

# Unit 21

## Expansion of Professional Education and Private Sector

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### 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 since 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. Renowned 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 liberalisation 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 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 percentage of the population enrolled in educational institutions then. In 1882, the Hunter 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 concessional 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 not receive 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 <sup>35</sup>	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 past 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 discuss 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, Homeopathy, 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 Table 21.3 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 education 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 present 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 accrediting 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

Anand, C.L. 1997. "Commercialisation of Teacher Education". In Panda, B. N. and Tewari, A.D.(eds.). *Teacher Education*. APH Publishing Corporation: New Delhi

James, H.R. and Mayhew, A. 1988. *Development of Education System In India*. Vanity Books: New Delhi