



Attitude Of University Students, Towards Privatisation Of Higher Education - A Study

KEYWORDS

Attitude, University Student, Privatization, Higher Education.

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ABSTRACT Higher education in India is moving towards privatisation day by day, which can be treated as an impact of globalisation. Privatisation leads to quantitative expansion of higher educational institutions, but possesses a serious threat so far as the quality is concerned. The main purpose of the study is to assess the attitude of University students towards privatisation of higher education. An attempt has also been made to make comparison of attitude with respect to the variable gender and two different universities. Descriptive survey method was adopted and the relevant data were collected by a self designed attitude scale. Most of the selected students have shown positive attitudes towards Privatization of higher education. The results of the study revealed 'statistical significance' between the variables.

1.1. Rationale of the study:

At the eve of liberalization, globalization and privatization, many changes are taking place in different spheres of Indian socio-economic life. These changes have affected all the sectors including education. Education is such a factor which affects all other sectors. So, it is important to observe the changes in education. Because of new economic policy, privatization is welcome in India. So, in education also. Now private educational institutions are increasing day-by-day in India. A market of educational services is growing tremendously in the country. Market forces have led to higher education being commercialized and it has emerged as a business. The popularity and availability of courses are also being shaped by markets (Nayyar 2007:32)1. The impact of globalization is also reflected in the employment of 'economic standards as benchmarks'. This has consequently 'led to an international tendency to over emphasize the practical, technical value of higher education. Such a tendency causes tensions between the more profitable applied subjects of science and technology and those of basic theoretical enquiry, particularly arts and humanities subjects'(Yang 2003:277)2.

The North-East India including Assam has been targeted for marketing of educational services. The public sector institutions of higher education have faced a serious threat. Considering all these changes and threats in the mind, the investigator has carried out a study on the following topic:

"Attitude of University Students towards Privatisation of Higher Education - A Study.

1.2. Operational Definitions of the key terms used:

- (i) Attitude: An attitude is a hypothetical construct that represents an individual's degree of like or dislike for an item. Attitudes are generally positive or negative views of a person, place, thing or event.
- (ii) University Students: Refers to students who have enrolled in the University.
- (iii) Privatization: Privatization is the incidence or process of transferring ownership of business, enterprise, agency or public service from public sector (government) to the private sector.
- (iv) Higher Education: Study beyond the level of secondary education. Institutions of higher education include not only college and universities but also professional schools in such fields as law, theology, medicine, business, music and art. They also include Teacher Training Institutions, Community colleges and institutes of technology. At the end of a prescribed course of study, a degree, diploma or certificate is awarded.

1.3. Objectives of the Study:

The objectives of the present study are:

- (a) To assess the attitude of students towards privatization of

higher education.

- (b) To make a comparative analysis of attitude of students with respect to:

- (i) Male and Female students (irrespective of the university).
- (ii) Gauhati University vs. Dibrugarh University (irrespective of gender of the students).

1.4. Hypothesis: As the objective no.1 is associated with fact finding issue, so there is no need to formulate any hypothesis. But for the objective 2, the following hypothesis has been formulated:

Ho: There exists no significant difference in Attitude towards Privatization of Higher Education between-

- (a) Male and female students (irrespective of the university).
- (b) Two Universities (irrespective of gender of the samples).

2.1. Methodology: Descriptive survey method was followed for the present study. Two different universities of Assam (Gauhati University and Dibrugarh University) were selected as per convenience of the investigator.

2.2. Sample: For the sample students, **Simple Random Sampling** technique was adopted and 80 samples were selected. The features of the sample selection are as follows:

- (i) Two Universities- the Gauhati University and the Dibrugarh University which are situated at two different corners of Assam.
- (ii) 80 total samples- out of which 40 were from the Gauhati University and the rests 40 from the Dibrugarh University.
- (iii) Out of 80 samples, 45 were female and 35 were the male students.
- (iv) Out of 40 students of Gauhati University, 16 were the male students and 24 are the female students.
- (v) Out of 40 students of Dibrugarh University, 19 were the male students and 21 are the female students.

2.3. Tool used for data collection: For the present study, the investigator has constructed a self designed scale, which is named as "**Attitude Scale towards Privatisation of Higher Education (ASPHE)**". The ASPHE was constructed by considering mainly the socio-economic, political and socio-cultural issues on privatization of higher education. 22 structured statements/ comments were given and three options were provided to put the tick mark against each comment. For the purpose of scoring, the investigator has used Likert Type 3-Point Summated Rating Scale. e.g. Agree (score=3), Undecided (score=2) and Disagree (score=1) was adopted. The negative comments were scored in a reversed order. As the scale consists of 22statements, the following score values would be revealing:

$$22 \times 3 = 66 \text{ most positive response/attitude possible}$$

22 x 2 = 44 a neutral attitude/ response attitude
 22x 1 = 22 most negative attitude/ response possible

Thus, the total score for any individual would fall between 22 and 66. The students whose scores are greater than 44, can be said to have a positive attitude; scores below 44 have the negative attitude and the samples whose scores are exactly 44 can be said to have a neutral or an indifferent attitude. The validity and reliability of the scale has been tested accordingly. The reliability co-efficient was found to be 0.84, so the ASPHE can be treated as highly reliable.

2.4. Statistical Test of Significance:

To make comparison of 'Attitude towards Privatization of Higher Education' between the sample students of the two Universities and between the boys and girls, 't' test has been applied for testing the significant difference.

3.1. Data Collection:

Rapport was established by contacting the student samples. The investigator found that the respondents have given full response to the scale.

3.2. Analysis and Interpretation of Data:

After collecting the relevant data, those have been analyzed according to the 3-Point Rating scale. To fulfil objective number 1, i.e. to assess the attitude of students towards privatization of higher education, following table can generate their attitude.

Table 1: Distribution of sample students of the two Universities according to their Attitude

Attitude	Gauhati University(n=40)	Dibrugarh University(n=40)	Total (N=80)
Positive (score>44)	33(82.5%)	31(77.5%)	64(80%)
Neutral (score=44)	1 (2.5%)	2(5%)	3(3.75%)
Negative (score<44)	6(15.0%)	7(17.5%)	13(16.25%)

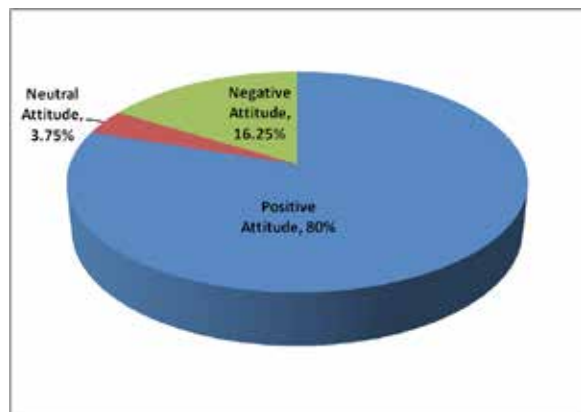


Figure 1.1: Pie diagram showing the % distribution of students according to their attitude level

Table 1 and fig.1.1 depict that maximum students have the positive attitude towards privatization of higher education. Irrespective of the university; 80% students have shown positive attitude (as their total attitude score > 44); while 16.25% of the total sample have shown a negative attitude (as their attitude score <44). Only 3.7.5% students have shown a neutral attitude (as their attitude score=44).

Objective 2(a)

Table 2 (a): Mean distribution of attitude scores among the samples according to gender (irrespective of University) and their't' value

Gender	No. of students	Mean SD	Degree of freedom(d.f.)	t-value	Significant
Male	35	51.29 5.01	80-2=78	3.09*	Significant (p<0.01)
Female	45	46.62 8.38			

(Critical value of 't' with 78 at 0.01 level of significance is 2.59)

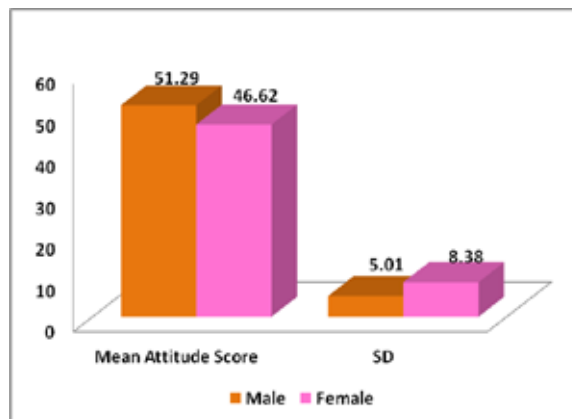


Fig 2 (a.1): Graph showing the mean & SD of attitude scores among male & female students

Table 2 and figure 2(a.1) have shown that the mean attitude score among the boys is higher than their female counterparts. The mean and SD scores among the boys are found to be 51.29 ± 5.01; while in case of girls, the mean and SD scores are 46.62 ± 8.38. Regarding the test of significance, it can be concluded that there exists a significant mean difference between the two groups.

Objective-2(b)

Table 2(b): Mean distribution of overall attitude scores among the total samples (n=80) between the two Universities (irrespective of gender of the samples) and their't' value

University	No. of students	Mean SD	d.f.	t-value	Significance
Gauhati	40	49.25 7.50	78	0.70	Not significant (p>0.05)
Dibrugarh	40	48.08 7.39			

From table 3, it has been found that the mean attitude scores among the samples between the two Universities are almost equal. It was 49.25 ± 7.50 among the GU students; while the same was 48.08 ± 7.39 among the DU students. Regarding the statistical significance, the difference between the two group is not significant (p>0.05). This clearly indicates that today's educated youth have perceived the issue of 'Privatization of higher education' in the same way, whether they hail from two far different parts of the state.

Major Findings of the Study: On the basis of the analysis and interpretation of data, the following findings have been drawn:

Most of the selected students (80%) have shown positive attitude towards Privatization of higher education; while only 16.25% have shown negative attitude and 3.75% are neutral about the fact.

There exists a 'significant difference' of overall attitude between male and female students at 0.01 level.

There is 'no significant' difference regarding the overall attitude between the students of two universities.

Concluding Remark: The study revealed that university

students of Assam seem to have positive attitude towards privatization of higher education. Private universities are allowed to set up in the country. A bill has already been passed in the Parliament to allow foreign universities to the country. As a result, traditional universities and courses are bound to face steep competition. Because of unemployment problem, new courses are in heavy demand. So, it is becoming inevitable to maintain quality in all respects. The Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are experimenting new techniques and policies. The apex authority like the University Grants

Commission (UGC) has already warned the HEIs to go for changes. Formation of the National Commission for Higher Education and research (NCHER) is another step for change.

It is, therefore, recommended that the public higher education institutions need to be critically investigate on the aspects of quality education, infrastructure, curriculum development, curriculum transaction, evaluation, campus environment, campus recruitments and above all students' satisfaction.

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