% in 2002 respectively (Rao 2002 cf. Weisskopt 2004). The per centage of girls' enrolment in higher education however has increased from 10% in 1950-51 to 40.5% 2003-03 (Govt. of India 2001-02).

In India there has also been a phenomenal growth of govt. recognized educational institutions from 209671 primary school in 1950-51 to 664041 in 2001-02; 7416 to 133492 high school, 587 to 11146 colleges (including colleges for professional education) and from 27 to 272 universities/institutions of national importance during the same period. More than 9.2 million students have enrolled in higher education in 2002-03 (Govt. of India 2001-02)

In spite of these developments higher education has remained beyond the reach of more than 94% of the Indian student population. The concept of open and distance learning is mooted for the educational well being of the marginalized. Can ICTs-based ODL be an effective tool for higher education among the marginalized in India? Let us examine the state infra structure or digital divide in India.

Experts often suggest several measures to integrate the ICTs and ODL to suffice the educational need of the marginalised. It is suggested that the ICT and ODL experts are to be sensitive to the need of the marginalized people in general and that of the workforce in particular. Educational curricula should focus on both their immediate and long-term knowledge need to pave the way to integrate them locally and globally through ICTs

Box 22.5: Digital Divide in Accessibility of ICTs

ICTs, however, function in a societal context. The Indian societal context is ridden with unequal distribution of resources, and divides based on caste, class, ethnicity and gender. Illiteracy, low income and spatial isolation widely contribute to sustain the pre-existing social exclusion. Along the time, there are also the dimensions of digital divides of various sorts. These divides are between rich and poor, between urban and rural, between English speaking upwardly mobile literati and non-English speaking rest of people. This digital divides are again accentuated with the varied extent of access to electricity, telephone and computer in different states in India. Table 3 shows the emerging form and the extent of digital and infrastructure divides in India. All parts of the country do not have full access to electricity and telephone connections, which are a pre-conditions for ICTS access. In the globalised world while there have emerged areas of inclusion; there also exists a vast section as excluded from within. While most of the urban areas have been connected with the forces of globalisation and ICT networks and a distinctive category of elites has emerged therein as the ICT-driven 'digiterati', within the same urban set a large segment of the work force working mostly in the unorganized sector and surviving in a sub-human existence has remained excluded from ICTs access. In rural areas, on the other hand, while the rudimentary forms of connectivity have only touched the upwardly mobile gentry, agricultural labourers, tenants, poor peasants and the artisans who represent the vast section of the marginalized people of India have remained excluded. Their educational and economic status often bar them from getting integrated with the information age.

22.6 Globalisation, Free Market and Higher Education: A Critique

The process of globalisation has exposed higher education in India to multiple tendencies, reach, connectedness and contradictions. While there has been concern for the educational well being of the marginalized, the market triumph over education can seldom be denied. Significantly in the Social Development Summit 1995 Copenhagen, the Heads of States and Governments recognized that the importance of the ICTs and the Structural Adjustment Programme to ensure the process of empowerment of the marginalized people. They committed:

- 'to promote open free markets, to prevent or counteract market failure, promote stability and long term investment, ensure fair competition,
- to ensure that people living in poverty have access to education and training, technology knowledge and information,
- to promote lifelong learning by seeking to improve the quality of education to ensure that people of all ages are provided with useful knowledge,
- to ensure equal education opportunity for girls, women, youth, children and adults,
- to 'strengthen the links between the labour market and education policies realizing that education and vocational training are vital elements in job creation and combating unemployment and social exclusion in our societies,'
- to 'implement at the national levels structural adjustment policies to establish a more favourable climate for trade and investment to ensure human recourse development'(UNDP 1995)

It is usually pointed out the Social Development Summit was a prelude to the GATT and GATS in order to get the Heads of the States and Government committed to the free market philosophy and to initiate trade in education largely to protect the interests of the for-profit provides of educations.

The provision of 'cross-border supply' under the GATS has opened up a new horizon for transference and commercialization of education through ICTs. With the 'commercial presence' in other countries through local branch, satellite campuses, twinning partnerships, and franchising arrangements, the process of transformation of local identities has also been smoothened. However, these processes have not been able to resolve the contradiction between local cultural values and sensitivities inbuilt in education on the one hand, and the global drive to commoditize education on the other.

All countries of the world however are not equally posited in relation to their technological development. Comoditisation and commercial expansion of education will immediately help promote the interest of those countries which have already reached a higher level of technological development, access to ICTs, and have the capacity to invest a higher proportion of their GDP in education. It is widely recognized that the GATS has introduced market driven competition among unequal partners. The developing and least developed countries, which are yet to fully develop their markets, infrastructure, domestic capacity for investment, etc., face added disadvantages while encountering the process of harmonization. The market driven competition of GATS contribute to the decline in the uniqueness of educational institutions, elimination of cultural focus, thoughts and educational themes. It is apprehended that 'with corporate controlled education, the security of an educational institution will disappear as it loses out to big merger deals and high-stakes investing. In fact the very ideal of education will change. No longer will truth be sought, but rather whatever suits the interests of the multinationals (Frase and O'Sullivan 2003).

Education has a social concern, especially in developing countries. Government subsidizes education to meet the national goal. As subsidized education is a barrier to free trade, government controls are to be minimized on education through GATS. "Government may be forced to allow private companies to issue accredited diplomas, even if there is little control over what is being taught by these private institutions. The potential for education to increasingly serve only as a corporate training ground is more encouraged, rather than encouraging critical enquiry and other democratically agreed upon ends (Ibid 2003)

Dissemination of knowledge, creation of knowledge and service to community are three tasks performed by educational institutions for nation building in the developing countries. GATS would undermine this task by converting education into a commodity and by altering the content of education in terms of the market need (Gill 2003)

There has been a perceptive change in the attitude of the Government towards higher education in the wake of introduction of the General Agreement in Trade in Services (GATS). Now there has been the added emphasis on private funding in higher education by way of (a) hiking student fees (b) introducing students' loan, (c) increasing role of private sector, (e) introducing self financing courses (Government of India 2001), (f) encouraging the private universities.

There is no denying the fact that the 'let the users pay' philosophy may work very well for the economically affluent or elite section of society. This approach however will adversely affect the students of the marginalized groups of society. As private investment in higher education will not go to the non-market-oriented courses and to research and development of knowledge, it would hid the interest of the students of the marginalized groups very hard. In the emerging scenario higher education is no more a luxury: It is essential to a nation's social and economic development (UNESCO 2001). Skilled human capital is to be developed in the country with the philosophy of access and equity, marginalised groups access to higher education is to be smoothened.

The country paper of Government of India, presented at the UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education 1998, expresses its commitment to ensure the 'reach of higher education to the youth as well as to those who need continuing education for meeting the demands of explosion of information, fast changing of occupation, and lifelong education' It also recognized that "the university has a crucial role to play in promoting social change and it must make an impact on the community by a new emphasis on the community based programmes and the roles of ICTs therein"(GOI 1998).

In the mission to promote social change and to develop community-based programme for the marginalized, social science education has a lot to contribute to contextualise the ICTs and lifelong learning in terms of the local need. In spite of initiation of the process of harmonization through globalization, GATS and the Structural Adjustment Programme the world has got digitally divided, a large section of the marginalized has remained excluded, new identities are formed, and a new culture of resistance has emerged. The challenge lies for the social scientists in the ODL in undertaking the risk to integrate the localized plural values and cultural sensitivities of the communities with the process of global learning.

22.7 Conclusion

In this unit we discussed the broad context, in which the ODL is to function today, i.e. the frame of globalization, and the emergence of ICT based knowledge economy therein. In the wake of globalization, proliferation of ICTs and the emergence of the free market philosophy through the GATS and WTO, ODL has acquired several new dimensions and possibilities. The changing facets

of ODL are also presented in this unit. The roles of the ODL in empowering the marginalized through appropriate education and technology in the context of persisting socio-economic and digital divide in India are also discussed at length. Besides highlighting the opportunities as unfolded for the ODL for becoming an effective tool for the empowerment of the marginalized in developing societies, a critique of the functioning of the ODL has also been presented here. Throughout the unit our aim has been not to impose a conclusion on the interface between the ODL and globalization, but to facilitate you by way of providing you some crucial interrelated information to locate socio-cultural sensitivities, market underpinning and the emerging significance of the ODL in the globalised world.

22.9 Further Reading

Night, J. 2002. *Trade in Higher Education Services : The Implications of GATS.* The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education: London

Chanda, R. 2002. *GATS and Its Implications for Developing Countries: Key Issues Concerns.* Department of Economic and Social Affairs, World Bank: Washington

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