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# Changing Landscape of Higher Education in Tamil Nadu: The Case of Management Education in Tamil Nadu

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**ABSTRACT:** This dominant share of private self-financing institutions in higher education with a focus on Management education, the paper attempts to look at the growth of such institutions over a period of time from 2001-10 to 2011-15. The changing nature of higher and technical education is much more nuanced and cumulative across time but also multi-woven in terms of policy paradigms at global, macroeconomic, sector specific and sub-sector level. The present paper makes an attempt to look at these changing dynamics of higher education, using Management education in Tamil Nadu as a case of reference those attempts to marshal the emerging salient characteristics of private higher education focusing on technical education in the state. While doing so, it brings out the major issues of the private colleges in the state. Later, it discusses the policy responses to the changes in the higher technical education in the state.

**KEYWORDS:** Higher Education, Management Educational Institutes, Management structure and Growth.

### I. INTRODUCTION

Knowledge is the key resource for global competitiveness. The processes of liberalization, privatization and globalization (LPG), along with technological revolution have further strengthened the significance of a knowledge-based society. Globalization and education are mutually supportive. It is a two way process, as globalization presupposes competitiveness and efficiency in the system and efficiency, in turn, is achieved upon the latest technology or knowledge accessible to the system. The entire process of globalization is technology-driven and knowledge-driven. In order to realize India's aspirations to become a Knowledge Superpower by 2010 and a Developed Nation by 2020, the country requires highly specialized human capital to create, share, use and manage knowledge. It presents both an opportunity – demographic dividend of its youth, especially in the 18-25 age groups and the challenge of channelizing them through the present confusing to chaotic situation of higher education in India.

Higher education in India and the educationally advanced state of Tamil Nadu needs to be viewed in this fast changing global context. Indeed, the Government of Tamil Nadu devotes special attention to strengthen the higher education system in the state and to respond to the emerging demands of the new century (GoTN, 2006a). The Government of Tamil Nadu is committed to a range of objectives, including economic growth, distributional goals, social inclusion, etc. Higher education is directly relevant to all these, besides the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. For higher education, these imply that in order to support growth, the sector needs to be large enough, of high quality, and responsive to a rapidly changing environment<sup>1</sup>. In addition, to support distributional objectives, the needs

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<sup>1</sup> The information on total central government transfers to higher education by states is not readily available. From

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of the weaker sections of the society including women, rural population, socially and economically backward communities are to be taken care of (GoTN, 2006a).

Achieving the objective of growth with equal access requires not only the full responsibility of the 'state' but also huge investments on the education sector, especially on higher education. In an era of declining government finances for higher education, private sector plays a dominant role, especially in professional higher education in India and Tamil Nadu in particular. In this light, the paper concentrates on the rapid growth of private sector in higher education, which led to the changing landscape of higher education in Tamil Nadu. The changing nature of higher education is much more nuanced and cumulative not only across time period but also multi-woven in terms of policy paradigms at the global, macroeconomic, sector specific and sub-sector levels.<sup>2</sup>

## II. GROWTH OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The system of education in Tamil Nadu inherited a poor educational infrastructure from the colonial masters. The colonial policy focused neither on mass education nor on higher education. As a consequence, they had to begin from scratch soon after its Independence. In order to meet the requirements of professional and technical manpower in a developing economy, the government set up the Tamil Nadu Institutes of Technology, regional engineering colleges, medical colleges, arts and science colleges and universities. In 2000-01, there were only 8 university level and research institutions which grew to 38 in 2014-15. During the same period, the colleges grew from 382 to 1642 in the country. The growth of the colleges during this period was high at 7.24 percent per annum compared to 5.47 percent at the university level. A similar trend can also be found at the growth of enrolment that it has been while it was 11.34 percent in Tamil Nadu. (See Table 1).

Table 1: Growth of Higher Educational Institutions and Enrolment in Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu				
Enrolment*	HEIs	Colleges	Univs & R. instns	Years
0.19	390	382	8	2000 – 01
0.21	403	395	8	2001 – 02
0.24	624	608	16	2002 – 04
0.36	736	716	20	2004 – 06
0.42	1009	986	23	2006 – 08
0.59	1015	989	26	2008 – 10
0.56	1586	1558	28	2010 – 11
0.61	1558	1530	28	2011 – 12
0.81	1684	1642	42	2012 – 13
1.32	1645	1436	36	2013 – 14
1.59	1759	1530	38	2014 – 15
11.34	7.64	7.24	5.47	Gth. Rates

Note: \* enrolment in millions; Growth rates (in %) are estimated by fitting a semi log liner trend regressions from 2000-01 to 2014-15.

UGC annual reports, one can cull out information from the fund allocation to state universities and colleges in Tamil Nadu. However, similar information is not available from MHRD annual reports.

<sup>2</sup> However, all government and aided engineering colleges offer courses that are accredited by National Board of Accreditation ([www.nba.org](http://www.nba.org)).

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Source: Selected Educational Statistics, various issues.

In recent years, women's enrollment has been in higher proportion in higher education institutions. During 2014-15, about 42 percent of the student strength of the State was women, which was only 37 percent during 2006-07. It is also a policy of the State to promote the participation of women at all levels of higher education, especially the levels that require special talents, knowledge and skill. The annual growth rates of female students enrolment is 10 percent and while the growth rate of male students is around 6 percent during the period between 2006-07 and 2014-15 (see Table 2).

Table 2: Enrolment in Higher Educational Institutions by Gender in Tamil Nadu (in 000s).

% of Girls in Total	All	Girls	Boys	
37.5	239.95	90.04	149.91	2006 – 07
43.1	356.71	153.87	202.85	2007 – 08
48.6	419.27	203.84	215.43	2008 – 09
44.9	592.74	266.14	326.60	2009 – 10
45.	558.50	255.87	302.63	2010 – 11
47.6	613.18	291.57	321.60	2011 – 12
47.9	543.70	260.19	283.51	2012 – 13
41.9	1324.36	554.68	769.68	2013 – 14
42.3	1587.53	671.00	916.53	2014 – 15
	7.60	9.85	6.01	GR

Source: same as Table 1<sup>3</sup>

### Management Structure and Institutional Type

The structure of higher education in India and in many states including Tamil Nadu consists of universities, research institutions, deemed to be universities which are at the highest level of higher educational institutions. At the next level, it is the colleges by disciplines such as general arts and science, professional including engineering, management, medical, agriculture and law colleges. These structures and distribution of higher education in Tamil Nadu is presented row wise for the year 2014-15 in Table 4. There are 35 university level institutions comprising general higher education universities, technical universities, agricultural, law and medical universities during 2014-15(see column 5 of Table 3).

Table 3: Structure of Higher Educational Institutions by Type of Management in Tamil Nadu in 2014-15

% of Institution type in total Institutions	Total (in numbers)	Self-fing. (in %)	Pvt. Aided (in %)	Govt. (in %)	Institutions
(6)	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	
2.48	35	31.4	11.4	57.1	Univs. including DU.
34.78	490	60.6	27.1	12.2	Arts and Science colleges
17.60	248	94.8	1.2	4.0	Engineering Colleges

<sup>3</sup> Students between the ages of 17 and 24

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15.19	214	71.5	18.2	10.3	Polytechnics
1.77	25	40.0	0.0	60.0	Medical colleges
0.35	5	60.0	40.0	0.0	Ayurveda colleges
1.21	17	94.1	0.0	5.9	Dental colleges
0.71	10	90.0	0.0	10.0	Homoeopathy
0.78	11	27.3	0.0	72.7	Law colleges
10.36	146	90.4	1.4	8.2	Management*
0.78	11	0.0	27.3	72.7	Agriculture Colleges
11.36	160	86.9	8.8	4.4	Colleges of Education
0.57	8	62.5	37.5	0.0	Colleges of Physical edn
2.06	29	51.7	41.4	6.9	Others**
100.00	1409	73.0	15.3	11.8	All

Note: PA – private aided; DU – Deemed Universities; \* Management institutes are part of the existing institutions except 44 additional individual business schools (includes hotel mgt) (see Saravanan, 2015); \*\* others include  
Source: [www.ugc.nic.in](http://www.ugc.nic.in); based on Government of Tamil Nadu (2015a); Statistical Handbook of Tamil Nadu, 2014

A large number (490) of general higher education colleges namely arts and science colleges exist which are affiliated to universities that are under the overall purview of the University Grants Commission (UGC). These general colleges occupy the highest share of 35 percent (see column 6 of Table 4) of all higher educational institutions<sup>4</sup>. The professional colleges include engineering, medical, pharmacy, agriculture, law, management (constitute another 35 percent) and a few others like colleges of education, etc. The professional colleges fall under the purview of various bodies - engineering, pharmacy and management colleges and computer application programmes are to get the approval of AICTE, medical colleges the Medical Council of India and Law colleges - the Bar Council of India. There is an overlap of various regulatory bodies in higher and professional education.

For instance, the management and computer application courses attached to general arts and science colleges, which fall under the purview of UGC, need to get the approval of the AICTE also.<sup>5</sup> As noted by Singh (2012) and a few others, the Centre has set up more than twelve professional councils. Each one of them has specific powers relating to the area with which it is concerned. Each one of them has a specific role to play and it is for the Ministry of Human Resource Development to deal with how they coordinate their functioning with one another.

Yet another dimension presented vertically in Table 4 is the institutional type by management. The educational institutions in India and in states are of three basic types based on funding and provision: (i) government provision and financing of higher educational institutions; (ii) private provision and government financing referred as private aided institutions and (iii) private provision and financing referred to as self-financing institutions. Internationally, three most prominent types, such as culturally pluralistic type, consisting of religious, charity, and philanthropy – termed as the fused private-public entities. These are somewhat similar to the private aided sector in many states in India. This type of management reflects simultaneous dominance of private aided institutions in Tamil Nadu during 1970s until middle of 1980s. The third type is the self-financing institutions which are in the nature of non-elite but demand absorbers. Their growth is accelerated in recent decades especially since 1990s primarily because of the excess of demand over supply (Geiger, 2004; Levy, 2006).

The self financing institutions in Tamil Nadu exploit the circumstances and emerge as something similar to

<sup>4</sup> Even though UGC is the regulatory body of all such colleges in the country at the federal level, the state governments equally play a vital role at the policy level.

<sup>5</sup> Anandakrishnan, M. (2004). Equity, Quality and Quantity in Higher Education, in Issues in Higher Education, Vol. II. ICFAI University Press. Hyderabad.

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the for-profit higher education in the United States wherein students and families buy higher education services in the market place (Morey, 2004; Kinser and Levy, 2007). It has developed sporadically within a very short span covering more than 90 percent of the total engineering and management colleges in the state (see column 4 of Table 4). Even among the general arts and science colleges 60 percent are self-financing. Among the higher educational institutions, about three fourth are self-financing type of institutions. Given this dominant share of private self financing institutions in higher education, the following section attempts to look at the growth of such institutions over a period of time that is from 2006-07 to 2014-15.

### III. PATTERN OF GROWTH: THE TREND

This section examines the pattern of growth of higher education under various levels from university level institutions to colleges by disciplines in the state.

#### I) Universities

University level institutions comprise Institutions of National Importance; State Universities; Deemed to be Universities with government funds, Deemed Universities without government funds or self-financing or private universities. Two institutions of national importance, Indian Institute of Technology and Dakshina Bharti Hindi Prachar Sabha, both funded by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), and another two deemed universities getting UGC funds are located in Tamil Nadu. Higher education is in the concurrent list with the Centre having an important role.<sup>6</sup> But, the federal commitment to higher education as institutions of importance and deemed universities remained stagnant since 2009-10 or much earlier since 1959 in the case of IIT, and 1964 with regard to Dakshina Bharti Hindi Prachar Sabha. Among 18 state universities only 12 get plan funds or development assistance from the UGC (see Table 4).

Table 4: Growth of University Level Institutions by Funding Type in Tamil Nadu

Funding Source	2014 - 15	2012 -13	2010 -11	2008 – 09	Type
MHRD	2	2	2	2	Institutions of National Importance
State govt/UGC	18	16	14	13	State Universities
State govt/ UGC	2	2	2	2	DUs with govt funds
Self-financing	13	10	10	7	DUs (self financing)
	35	30	28	24	All

Source: Based on UGC Annual Reports, various issues and [www.ugc.nic.in](http://www.ugc.nic.in) downloaded as on 17.05.2015

The state universities are primarily funded by the state government and they get a meager share of plan assistance from the UGC. It is to be noted that the new state universities established since 2008-09 do not get any central assistance. Unfortunately, no central university exists in the state for a full funding of plan and non-plan assistance by the UGC. Centre allocation to states for higher education take place via MHRD and UGC<sup>7</sup>. The share of

<sup>6</sup> [www.tnmgr.univ.org](http://www.tnmgr.univ.org)

<sup>7</sup> The information on total central government transfers to higher education by states is not readily available. From UGC annual reports, one can cull out information from the fund allocation to state universities and colleges in Tamil

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UGC funds in total higher education expenditure in the state was as low as from 7.5 percent to around 12.5 percent in the last one and a half decade.

### II) Management Colleges

Management Education in colleges affiliated to universities started at Calcutta in 1954, quickly followed by Universities of Bombay, Delhi and Madras. In order to meet the growing demand for management education, the AICTE permitted from 2014 -15 a large number of MBA and Post Graduate Diploma in Business Management programmes on self-financing basis. Tamil Nadu was again in the race along with Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh, these three states alone accounted for nearly 60 percent of the full-time seats. The private societies and trusts in these states had the experience of establishing and managing diploma and degree level engineering colleges and, therefore, were quick in taking the lead in the sector of self-financing management education (AICTE, 1999). The management educational institutions first began to appear in 1987-88 in Tamil Nadu and grew many folds between 1994 and 1999 and then the growth gradually stagnated. Among the 146 institutions in 2013 - 14, ninety one percent of them are self-financing institutions and do not get any grant from state or Central government. (See Table 5).

Table 5: Management Educational Institutions by Type of Management in Tamil Nadu

Since 2012 (in per cent)	2000s	Since 2012 (in numbers)	2000s	Management Type
5.4	3.9	8	4	Govt (state colleges, univ depts. DU, Central govt)
1.4	1.0	2	1	Private aided
93.2	95.1	138	98	PUA (including private DUs)
100	100	148	103	Total

Source: based on [www.aicte.nic.in](http://www.aicte.nic.in) downloaded as on 20.5.2007

Almost a similar trend could be observed in medical and para medical education as well.

### Emerging Characteristics and Major Issues of Management Institution in the State:

This section examines two major aspects of the Management Institution and University, viz., major characteristics and major issues relating to Management Institution and university. The characteristics of the Management Institution and University are examined in terms of provision. The major aspects covered under this include:

- Number of institutions and intake by location
  - Background of sponsors
  - Affiliation
  - Single and multiple discipline institutions
  - Size and composition of faculty at different levels and qualifications and
  - Infrastructure (extent of campus, presence of major facilities such as library, labs, etc.)
- Further, the major issues relating to Management Institution and University are examined in terms of –
- Admission criteria and procedures
  - Fees
  - Quality
  - Performance

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Nadu. However, similar information is not available from MHRD annual reports.



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- Performance evaluation and
- Functioning of regulatory authorities

The information used for this analysis primarily comes from the websites of the individual institutions, besides the AICTE website and the Statistical Abstract and Policy Notes on Higher and Technical Education in Tamil Nadu. The individual websites of 43 self financing engineering colleges (courtesy: tamilnow.com ;) has been meticulously looked at to decipher the information on various aspects examined here. In each of the aspects, the kind of information provided by the colleges in their websites varies at great deal. Such variation is found despite the fact that AICTE has stipulated to provide the mandatory disclosure of information by each of the Management Institution and University in a standard Performa.

### Functioning of Regulatory Authorities

Need for regulation of the private self-financing colleges from both the centre and state has to be ensured. Although the AICTE was legally equipped with sufficient powers for enforcement of standards, it has hardly lived up to the task that was envisaged for. It is important to note that the Government of Tamil Nadu plays an active role in governance if not in regulation. A couple of interventions namely single window system and abolition of common entrance test are noteworthy in this context.

### Single Window System of Admission

The state regulation has been in an incremental approach, resulting in piece-meal additions to programs that are already in place. When private self-financing institutions came in large numbers in the eighties in the four States of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Maharashtra, there was no effective mechanism to control their functioning, nor was there a systematic admission procedure, except in Andhra Pradesh, where all seats were filled up by the Government on merit basis. In other states, 50 percent seats were filled up by the respective governments and for the remaining seats, large sums of money were collected as donations. Since the demand for admissions continued to increase and there was no effective control, the situation led to a sort of commercialization of technical education. The above situation continued even after all institutions were brought under the AICTE control. Later, the Supreme Court, in a historical judgment in 1993, defined the norms for admission and the fee structure for all self-financing engineering colleges. As per the Supreme Court directive, all admissions to self-financing private colleges are to be done by the respective state governments based on merit. 50 percent of the seats are “free seats” for which the fee structure is the same as those of government institutions in the state government (AICTE, 1999, p.151).

Following this, the State Government of Tamil Nadu has introduced a single window system of admission of students to engineering colleges during 1997–98 and streamlined the admission procedure on the basis of merit of the students. The planning and execution of the single window system of engineering admissions has been executed by the Anna University (GoTN, 2006a). However, in conducting examinations and evaluation, these colleges were under the Madras University and operating independently until 2002. In 2003, the state government brought all these colleges under the Anna University. The State Legislature has passed an Amendment Bill disaffiliating all the engineering colleges from the six general purpose universities of the State and affiliating the same to the Anna University.<sup>8</sup> The Bill also contains a provision for transfer of all the Government engineering colleges to the Anna University as constituent colleges. Belatedly in 2001, the state came up with a common entrance test covering all management colleges along the line of engineering colleges when the Anna University Amendment Bill was passed. Not only the engineering colleges, but also all arts and science colleges are part of an affiliating university, whose main function is to act as a regulating and an examining body in Tamil Nadu.

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<sup>8</sup> Singh, A (2004), Challenges in Higher Education, Economic and Political Weekly, vol. 34 (21), pp. 2155-58.

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## Abolition of Common Entrance Test

The common entrance test (CET) system for admissions to professional courses in Tamil Nadu was introduced in 1984 in order to infuse transparency in the admissions process, at least with regard to the government quota seats in unaided professional education institutions. The CET system evolved over time and got its present structure in the early 1990s. Admissions to courses in medical, paramedical, engineering, veterinary and agriculture and allied sciences were based on a combination of marks obtained in the higher secondary examinations and the CET. This CET is largely urban biased and did not consider large interest and welfare of the student community. This resulted in mushrooming of coaching centers and fleecing parents in the name of entrance examination<sup>9</sup>. To lessen the burden and hardship faced by students in view of CET, the government constituted a high-level expert committee headed by former Anna University Vice-Chancellor M Anandhakrishnan to recommend measures to be taken for abolition of CET from 2007-08.

Following the recommendations of the committee, the State Government enacted the Tamil Nadu Regulation of Admission in Professional Courses Act 2006 whereby the CET was abolished for students clearing the State Board Examination.<sup>10</sup> The students of other boards such as the Central Board of Secondary Education were required to write the CET for admission to professional courses. It may be noted that as in 2007-08, Tamil Nadu is the only state which abolished CET. The major thrust behind the CET abolition is an attempt to place the rural students at parity with that of urban students. In addition, it is also important to note that rural Tamil Nadu's biggest provider of higher secondary education is public-funded institutions run by the state government and local bodies, wherein the quality need to be enhanced.

However, these are a few lukewarm measures taken at the state or aggregate level. Given the intensity of the nexus between high fees combined with poor quality and no accountability of the private institutions, the state does make an attempt but an effective one because of the nature of dynamic and complex relationship among education, finance and polity.

## IV. CONCLUSION

Tamil Nadu's higher education in engineering with the 70 percent share with above 50 percent share of enrollments in the private sector, still operates in a largely effectively under regulated space. The most acute problem is quality on account of lack of competent faculty. This coupled with a lack of accountability raises serious doubts as to its ability to address the huge latent demand for quality higher education in the state. As aptly put, "There is a place for the market, but the market must be kept in its place" (Krip, 2007). Hence, a more effective regulatory framework needs to be developed to address the problem of imperfect information on the quality of teaching and student learning. While improved information sharing on academic quality would be an obvious regulatory mechanism, some form of "enforced self-regulation" is needed for more effective private higher education. This would entail government incentives and sanctions designed to reform and strengthen institutional and professional mechanisms for assuring academic quality, expressed as early as in the middle of nineteenth century by J.S. Mill (1965).

Hence, it is important to regulate market through both short-term and long-term policies. In the short run, it needs to focus on ensuring quality and accountability of the private higher education system immediately. In the long run, the 'state' should raise some fundamental and forgotten intrinsic values such as positive externalities, the social purpose that higher education serves, the nation building role it performs, the public good and the human right natures of higher education are to be brought back. Given these inherent and intrinsic values of higher education, some basic questions like - Should the expansion of private higher education continue? How much responsibility does it owe to the

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<sup>9</sup> MHRD, Selected Educational Statistics, Government of India, New Delhi, various issues.  
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NSSO, (2003a), Unorganised Service Sector in India 2001-02, Salient Features, Report No.482, NSS 57th Round, Government of India.

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public good? How to revive the abandoned scholarship? How to save the core of the ideals of modern higher education in the face of market forces serving private interests rather than the public good? etc., are to be the policy concerns in the middle to long run.

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