



Private Education in China: Issues and Prospects

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In the recent years, China has witnessed a rapid expansion in the number of private education institutions. These institutes not only groom students to go abroad but also produce professionals to work in the high end companies in China. According to Frost & Sullivan Report, the spending on private education institution had risen to 288 billion Yuan in 2015 which by 2020 will become 490 billion Yuan. The “Promotion of Private Education Law” which was introduced in September 2017, favoured these institutes enormously. It allowed private education institutes to designate themselves as for-profit entities with numerous flexibilities. However, drawing on the trajectories of evolution of private education in China before Ming period, the speaker highlighted the emerging fractures and its consequences in the education system in China. Among many issues, law and regulations in these private education sector has been very problematic. Further, explosion of these private education institutions have exacerbated inequality in the education system in China. The speaker argued that incompetent faculties and inadequate education infrastructure in these high end private school is one of the reasons for the failure of the same.

The speaker clarified that the compulsory primary education and secondary education are two different entities in China and focussed research should never combine these two. Emergence and decline of private education has been a common phenomenon in China. If the Han dynasty patronised private education, the liberation of 1949 has resulted in its decline. It was only with the coming of 11th CPC and the promulgation of the 4th constitution of China in the late 1980s that the private education which was referred to as ‘the non-public’ education,

revived. Further, in the later years, the second phase of economic reform in China and the advent of globalization conditioned the growth of private education system. The number of institutions spiked from 20 in 1997 to 630 in 2007. The speaker stated that 2003 proved to be a significant year as it enforced the law on the 'promotion of private education' in China for the first time. The law has helped to legalise private institutions in China. Privatisation in higher education in China occurs at three levels. First, in the public run institution, specialised courses are provided to the students with financial capability; secondly, is the setting up of second tier college; thirdly, setting fully private educational institutes. Therefore, according to the speaker the primary characteristics of privatisation in this reform era were commercialization, decentralization, expansion and marketization.

Despite the proliferation of these institutes, degree granting permission has been denied, thus rendering the private institutes to being a mere second class status. Further, unlike government run universities, research funds to the private research institutes are not given. Most importantly, all the private institutes are subject to inspection by the government officials. In terms of faculty recruitment, earlier, the private institutions could have drawn the pool of retired faculty member from the renowned government run institutions.

About the Speaker

Sreemati Chakrabarti is a retired Professor of Chinese Studies in the Department of East Asian Studies, University of Delhi and Honorary Fellow and Vice-Chairperson of the Institute of Chinese Studies, Delhi. She has been Head of the Department from 2000 to 2003, from 2005-2008 and again from 2014-2017. From April 2014 to December 2015 she was Dean (Social Sciences) of Delhi University. Between 2009 to 2012 she was Honorary Director, Institute of Chinese Studies, Delhi. She has a PhD in Political Science from Columbia University and holds Master's degrees from Delhi University (Political Science) and Harvard University (Regional Studies – East Asia). She has done post-doctoral research at Beijing Normal University. Between 2007 and 2013 she was the Book Review Editor of the Sage journal China Report. Her publications include China and the Naxalites (1990), Mao, China's Intellectuals and the Cultural Revolution (1998), Taiwan Today (2007, edited with Anita Sharma) and a National Book Trust document, China (2007). She has also edited a forthcoming volume titled: Higher Education in Transition: Select Perspectives from India and China. She specializes on politics and education. On academic assignments she has

travelled to Russia, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Nepal, the United States, South Africa and several times to China. She is on various China-related panels in Indian universities and government-run research and educational organizations. Several television and radio news channels, including the BBC, invite her to comment on issues concerned with China and East Asia. In the year 2010 Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao felicitated her with the China-India Friendship Award.

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