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## SELF-FINANCING ENGINEERING COLLEGES IN KERALA; ISSUES AND CHALLENGES- A CASE ANALYSIS

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### Abstract

*Education is the key factor for socio, political and economic development of every nation. The number of institutions for education was inadequate in India for last few years. These problems are tackled by the government by permitting private participation in the field of education. The privatisation is more prominent in higher education especially in professional education. In Kerala, number of self financing colleges in engineering is very high when compared to Government / aided colleges. This blooming of self financing colleges creates lots of quality issues in education. Students faces problems regarding facilities, academic environment etc. Here the researcher analyses an issue of an engineering college through a case. Students of the same college were the sample for the study. Document analysis and interview were used. Verbal interpretations of the results were done for analysis. From the analysis it is clear that there were some problem in the college regarding their attitude towards students.*

### INTRODUCTION

The socio political and economic development of India necessitated the demand for education and hence the education system of the country expanded a lot. Like other sections of education the demand for higher education also been grown rapidly. In-respect to the population growth of India, the number of educational institutions is not adequate. The population growth rate is double but the number of institutions for higher education has been grown at slower rate at 1990. In a neoliberal economic order across the globe it shows the tendency of the governments to withdraw from investing on service sectors like Education and Health, this become a serious problem for getting access to higher education for a majority. At that time the government will have to set up measures to overcome these difficulties. The idea of self financing of higher education comes from these difficulties faced by the government. The government authority encourages self reliance which provides a massive investment in education.

'User pay Principle' is the common base of the self financing system. At 1990 in a discussion paper Government of India have a discussion on government subsidies? In this the higher education was considered as "non - merit good". At that time the government will give more importance to primary and secondary education. At the same time students faces problems to obtained admission in to higher education especially professional education. One of the reasons for this situation was due to less number of professional institutions. To overcome these difficulties the government will step to start more institutions especially higher professional institutions in self reliance mode. This will result in blooming of self financing institutions in professional education sections.

### Scenario in Kerala

Private participation in education or privatisation is not a new phenomenon in Kerala. The public expenditure on higher education was dropped by the government, so the state will be unable to invest fund to higher education sectors. Here also government encourages self financing institutions. Courses in engineering emerged as one of the most preferred options for students passing out the secondary school system. Right from the begging and until 2001 the engineering education in Kerala was public funded. At

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that time most of the colleges were government owned and a small number of colleges were govt. aided in case of engineering colleges.

Kerala has one of the large numbers of seats for undergraduate courses in engineering; in-response to the growing demands for engineering courses. In the year 2002 onwards there has been a tremendous increase in the capacities and actual intake of places for engineering occurred. Self financing colleges increase the capacity of engineering in Kerala. Now there are 156 self financing engineering colleges in Kerala. This paper discusses an issue regarding self financing engineering college in Kerala. It is an attempt to case and present a narrative analysis on an issue of self-financing college.

## **NEED FOR THE STUDY**

The number of seats in engineering increased a lot, but there was some quality issues reported daily. The Directorate of technical education done a result analysis of engineering degree course for the years 2009.2010 and 2011 and published at 2012 shows 60% engineering colleges have only below 50% pass. At June 28th 2012 Kerala High court ordered AICTE to consider cancellation of affiliation given to self financing colleges have low pass percentage. The court directed the state to grand new NOC. Meanwhile lots of issues regarding self financing colleges were reported in newspapers and other media. One of the most burning issue regarding engineering colleges is the suicide of a B. tech student from a self financing college. Considering this in mind, the investigator has done an analysis of the same issue in detail.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study followed case centered analysis Here the researcher analysed the oral expression of students. Stories and experiences of students who were studied in the college were collected and interview was done on engineering graduates and ongoing B.Tech. students of the self financing colleges. Media reports, news papers reports and writings in the social Medias are used for document analysis. The data were analysed by verbal interpretation.

## **THECASE**

A first year B.Tech. student committed suicide at the hostel of a self financing college. The news and media report say that this incident was due to the mental harassment by the college authority towards the same student. But the college authority said that they caught the student for coping in examination. Meanwhile the authority from KTU who conducted a direct investigation in to the same issue found that the college authorities argument were false.

## **EXPERIENCES OF STUDENTS**

Five students reported that there is an 'idimuri' ( a room for the physical attack) in that college. They told that the student who committed suicide were beaten by the staff of the college in the vice principals room. Some students said that the body of the suicide committed student there were some beaten mark. The media also reported that in the post-mortem report of the case substantiate the above statement

One of the girl students said that boy was not copying anything in the time of examination. The examiner caught him for looking back at the time of exam. The examiner used cruel words and scolded him. She also claimed that he was a brilliant student.

Another student remembered that that the boy committed suicide was an active student and he questioned college authority on some issues regarding the college. The college authority will not tolerate questioning from the students. They focused the student and create situation for disciplinary action on him. This will lead to the death of the boy.



One student told that 3000 rupees were fined for a student who caught for coping in examination. 10% of this is given to the invigilators who caught the coping student. To get more money the teachers some time caught innocent students. College authority also motivates this activity because they get money very easily. In some cases the amount of fine increases to more than 3000.

One girl student says that the facilities of the college are not satisfactory. Most of the faculties have only B. Tech or M Tech and are just pass outs. When the students question them on their academic qualities the faculties threaten them on the bases of internal marks.

One boy student has an experience that in an internal examination time he had lots of tension regarding exams he forgot to shave his face. When he entered in to exam hall without 'clean shave' the faculties not permitted him to entered in to the hall and return him and said do first your shave and then exam. He returned back and lost the chance for those examinations. He also said that the authority was very strict and no humane consideration.

One drop out of the college says that occurrence of this type of issue is not first in that college. When he was studying at that college an issue regarding girls' hostel was occurred. At that time with his friends he also participated in the protest against the college authority. He was one of the leaders of that protest. Almost all students participated in the protest at that time. Then the college was shut down for few days. The college authority takes disciplinary action towards the leaders. After that issue he faced lots of issues. He was threaten by the authority and brutally beaten by the college 'gundas' (criminals). At that time the Medias covered the protest against the college but they were not given due important to that issue. He thinks that it was due to the high political influence of the college authority. After the issue he will not able to complete the course.

One alumni student from the college says that the 'Idimuri' is true. In his words most of the boys who questioned any of the problem regarding the college goes to this 'idimuri' and had beaten by the staff. The 'naughty students' threaten by the management. The college staffs did not give any humane consideration to students. He memorised that he have some bad experience from the college like this. But he was not reported to police because he feared that if he reported to police he will not able to complete the course 'successfully'. He sadly regret for that also he thought if he reported at that time the suicide may not be happened now.

In media reports all political parties of students said that they tried 4-6 times to form a 'unit' in that college. The management not permitted it. The students who tried to form union in the college were 'identified' and threaten by the authority. The authority threatened the leaders that if they continued to form union in college were dismissed from the college and not permit them to continue the course any were. One student reported to media that in the college diary of the same college there was a line that; a student who participated in political party in and outside the campus will face disciplinary action.

Another issue reported by a student is that talking boys and girls each other inside the campus is a 'punishable offence' in the college. If it happened in the class the 'victims' are 'fined'. All class rooms are in CCTV observation.

## DISCUSSION

These are some issues as raised by the students. A few were reported and registered complaints against the authority. Most of the problems were not reported properly or it may withdrawn by the management by their high influence in political affairs. A high percentage of students due to their fear against the authority do not ready to register complaints against the authority. They feared that if they report any issue against college their successful course completion not happened.



Another thing is that in most of the self financing colleges political parties are banned. This will also be a factor for the high authority of the self financing colleges. If a political union is active in a college they questioned against most of the issues raised by the students. Here the college faces only the 'Individual' so they handle and fear them easily.

Now most of the engineering colleges struggle to fill even half of their seats in engineering. Most of the colleges fight to maintain the result above the expected level and fill seats behalf of that. To keep the result good the college insists some disciplinary measures and not giving any humane consideration to students.

In 2012 the UGC and AICTE recommended that the universities should appoint an ombudsman to handle the student's grievance. But the state would not have gone for such appointment. AICTE's norms in all engineering colleges there is a grievance redressed committee. 80% of students say that they are not aware of that committee and it is not active in their college.

Now the APJ Abdul Kalam Technology University appointed an Ombudsman to address students grievance in Engineering colleges affiliated to it. The university takes steps to strengthen the inspection of the self financing colleges and it will be conducted in all the affiliated self financing colleges by this year. They decided that the affiliation of self financing colleges will be renewed strictly on the bases of the findings of the inspection team.

## CONCLUSION

To maintain quality of education some measures are necessary engineering is a good choice for students who complete school education. In Kerala there are 155 self financing engineering colleges. In some colleges there were some issues faced by students regarding academic matters, college authority etc. this will negatively effects the development in the higher education sector. To come over this issue the quality maintenance is needed. In case of technical education KTU and AICTE takes steps to regulate and maintain the quality of engineering education in Kerala.

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