

Pandemic, Parenting and School Market: A Content Analysis of News on Parental Anxieties and School Fee Payment during Covid-19 in India

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Abstract

The study involves an analysis of education market by examining the private schools' insistence on fee payment, consequent parental anxieties and the response of the state and its apparatuses during the Covid-19 pandemic in India. The study revealed that once a consistently thriving private school market experienced severe turbulence during the pandemic. While low-budget schools faced an existential threat, high-fee charging elite schools could manage to survive by continuing their teaching-learning activities in online mode. Parental anxieties become palpable, tussle between parents and school [associations] reached the higher judiciary, engaged the state and its apparatuses. Amid these came numerous advisories, executive orders and judicial interventions that could only attain a partial success in resolving the entanglements especially due to the lack of policy guidelines to regulate the education market.

Keywords: School market, Covid-19, Fee payment, Parental anxiety, Educational crisis, Neoliberalism

Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic, a highly infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus engendered a phenomenal educational crisis in India by inducing the sudden closure of schools, adoption of the online mode of education dissemination, and an emergent livelihood and financial crisis for most parents, schools and its various stakeholders (Oxfam 2020; Save the Children 2020; UNICEF 2021; Meo and Chanchal 2021; Tilak 2023). Soon after the announcement of the *Janta Curfew* (public lockdown) by Government of India (GOI) on 22 March 2020, the schools and all other educational institutions were closed suddenly across the country. Online mode of educational dissemination was unequivocally adopted as a substitute to the offline mode to keep continue

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