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Q5(a)

Comment on the critical issues of commercialization of higher education in India

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2019 · Sociology GS 2 · 10 marks · Tribal communities in India

Tribal communities in India: Definitional problems; Geographical spread; Colonial policies and tribes; Issues of integration and autonomy.

Core demand of the question

- Comment on the critical issues of commercialization of higher education in India
- Keep the note to a 10-mark length

Revision summary

Higher education is sold as a fee product as well as a public right.

Private costs filter class, caste and gender.

Quality and labour conditions are uneven.

Public campuses weaken while demand for degrees grows.

Commercialization without a public core grades citizenship.

Introduction

Commercialization of higher education turns the university into a market of fees, brands, and ranks. In India it expands seats. It also grades citizenship by paying capacity.

Body

Critical issues

- **Capitation** and high private fees make college a class filter, which A. R. Desai would read as bourgeois closure of opportunity.
- **Caste and gender compound the price:** first-generation learners meet coaching markets and unpaid care at home.
- **Quality is uneven:** deemed and private campuses sell placement dreams while adjunct labour teaches.
- Public universities starve while the state still needs their degrees for the disharmonic equality Beteille described.

What follows

- Research and critical sociology shrink when the product is a job credential.
- Regulation lags; dummy faculty and ghost libraries appear in inspection cycles.

Sociological stake

- Yogendra Singh's modernization can mean diplomas without a **public university** ethic.

Flow diagram

Fee market -> Class caste filter
Public underfund -> Fee market
Fee market -> Uneven quality credentialism

Conclusion

Commercialization is a critical issue because it markets a public good. It widens access for those who can pay and deepens exclusion for those who cannot, unless a strong public campus balances the market.

Facts & figures

Capitation

Illegal extra fees that turn admission into a purchase.

Coaching market

Parallel commercial gate to elite colleges and services.

Public university

Still the main inexpensive path, underfunded relative to demand.

Credentialism

Degrees as market signals more than as public knowledge.

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