

Globalization and the Changing Ideology of Indian Higher Education

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Introduction

The preamble of the Constitution declared India to be a sovereign, socialist, secular and democratic republic. The ideals, the nation has to follow are emphasized in it along with the principles and values for the development of the nation. In fact, the preamble sums up the whole philosophy of the Indian state. By declaring the state sovereign, the Constitution has asserted the right of people to govern themselves. Sovereignty of the nation lies in the people and the power to direct the nation and to enact the laws lies in the will of the people. Socialism meant the desire to secure to all citizens social, economic and political justice. While secularism was a commitment to build the country into a human family by going beyond casteism, communalism and religion, democracy means the government of the people, by the people and for the people.

The philosophy of the preamble was expected to be translated into the educational system at the time of India's independence. How to democratize education by making it accessible to all in the quest for social justice should have been the obsession with the leaders of Independent India. Wonderful policies were drawn up. In the Directive principles of state policy the state made a commitment within a period of ten years from the commencement of the Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children, until they completed the age of fourteen years (Article 45). In the same part of the Constitution, the state assured to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections and in particular, of the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes (Article 46). The idea was to empower the weaker sections through education by protecting them from all social injustice and all kinds of exploitation. Pronouncements were also made for providing special impetus for women's education.

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Table 01 : Number of Illiterates in India in crores.

Year	Number of Illiterates
1951	25.5
1961	26.7
1971	30.7
1981	35.0
1991	37.1

Source: Probe Report on Basic Education in India: Probe Team 1999.

Dichotomy Between "Profession" and "Practices":

If one has to critically examine our achievements after 53 years of independence, wide gap exists between profession and practice. The census of 1991 points out that 48% of the people of the country are still illiterate. The assurance in the constitution to put an end to illiteracy within ten years has not even been implemented even after 52 years of independence. The SCs/STs still remain as the least literate in the country. Women's education has been a privilege of urban women hailing from upper castes and classes. The state has miserably failed in its commitments.

To make matters worse the duality in the educational system has been a mockery. The rich and the wealthy manage to have the best of education in quality English medium schools which help them towards social mobility and to climb the ladder of success. The poor have to frequent single teacher schools with dilapidated school buildings where the teachers rarely make their way to the schools. It is no different at the level of higher education. The masses enrol in government colleges which impart hardly any education and the elite class rushes to private institutions of repute. There is a wide gap between the two types of education. In a recent survey by "India Today" all the ten colleges considered as the best in the country have been in the private sector. The poor not only can't avail quality institutions, they are not affordable to them. A poor quality education is provided to the masses to tell them that they have equal opportunities when in reality that access to education provides no opportunities in life at all.

Table No.02 : Ten Top Colleges

ARTS	SCIENCE	COMMERCE
St.Stephen's, Delhi	St. Stephen's, Delhi	Shri Ram College Delhi
Presidency, Calcutta	Presidency, Calcutta	St. Xavier's, Calcutta
St. Xavier's, Mumbai	St. Xavier's, Mumbai	St.Xavier's, Mumbai
St. Xavier's, Calcutta	Loyola, Chennai	Loyola, Chennai
Loyola, Chennai	St.Xavier's, Calcutta	Mithibai, Mumbai
Lady Shri Ram, Delhi	Hindu College, Delhi	Poddar, Mumbai
Madras Christian	Presidency, Chennai	Goenka, Mumbai
College, Chennai		
Hindu, Delhi	St.Joseph's, Bangalore	Badruka, Hyderabad
Brabourne, Calcutta	Madras Christian	St. Joseph's, Bangalore
	College, Chennai.	
Presidency, Chennai	Ruia College, Mumbai	Lady Shri Ram,
		Delhi

Source: India Today, June 14,1999

Another sad factor in Indian education is the stress on higher education over primary education against all that the constitution professed. When 48% of the Indian population is illiterate, we have gone on expanding our higher education meant for a specific class. The expansion of colleges has been on account of pressure from dominant groups - zamindars, industrialists, local politicians and other influential sections. A state that professed the principle of equality instead of using education to bring about equality in society has used education to widen the gap between classes by going for an expansion of higher education at the expense of mass education for the poor.

Prem Kirpal in his introduction to the book "Learning To Be" rightly observes "many educational systems are oriented towards the building of an 'elite'" and the term applies to India. J.P. Naik had said "our educational system has been geared to the welfare of the upper and middle classes right from the start and they continue to be its principal beneficiaries even to this date. Education has thus become an instrument for the preservation of the status quo and continuation of privileges" (Naik 1982: 13) working against the very philosophy professed in the Constitution.

"Professed" and "Hidden Ideology"

Why does it happen? It is because in spite of all the profession the state has, there is a hidden ideology that is operative and that blocks "education for all". Certain vested interest forces seem to be totally opposed to democratization and Universalization of education. If the local community is educated the Zamindars would not get their cheap labour. The politicians cannot carry on sloganeering and the dominant groups cannot go on with exploitation. These vested interest groups in close nexus with the state apparatus have been blocking education for all. Otherwise one will not be able to explain the rapid growth of higher education and the failure of the universalization of primary education scheme.

**Table 03 : Trends in Education Expenditure
(Percentage of GNP)**

Year	Education at all levels	Elementary Education
1981-82	3%	1.3%
1986-87	3.7%	1.7%
1991-92	4%	1.8%
1995-96	3.2%	1.5%

Gail Omvedt connects the neglect of primary education to the development path India has followed since Independence. "Rapid industrialization focusing on heavy capital goods, high technology, a scientific establishment, nuclear power etc. was seen as the core of self-reliance, national prestige and economic growth. Investment and energy were directed to this end. Agriculture, agro-industries and simple manufacturing such as textiles (which had upto then been India's strongest items of trade) were neglected. The majority of India's people were seen mainly as suppliers of cheap labour and as objects of poverty alleviation programmes - not as sources of energy, enterprise and capacities that were the country's real strength. Slogans of "socialism" meant mainly state control of industry, not popular control; they assumed an economy managed by the elite controlling the bureaucracy. . . . What did this mean for education? It meant not only a neglect of education as such, but that the funds for education were disproportionately directed at creating institutions of higher learning... The final result is the burgeoning crisis we see in all sectors of education today: widespread illiteracy, neglect of elementary education, failure rates of over 50 per cent in secondary education....The choice of this top-down development model

was related in turn to deep factors of the Indian social structure, primarily the old values of caste hierarchy (Probe 1999: 134).

Gail Omvedt is quite clear that forces of capitalism have established nexus with the casteist forces. Caste assigns definite roles and occupations to specific social groups. While in the vedic period, knowledge along with ritual practices were the preserve of the brahmins, the character of the beneficiaries did not drastically change during the British period. In theory colonial schools were open to all. But given the limitedness of funding, it was the Brahmins and few other upper castes who monopolized the system. Others did not have both the money and the means to enter the gates of education. The story has repeated itself in the post colonial project of education. That is why in spite of a professed ideology of working towards an egalitarian social order, the capitalist and casteist forces have been determined to keep the unjust social order intact. Even in 1999 there is no major political party or a social movement attempting to win public support by taking radical steps to universalise primary education and provide greater access to higher education. The fact that only 6% of the relevant age group is in higher education and they do hail from the top 20% of India's socio-economic groups is a clear proof education in general and higher education in particular continues to be the preserve of upper castes and classes.

Shift from Capitalist Education to Globalization

Therefore it is evident if one has to analyze the characteristic of Indian education, it is primarily at the service of the capitalist class. Education though in profession is open to all, is selective to certain social groups with status, power and wealth. Privileged groups have cornered the best educational facilities. The educational system functions within the broader socio-economic, political, cultural and ideological system. Being a sub-system, it is heavily depended upon and in turn supports and strengthens the other systems. Basically the system of education corresponds to and reflects what happens in the over all society. It is therefore natural that the educational policies of the Indian state betray the same caste and class bias as the economic policies. It is the same dominant social groups who take over the political leadership that forms educational policies.

By its very nature capitalist education reproduces the existing social hierarchy. Education has not transformed any society. In some socialist countries a socio-economic revolution has helped to reconstruct education on egalitarian terms. However when changes in education are initiated by the ruling classes, they are primarily meant to benefit them. Even the reforms through various commissions, to the extent the commissions are constituted by those in power, help in reinforcing caste and capitalist hierarchies.

The education system therefore is intimately connected with economics and politics. If poverty is the root cause of illiteracy, wealth provides quality education to the rich. Carnoy therefore had rightly observed "the way society organizes formal schooling is a function of the economic and social hierarchy and cannot be separated from it" (Cornoy 1974: 347). Political power is normally in the hands of the economic and social elite. Those who wield economic power control politics and other social sub-systems to manipulate it to their own advantage. The political economy of education therefore is a dominating factor in determining education.

Table 04 : Plan Expenditure on different sectors of Education (1951-1997)

	Primary	Secondary	Technical	Higher	Other
First Plan (1951-56)	56	13	13	9	9
Second Plan (1956-61)	35	19	18	18	10
Third Plan (1961-66)	34	18	21	15	12
Plan Holiday (1966-69)	24	16	25	24	11
Fourth Plan (1969-74)	30	18	13	25	14
Fifth Plan (1974-79)	35	17	12	22	14
Sixth Plan (1980-85)	33	21	11	22	4
Seventh Plan (1985-90)	37	24	14	16	3
Expenditure (1990-92)	37	22	17	12	2
Eighth Plan (1992-97)	47	18	14	8	4

Looking at Indian education from another perspective, the principal objective of colonial education was de-Indiansiation of Indians. Friere's expressions are worth noting; colonial education "was discriminatory, mediocre and based on verbalism. It could not contribute anything to national reconstruction because it was not constituted for the purpose.... Schooling was anti-democratic in its methods, in its content and in its objectives. Divorced from the reality of the country, it was, for this very reason, a school for a minority and thus against the majority" (Freire 1978: 13 & 14). It selected a few and excluded most. The rejected constantly increased. This is a typical function of capitalism.

Table 05 : Growth rate in enrolment in Higher Education

Year	Growth rate
1950-51 to 1960-61	12.6%
1960-61 to 1970-71	13.4%
1970-71 to 1980-81	3.5%
1980-81 to 1990-91	4.9%

Source: UGC Reports

Competition is the essence of capitalism. In the process of competition several are excluded and those who have capital oppress the system. The operation of the educational system is similar since it is designed by the capitalists to preserve their interests. The system is designed in such a way, to give an impression that all have access to it. In reality, the whole nature, content and curriculum of the system favours the capitalist groups and excludes the others.

We have not made any radical changes in the colonial model of education. The values, attitudes and knowledge inculcated by the system was to de-indianise and colonize. There was no concern for local history, culture and language in the education imparted by the British. Concern for masses and construction of Indian society were not its objective. Preparing collaborators for British administration in India was its goal/ The elite found English education useful for their economic and political interests. The very same elite today with globalization crave for foreign degrees. It is not a matter for bewilderment. With the change of the economic system, the change is perceived in education.

Features of globalization

Globalization is a philosophy of a social minority all over the world. This capitalist minority is determined to possess and amass as much wealth as possible at the expense of the social majorities. They have discovered the state system as an obstacle for the growth of capital and are determined to undermine state sovereignty and substitute the state with the markets. The whole ideology of the market economy is to make the markets sovereign over the state. Political boundaries are an obstacle for the markets. The world should become one to establish nexus between capitalists all over the world. The state has been made subservient to markets. Globalisers do not care for the concerns of the masses. Privatization, liberalization and total freedom for the markets is the mantra of globalisation so that these forces of the markets determine all of life and living.

Growing disparities are already witnessed as a result of globalization. At the International level according to the Human Development Report 1992, the 1960 income of the top 20% was 30 times that of the bottom 20%. By 1989 it was 60 times more, the richest getting 82.7% of the world GNP and the bottom 20% only 1.4%. This income disparity is reflected in real consumption levels: the North with one fourth of the world's population consumes 60% of the world's food, 85% of its wood, 75% of its metals and 70% of its energy.

TABLE 06 : Sources of Funding for Higher Education (Percentage)

Year	Government	Local Bodies	Fees	Other	Total
1950-51	49.1	0.3	36.8	13.8	100.0
1960-61	53.1	0.4	34.8	11.7	100.0
1970-71	60.4	0.5	25.5	13.5	100.0
1980-81	72.0	0.8	17.4	10.8	100.0
1985-86	79.7	1.4	14.4	4.5	100.0

Source: Education Dialogue, New Delhi, Page 13.

Globalization is thus a new contemporary stage of the development of capitalism all over the world. Its hallmark is the dominance of predatory transnational capital which with no respect to national boundaries seeks to penetrate all geographical areas and all sectors of economic activity and subordinates it to the world capitalist market and system.

The process of globalization involves homogenization of technologies, internationalization of production processes, labour processes and accumulation of capital by multi-national and transnational corporation.

Education for Globalization

An ideology of the kind impacts extensively upon education. The universities can no longer prepare people for their economies. Their role now is to prepare students for global markets. While universities will have to equip students with new knowledge, skill and attitudes, information services and technologies will take the centre stage. Globalized economy needs technocrats in industry, information specialists, computer experts both in hardware and software. The internet is already playing an important role. Concretely, what does education for the markets mean?

- a) Education becomes business: Education considered till now as a service is already transformed into a business activity. With capitulation colleges emerging in the private sector education is bound to be expensive. Private universities will emerge. The Government of India has already initiated a bill on Private Universities in the Rajya Sabha. These private universities will gradually link themselves with universities beyond the border of this country. The system of accreditation will be market driven. International partnership arrangements will be guided by profits than service. The MNCs, TNCs and Business Houses will enter the educational market in a big way.
- b) Education for neo-colonialism: The colonization of India had provided a boost to British economy by transfer of economic resources from the country. Globalization is termed as neo-colonialism. If education then under the British was meant to indoctrinate citizens with a colonial ideology, the education for markets is meant to help advanced countries to exploit education to inculcate the ideology of the markets. Business enterprises from the North will dominate the educational scene. More and more students will travel abroad for foreign degrees. The local institutions will be gradually destroyed and the best ones in the country will be treated as second class. Education will be utilized to rob the country's resources. There are already experiments of linking up of Indian universities or colleges with the West. The curriculum, reading materials, style of teaching and the core of the programme in

these courses is as directed by the western Institutions. At the end of the programme students receive a degree from a western Institute for a significant premium. The local colleges in the process are "neo-colonized".

c. Growing Disparities in education among Social groups: Globalization per se has increased disparities. Education in general and higher education in particular will be available to the wealthy in the future. It will be the preserve of the super elite. With the government abandoning its commitment to higher education, the dalits, the tribals and the minorities will receive no quality education. Nationally and globally, the rich-poor divide is growing. According to the statistics provided by the Alternative Report of Delhi Science Forum 53% of the Indian population lives below the poverty line.

d. Marketisation of Education: Globalization of education is the natural consequence of economic globalization (Pinto 1998: 637). Science education is likely to experience a set back. Economy is built on trade and commerce, demand and supply and not on science. In the last few years the number of science students has dropped from 32% to less than 19% creating a fear among the scientific community that progress in space research and atomic energy will gradually collapse irrespective of the nascent efforts made by the government and other educational institutions" (*Hindu* the December 1998). On the other hand Business and Technical Education will flourish. The global markets require competent personnel in marketing, Commerce, Economics, Finance, Accounting, Human Resource Development, management, Computers, Electronics and other information related areas.

Even humanities may receive further encouragement though utilized for markets. "The forces of globalization do appropriate certain ways of social and cultural behavior through construction and commodification" (Pinto 1998: 637). Globalization is an ideology. As a set of ideas, beliefs and myths, social sciences are essential to spread the market ideology. All ideologies are constructed by social scientists. Politics plays an important part in providing a direction to education. Once the state accepts the ideology of the market, the role for educational system is to support the policies and decisions of the state. And ideological framework has to be highlighted by the educational system to make the ideology acceptable to the public. As subservient to the state, education

provides the ideological support to the doctrines and ideas of the state. That would mean social sciences would continue to enjoy the status that they have enjoyed. The subjects of course will be driven by the forces of the market, highly competitive and utilised for market purposes. Writing in the Times of India on 1st May 1999, Altbach rightly observes globalization in education is motivated by profits. It is for the most part, unregulated. The goals are to meet market demand and to create a market niche for an "educational product".

e. Impetus to foreign degrees: In recent years there has been an increasing flow of Indian students abroad. Between 1996 and 1998 Altbach says students going from India to US alone increased by 10.5 per cent. Universities from the industrialized countries have been very active in recruiting students from Asian countries. These students besides contributing to the already affluent economies of the West will return to the country with ideas of capitalist economy and thus contribute to the process of globalization. Foreign degrees in foreign universities essentially contribute to the capitalist economy depriving the local economy its share.

Analysis

Both colonial education and education for globalisation are exploitative in nature. If colonial education was meant to prepare "babus" for East India company, the education for markets is to prepare Indians for the global corporates. Both in terms of goals and objectives there is no much difference between the colonial and global educational processes. Both kinds of education are not rooted in the native soil. In fact, their primary aim is to draw out the rich and the dominant away from the local moorings and use them as tools for markets. Students passing out of such systems will have a loyalty to capitalists processes of production, culture and living.

Education is indoctrination. It defines what is good and desirable and what is to be rejected and discarded. The values, beliefs and attitudes inculcated by both colonial and market education exalts consumerism, competition, individualism, western mode of life and living, technology, science, and capital while at the same time rejecting indigenous ways of life, folklore and communitarian ways of living. Development essentially is all about people; their right over resources. Education for markets

is all about capital, technology, computers, electronics and profits. An education for globalisation is bound to further marginalise the poor not only in terms of access but also in terms of the products.

A globalized educational system in terms of access will not be available to all. It will be expensive and sophisticated. If only 6% make it to higher education now, it will be further reduced. A matter of greater concern is the attitudes beliefs and value systems internalized by the products of the system. These will carry on the mission of the globalises plundering and looting our natural resources, imposing a developmental model that benefits the global capitalists and thus act as agents of global economic lords.

There is thus a link between the evolution of Indian society (the progressive consolidation of the business and economic elite) and the transformation of higher education; starting with the colonial period, (preparing subservient administrators for the colonial administration); followed by the progressive consolidation of the economic and business elite till the late eighties with launching of the top institutions like IITs, Institutes of Management, Agricultural Universities, etc all with foreign collaboration, all catering to the top elite. With the 1990s, the elite has sufficiently consolidated itself economically and otherwise and feels strong enough to run its own institution of higher learning. This is the beginning of a new period when the subsidies by the state are no longer needed. The process had already started back in time, with Tatas, Manipal and Birlas starting their own institutes. But by the mid 1980s onwards a much broader section of the business increasingly feels that it can now run educational institutions on its own and make them "profitable". Number of colleges, institutes of management, medical colleges etc. are started by the elite on a purely profit basis, using NRIs, of late, also show increasing interest in this sort of "business": The process is accelerated by globalisation.

Take the example of US high-tech firms depending on foreign labour.

"For thousands of American high-tech firms, their billion dollar businesses depend on their ability to find foreign workers who can navigate complex computer languages like "Java" or "C". According to the Information Technology Association (ITA) of America, about 346,000 information technology-related jobs were vacant in 1998, and labour-de-

prived high-tech firms have begun exploring beyond American shores, seeking offshore operations or importing skilled foreigners to work in the US. We've been forced to go outside the US to hire people," said Richard McGinn, Chairman and CEO of Lucent Technologies, the New Jersey-based communications equipment giant. "Many of those jobs are outside... We're now employing nearly 3,500 engineers in UK, in Germany, in China, Japan, Taiwan, Korea... not for the market access, but because we can't find people here." In an attempt to attract the foreign-trained "cream of the crop" to American high-tech industry, Congress enacted a law last year, to increase the number of temporary work visas to 115,000 a year from the previously approved 65,000. This year, Senator Phil Gramm (R-Texas) has been pushing legislation calling for more foreign workers to keep the US economy rolling. But more relief is needed to meet an unrelenting labour demand that has been created by the red-hot economy over more than eight years. According to Department of Labour estimates, America needs more than a million new information technology (IT) workers through 2005 — far more than foreign temporary workers can provide.

The temporary work visa, called H1-B, is a category for non-immigrant foreign workers to work in a specialised field in the US for up to six years. Experts estimate almost half of those visa holders are working in the IT industry as engineers, computer programmes or medical professionals with higher academic degrees from their homes abroad. "I think it makes perfectly good economic sense to try to increase the number of skilled foreign workers in the US," Princeton University Professor Alan Krueger, a former chief economist for the US Department of Labour, said. "But the H1-B visa is a very imperfect approach because it gives employers far more bargaining power than they have in the ordinary employment situation". For people like Duncan Moore, associate technology director for the President's Office of Science and Technology Policy, the better and long-term solution is to figure out how to increase the number of high-tech workers in the US. Moore said one of the main reasons for America's dependency on high-tech foreign workers stems from the nation's inability to attract qualified science and math teachers into classrooms. "If you are graduating with your first degree in science, say in chemistry, you've got all kinds of industry opportunities," he said. "But (teaching) salaries are terrible. So why would young people do this?" (*Times of India*, dated 27.08.1999).

This is a typical case how global markets rob local talents of third world countries for global markets. Unfortunately third world elites are only too happy to offer their labour for a few extra coins. A large number of our computer experts are now in the USA. They were prepared for global markets.

All along the process of consolidation the elite have always vigorously fought to exclude competitors (means here the poor, dalits, minorities and tribals) from entering the educational system. Opposition to Reservation and the ensuing struggle is a reflection of the class/caste struggle emerging more and more acute within the broader social system. Ultimately the democratisation of education is linked to a revolutionary process of radical alteration in power relations, in favour of the victims and deprives of today.

Conclusion

The Alternative to globalisation is localisation. Designs of a global empire contemplated by MNCs, TNCs and Business groups can only be done away with local struggles for assertion, identity and development. The important question is how do we strengthen local control over educational system and knowledge and gear education for national development. Unless and until a movement for change begins from below, the task is not easy. Though the independence movement freed us from the British, the educational system was kept intact. What the system inculcates still is western value systems of individualism, competition and prepares students to western kind of living. With globalization such values are intensified. The alternative is a massive campaign for change.

Education must become more and more sensitive to local aspirations, hopes and desires and gear itself for control of local resources by local communities. Such reforms are not contemplated by the state or ruling classes in India. The only other way of reforming the system is by the involvement of intellectual elite who are critical of the ruling class. In the past intellectuals committed to the transformation of society have played a major role in change processes. One of the pre-conditions for change by intellectuals is their ability to establish a close bond with the rest of the population and mobilise various groups and associations to the revamping of the system. Political support of liberal and mass oriented parties is needed. Governments quickly respond to pressure

from political and social groups. The urgent need is to conscientise citizens towards an educational vision for a new society, centred on equality and justice.

Will it happen or will we permit TNCs, MNCs and Business groups to enter educational business and colonize us again? Globalization of education undermines state sovereignty, the principles of socialism and egalitarianism. It is anti-constitutional. Education as a device is meant to usher equality and justice. It is a pity that it is used by the State to create inequality. At the present juncture it is further utilized for accentuating inequalities. Since the state has abdicated its responsibility to its citizens, concerned citizens have to pressurize the state to be faithful to the Constitutional mandate of "education for all" and transformation of the social order by revamping the system. It is more important to prepare citizens for the community than workers for the markets. Education therefore has to work at the three fold level attitudes, knowledge and skills. New attitudes with right kind of knowledge and skills have to be offered to students to make them aware of the context they live and how they can transform the system by contributing to the change of an oppressive system.

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