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A Study of Deemed to be Universities in India

Jinusha Panigrahi

Centre for Policy Research in Higher Education
National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration
17-B, Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi-110016 (INDIA)

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Jinusha Panigrahi*

Abstract

Globally, there has been an expansion in the higher education sector and in a majority of the developing and underdeveloped countries in the recent decade. India too has experienced enormous growth in higher education enrolments and institutions in the last two decades. This expansion has been driven by the growth of higher education institutions in the private sector with a few exceptions. The growth of private deemed-to-be universities has been significantly higher than that of public deemed-to-be universities. However, one of the major concerns for the regulators of higher education is the high and rising fees of private deemed-to-be universities in India. This research paper, based on an empirical study conducted by the Centre for Policy Research in Higher Education (CPRHE) at NIEPA explores the fees in private deemed-to-be universities in India. It has been observed that there are course-wise variations in the fees across deemed-to-be universities, which is based on certain criteria, and the fees has been rising at a higher rate every year in most of these institutions. There are several implications and challenges pertaining to this rise in fees despite the existing regulations imposed by the Centre and various state governments. The equity and quality implications of the rising fees would be tremendous, thereby highlighting the need for regulating the fee structure in higher educational institutions.

* Assistant Professor, Centre for Policy Research in Higher Education, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi.

Introduction

The privatisation of public higher education and the expansion of the private higher education sector has been the result of changing public policies related to the financing of higher education across the globe. Although theoretically there are several arguments favouring the role of the government in the financing of higher education, in practice many factors encourage the intervention of market forces in the functioning of the higher education sector, which has direct implications for the financing of higher education, especially for the developing and under-developed countries compared to their developed counterparts.

The massive expansion of the higher education system in India has been driven, to a larger extent, by the private sector. The imparting of higher education by private entities is not a new phenomenon in India. Private colleges were in existence even prior to independence, but they were mainly philanthropic in nature, providing higher education without any profit motive. However, post the 1980s, India witnessed a rise in higher education institutions (HEIs) in the private sector, particularly capitation fee colleges in the States of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Maharashtra. Subsequently, due to stringent regulations by the government on the exorbitant fees charged by the capitation fee colleges, many such colleges applied for the status of deemed-to-be universities, which was liberally granted to both public and private HEIs. This led to the emergence of many private deemed-to-be universities, particularly those imparting technical or professional courses. India has also experienced a growth in private deemed-to-be universities since the beginning of the twenty-first century. Recently, there has also been an emergence of a number of private universities imparting liberal arts and science courses along with many professional streams.

The participation of the private sector can be seen in different forms, such as the building up of institutions to offer several selective courses focusing basically on market-oriented technical and professional courses, and some also offering courses on liberal arts and sciences. Such institutions are fully funded, governed, and managed by the private sector. Some of these institutions have been established under the Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) mode or as financial contribution by the private sector in terms of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

The major focus of this research paper, which is based on an empirical research study conducted on behalf of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) (Panigrahi, 2019) is to explore and understand the fee structure of private deemed-to-be universities in India offering similar types of courses, and the implications and

challenges of rising fees in many such universities notwithstanding several regulations. Section 2 of the paper highlights the expansion of higher education in India and how it is driven by the private sector with a focus on the growth of private deemed-to-be universities. Section 3 provides an overview of the rising fees of private deemed-to-be universities and regulations. Section 4 contains an overview of the study, entailing a discussion on the fee structure of sample institutions, the implications of rising fees, and an analysis of the revision in the fees based on suggestions offered by students and teachers. Section 5 provides the concluding observations.

State and Expansion of the Private Sector in Higher Education

The development of the social sector, including health and education, has traditionally relied on public financing across various countries around the globe. There are several arguments for the role of the State in the financing of education. The non-market benefits or the spillover social benefits of investment in human capital, such as promotion of patriotic feelings, maintenance of democratic values, and compliance with cultural norms, are difficult to measure as the market for valuing such externalities is missing (Dreze and Sen, 1996; McMahon, 2006). Due to such market imperfections, it is argued that the burden of financing of higher education should be taken care of by the government (Lleras, 2004). The principal proponents of HC theory argue that investment in education gradually increases the productivity and earnings of an individual, which ultimately leads to a higher level of economic growth of a nation (Schultz, 1961; Becker, 1964). The HC theory was also identified with endogenous growth models, where the concept of knowledge and innovations, and hence the role of research and development, have been emphasised in the argument for investment in education (Lucas, 1988; Romer, 1989).

Higher education too needs generous public funding for its expansion in view of need for promoting the knowledge economy for the growth and development of any country. However, the economic crisis experienced by different growing economies of the world from time to time and the resulting changes in economic policies have led to financial constraints in investment in the social sectors. This has necessitated prioritisation of planning prudent investments in the education sector. Similarly, the structural adjustment programmes of the 1980s encouraged the adoption of a market-oriented approach in financing. Higher education is deeply impacted by all such changing policies. Based on the rate of return approach, it is argued that higher education achieves greater private returns as compared to social returns unlike primary and secondary education. It is argued that the social returns gradually go on

declining and alternatively the private returns go on increasing with the subsequent levels of education (Blaug, 1976; Psacharopoulos, 1987).

The universalisation of elementary and secondary education has raised the demand for higher education. This has also put massive pressure on the public exchequer across the developed and developing world for the provision of higher education. Further, the growing importance of the knowledge economy, rapidly changing technologies, and the demand for skilled individuals has exerted pressure on the limited resources of governments. Therefore, despite the vast expansion of the higher education sector due to the growing demand for higher education, there has been a relative decline in public funding of higher education in many countries. This has encouraged the privatisation of public institutions through cost recovery measures or income-generating activities or PPP initiatives and participation of more private institutions to meet the growing demand for higher education, besides encouraging new entrants from the private sector to offer courses aligned with the market demand. Transition economies have witnessed a greater expansion of HEIs in the private sector as compared to the public sector since the last decade of the twentieth century (Varghese, 2004). In view of its significant growth and expansion, private higher education is also said to be among the most dynamic and fast-growing segments in post-secondary education in the twenty-first century (Altbach, 1999). Private HEIs have been established by philanthropists or religious bodies/organisations/foundations[1] or corporate individuals/sectors with either a for-profit or not-for-profit motive. Several laws and regulations govern the establishment, operation, and expansion of private institutions to ensure the quality and excellence of education, and its access to aspiring students.

With the advent of more than 70 percent of private institutions in recent years, the idea of setting up private universities was also mooted in Bangladesh in 1981 due to a few important reasons such as the existence of a limited number of public universities to fulfil the demand for higher education, the rise of student and teacher politics causing day-to-day disruptions in the functioning of the institutions, and the fact that the high tuition fees of private institutions could now be afforded by a growing number of upper middle class people in the country (Alam and Haque, 2004). The Russian Federation experienced a transition towards private expansion in the 1990s with the introduction of significant reform measures aimed at countering

[1] While many private HEIs were established by the Roman Catholic Church in Asia, Europe, and Latin America and by the Protestant Church in USA (Varghese, 2004), many such institutions were established by Islamic organisations in countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Egypt (Altbach, 1999).

the disproportionate character of the Soviet system of higher education that was producing more than 75 percent graduates in natural and technical courses, and only 25 percent in law, economics, humanities, and the social sciences (Ovodenko, 2004).

The emergence of private HEIs in a few regions in the 1990s has been promoted by the government through the provision of licences in the backdrop of legislative chaos as seen, for example, in Georgia (Sharvashidze, 2004). Meanwhile, reforms in higher education have also encouraged the private sector to address the changing demands of the labour market by introducing new specialised courses, as in Kazakhstan (Tasbulatova et al., 2004). Kenya initiated the full-fledged launch of private establishments in the theological domain in 1969, but the policy shift towards the recognition of private universities offering diverse courses emerged after the implementation of structural adjustment policies in the 1980s (Abagi et al., 2004).

Like East Asian countries such as Indonesia, Japan, Korea, and the Philippines. Latin American countries too have a tradition of private universities and a large number of private institutions (Varghese, 2004).

Overall, the participation of more private HEIs fosters several complexities in regulations by governments in most developing countries like India while also raising issues related to access to such institutions and the quality of education imparted by these institutions. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, (MHRD, 2020) of the GoI addresses to the possibility of commercialization and profit in education by suggesting light but tight regulations. The regulatory approach involves full transparent public disclosure of finances and procedures followed and the courses and programmes offered with good governance of both public and private institutions.

Expansion of Private Higher Education Institutions in India

India has experienced enormous growth in higher education enrolments and institutions in the last two decades. Such expansion is driven by the growth of private higher education institutions and enrolments in such institutions. The country reached the stage of massification of higher education in 2009 with a Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of 15 percent in higher education (Varghese, 2015). As shown in Table 1.1, the GER was 25.8 percent in 2017-18, with 36.6 million enrolments in higher education. Similarly, notwithstanding the regional disparities and concentration of general and technical higher education institutions in several regions of India (Varghese et al., 2017) there was a rapid expansion in private universities from 7 in 2005-06 to 263 in 2017-18. However, though the expansion within these reference periods took place in

both central universities as well as institutes of national importance, their absorption of enrolments is very low. Simultaneously, there was expansion in colleges too, which contributed to the absorption of higher enrolment figures in different States of India.

Both the privatisation of public HEIs and the expansion of the private sector went hand in hand from the 1990s onwards, occurring at a rapid pace, as indicated by various committees and commissions, with a relative decline in public expenditure on higher education. There was an attempt at privatisation of public HEIs in the 1990s in the form of rising fees of regular courses and the introduction of self-financing courses. The self-financing courses introduced in many public institutions were basically inter-disciplinary in nature, covering several streams such as computer science, management, law, journalism and media studies, travel and tourism, general sciences, and social sciences, among others (Rao and Singh, 2002). Such courses, which are confined to selective disciplines, are offered at the degree, diploma, and certificate levels by many Central and State universities, institutes of national importance, and affiliated colleges, with the courses offered by them catering to the demands of the students (Maitra, 2019), that is, they are generally driven by market demand. The self-financing courses represent important cost-sharing measures adopted by autonomous colleges and private aided colleges due to a decline in public funding to such institutions over the years (Panigrahi, 2018).

During the beginning of the Plan period in the 1950s, the emphasis was on growth and development of the economy with maximum support from the government. Therefore, education, including higher education, got special attention with the objective of promoting knowledge and skills with a manpower development approach. On this pretext, many private higher education institutions were transformed into public institutions (Gnanam, 2008), a trend that Varghese (2013) argues is tantamount to the 'publicisation' of private institutions wherein many private HEIs in the country were nationalised.

Although private colleges existed in India several decades before the 1990s, and even received financial support from the government at par with public HEIs, the process of privatisation was expedited significantly only in the 1980s. As pointed out by Varghese (2013), India experienced a publicly supported/sponsored private growth in higher education because of the affiliated system of higher education wherein the private colleges affiliated to public universities were functioning more like public institutions and their fees were fixed by the respective state governments. However, the promotion and establishment of self-financing courses in public HEIs in the 1970s and subsequently the establishment of private self-financing HEIs in the 1980s

brought about a drastic change in the then prevalent nature of higher education system in India in terms of both funding as well as obligations towards the society. Such private HEIs were basically self-financing colleges, otherwise called capitation fee colleges. Management, engineering, and medicine were the core subjects offered by such private self-financing colleges (Agarwal, 2007), which functioned with a profit motive as such subjects were in high demand among students in the 1980s. Varghese (2013) points out that a surge in private higher education in India resulted from the proliferation of such for-profit private self-financing colleges in selective states of the country, such as Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu in South India, and Maharashtra in West India, where technical and professional courses were offered at very higher prices, thereby being inaccessible to the lower- and middle-income families. The objective of higher education leading to social mobility seems to have remained unaddressed with the expansion of the private higher education sector, which is subject to improper regulations. While the private HEIs were arguably encouraged to become diverse and inclusive (Gupta, 2015), they can also be encouraged to apply for the Multi-Deprivation Index to ensure reservations in private institutions for enhancing equity and access to students belonging to the marginalised sections (Chattopadhyay, 2009).

The transition towards the provision and expansion of higher education by the private sector continued in the 1990s and even till date with the introduction of the Private Universities Establishment and Regulations Bill in Rajya Sabha in 1995, for laying down the path for the establishment of private universities in India. Although the Bill could not be passed due to several oppositions to it, the debate for private universities has continued even at the policy level. Many state governments such as those of Chhattisgarh, Assam, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Odisha, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand, have passed private university Acts with the Sri Rawatpura Sakar International University, Chhattisgarh, being the first officially-established (in 2002) private university in India (Varghese, 2013). The fee structure of most of these private universities, which numbered 263 by 2017-18, (as shown in Table 1) has remained a matter of concern as it hinders access to such universities by students belonging to poor economic backgrounds. This situation prevails even though such universities are expected to follow the guidelines of the University Grants Commission (UGC) and other statutory bodies like the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), Medical Council of India (MCI), Nursing Council of India (NCI), etc., while fixing the fee structure of several courses offered by them. It is observed that the per unit cost for the courses in private universities is determined on the basis of past expenditure or anticipated expenditure, and the

enrolments of students, which vary from university to university and student to student for the same course (Angom, 2019). Angom argues that such institutions are self-financed with a few exceptions, which get research grants from several government organisations, and the main sources of income for such private universities are student fees, endowments, bank loans, and donations.

However, one of the less emphasised group of institutions that has been witnessing growth is that of the deemed-to-be universities, which are empowered to function with a national character under the UGC Act of 1956.As stated under the Act, the HEIs other than universities offering courses in specific areas and adhering to high standards and quality or education were declared as deemed-to-be universities after fulfilling the requisite criteria. All the provisions of the UGC Act applicable to universities under Clause (f) of Section 2 are also applicable to the deemed-to-be universities. The deemed-to-be universities also enjoy all sorts of autonomy to design the curriculum, offer courses, and grant degrees like any other university. Apart from teaching, research in several non-traditional disciplines is also one of the important areas being explored by the deemed-to-be universities.

The expansion of private deemed-to-be universities has been enormous compared to that of public deemed-to-be universities, which may be attributed to both the liberal granting of deemed university status, irrespective of the year of its establishment, as well as the autonomy to start its own study programmes and award degrees. These liberal benefits are not possible in the case of private colleges, which are controlled by the parent universities to which they are affiliated. As shown in Table 1, India has seen a significant expansion in the deemed-to-be universities in India, from 95 in 2005-06 to 123 in 2017-18. Interestingly, this growth has basically taken place in private deemed-to-be universities during the selected periods barring a shortfall in 2010-11, when some of the universities earlier under the ambit of deemed-to-be universities were removed from this category as they were unable to meet the required capacity under the Universities Regulations Act of 2010, and could not, therefore, meet the status of deemed-to-be universities. Although India has witnessed the existence of private deemed-to-be universities since 1964, it has seen the rapid expansion of such universities only since the year 2000 onwards. By 2017-18, there were 80 private deemed-to-be universities in the country as compared to only 33 public and 10 government-aided deemed-to-be universities. Uttar Pradesh is the State with highest number (3) of government-aided deemed-to-be universities.

Table 1: Expansion of Higher Education Institutions and Enrolments in India

Year	Central Universities	State Universities	Private Universities	Deemed to be Universities-Govt.	Deemed to be Universities-Govt-Aided	Deemed to be Universities-Private	Total Deemed to be Universities	Institutes of National Importance	Total Universities	Colleges	Enrolments (in millions)	GER %
2005-06	18	205	7	34*	NA	48*	95	18	343	17625	11.6	11.6
2010-11	41	281	87	40	0	91	131	59	621	17023	27.5	19.4
2015-16	44	352	198	32	11	79	122	75	799	39071	34.6	24.5
2017-18	46	365	263	33	10	80	123	101	903	39050	36.6	25.8

Source: MHRD (2014; 2016)

Note: *Figures taken from Tandon Committee Report, 2009; NA: Figure not available.

The expansion of private deemed-to-be universities has taken place on a large scale in selective States of South India, but the numbers have remained stable in the last five years, as per the data given by AISHE (MHRD, 2018), due to strict regulations on expansion of such types of universities. As shown in Table 2, Tamil Nadu is at the top with 26 private deemed-to-be universities, followed by Maharashtra (12), Karnataka (11), and Rajasthan (8). A total of 17 States have private deemed-to-be universities. The other States with private deemed-to-be universities are Andhra Pradesh (4), Uttar Pradesh (4), Haryana (3), Odisha (2), Telangana (2), Delhi (1), Gujarat (1), Jharkhand (1), Kerala (1), Punjab (1), Puducherry (1), Uttarakhand (1), and West Bengal (1). Private deemed-to-be universities are concentrated more in the regions where there are fewer public deemed-to-be universities, except in Maharashtra. The private deemed-to-be universities in the States with a larger number of such universities are primarily located in the rural areas or outskirts of the cities, where the campuses can be expanded and equipped with better infrastructure facilities, in adherence to the concomitant criteria laid down for deemed-to-be universities under Section 3 of the UGC Act of 1956. The private deemed-to-be universities usually offer technical and professional courses, such as in the streams of engineering, medical, and research and teaching, wherein there is an opportunity for charging higher fees or differential fees, as such courses are offered under the self-financing mode.

Table2: Category-wise Number of Deemed-to-be Universities in India by 2017-18

Sl. No.	States/Union Territories	Deemed-to-be Private University	Deemed-to-be University—Government	Deemed-to-be University—Government-aided
1.	Andhra Pradesh	4	1	0
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	0	1	0
3.	Bihar	0	1	0
4.	Chandigarh	0	1	0
5.	Delhi	1	8	1
6.	Gujarat	1	0	1
7.	Haryana	3	2	0
8.	Jharkhand	1	1	0
9.	Karnataka	11	4	0
10.	Kerala	1	2	0
11.	Madhya Pradesh	0	1	0
12.	Maharashtra	12	7	2
13.	Odisha	2	0	0
14.	Puducherry	1	0	0
15.	Punjab	1	1	0
16.	Rajasthan	8	0	0
17.	Tamil Nadu	26	0	2
18.	Telangana	2	0	0
19.	Uttar Pradesh	4	2	3
20.	Uttarakhand	1	1	1
21.	West Bengal	1	0	0
	All India	80	33	10

Source: MHRD (2018)

Fee Controversy in the Private Sector

The higher fees charged for self-financing courses offered by public HEIs has resulted in severe resistance from the student bodies and other non-government organisations. In the absence of any specific guidelines by the UGC or a comprehensive system of multiple regulatory authorities, the regulation of self-financing courses regarding the number and quality of the courses offered and the fees charged are not strictly followed (Maitra, 2019)[2]. It is argued that affordability is

[2] As argued by the author, of all the self-financed courses offered by HEIs, the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) charge the highest fees for their short-term management courses, and similarly, the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) charge substantially higher fees for sponsored/self-financed students in the M.Tech/M.Sc/ Ph.D programmes (Maitra, 2019).

inversely proportional to the fees and other education-related expenditure; it is only 71 percent in the case of self-financing courses as compared to 99 percent in the case of regular courses, and management, engineering, and medicine are the least affordable disciplines in India (Bhushan, 2017).

In fact, the exorbitant fees charged by private HEIs is one of the controversial aspects in the provision of higher education by the private sector. An earlier study on private universities revealed a high level of student dissatisfaction with the fee structure of such institutions as the courses offered at higher prices did not meet the required teaching quality in higher education (Angom, 2013). As discussed in the previous section on the emergence of capitation fee colleges, particularly in professional streams such as engineering and management courses, many legal battles have been fought in the apex court of the country, by several States against the fee charged by certain private colleges with a profit motive. In the case of Mohini Jain versus the State of Karnataka in 1992, the differential and exorbitant tuition fee charged by the private entity for medical education as compared to the fees charged by government medical colleges and under "government seats" in private medical colleges was challenged and considered as capitation fee not permissible under the law by the Supreme Court judgement. Similarly, the judgement on J.P. Unnikrishnan versus The State of Andhra Pradesh in 1993 also declared capitation fee to be illegal and divided the seats into free seats and payment seats, where the fees to be charged had to be similar to that charged in government colleges in the former case, and the fees to be charged from the students to be more than free seats in case of later. States such as Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Gujarat, Odisha, and Maharashtra enacted laws for forming committees to regulate the fee structure, particularly for the professional HEIs in these states. Subsequently, the judgements of the Supreme Court seemed to have extended some autonomy to the private HEIs in similar types of cases. The difference between 'profit'-making and 'surplus' by private HEIs has never been addressed in any of the judgements or at the policy level, and thus remains unclear till date.

Rising Fees in Private Deemed-to-be Universities and Rules and Regulations

The idea of setting up a deemed-to-be university was to encourage well-performing HEIs to enhance quality, research, and innovation. However, the issues related to the granting of a deemed-to-be university status to an institution arose when some of the deemed-to-be universities were found to be not adhering to the rules and regulations under Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956.The controversy pertaining to the granting of deemed-to-be university status began with the liberal granting of

such status since 2000despite that fact that many such deemed-to-be universities did not have adequate infrastructure, quality faculty, and research activities, which are basic requirements for any university to obtain the status of an 'university' under the UGC Act of 1956.

A review committee was constituted by the Government of India (GoI) under the chairmanship of P.N. Tandon and a group of experts to review the functioning of the existing deemed-to-be-universities and for their continuance as such. The review committee appointed by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) pointed out that some of these universities were not aligned with the concept of a 'University' as recommended by the Radhakrishnan Commission Report (1948-49) and UGC guidelines of year 2000, considering proposals for declaring an institution as a deemed-to-be university under Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956.

The guidelines were based on the following areas of concern: the consideration of the idea of a university; if all the present academic activities /programmes could have been carried out without the institution being a deemed-to-be university; how the status of a deemed-to-be university was obtained by the selected institutions; whether the granting of such a status had become a stimulus for better performance or not; whether the provisions of the UGC Act and the UGC Guidelines for the recognition of an institution as a 'deemed-to-be university' had been followed along with the other relevant aspects of governance, maintenance of quality and innovations in the teaching–learning process, types of research output and their impact in terms of the research publications, books, monographs, patents, etc.; introduction of various Doctoral programmes and other research degree programmes; available faculty resources; and the process of admission and award of degrees (GoI, 2009).

The review committee, known as the Tandon Committee, also reviewed the existing deemed-to-be universities, with reference to the previous committee report questioning the irregularities and violation of norms by many private deemed-to-be universities in the formulation of the fee structure. The Committee categorised the deemed-to-be universities into three groups and suggested the formulation of a Task Force to implement its recommendations in order to safeguard the interests of the students.

As a follow-up to the Tandon Committee Report, the UGC brought out the Institutions Deemed-to-be Universities Regulations, 2010"*to regulate, in an orderly manner, the process of declaration of institutions as deemed to be universities; preventing institutions of dubious quality from being so declared; and, further to*

maintain quality of higher education imparted by institutions deemed to be universities consistent with the ideals of the concept of a university" (UGC, 2010). This regulation specified some major objectives. One of them was to impart higher education, which leads to excellence and innovations, particularly at the post-graduate and research degree levels. The regulation requires the deemed-to-be universities to specialise and offer non-conventional courses that are important for the strategic needs of the country or for the preservation of our cultural heritage, unlike conventional degrees in arts, science, engineering, medicine, dental, pharmacy, and management, which are routinely offered by conventional HEIs. Besides, well-qualified full-time faculty members in diverse disciplines and research scholars are required to be maintained to ensure high quality teaching and research.

The recommendations by the Justice B.N. Krishna Committee on prescribing guidelines for tuition and other fees for professional courses (AICTE, 2015) suggests that more fees should be added for less admissions, that is, 5 percent of the total fees for up to 80 percent admissions, 15 per cent of the total fees for upto 60 percent admissions, and 20 per cent of the total fees for upto 40 percent of admissions with the fee taken as a divisor (minimum of the sanctioned intake and students on roll). Institutions receiving autonomous status by the appropriate authority and institutions having accreditation for more than two-third of their courses may charge additional fees of up to 10 percent and 20 percent, respectively, than the prescribed maximum fee by the committee. The government would also offer educational loans at concessional rates of interest and scholarships for meritorious students, as well as fee waivers and scholarships for weaker sections to encourage their participation in post-graduate courses. The fee shall increase by 5 percent every year and any fee revision would be applicable to new entrants in the programme. Fees as recommended under four major heads would be charged from the enrolled students, such as tuition fee, development fee (limited to 15 per cent of the tuition fee), examination fee and other fees excluding fees for the industrial tour (1 per cent of the tuition fee). However, no recommendations were made for charging of hostel fee and it was left to the institutions concerned to decide their respective hostel fees.

The fee charged by most of these universities is exorbitant, and therefore needs to be regulated to safeguard the rights of students and parents. For implementing fee regulations, the UGC passed the regulation, Institutions Deemed-to-be Universities Regulations, 2016 (UGC, 2016), with the objective of controlling the exorbitant fees charged by such institutions, particularly private institutions. The regulation stipulates, *"No institution deemed to be university shall, for admission in respect of any*

course or programme of study conducted in such institution, accept payment towards admission fee and other fees and charges:- (a) which is a capitation fee or donation in whatever nomenclature or form; (b) other than such fee or charges for such admission, which has been declared by it in the prospectus for admission against any such seat, and on the website of the institution, Provided if there are any fees prescribed in accordance with the Fee Regulations framed by the Government or by the Commission from time to time, then the fees or other charges for admission shall not exceed the same; (c) without a proper receipt in writing issued for such payment to the concerned student admitted in such institution."

The regulation also mentions that the deemed-to-be university would charge a fee for admission test equivalent to the cost incurred in conducting the test only and refrain from commercialisation of education keeping into consideration the concerns for access and equity by deserving students. In the matter of refund of fees, the regulation says that there would be 100 percent refund of fees subtracting the processing fees (not exceeding Rs. 10,000 or as fixed by the UGC) if the institution is informed seven days before the beginning of the academic session. The same rule would be applicable if the student has not informed about the refund but the institution is able to fill the seat vacated. In case of lack of information from the student and the seat going vacant therein, 50 percent of the fees would be refunded to the student by the institution concerned after deducting the processing fees for 30 days after the opening of the academic session. However, if the student leaves the course in the mid-session, no fees would be refunded.

The 2016 regulation strictly rules out capitation fees for any of the courses offered by the deemed to be universities. It states that: *"No institution deemed-to-be university shall, directly or indirectly, demand or charge or accept, capitation fee or demand any donation, by way of consideration for admission to any seat or seats in a course or programme of study conducted by it. No person shall, directly or indirectly, offer or pay capitation fee or give any donation, by way of consideration either in cash or kind or otherwise, for obtaining admission to any seat or seats in a course or programme of study in any institution deemed to be university"* (UGC, 2016).

Subsequently, the Higher Educational Institutions (Regulation of Fee) Bill 2017 (Lok Sabha, 2017) recommended for prohibition of capitation fee and constitution of a national committee representing several regulatory bodies (total 13) of general and technical institutions, along with the State Council of Higher Education, for the regulation of fees in HEIs. Two major objectives of the national committee are to: (a) prescribe the fee to be charged for each of the courses run by an HEI; and

(b) define the principle of 'reasonable surplus' and 'non-profiteering' on the basis of cost–fee analysis for courses run by HEIs. The Bill also recommended the constitution of a state committee for regulation of fee in HEIs consisting of such number of members representing the State Higher Education Boards, teachers, parents, and students to be appointed by the State Government concerned. The functions of the state committee would be to: (a) ensure that the fee structure submitted by the HEIs within the State conforms to the principles of 'reasonable surplus' and 'non-profiteering' defined by the National Committee; and (b) undertake such other function as may be assigned to it by the Central Government, from time to time.

Apart from these regulations, a new regulation on 'Institutions of Eminence Deemed-to-be Universities' under the UGC guidelines came into force in 2017 (UGC, 2017). The UGC regulations of 2016 would not be applicable on deemed to be universities declared as Institutions of Eminence (IoE). The idea is to create a distinct category of deemed-to-be universities that would gradually evolve into world class institutions within a reasonable period of time. Under the UGC Act 1956, Clauses [f] and [g] of Sub-section [1] of Section 26, the IoE deemed to be universities would be free to fix the fees for both domestic as well as foreign students with respect to the internal policies of the respective institution and would be exempted from all sorts of fee regulations. It is suggested that a credible and robust programme of financial assistance in the form of scholarships or loans should be created by the institution itself so that no meritorious student would be denied admission due to lack of finance. The guidelines also stipulate fixing of the fee in a transparent manner without any hidden charges or capitation fee. Further, it is recommended that an institution of ombudsman should be established in such an IoE to address student grievances and allegations of unfair practices, if any of them are related to fee or any other issues within the institution.

Empirical Findings

With the expansion of higher education in India, and the rising participation of private HEIs, there has been a change in the dynamics of higher education financing. The contribution of households or students is gradually increasing in the financing of higher education. The private HEIs depending on their own resources for day-to-day functioning of their respective institutions have increasingly started relying on student fees. The self-financing mode of functioning has also encouraged the inclusion of more technical or professional courses in the curriculum, which are offered at a higher cost in view of the higher envisaged paying capacity of students aspiring to attain skill-based education and increase their chances of getting absorbed

in the market. However, this practice of increasing the fees for courses in high demand raises issues of affordability by students belonging to poor socio-economic backgrounds. Many regulations have been implemented from time to time to regulate the fee structure of private HEIs to protect the rights of students. In this backdrop, this study focusing on private deemed-to-be universities in India explored the multiple fee structure of similar types of courses in private deemed-to-be-universities in India and their implications, and the regulations by the Central and State governments on such diverse fees being charged by these private institutions.

The study is based on a mixed method approach. Secondary data based on the All India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE) data, Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) Report, University Grants Commission (UGC) Report, and various reports and regulations of the Central and State governments have been used for initial analysis of the fee structure and regulations of the private deemed-to-be universities. Based on the available secondary documents, the statutes of private deemed-to-be universities and the subject-wise fee structure of each of the selected universities across India have been studied thoroughly.

Empirical studies of selected private deemed-to-be universities representing several zones of the country have also been undertaken to further explore the rationale and implications of a differential fee structure adopted by the private deemed-to-be universities in India. This will also help in identifying areas where there is a need to restructure or reformulate the existing regulations or initiate a new regulation regarding fixation of fees in private deemed-to-be universities in India. The rationale of selection of the sample institutions for the study is to ensure the representation of institutions from different geographical zones of the country, while considering the growth of private deemed-to-be universities in several regions over the years. Accordingly, one institution each from Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan, Karnataka, West Bengal, and Odisha has been selected for the study. In selection of the concerned institutions, the location of the institution (rural and urban), year of establishment (old and new), and quality or performance (as graded by NAAC, comparing the well-performing with low-performing institutions) were also considered. Various secondary data have been collected from the sampled institutions and primary data have been gathered through administration of questionnaires, and focused group discussions (FGDs) and interviews conducted with students and teachers, and institutional administrators, respectively. A sample comprising 636 students and 153 faculty members across different disciplines was selected randomly from the selected private deemed universities.

Institutional Characteristics and Fee Structure

One of the major concerns for the regulators of private deemed-to-be universities is the higher and rising fee structure of private deemed-to-be universities in India, which has various equity implications for the deprived groups. The imposition of higher fees may also have quality implications if they are not regulated. There is a course-wise differentiation in the fee structure across deemed-to-be universities, which is based on certain criteria.

The sampled institutions have been named as Institution 1, Institution 2, Institution 3, Institution 4, Institution 5, and Institution 6. [3] These institutions are basically originating from a trust or philanthropic contribution by individuals for the establishment of such institutions. Institutions 1 and 2 have originated from religious trusts established in rural or semi-urban locations, respectively. After being granted a deemed-to-be university status, they are separated from the trust but still have a member from the trust as a member of their governing board along with the Vice Chancellor, Pro-Vice Chancellor, and Registrar, who offer suggestions for the day-to-day functioning of the institution. The fee structure of such an institution is comparatively lower than that of the other four sampled institutions, which have been discussed in detail in the following section on the fee structure. The total enrolment in these institutions varies from 1500 to 5000. The representation of teaching and non-teaching staff is also less as compared to the other sampled institutions based on the limited number of courses offered by these institutions in different streams such as yoga and allied health sciences, languages, humanities and social sciences, computer application, management and commerce, physical sciences, and natural sciences. The geographical spread of such institutions is confined to a limited area and a few centres, of which, in the case of Institution 1, one is in the same region and the other is in another state. Institutions 1 and 2 are hence classified as category 1 institutions (Table 3).

[3] On the request of the sampled private deemed-to-be universities, their names have been kept confidential though this does not affect the findings of the study.

Table 3: Classification of Institutions into Categories Based on Selected Criteria

Category 1 (Institutions 1 and 2) Comparatively Lower Fees	Category 2 (Institutions 3 and 4) Medium Level Fees	Category 3 (Institutions 5 and 6) Higher Level Fees
Location: Rural or Semi-urban	Location: Urban	Location: Semi-urban or Urban
Enrolment: 1500-5000	Enrolment: 1300-4000	Enrolment: 1000-7000
Courses: Limited and selective in number with a focus on non-conventional courses.	Courses: Limited courses but focusing more on Engineering, Management and Medical Sciences (only institution 4)	Courses: Large number of courses offered, with an emphasis on several technical and professional courses
Teaching and Non-teaching staff: limited specialised regular teachers and inadequate non-teaching staff	Teaching and Non-teaching staff: Average number of teachers with more reliance on temporary and part-time teaching and non-teaching staff	Teaching and Non-teaching staff: Large number of teaching staff along with guest and visiting faculty. and the non-teaching staff outnumber teaching staff
Centres in other regions: Limited	Centres in other regions: Few	Centres in other regions: Some
Offshore campus: No	Offshore campus: No	Offshore campus: Yes
Fee structure: Comparatively lower than others	Fee structure: Lower than that of Category 3 institutions but higher for selective courses	Fee structure: Exorbitant in the range of courses as compared to that of Category 2 institutions

Source: Prepared by the author

Institutions 3 and 4 are private deemed-to-be universities with their managements comprising philanthropic individuals, and locations in urban areas with extended campuses in the same region at several locations. The influence of the representative of the founder of the institution in the management body is greater in case of institutions 3 and 4 compared to Institutions 1 and 2The representation of the management is stronger in the governing body of Institutions 1 and 2 with the Vice Chancellor being majorly dependent on the management for the day-to-day functioning of such institutions with some control over academic activities. The fee structure of such institutions has changed sporadically and has been discussed in detail in following sections. The enrolment figure for Institution 4 was 1344 in 2017-18.[4]The courses offered by these institutions basically include those in natural sciences, medical sciences, and engineering and technology subjects along with certain limited courses in management and languages, humanities and social sciences.

[4] The enrolment figure for Institution 3 was not provided by the institution. The figures have also not been uploaded on the website of the concerned institution.

These two institutions with similar characteristics are categorised as Category 2 institutions.

Institutions 5 and 6 are located in semi-urban and urban locations with huge campus areas, and also have a past history of more than 60 years. These are also sought after private deemed-to-be universities basically specialising in technical and professional courses. While the managements of these institutions have a strong hold on them, the respective Vice Chancellors have also been empowered to oversee their day-to-day functioning. Many non-teaching staff members are also representatives in the managements of the institutions, particularly in the case of Institution 5. Institutions 5 and 6 are characterised by the quest for excellence and competition with public engineering, medical, and nursing colleges, the consequently, since they offer courses in engineering and technology, information sciences, architecture, and medical sciences, their fee structures are also extremely high as compared to the fee structures of the other two categories of institutions. The enrolment figures for Institutions 5 and 6 are 7437 and 1000, respectively. These two institutions with similar characteristics are categorised as Category 3 institutions.

All three categories of institutions can also be distinguished from each other in terms of the socio-economic status of the students studying in them and therefore their affordability, which has also been discussed in detail in one of the following sections.

Table 4: Number of Academic and Non-Academic Staff

	2014			2015			2016			2017			2018		
	AP	AT	NA	AP	AT	NA	AP	AT	NA	AP	AT	NA	AP	AT	NA
Institution 1	...	28	...	12	32	18	20	35	23	21	7	16	...	...	...
Institution 2	...	...	...	454	...	454	407	...	407	450	...	450	...	...	...
Institution 3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Institution 4	...	...	...	...	...	...	243	3	145	237	9	150	262	8	161
Institution 5	...	...	...	...	...	...	1833	...	4029	1928	...	3993	1949	1847*	3932
Institution 6	...	...	...	243	67	580	20	280	595	29	268	582	...	...	...

Source: Compiled from the administrative data of the selected institutions
Note: *Data of 2018 includes temporary academic staff from 2015 to 2018.
AP: Academic Permanent, AT: Academic Temporary, NA: Non-Academic

It may be observed from Table 4 that over the selected last three years, there has not been much addition to the permanent staff but temporary academic staff have been hired across all institutions except Institution 2 to manage the day-to-day functioning of the institution on the academic front. During an interview, the institution administrators also mentioned that these temporary or adhoc or guest teachers have been hired for teaching specialised courses as the regular teaching staff do not have expertise to teach these courses.

Apart from being private deemed-to-be universities, all the selected institutions share the common characteristics of representing students from different parts of the country, and offering technical and professional courses. As per the guidelines of the Institutions Deemed-to-be Universities, 2010, the focus of almost all the sampled institutions is on offering some non-conventional courses such as data sciences, agriculture and biotechnology, agriculture and rural development, biomedical engineering, virus research, allied health sciences, and some integrated courses on engineering and management or social sciences. As per the guidelines all the institutions offer PhD programmes and engage students with research, particularly in physical and natural sciences or medical or engineering studies. Although the students belong to various social categories, yet across the sampled institutions with a few exceptions, it was difficult to obtain the category-wise representation of students in several courses offered by the institution.

However, the gender-wise representation of students or enrolments in several courses of the sampled institutions for the last three years has been given in the Annexure. Table A.2.1 shows that the total enrolment of students in languages, humanities and social sciences, or basically courses on Indian heritage, in Institution 1 in the year 2018 was 1407. The representation of girls over the years has been higher than that of boys in both natural and life sciences in the previous three years. Institution 2 has experienced a decline in enrolment in the last three academic years (Table A.2.2), particularly in the engineering and technology courses at the Bachelors level, which is the core course of the institution, and the representation of girl students in this course is also much lower as compared to boys. The decline in demand may be attributed to the diversion in student preferences for certain courses in neighbouring institutions at lower cost as well as the employability quotient of the courses.

The enrolment in Institution 4 (Table A.2.3) in the last three consecutive years has also declined for the same reason cited above. However, this decline has taken place not in the Bachelor's level but at the Master's level for both engineering and

technology as well as management and commerce courses. As stipulated in the statute of deemed-to--be universities, there has been an increase in enrolment in the PhD programme in this institution but its share is much lower than that of other courses. It may be pointed out that PhD courses are much sought after in public HEIs rather than private ones due to the value of the degree gained from a public institution in the employment market.

Institutions 5 and 6 (see Tables A.2.4 and A.2.5, respectively) are bigger institutions, also having branch campuses in other countries. While Institution 5 has experienced an increase in enrolment in its medical courses, Institution 6 has experienced a decline, particularly in engineering courses, due to the higher fee structure as well as competition with other public institutions offering the course at a lower cost. The representation of girls is higher than that of boys across courses in Institution 5 except in management courses whereas the representation of boys is higher than that of girls in Institution 6.

Fees in Sampled Deemed-to-be Universities

Being private HEIs, the major source of funding of the sampled institutions is student fee. The variation in fees over the last 3-4 consecutive years (that is, 2015-16 to 2018-19) has been discussed in detail in the following sections. The courses have also been categorised into 14 categories on the basis of their classifications in the respective sampled institutions and variation in fees. These courses are: engineering and technology, computer applications and information sciences, architecture and communication studies, medical, nursing, dental, pharmacy, community medicine and public health, management and commerce, languages, humanities and social sciences, yoga and allied health sciences, natural and life sciences, physical sciences, and international studies.

The fees vary across institutions for the same type of courses. The fees charged for engineering and technology courses are hugely different amongst the sampled institutions. While the fees remained same for Institution 1 at a very low rate, the fees are a little higher and constant in Institution 2 in the selected years. The fee structure for B.Tech and M.Tech courses in Institutions 3 and 4 are also observed to vary but are almost similar to each other though pretty higher than the fees being charged in Category 1 institutions. Institutions 5 and 6 are charging quite higher fees for the same B.Tech or BE and M.Tech or ME courses, and the fees of Institution 5 is very diverse for all the courses under the B.Tech and M.Tech programmes and mostly increasing over the years with a few exceptions. The B.Tech engineering courses offered by

Institution 2 in association with JBM and IBM are priced very high as compared to the other engineering streams. This reflects the impact of demand and employability of the courses concerned wherein the price is determined by these important factors. Similarly, the fees for the dual degree courses (B.Tech and M.Tech or MBA) in engineering offered by Institution 3 are comparatively higher than for other individual degrees. Charging higher fees is also an important strategy for selling the courses that may not otherwise be selected by many students.

In the case of Institution 5, the B.Tech with computer science or electrical and electronics major courses are generally much more expensive than for the other majors and lateral courses. As far as the duration of study is concerned, the M.Tech courses are also expensive and the fees have been increasing in the case of Institutions 3, 4, and 6.

However, during an interview, the administrators attributed the huge variation in course fee across all three categories of institutions in engineering and technology to the provision of updated instruments and machines for laboratories, industrial training, visits of employers, and the number of teaching and non-teaching staff, and the salary of faculty members. Students, on the other hand, had several opinions regarding the facilities provided by their respective institutions, as discussed in the following section.

For MCA courses, Institution 3 is observed to charge a much higher fee as compared to the other selected institutions, with the argument of providing better employment opportunities as well as modern software and instruments. However, as compared to Category 3 institutions, this seems to be very high and is tantamount to the over-exploitation of students opting for such courses. The fee structures of BCA courses are equal to those of MCA courses in Institution 3 except for the fees under lateral entry. Similarly, the MSc course on information systems offered by Institution 6 is very expensive with the institution offering the argument that it entails the use of modern technology and also provides several employment opportunities to the students.

For the course on architecture and communication studies, the variation in fee structure is attributed to field-based training imparted for such courses and the employment of experts to provide in-house teaching and training.

Greater variation is seen in the fees for medical, nursing, dental, and pharmacy courses across the sampled deemed-to-be universities. While Institution 5 bids very

high for all these courses, Institution 3 is charging comparatively lower fees for these courses.

There is a wider variation in the fee structure for medical education in the sampled Institutions 3 and 5.While the former has not implemented any change in the MBBS course fee for three consecutive years, the latter increased the fee structure in each selected year, which was comparatively much higher than the fees being charged by Institution 3. The fees for post-graduate courses also show variations between both the institutions but with a lower magnitude due to the almost equal demand for these courses in both the regions from local students, whereas in the case of the MBBS degree, Institution 5 has a national representation of students. The higher demand for MBBS courses is quite evident and the linkages of hospitals with these courses, and the consequent demand for more staff and modern instruments also accounts for one of the reasons for the high course fee. Although such courses provide better employment prospects as compared to the other courses, there is a need to revisit the fee structure, particularly in Institution 5 in order to support students belonging to poor economic backgrounds.

After medical sciences, both nursing and dental courses are in greater demand, particularly in South India. Therefore, students in Institutions 3 and 5 pay higher fees than for others as such institutions claim to offer modern instruments and laboratory facilities. The courses which also entail practicals are in greater demand and more highly priced than those which are based only on theory. This has a regressive impact on students seeking admission in such institutions. There has been an expansion of the hospital sector in the respective States in recent years, leading to a greater demand for the MSc Nursing course. Institution 3 has, in fact, made the course fee of the MSc Nursing course equivalent to the course fee of the BSc Nursing course, whereas Institution 5 has increased the fee even further.

The need for expensive laboratory instruments entailing the use of modern technology that requires continuous maintenance has made the dentistry course immensely expensive, thereby restricting access to the course for students from poor economic backgrounds in the absence of adequate scholarships. However, the difference in the fee structure between Institutions 3 and 5 is pretty high even for the use of similar types of instruments, which is a cause for worry for students. For example, the fees for the BDS course in Dental Science in Institution 3 is Rs.13,60,000,but the corresponding fees for the same course in Institution 5 is Rs.18, 50,000.

Pharmacy is one of the emerging fields in modern medical sciences. Taking advantage of this fact, the institutions offering courses in this stream are charging very high fees. Category 3 institutions are also making their courses very expensive based on the argument of providing better job opportunities and modern laboratory facilities, and linking them with industries for training purposes. This argument needs to be revisited as other institutions like Institution 3 can also offer the same courses at lesser fees. Enrolling in M.Pharma and B.Pharma courses is equally expensive in Institutions5 and 6 due to the boom in the hospital sector and the greater demand for experts having such qualifications.

A variation in fees has also been observed in the case of community medicine and public health. Institution 6 has also kept its fees high for this subject based on the pretext that it has to provide field experience and community engagement along with the theoretical training for the course. Management and commerce courses are also very expensive courses across HEIs due to the greater demand for such courses and also because students opt for them to enhance their employability after completing graduate courses across several disciplines, including engineering courses.

The fees for courses pertaining to languages, humanities, and social sciences also varies across the sampled institutions but these fee structures have been observed to be stagnant over the years except in Institutions 5 and 6 which offer selective courses in this stream. The fees for these courses also depend on the demand from the students and future job prospects.

Courses on yoga and allied health sciences are non-conventional courses but do not have much impact in terms of influencing the student count even if they are offered at a lower cost. However, a few institutions are still charging higher fees for these courses in the name of therapy and linking up with the medical sector, which ostensibly helps provide job facilities in the hospital sector post the completion of the courses. Such mal-practices need to be checked.

The variation in fees for courses in natural and life sciences as well as physical sciences across the sampled institutions may be attributed to the provision of modern laboratory facilities as well as the option for studying some emerging non-conventional courses. This again discourages students from poor economic backgrounds from opting for such courses.

The natural and life sciences streams show the same type of fluctuation in fees as that of social sciences but some new non-conventional courses are being offered

across the sampled institutions in subjects such as stem cells and regenerative medicine, clinical virology, molecular biology and human genetics, among others.

Courses on international studies have not been explored much by the institutions under study except Institution 5, but the course fees are observed to be higher for these courses due to the fact that only selective private deemed-to-be universities offer courses on international studies, and also because there is a higher demand for such studies that can also offer students a global experience during or after completion of the course.

As regards the PhD course, there is a little variation across institutions in the fee structure, which depends mostly on the stream of PhD being offered. Pursuing a full-time PhD course is less expensive than a part-time one in the case of Institute 6 which is characterised by enrolment of service holders and practitioners (e.g. employees from companies, hospital sector and other sectors too). This is also a medium for extracting resources to finance the institution. However, in interactions with the students, they painted a gloomy picture for their future prospects after the completion of their courses as they would have to compete with students pursuing similar courses in government institutions. They had been compelled to join the private institutions as they could not get through in many public institutions.

The question thus arises that if these courses can be offered at a lower cost, then why are certain institutions offering them at such a high costs? It may be pointed out that the hospitals associated with such high-cost institutions provide treatment to patients from poor economic backgrounds at very minimal cost. However, such practices have negative implications on affordability by the students from poor economic background by getting admitted perforce to such high cost institution in lieu of getting an employment in the future in the associated hospital of the respective institution. Category 3 institutions are highly rated by students on the basis of their quality, and therefore the latter readily enrol in these institutions and pay high costs for the engineering, medical, pharmacy, nursing, and life sciences courses. The fee has been increased for the new batch of students by 10-12 percent as compared to the previous year depending on the demand for the course concerned. However, the resentment expressed by the students against this fee hike both in response to the questionnaire as well as during the FGDs with them makes it quite clear that the increase in fees is a harsh move for many students. The next section discusses these observations in detail.

The scholarships received by the students under several scholarship schemes offered by the Central and respective State governments vary among the selected

institutions. The common fellowships are for meritorious students in the reserved category and for girl students in some selected States. However, several scholarships are also disbursed to meritorious students by the selected institutions themselves under different heads/schemes. These are either offered on a voluntary basis by private individuals or philanthropists/donors of the institution or created by the departments or the institution concerned.

Scholarships are also offered by the Central as well as State governments to meritorious students belonging to poor socio-economic backgrounds. The Government scholarships include merit cum-means scholarship, the UGC Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship for SCs/STs, minority fellowship, scholarship for the single girl child, and fellowships by DST, AICTE, and DAE, among others. Merit scholarships are also given by the respective State governments to the deprived groups. However, institutions themselves also give scholarships to meritorious students belonging to poor economic backgrounds who are otherwise not receiving any scholarship from any government source or students who are children or spouses of any employee of the institution. The scholarship amount varies on the basis of the grades, and may cover 25 percent, or 40 percent, or 50 percent, or 80 percent, or 100 percent of the total course fee accruing to the student.

It may be noted that there is no institutional policy for the provision of scholarships for meritorious students from the deprived groups. There is need for government intervention for improving access to higher education for students from the deprived groups like SCs, STs, Other Backward Classes (OBCs), girls, and minorities.

Implications of Higher and Increasing Fees

The annual fee hike by the private deemed-to-be universities is a matter of concern for students and parents belonging to poor socio-economic backgrounds. With such universities hiking the fees every year, several committees formed by the government have recommended various fee regulations from time to time, as discussed in the initial sections of this study. There have been several responses from both students as well as teachers on this issue, with the emphasis being on implementing a revised fee structure in their respective universities. Overall, greater emphasis is being laid on a fee structure that takes both access and quality parameters into account.

Characteristics of Students in the Sampled Institutions

On the basis of the fee structure and infrastructure facilities, Institutions 1 and 2 are considered as Category 1 institutions. Table 5 shows the characteristics of the sampled students across departments. While the representation of gender is seen to vary across departments, students belonging to the Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) categories are completely absent from Institution 2, which has greater representation in urban areas. The national character of the institution may thus not be represented in this instance. Similarly, the parents of students enrolled in the languages, humanities and social sciences courses in Institution 1 belong mostly to the Category 2 and 3 income groups (with incomes of >Rs. 5000 to ≤10000, and >Rs. 10000 to ≤25000), whereas the parents of students enrolled in the mathematics, life sciences, and engineering and technology courses in Institution 2 belong to the Category 4 and 5 income groups (with incomes >Rs. 25,000 to ≤50,000, and >Rs. 50,000.

Table 5: Gender, Region, Social and Economic Background of Students Enrolled in Category 1 Institutions (in %)

	Institution 1						Institution 2					
	L, H and SS	**GS**	**LS**	**E**	**Maths**	**Total**	**L, H and SS**	**GS**	**M**	**LS**	**E**	**Total**
Male	33.6	16.8	8.4	0.8	4.2	63.9	6.2	3.1	8.3	0	32	49.5
Female	9.2	3.4	21.9	0	1.7	36.1	13.4	6.2	10.3	13.4	7.2	50.5
Total	42.9	20.2	30.3	0.8	5.9	100	19.6	9.3	18.6	13.4	39.2	100
SC	9.2	0.8	1.7	0	0	11.8	0	0	0	0	0	0
ST	0	0	0.8	0	0	0.8	0	0	0	0	0	0
OBC	9.2	0	4.2	0	1.7	15.1	3.1	3.1	2.1	0	6.3	14.6
Gen	24.4	19.3	23.5	0.8	4.2	72.3	16.7	6.3	16.7	12.5	33.3	85.4
Total	42.9	20.2	30.3	0.8	5.9	100	19.8	9.4	18.8	12.5	39.6	100
Rural	30.5	6.8	7.6	0	2.5	47.5	2.1	0	2.1	0	4.2	8.3
Urban	12.7	12.7	22.9	0.9	3.4	52.5	17.7	9.4	16.7	13.5	34.4	91.7
Total	43.2	19.5	30.5	0.9	5.9	100	19.8	9.4	18.8	13.5	38.5	100
Y0	3.2	1.1	0	0	0	4.3	0	1.2	0	0	0	1.2
Y1	22.6	2.2	2.2	0	1.1	28	1.2	0	2.4	0	4.8	8.4
Y2	7.5	4.3	6.5	0	0	18.3	0	0	1.2	0	1.2	2.4
Y3	4.3	5.4	7.5	1.1	2.2	20.4	1.2	0	0	0	6	7.2
Y4	6.5	4.3	3.2	0	0	14	7.2	1.2	6	4.8	7.2	26.5
Y5	1.1	7.5	6.5	0	0	15.1	12	4.8	10.8	9.6	16.9	54.2
Total	45.2	24.7	25.8	1.1	3.2	100	21.7	7.2	20.5	14.5	36.1	100

Source: Analysis from the student questionnaire

Notes: Y0: Not earning, Y1: Parental Income Group 1 (≤Rs. 5000), Y2: Parental Income Group 2 (>Rs. 5000 to ≤Rs. 10,000), Y3: Parental Income Group 3 (>Rs. 10,000 to ≤Rs. 25,000), Y4: Parental Income Group 4 (>Rs. 25,000 to ≤Rs. 50,000), Y5: Parental Income Group 5 (>Rs. 50,000).

Students enrolled in Category 2 institutions (Table 6) mostly represent General Category male students from urban areas. Again, it may be said that students with access to such deemed-to-be universities symbolise more of a local than a national character. As regards affordability, students enrolled in the engineering and technology courses in both the institutions belong to income categories 4 and 5.

Table 6: Gender, Location, Social and Economic Background of Students Enrolled in Category 2 Institutions (in %)

	Institution 3					Institution 4					
	L, H and SS	GS	LS	E	Total	L, H and SS	GS	M	LS	E	Total
Male	11.8	2.6	9.2	39.5	63.2	0	0.9	12.1	4.3	37.1	54.3
Female	17.1	0	17.1	2.6	36.8	2.6	0	11.2	8.6	23.3	45.7
Total	29	2.6	26.3	42.1	100	2.6	0.9	23.3	12.9	60.3	100
SC	0	0	4	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
ST	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OBC	1.3	1.3	2.7	5.3	10.7	0	0	0.9	0	0.9	1.7
Gen	26.7	1.3	20	37.3	85.3	2.6	0.9	22.6	13	59.1	98.3
Total	28	2.7	26.7	42.7	100	2.6	0.9	23.5	13	60	100
Rural	2.6	1.3	4	9.2	17.1	0.9	0	3.5	0	4.3	8.6
Urban	26.3	1.3	22.4	32.9	82.9	1.7	0.9	19.8	12.9	56	91.4
Total	29	2.6	26.3	42.1	100	2.6	0.9	23.3	12.9	60.3	100
Y0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Y1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.1	1.1
Y2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Y3	0	2.9	2.9	2.9	8.8	0	0	1.1	0	2.2	3.3
Y4	2.9	0	5.9	13.2	22.1	0	0	6.7	1.1	18.9	26.7
Y5	22.1	0	17.6	29.4	69.1	0	1.1	21.1	13.3	33.3	68.9
Total	25	2.9	26.5	45.6	100	0	1.1	28.9	14.4	55.6	100

Source: Analysis from the student questionnaire

Notes: Y0: Not earning, Y1: Parental Income Group 1 (≤Rs. 5000), Y2: Parental Income Group 2 (>Rs. 5000 to ≤Rs. 10,000), Y3: Parental Income Group 3 (>Rs. 10,000 to ≤Rs. 25,000), Y4: Parental Income Group 4 (>Rs. 25,000 to ≤Rs. 50,000), Y5: Parental Income Group 5 (>Rs. 50,000).

Among Category 3 students, Institution 5is dominated by girls (Table 7) but Institution 6 is dominated by boys belonging the General category, urban areas, and the two highest income ranges. These figures clearly show the minimal access to courses for students from rural areas, from the reserved categories, and from the very low income groups. However, some students from middle income groups are also seen to be present in the system due to their ambitions and aspirations for upward mobility in the socio-economic strata.

Table 7: Gender, Location, Social and Economic Background of Students Enrolled in Category 3 Institutions (in %)

	Institution 5						Institution 6						
	L, H and SS	**GS**	**M**	**LS**	**E**	**Total**	**L, H and SS**	**GS**	**M**	**LS**	**E**	**Maths**	**Total**
Male	6.1	4.1	11.2	10.2	11.2	42.9	3.5	2.6	0	0.9	72.2	5.2	84.4
Female	8.2	9.2	10.2	23.5	6.1	57.1	0	2.6	1.7	0.9	9.6	0	14.8
Third Gender	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.9	0	0	0	0	0.9
Total	14.3	13.3	21.4	33.7	17.4	100	3.5	6.1	1.7	1.7	81.7	5.2	100
SC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.9	0	0	0	0.9	0	1.7
ST	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
OBC	0	3.1	2.1	2.1	3.1	10.4	0.9	0.9	0	0	4.4	0	6.1
Gen	14.6	10.4	19.8	30.2	14.6	89.6	1.7	5.2	1.7	1.7	76.5	5.2	92.2
Total	14.6	13.5	21.9	32.3	17.7	100	3.5	6.1	1.7	1.7	81.7	5.2	100
Rural	4.1	3.1	5.1	3.1	5.1	20.4	0.9	1.7	0	0	7.8	0	10.4
Urban	10.2	10.2	16.3	30.6	12.2	79.6	2.6	4.4	1.7	1.7	73.9	5.2	89.6
Total	14.3	13.3	21.4	33.7	17.4	100	3.5	6.1	1.7	1.7	81.7	5.2	100
Y0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.1	0	0	0	0	1.1
Y1	0	0	0	1.2	1.2	2.5	0	0	0	0	1.1	0	1.1
Y2	1.2	1.2	0	2.5	0	4.9	0	0	0	0	1.1	0	1.1
Y3	2.5	1.2	1.2	2.5	1.2	8.6	0	0	0	0	3.3	0	3.3
Y4	2.5	4.9	3.7	3.7	4.9	19.8	2.2	2.2	0	0	12.2	1.1	17.8
Y5	9.9	6.2	14.8	23.5	9.9	64.2	1.1	3.3	1.1	2.2	65.6	2.2	75.6
Total	16	13.6	19.8	33.3	17.3	100	3.3	6.7	1.1	2.2	83.3	3.3	100

Source: Analysis from the student questionnaire

Notes: Y0: Not earning, Y1: Parental Income Group 1 (≤Rs. 5000), Y2: Parental Income Group 2 (>Rs. 5000 to ≤Rs. 10,000), Y3: Parental Income Group 3 (>Rs. 10,000 to ≤Rs. 25,000), Y4: Parental Income Group 4 (>Rs. 25,000 to ≤Rs. 50,000), Y5: Parental Income Group 5 (>Rs. 50,000).

The decision of students to opt for private institutions despite the existence of government institutions both at the local and national levels point to the significant role of higher education in the changing economic scenario. The private deemed-to-be universities that are more aligned with national level institutions and reflect the character of a university are also preferred by students who evaluate =the quality and the relevance of the courses offered by them. Unlike in the past decades, in the recent decade that is characterised by the use of technology, students/parents are more aware about the types/quality of educational institutions offering different courses and programmes across the respective regions of India. The future employability of courses offered by an institution (in line with its prestige) impacts

the decision-making behaviour of the parents (Mooganet et al., 1999) and students from low-income families. Such students thus mostly enrol in less prestigious institutes due to lack of funds to pursue course in better institutions (Shiner and Modood, 2002) or end up taking courses in institutions entailing lower living costs (Knowles, 2000; Callender and Jackson, 2008). In the case of technical or professional courses, the well-informed urban students usually influence the decisions of their counterparts from rural areas in terms of choosing from amongst the reputed and highly- ranked technical or professional institutes, which, in turn, is determined by their credibility in offering job guarantees. Therefore such competition often acts as a constraint in the decision-making process and access to HEIs for different sections of the population (Panigrahi, 2015).

Table 8: Category-wise Student Responses on the Choice of Institute (in %)

Choice/Preference	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Total
First choice for course offered	41	28.35	25.6	35
First choice among all institutions	17.75	9.65	25.3	21.2
Near to place of residence	18.85	19.1	5.7	15.9
Affordable fee	10.7	8.35	6	9.2
Entry requirements match credentials	6.85	15.35	19.6	8.6
Friends/relatives studying	1.85	2.15	0.9	1.8
Did not get admission in other colleges	0.85	8.45	14.15	3.5
Availability of hostel facilities	2.15	8.55	2.7	5

Source: Analysis from the student questionnaire

The choices made by student choices among the three categories of the deemed-to-be universities selected for the study are given in Table 8. The choices/preferences of the institution are divided into eight categories as follows: (i) first choice for the course offered, (ii) first choice among all institutions, (iii) near the place of residence, (iv) affordable fee, (v) entry requirements match the credentials, (vi) friends/relatives studying in the institution, (vii) did not get admission in any other college, and (vii) availability of hostel facilities. An analysis of the overall responses indicates that there is a preference for private deemed-to-be universities basically due to the quality of the selective courses (in the professional stream) offered by such institutions, followed by the reputation or ranking of the institution in terms of the employment opportunities resulting from the selective courses provided by such institutions, followed by the students' preferences for such institutions as they may be located near the native places of the students. However, a comparison between among the

three different categories of such private deemed-to-be universities pointed to several variations in the choice of such institutions by students.

Among students enrolled in Category 1 institutions, at least 41 percent had got the course of their first choice. These courses included yoga and allied health sciences, physical sciences, architecture, management and commerce, MCA, BCA and information sciences, a few courses in languages, humanities and social sciences. Among students from Category 2 and 3 institutions, approximately 25 percent got the courses of their first choice. However, in terms of the choice of institutions, Category 3 institutions were comparatively more preferable than Category 1 type of institutions, which highlights the reputation and ranking of such institutions, which are relatively old but have still maintained their quality and ability to attract students across the country. The choice of Category 1 type of institutions was mainly based on the unique type of courses offered by them as well as the field-based curriculum which provided some hands-on experiences to the students. Category 2 institutions were not much sought after but students enrolled in them mainly out of compulsion. The national character of the institutions is basically determined on the basis of the representation of students in the institution. Therefore, the choice of an institution based on it being close to the residence of the student is very low, at 5.7 percent in the case of Category 3 institutions, indicating the national character of such institutions, which is not true in the case of Category 2 and 3 institutions, as the latter largely meet the demand for higher education among students in the locality despite Category 2 institutions having better hostel facilities. This finding goes against the criterion that a deemed-to-be university should have a representation of students from across the country.

The choice of institutions based on affordability is minimal in the case of Category 3 institutions, followed by Category 2 and 1 institutions. This indicates that the higher fees charged by the former type of institutions makes them unaffordable for a majority of the students. Therefore, the elite character of such private deemed-to-be universities puts a question mark on such HEIs on the criterion of affordability for students belonging to poor economic backgrounds. Among all the sampled students, 14 percent had taken admission in Category 3 type of institutions as they had failed to secure admission in similar institutions with a lower fee structure and of similar quality. This is a good example of the distortion in the choice of HEIs due to variation in the fee structure. The variation in the fee structure in terms of the students' responses regarding the tuition fees and total fees has been captured through simple descriptive statistics (Tables 9 and 10). The higher mean and standard deviation

figures in both the tuition fees as well as the total fees indicates that Category 3 institutions are expensive, which raises the question of affordability of such institutions for students from various socio-economic backgrounds.

Table 9: Descriptive Statistics of the Tuition Fee

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Category 1	182	500	3,20,000	28771.43	40,795.23
Category 2	120	21,000	10,50,000	174525.8	1,65,959.3
Category 3	169	11,300	18,00,000	69608.93	2,20,050.4

Source: Analysis from the student questionnaire

Table 10: Descriptive Statistics of the Total Fee

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Category 1	212	600	4,99,000	73,675.47	82,241.90398
Category 2	170	10,000	7,50,500	23,6340.3	17,6787.8935
Category 2	176	15,000	67,60,000	30,5942.9	7,35,382.5082

Source: Analysis from the student questionnaire

Analysis for a Revised Fee Structure

In order to explore the implications of rising and varying fees on students across courses and institutions, some questions were posed to the students in the quantitative questionnaire as well as in the FGDs. Similarly, in order to understand the perspective of teachers and their role in fixing fees for various courses, some questions were also posed in the questionnaire as well as FGDs to the teachers of the selected private deemed-to-be universities.

Responses of Students on the Fee Structure

The reasons for the dissatisfaction with the existing fees varied across three categories of the sampled institutions. Based on the quantitative responses of the students on the existing/changing fee structure of the sampled institutions, 11 major categories were created for analysis of the students' data. These are represented as follows in Table 11: (i) the fee structure is satisfactory; (ii) there is need for a transparent fee structure; (iii) affordability with external support; (iv) provision of flexible payment; (v) need for a fixed fee structure across the years of study; (vi) differential fee structure considering the economic background of the students; (vii) fee relaxation or fee waiver; (viii) provision of loan facilities; (ix) enhancement of

quality in institutional facilities; (x) imposition of fees according to the services provided; and (xi) Others.

Table 11: Department-wise Suggestions of Students for the Existing Fee Structure (in %)

	Category 1							Category 2						Category 3						
	L, H and SS	GS	M	LS	E	Maths**	Total	L, H and SS	GS	M	LS	E	Total	L, H and SS	GS	M	LS	E	Maths	Total
Satisfactory	11.3	0	5.2	7.2	3.1	0	26.8	0	0	3.9	1.1	0.6	5.6	1.5	1	2	3	2	0	9.5
Transparency	2.1	0	0	0	0	0	2.1	0	0	0	0.6	2.8	3.3	1	0.5	0	0	8	1	10.5
Affordability with external support#	12.3	4.1	4.2	2	18.6	0	41.3	5.6	1.1	5	12.2	25	48.9	4.5	2.5	2	4.5	18	0.5	32
Flexible payment	3.1	0	0	4.1	0	0	7.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	1	0	0.5	0	0	2
Fixed fee	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1.7	1.7	3.3	0	1.5	0.5	1.5	10	0.5	14
Differential fee	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.6	0	0	0.6	1.1	0	0	0	0	2.5	0	2.5
Fee waiver	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.1	1.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Loan Provision	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.6	0	0	0.6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Quality enhancement	1	2.1	1	1	0	0	5.2	1.1	0	2.2	0	2.8	6.1	0	0.5	2	1.5	0	0	4
Fees according to services	4.1	1	0	0	3.1	0	8.2	1.7	0	2.8	2.2	8.9	15.6	1	1	3.5	2	3	0	10.5
Others*	3.1	1	0	0	4.1	0	8.2	1.1	0	0.6	1.7	11.1	14.4	0	1.5	1.5	4	7.5	0.5	15
Total	37.1	8.2	10.3	14.4	29.9	0	100	9.4	1.7	15	19.4	54.4	100	8.5	9.5	11.5	17	51	2.5	100

Source: Analysis from the student questionnaire

Notes: Each Category has two institutions; L,H and SS: Languages, Humanities and Social Sciences; GS: General Sciences; M: Management; E: Engineering; LS: Life Sciences/Medical Sciences.

includes responses on reducing fee and providing scholarships or government support.

****** There are non-responses from the students belonging to the Department of Mathematics in Category 1 institutions and no samples are collected from the Mathematics Department in Category 2 institutions.

***** Others: Fee based on 10+2 marks; poor food quality in mess; explore other sources of funding; flexible hostel timings; no student fund or placement charges; improve criteria of admission; at par with other government institutions; encouraging research; regular fee auditing; better sports facilities; fee hike according to inflation; benchmark for scholarship; ceiling on fee hike; etc.

A department-wise statistical analysis reveals that the dissatisfaction among students across categories basically stems from the lack of consideration for the students' ability to afford the high fees of such HEIs. These students have been demanding government support in the form of scholarships and fellowships that would make it affordable for them to pursue their higher studies in such institutions. Half of the students in Category 2 institutions demand more of external support from

the government to enhance access to the engineering/medical/life sciences courses offered in such institutions. Similarly, students (41.3 per cent) from Category 1 institutions also highlight affordability issues and demand more scholarships for deserving meritorious students. These students are studying in the engineering, languages, humanities and social sciences as well as management and general sciences streams. Around 32 percent of the students from Category 3 institutions also point to the need for more scholarships and fellowships, either by the government or the institutions themselves. Currently, only a limited number of students who are receiving scholarships from the Central and State government under various schemes.

In view of the demands from students, the institutions themselves have taken some initiatives to provide scholarships to meritorious students. Category 3 institutions have provisions for such support for students who achieve high scores in each semester and for the exemption or reduction in fees for children of employees of the respective institutions. Category 1 institutions too have similar provisions; for example, in order to promote the Sanskrit language, Institution 1 charges a very minimal fee from students enrolled in Bachelor's and Master's levels, and provides them lodging free of cost. Category 2 institutions offer scholarships only for the toppers in each class. Overall, a majority of the students remain outside the ambit of such financial support for pursuing their higher studies in such expensive HEIs. When questioned about the reasons for the lack of financial support offered by them, the administrators of the concerned institutions said that any increase in the number of scholarships would further increase the fees in the respective discipline or across disciplines.

A reasonable proportion of students (27 percent) in Category 1 institutions also find the existing fee structure satisfactory due to the comparatively lower fee they pay in such institutions as compared to other similar HEIs in the region. In contrast, the level of satisfaction expressed by students in Category 2 and 3 institutions is much less, at 5.6 percent and 9.5 percent, respectively, due to the comparatively higher fee structure for disciplines such as engineering, medical, and life sciences, in such private HEIs. Students have also suggested a revised fee structure where in the fees should be determined in accordance with the services provided by the institution concerned, as mentioned by 8.2 percent, 16 percent, and 10.5 percent of the students from Category 1, 2,and 3 institutions, respectively. About 4.1 percent of the students from the languages, humanities and social sciences streams from Category 1 institutions argue for reduction of fees due to the non-availability of services such as access to laboratories and Wi-Fi, provided by the institution. Further, 3 percent of the students

from the engineering stream alleged that they were not getting adequate facilities as per the fee paid by them, and complained of lack of specialised teachers, obsolete computers and machineries, software, inadequate industry training, and absence of campus interviews by recruiters. In category 2 institutions, students across disciplines argued for fixing a fee structure in accordance with the services provided, except students of general sciences who were satisfied with the services provided. Engineering students (10 percent) were the most dissatisfied as they claimed that the services provided in the institutions concerned did not meet the requisite standards as per the fees paid by them. They complained that no development activities had taken place in the last three years, and that more practical field-based training and placement facilities were needed to justify the high fees paid by the students. There was also a demand for quality teaching and non-teaching staff, advanced laboratories, updated curriculum with more practical applications, and better facilities in hostels. These demands for provision of services in accordance with the fees were raised by management students, followed by those in engineering and life sciences/medical science in Category 3 institutions. The other services sought by the students included demand for highly trained teachers, more campus placements, improvement in food quality provided in the hostel mess, non-payment for consumption of electricity in hostels, provision of laptops (as promised), better laboratory equipment and reduction in fees taken under the guise of infrastructure development on the campus.

The need for enhancing the quality of teaching and services was also suggested by students from Category 1 (5.2 percent), 2 (6.1 percent), and 3 (4 percent) institutions with the existing fee structure. The demand for enhancement of quality in their respective institutions, was raised by students from the engineering, management, and languages, humanities and social sciences streams from Category 2 institutions and students from management, life sciences/medical sciences, and general sciences from Category 3 institutions. These responses by the students pointed to the comparative assessment made by them between their respective institutions and other HEIs in India with regard to the quality of teachers, placements and industry exposure, industry-based curriculum (Institution 4), sports facilities (Category 2), recreational activities (Institution 5), library and cafeteria facilities (Institution 4), food and sanitation (Institution 5), and safety and security (Category 2).

Despite the lower fees being charged by the Category 1 institutions, students from life sciences and languages, humanities and social sciences streams (7.2 percent) belonging to poor economic backgrounds suggested the need for a flexible fee

payment plan on a monthly instalment basis to reduce their burden of payments. Similarly, students from Category 3 institutions also argued in favour of a flexible payment plan to offset the high tuition fees being charged by these institutions. Two of the most important observations that emerged from the student responses included that need for a fixed fee structure and transparency in fee hikes/utilisation of income generated from the tuition fees. The change in the fee structure in each semester was seen as a penalising factor by 10.5per cent of the students, particularly from Category 3 institutions (Institution 6), wherein changes were observed in the tuition fee or hostel fee or other fees each semester even for existing students. Similarly, the fee hike implemented every semester for new batches or the increase in hostel fee (for existing batches) each semester was criticised by 3.3 percent of the students from Category 2 institutions, as a fee hike of more than 15-20 percent was being done for new batches for courses in great demand. Therefore, these students suggested that the fee structure should be fixed for a period of at least five years or throughout the course period, especially in Institutions 4 and 6.

Some other suggestions were also made by students regarding the fee structure in private deemed-to-be universities that would address several important aspects for students in the institutions being analysed. While 8.2 percent of the students from Category 1 institutions were concerned with other aspects while dealing with fee structure, 14.4 percent and 15 percent students from category 2 and 3 institutions respectively suggest addressing these aspects while fixing the fee structure.

The students from Category 1 institutions suggested the implementation of a fee structure wherein first and second year students from the engineering discipline should be exempted from paying towards the department fund or student fund or placement charges, and other students suggested that there should be an improvement in food quality within the existing fee structure. The students from Category 2 institutions, particularly those pursuing engineering and technology (11 percent), life sciences/medical sciences and languages, humanities and social sciences suggested the provision of all sorts of materials for practical works by the institution itself; selection of students based on their performance/credentials rather than their paying capacity; regular fee auditing (Institution 3); revision in the curriculum as per the industry requirements; the publication of more journals and encouragement to a supportive research environment; hands-on experience with industry academia linkages; and the setting up of a standard committee across institutions to regulate the fee hike (Institution 4). The focus of students from Category 3 institutions, particularly engineering (7.5 percent), life sciences/medical

sciences (4 percent), management and languages, humanities and social sciences was on benchmarking for scholarship and providing access to the same facilities to students receiving scholarships (from the institution) like the fee-paying students; imposition of fees based on marks secured in the 10+2 classes; a fixed percentage hike in the fee every year; no separate fee for Wi-fi and medical insurance; ensuring that the expenditure incurred on guest faculty, stationery, laptops, laboratory and library facilities, and study tours, is borne by the institution (Institution 5); hiking of fees according to inflation but not exceeding it; imposition of a ceiling on the fee hike; provision of scholarships by the institution only to needy students; cutting down of unnecessary expenses incurred by the institution; and exploring other sources of funding (Institution 6).

The insignificant number of students from Category 2 institutions also points to the need for fee waivers and provision of loan facilities. This indicates the reluctance of Indian students to opt for future debt for their higher studies. Although student loans are promoted to be popular, taking a loan remains as the last resort even for students belonging to reasonable economic backgrounds. Transparency in the utilisation of fees is one of the important aspects for students (10.5 percent) from Category 3 institutions, particularly engineering students (Institution 6). While students opine that the institution does not respond to their queries regarding the usage of fee collected for different purposes such as development, sports, placements, and student funds, the administration is of the opinion that the fee collected are used for student activities and infrastructure development. Similarly, students from Category 2 (3.3 percent) and Category 1 (2.1 percent) institutions, particularly engineering and languages, humanities and social sciences students, respectively, suggest the need for transparency in the utilisation of fee collected from the students.

Responses of Teachers on the Fee Structure

The diverse quantitative responses of teachers of the sampled deemed-to-be universities, emerging from the questionnaire and the FGDs on existing and changing fee structure and the need to revise it, are divided into eight categories as follows: (i) the fee structure is satisfactory; (ii) the fee should increase; (iii) affordability with external support; (iv) need for differential fee considering the economic background; (v) fee relaxation or fee waiver; (vi) provision of loan facilities; (vii) fees according to services provided; and (viii) Others. A department-wise analysis of the quantitative responses by teachers is presented in Table 12.

The existing fee is said to be satisfactory by only 14 percent of the faculty members from several streams of Category 1 institutions, which is double for students from several streams. A larger percentage of teachers (18.2 percent) basically from the life sciences/medical and engineering streams in Category 2 institutions said that they were fine with the existing fee structure in their respective disciplines, whereas a correspondingly much lower percentage of students agreed with them. The share of teachers approving of the existing fee structure in their respective disciplines was also a little higher than that of students as the former perceived that the higher fee structure was needed to meet the increasing costs accruing to the institution.

Like students, the faculty members of the respective sampled deemed-to-be universities also argued for a reduction in fees in order to increase the affordability of courses for students, along with the provision for scholarships and fellowships to the deserving needy students (Table 12). The faculty members (47.1 percent) from Category 1 institutions, particularly those teaching the general sciences and engineering streams (11.8 percent each), followed by the faculty teaching the languages, humanities and social sciences courses (7.8 percent), and management, mathematics and life sciences argued for a reduction in the fees and for the provision of scholarships. Similarly, faculty members (48 percent) from Category 2 institutions from the engineering stream (16 percent), followed by the languages, humanities and social sciences, the mathematics and life sciences/medical sciences faculty (9.1 percent each)and management faculty realise that the existing fee structure is quite high and scholarships must be provided to deserving students in the respective disciplines. Faculty members (33.3 percent) from Category 3 institutions also agreed with the fact that the existing fee structure in their respective disciplines was high and needed to be reduced, while deserving students should also be given more support through government scholarships and fellowships. These disciplines mainly included life sciences/medical sciences (16.7 percent), followed by engineering (7.1 percent), and general sciences, and languages, humanities and social sciences (4.8 percent each).

Table 12: Department-wise Suggestions by Faculty on the Existing Fee Structure (in %)

	Category 1							Category 2							Category 3						
	L, H & SS	GS	M	LS	E	Maths	Total	L, H & SS	GS	M	LS	E	Maths	Total	L, H & SS	GS	M	LS	E	Maths	Total
Satisfactory	2	2	2	3.9	0	3.9	13.7	0	2.3	2.3	9.1	4.5	0	18.2	4.8	0	4.8	0	2.4	0	11.9
Fee should be increased	3.9	0	5.9	2	0	0	11.8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.4	4.8	0	4.8	0	4.8	16.7
Fee should be reduced#	7.8	11.8	5.9	3.9	11.8	5.9	47.1	9.1	0	4.5	9.1	15.9	9.1	47.7	4.8	4.8	0	16.7	7.1	0	33.3
Differential fee structure	2	5.9	2	0	3.9	0	13.7	2.3	0	0	0	4.5	0	6.8	0	0	0	2.4	0	0	2.4
Fee waiver	0	0	2	2	0	0	3.9	0	0	0	2.3	2.3	0	4.5	2.4	0	0	0	0	0	2.4
Loan Provision	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.3	0	0	0	2.3	0	0	0	0	2.4	0	2.4
Fee should be according to services provided	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	2.3	0	4.5	2.3	2.3	0	11.4	2.4	0	0	2.4	9.5	0	14.3
Others*	2	0	0	2	3.9	0	7.8	2.3	0	2.3	0	4.5	0	9.1	7.1	0	7.1	0	0	2.4	16.7
Total	17.6	21.6	17.6	13.7	19.6	9.8	100	15.9	2.3	15.9	22.7	34.1	9.1	100	23.8	9.5	11.9	26.2	21.4	7.1	100

Source: Analysis from the teachers' questionnaire

Notes: Each Category has two institutions; L,H and SS: Languages, Humanities and Social Sciences; GS: General Sciences; M: Management; E: Engineering; LS: Life Sciences/Medical Sciences.

includes responses on reducing fee and providing scholarships or government support.

***** Other responses: education quality enhancement; at par with other institutions; development of additional centres; additional seats for underprivileged students; medical insurance provision; benchmark for fee.

A differential fee structure is also suggested by some teachers (13.7 percent) in Category 1 institutions from the general sciences and engineering streams, which was not so in the case of responses from students from the same institutions. A few teachers from Category 2 institutions (6.8 percent) largely belonging to the engineering stream had similar opinions. Very few teachers from Category 3 institutions, particularly from the languages, humanities and social sciences streams suggested the need for a differential fee structure due to the greater access of such courses for students belonging to poor socio-economic backgrounds.

Besides, teachers from Category 1 (12 percent) and 3 (17 percent) institutions, who find the existing fees to be comparatively less, suggested a hike in fees for the management, languages, humanities and social sciences and mathematics, life sciences/medical sciences, general sciences and the languages, humanities and social sciences streams, respectively. Teachers from Category 2 institutions, however, did

not share this opinion. It may be mentioned that the private deemed-to-be universities functioning under the self-financing mode are dependent on student fees for meeting all sorts of recurring and non-recurring expenses. Like students, teachers from the respective sampled institutions also suggested that the fees should be determined in accordance with the services provided to management and engineering students from the Category 2 and 3 institutions, respectively. While students did not ask for a fee waiver, faculty members suggested that fees could be waived for management and life sciences/medical sciences students (Category 1), engineering and life sciences/medical sciences students (Category 2) and languages, humanities and social sciences students (Category 3).

Many faculty members also offered some other suggestions (8 percent from Category 1, 9per cent from Category 2, and 17per cent from Category 3) related to the enhancement of the quality of education, bringing the fee structure at par with that in other similar HEIs, establishment of additional centres of the university in other localities to compensate for institutional expenses by increasing enrolment and thereby the collection of fee from additional enrolments. There was also a suggestion to ensure additional seats for under-privileged students while providing them with adequate scholarship options, provision of medical insurance to students from poor socio-economic backgrounds, and keeping a benchmark for a fee hike beyond which the fee cannot be raised by such HEIs. Like students, the faculty members of such private deemed-to-be universities were also not supportive of giving students loans to enable them to pay the high fees in the expensive HEIs.

The variation in responses from students and teachers pertaining to the existing fee structure may be attributed to the fact that teachers interpreted lower fees as leading to lower salaries, and higher fees as leading to higher salaries for the staff of the institutions. Category 3 institutions charging very high fees pay salaries in line with the Seventh Pay Commission recommendations whereas Category 1 institutions pay lower salaries, and Category 2 institutions manipulate salaries according to the bargaining capacity of the respective faculty members or based on the quality of the faculty members as per their credentials.

Conclusion

India, the second largest higher education system in the world, which has been framing its own independent ranking system, is experiencing a stage wherein the participation of various stakeholders in the provision of higher education has raised new issues and concerns related to the regulation of such institutions for equity and quality purpose. The changing dynamics in higher education financing post the new

economic reforms have resulted in the privatisation of public higher education institutions and rapid expansion of the private sector, particularly institutions offering technical and professional courses. The courses are basically offered under the self-financing mode, as a result of which students are charged higher fees, and the fees keeps on increasing every year in many disciplines, causing a burden to both students and the households they belong to, particularly from poor economic backgrounds. This issue is quite pertinent for private deemed-to-be universities.

As pointed out by the UGC regulation of 2016, an institution deemed to be a university shall not engage in the commercialisation of education in any manner whatsoever, and shall provide for equity and access to all deserving students. However, few such efforts are observed in most of the institutions.. Although some scholarships are provided to the selected students, yet in many instances, the amount given does not cover the total expenses incurred by the student. There is no consideration for the deprived groups or those belonging to the reserved categories despite their getting a national stature.

The fees for various technical and professional courses are much higher than the fees charged by public higher education institutions offering similar types of courses in the same areas. On the pretext of offering courses and charging fees for infrastructure development and quality enhancement, many private deemed-to-be universities resort to the concept of 'surplus'. However, the difference between 'surplus' and 'profiteering' is not well-defined in any of the regulations. The prevalent dissatisfaction among students with the existing fee structure and their suggestions for affixing the fees according to the facilities provided need to be considered seriously for restructuring the existing level of higher fees being charged for several disciplines.

The maximum fee hike is observed in the case of technical/professional courses like engineering and technology (which are confined to a few streams as per the market demand), medical, pharmacy, and management, among others, which are not only expensive due to the higher costs associated with them but also entail the possibility of greater employability as compared to the other streams. The practice of charging of capitation fees in the recent form like management quota needs to be regulated in a few institutions falling under such a category. No record is maintained by the concerned institution of the refund of fees issued to students who leave the course within a week/few weeks/months of taking admission in the institution. This also gives rise to the possibility of manipulation and unfair practices. Students also pay fees for some activities which they may not even participate in or benefit from,

for example, fees for laboratories (by students studying social sciences), Wi-Fi, dramatic society, students' union, development fee, etc. The fees across disciplines needs to be displayed on the website of the institution with detailed break-ups of various fees charged for several disciplines mentioned in the fee receipt provided to the student and his/her parents during admission.

Varying expenses across cities and GST costs add up to the total expenses of the HEIs. However, category-wise, the variations between the private deemed-to-be universities need targeted action for a revised fee structure keeping into consideration access, equity, and excellence. It is important to understand the variation between the institutions offering the same type of courses but with a huge difference in the fees. Needless to add, there are minor differences in terms of enrolment and staff strength between the category 2 and 3 types of institutions. However, the hike in fees over the years has not been commensurate with the growth in enrolment across various courses. A unit cost calculation for each course in every three years would serve the purpose of fixation of fees by such institutions without compromising on the quality and excellence of the course yet ensuring affordability for the under-privileged sections of society.

It may soon be mandatory for all private deemed-to-be universities to provide details of their total enrolment figures on their websites as not revealing data on enrolment figures and the sanctioned seats offers an opportunity for malpractices in enrolment of students under several quotas and for charging exorbitant fees. This not only hampers quality but also leads to exploitation of the students and parents through several means. The NEP 2020 reserves the provision for those private HEIs having 'philanthropic and public spirited intent' to follow a progressive regime in the determination of fees along with the provision of 20 percent freeships and 30 percent of scholarships (MHRD, 2020). However, in this context the role of the regulatory mechanism would be far more important to look in to the real practices at the institutional level.

Above all, across all three categories of the private deemed-to-be universities, the possibility of alternative sources of funding of the respective institutions such as renting out of land and institutional infrastructure, contributions from alumni and corporates, institution-industry linkages, and admitting of more foreign students as per the rule needs to be explored rather than relying only on student fees. Gradually, the cost recovery model through collection of student fees may be replaced, to a large extent, with an income generation model through other possible sources.

With growing enrolment in private HEIs such as private colleges, private universities, and private deemed-to-be universities, the government needs to intervene by providing more scholarships to deserving students from among SC/ST/OBC (non-creamy layer), girls and minorities to enhance access to skill based technical and professional education which are majorly offered by such private HEIs.

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Annexure

TableA.2.1: Enrolments in Institute 1 in the Selected Years

	Class	2018	2017			2016			2015		Total
		T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Natural and Life Sciences	**PhD**	-	3.8	8.6	12.4	5.2	9.3	14.4	7.1	10.7	17.9
Natural and Life Sciences	**AgBT**	-	14.3	28.6	42.9	19.6	23.7	43.3	21.4	21.4	42.9
Natural and Life Sciences	**ARD**	-	18.1	26.7	44.8	21.6	20.6	42.3	14.3	25	39.3
Languages, Humanities and Social Sciences	**Indian Heritage (2 years)**	13.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Languages, Humanities and Social Sciences	**Indian Heritage (2+ years)**	57.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Yoga and Allied Health Sciences	**Yoga Sutras**	13.8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Languages, Humanities and Social Sciences	**Indian Heritage (1 year)**	5.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Languages, Humanities and Social Sciences	**Functional Sanskrit (6 months)**	10.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	100	36.2	63.8	100	46.4	53.6	100	42.9	57.1	100
	N	1407	38	67	105	45	52	97	36	48	84

Source: Compiled by the author from the administrative data of the sampled institutions

Table A.2.2: Enrolments in Institute 2 in the Selected Years

		2017-18			2016-17			2015-16		
		M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Engineering and Technology	Bachelors	35.7	7.6	43.4	42	7.4	49.4	46.8	7.1	53.9
	Masters	0.9	0.8	1.7	0.9	0.9	1.8	0.6	1.4	2
Computer Applications and Information Sciences	Bachelors	5.2	1.1	6.3	4.5	0.8	5.3	3.9	0.8	4.6
	Masters	0.9	0.7	1.6	0.9	0.7	1.5	0.9	0.8	1.7
Architecture and Communication Studies	Bachelors	3.6	2.5	6.1	3.4	2.4	5.9	3.1	2.2	5.3
	Masters	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0	0.1	0.1
Management and Commerce	Bachelors	14	5.7	19.7	13.8	4.9	18.7	13.5	4.4	17.9
	Masters	2.1	2.1	4.2	1.8	1.7	3.5	2.4	1.7	4
Languages, Humanities and Social Sciences	Bachelors	1.1	2.3	3.4	0.7	1.8	2.6	0.3	1.2	1.6
	Masters	0.1	0.8	0.9	0	0.6	0.6	0	0.3	0.3
Yoga and Allied Health Sciences	Bachelors	1.8	6.2	8	1.4	5.6	7	1.1	4.2	5.3
	Masters	0	0.3	1.6	1.8	0.2	1.1	1.3	0.1	1.3
	PhD	1.2	1.9	3	1	1.4	2.3	0.9	1.1	2
	Total	66.7	32.1	100	72.4	28.5	100	74.8	25.3	100
	N	3883	1867	5825	4405	1737	6088	4593	1557	6144

Source: Compiled by the author from the administrative data of the sampled institutions

Table A.2.3: Enrolments in Institute 4 in the Selected Years

		2017-18			2016-17			2015-16		
		M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Engineering and Technology	Bachelors	67.8	13.6	83.9	60.1	22.2	82.3	57.3	20.6	77.8
	Masters	3.6	4.8	8.3	4	5.3	9.3	5.9	8.5	14.3
Management and Commerce	Masters	1.6	2	3.6	1.8	2.9	4.8	3.2	2.7	5.9
	PhD	3.5	0.7	4.2	2.1	1.5	3.6	1.4	0.5	2
	Total	76.5	21.1	100	68.1	31.9	100	67.7	32.3	100
	N	1028	283	1344	929	436	1365	1030	491	1521

Source: Compiled by the author from the administrative data of the sampled institutions

Table A.2.4: Enrolments in Institute 5 in the Selected Years

		2017-18			2016-17			2015-16		
		M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Engineering and Technology	Bachelors	25	6.5	31.5	23.8	5.5	29.2	24	4.6	28.7
	Masters	3.8	1.6	5.5	3.9	2.1	6.1	4.4	2.1	6.6
	PhD	0.4	0.3	0.8	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.3
Computer Applications and Information Sciences	Masters	1.4	0.7	2.2	1.2	0.8	2	1.3	0.9	2.1
	PhD	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Architecture and Communication Studies	Bachelors	2.1	2.9	5	2	3.3	5.3	2	3.1	5.1
	Masters	0.3	0.7	1	0.5	0.8	1.2	0.3	0.8	1.1
	PG Diploma	0	0	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Certificate Programme	0	0	0	0	0.1	0.1	0	0	0.1
	PhD	0	0	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Medical	Bachelors	3.6	5.7	9.3	3.6	6	9.6	3.7	6.5	10.2
	Masters	1.3	2.5	3.8	2	2.6	4.6	2.2	3.1	5.3
	MPhil	0	0	0	0	0	0.1	0	0.1	0.1
	PhD	0.8	0.9	1.7	1.3	1.2	2.4	1.2	0.8	2
	Advance Training Program in Geriatric Medicine	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0
Nursing	Bachelors	0.2	1.1	1.3	0.2	1.2	1.4	0.2	1.3	1.5
	Masters	0	0.2	0.2	0	0.4	0.4	0	0.3	0.4
	Nurse Practitioner Critical Care	0	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Integrated MSc PhD	0.1	0.1	0.2	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Diploma	0.1	0.9	1.1	0.1	1	1.1	0.1	0.9	1.1
	PhD	0	0.1	0.1	0	0.1	0.1	0	0.1	0.1
	MPhil	0	0.1	0.1	0	0.1	0.1	0	0.1	0.2
Dental	Bachelors	0.7	1.6	2.4	0.6	2.2	2.8	0.8	2.2	3
	Masters	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.2	0.5	0.8	0.2	0.7	0.9
	PG Certificate	0.3	0.5	0.8	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.3	0.7	1
	Dental Mechanics	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Integrated Dental Photography Certificate Course	0.1	0.1	0.2	-	-	-	-	-	-

Pharmacy	**Bachelors**	0.7	0.8	1.5	0.6	0.9	1.5	0.4	1	1.5
	Masters	0.8	0.9	1.6	0.6	0.9	1.6	0.8	0.6	1.5
	Diploma	0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0	0	0
	PhD	0.2	0.5	0.7	0.2	0.4	0.6	0.2	0.4	0.6
Community Medicine and Public Health	**Masters**	0.2	0.5	0.7	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.6
	PhD	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Management and Commerce	**Bachelors**	4	2.4	6.4	3.9	2.1	6	3.2	1.5	4.7
	Masters	2.5	2.7	5.2	2.4	2.8	5.2	2.5	1.9	4.5
	PhD	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0
	PG Diploma	0	0.2	0.1	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.1
Languages, Humanities and Social Sciences	**Bachelors**	0	0.1	0.3	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Masters	0.1	0.6	0.7	0.4	0.6	0.9	0.4	0.7	1.1
	PhD	0	0	0	0	0	0.1	0	0	0
	Certificate Programme	0.4	0.6	1	0.4	0.6	1.1	0.5	0.8	1.3
Yoga and Allied Health Sciences	**Bachelors**	1.6	3.6	5.3	1.5	3.9	5.4	1.5	3.7	5.2
	Masters	0.3	2.5	2.8	0.5	2.2	2.7	0.6	2.2	2.8
	PhD	0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0	0.1	0	0	0
	Optometry Technician	0	0.1	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	OT Technician	-	-	-	0	0	0	-	-	-
	Pulmonary Technician	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0
	Radiography Course in X-ray Application	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0
	Refresher and Specific Advance Course in Amp Devices	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0
	Diploma	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.6	0.9	0.2	0.5	0.8
	Certificate Programme	0	0	0.1	0.1	0	0.1	0.1	0	0.1
Natural and Life Sciences	**Bachelors**	0.1	0.5	0.7	0.2	0.5	0.7	0.2	0.4	0.7
	Masters	0.2	0.6	0.8	0.2	0.6	0.8	0.2	0.5	0.7
	PG Diploma	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.1	0.2	0.3
	Certificate Programme	0	0.1	0.3	-	-	-	0	0.1	0.1
	MPhil	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	0

	PhD	0	0.1	0.1	0.2	0	0.1	0.1	0	0
Physical Sciences	**Bachelors**	1.4	0.4	1.8	1.5	0.2	1.7	1.8	0.4	2.2
	Masters	0	0.4	0.9	1.4	0.5	0.8	0.4	0.5	0.9
	PhD	0	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0	0.2	0.2	0.1
International Studies	**Bachelors**	0	0.1	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Masters	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.4
	PhD	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-
	Total	53.7	45.6	100	56.3	46.6	100	56.5	45.2	100
	N	3992	3389	7437	3907	3230	6935	3653	2920	6464

Source: Compiled by the author from the administrative data of the sampled institutions

Table A.2.5: Enrolments in Institute 6 in the Selected Years

		2017-18			**2016-17**			**2015-16**		
		M	**F**	**T**	**M**	**F**	**T**	**M**	**F**	**T**
Engineering and Technology	**Bachelors**	54.4	4.6	59	39.5	4.8	44.3	39.2	4.1	43.3
	Masters	1	0.3	1.3	9.8	4	13.7	10.9	5.2	16.1
Pharmacy	**Bachelors**	2.5	2.4	4.8	2.3	1.8	4	1.2	1.6	2.8
	Masters	0	0	0	1.1	0.7	1.8	0.7	1.3	2
Management and Commerce	**Masters**	0.1	0.1	0.2	3.6	1.5	5.1	4.1	1.5	5.6
Languages, Humanities and Social Sciences	**Masters**	6.6	0.9	7.4	4.9	0.8	5.7	5.1	1.1	6.2
Natural and Life Sciences	**Masters**	4.3	0.8	5.1	3.9	0.6	4.4	2.5	1	3.5
Physical Sciences	**Masters**	14.7	3.1	17.9	14.2	2.3	16.6	14	2.9	16.9
	PhD	2.7	1.6	4.3	2.7	1.7	4.4	2.2	1.3	3.5
	Total	86.2	13.8	100	81.8	18.2	100	80	20	100
	N	801	128	929	1012	225	1237	1142	286	1428

Source: Compiled by the author from the administrative data of the sampled institutions

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About the paper

Like many other developing countries, India has experienced a massive expansion in higher education in the last a couple of decades, which is primarily driven by the private sector for higher education. The higher education institutions in the private sector generally offer market-oriented courses in several disciplines. However, the fees charged by such institutions are comparatively higher than that for similar courses offered by the higher education institutions in the public sector. This paper discusses the transition from a public-supported higher education system to a private higher education system based on policy changes supporting market intervention and relying more on the self-financing mode of financing of higher education. The fees paid by students have been a major source of financing for such private institutions. The paper, which is based on an empirical study, focuses on the private deemed-to-be universities in India and unravels the diverse and increasing fee structure of these institutions that has implications for the affordability and quality of the courses offered by them in the absence of efficient regulations.

About the author

Dr. Jinusha Panigrahi is an Assistant Professor at the Centre for Policy Research in Higher Education at the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi. She holds a PhD in the Economics of Education from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She is the Co-Chair Person (2018-2021) of the Economics and Finance Education – Special Interest Group, Comparative International Education Society, United States. She is an alumna of the prestigious International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) U.S. Department of State, Washington DC. She has several years of experience in teaching and research. Jinusha's research work lies in the areas of economics of education, financing of higher education, internationalisation, and private higher education. She is the Co-editor of the 'India Higher Education Report 2018 on Financing of Higher Education' (SAGE, 2019). Jinusha is currently associated with a multi-country International Research Project (ESPI) on "Inequalities and Higher Education between Public Policies and Private Sector Development" coordinated by Ceped-Paris Descartes University in Paris.

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