

# Higher Education in India in the Grip of Monopoly Capital – Highest Level of Unemployment Crisis

*–Prof. Thota Jyothi Rani*

The National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 is one among the several anti-people laws and sudden decisions declared during the period of COVID-19 pandemic which clearly exposed the extreme crisis created by the exploitative capitalist system. The University Grants Commission hurriedly came forward to release various rules and directions to realise this education policy which seriously aimed at transforming the Education as a powerful commodity and transfer it to the monopoly capital / corporate forces. In this process, the UGC released guidelines in September, 2022, for transforming small private higher educational institutions into multi-disciplinary hubs through mergers and amalgamations. Immediately, in January, 2023, the UGC hastened to release draft regulations for setting up and operation of foreign universities and higher education institutions in India.

It is a well known fact that our comprador bourgeoisie government for the last three decades has constituted various committees and amended laws to corporatise our education sector so as to hand over it to foreign capital in line with World Bank pressures. On the other, the UGC could formulate various new rules, regulations and guidelines accordingly. However, all this effort will not confine to mere increasing commoditisation of education and raising the profits of corporate forces. The exploitative capitalist system is strongly associated with continuous crises. The capital will search for solutions to the crisis within the framework of their profits. Consequently, every crisis is followed by the intensification of labour exploitation in various new forms. When the existing exploitative relations of production obstructs the development of productive forces, then the mode of production will become untenable and ultimately will be ended. This results in the emergence of new mode of production with new relations of production. This is the dialectic explained by Karl Marx. In the present context, the monopoly capital dictates and directs the highest technical progress in the form of Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, Big Data, financial Management and e-commerce. Therefore, the monopoly capital assumes that it could control the development of productive forces therefore, the monopoly capital presumed that in these conditions, how it is possible for the existing relations of production to hinder the development of productive forces? Thus, it is under an illusion that there will be no impediment for the continuation of exploitative capitalist system. Contrarily, the crisis is intensifying continuously in the system. In reality, it is impossible to solve the crisis within the vicious circle of exploitative profits of monopoly capital.

The dominant class always searches for various ways and means to divert the attention of youth. They should be kept in dark and ignorance. For this purpose, it is inevitable to transfer

education system to monopoly capital/corporate forces. Therefore, it intensively popularised that the quality education will be provided by the monopoly capital so as to ensure great jobs to youth. The corporatised education completely reserved for wealthy because its cost is boundless. However, the youth belonged to poor and middle classes aspire that this costly education will improve their lives and living conditions. With this hope, they take loans, liquidate small assets and run after this costly education. If it is not accessible, it is the responsibility of individuals. Similarly, if they do not get jobs, then they are stupid, brainless and not competitive. Again, the individual is made responsible for the problem of unemployment.

Because, it is popularised that highly qualitative corporate education not at all responsible for the various issues related to world of workers like getting no job or low-level job, no guarantee for job and jobloss. Individually, workers are responsible for all these serious problems. Therefore, individuals will blame themselves and feel that they are unfortunate and not lucky. Thus, they are forced to run after amulets/ thayats, tantrik poojas etc. In this process, the working-class consciousness of workers will vanish. This is the main aim of monopoly capital to takeover entire education system. Our comprador bourgeoisie ruling class is making serious efforts in this regard. They leased out our valuable and scarce land for thousand years to corporate forces to establish large sized higher educational institutions as suggested by the Narayana Murthy's Committee. For this purpose, oppressed classes will be sent out from their lands forcibly. All this accentuates our dependency and India will be strengthened as a dependent country. This is the exploitative aim behind the corporatisation of education sector with an accelerated speed and welcoming foreign universities to open up their campuses in India. Our domestic private higher educational institutions will be rapidly merged with these foreign universities which are popularised as a definition of quality. Thus, our entire higher education system will be transferred to foreign capital. Will this high dependency compensate if we popularise our nation as 'Vishwa Guru'?

### **Corporatisation of Higher Education, Inviting Foreign Universities – Effects**

Consequently, education as a commercial commodity will reach to the highest level. Its supply will be determined by profits of monopoly capital. Education is accessible to wealthy who have capacity to pay. The institutions will collect more and more fees on the name of skills and quality. The concepts of social justice, social consciousness and the issues related to human relations will be not at all under the purview of higher education. No reservations, no scholarships. It is reserved totally to wealthy class. The higher education will become synonymous to rich class. Gradually, it will become a crime to talk about working class consciousness, achievement of equality, freedom from all kinds of exploitation, oppression, discrimination and violence in the system of higher education. This system includes, no standards connected to human relations and human values. In this way, the Higher Education System will be articulated to represent the ideology which is necessary for the survival and continuation of exploitative capitalist system.

### **Enrolment Rate in Higher Education, Quality of Private Educational Institutions**

The gross enrolment rate did not exceed 23 percent in 2015 despite as high as 400 percent growth rate in private higher educational institutions since 2001. As per the report of Brookings Institute, the gross enrolment rate (GER) is 27.1 percent in 2019–20. However, it is 27.2 percent in 2020–21 according to AISHE in which, the GER is 5.8 percent for STs, 14.3 percent for SCs, 4.7 percent for Muslims can be seen. Shortly, the enrolment ratio of oppressed and bottom classes will disappear. Further, the AISHE Report says that the quality of all the 450 private universities is seriously poor. This clearly states that privatisation will not indicate efficiency. Moreover, the world recognised higher educational institutions from our country are Central Institutes under the control of Central Government. In essence, the privatisation of HEIs is only beneficial to monopoly capital/ exploitative classes.

In our country, the link between Higher Education and employment is strongly disconnected long back. The education in a popular institute with the payment of abnormal high fee will not be sufficient to search for job. They should join in various coaching centres to learn different skills continuously by paying money and appear for various tests and exams. Still, there is no any guarantee for job. Entire family will suffer to send one family member to higher education. All these efforts will go waste, if one fails in examination. This will create lot of pressure on the minds of youth and many a time commits suicides during the time of exams. Further, if any corporate giant declares that there will be a demand for a particular skill or there is shortage of a particular skill, then immediately several coaching centres will be established collecting extremely high fee. Youth has no option except to run for these coaching centres. All this is to divert the attention of youth. Presently, there is no guarantee to get the employment. Is it possible for employment generation if the entire education system is controlled by corporate monopoly capital which always prefers to utilise modern technology and mechanization every where? Will this end the problem of unemployment? Will it end the in-built crisis of exploitative capitalist system? No. But, the oppressed class will be deprived of higher education permanently.

Therefore, the NEP–2020 intelligently proposes vocational education for oppressed class students. Our youth should be aware of demand for various skills in various countries. Accordingly, they should join in coaching centres to learn skills and migrate to other countries for survival. This is the advice of our comprador bourgeoisie government to our youth who are known as demographic dividend, for the last several years. The youth, who are not profitable to monopoly capital in our country, will be sent out. The Sri Lanka which has encouraged this tendency did face severe crisis during the period of covid-19 pandemic. The youth, who lost their Jobs in other countries, came back to Sri Lanka. This is one of the main reasons for recent crisis of Sri Lanka. This will indicate the dependency of all emerging economies. Moreover, it also reveals the seriousness of the problem of unemployment.

The NEP, 2020 proposes distance education and online education to bottom classes. For this, the government proposes to establish TV channels. The Central budget, 2022–23 declares to establish 750 Virtual Labs for mathematics, 75 e-skilling labs. Is it possible for oppressed class students to get education who are forced to work in 'Gig economy' for their

survival which is characterised by high level of labour exploitation? Is there any better job guarantee even if they study with so much of hard work. Decent employment generation is not at all the goal of comprador bourgeoisie ruling class. The proposals of Online and Distance education is only to divert the attention of youth belonged to oppressed classes on the name of education. On the other, the rich class students get jobs with high package owing to their specialization in Artificial Intelligence and Robotics. By looking at this, the poor students blame their parents who are not capable of providing this kind of education to them. They hate their parents and treat them as their enemies. This process will deny the creation of working-class consciousness within the families of working class. This will be an additional benefit to the exploitative classes. Corporatizing higher education, inviting foreign investment and foreign universities is to deny higher education to majority of youth but it has been stated as a 'Quality Education' to all. This is really a cruel insult to oppressed class youth.

The concept of Brain Drain indicates the migration of our Engineers, Doctors and Scientists to other countries for employment. In this condition, our intellectual capabilities will be useful and beneficial to other nations. Thus, it has not been used for the qualitative improvement in lives of our people. The education in foreign countries will not be called as 'Brain Drain'. Contrarily, Dr. Jagdeesh Kumar, the chairperson, UGC states that foreign universities are invited to open up their campuses in India to end the problem of Brain Drain. The statement is really ridiculous. However, the higher education will not provide employment in our country. Moreover, every one works for multinationals.

Our software institutes will manage the projects of dominant countries. In regard to vocational education, our central budget- speech clearly states that it is only to find jobs in other countries. Our comprador bourgeoisie government has been formulating education policies and strategies only for 'Brain Drain'. Ours is jobless growth for the past two decades. Foreign Universities, Quality Education, Vocational Education are not intended to generate employment in our country.

The higher education sector is more attractive to foreign capital. As high as 37.4 million students have been enrolled in higher education in 2021. The value of this sector is expected to be \$225 billion by 2025. On the other, various tax concessions, incentives, valuable land allocations are offered by our government. Moreover, they can send profits to their own countries as per FEMA Act, 1999.

### **Comprador Bourgeoisie Government - Higher Education- Foreign Capital**

In order to ensure the flow of foreign capital into Education and Health Sectors, the World Trade Organisation could bring General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) as early as in 1995. Immediately, in 2002, World Bank has released a report on "Constructing Knowledge Societies- New challenges for Tertiary Education". The aim is to articulate emerging economies as 'Knowledge Societies'. For this, it is necessary for monopoly capital to enter into higher education system because the corporate forces are centres for knowledge.

Public education is the symbol of inefficiency. All this has been intensively popularised by this report.

In line with these pressures, the National Knowledge Commission has been constituted under Sam Pitroda's chairmanship in 2007-08. By 2010, as many as 160 foreign education programmes are running in our country. Still, the then Central Government in 2010 introduced "Foreign Educational Institutes Bill (FEI), 2010" into parliament to invite foreign universities to raise the quality of education as well as enrolment rate. The opposition parties opposed the bill and therefore, it is not approved by the Parliament. However, serious efforts in this regard continued irrespective of the political party that is in power.

The National Development Council in 2012 has made necessary amendment to law to transform 'Education for Profit'. Consequently, all the Higher Educational Institutions became Companies. They can mobilise funds from speculative market through bonds and shares. The establishment of these institutions will be under Company Law, 1956, Section 25. 'Narayana Murthy Committee' is constituted in 2012 for suggestions to attract monopoly capital into the Education Sector. The committee recommended desired incentives, lease out highly valuable lands for 999 years and guaranteed profits to the tune of 25 to 30 percent to attract world class universities. The Prime Minister Modi states that the establishment of foreign universities campuses is part and parcel of 'Make in India'. Therefore, he discussed with Niti Aayog, UGC, Ministry of Human Resource development and officials of Ministry of Commerce for suggestions about rules and regulations. They suggested that the foreign universities should be given financial autonomy and no control of UGC on them. On the name of internationalisation of Higher Education, in July 2021, UGC and the Ministry of Education jointly released rules to create Professor chairs of great Indian individuals in foreign universities and promote our education brand name.

Further, decision is taken to encourage the flow of foreign investment through External Commercial Borrowing route to build educational infrastructure in India. It should be noted that irrespective of ruling party in power the process of corporatising education and inviting foreign universities have been strongly continued. This clearly indicates the unity of ruling class in articulating India as a strong 'Dependent Nation'. In this process, in May 2022, UGC declared, UGC (Academic Collaboration between Institutions to offer Tertiary joint degree and Dual degree programme) Regulation, 2022. Finally, in January 2023, UGC declared, "A set of Draft rules to facilitate foreign universities in setting up campuses in India". Thus, our Higher Education sector along with our Industrial sector will be in the strong grip of monopoly capital. The education and employment sectors which are very essential for crores of people is caught in growing crisis.

### **What Kind of Education System that India Needs?**

The education sector should be strongly connected to the sectors of agriculture, industry, services and culture. Because, they are related to the basis of the mode of production. Contrarily, during the colonial rule and in the post-transfer of power period, our education system has been formulated to the needs, profits and development of foreign capitalist

and commercial forces. This articulation will not allow autonomous and scientific education system. Therefore, our comprador bourgeoisie governments used to formulate education policies according to the needs of monopoly capital. Thus, the system is not relevant and suitable to the diverse geographical needs of our people. Our education system, so far, neither developed our agriculture though ours is a primarily agricultural country nor promoted agricultural allied industries. Thus, available resources are not utilised efficiently so as to generate employment as well as to attain qualitative improvement in the lives of people. Moreover, the prevalent education system hinders the development of our own national productive forces. Therefore, our education system has to be changed radically, and should be moulded according to the needs of our people. It should be free from the clutches of monopoly capital. This will pave the way to satisfy our education and employment needs.

### **Conclusion:**

The technological innovations made in the framework of profits of monopoly capital are the real causes for growing problems of unemployment, labour exploitation, poverty and economic inequalities. This has clearly been revealed by the reports of World Economic Forum, UNO and ILO. The study of UN DESA, WEF, IMF, Oxford economists and CISCO, McKinsey Global institute state that as high as 50 to 80 percent of present jobs will become outdated / obsolete due to automation during 2030-2050. The Artificial Intelligence created by Human intelligence says that Human Intelligence itself is outdated. The physical labour has been shown as outdated owing to the use of Robots. However, all these processes, on the one hand accentuates labour exploitation and strengthens crisis on the other. The IBM survey states that the present education system is irrelevant for future jobs. The Joint study of Oxford economists and CISCO reveals that the present primary education is irrelevant for 65 percent of future employment. The Robots stand first in the highest global competitive tests.

In these conditions, what is the use of so called high quality, costly education provided by monopoly capital? This will not stop intensity of unemployment crisis. Therefore, the capitalist exploitative relations of production must be ended. Working class consciousness should be strengthened to build socialist mode free from exploitation. It is the responsibility of strong revolutionary forces to give a scientific direction in this regard.