

Stop Hired Teaching Business

The mushrooming private universities in the city and elsewhere could be a measure of the facilities for higher education in demand. It could also mean the missed opportunities for excellence by the growing army of candidates at this level had these institutions not come up opening their doors to those candidates. But unfortunately, these universities, barring a handful reputed ones, have made a mockery of the tertiary-level education.

Universities are not only housed in the unlikeliest places and buildings, they are run by hired teachers. Since privatisation is a global trend and a screaming slogan for many governments including ours, we have allowed ourselves to fall in the trap. Privatisation means improvement of quality and performance, not the other way round. Now without campuses, libraries and even teachers, these private universities render what is called a middle-man's service. How they manage government approval is rather intriguing. What responsibility the University Grants Commission (UGC) is performing?

Not that classes are not held and courses are not completed. The hired teachers are there for doing the job. Now who hire out their teaching service? Obviously the teachers from public universities and government colleges. It should be made clear that not all of them are making themselves available for hired teaching. But then there are others who would rush from one such private facility to another to keep their busy schedule. And in the process, education has been commercialised beyond limits. A teacher from the public university takes the responsibility to complete a course and he or she does so with the help of his/her colleagues. Thus more teachers of the public university gets involved. The lure of lucre obviously does the trick.

When teachers are so busy, it cannot be without a price. There is a complaint that in maintaining their busy schedule outside, the teachers have to ignore teaching at their own universities—willingly or unwillingly. After all, teaching at the highest level is no joke. Besides, there is the question of physical endurance. So all this can go on at the expense of the poor students of the public universities or government colleges. The quality of education in public educational institutions is bound to fall when teachers are more preoccupied with teaching in private universities. They are not supposed to do justice to the subjects or courses simply because their attention is divided and they try to swallow more than they can chew.

Teaching at the school level has long got compromised because of private tuition. Now the private universities are playing the same role for higher education. If private universities were adequately staffed and had the required facilities, no one would complain. But please stop the farcical 'hired teaching business'. It is cutting into our higher education like a double-edge sabre.