

## PRIVATISATION AND CORPORATISATION OF ONLINE EDUCATION AND TEACHER-STUDENT DIVIDE: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF ITANAGAR CAPITAL REGION (ICR)

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This paper examines the impact of privatisation and corporatisation of online education on the teacher-student divide. The study aims to assess how these trends have affected the relationship between teachers and students in educational institutions. The research methodology involved the use of a questionnaire that was distributed to students of ICR using Google Forms. The questionnaire sought to obtain information on the experiences and perceptions of the students concerning the teacher-student divide in privatised and corporatised educational institutions. The findings of the study reveal that privatisation and corporatisation have had a negative impact on the teacher-student divide. The study suggests that there is a need for educational policymakers and stakeholders to consider the implications of privatisation and corporatisation on the teacher-student divide and take appropriate measures to address the issue.

**Keywords:** Corporatisation, privatisation, online education, teacher-student divide

### Introduction

The teacher-student divide is a phenomenon that refers to the lack of communication, interaction, and rapport between teachers and students in educational settings (Rizvi, 2016). This divide can have negative consequences for the quality of education, student motivation, academic performance, and teacher satisfaction (Belfield & Levin, 2002). The teacher-student divide has been exacerbated by the recent trends of privatisation and corporatisation

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of education, which have transformed educational institutions into profit-oriented businesses that prioritise efficiency, standardisation, and accountability over pedagogy, creativity, and diversity (Verger, Fontdevila, & Zancajo, 2020). Privatisation and corporatisation of education have also increased the power and influence of external stakeholders, such as investors, managers, administrators, and policymakers, over internal stakeholders, such as teachers and students (Giroux, 2002). These external stakeholders often impose their agendas and expectations on the educational process without considering the needs and interests of the teachers and students (Verger, Lubienski, & Steiner-Khamsi, 2016). As a result, teachers and students feel alienated, disempowered, and devalued in their educational roles (Marginson, 2016).

Privatisation of education is defined as the transfer of educational provision from the state to private entities, encompassing companies, religious institutions, or non-governmental organisations (Verger et al., 2020). The corporatisation of education, on the other hand, refers to the transformation of educational institutions into profit-oriented businesses prioritising efficiency, standardisation, and accountability over pedagogical values (Giroux, 2002). The teacher-student divide is elucidated as the deficiency in communication, interaction, and rapport between educators and learners, with potential implications for the quality of education, student motivation, academic performance, and teacher satisfaction (Belfield & Levin, 2002). Online education is specified as the utilisation of home computers and the Internet for learning and teacher-student interaction, specifically referring to online coaching classes for various exams in this study (Ma et al., 2022). The conceptual framework also incorporates the examination of factors influencing the teacher-student divide, including variables like teacher autonomy, student participation, curriculum design, assessment methods, feedback mechanisms, class size, teaching style, and learning style (Martin et al., 2018). The arrows within the framework denote the causal or correlational relationships between these key concepts, providing a structured foundation for investigating the complex dynamics within the educational landscape.

## **Review of Literature**

Muralidharan and Sundararaman (2015), in their investigation on the effect of privatisation on education quality in India using a quasi-experimental design focussing on the academic performance and learning outcomes of students in public and private schools, found that privatisation has a positive impact on education quality, but only for students from high-

income families. They also showed that privatisation increases inequality and segregation in education. Giroux (2002), in his exploration of the implications of the corporatisation of higher education for academic freedom, argued that corporatisation undermines academic freedom by imposing external pressures and constraints on academic decision-making, curriculum development, research agenda, teaching methods, and evaluation criteria. He also suggests some strategies to resist and reclaim academic freedom in corporatised higher education institutions. On the other hand, Martin *et al.* (2018) studied the teacher-student relationship in online learning environments and identified the factors that influence or affect the teacher-student relationship in online learning, such as teacher presence, student engagement, feedback, communication, trust, rapport, etc. They also discussed the benefits and challenges of developing and maintaining a positive teacher-student relationship in online learning. Hargreaves (2000) defined the teacher-student divide as a multidimensional construct that consists of four dimensions: cognitive, affective, behavioural, and structural. He also explained how these dimensions interact with each other and with other contextual factors to create different types and levels of teacher-student divide.

The above review indicates that it is essential to consider the impact of the teacher-student divide on student well-being and educational outcomes. Researches indicate that positive teacher-student relationships contribute to improved academic performance, student engagement, and emotional well-being. When the divide between teachers and students widens due to privatisation and corporatisation, these positive outcomes may be compromised. Students may feel disconnected, disengaged, and lacking support from their teachers, leading to decreased motivation and lower academic achievement. The erosion of the teacher-student relationship can also negatively impact students' mental health, as the absence of a supportive and caring environment may contribute to increased stress and emotional difficulties.

The conceptual framework for this study delineates the interrelated dynamics of the privatisation of education, corporatisation of education, the teacher-student divide, online education, and the factors influencing the teacher-student divide.

## **Objectives**

The present study will contribute to the existing literature on the teacher-student divide by providing empirical evidence on how privatisation and corporatisation of education have impacted this phenomenon. It will also offer insights and recommendations for educational policymakers and stakeholders on how to address the issue of the teacher-student divide and enhance the quality of education for both teachers and students. The study will also raise awareness and stimulate debate on the ethical, social, and political implications of privatisation and corporatisation of education for democracy, equity, and justice in society.

Specifically, the researchers aim to First explore the impact of privatisation and corporatisation on the teacher-student divide, focusing on the potential consequences for educational quality, teacher autonomy, and student well-being. Secondly, to assess the teacher-student divide brought on by privatised and corporatised online education.

## **Database and Methodology**

The data for the present study was both primary and secondary-based. Data on the effect of privatised and corporatised education on students were collected using a structured questionnaire (using 'Google Form'), which was then administered through various social media platforms, viz., email, WhatsApp, and Facebook Messenger. A total of 289 student respondents, consisting of 149 males and 140 females from different areas of the Itanagar Capital Region (ICR), were randomly selected. Secondary data were drawn from various sources such as websites, published articles, journals, and magazines.

## **Study Area**

The present study was conducted in the Itanagar Capital Region (ICR) of Arunachal Pradesh and its surrounding settlements. The ICR is the largest urban agglomeration in the state, accounting for nearly 30% of the state's urban population, with a planning area of 271.00 Sq.km ([www.http://itanagar.nic.in](http://itanagar.nic.in)). Being equipped with better facilities (compared to other regions in the state), ICR is considered to be the centre for students to pursue their higher education and prepare for various competitive exams such as Civil Services, NEET, JEE Mains, UGC NET, APSSB, and APPSC. Further, due to better internet connectivity in the ICR region, many aspirants also opt for online education.

## Findings and Discussions

The distribution of information sources among students in a privatised and corporatised educational institution reveals intriguing patterns (Table 1). Notably, a significant 60% of respondents relied on personal connections, with friends, family, or relatives being the predominant source of information. This underscores the influence of interpersonal relationships in shaping decisions about courses and institutions. In contrast, online advertisement emerged as the second most prevalent source, constituting 20% of responses, emphasising the growing impact of digital marketing in the education sector. Surprisingly, social media played a comparatively minor role, comprising only 10% of the responses. The remaining 10% encompassed diverse channels like websites, newspapers, and magazines, highlighting a diverse array of information outlets. The result suggests that personal networks and online advertising play pivotal roles in students' decision-making processes within the context of privatised and corporatised education.

The breakdown of reasons for enrolling in online courses offered by ed-tech companies sheds light on the key drivers influencing learners' choices (Table 2). Notably, flexibility emerged as the most prevalent factor, garnering 35% of responses, underscoring the significance of accommodating schedules and individual pace in the online learning landscape. Following closely, cost-effectiveness accounted for 30% of responses, reflecting the importance of economic considerations in the decision-making process. Conversely, comfort and convenience constituted the least common motivator, making up only 7% of the responses, suggesting that learners may prioritise other factors over sheer ease of use. The remaining 28% of responses highlighted the appeal of top-quality coaching and a diverse array of courses, with 13% and 15%, respectively, indicating a growing demand for comprehensive and high-calibre educational offerings from ed-tech platforms. Our findings indicate a nuanced set of considerations driving enrolment in online courses, ranging from flexibility and cost-effectiveness to the pursuit of top-tier coaching and a wide variety of courses.

Among students enrolled in online courses offered by ed-tech companies, APPSC emerged as the most favoured course (40%) of respondents selecting it. Conversely, NEET, JEE, and CUET ranked as the least popular (20%) as chosen by participants. The remaining 40% of responses were evenly split between UPSC and APSSB, each commanding a 20% share. This succinct overview underscores the diverse preferences among students, with APPSC leading in popularity and a balanced distribution among UPSC and APSSB,

while NEET, JEE, and CUET are behind (Table 3).

*Table 1.* Source of information about the course(s) and the institution(s)

<i>Source of Information</i>	<i>No. of response</i>	<i>Frequency (%)</i>
Online advertisement	58	20
Social media	29	10
Friends/Family/Relative	173	60
Others (please specify)	29	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>100</b>

*Table 2.* Reason for enrolment in online course provided by ed-tech companies

<i>Reason for enrolment</i>	<i>No. of response</i>	<i>Frequency (%)</i>
Flexibility	101	35
Cost Effective	86	30
Access to top-quality coaching	37	13
Variety of courses	43	15
Comfort and convenience	22	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>100</b>

*Table 3.* Name of the course undertaken

<i>Name of the course undertaken</i>	<i>No. of response</i>	<i>Frequency (%)</i>
UPSC	58	20
APPSC	115	40
APSSB	58	20
NEET, JEE, CUET	58	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>100</b>

*Table 4.* Level of satisfaction with course content, delivery, and assessment

<i>Level of satisfaction</i>	<i>No. of response</i>	<i>Frequency (%)</i>
1 (Very Dissatisfied)	37	13
2 (Dissatisfied)	43	15
3 (Neutral)	101	35
4 (Satisfied)	86	30
5 (Very Satisfied)	22	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 5. Frequency of interaction with teacher(s) or instructor(s) of the course(s)

<i>Response</i>	<i>No. of response</i>	<i>Frequency (%)</i>
Daily	43	15
Weekly	86	30
Monthly	101	35
Rarely	37	13
Never	22	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>100</b>

Based on the five-point rating scale (1 being very dissatisfied and 5 being very satisfied), our result reveals a predominant satisfaction among students enrolled in online courses provided by ed-tech companies, with 65% expressing contentment or high satisfaction with course content, delivery, and assessment. Conversely, dissatisfaction was limited (28%), while a minority of students (7%) remained neutral. Most students exhibit a positive perception of the course experience, emphasising the effectiveness of the ed-tech company’s offerings (Table 4). Our findings also show that the majority of students (35%) engaged with their teachers on a monthly basis, indicating a prevalent pattern of periodic communication (Table 5). Weekly interactions are also notable, comprising 30% of responses, suggesting that a substantial portion of students consistently engage more with instructors. Daily interactions (15%) indicate a smaller but significant group of students who regularly communicate with their teachers.

On the other hand, less frequent interactions, such as Rarely (13%) and Never (7%), collectively suggest that a notable portion of students experience infrequent or no direct engagement with their instructors. In terms of the ‘communication preferences’ of students with their course instructors (Table 6), the most widely used mode is chat, chosen by half of the respondents, representing a prevalent inclination towards asynchronous communication, followed by email (24%), indicating a significant reliance on written correspondence. Phone communication is selected by 20%, reflecting a notable but slightly smaller portion of students. Video calls (6%) represent a more interactive form of communication. Notably, there are no specified responses under the “Others” category. This result underscores the prominence of written and asynchronous communication methods, with chat and email as the primary choices, while acknowledging a preference for some degree of real-time interaction through phone and video calls.

Further, on the basis of a five-point rating scale (1 being very unresponsive and unhelpful and 5 being very responsive and helpful), our result analysis shows that the most significant proportion of students (45%) rates their instructors as “Somewhat Responsive” (3 on the scale), indicating a moderate level of satisfaction which is followed by “Unresponsive” (20%; 2 on the scale) or “Responsive” (4 on the scale), suggesting a balanced distribution of opinions. Few students (10%) perceived their instructors as “Very Responsive” (5 on the scale), while others (5%) found them “Very Unresponsive” (1 on the scale). These figures portray a varied landscape of student opinions regarding instructor responsiveness and helpfulness, indicating room for improvement in some cases and highlighting a substantial portion of students who perceive their instructors as moderately responsive (Table 7).

*Table 6.* Mode of communication with teacher(s) or instructor(s) of the course(s)

<i>Mode of communication</i>	<i>No. of response</i>	<i>Frequency (%)</i>
Email	69	24
Phone	59	20
Video call	17	6
Chat	144	50
Others (please specify)	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>100</b>

*Table 7.* Being responsive and helpful as the teacher(s) or instructor(s)

<i>Rating</i>	<i>No. of response</i>	<i>Frequency (%)</i>
1 (Very Unresponsive)	14	5
2 (Unresponsive)	58	20
3 (Somewhat Responsive)	130	45
4 (Responsive)	59	20
5 (Very Responsive)	28	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>100</b>

*Table 8.* Opinion on teacher-student relationship in the course(s)

<i>Opinion</i>	<i>No. of response</i>	<i>Frequency (%)</i>
Very close and supportive	37	13
Somewhat close and supportive	43	15
Neutral	101	35
Somewhat distant and unsupportive	86	30
Very distant and unsupportive	22	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 9. Teacher-student relationship in the course(s) vs traditional education

<i>Response</i>	<i>No. of response</i>	<i>Frequency (%)</i>
Much better	43	15
Somewhat better	86	30
No difference	101	35
Somewhat worse	37	13
Much worse	22	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 10. Benefits of learning in privatized & corporatized educational institution

<i>Benefit of learning</i>	<i>No. of response</i>	<i>Frequency (%)</i>
Access to diverse and updated courses	37	13
Flexibility and convenience of learning	43	15
Affordability and value for money	101	35
Recognition and accreditation of the courses	86	30
Others (please specify)	22	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>100</b>

Our result also reveals that the largest group of respondents (35%) feel neutral about the teacher-student relationship, indicating a lack of distinct closeness or distance. Following this, 30% perceived the relationship as “Somewhat distant and unsupportive,” while 15% described it as “Somewhat close and supportive.” A smaller but notable 13% of students feel that the relationship is “Very close and supportive,” suggesting a more positive rapport. On the contrary, 7% of respondents think the relationship is “Very distant and unsupportive” (Table 8). These results reflect a diverse range of sentiments regarding teacher-student relationships, with a substantial portion falling into the neutral category and varying degrees of perceived closeness and supportiveness. For students’ perceptions of the teacher-student relationship in online courses compared to traditional educational institutions, the most significant proportion (35%) believes there is “No difference” between the two settings, indicating a perception of parity (Table 9). Additionally, 30% of respondents feel the online course relationship is “Somewhat better,” while 15% consider it “Much better,” suggesting a positive view of the online

learning environment. Conversely, 13% feel the relationship is “Somewhat worse,” and 7% believe it is “Much worse” than in traditional institutions. Our results suggest a mixed perspective, with a substantial portion perceiving the online course relationships as equal or superior to traditional educational settings but with a notable minority expressing a less favourable view. Table 10 outlines the perceived benefits of learning from a privatised and corporatised educational institution. It is seen that the most significant proportion (35%) of respondents identified “Affordability and value for money” as a key advantage, emphasising cost considerations. Following closely, 30% highlight “Recognition and accreditation of the courses,” suggesting the importance of credibility in educational offerings. “Flexibility and convenience of learning” is noted by 15%, indicating a significant appeal for adaptable learning schedules. “Access to diverse and updated courses” garners 13%, reflecting a desire for a broad and current curriculum. Lastly, 7% of respondents provide other specified benefits. The data underscores the multifaceted advantages associated with privatised and corporatised educational institutions, with affordability, recognition, and flexibility being the most prominent.

Table 11 outlines the perceived challenges of learning from a privatised and corporatised educational institution. The most prevalent challenge (35%) is “Technical issues and glitches,” indicating the impact of technology-related obstacles on the learning experience. Following closely is the “Difficulty in maintaining motivation and discipline” (30%), suggesting a potential struggle with self-directed learning. Meanwhile, “Lack of personal interaction and feedback from the teachers” (15%) emphasises the importance of interpersonal elements in education. Additionally, 13% express “Uncertainty and insecurity about the quality and validity of the courses.” Lastly, a few respondents (7%) specified other challenges not covered by the provided options. Thus, the present study highlights the diverse set of hurdles faced by students in privatised and corporatised educational settings, ranging from technological issues to concerns about the quality of education and motivation. Also, Table 12 provides insights into the perceived impact of the teacher-student divide in privatised and corporatised educational institutions on learning outcomes and achievements. The majority (50%) express uncertainty, indicating a lack of clarity on the influence of the teacher-student dynamic. Of those with an opinion, 24% believe the divide affects learning outcomes and achievements “Positively,” suggesting potential adaptability to a more independent learning

environment. Conversely, 20% feel the impact is “Negatively,” indicating concerns about the drawbacks of reduced teacher-student interaction. A smaller portion (6%) believe there is “No effect” from the teacher-student divide. Thus, the study highlights the varied perceptions among students regarding the impact of the teacher-student dynamic in privatised and corporatised educational institutions.

On the perceived drivers of the teacher-student divide in privatised and corporatised educational institutions (Table 13), most respondents (25%) cited that “Distractions and Self-motivation” are the major drivers suggesting that factors related to student focus and motivation contribute to the divide, followed by 25% of responses indicate “Limited Feedback” which shows the importance of feedback mechanisms in bridging the gap. The profit-oriented and market-driven approach of institutions is identified by 24%, emphasising the impact of institutional priorities on the teacher-student dynamic. “Lack of Personal Interaction” is noted by 20%, highlighting the significance of interpersonal elements in the educational process. A smaller percentage (6%) attributes the divide to the “High student-teacher ratio and workload.” This data provides a nuanced understanding of the factors contributing to the teacher-student divide in privatised and corporatised educational institutions. On the other hand, our results on the ‘potential strategies to narrow or bridge the teacher-student divide in privatised and corporatised educational institutions’ (Table 14) show that the most widely endorsed solution (35%) involves “Improving the technical and pedagogical support and resources for the teachers and students,” emphasising the importance of adequate support structures. Following closely, 30% suggest “Enhancing the involvement and participation of teachers and students in the course design and delivery,” indicating a desire for collaborative educational processes. A reasonable response of 15% indicates “Increasing the frequency and quality of communication and feedback between teachers and students”, which underscores the significance of interpersonal communication. Additionally, 13% advocate for “Establishing and enforcing standards and norms for institutions and courses”, followed by 7% of respondents who specify other approaches. Our findings provide valuable insights into potential strategies for addressing the teacher-student divide in privatised and corporatised educational institutions, ranging from technical support to collaborative course design.

Table 11. Challenges of learning in a privatized and corporatized institution

<i>Challenges in learning</i>	<i>No. of response</i>	<i>Frequency (%)</i>
Lack of personal interaction and feedback from the teachers	43	15
Difficulty in maintaining motivation and discipline	86	30
Technical issues and glitches	101	35
Uncertainty and insecurity on validity of the courses	37	13
Others (please specify)	22	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 12. Effect of teacher-student divide in learning outcomes

<i>Response</i>	<i>No. of response</i>	<i>Frequency (%)</i>
Positively	69	24
Negatively	59	20
No effect	17	6
Not sure	144	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 13. Major drivers of teacher-student divide

<i>Response</i>	<i>No. of response</i>	<i>Frequency (%)</i>
The profit-oriented and market-driven approach of the institutions	69	24
Lack of Personal Interaction	59	20
High student-teacher ratio and workload	17	6
Distractions and Self-motivation	72	25
Limited Feedback	72	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 14. Means to narrow/bridge teacher-student divide

<i>Response</i>	<i>No. of re- sponse</i>	<i>Frequency (%)</i>
Increasing the frequency and quality of communication and feedback between the teachers and students	43	15
Enhancing the involvement and participation of the teachers and students in the course design and delivery	86	30
Improving the technical and pedagogical support and resources for the teachers and students	101	35
Establishing and enforcing the standards and norms for the institutions and the courses	37	13
Others (please specify)	22	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>100</b>

### Conclusion

Privatisation and corporatisation of education have emerged as significant trends in many educational systems around the world. These practices involve the transfer of educational institutions from public control to private entities and the adoption of business-like models and principles within the education sector. While proponents argue that such changes enhance efficiency, accountability, and innovation in education, critics express concerns about the potential negative impacts, particularly on the teacher-student relationship and the divide that may arise between them. The teacher-student relationship is a cornerstone of practical education, characterised by trust, support, and mutual respect. It is within this relationship that teachers nurture students' intellectual, emotional, and social development. However, the advent of privatisation and corporatisation in education has brought forth changes that can disrupt this vital connection.

Our findings in the present study indicate a nuanced landscape in privatised and corporatised online education. Students express diverse opinions on the teacher-student relationship, with a notable percentage perceiving it as somewhat distant. While many appreciate the flexibility and affordability of these institutions, challenges such as technical issues and motivation maintenance are evident. Strategies to bridge the teacher-student divide include improving support structures and involving both parties in course design. To enhance the online learning experience, institutions should prioritise technical and pedagogical support, encourage collaborative course development, and ensure transparent standards. Regular, high-quality communication channels should be established to foster a sense of connection. By addressing these aspects, privatised and corporatised educational institutions can create a more inclusive and engaging learning environment for students.

One of the primary concerns associated with privatising education is the potential commodification of knowledge and the resultant shift in priorities. In a privatised system, educational institutions often operate as businesses driven by profit-oriented motives. Commercialisation can lead to prioritising financial gains over educational goals, potentially compromising the teacher-student relationship. Teachers may be pressured to conform to standardised curricula or teaching methods, prioritising efficiency and marketability rather than individual student needs. As a result, the personal connection and customised support that characterise effective teaching may be eroded, contributing to a growing divide between teachers and students. Corporatisation, on the other hand, introduces managerial practices and principles from the business world into educational institutions. While this approach may improve efficiency and accountability, it can also have unintended consequences for the teacher-student dynamic. With the adoption of corporate-style hierarchies, top-down decision-making processes, and performance metrics, teachers may feel disempowered and undervalued. The focus on quantifiable outcomes and standardised assessments can reduce teachers' professional autonomy and creativity, leading to a disconnect between their pedagogical expertise and the needs of their students. Consequently, the teacher-student divide may widen as teachers struggle to meet the demands imposed by a corporate educational framework.

Furthermore, privatisation and corporatisation can exacerbate existing inequalities in education. Private educational institutions often cater to more affluent families who can afford higher tuition fees, potentially resulting in a socio-economic segregation of students. This division can create disparities in the quality of education received by students from different backgrounds, further amplifying the teacher-student divide. Additionally, corporate influence in education can lead to the emergence of market-driven educational practices, where profit-driven enterprises dictate educational policies and practices. This situation may prioritise the needs and desires of corporations over the best interests of students, further straining the teacher-student relationship.

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