

# Dynamics of Public and Private Sector Participation in Education: A Perspective on India and Beyond

Yagnamurthy Sreekanth

**ABSTRACT:** *There has been a steady growth of private sector participation in education in India. There are also attempts at government level for Public-Private-Partnerships. While traditionally, it was government's obligation to provide education to all, the entry of private sector has brought with it a new market dimension. In the light of this, the present paper describes the role of public and private sectors' in education, which appears to be complementary or diametrically opposite to each other. In the comparative study of these two prominent players in education, it has been observed that they are poles apart in terms of focus, methodology, assessment procedure, goal, intrinsic market and community oriented approach, management dimension, and expansion approach. In view of this, it may be more appropriate for the two sectors to exist independently to provide complementary role, rather than converging, which will be detrimental to themselves and to the stakeholders they serve. A better approach could be to provide empowered teaching community who could contribute for the cause of enriching the human resources. This is because a country like India with huge population needs to turn a liability into asset, which can happen through enrichment of human resource potential (students) through available human resource (teachers).*

**KEY WORDS:** *Approaches to education, curriculum, public-private-partnership, perspectives of India, and participation in education.*

## Introduction

The public and private institutions have a great role to play in mixed economies and welfare states. In India, while they worked in different and exclusive spheres, largely in the immediate post-independence era gradually they are converging to collaborate and compete with each other. The New Delhi government has envisaged for "setting up of senior secondary schools with one-time funding, and profits to be ploughed back for upgrading infrastructure and setting up more such schools" (Walia, 2009:12). The Human Resource Development Ministry of India has proposed "Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) as an alternative to improve access to quality school education while ensuring equity and social justice" (Seethalakshmi, 2009:16).

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**Yagnamurthy Sreekanth, Ph.D.** is Assistant Professor at the Department of Secondary Education NCERT (National Council of Educational Research and Training), Room No.222, CIET, Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi 110016, India. He can be reached at: [syagnamurthy@yahoo.com](mailto:syagnamurthy@yahoo.com) and [sreekanth.ncert@nic.in](mailto:sreekanth.ncert@nic.in)

Kapil Sibal (2009:17), the Minister for Human Resource Development, was also emphatic that “there is enormous interest evinced by foreign education providers to collaborate with Indian Institutions both in the private and public sector to set-up a variety of educational enterprises in India”. The government of India has also proposed for opening up of accreditation for multiple accreditation agencies, mostly private, with their action being monitored by a regulator (Mukul, 2010a:6).

These attempts may be largely due to what Shailaja Fennel (2007:194) has outlined as “the failure of government sector to provide adequate schooling and a growing commercial interest in the education sector”. The mushrooming of private school sector is also attributed to lack of government schools, and desire of parents for instruction in English (Tooley & Dixon, 2007:16). It has also been ascribed to “increased opting out of public education by those who can afford to pay, and by liberalised regulatory frameworks that allow non-government providers to offer educational services” (Lewin, 2007:41). The private sector has its proponents and vehement critics and both have their own view points as pointed by C.D. Levy (2006:217) that “promoters glorify roles (e.g. access), while critics demonize roles (e.g. money making)”.

In the light of the above, it is pertinent to assess the characteristics, strengths and weaknesses of these public and private sectors of education to see the nature of services rendered by these sectors, the aims and objectives for which these sectors are working in the Indian context and the manner in which they are perceived in other countries and what could be the future role of these two sectors separately and jointly.

### **Approaches to Education**

At the outset government looks at education as an area in which development will lead to the overall growth of the economy and prosperity of the people. It is seen as an essential constituent for quality life for all. In view of this providing “basic education” has become a priority area with the aim to provide equal opportunities to all, which requires huge expenditure without anticipation for immediate and direct monetary gains. As observed by Callaghan (in Fitz & Beers, 2002:140) that “the public education is diverse in its quality, somewhat inward looking and not tuned enough to the needs of industry and economy”.

S. Mehrotra and R.P. Panchamukhi (2006:422) view that “the historical evidence from the now industrialised countries suggests that it was the public school system, which played a dominant role in universalising schooling”. This logically makes us believe that the public sector follows what may be called as “social needs approach”. It involves development of different areas of population through education, even in the most unviable conditions, in areas of social priority and of least priority and of different socio-economic sections of population. “The privately managed schools located in urban areas have restricted the entry to those who can afford hefty fees, the government-run schools in villages have to bear the brunt by providing education for all, as a welfare measure” (Sreekanth, 2009:235).

The social needs approach is governed by the intent to create and sustain a healthy society. The responsibility stems from the constitutional obligation of the democratically elected governments. With education gaining importance as a priority area and an important component of Human Development Index nationally and internationally no country is expected to lag behind. Consequently, the concern is on attaining and maintaining minimum standards across different areas, though excellence is desirable but secondary in terms of priority.

As opposed to the perspective of public sector education's social needs approach, the private sector is governed by "market demands approach". Education markets provide a conducive opportunity for the private stakeholders to participate and thrive. "The South-Asian region shows an example of the demand-side development of private education" (Kitaev, 2007:94). It involves service in the priority areas rather than all round development, covering the population who can afford rather than all those who need to be covered. Priorities are set out on the basis of market demands, not always from the point of view of the community or societal interests as a partner but more as a client providing quality services. Schools under private sector become centres for market interests as observed below:

School commercialism serves three distinct functions. It provides corporations with a venue in which to market products and services. It also provides them with a podium from which to disseminate corporate ideas about topics important to their interests. Finally, school commercialism becomes a vehicle through which corporations can deliver a broader ideological message promoting consumption as the primary source of well-being and happiness (Molnar, 2006:632).

It is also apparent that the private sector entry and sustenance is largely governed by the feasibility factor rather than accountability or providing access to education. Feasibility emerges from optimal utilization and conservation of resources to make the activity productive and profitable. "The general superiority of market provision is based upon the efficiency and innovation gains associated with competitive markets" (Adnett, 2004:389). These competitive markets have become immensely popular leading to the expansion of private sector. "Education Management Organizations (EMOs), for profit and non-profit management companies engaged in takeover of public education are becoming big business in the USA and UK" (Fitz & Beers, 2002:137).

The educational activity under private sector has to have independent self-sustenance, unlike the public sector which can draw the resources from one sphere and allocate on other. The accountability factor which the government sector is entrusted with to the democratically elected representatives is missing with private players and responsibility if any in the form of corporate houses is only to the shareholders who are interested in profiteering and to the fee-paying parents. The responsibility is very limited in nature because the private sector is not expected to set up schools in remote and inaccessible areas and for the children who cannot afford to pay fees.

Under these conditions education becomes a “product” and its marketability depends on the quality of the product. The product is best marketed when the demand is enormous. This can be observed through “the tie-ups of employers and private educational institutions for placements, with the curriculum largely designed to meet the industry requirements” (Gupta, 2010:16). The Confederation of Indian Industry (TNN, 2010:10) views that “India has 54 per cent of population below the age of 25 and to reap the demographic dividend or head for a disaster depends on how educational reforms are in synchronous with global education system and meet global standards”.

This is further supported by parents themselves. It has been observed that “parents themselves want their children to pursue careers that will earn them higher salaries” (Rao, 2007:13). As a result all areas of education do not receive the same attention of private players because every product that emerges from different stream cannot be marketed profitably. For instance, graduation in Medicine or Engineering can be better marketed than a post-graduation in History or Geography in India.

In an empirical study of Yagnamurthy Sreekanth (2010:77) of the National Talent Search Scheme Awardees, it has been observed that “a very large percentage of students are opting for either Medicine or Engineering”. Consequently, the socially most desirable areas of study and sections of population tend to benefit and other areas get least/no credit. The market interests give a clear and different direction than that of expected by the society and its culture. In India, for instance, educationists and linguists argue for mother tongue as a medium of instruction, as it helps child to cope up and connect with what is learnt from home to what is taught in school. However, as observed by S. Mehrotra and R.P. Panchamukhi (2007:130) that in “the private unaided schools the medium of instruction is almost always English. Also, fees are so high that the schools can only be patronised by the upper, upper middle and, increasingly the nouveau-rich middle classes”.

The other characteristic of this market demands approach is that it is based on the “outcome mode”. The quality is determined by empirical outcomes. The outcomes must be realistic, renewable, and projectable in order to sustain in the competitive field of education which is getting globalized. However, one need not always be suspicious of the private players’ participation in education, as it leads essentially to self-sustainability, institutional responsibility, and productivity which underlie the progress. As opined by Igor Kitaev (2007:93) that “apart from shifting the costs from the public purse to the user, supporters of privatization claim that the benefits will include greater effectiveness, greater efficiency, and enhancement of parents’ freedom to choose”.

Moreover, it is not the private players who are to be blamed for the skewed expansion of the courses. They are at the most, furthering the cause of the uneven development which is created in a democratic society and are merely responding to that. Furthermore, the argument could be that, in the name of maintaining parity across streams/courses of academics a country may fail to perform in the areas which are the most sought after nationally and internationally. But all these arguments do not, however, justify the need to maintain an optimal balance of

different courses/streams which are ultimately essential for a mature, and holistic development of society.

These two different approaches of the two prominent players in the field of education have provided for a complementary role in the field of education at different levels ranging from school to university. While at school level, the government is attempting to bring into fold all the children of remote and uncovered areas through Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE), the private sector is advancing the cause of more affluent, mobile and internationalized clientele through different courses (syllabuses) to suit the needs such as International Baccalaurean (IB), Indian Council for Secondary Education (ICSE), Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and state and provision of high-tech facilities such as air conditioned classrooms with WiFi connections etc. “While the government schools are run with classrooms wooden desks, chalk and duster, and a bunch of prescribed textbooks, some of globalized schools have interactive boards in the classroom with different software used to prepare study plans and digital labs for exchange of ideas” (Rai, 2010:24).

At the university level, it has led to division of courses into those which are marketable and which are not. While the public institutions continue with all the traditional as well as contemporary courses, the private institutions have selectively eliminated the unviable courses even when they have integrated universities or have become centres in specialized areas. The viability is based on the demand for the course in the employment market and for the courses where the demand exceeds the supply.

### **Curriculum under the Two Diametrically Opposite Approaches**

Curriculum has its origins in the running/chariot tracks of Greece. “It was literally, a course” (Smith, 2000:18). As quoted by John Kerr (in Kelly, 1999:10), curriculum is defined as “All the learning which is planned and guided by the school, whether it is carried on in groups or individually, inside or outside the school”. In line with this, we may discuss the curriculum under the basic needs approach and market demands approach which also have diametrically opposite stand-points.

The basic needs approach provides for “cooperative curriculum” whose characteristics are designed to realise the societal goals. The “competitive curriculum” under market demands approach facilitates “individualistic” mode of courses wherein individual excellence rather than cooperative and group accomplishment of tasks are given priority. Even when cooperation is sought among few individuals, it is again based on the premise that each group of individuals are in competition with other groups of individuals, and who would do better than whom. This results in producing very capable individuals and not capable communities or societies.

For individual interests do not always match with societal interests. This could be better explained through the political movements that have taken place during

pre-independence period where great sacrifices were made by students for attaining freedom. The societal interests were given priority over individual and the binding spirit was far more than divisive spirit across socio-economic classes of population. The society was largely governed by socialistic thinking and the capitalistic forces had not crept in and education was largely in the domain of public sector. As opposed to this, post-independence has thrived through liberal democratic, capitalistic approaches which have brought in more of individual prosperity and less of social welfare that is exclusively pursued with the efforts of government.

The level of competition and cooperation is largely driven by respective ideologies. The great ideologies have also brought in their influences through curriculum in the classrooms. While the competitive curriculum is influenced by the capitalist ideology, the cooperative ideology is influenced by the Marxist/Neo-Marxist ideology. The cooperative curriculum brings in to its fold the objectives of egalitarian society, cooperation among children, welfare orientedness and emphasis on group learning etc.

While the competitive curriculum focuses on individualistic nature of teaching learning, excellence, idea of competition with peers and goal oriented objectives. The most popular initiative that is widely practiced in the Western world and beginning to spread to other developing countries is "School Choice". The School Choice is seen as a "measure to encourage competition between schools and teachers as well as students and thus effect the efficient production of atomised, neo-liberal subjects" (Kipnis, 2009:165).

While government educational institutions are responsible for inclusive education under which they have to raise the level of standards of every student, the private institutions have the option of only fee paying and well performing students, so that it serves the interests of "marketability". Private schools go to the extent of classifying students on the ability bands and providing an enabling environment to the students based on their ability, so that they cherish under right environment. It is like grading the commodities on the basis of quality for having high returns.

Hence, cooperative and competitive curriculum also acts as both genesis and consequence for the prevailing social setting. It is a resultant of educational philosophy of the kind of institutions in which the students study. This further leads us logically to the state of educational outcomes of these dichotomised institutions. At one end of the spectrum the public education is based on the fundamental assumption of meeting the social criteria. On the other hand, the private education is based on the assumption of individualistic excellence. The resultant outcome is social and individual prosperity respectively. Though at the outset one may consider that it does not have any contradictions as society consists of individuals and individuals have no place in the absence of society, it is not true. The crux of the issue is that a society which is highly individualistic in nature or completely un-individualized will be detrimental.

## Learning Patterns

The cooperative curriculum and competitive curriculum have their impact on the students learning in the institutions where they pursue their studies. There are two possibilities for divisions between these two sectors of education. The first one is cooperation and competition that arises among students studying in the same grade/discipline/course in these two sectors and the second, among students who study in different grade/discipline/course. Cooperative and competitive learning is possible among students who are pursuing same course, but in India it is competition which prevails more than that of cooperation in private sector education, as it will be discussed under the characteristics of two curriculums below.

In institutions where different courses are pursued by students, it provides for a cooperative learning through regular interaction of students from different disciplines and of the same discipline. The segmented and discipline-oriented curriculum, where the courses are treated as watertight compartments lacking any interaction and collaboration does not encourage for cooperative learning. Knowledge dealt in independent and unconnected manner would prove catastrophic in long term, as students fail to make connections between domains of knowledge. As viewed by Saljo Roger (2009:203) that “behaviours and cognitive processes no longer suffice as basic constructs for providing a coherent and interesting conceptualization of learning; there are many other issues that have to be considered such as time, situatedness, and reciprocity between individuals and cultural practices”.

All this is possible when there is a systematic interaction of scholars in different areas of knowledge for understanding problems associated with regions which have vast differences in a country like India. This is necessary because in India at school level, after basic education students opt for sciences or liberal arts and not for both and as a result they lose contact with either of them. The same continues at higher education level also. This leads to a skewed understanding of the world realities and needs to be strengthened through interaction. Shelley (as cited by *The Tribune*, 2009:12) views that “it can be very useful if scholars are asked to attend relevant seminars in various departments in order to have a cross disciplinary and a broader view of their project”. It is not only the scholars, even those pursuing under-graduation and post-graduation need to know what is happening in other courses and streams. The cooperative learning is based on the unity of disciplines and domains of knowledge and positive inter-dependence of students. Though for the purpose of teaching and research disciplines may be categorised in different ways ultimately the focus needs to be working for the “whole”.

In contrast to this the private institutions encourage what may be called as “competitive learning” wherein the productive courses are severed from others resulting in greater deprivation to the students to see the things from holistic perspective. “Educational institutions are investigated as distinct cases, whereas it is possible to understand them as competing and cooperating groups and individuals who interact in various ways, and form and deform in different configurations

and confirmations at different moments and places” (Scot & Usher, 1996:23). Competitive learning not only alienates students from the holistic perspective but also incurs a huge loss to the students through denial of social-personal interaction which is a unique educational opportunity available to the students in schools/colleges/universities.

### Characteristics of the Two Curricular Approaches

The following table gives a description of different aspects of curriculum pursued by the private and public sectors in India.

**Table 1**  
 Curriculum under Public and Private Sectors

SL.No.	Features of Sector	Private	Public
1	Curriculum	Competitive	Cooperative
2	Focus	Individual	Group
3	Methodology	Learner centred	Learning centred
4	Assessment	Norm referenced	Criterion referenced
5	Goal	Excellence	Equity
6	Intrinsic feature	Market oriented	Community oriented
7	Management	Decentralized	Centralized
8	Expansion approach	Top-down	Bottom-up

The aspect of competitive and cooperative curriculums has been discussed above. Individual is the central point under competitive curriculum and group under cooperative curriculum, which in turn directs various other aspects such as methodology, assessment procedure, important goal and its intrinsic facet. The methodology of competitive curriculum is learner centred, which means it goes to any extent in making the learning acceptable to the learner. However, as pointed out by G. Pugh, P. Davies and N. Adnett (2006:21) that “for-profit providers concentrate their innovation exclusively on those measured outputs specified in their contracts”. This also involves a great deal of expenditure on providing infrastructural facilities, teaching, and technological aids other visible features. Ultimately, the user has to bear the expenditure and in addition to pay for the servicing agency for its services also, which depend on the location, reputation and field of study (course/stream).

The learning centred cooperative curriculum, on the other hand, is based on the provision of bare minimum infrastructural facilities that the country/society can offer in view of the crunch of resources and the absence of returns from these services. It is learning centric because in government schools and colleges with textbooks being the only source of knowledge, students would not have access to any other information or learning materials. The teaching-learning is also



tuned to merely promoting the students from one level to another level, without necessarily leading to creation of value at each level due to large numbers present in the classroom, lack of accountability between the agencies providing the service (school/college) and the beneficiaries due to non-economical relationship and more organized and secure environment in which employees function.

This is perceived to be the reason for large un-employable human population. The non-detention policy adopted and promoted in India up to grade VIII, wherein the students are promoted to the next class without any qualifying criteria levels to be attained at the end of each academic year/session best illustrates this. However, all this does not mean that there is always a positive relationship between infrastructural and teaching learning facilities and learning. Learning at times transcends all this and a poor classroom in terms of facilities may not necessarily be poor in terms of transaction.

The norm referenced assessment under the competitive curriculum has its objective in providing comparative picture to each individual/student, which furthers competition. Students right from the Lower Kinder Garden stage are given grades/stars for their performance. This puts them at a high/low psychological esteem when they have not even started to get adjusted to the learning environment at school. The institutions also try to draw the best through competition and persistently sustain that spirit to advance the cause of these students for entry at higher levels. The cooperative curriculum is on the other hand based on meeting the criterion. Criterion referenced under cooperative curriculum lead to attainment of self-referenced and unambitious goals. It does not create a spirit of animosity among students but also does not result in drawing out the best of them. The goal, therefore, is of attaining equity across different sections who are involved in the educational processes.

The focus, methodology, and assessment lay foundation for the goals which are aimed at excellence and equity for private and public sectors respectively. Excellence provides substance for the private sector in the competitive market arena. The competitive spirit is not merely a domestic phenomenon of private sector but also the outcome of international interaction. The developed world's propagation of international testing such as Programme for International Students Assessment (PISA), Trends in International Mathematics and Science Survey (TIMSS) etc among themselves and also for introduction of the same in the third world nations is to put the nations on competitive pedestal and show them where they are on the educational arena. This is also echoed by M. Forsey, S. Davies and G. Walford (2008:14) that "many states are implementing standardised test score regimens to gauge levels of learning among students and compare them across jurisdictions".

Indeed, comparisons of these scores are increasingly internationalised. Those institutions which do not provide an opportunity for excellence to the students would either perish or remain poor cousins of the other private sector institutions, serving the needs of those who fail to get absorbed in the best of the institutions.

Hence, the key factor for private players is either “perform or perish”. On the other hand, the public sector continues to strive towards the goal of “equity” through inclusion (social and physical). The ultimate aim or intrinsic aspect that governs these institutional philosophies is mainly market orientation and community orientation respectively for the private and public sectors.

The twentieth century has seen increasingly powerful efforts to transform the ideal of state run schools as democratising civic institutions into the ideal of schools as a consumerist market place. “In framing a global market place GATS, education is not treated as a public trust but as a profit opportunity” (Molnar, 2006:638). “The neoliberal human capital interpretation of education is only for economic productivity and employment” (Walker, 2006:165). The market orientation is amply visible in India through the policies of the private institutions where in largely at school level these are English medium (with the main purpose of serving global markets), and at higher education level they are for market oriented courses (with large presence in the areas engineering, medicine, and management). The public sector on the other hand is interested in maintaining a delicate balance among all the courses/streams of study for a healthy and holistic development of the society, even at the cost of maintaining some unviable/uneconomical courses (courses with low teacher-student ratio etc in rural and remote areas, where private sector finds it hard to provide services).

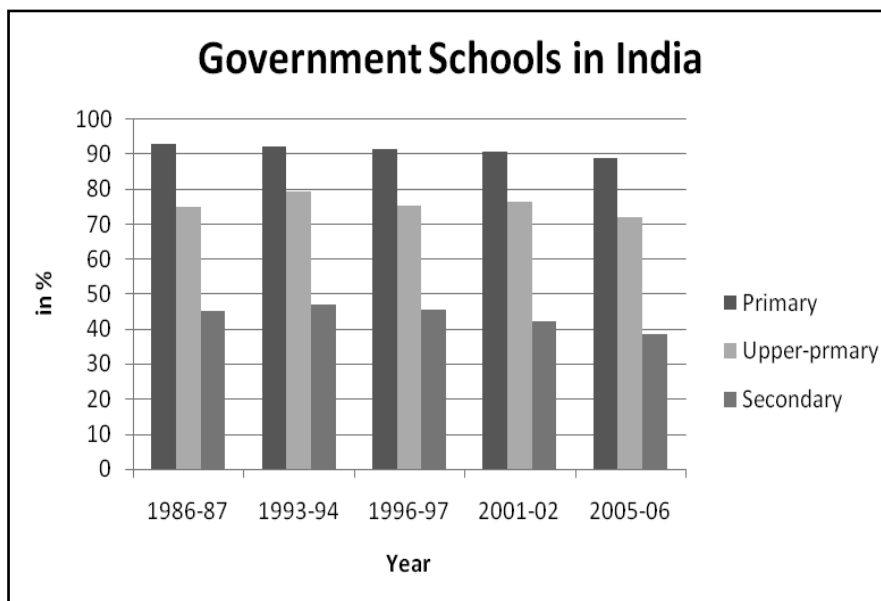
Also, unlike the private sector, which is very selective towards its clients as the survey conducted by S. Mehrotra and R.P. Panchamukhi (2006:438) has confirmed that “schooling is gender-biased in terms of enrolment (against girls, who are a larger share of the children out of school) and does not help to redress the bias against the lower castes – it does not serve the interests of social equity”. The public sector has to cater to the needs of all and especially the disadvantaged like gender and caste categories.

The management under the cooperative curricular approach is highly centralized in nature. The policies and practices related to curriculum, governance, and reforms are formulated at central or provincial level and passed on to schools. This is a most suitable approach for the public sector because eventually aspects such as reservation to the weaker sections, provision of welfare schemes such as mid-day meal to children, free textbooks, and uniforms etc are to be monitored centrally and the agencies implementing the schemes could be held responsible to the democratically elected government, only when they are implemented uniformly and through centralised structures. On the other hand, the management under the competitive curriculum requires instant, efficient, and effective local management system which can address the needs that constantly arise from the market demands.

The following figures prepared on the data obtained from selected educational statistics of GOI (Government of India), 1970-2006, provide information of the schools. The figure 1 shows the schools under public/government sector as a percentage to the total including government, private-aided (schools under private management receiving government funds) and private-unaided (independent)

schools. It indicates that the emphasis of public sector is very high on primary (grade I – V) followed by upper-primary (grade VI – VIII) and secondary (grade IX – XII).

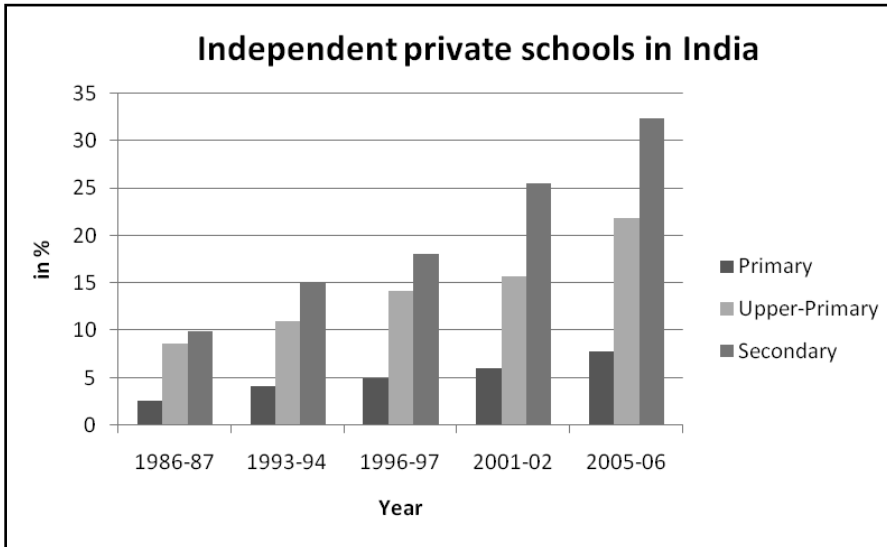
Figure 1



This is very important from the point of view of public sector to provide basic education before making an attempt to provide higher education to the children. The primary focus is coverage and once that is achieved, it would attempt to provide further education. The public sector aimed at Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE), as the primary objective followed by the present attempt to rope in the children who completed elementary education to provide Universalization of Secondary Education (USE). However, there is a gradual decrease in percentage of government schools and this gap is being filled by private sector.

In contrast to this the emphasis of private sector is on secondary followed by upper-primary and primary. The following figure provides information on the unaided private school sector and its growth across different levels i.e. primary, upper primary, and secondary. The focus of the private sector is not on basic education as it is quite evident from the figure below. However, there is an increase in the upper-primary percentage between 1986-1987 and 2005-2007 but in absolute terms it is much less than what it is at secondary level. This is mainly due to the fact that the educational enterprise is far more remunerative at secondary level than at primary level.

Figure 2



### Individual versus Social Goals

The above discussion indicates that there is an inconsistent relation between public and private players. This may also be dealt in terms of what is desirable from the point of view of individuals (private) and of state/society (public) as highlighted earlier. While the society/state's aim of education in general and curriculum in particular is tuned towards realizing the social objectives such as realization of goals enshrined in constitution and of sustenance of welfare and democratic ideals, the individual orientation is always to excel in the domains which are the most sought after and prioritization of thought and action in realization of that. In line with the above, while the society requires development of all curricular areas, individuals tend to choose only those which have marketability.

This results in a situation of dichotomy between societal demands and individual demands. An idealistic society requires a harmonious development across all sectors. The societal demands are largely altruistic in nature, while the individual's are self-centred. India being a welfare state aspires to realise the goal of equality of opportunities through education. But, its democratic compulsions make the public sector not the sole operator, but one of the prominent stakeholders in education as the intervention of private stakeholders becomes inevitable. With the individual's ability and the availability of choice becoming prominent it is possible for those who can afford to choose, what they desire and those who cannot, be dependent on government-run schools/institutions for education.

The increased role of private players has resulted in priority to the individual interests over societal interests. This has been rightly explained by Gary Wilkinson (2007:268) that “those who support economic arguments for school markets and parental choice, define school effectiveness purely in terms of academic attainment and ignore the social functions of schooling for civil society”. The liberalization, privatization, and globalization provide an opportunity for the individuals to have a lead and be assertive than the state/society. Under these circumstances it becomes essential for the state to identify, plan, and pursue the implementation for all round development across different sectors, and also plug the loopholes created by the private sector.

### Conclusion

There has been a steady growth of private sector in education. Also the influence of private sector on public sector education is unprecedented, as observed by Yongmei Ni (2009:571) that “the proponents of School Choice feel that it helps to free schools from the constraints of both bureaucracy, and monopoly, creating market incentives that include traditional public schools to become more efficient”. The private sector’s growth becomes inexorable and the public sector which also indirectly benefits from the growth of private sector (through tax collection and reduced responsibility in education) will still have to concentrate on education of large sections of population and for the advancement of different streams/courses of education. However, defining quality as only that which is measurable, demonstrative, and commercial is not the only way of looking at it. The educational quality has been defined in varied ways ranging from provision of physical inputs to educational experiences with least cost factors. However, largely people conceive of quality only of those aspects which are physical and measurable. This is very vehemently argued by A. Wolf, A. Jenkins and A. Vignoles (2006:535) as follows:

During the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the education policies of European and North American governments became increasingly directed towards immediate economic goals, especially in the post-compulsory, further, and adult sectors. This development reflected concerns over increased global competition and each country’s own economic performance and has been informed by a rather simplistic version of human capital theory.

Though there these are serious concerns about the human capital theory explained above, it is largely acceptable to educational planners, administrators, and other general public who are inclined to see pragmatic considerations and material gains for the “quality education”, rather than struggle for more altruistic, purposeful, ethical, and value laden education which is not quantifiable, and which makes education a meaningful and satisfying experience than mere gratifying one. “India, though economically growing, still in terms of numbers having 76 per cent of population living in poverty and with more people living on less than \$1 a day in India than in Sub-Saharan Africa” (Ray, 2010:19). It is neither feasible nor

achievable for many to aspire for high quality of education as defined above and even the government cannot be accepted to provide it, if visualised from the point of view pragmatic people.

A better approach could be to provide empowered teaching community who could contribute for the cause of enriching the human resources. This is because a country like India with huge population needs to turn a liability into asset, which can happen through enrichment of human resource potential (students) through available human resource (teachers). Further, making the classroom transaction process rich by invoking much sought after techniques such as discussions, debates, critical pedagogy etc, which do not cost much is necessary. The networking of student community is another important measure which can bring remarkable improvement in learning. This can be done through regular interaction of university students with undergraduate students and undergraduate students with school level students and further across all these levels. This provides for effective human resource utilization at a time when there is an immense shortage of teachers at various levels.

The private sector is also increasingly being roped into the social responsibility, which seems to be highly antithetical to its framework. However, the private sector also faces stiff competition with the proposed entry of world class private institutions into the education sector of the developing nations like India. It becomes imperative for the international private players also to follow the guidelines prescribed by the government such as lower cut-offs for the socio-economically weaker sections students at entry level, provision of subsidies, and other facilities as the private unaided schools have been mandated to follow at school level. However, it has been lamented that un-aided private institutions are not doing justice in fulfilling their responsibility towards weaker sections children as they are expected to do in return for the subsidized land allotted to them by the government of Delhi.

The Human Resource Development Ministry, in the meanwhile, has proposed to set up innovation universities under PPP, wherein it has been suggested to “weight the test scores with a measure for the socio-economic background of the candidates for admissions” (Mukul, 2010b:17). Even China established political performance as an important criterion for admission to postgraduate study. “Students displaying outstanding leadership in political activities and agreeing to engage in political education after graduation could be offered admission without an examination” (Pan, 2006:246).

Even in the developed world the inequalities persist in higher education despite tremendous progress, as observed by L. Rosado, M. Delia and M.E. David (2006:346) that the idea of the “demographic boom in the universities” does not mean that social class educational opportunities have changed and nor that inequalities in labour market opportunities have been eroded. Also, in the relationship between Public and Private sector, it is always assumed that Private sector is always in a position to give than take. Ale Jandra Cardini (2006:395) observes that “in PPP, the private sector assumes of providing better value for

money in procuring modern, high quality services as well as expertise, innovation and management of appropriate risks, but does not mention what public sector entails apart from those that benefit the private sector”.

The above discussion provides the scope of functioning of the private and public sectors in education which taken in an ideal condition appear to be dichotomous in nature. “Bringing public and private providers together when their objectives do not have considerable overlap, and often have conflicting objectives, raises doubts about the feasibility of such an arrangement” (Levin, 2000:135). Their coexistence in mixed economies is inevitable but their collaboration appears incoherent due to the goals that these two different sectors perceive. Under these conditions, it would be highly inappropriate for the policy makers to view that there could be partnerships between the two without diluting their respective standpoints. If the public sector compromises more it will be ignoring its basic social responsibility of facilitating “equity” in a democratic society which will be detrimental to the very existence of the government and the underlying philosophy for which it needs to strive.

As suggested by Melanie Walker (2006:183) that “getting education is a matter of social justice, and that schooling is a site for state intervention and public policy”. On the other hand, if the private sector compromises, its own existence which is based on promotion of merit and competition will be perilous. In view of this it becomes necessary that both the sectors work independently in their own spheres because in their union they produce something which would not be in their interest and in the interest of the groups for which they work.

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India, though economically growing, still in terms of numbers having 76 per cent of population living in poverty and with more people living on less than \$1 a day in India than in Sub-Saharan Africa.