

Privatisation as a Socio-Economic Policy and Its Impact on Teacher Education: A Study of B.Ed. Admissions and Vacancies in Maharashtra

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Article info

ABSTRACT

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This paper examined privatisation as a socio-economic policy shaping teacher education in India, focusing on B.Ed. admissions in Maharashtra during the 2020-21 academic session. Using secondary data from the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) and the Directorate of Higher Education (DHE), Maharashtra, the study traced the sector's growth and analysed admission outcomes across the 496 B.Ed. colleges approved for that cycle. Teacher education institutions in India grew by 268% between 2005 and 2020 (a compound annual growth rate of about 9%), with private, unaided colleges accounting for most of this expansion. In Maharashtra, of 34,218 approved B.Ed. seats, 46,813 students registered but only 29,533 (86.3% of verified applicants) were finally admitted, leaving 4,392 seats (12.8%) vacant. A chi-square goodness-of-fit test showed that these vacancies were not distributed in proportion to each category's share of colleges ($\chi^2(6) = 398.6, p < .001$): unaided-minority colleges held 22.3% of colleges but accounted for 28.4% of vacancies, while aided-minority and university-managed colleges were markedly under-represented in vacancies relative to their numbers. Vacancy rates also differed significantly by affiliating university ($\chi^2(4) = 415.5, p < .001$; Cramér's $V = 0.16$). These patterns suggest that fee structures and limited public-sector capacity, rather than the sheer number of private colleges, best explain vacancy disparities. The findings point to a demand-supply mismatch in India's expanding private teacher-education sector and raise questions about equity and quality that current policy has yet to resolve.

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1. Introduction

Privatisation has reshaped public life across sectors, and education is no exception. In India, the trend gained momentum after the 1991 economic reforms, which assumed that globalisation, privatisation, and liberalisation would expand employment and opportunity. Enrolment in privately managed higher education grew faster than

population growth over the following decades – by two-and-a-half times, according to Kapur and Mehta (2007), who attributed the expansion primarily to the retreat of the state system rather than to a genuine shift in stakeholder preference. Tilak (2006) identified converging causes: declining philanthropy, a profit orientation among new entrants, a shrinking public-sector footprint, and growing reliance on student fees.

At independence, India had 20 universities and roughly 500 colleges enrolling under 150,000 students; by 2006 this had grown to 348 universities, 17,973 colleges, and 10.5 million students (UGC, 2005-06). By 2019-20, of 1,043 universities, 408 were privately managed, and the private sector managed 78.6% of the country's colleges – 65.2% privately unaided and 13.4% privately aided (AISHE, 2019-20). Yet these private institutions together accounted for only 66.3% of total enrolment, suggesting considerable unused capacity even as the sector expanded. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has since called for an enhanced role for public-private partnerships, even as many private institutions continue to operate under charitable cover while following an essentially market-driven model. Teacher education has followed the same trajectory. The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) – the statutory body that grants and revokes permission to run teacher-education programmes, operating through four regional offices – recognised 16,754 institutions enrolling 1,910,548 learners by 2020, up 268% in institutions over 15 years (NCTE, 2020). This paper asks how that growth has translated into actual admissions on the ground, using Maharashtra's B.Ed. sector – regulated by NCTE's Western Regional Committee – as a case study.

2. Data and Method

The study drew on secondary data from NCTE annual reports (2005-2020) and the Maharashtra Directorate of Higher Education's Common Admission Process (CAP) portal for the 2020-21 B.Ed. admission cycle, supplemented by AISHE (2019-20) figures for state-level context. The analysis is descriptive, but two inferential tests were applied to the DHE dataset to check whether patterns visible in the raw numbers were statistically robust rather than incidental:

A chi-square goodness-of-fit test compared the observed share of vacant seats held by each college-management category (government, government-aided, university-managed, aided-minority, unaided, unaided-minority) against the share expected if vacancies were simply proportional to each category's number of colleges.

A chi-square test of independence (with Cramér's V as effect size) compared filled versus vacant seats across the five affiliating universities with the largest reported vacancies, to test whether vacancy rates differed by university beyond what chance would predict.

The study is confined to B.Ed. admissions in Maharashtra for the 2020-21 session and does not extend to other states, other teacher-education programmes, or other years.

3. Growth of Teacher Education Institutions

Table 1 summarises the growth in NCTE-recognised teacher-education courses, approved intake, and institutions between 2005 and 2020. Total institutions grew from 4,550 to 16,754 – a 268% increase, equivalent to a compound annual growth rate of about 9.1%. Approved intake for all courses grew even faster, at roughly 11.0% per year, indicating that new entrants were, on average, larger than existing institutions.

Indicator	2005	2010	2015	2020
B.Ed. courses recognised	2,182	6,363	7,964	9,634
B.Ed. approved intake	223,476	651,608	809,270	953,660
Total courses (all programmes)	5,194	14,405	18,374	24,621
Total approved intake (all programmes)	400,438	1,111,680	1,363,971	1,910,548

Total institutions	4,550	11,712	15,013	16,754
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Table 1. Growth of NCTE-recognised teacher education courses, intake, and institutions, India, 2005-2020. Source: NCTE Annual Reports, 2005-2020.

Total institutions grew 268% over the period (CAGR $\approx$ 9.1%); total approved intake grew at a CAGR of about 11.0%.

4. Maharashtra: Admissions and Vacancies, 2020-21

4.1 State context

Maharashtra ranked second among Indian states in higher-education capacity, with 4,494 colleges (34 per lakh population), behind only Uttar Pradesh (AISHE, 2019-20). Its Western Regional Committee (WRC) oversight covered 550 B.Ed. colleges with a combined intake of 42,500 – 17.5% of WRC's total B.Ed. capacity.

4.2 The admission funnel

For the 2020-21 session, DHE-CAP approved 496 colleges offering 34,218 seats, including 2,216 reserved for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS). Table 2 traces the funnel from registration to admission.

Stage	Number	% of approved intake
Approved intake (incl. 2,216 EWS)	34,218	100.0%
Registrations received	46,813	136.8%
Verified after locking	39,835	116.4%
Students finally admitted	29,533	86.3%
Seats left vacant	4,392	12.8%

Table 2. B.Ed. admission funnel, Maharashtra, 2020-21. Source: DHE, Maharashtra CAP portal. 10.4% of registrations were rejected at verification, and a further 23.6% of verified applicants did not secure admission – pointing to a mismatch of choices and seats rather than a simple shortage of applicants.

4.3 Colleges by management category

Of the 496 approved colleges, only 12 (2.4%) were government-run and 6 were university-managed. Unaided private colleges – 328 general plus 110 minority-managed – made up 88.7% of all approved colleges, concentrated in Pune and Mumbai University's jurisdiction (87 and 84 affiliated colleges respectively).

College category	Colleges	Vacant seats	% of colleges
Unaided (general)	328	2,666	66.4%
Unaided minority	110	1,246	22.3%
Government aided	27	246	5.5%
Government	12	108	2.4%
University-managed, aided	5	74	1.0%
Aided minority	11	2	2.2%
University-managed, unaided	1	50	0.2%
Total	494	4,392	100.0%

Table 3. B.Ed. colleges and vacant seats by management category, Maharashtra, 2020-21. Source: DHE, Maharashtra. (Excludes the “Unaided Autonomous” category, which had zero approved colleges.)

4.4 Is vacancy proportional to the number of colleges? A statistical test

The raw figures in Table 3 could simply reflect the fact that unaided colleges are the most numerous. To test this, a chi-square goodness-of-fit test compared each category's observed share of the 4,392 vacant seats against the share expected if vacancies were purely proportional to its number of colleges. The difference was highly significant ($\chi^2(6) = 398.6$, $p < .001$).

The deviations were informative rather than uniform. Unaided-minority colleges held 22.3% of colleges but 28.4% of vacancies – well above the 22.3 % expected – indicating disproportionately weak demand for this category specifically. By contrast, aided-minority colleges (2.2% of colleges) accounted for only 0.05% of vacancies, far below the ~19.8% expected share for a group that size, and university-managed and government colleges were likewise under-represented in vacancies. Plain unaided (non-minority) colleges, despite holding the largest share of colleges (66.4%),

held a slightly smaller share of vacancies (60.7%) than their numbers alone would predict. In short, vacancy is not simply a function of how many private colleges exist – it is concentrated in specific categories, most notably unaided-minority institutions, while aided and university-run colleges of every type fill up first.

4.5 Does vacancy rate differ by affiliating university?

Table 4 reports the five affiliating universities with the highest reported vacancies.

University	Colleges	Intake	Vacant	Vacancy rate
Homi Bhabha National Institute, Mumbai	1	55	29	52.7%
University of Mumbai	84	5,835	1,489	25.5%
SNDT Women's University, Mumbai	46	3,142	775	24.7%
Kavi Kulguru Kalidas Sanskrit University	4	383	69	18.0%
Savitribai Phule Pune University	87	6,981	898	12.9%

Table 4. Universities with the highest B.Ed. vacancy rates, Maharashtra, 2020-21. Source: DHE, Maharashtra.

A chi-square test of independence (filled vs. vacant seats $\times$ university) confirmed that vacancy rates differed significantly across these five universities ($\chi^2(4) = 415.5$, $p < .001$). Cramér's $V = 0.16$ indicates a small-to-moderate effect: university affiliation is a real but partial explanation for vacancy, alongside college category and, plausibly, fee levels and location, which this dataset cannot separate out.

4.6 Fees and student choice

Students bore roughly half of B.Ed. fees, with the state's social-welfare department covering the rest through scholarships for eligible categories. Because private colleges often charged more than the combined scholarship-plus-tuition ceiling, open-category students without full scholarship cover faced higher effective costs – a likely driver of the pattern above. This also explains why EWS seats, expanded that year to 2,216, saw 1,730 (78.1%) remain vacant despite the additional allocation: fee support did not fully offset the cost gap. Government and aided colleges, which charge no additional fees and employ permanent staff, correspondingly recorded far lower vacancy (2.4-5.6%) than unaided institutions.

5. Limitations

The analysis is limited to B.Ed. admissions in Maharashtra for the 2020-21 session and does not extend to other states, programmes, or years. It does not incorporate student-level variables such as economic status, detailed fee structures, distance, or college facilities and staffing, that plausibly influence admission choices alongside the institutional factors examined here. The statistical tests establish that observed patterns are unlikely to be due to chance, not that any single factor (fees, category, or location) causes them individually.

6. Conclusion

Privatisation has driven a large and rapid expansion of teacher education in India, evident in a 268% growth in institutions between 2005 and 2020. In Maharashtra, this expansion has outpaced demand: 12.8% of approved B.Ed. seats went unfilled in 2020-21, concentrated disproportionately in unaided-minority colleges ($\chi^2(6) = 398.6$, $p < .001$) and varying significantly by affiliating university ($\chi^2(4) = 415.5$, $p < .001$). Government, aided, and university-managed colleges, despite being few in number filled up first, most plausibly because of lower fees, permanent staff, and institutional reputation.

These patterns suggest that expanding the Gross Enrolment Ratio through private capacity has not, by itself, delivered equitable access: cost remains a binding constraint for students outside protected categories, and supply

has grown faster than demand in the least-regulated segment of the market. As the National Education Policy 2020 pushes further public-private partnership, the evidence here indicates that quality assurance and fee regulation – not further unaided expansion – are the more pressing needs if privatisation is to serve equity as well as enrolment growth.

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