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**STUDENTS AND PRIVATISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION****DR. NARINDER TANWAR****ASST. PROFESSOR****B S ANANGPURIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT****FARIDABAD****ABSTRACT**

*In the current scenario, it is believed that, it is not the government but the market that can do everything for everybody. The education sector is also influenced by this philosophy. The resultants out-come has been the establishment of higher education institutions, which are founded, funded and run by private agencies. The primary motive of these private bodies in setting up educational institutions is to earn profit. These educational institutions subscribe to the view of full recovery of cost from those who derive benefit from education. The private higher education institutions have been established in India since 1970's and were known as capitation fee colleges, which may be called self-financing colleges. The centre and the state have been favoring this trend, as these colleges impose no financial burden on the exchequer. Moreover, they meet the ever-increasing, demand for professional education. Majority of these self-financing institutions are catering to the market needs and student's requirements. It is also considered relevant to mention here that education is not the only input for creating a knowledge-based society but also economic opportunities and these new opportunities, in turn, place new demands on education. In this sense, reforms in education and in the economy are mutually reinforcing.*

**KEYWORDS**

education, information, institutes, students.

**INTRODUCTION**

In India, private initiatives in education came from philanthropists who set up educational institutions and nurtured these institutions by endowments and liberal donation with the aim of rendering service to the society. Over a period of time, with the increase in demand and rise in the recurring and non-recurring cost, the private efforts, with the sole aim of service has declined significantly. The globalization has spurred demand for quality in education. Interestingly enough, it has pushed the demand for quantity also. The student community in rural, semi-rural and urban places does not only want education in modern fields but they also want education which is of quality and give them an identity. Our higher education system has a role and challenges carved out to give skilled human power at all levels, which is confident, flexible and enjoys knowledge and technical skills needed to effectively confront the social and economic realities of the twenty-first century. Therefore, higher education institutions require managements with vision and staff with commitment. While it is not impossible for government to create such institutions alone therefore, privatization of higher education system was considered an option. Moreover, the nature of public accountability in government institutions cannot have the kind of independent space which is for converting the vision into a mission. Infrastructure and other facilities provide the base, but it is the ability to recruit good faculty and maintain their level of commitment that is the most critical factor in developing both good and great institutions. Again, government rules may come in the way of linking assessment with rewards and punishments. Too many cooks spoil the broth. The continuity of vision and commitment that comes from good private educational managements cannot be built easily in the public sector. For these reasons alone, if not for other consideration like lack of finance etc., there is need to encourage private educational enterprise.

Private sector has, thus, a major role in establishing new institutions and new leadership which provides enough freedom and space, conditions and facilities for staff well as for students to develop themselves professionally and this is contributing to the welfare and development of the student community and consequentially, the society. There are enormous opportunities for India to provide education of the highest order that can greatly benefit both generations of knowledge as well as its application. India should be in the lead in establishing these world-class institutions of higher education, technology and research. There is a great reservoir of talented people in our country whose talent is vastly under utilized. Thus, we should have an aggressive policy of promoting and establishing of high quality self-financing educational institutions with linkages to various universities and technical institutions abroad.

Globalization and privatization throw up unprecedented challenges before the educational community, entrepreneurs and government. Together they have a unique opportunity to build institutions that will cater to diverse educational and cultural needs of students and the world. Also the public system of higher education is neither ensuring the cognitive, affective and psychomotor inputs to the students nor matching the inputs to employment requirements (Gredes, 1994). The private organizations have done wonderfully well in school education and also in computer application education. It is largely due to achievements of such organizations that in the field of education, India is a force to reckon with. Similarly our management graduates from many such organizations are working in MNCs all over the world. In fact many private business schools have been rated higher than public funded business schools. According to a study conducted by Business Today and reported in its May 22' 1997 issue, these institutions have established beyond doubt that there is willingness of the students to pay for quality education. Report of the UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty First Century entitled 'Learning: The Treasure Within 1996' states, "Further the Commission feels that it is not only justifiable but also desirable to raise money from private sources in order to ease the pressure on national budgets. Private funding can come from variety of sources; contribution by individuals' families and students towards fees but for that what need is more of quality services in higher education".

Higher education seems to be one of the important factors contributing in the process of globalization. Indeed, the core concern of education, viz. knowledge, is a resource that is best attuned to the forces of globalization such as the internet, distance learning, DTH and convergence between computer and wireless communication techniques. These changes will not only internationalize the market of educational services, but also force the traditional education system to change by linking students to global pools of knowledge and databases. Indeed, the very character of the teacher-taught relation is bound to transform slowly in this backdrop.

**OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The objective of the study was to examine the importance level of different sort of information which students require while seeking for admission in any institute or college.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research design of the study is exploratory cum descriptive. The research is exploratory due to the fact that the field of higher education has not been deeply touched by the earlier researcher. Therefore, in this case, extensive preliminary work needs to be done to gain familiarity with the phenomena in the situation to understand what is occurring, before developing a model and setting up a rigorous design for comprehensive investigation. The study is descriptive because the area of research that has been chosen by the researcher explains the attributes, which are associated with service quality implication in the field of higher education. To fulfill the objective of the study a questionnaire was prepared for students (N=400) as well as for director/administrators of different institutes. The questionnaire was put forwarded to respondents of various self-financed higher educational institutes and observations are presented in the form of tables. The research has been carried out in the NCR region comprising the state of Haryana, UP, & Delhi as NCR has emerged as a prominent center higher education. Further, to solve the purpose of the study both descriptive as well as inferential statistical techniques were applied. In the descriptive, Means and Standard Deviation were calculated and to test the significance level of the difference between Means of the criterion variables Mann-Whitney Test was applied.

**RESULTS OF SURVEY**

Students search for different information when they plan to take admission in any institute in the same way management institutes disclose different information either on institute's website or brochure. Researcher has asked students (N=400) to indicate significant level of various information on a five point likert scale disclosed by management institutes. It is important for any institute to disclose such information which are directly related to students and can result into long term mutual benefits. Information which are important to students to know, are identified and listed in questionnaire and respondents were asked to state their views. Results of survey are listed in Table 1.1.

**TABLE 1.1: STUDENT'S PERCEPTION ABOUT INFORMATION DISCLOSED BY INSTITUTES**  
(Number of Respondents = 400)

S. No.	variables	Mean Scores	Standard Deviation
1	Organizational chart & process	3.41	1.197
2	Details of Faculty	4.06	1.115
3	Norms & procedure for good governance	3.06	1.243
4	Teacher and students ratio	3.24	1.376
5	Involvement of faculty/students in academic affairs	2.75	1.259
6	Students feedback on institutional governance	2.97	1.267
7	Details about the courses offered and duration	4.65	0.475
8	Admission procedure	4.7	0.457
9	Campus placement	4.01	1.199
10	Details of fees & time scheduled for payment	4.09	0.892
11	Scholarship offered, duration & amount	3.25	1.485
12	Estimated cost of boarding and lodging in hostel	3.06	1.29
13	Information on infrastructure and other resources	4.01	0.939
14	Grievance redressal mechanism for faculty/students	2.4	1.071

Source: Computed on the basis of Field Data

Information which value more to the students to know are admission procedure (Mean = 4.7, Std. Dev. = 0.457), detail about the various courses offered and duration (Mean = 4.65, Std. Dev. = 0.475), details of fees & time scheduled for payment (Mean = 4.09, Std. Dev. = 0.892), details of faculty (Mean = 4.06, Std. Dev. = 1.115), information on infrastructure and other resources (Mean = 4.01, Std. Dev. = 0.939), campus placement (Mean = 4.01, Std. Dev. = 1.119) emerged as the information that have been more useful to the students. Results also indicated information which are moderately or less important to the students such as, organizational chart & process (Mean = 3.41, Std. Dev. = 1.197), scholarship offered, duration & amount (Mean = 3.25, Std. Dev. = 1.485), teacher/students ratio (Mean = 3.24, Std. Dev. = 1.376), norms and procedure for good governance (Mean = 3.06, Std. Dev. = 1.243), estimated cost of boarding and lodging in hostel (Mean = 3.06, Std. Dev. = 1.29), followed by students feedback on institutional governance (Mean = 2.97, Std. Dev. = 1.267), involvement of faculty/students in academic affairs (Mean = 2.75, Std. Dev. = 1.259), and grievance redressal mechanism for faculty and students (Mean = 2.4, Std. Dev. = 1.071).

The standard deviation values are consistent in case of some of information such as admission procedure (0.457), details about various courses offered and duration (0.475), details of fees & time scheduled for payment (0.892), information on infrastructure and other resources (0.939), while in case of some information the respondents have high divergence of opinions regarding these options, such as scholarship offered, duration & amount (1.485), teacher/students ratio (1.376), students feedback on institutional governance (1.267), involvement of faculty/students in academic affairs (1.259), norms and procedure for good governance (1.243). The findings indicated that some information mean high value to students while other having less important to students.

In response the information disclosed by management institutes, 61% respondents stated that it is essential for them to know about the management of an institute and functioning of management. In response of the same question 2/5 of students did not agree or not having a clear opinion. Nearly 4/5 students have mentioned the importance of information regarding faculty members, which include their qualification and experience. This is one of the most important information for students as their satisfaction level and relationships with institute largely depend upon that how much the students are satisfied with faculty members. Around 40% of the respondents are in agreement that information regarding what mechanism/norms and procedures are adopted by management institutes for democratic and good governance is significant for them where as 3/5 of the respondents were not having a positive opinion or did not have any opinion. The researcher has noticed that students feel that such information can be availed once they join the institute. About half of the students are in agreement that it is significant to know about teacher and students ratio while 45% were having different opinion. Only 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the respondents have stated that it is important for them to know about the nature and extent of involvement of faculty and students in academic affairs or improvement where as others differ from the opinion or not having a clear opinion. 39% respondents mentioned that it is significant to know about whether student's feedback on institutional governance and faculty performance is utilized by the institutes or not where as 61% respondents did not have the same opinion or not having a clear opinion. The researcher has noticed that most of the students are more interested to know other information rather their involvement in the functioning of the management institutes. As far the details about various courses offered and duration are concerned majority of respondents have agreed on importance of this information and it is evident also that knowing about courses offered and duration are reasons for a student to make an interaction with an institute. Majority of students are in agreement that knowing about complete details about the admission procedure is very significant to them.

As far as the details about campus placement are concerned 3/4<sup>th</sup> respondents are in opinion that information regarding various companies visited the campus and number of students placed in these companies is significant to them but during the survey it has been observed that management institutes are disclosing manipulated information to students in this regard. Most of the students have stated that information about the fee structure and time schedule for payment is significant to them. Nearly half of the students said that it is significant for them to know about scholarships offered in different courses, criteria for scholarship, duration and amount of scholarship while rest of students were having a different opinion. The researcher has observed that students feel that such information can be after the admission. Among the respondents 45% have said that it is essential to know about detail regarding boarding and lodging in the hostel. The information includes hostel charges, security, capacity of rooms, facility provided, etc. In response to the same question 1/2 of the students have responded negatively or their opinion was not clear. It has been noticed that except some management institutes which are offering residential programs, in rest of the institutes around 10%-20% students avail hostel facility therefore, this information is less important for students to know. Nearly 4/5 students have agreed that it is significant to know the details about infrastructure and other available resource such as library, computer labs, workshop, etc. It is obvious also as these days when the competition has grown so much in self-financed management institutes students want to compare that which institutes are offering better infrastructural facilities than the others. In the response of grievance redressal mechanism for students, faculty and staff 1/4 respondents have said that information is significant to them where as 3/4 students were having a different opinion as some other information value more to students than this information.

On the other hand management institutes are also aware that some information values more to students and some less. So, on the basis of priority information are disclosed to the students. Keeping in view the fact, the researcher has interacted with respondents (N=40) working as directors/administrators in different institutes and took their opinion about the level of importance management institute are attached regarding the disclosure of various information on same parameters which were asked from students and purpose was to compare opinions of both of the respondents. The results of the survey are presented in Table 1.2.



**TABLE 1.2: PERCEPTION OF DIRECTORS/ADMINISTRATORS ABOUT INFORMATION DISCLOSED TO STUDENTS**  
(Number of Respondents = 40)

S. No.	Variables	Mean Scores	Standard Deviation
1	Organizational chart & process	2.92	1.271
2	Details of Faculty	4.61	0.49
3	Norms & procedure for good governance	3.07	1.417
4	Teacher and students ratio	3.24	1.24
5	Involvement of faculty/students in academic affairs	3.7	1.208
6	Students feedback on institutional governance	3.11	1.598
7	Details about the courses offered and duration	4.73	0.423
8	Admission procedure	4.85	0.405
9	Campus placement	4.32	0.769
10	Details of fees & time scheduled for payment	4.24	1.071
11	Scholarship offered, duration & amount	3.61	1.356
12	Estimated cost of boarding and lodging in hostel	4.65	0.49
13	Information on infrastructure and other resources	4.6	0.496
14	Grievance redressal mechanism for faculty/students	2.94	1.328

**Source:** Computed on the basis of Field Data

Among various information disclosed to students admission procedure (Mean = 4.85, Std. Dev. = 0.405), detail about the various courses offered and duration (Mean = 4.73, Std. Dev. = 0.423), estimated cost of boarding and lodging in the hostel (Mean = 4.65, Std. Dev. = 0.49), details of faculty (Mean = 4.61, Std. Dev. = 0.49), information on infrastructure and other resources (Mean = 4.6, Std. Dev. = 0.496), campus placement (Mean = 4.32, Std. Dev. = 0.769), details of fees & time scheduled for payment (Mean = 4.24, Std. Dev. = 1.071), emerged as information more important to disclose. Results also indicated information which are moderately or less important for institutes to disclose for students. Such information listed as involvement of faculty/students in academic affairs (Mean = 3.7, Std. Dev. = 1.208), scholarship offered, duration & amount (Mean = 3.61, Std. Dev. = 1.356), teacher/students ratio (Mean = 3.24, Std. Dev. = 1.24), students feedback on institutional governance (Mean = 3.11, Std. Dev. = 1.598), norms and procedure for good governance (Mean = 3.07, Std. Dev. = 1.417), grievance redressal mechanism for faculty and students (Mean = 2.94, Std. Dev. = 1.328), organizational chart & process (Mean = 2.92, Std. Dev. = 1.271).

Standard deviation values are consistent in case of some of information such as admission procedure (0.405), details about the various courses offered and duration (0.423), details of fees & time scheduled for payment (0.892), estimated cost of boarding and lodging in the hostel (0.49), details of faculty (0.49), information on infrastructure and other resources (0.496), campus placement (0.769), while in case of some information the respondents have high divergence of opinions regarding these options, such as students feedback on institutional governance (1.598), norms and procedure for good governance (1.417), scholarship offered, duration & amount (1.356), grievance redressal mechanism for faculty and students (1.328). The findings indicated that some information mean high value to the administrators to disclose while some information mean less value to the administrators to disclose for the students.

From the responses it has come out that nearly 3/5<sup>th</sup> of the respondents admitted that institutes do not give much importance to disclose information regarding organizational chart and its process to students due to the reason that there are number of other information which value more to students to know than this information. Most of the respondents agreed on importance of disclosing information about faculty to students. Institutes know that having qualified and experienced faculty members is one of the most important factors to attract students. It helps in developing relationships with students and making them loyal to institute. As far as disclosing mechanism/norms & procedures for democratic/good governance is concerned respondents are divided. Among respondents 50% are in agreement and rests were having a different opinion. The respondents who were not in agreement gave reason that complete detail in this regard should be conveyed to students once they take admission and start attending classes. Opinions were also divided in case of providing information regarding students and faculty ratio. About 1/2 respondents were in disagreement of providing this information to students as they justified that faculty members' qualification and experience is sufficient information for students to provide in this regard. In case of nature and extent of involvement of faculty and students in academic affairs or improvement is concerned, 65% respondents were in opinion that this information helps in generating a better picture about institute in students' mind and help management institutes in achieving its relationship management objective. Students feed back on institutional governance and faculty performance is a kind of information where respondents were again divided. About 52% respondents are in agreement and rest did not have a positive or clear opinion. In this case, it has been observed that respondents felt that feedback from students should be considered while judging the performance of faculty but students should have minimum interference in case of overall institutional governance. As far as information regarding complete details about various courses and admission procedure is concerned majority of respondents are in agreement that students must be informed very clearly about various courses offered and duration as this is the information for which a student is looking for along with admission procedure through which a student has to pass while taking admission. Most of the respondents stated that proper information is given to students in regard with training and placement facilities provided by management institute. Respondents are very much known to the importance of training and placement activities and try to provide details to students such as, companies which have visited the campus, name of companies in which students have done summer training, and information regarding final placement along with the average package offered. Majority of respondents are opinion that complete details about fee structure of various courses and schedule of payment is conveyed to students. About 3/4<sup>th</sup> respondents are in agreement that information regarding scholarships offered by institutes, duration and amount of scholarships provided to students as it is a vital information which motivates students to work hard and affects relationships of an institute with its students. In case of disclosing information regarding estimated cost of hostel, facilities offered in hostel, infrastructure, library, computer labs, workshops etc., majority of respondents agreed that complete information are provided to students as all these information play a vital role in decision making process of students regarding different management institutes. Nearly 60% of the respondents are in agreement that information regarding grievance redressal mechanism for students is not significant to disclose. The respondents were in opinion that students should be explained about this information only after they take admission as there are number of other information which is more vital to students.

To ascertain level of difference among the respondents' opinion Mann-Whitney Test was conducted. High value (Mann-Whitney Test Value closer to 1.000) indicates that there is not any significant difference between the opinions of both of the respondents (Students and Directors/Administrators) while less value indicates (Mann-Whitney Test Value closer to 0.000) that there is a significant difference between the opinions of respondents (Table 1.3).

TABLE 1.3: RELATIONSHIP AMONG THE RESPONSES OF RESPONDENTS IN REGARD WITH INFORMATION SHARED BY MANAGEMENT INSTITUTES WITH STUDENTS

S. No.	Variables	Mean Scores (N=400)	Mean Scores (N=40)	Significance level of Mann Whitney Test
1	Organizational chart & process	3.41	2.92	0.163*
2	Details of Faculty	4.06	4.61	0.672**
3	Norms & procedure for good governance	3.06	3.07	0.601**
4	Teacher and students ratio	3.24	3.24	0.646**
5	Involvement of faculty/students in academic affairs	2.75	3.7	0.081*
6	Students feedback on institutional governance	2.97	3.11	0.334*
7	Details about the courses offered and duration	4.65	4.73	0.589**
8	Admission procedure	4.7	4.85	0.473**
9	Campus placement	4.01	4.32	0.442**
10	Details of fees & time scheduled for payment	4.09	4.24	0.592**
11	Scholarship offered, duration & amount	3.25	3.61	0.412**
12	Estimated cost of boarding and lodging in hostel	3.06	4.65	0.049*
13	Information on infrastructure and other resources	4.01	4.6	0.076*
14	Grievance redressal mechanism for faculty/students	2.4	2.94	0.072*

Note: \*, \*\* indicate Mann-Whitney Test value is significant at 5% and 1% levels respectively.

Source: Computed on the basis of Field Data

The student's response (Mean 3.41) in case of organizational chart and process is more than the mean value (Mean 2.92) of directors which indicates that there is a significant difference in the opinion and the same is supported by Mann-Whitney Test Value (0.015). Same is the case in response to some other variables such as, involvement of faculty/students in academic affairs (0.081), estimated cost of boarding and lodging in hostel (0.049), information on infrastructure and other resources (0.076), and grievance redressal mechanism for faculty/students (0.072). The response of both of the respondents is different in case of these mentioned variables and it is well justified by Mann-Whitney Test Value as in some cases students stated that that information is important to them but the directors/administrators stated otherwise or there opinion is much stronger to the opinion of the students while in the other case the directors/administrators stated that the information is important to students but the students stated otherwise or their opinion is much stronger to the opinion of directors/administrators. Responses of respondents in regard to other information are very similar such as, details of faculty (0.672), norms & procedure for good governance (0.601), teacher and students ratio (0.646), details about courses offered and duration (0.589), admission procedure (0.473), campus placement (0.442), details of fees and time scheduled for payment (0.592), the response of both of the respondents is similar as commonly they agree on the status of any information.

## CONCLUSION

After discussing the status of all the mentioned information it is can be concluded that students as well as the directors/administrators focused more attention on some information and less on other. But, it is necessary to state that all mentioned information should be disclosed by the management institutes on its websites as it has made mandatory by AICTE. The higher education system is still going through a phase where the educational institutes need to focus on much more aggressively on the different information which students require while search an institute for admission purpose. Due to the increased competition among the institutes the students are benefiting but still a lot to be done yet.

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