

Corruption: it's silent penetration into the Indian education system

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Abstract

There was a time when corruption was only in Government offices, private institutions, police stations etc. But, now a days corruption has spread its roots in education system also. Today, modern educational institutions have their primary emphasis on moneymaking and materialism instead on the concept of complete human development. In this paper we are discussing about how corruption penetrate into the Indian education system and what are the most important means through corruption is clutching the education system and their impacts on society. Privatization of education, Teacher appointments, posting, transfer and stay at choice place, Teachers absenteeism form classes and Up-down, Private tutoring, Midday meal, Admission process, Examination process-cheating, unfair means act, practical examinations, result, Affiliation of institute, Student scholarship, fellowship, Purchasing and maintenances in institutes etc are many important means through corruption is clutching the Indian education system.

Keywords: Indian Education System, Corruption, Teachers absenteeism

Introduction

In ancient time, the education was considered as sacred as God in India and the gurukuls were the best Institutes to achieve the education with sacredness. In ancient India, the gurukuls were dedicated to achieve the highest ideals of complete human development that included physical, mental, spiritual development as well as leading to God-realization. On the other hand, modern educational institutions have their primary emphasis on moneymaking and materialism instead of concept of complete human development. There was a time when corruption was only in Government offices, private institutions, police stations etc. But, now days, corruption has spread its roots in educational system also. Now schools are not a temple of education but they have become the shops of poor quality education. However the corruption in education is not only prevailing in India but is also observed in many other countries like Brazil (as in appointment, deployment and payment of teachers), Indonesia (as in ghost teachers), Philippines (production and distribution of textbooks), Mauritius (private tutoring), and Haiti (private use of official cars from the education administration) etc (Hallak and Poisson, 2007).

Corruption can be generally defined as the misuse of office for unofficial ends. Corrupt acts include but are not limited to bribery, extortion, influence peddling, nepotism, fraud, use of money to bribe government officials to take some specific favour, and embezzlement (Patrinos and Ruthkagia, 2007). Corruption in the education sector can be defined as “the systematic use of public office for private benefit, whose impact is significant on the availability and quality of educational goods and services as a consequence on access, quality or equity in education” (Hallak and Poisson, 2005). Drafting Committee of the World Education Forum, Dakar (2000) also define that “Corruption is a major drain on the effective use of resources for education and should be drastically curbed” (Hallak and Poisson. 2001).

Education System in India currently represents a vast contradiction. There are many institutes like IITs, IIMs, AIIMS, BITS, CSIR, Space Research and Atomic Energy Commission that rank among the best institutes in the world and on the contrary, most of the institutes in the country do not even have the minimum basic infrastructure (Singh and Purohit, 2011). In the recent times, many Indian educational institutes are under the clutches of corruption cases. MCI, AICTE, UGC etc which are regulatory or monitoring bodies of Indian educational system are also involved in corruption cases. So, in this paper we are discussing about how corruption is grasping the Indian education system and what are the most important means through which corruption is clutching the education system and their impacts on society. Privatization, Teacher appointments, posting, transfer and stay at choice place, Teachers absenteeism form classes and Up-down, Private tutoring, Midday meal, Construction of building of Hall or Classrooms in SSA, Admission process, Examination process-

cheating, unfair means act, practical examinations, result, Affiliation of institute, State and local politics, Old examination policy, Fake and money maker institutes, Harassment of research scholar, Declining ethical values, Student scholarship-sc/st, minorities, fellowship, Purchasing and maintenances of institutes etc are many important means through which corruption is clutching the Indian education system.

Privatization of education

Privatization of education has emerged in several forms in the recent decade in India. Government has allowed to open self-financing private institutions with recognition, which may be termed as commercial private education institutions. Many private institutions have started courses on many discipline without basic infrastructure and qualified teaching faculties (Singh and Purohit, 2011). Similarly mushrooming and practices have been noted in engineering, medical, nursing, pharmacy and management discipline and faculties in many private institutions are compelled to sign on affidavit that they are being paid as per UGC scale, although they are not even paid half of what is recommended by the government (Singh and Purohit, 2011a). Recently in the deemed university status swindle, the status was granted with a massive violation of the University Grant Commission rules with nepotism type of corruption and MRD ministry has decided to derecognize 44 deemed universities ((Gupta and Gupta, 2012, Shelly and Kusum Jain, 2012). In another case, CBI has found that 42 institutes were granted illegal approval by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE). In this fraud, the CBI detected that the experts appointed by the AICTE thrice and recommended approval for three different colleges for the same building inspected one building (common man, 2010). Recently the anti-corruption bureau (ACB) inspected 48 private nursing colleges in Rajasthan and find that at least half-a-dozen of them were operating from buildings that house other colleges of different streams including nursing, B. Ed and even schools. Besides, it was found that in records, the address of some colleges is elsewhere, while they are situated at a different location (TOI, 2012).

The MBBS seats sold between 12 lakh to 40 lakh rupees by two private colleges in Chennai. The scam gets bigger as the post graduate in medical field that are necessary for a successful career. The price for a post-graduate seat in radiology in most leading private colleges across the country is 2 crore rupees while in cardiology, gynecology and orthopedics are priced around rupees 1.5 crore (Pushpa Narayan, 2009).

The Medical Council of India constitutes for the maintenance of uniform standards of medical education and recommend for recognition/de-recognition of medical institutions in India. CBI has arrested President of Medical Council of India for allegedly accepting a bribe of Rs. two crore to grant recognition to a medical college in Punjab. After that, the CBI found that the President of the MCI and his family possessed disproportionate assets worth Rs 24 crore (The Hindu, 2010).

The uncontrolled growth of private education especially in engineering, medical, dental, nursing, pharmacy and management disciplines created a huge unwaged youth and the professional degrees are made into a commodity and are being sold (Singh and Purohit, 2011). Due to the mechanical and pragmatic process the private institutes are unable to produce a complete ‘human capital’ with ethical standards. On the contrary every year they are producing thousands of money minded machines and India has the world’s largest number of unskilled, untrained and unpaid professionals (Garg and Kaur, 2012).

Teachers absenteeism and Up down-

Teacher absenteeism is one of the most serious forms of education corruption, because it appears to be pervasive, it has a lasting effect on students, and it constitutes a large burden on the education budget (Patrinos and Ruthkagia, 2007). The UNESCO’s International Institute of Educational Planning study on corruption in education state that there is 25% teacher absenteeism in India which is among the highest in the world. In Bihar two of every five teachers were reported absent, the figure in UP was reported to be one-third of the total teachers. Ghost Teacher does not just affect quality of education but it is also a huge drain on resources resulting in the wastage of 22.5% of education funds of India (Hallak and Poisson, 2005). In terms of direct loss of financing, the teacher absenteeism range from \$16 million a year in Ecuador to \$2 billion a year in India (Chaudhury and others, 2006). According to a professor at National University for Education Planning and Administration, “Politics in teacher appointments and transfers is a major reason for teacher absenteeism.” In the teaching profession, most of the teachers are women and their responsibilities are multitasking. Indian women are heartily devoted to their family. If their posting is far away from their family, then the line of work definitely effects. They do not work efficiently and successfully. This is the major reason of teacher’s absenteeism. Mostly teachers are posted in rural areas who do not live in villages with their family, so they settle their family in city areas and go daily to their posting places. This daily up and down tendency also affects their efficiency. In India, where teacher absenteeism is 25 percent on average, only about 8–10 percent of teacher absence can be attributed to annual leave, medical leave, and other officially sanctioned reasons for absenteeism (Chaudhury

and others, 2006). Certainly, not all teacher absences are indications of corruption; but all absences have a negative impact on student learning. The costs, both monetary and educational, are just as high when absences are excusable as when they are not (Patrinos and Ruthkagia, 2007). So the teacher absenteeism is greatly reduces the overall effectiveness of the school, diminishes pupils' achievements, damages the school's reputation, and induces pupil absenteeism (Bray, 2003).

Teacher appointments, posting, transfer and stay at choice place-

There was a time when an entire generation of dedicated teachers was present in India, which was motivated by ideals and principles that were embedded in the social value system. The number of such teachers has substantially declined due to the corruption and political interference involved in teachers recruitment and transfer. The policy relating to recruitment, promotion and transfer of teachers in the education system are yet not formed in many states and thus the human resource management in education is not well organized in India. Teachers are always afraid regarding their appointment and transfers. Sometimes teachers pay bribe for their posting and transfers. Mostly Political leaders, high-level bureaucrats and members of the teacher unions also attempt to influence decision-making regarding the recruitment and transfer of teachers. In India, a Chief Minister chargesheeted in connection with a scam relating to appointment of over 3,000 junior basic teachers in the Haryana state during 1999-2000 (TOI, 2008). CBI reported big manipulations in the appointment of assistant teachers in Government lower primary schools in Meghalaya. This information was obtained through the RTI Act, 2005 which brought to light various discrepancies and manipulation in the appointment of assistant teachers in 2009-2010 (North east today, 2012). These examples explain that favoritism, nepotism and bribes are major types of corruption in teacher's appointment, posting, transfer and stay at a choice place. Finally the moral and ethical commitment of teachers has gradually decreased over the years due to political interference and corruption. (Nuland and Khandelwal, 2001). So there is an urgent need to frame policies regarding recruitment, promotion and transfers as well as to curb absenteeism in the education system in all the states.

Admission process-

Mostly colleges and schools organize Entrance Test for admissions in India. All corrupt educational institutes have started making money through entrance exams. Many coaching institutes are making money in the name of preparation of these entrance examinations. On the other hand most Indian education institutes whether they are college or schools, get donation for admission in their institutes under the name of management seats quota. They are abusing the noble word "donation" to get bribes for the admissions. These institutes also conduct their own entrance test and take admissions according to their own interest. Many students have ability to perform their best but this educational privatization is indirectly depriving the child from taking education. Many reputed institutions demand very high charges for admission fees and hostel fees, saying that this is management quota fee. Talented students or backward class student try to take loans which again create a problem for them. This problem makes their life worse and some who do not find a way out of this problem often ends their life. The suicide rate is increasing every year in students who do not get their desired institutions.

Affiliation of institute

All the educational institutes are governed by regulatory bodies like UGC, AICTE, MCI etc. These governing bodies form rules, regulations and guideline from time to time to regulate the functioning of educational institutes. Presently many education institutions do not fulfill eligibility criteria of affiliation to these regulatory bodies because they do not have minimum teaching and non-teaching staff, laboratory, and equipments as prescribed by the regulatory body, even they do not fulfill minimum demands of basic facilities for essentials like water, electricity, ventilation, toilets, sewerage etc. however many corrupt private institutes have been affiliated without following rules, regulations and guidelines of the statutory/ regulatory bodies by means of bribery, nepotism or favoritism. In a recent case of corruption in technical education institutes, the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has cancelled recognition of five engineering colleges affiliated to Rajasthan Technical University (RTU) on grounds of their involvement in malpractices. The AICTE has cancelled affiliations granted after CBI filed cases against these institutes in different cases from cheating to bribery. Most of the students studying here are from rural background and the surrounding areas (TOI, 2012).

Private Tuitions –

The curriculum of schools and colleges should be so designed as to pay attention on the overall development of students. It should be emphasized to aim at wide range of goals that may include the development of sporting spirit and sense of music, as well as promotion of courtesy, civic awareness and national pride with academic interests (Bray, M. 2003). However in present time, most of curriculums given more emphasis on academic section which do not fulfill the overall development of the students. Students take private tuitions to complete their syllabus and shrink the overall development of them as in the evening they spend their time in studies

instead they should play with their friends and participate in extracurricular activities or spend time with their families. Private tuition institutes are of low intellectual value. It is dominated by memorized answers of past question papers and tips on likely questions to pass the students in their exams (Bray, M. 2003). The impact of private teaching is that it causes damage to the student's overall development and innovative thinking. Private tuition is corrupting the education system because most of the tutors are the mainstream teachers and teaching the students in their schools which destroy the honorable place of the teachers. They are not teaching in the school times. So the tutors are not preparing the students for their future but they are using them as an income source. Private tuitions also increase social inequalities, because it is easily available to the rich than to the poorer. Immediate steps must be taken to eradicate this serious problem as it is harmful to the career of the young children of our nation (Bray, Mark 2011).

Midday meal –

The Midday Meal Scheme has been launched in school; it involves provision of free lunch on working days. The main objective of this programme is protecting children from malnutrition, increasing school enrollment and attendance, improved socialization among children belonging to all castes, and social empowerment through provision of employment to women. But with achievement of above objectives, many scams also have been finding place since it was started. In 2006, the residents of Pembong village under the Mim tea estate (about 30 km from Darjeeling), accused a group of teachers of embezzling midday meals. In a written complaint, the residents claimed that students at the primary school had not got midday meal for the past 18 months (Telegraph, 2006). In December 2006, The Times of India reported a scam involving government schools that siphon off food grains under the midday meal scheme by faking attendance (TOI, Bangalore, 2012). The problems started intensifying right from the beginning of scheme. The head of gram panchayat and headmaster shared the responsibility for the same; however the shared responsibility turned into sharing of the funds. The quality of food provided to children was far from being a balanced diet, many times midday meal consists of poor quality eatables, often insufficient and tasteless.

Examination malpractices -cheating, unfair means activity, practical examinations and results

Examinations are the best tool for an objective assessment and evaluation of students, but different kind of malpractices are prevailing in the examination process i.e. unfair means activity, cheating, favoritism in internal assessment or in practical examinations and bribery in result preparations. Examination malpractice is defined as an irregular behavior exhibited by a candidate or anybody, during or after the examination that contravenes the rules and regulations governing the conduct of such examination (Maheshwari, 2011).

Examination malpractice can also be defined as a deliberate wrong activity by anybody contrary to examination rules with favoritism to any candidate. Some institutes have given ninety to hundred percent marks in internal assessment or practical examinations; however mostly students copy from previous student's records or books in these examinations. These institutions are always engaged in welcoming of external examiners and never give fair attention to conduct examination in proper manner. Many institutes give Valuable gifts to external examiners through collection made by students after completion of examination. This does not only make the students lazy and corrupt but also suppress their talent. Many times students give bribe in the form of big donation to the teachers and other authorities and get the degree without doing well in the examination from corrupted educational institutes. So examination malpractice is also a kind of corruption in India.

Student scholarship

The student scholarship system in India suffers highly from corruption and fake nominees poses great threat to the eligible candidates and causes delay and loss in scholarship money. The audit report of comptroller and auditor general of India state that lack of coordination with Technical Education Department and failure of control by the District Officers of Social Justice and Empowerment department in Rajasthan led to payment of fraudulent claims (Rs 34.63 lakh) to four private educational institutions on account of scholarship to students(saiindia.gov.in, 2010). In Gujarat eight schools charged Rs.17.8 lakh worth of scholarship money which was obtained by these schools in the name of students who did not exist (Indian express, 2012). In another case in Tamilnadu elementary education, a record 61 headmasters (HMs) of Government-run schools were suspended unearthing of a scholarship scandal. The headmasters of these institutions were accused of either siphoning off or abetting or turning a blind eye to the swindling of scholarship funds to the tune of several lakh rupees meant for children of scavengers and tanners (Indian express, 2012).

Discussion

Corruption can be found at micro, meso and macro level in the education sector in India. Corruption based on magnitude can also be differentiated between 'grand' and 'petty' corruption, where grand corruption involves high-level officials and politicians for example fraud in public tendering for school building or textbook

publication. It usually has a high economic impact. Whereas Illegal fees paid by parents to school to get their children admitted, or to pass their exams are some of the examples of Petty corruption. However, it usually has a limited economic impact, but it can have a severe social impact (Hallak and Poisson, 2007). The economic impact is higher when corruption involves large government purchases, but the number of people affected is much greater when corruption involves education services (Rosea and Mishler, 2010). Corruption in the education system shakes the confidence and reduces the ability and willingness of wide parts of society to become involved in democratic processes (Katharina L. Ochse, 2004). Corrupt practices in the education system have declined the ethical values among students and shatter confidence in the quality and quantities of the education system. When youngsters become familiar with corrupt practices in education system and see that personal success depends not on performance but on bribery, favoritism and nepotism, then they develop unethical behavior, which is passing to next generation in a rapid way. Corruption is frequently found in recruitment, transfers, posting, promotion, stay at choice places and mostly absent from teaching places. In India, many times recruitment, appointment are not based on the performance but bribe, family links, allegiance with political parties, religious, caste play a major role. Mostly teachers have an association with political parties and thus after elections, transfers are done on the basis of their affiliation with political parties. Teacher absent from the classrooms are favored from the political leaders because they help them in elections. For the prevention of above type of corruption, there is a need of monitoring and evaluation system that should be based on regular achievement by teachers and be related with result of students. Consultancy services can also be hired for the development of criteria and standardization of recruitment, appointments and promotions, also for the development of performance of teachers via training courses, and enforcement of teacher's code of conducts (Katharina L. Ochse, 2004). To reduce the rate of absenteeism from classrooms, incentives should be given to regular working, and demoralized those habitual absent from classrooms via parent associations and school administrations. Corruption at the admission level can be controlled through a centralized and online admission process, which may be controlled by state or university level. These committees can organize entrance examination for the admission at state level or through common merit list.

Corruption in examination can be controlled by encoding the identity of examiners and examinees in written examinations for awarding marks. Code of conduct should be reviewed for the students to control unfair means activities in examinations. Unfair means act needs review because courts take time to make decision, which not only causes delay in punishment to students but also puzzle a teacher to file a case or not for unfair means, because teachers are mostly soft hearted and avoid to court cases. Many times teachers feel that court punishment can destroy student career and they free the student with only warning.

There is need for major changes in educational institutes. At present all the management and administration services of these institutes are maintained by the principal alone with help of some clerks. Principals also use teachers in management and administration of institutes. It is a fact that educational institutes cannot run without teacher's supports because teachers better know the institute's atmosphere. Teachers are mostly busy in admissions, scrutiny of examination form, student union election, examination works etc, but these management activities result in loss of academic session of students. There is a need to free teachers from these administrative and management duties and all the management work of educational institutes should be done by professionals as is being done in private hospitals. Institutes should run with the full recommendations of teachers and professionals support as well as with organized facilities for students and teachers. Teachers should always be mentally and physically free for teaching in the classrooms, not for distribution of scholarship, examination form, and maintenance of school buildings. It can be a good idea to privatize or *outsource* certain services, such as the maintenance of school buildings, preparation of school meals, school transport systems, etc. To ensure that the privatization of services does not open the door to new corruption, the procedure and policies behind the privatization procedure must be carefully devised and rendered "watertight" in this regard(Michael H. Wiehe, 2004). These professional must be under the control of government.

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