

Regulating the teacher: Is there any alternative to teacher regulation?

Webinar 2: The Critical Economics of Higher Education
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Objective and Outline



- ▶ While Economic principles are invoked to understand the **dynamics** of the education sector and inform **policy making**, why we need to be critical in our approach
- ▶ Teachers are central to the functioning of an educational institution. We examine the National Education Policy (**NEP**) 2020 with focus on the role of the teachers, ie, the professoriate in the Indian higher education institutions.
- ▶ Outline:
- ▶ A1. Economics of education (EoE): Can we apply economic principles to understand the HE sector? Even if it can be, should we?
- ▶ A2. To understand the Economic rationale behind the shift in HE policy making
- ▶ B1. The NEP 2020: diagnosis of the challenges and policy recommendations related to teacher regulation
- ▶ B2: Is there any alternative to teacher regulation?



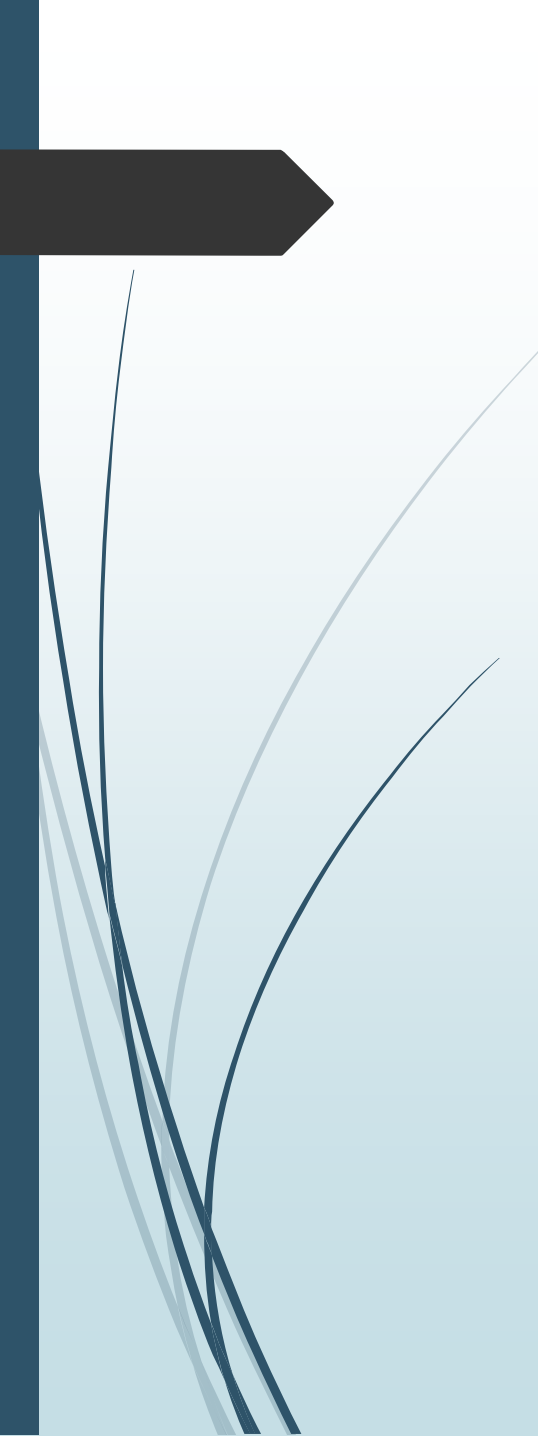
Drawing parallels between the world of commodity production and the academia

- ▶ The theoretical foundation of Economics of Education (EoE) can be traced to the theory of human capital (HCT) (Becker 1964/1975; Schultz 1960, 1961).
- ▶ The propositions are (based on Majumdar 1983):
 - ▶ (i) to treat a student as an **investor** in human capital.
 - ▶ (ii) the **alternative opportunities** available to an investor in the capital market are no different from what a student faces
 - ▶ (iii) The student is guided by the same principle of **return maximisation** similar to the one that guides an investor in a capital market
 - ▶ (iv) **Input-output** modelling or Education production function: functioning of an institution can be understood and compared to that of a business firm.



The status of Economics of Education in teaching programme

- EoE is **hardly offered** in the Departments of Economics in Indian universities as an optional. Same is the story for most of the departments (or schools) of education.
- While some areas of EoE are covered in papers like development economics and labour Economics, teaching of Economics of education evokes criticism from the field of education as the study of economics of education entails **commodification of education**, which amounts to degradation.
- However, the field of education, despite wide differences with the world of commodity production and the domain of education, EoE can yield important **insights** and enrich our understanding of the world of education.
- The approach should be to teach EoE critically with **an exposure** to other social science disciplines. This requires broader understanding of Economics as a field of study.
- The application of HCT is highly **problematic** because the social reality is highly complex and layered, it is a non-linear system, open and heterogeneous (Marginson, 2015). Education and work are two different domains.
- **Expectations**, which are **subjective**, ignored. Estimation of ror becomes a meaningless exercise.
- The policy makers have invoked EoE in their policymaking (Marginson 1997).



These hard facts are apparently puzzling but actually not!

- ▶ (i) Why does there exist poor quality HEIs despite informed (to a significant extent) choice making by the students within a competitive HE system?
- ▶ Or Why **competition can improve quality** only to a limited extent while the hierarchy in the system remains stable and unchallenged?
- ▶ (ii) if higher education is **a public good** and the market fails, why is **private participation rising**?
- ▶ (iii) why **privatisation** has **not** led to an overall **improvement in the quality** of education? This is not to deny the existence of a few pockets of excellence both in public as well as in private.



The possible explanations are:

- ▶ There can not be a **full fledged market** for higher education (Marginson 2013 and other papers) and market cannot function (should not function) with full autonomy to both the students and the institutions (Glennester 1991; Jongbloed 2004). Need for a quasi-market (Chattopadhyay 2009).
- ▶ (distinction between teaching and research is essential).
- ▶ Competition is **selection-based** which produces S-efficiency in addition to exchange-based, ie, E-efficiency as in the case of commodity market (Glennester 1991; Winston 1999).
- ▶ Education is **not a typical commodity** with well-defined specifications; it is an 'experience good'
- ▶ Students are **not typically consumers** as they can **not** buy degrees. Learning in class and research in labs are co-produced. Have to earn their degrees.
- ▶ Students in many cases are more interested in **credentials** which can act as signals in the job market rather than going through the rigorous process of learning (Chattopadhyay).



The possible explanations are (contd.)

- ▶ **Optimisation**, either cost cutting given output or output maximisation given cost are **inimical to quality education**. Efficiency does not always lead to quality improvement (Chattopadhyay 2012).
- ▶ The **education production function is unstable** and weak in absence of a well defined technology and optimising inputs.
- ▶ The **quality of inputs** are human capital embodied and hence they are **not replicable**.
- ▶ An IBC of Oxford University (hypothetically speaking) located in Delhi cannot emerge to be the Oxford University of Oxford but a camera producing factory of Nikon in Delhi can be no different from a Nikon manufacturing unit located in Japan. Can explain hierarchy.
- ▶ Application of **theory of production and cost is not tenable**. Its application **can hamper** the functioning of a university as an institution of higher learning and compromise university objective (Majumdar 1983, Marginson 1997).
- ▶ **Public-private divide** depends on policy making, quantum and mode of funding (Marginson 2016).



Rationale for neoliberal approach to higher education reform

- ▶ If there is a world of difference between education and commodity production, why higher education policy making which is mostly based on neo-liberal approach is informed by economic principles?
- ▶ Adam Smith (1776) and James Buchanan (with Devletoglou) (*Academia in Anarchy* 1970) argued for market construction to address poor functioning of the university system
- ▶ This entails that the teachers and the students to behave differently but in practice, it is not so.
- ▶ There are non-economic factors too which push for neoliberalism.



Rationale for neoliberal approach to higher education reform

- ▶ There are enough **sources of market failure** in case of higher education to justify government intervention plus the issue of access.
- ▶ There are enough **instances of Government failure** too in case of public universities particularly in the developing parts of the world.
- ▶ However, the policymakers believe that **market failures can be corrected** whereas the government failure cannot be as agents are self-interest driven.
- ▶ Hence, the approach should be to correct sources of market failures and construct a regulated market. This achieves **allocation efficiency**. And university governance reform achieves **technical efficiency** by restoring the education production function.
- ▶ Student based funding constructs market while providing funding support to HE (eg, vouchers). **Public funding and market construction**. (New Public Finance)
- ▶ The neoliberals believe that the teachers in particular (the economic agents) are essentially self-interest driven and they are 'manipulatable'.

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In the traditional concept of the university

- ▶ University is for the production of a collective good, the knowledge which has to be produced and disseminated apart from imparting necessary training to the graduates
- ▶ Knowledge is required by the nation, a means to an end and education is essential for social and political order, functioning of the institutions.



The conduct of the teacher is expected to be different in the traditional university!

- ▶ In this entire episode of reform, the **teacher is central** to the functioning of what all a university does, Reform of teacher is central to the higher education reform.
- ▶ The teacher should have academic freedom in all her engagements
- ▶ The teacher should have the **freedom of inquiry** which is essential for knowledge generation and disinterested pursuit of truth.
- ▶ Ideally a teacher in her effort should remain **intrinsically motivated**. Monitoring and surveillance diminish intrinsic motivation and creates mistrust (Feige and others).



The teacher is expected to be...

- ▶ The teacher should be **trust worthy** (shift in policy is from high trust to low trust)
- ▶ The teacher should have the **competence**, should exhibit scholarly diligence, and morally responsible.
- ▶ The teacher should remain accountable to her **conscience** (Berdahl 1990)
- ▶ the teacher should have **a sense of duty** (Seumas Miller 2010) or
- ▶ the teacher should remain **accountable to a multiple sources** (Codd 1999, Olssen, Codd and O'Neill 2004)
- ▶ This requires **Input-based** adequate public funding



Why the neoliberals dominate when it comes policy making?

- ▶ If these conditions are **not** obtained, the neo-liberals enter to fix the system.
- ▶ The **suboptimal performance** of the university has been made attributable to the suboptimal performance of the teachers
- ▶ Teachers are essentially **self-interest driven** optimising agents.
- ▶ “We happen to be teachers” (my supervisor, Prof Kumar once remarked).
- ▶ The New Public Management (NPM) suggests that the teachers’ performances are to be **accounted** for and are to be subjected to audit.
- ▶ The economic argument is to achieve **efficiency** to get the best out of the teachers and ensure ‘value for money’, the society demands.
- ▶ Market gives **freedom** to choose and fosters **competition** to realise efficiency in use of resources. Both are highly valued
- ▶ But the link between **efficiency and quality is uncertain** and tenuous. Because quality inputs are not replicable.



Concluding observations



- ▶ The problem with application of economic principles in policy design is that in the process, the students and the teachers, college or a university undergo **transformation** (Marginson 1997 and others)
- ▶ Students become **consumers** and the teachers cease to be intrinsically motivated, and the HEIs evolve as corporate firms.
- ▶ It is the broader objective of education, the **public good** character of higher education which gets compromised with the growing individualisation in the society.
- ▶ A market without adequate safeguards may prioritise power of **money** and **merit** over the concerns for the **margin** hindering social mobility and making an equitable society.



The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020



The Indian Higher Education

- ▶ Third largest in the world
- ▶ Universities: 1000+, Colleges: 50K around. Students: 37.3 million, Teachers: 1.4 million
- ▶ GER: 27-28 % approx.
- ▶ Enrolment in private (aided and unaided) HEIs is around two-third of the total enrolment in HE.
- ▶ Quality is a major concern. Arguably, poor employability of the graduates.
- ▶ Limited presence of Indian Universities in the global ranking. Only a few within 200-300 range as per one ranking agency.



The Indian HE Contd.

- ▶ Public funding for HE is around 1.25 % of GDP. For Education: **4.4% of GDP** (NEP) all the Ministries combined.
- ▶ Students' **mobility**: Outbound 461,792; (MoExt Aff: 0.8 mn) Inbound 49,348 (UNESCO latest data)
- ▶ **Second most** important sending country for students abroad after China
- ▶ In terms of total number of publications, India now ranks fourth in the world, after China, USA, and UK followed by Germany (International Facts and Figures, Universities UK International 2020). But around 12 publications by 100 faculty (only 1.4 million excl. Research Institutions produced 0.18 million)
- ▶ Proportion of internationally co-authored publications is 18 per cent (2019)



NEP 2020: Envisioning education and its role in nation building

- Only the third Education Policy since Independence. Took five years of deliberations at all levels.
- Education is transformative because it changes the individual or contributes towards '**self-formation**', and it imparts the necessary **skill**. Both the aspects have been sought to be addressed.
- Not only for developing 21st Century competencies, also to encourage critical thinking & innovation but also for becoming a good citizen
- To usher in major transformative changes in almost all spheres **within** the HE system, and to respond to the **internal** and **external** challenges.
- To increase public engagement, ethical practices, and to inculcate values, public spiritedness (to foster 'publicness' of public good character).



Diagnosis of the challenges facing the Indian HE (Draft NEP 2019)

- Teachers are central to the functioning of the universities. For any higher education reform to succeed, the focus has to be on the teachers' role in the transformation of the University system.
- We focus on those aspects which affect the teachers directly and indirectly.
- The primary focus is on rejuvenating the system by giving autonomy to the teachers and the institutions and autonomy being given to the students to exercise their autonomy in terms of courses and time of their study.
- Focus on skill orientation and internationalisation to be realized by digitisation of the system.
- Higher Education is a quasi-public good. Public funding has to go up to 6% of GDP from the present 4.3 percent.
- Too many HEIs, sizes of many are **too small**, and mostly are of substandard quality:
- Leading to **suboptimal utilisation** of resources, human, financial, physical.
- Lack of vibrancy, lack of enthusiasm among the teachers & students
- **Failure of regulation:** micromanagement has been stifling for the teachers to innovate in teaching & research



Diagnosis of the problems (select)

- **Faculty: Unethical practices and lack compliance:** too much of regulation has stifled innovation and creative practices, blocking new vistas from opening up.
- **Promotion** is largely based on seniority (Draft NEP).
- Proliferation of **fake journals (Draft NEP)**.
- **Institutional:** Emergence of **an inspectorial regime** even though the regulatory interventions were continued to be violated.
- Further, micromanagement of practices have suffocated the teachers, have deterred them from innovation and engaging with creative practices.
- Vacant faculty positions, inadequate infrastructure.



NEP recommendations

compliance with regulations Regulating universities '**Light but tight**' gives importance to institutional autonomy and it should be minimalistic and at the same time the few regulations should be effectively and sincerely complied with

Leadership: balancing the **vertical** which is meant for university administration with the **horizontal** where teachers as experts of their knowledge areas are located who deserve autonomy and desire autonomy.

To **strengthen leadership**. To foster a culture of excellence and innovation.

Institutional development plan (**IDP**) presents an alternative approach.

The overall approach of the NEP 2020 gives the impression that a state regulated market for HE is being sought to be constructed.



The inefficacy of the existing UGC Regulations

- ▶ Altbach and Jayaram (2008) had earlier said about seniority based promotion (+). Draft NEP 2020 (2019) referred to it too.
- ▶ The UGC adopted regulations to assess faculty performance quantitatively and regulate their career progression in 2010.
- ▶ The UGC Regulations 2018: It seeks to assess objectively the performances of the teachers (API), control and monitor use of time and increase research output and improve quality.
- ▶ Use of time: **teaching load and research guidance:** (ritualistic adherence/compliance. Load may vary across depart/institutions. Time cannot ensure quality. Focus is on regulation and not quality).
- ▶ Minimum number of points from research output (research score)
- ▶ More points are awarded for publication in high impact factor journals.
- ▶ Target setting is not often of use. Points can be accumulated in various ways devoid of quality concern.

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The inefficacy of the existing UGC Regulations

- ▶ Incentives for MOOCs (in the pre-Pandemic situation)
- ▶ Incentives for research projects: measured in terms of funding
- ▶ No incentives for better performances
- ▶ Division of points for co-authored publications.
- ▶ It shows lack of trust reposed on the teachers. Purpose is to control. Bureaucracy has been given undue space and scope. A dent to the self-esteem of those who are serious scholars.
- ▶ Proliferation of unethical practices in the academia.



NEP 2020 contd.

- ▶ Strategising for increasing publications at the expense of scholarship. Role of peers greatly undermined.
- ▶ The **transformative role** to be played by the teachers is getting **eroded** and undermined..values inculcated are less, much needed in view of the steadily rising fast generation learners in the wake of massification.
- ▶ In terms of real functioning, there is not much of an improvement as the ground reality remained impervious to regulations. **Academic corruption** of various kinds remain entrenched in a majority of the universities (Chattopadhyay 2018 and others). Nepotism, poor quality teaching, poor leadership (Chandra 2017)
- ▶ Education **processes** are easily amenable to **manipulation and subversion**.
- ▶ The autonomy of the institutions and the teachers both have been abused in a large part of the HE system.



The fallout of UGC Regulations: largely ineffective

- ▶ Political interventions in **appointment of the VCs** and existence of power centres within the academia-administration set up (Bhushan 2019).
- ▶ **Straightjacketing** with complete disregard for the differences in university mandate, discipline wise differences and individual differences (Das and Chattopadhyay 2014)
- ▶ Resulting in proliferation of fake journals.
- ▶ A dynamic list of journals is being maintained by the UGC. Plagiarism regulation by the UGC..
- ▶ The rapid rise in the number of publications has come at a cost. There has not been any commensurate improvement in the quality of papers particularly in terms of citation index.



Institutional Development Plan



- ▶ *National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 recognises the importance of Institutional Development Plan and recommend that each institution will make a strategic Institutional Development Plan shall be prepared with the joint participation of **Board members, institutional leaders, faculty, students, and staff** based on which institutions will develop initiatives, assess their progress, and reach the goals set therein, which could then become the **basis for further public funding**.*
- ▶ Source: Institutional Development Plan for HEIs, Working Group Report, (2022) p.7.



Institutional Development Plan (IDP)



- ▶ Collective reflection, collective envisaging of the future in the context of a SWOT analysis undertaken by the university
- ▶ Collective planning will involve all the stakeholders, students staffs and of course the teachers
- ▶ However, this collective reflection and planning will remain tempered by the facts
- ▶ that there will be a competition for funding, strong leadership and
- ▶ the BoGs intervention in planning
- ▶ No less importantly adequacy of research funding and mode of funding.
- ▶ Three categories of universities: research intensive, teaching intensive and degree granting colleges.



IDP seems to be different than a typical NPM.

- ▶ IDP: Collective planning by the university involving the teachers and the students, staffs and the VC is expected to **restore collegiality and inculcate a collective sense** of pride, self-esteem, responsibility.
- ▶ **University plan is to be derived as the sum of individual plan**
- ▶ **Bottom up approach** instead of top down approach or collective approach.
- ▶ **Each teacher** may be given the **freedom to decide** her own template of deliverables: teaching, research and outreach.
- ▶ If there is **mismatch** between what is expected from the faculty by the university and what the faculty as a community is willing to deliver, there can be some negotiations and adjustments where the senior teachers can take the lead
- ▶ The ideal approach is to create the necessary conditions for the teachers to deliver within a reasonable time period, reposing trust on the teachers, and providing necessary financial and physical resources (similar to Bhushan 2019).
- ▶ This is not to undermine accountability but to make it flexible in terms of time and deliverables, and to make individual specific to provide scope for capacity build up
- ▶ Waste of resources and talent is inevitable (Kumar). Better than standardisation which becomes a deterrent for those at the top in their pursuit of excellence.

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Academic freedom, autonomy: substantial and procedural

Academic freedom: absence of any control in teaching and research and freedom of expression, speaking truth to the power

- ▶ substantive autonomy (what to do in university governance) and
- ▶ procedural autonomy (how to do in university governance),
- ▶ the proposed structure of university governance as envisaged in NEP, it will a **loose procedural model** which is indicative of degree of administrative control and
- ▶ **a limited** (rather than neither loose nor tight) substantive model which is indicative of goal setting capacity.



Teacher autonomy: constraints and possibilities in the larger regulatory framework

- ▶ From state control to steering from a distance
- ▶ **Institutional autonomy will not get translated fully to academic freedom**
- ▶ **The larger picture can be overwhelmingly interfering: Multi actor, multi level and multi dimensional governance**
- ▶ The QAA..meta-accrediting body with independent agencies. The importance attached to QAA is very high, what can be called 'agencyfication'
- ▶ HEGC: allocation of grants based on uniform criteria...cost function of universities are not comparable.
- ▶ Free mobility across general and vocational education. Courses to be offered as per the demand arising out of students' choice making
- ▶ Role of the MOOCs from SWAYAM platform...will they become compulsory



Some questions? Contd.

- ▶ Inculcation of values entails socialisation in the campus. Veering towards online teaching will restrict students' socialisation in the campus.
- ▶ As hierarchy among the HEIs will get further accentuated due to competition, foreign participation and branding. Will expansion be meaningful ?
- ▶ will expansion of higher education be inclusive when the higher education system itself is getting more and more hierarchical?
- ▶ Rise to the dominance of online education will recast teacher-student relationship, the concept of space of an institutions and what the teachers and the students seek to do and achieve.

