

## Analysis of Unethical Practices in Higher Education System

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### Abstract

*This paper attempt Higher education in particular plays a key role in the realization of the potentialities of younger population that will in turn give a boost to the economic, social, political, technological and human development in any society. The institution of higher learning therefore is significant in affecting the quality of life of the people in a given society and they have a moral and ethical responsibility to maintain and promote the well being of 1.32 billion populations in India. Unfortunately in the present globalized knowledge economy instead of giving importance to teaching, learning, research and other allied activities to enrich and promote higher learning, the higher education system in India and the people associated with the system are all involved in one or the other unethical practices giving way for the low standard and poor quality education. The higher educational institutions in India from graduate to post-graduate degree courses including Engineering, Medical and other Professional courses from admission to examination and research indulge in all forms of unethical methods and means to reach its goals. Based on the secondary sources available in the published and unpublished form this research article tries to focus its objective on understanding numerous kinds of unethical practices among the people involved in higher education as well as analyse how such practices are leading to deterioration of educational values in higher education in India.*

**Key Concepts:** Higher Education, Population, Economy, Values and Unethical Practices.

### Introduction:

“**E**ducation is the manifestation of perfection

already in Man”-Swamy Vivekananda

Education in general and higher education in particular plays a key role in the realization of the potentialities of younger population that will in turn give a boost to the economic, social, political, technological and human development in any society. The institution of higher learning therefore is significant in affecting the quality of life of the people in a given society. Therefore the higher educational institutions in India have great moral and ethical responsibility to maintain and promote the well being of 1.32 billion populations among whom young population is 600 million who stand to be the direct stakeholders. As a developing country with huge demographic dividend and youth population of more than 50% in the productive age group, Higher education in India should reckon tremendous importance in facing the challenges of growing economy of the emerging globalization.

It is through education only the individuals can acquire the knowledge; learn various skills, develop different traits required for the present knowledge economy. India needs people not only technically competent but individuals who respect human rights, value individual dignity, follow the rules of law, people who fulfill roles and responsibilities willingly and work for the common good of all without any discrimination based on caste, creed, religion, or region. But the incidents that are reported and seen with respect to the outcome of education among the students seem to be of poor quality with most of them in unemployment state. As per the report of the NASSCOM-Mckenzie only 25% of the graduates of the engineering colleges are unemployable.

With respect to the teachers and their commitment, the administrators and their transparency in work there is no exception that their contribution in the upgradation of knowledge is also very poor. Our former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh once said the following about higher education in India-“our University System is, in many parts in a state of disrepair. In almost half the districts higher

education enrolment are abysmally low. Almost two third of our Universities and 90% of colleges are rated below average in quality parameters”.

Unfortunately instead of giving importance to teaching, learning, research and other allied activities to enrich and promote higher learning, the higher education system in India and the people associated with the system are all involved in one or the other unethical practices giving way for the low standard and poor quality education compared to many other not only developed countries but even some of the underdeveloped countries like Africa for example. It is with this perspective that this research article tries to focus its objective on understanding numerous kinds of unethical practices among the people involved in higher education as well as analyse how such practices are leading to deterioration of educational values in higher education in India.

### Objectives of The Study

1. To identify several kinds of unethical practices among hierarchy of people involved in Higher Education in India.
2. To critically analyze how different types of unethical practices in higher education is leading to the inhuman practices and decline of educational values.

### Research Methodology

The research article is mainly based on secondary source of information. The number of scholarly books and research articles published by researchers, National Sample Survey reviews helped in understanding the conceptual issue of Higher Education in Indian. The study is also based on some observation of historical events and personal experience of rendering 20 years of service in higher education as a faculty.

### Limitations of The Study

It has been rightly pointed out by TSR Subramaniam committee, submitted in 2016 (MHRD) that most of the institutions are nothing but shops, selling degrees. According to report, “While there are a few which can be identified as “Centre of Excellence”, both in the public and private sector, there are a large number which are mediocre, some of them could well be described as “Degree Shops”. This statement above describes the state of affairs of

Higher Education in India. Therefore this research article mainly focusing on content analyses of secondary source of information tries to critically analyse the unethical practices found in educational institutions. Direct first hand information was sought by observation of historical events over a period of time and day to day experience as a faculty in higher education department. The limitation of the study is that it is more subjective perspective than an objective methodology of study.

### Discussion And Analysis

Ethics is a system of moral principles. They affect how people make decisions and lead their lives. Ethics is concerned with what is good for individuals and society and is also described as moral philosophy. Unethical behavior on the other hand is an action that falls outside of what is considered morally right or proper for a person, a profession or an industry. Individuals can behave unethically, as can businesses, professionals and politicians. Universities and affiliated educational institutions that are part of Higher Education system in India are interdependent organizations. When these institutions impart the knowledge and skills required for the fulfillment of educational goals need ethical consideration. But what has been observed today in our higher education system is manipulations of ethical standards and weakening of ethical values. Lack of knowledge and corruption among teachers, bribery and scams, laziness and indifferent attitude among the students, political influence in the teacher student relationship, absenteeism both among teachers as well as students, unaccountability and lack of transparency in academic and administrative work, emotional and sentimental attachment of teachers with students, misuse of students psychological and emotional issues all have become part and parcel of higher educational institutions in India today. In the following discussion an effort is made to identify how each individual associated with Higher Education yield to unethical practices out of compulsion or due to their selfish motives.

### Teaching Faculty and Unethical Practices:

Teachers/Lecturers are expected to be the role model for the students by being fair, objective, practical and resourceful at all costs. But the present day teachers/lecturers both at graduate and post-graduate courses are identified with huge amount of

negative practices. They employ inappropriate teaching methods, lack subject knowledge and land up dictating notes from reading material available in the form of guides. Studies have shown absenteeism as one of the major issue leading to escapism from work. Teachers involving in research work and writing books are indulging themselves in plagiarism. Examples of cases reported to UGC for plagiarism Dr. Chandra Krishnamurthy, Vice-Chancellor of Pondicherry University (2015), Dr. Anil Kumar Upadhyaya, Reader Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidya Peeth, Varanasi (2017), and Prof. Vinay Kumar Pathak, Vice-Chancellor of Dr. A.P.J Abdul Kalam Technical University, Lucknow. These are few examples but in reality there are any numbers of cases reported and unreported where both M.phil and P.hd have been in the breach of copyright. Reported cases of sexual misconduct and sexual harassment and even stalking is no less. Teachers are also known to exhibit favouritism and nepotism. There are reported cases of ghost teachers, the prosy teachers. HRD Minsiter Prakash Javekar reported that there are nearly 80,000 ghost teachers identified in some of the state and private colleges.

There are teachers who give importance to their own personal development at the cost of students, college/institution or society at large. By holding positions in educational institutions they concentrate on private home tuitions, they are members of several boards holding academic positions in BOE, BOS, private NGO organization, autonomous institutions which are of course impotent for professional growth but over concentration and more focus on these things would take away the quality time they are expected to spend in the post they hold. The UGC guidelines that makes research and publications mandatory also has led to more teachers participating in seminars, conferences and workshops with out any quality improvement but end up purchasing certificates. Papers presented and published in such seminars and conferences are also lifted from internet sources by just changing the title. Ample of research articles are available on internet with dual authors with different date of publication. Added to this the semester system that limits the teaching hours to 60 contact classes and 90 working days in which number of acidizing and cocurrirular activities with given public holidays there is hardly

quality time the teachers spends with students. All this obviously mean more unethical practices than ethical approach in higher education. Teachers taking up projects under various UGC schemes never consign themselves to carry out research in actual sense but relay on research scholars in the departments, the ghost writers and produce false bills and complete the projects and submit the same with dubious means. No doubt that nothing can be created out of nothing. Knowledge of any kind requires understanding of past and available knowledge, assumption of something and creation of something out of that. But that does not mean without any effort one steels the work of others and present it as their own without proper acknowledgement.

#### **Students and Unethical Practices:**

Students are the first stakeholders who need to benefit more from higher educational institutions for they are the one who become the future of society. They need to develop qualities to become good citizens, employees, business and community leaders. Unfortunately it is commonly observed by the teachers and academic administrators that students also employ various methods of fraud during their academic years. McCabe and Trevina (1993) conducted studies on different campus that reveal that students admitted to have taken part in questionable behaviour during the academic years. Irrespective of the course they are studying many students practice unethical behaviour of copying, cheating, influencing the teachers to get more marks, lying, buying academic essays and papers, offering gifts to teachers and non-teaching staff, fabrication of written materials, and presently with computer advancement illegally accessing to the computer database. Student motivation to practice unethical practices can be looked at from different perspectives. Firstly from objective point of view students think that the courses and study materials itself is of high level for them to study and the time duration for preparation is too short. Secondly from subjective point of view they feel that teachers not being strict. Students take things for granted and they feel by hook or crook they will be able to get good grades. Colleges and institutional members are some time responsible for mass copying among the students as they want to retain good grand and ranking to their institutions.

**Administrators and other authorities and Unethical Practices:**

There are abundant number of people in this category the academic authorities, administrators, department heads, politicians and a host of others who are directly or indirectly part of higher education system always look out for short cut means to make money. There is a methodical and organized corruption among the higher educational institutions especially Technical, Medical and Management B-Schools. Some of the authorities of these institutions illegally sell seats. They manipulate the seat matrix and sell the seats meant for SC/ST and other suppressed classes to general merit students. There are reported cases where the officials had managed to fake marks sheets, caste and income certificates to secure seats meant for others. Many bright and intelligent students are used to impersonate and write entrance and qualifying examinations for other to seek admission. While collecting fee from students there are number of unaccountable charges in the form of development fee and other charges. Institutions with their big advertisements through media try to trap the aspiring students for admission especially seats in technical and medical colleges. The students once admitted through this kind of back-door entry obviously indulge themselves in unethical means and methods to accomplish their goals and qualify with good percentage. Since there is no actual learning among such students they land up unemployed and again depend on inducement method to get jobs.

Irregularities are also observed in recruitment process of the faculty in many institutions and universities across the country. Many affiliated educational institutions that are black listed also get academies affiliations by corrupt means year after year. There is also no check on MOUs signed with many overseas universities.

**Parents and Unethical Practices:**

last but not the least parents are also part of any educational institutions as it is they who show more concern when it comes to educating their wards. They are also no exception to the unethical practices. They want the best education from best institutions, the best placement for their wards. As a result they never mind to bribe for seats, for marks and even placement.

**Conclusion and Suggestions**

Higher Education system in India has no doubt produced brilliant citizens and statesmen who have contributed to the development of various fields in Indian society. The Noble Laureates like Rabindranath Tagore – The Nobel Prize in Literature, 1913, CV Raman – The Nobel Prize in Physics, 1930, Mother Teresa – The Nobel Prize in Peace, 1979, Amartya Sen The Nobel Prize in Economic Studies, 1998 and Kailash Satyarthi – The Nobel Prize in Peace, 2014. A host of other educationists, scientists, administrators, bureaucrats have been produced by these very education institutions but they are all exception cases. When we speak in terms of larger population and the kind of educational system today there is lack of ethical practice. The outcome of knowledge produced we see an over flow of unethical practices in the present system defeating the whole purpose of education which aims to produce values for human life. Therefore the aim of educational institution should be not to produce knowledge of some subjects and prepare the students for exams with all this unethical means and methods and allow all other stakeholders to practice unethical means to fulfill their selfish motives. The need of the hour is to identify all unethical practices, punish the culprits and create conducive learning environment which would help in self disciplining and change the mind set of people so that they understand the value of higher education. Education in the market economy has become more commercialized that got accelerated due to LPG factor over the years. As education became commercialized the unethical practices also rapidly picked up its speed. The drive to make higher education socially inclusive has led to a sudden and dramatic increase in numbers without a proportionate increase in material and intellectual resources. As a result, academic standards have become unsettled and have been placed in jeopardy in the university-system in the country since the 1960s (André Béteille, 2005). The TINA syndrome used by Sociologist Herbert Spencer and popularly associated with British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher applied to unethical practices in educational system today should not mean ‘There is No alternative’, it should mean that ‘There is New Alternative’ to deal with unethical practices in the system. It needs only an effort to

bring change. Only timely act can save the system from more deterioration and destruction. Higher education finally should mean integrated development of personality with ethical values. Rabindranath Tagor-The Higher Education is that which does not merely give us information, but mean life in harmony with all existence.

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