

Coaching Institutions in India -

SUMMARY FINDINGS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary Findings

1. Coaching institutions in India were established prior to independence. These institutions provided facilities to students to supplement their studies and meet their educational needs for certificate and degree programmes as well as competitive examinations. They also catered for knowledge and skills which were demanded by changing job situations in the society. The coaching for admission to engineering and medical courses started in 1956 and 1962 with the introduction of competitive tests for admissions to IIT, Khadagpur and All India Institute of Medical Science, New Delhi respectively. Thus the coaching institutions seem to have been established and are existing today as a response to the needs felt by the students to supplement and upgrade their information, knowledge and skills to meet the requirements of the competitive examinations. Due to the very fact that the coaching classes have to cater to the needs of the students, they have to keep revising and changing their teaching material, teaching methods and programmes so as to meet the needs of the students and, in turn, of the changing needs of the society.
2. The growth and development of these institutions have been slow, until several other competitive examinations started. The number of coaching institutions and branches seem to have increased rapidly during the late 1980s and early 1990s.
3. Initially, these institutions were established by individual educational entrepreneurs as family concerns. In early 1990s, these institutions were set up by professional groups on the pattern of business firms or in the form of share holding companies. Even older institutions have changed their character by introducing franchise system for opening new branches at various places in the country. There is always one or two key persons in the management of such institutions.
4. These institutions have bare minimum infrastructure in the form of classrooms and office accommodation, without much in the name of library or students facilities. Unlike the formal system, they use this infrastructure to the fullest possible extent. Hardly any facilities remain unused.

5. The motivating factor for starting these coaching institutions for most of them, (which supplied information) seems to be help the students to face various competitive examinations with full preparation. Some also stated to have started it to promote excellence, and yet others, to help poor students to come to the mainstream and brilliant students to become toppers. The objectives of starting may be Nobel, yet none is expected to run them on loss. Thus motive appears to be mixed-providing help to the students and earning money. Those who have stayed and want to stay in this vocation seem to maintain their status by responding to the demands of the students.
6. Every coaching institute runs several programmes for various competitive examinations. Because of multiple programmes, their infrastructure and human resources are utilized to the maximum possible extent. However, some of them established very recently, have coaching only for IIT and JEE examinations.
7. Most of the coaching centres run both correspondence/postal programmes as well as contact programmes. They also run short and long term programmes. The duration of the long term programmes is 75 to 225 days but the same institutions also have programmes of 1 to 2 years. Short term programmes are of varied nature. These are namely short duration programmes, intensive programmes, crash programmes and capsule programmes with durations ranging between 40 to 120 days. Some courses are exclusively for competitive examinations, yet others are mixed programmes of long duration which cater to both CBSE examination and competitive examination. That is to say that student prepare for both class 12 as well as for competitive examinations. Some of them also combine the two competitive examinations, namely, medical and engineering entrance tests. Thus the nature and duration of programmes/courses have been stated by coaching institutions to be in response to the needs of different groups of the students.
8. Students are selected through an admission test by most of the coaching institutioins. These admission tests are a combination of general intelligence and specific subjects. The specific subjects are physics, chemistry and biology or mathematics depending on individual student's target which could be either medical or engineering course respectively. The level of test for specific subjects is normally set at class XII level. They call it 'Aptitude Test'. These are separately conducted for each programme/course. However, no test is conducted for admission to correspondence courses.

9. In general, the batch size ranges from 20 to 35 students in most of the coaching centres. Some of them have small batches, say of 10-20 students. A few coaching centres even have batches of 5-10 students. Popular centres seem to have a batch size of 30-35 students. Some of them have a separate batch of 20 selected students known as 'Select Students Batch'.
10. Most of the centres employ both full-time and part-time teachers. Half of their teachers are engaged on lecture basis payments. Some of the centres engage full time teachers for teaching as well as for preparing the study material. As reported by the coaching institutes, there seems to be relatively more full time teachers in the engineering courses than in the medical courses. In general, the proportion of part-time teachers is much higher than that of the full-time teachers. The coaching centres seem to keep a core of full-time teachers so as to ensure regularity in teaching and updating of their study material.
11. The teaching-learning process involves teacher-student contact for 10 to 29 hours per week in a large number of institutions. This holds good for both short and long term courses in engineering. For medical courses, contact hours per week range from 10 to 29 hours for long term programmes and 5 to 20 hours for short term programmes.
12. Most of the institutions follow lecture method followed by question-answer, feedback, and correction. Sometimes project work, group discussion and written work methods are also adopted by these institutions. Mock interviews are also a part of the methodology of teaching.
13. Most of the coaching centres develop their own teaching material which is mainly photocopied and supplied to the students. Material which is of use to larger number of students is also printed. Some of them use films for teaching medical students. Students consider the material given by the coaching institutions, as of high value for competitive examinations. However, some students feel that the cost of the material is very high. Analysis of material revealed that basic concepts are explained in precise and clear terms. Lot of exercises are given to enable students to answer questions correctly. Model text papers with solutions form the part of the teaching material. However, material does not deal with the subject matter in depth.
14. Generally, the data on financial aspects and on the success rate were not shared with the researchers. From the data on the success rate received from some and from what has been obtained through two in depth case studies, we know that

the success rate of those who are studying for competitive examinations and were selected ranges from 14 to 67 per cent. However, the cluster of institutions is around the success rate of 30 to 40 per cent.

15. Unit cost (tuition fee) of availing the facilities in coaching institutions ranges from Rs. 1 to 8 thousand in most of the institutions. However, information collected about some institutions from their brochures, reveals that the unit (per student) cost for some programmes reaches even up to Rs. 10-75 thousand some programmes fetch Rs. 10,000 and yet some other, Rs. 75,000. These are charges for full-time courses. Some of these institutions explained that the cost was high because they had to spend considerable amounts on the advertisements.
16. The remuneration paid to the teachers ranges from Rs. 100 to 250 per contact hour. Some institutions also pay upto Rs. 400 per contact hour. Teachers employed on regular basis, for full time, are paid Rs. 12-15 thousand per month.
17. The in-depth case studies of two coaching institutions revealed about their (i) approaches towards coaching; (ii) methods of quality control; (iii) methods of preparation of material and; (iv) methods of expansion and management of coaching institutions.
 - (i) The approach of coaching adopted in these institutions is to emphasise on Clarifying the fundamentals and to proceed further only after fundamentals are clear to the students. If it takes long time to clarify the fundamentals they prefer to spent that time on that. Having clarified the fundamentals they seek to promote the application aspect of the subject matter. They try to be intensive rather than extensive. The approach is to encourage the students to do indepth rather than vast studies.
 - (ii) Quality control is exercised through preparation of (a) study material, (b) recruitment of teachers (c) linkage between students, teachers and management.
 - (a) The coaching centres regularly update the material. A team of person, who collect information from the students(soon after they have appeared at their respective examinations) about types of questions asked in the competitive tests, and the kind of difficulties faced by them, identify gap areas and consequently incorporate the improvements in the existing study material. The regular contact with these students enables them to update their material and methods of

coaching. They also bring out journals. Two popular journals, namely, Competition Success Review and General Knowledge Today are published by Sachdeva New P.T. College and a new magazine called Beyond Horizon by Erosee Infotech Pvt. Ltd.

(b) The method of recruitment, differs from one coaching institution to other, yet the approach is to find out from students about most popular teachers in respective subjects and give them offer of appointment. That is to say they search for good teachers. In order to control the quality of teachers at the sub-centres, the main institution approves the appointment of teachers. They regularly conduct orientation programmes for teachers and also send good teachers to sub-centres from the main centre as and when the need arises.

(c) The coaching centres maintain a close link between the students, teachers and the management. The management regularly finds out from students about teachers and the progresses made in classrooms. They regularly interact with teachers on various matters. If a student is irregular, they follow it up with concerned students and his/her parents. They obtain information about very good and bright students as well as weak students. Through this they help both the categories to achieve their goals.

(iii) Some of the coaching institutions, instead of opening their own branches, have bestowed their franchise, whereby the new centre uses the name of the coaching institution and in return pays some amount. In order to ensure quality the Head Office provides teaching material, decides on method and duration of programmes, approves the selection of teachers or selects teachers. It also helps the sub-centres by sending teachers from main centre. It regularly monitors them on phone.

18. A majority of the sampled students studying for engineering and medical courses at IITs and medical colleges came from families of three occupation groups, namely, professional (doctors, engineers, lawyers, chartered accountants) officers in government and private offices; office workers and teachers in universities, colleges and schools.

19. The sampled students admitted to engineering and medical courses at IITs in Delhi, Kanpur and BHU and Medical Colleges in Delhi and BHU had a very high level of performance at the higher secondary level. The majority of students had

- scored very high percentage of marks at higher secondary level, i.e. 76 to 90 and even above 90 percent. Students in engineering courses had a relatively better performance than the students in medical courses at the higher secondary level.
20. Of the sampled students admitted to engineering and medical courses, the majority (71 percent) among Engineering students had attended coaching classes through correspondence and 38 percent through contact programmes. More than half of the medical students had attended coaching through contact classes. The proportion of those who had attended correspondence courses was relatively less among medical students.
 21. Irrespective of educational attainment of students as well as of their parents occupation, a good proportion of sampled students, both from engineering and medical courses, had attended the coaching classes. Those with educational attainments in the range of 86-90 percent had attended coaching classes in relatively larger proportion. Those with a better level of attainment in the higher secondary examination did not want to leave the matter to the chance factor. They explored all the possibilities in order to get success in the competitive tests.
 22. Students belonging to families of all occupational groups attended coaching. However, those belonging to families in occupational groups, namely, professionals and teachers, attended coaching both through correspondence and contact programmes in large proportions.
 23. Ninety percent of the sampled engineering students and eighty three percent of medical students said they would recommend other students to attend coaching classes.
 24. Seventy percent of the sampled engineering students and thirty percent of the sampled medical students attended coaching classes during their school studies.
 25. Both felt that coaching had enhanced their abilities, namely, confidence, understanding, preciseness and understanding of science in that order of priority.
 26. Most of the students, however did not feel that knowledge gained in the coaching classes helped them in their present studies. Whereas only thirty percent engineering and fifteen percent medical students felt it was indeed helping. The rest said not much or not at all.
 27. The qualitative statements give by the students on four major aspects namely, (i) opinion of those who did not attended coaching classes or coaching arrangements. (ii) Impact of coaching on studies on friends and on their school. (iii) Their suggestions on school education and finally, (iv) their suggestions for

improving and providing support to prepare the students to face competitive examinations tend to supplement the quantitative information. Their responses are very expressive and make interesting reading.

- (i) More than one third (38 percent) of those who did not attend coaching classes favored such arrangements. Another one fifth had negative opinion about such arrangements. About 15 percent gave qualified statements. Nine percent made suggestive statements. Those who had negative opinion had it owing mainly to the high cost, limited scope and limited utilities of these institutes. Those who made suggestive statements wanted that schools do this work or wanted that government provide such facilities.
- (ii) The majority of students (57 percent) gave positive statements about the impact of coaching on the school, studies and friends. About 13 percent of them gave negative opinion and another 13 percent did not comment. Sixteen percent gave qualified opinion. Those who gave positive opinion felt that it helped in their studies, enlarged their friend circle as those serious about studies interacted with them and enabled them to assess their own position. Those who gave negative opinion said it affected their studies, and they had little time for doing self study. Those who gave qualified statements though felt positive but missed something, could not enjoy time, the routine became tough and so on.
- (iii) Many suggestions were made by students regarding improving school education were large in number; 32 suggestions were made on the teaching learning processes, another 25 on teachers and 19 suggestions for school management, 22 suggestions on curriculum, 9 on general nature and two of them were on reservations. The suggestions about the teaching learning processes focused on making the process rigorous, and practical, clarifying the fundamentals, extra classes for weak students, promoting understanding of concepts and so on. Suggestions pertaining to teachers stressed on improving the quality of teachers, holding regular classes, appointment of qualified teachers and so on. For curriculum, they wanted it to be made compatible with competitive tests, making it less examination oriented, move vocationalised and practical oriented. Suggestions pertaining to school management related to improvement of environment, teachers to provide coaching for entrance examinations in

the school itself, special selection of students, improving activities, and so on. Some also felt that reservations should be removed or at least curtailed.

- (iv) With regard to improving the facilities for preparing students for competitive tests, most of the suggestions were addressed to the students themselves, followed by the system of education, and then the coaching classes. Most of them said sincerity, regularity in studies, and self-confidence help in achieving the goals. Students should do self study, have confidence and have faith in God. They also said coaching may improve one's ability a little bit, but there is no substitute for self study. Regarding the system of education, these suggestions focused on providing better teachers, better teaching, good material, making the courses of class 12 equivalents to competitive examination and so on. For coaching classes They suggested that they should get feedback, provide competent teachers, reduce the cost, reduce the size of batches and improve the contact classes.

Policy Recommendations

1. Since coaching institutions tend to cater the need of the students for supplementing their knowledge and skills as well as preparing them for a specific test, these would continue to exist and proliferate in the future. Therefore, these institutions need to be registered either under Societies Registration Act 1862, if run as nonprofit making institutions or under Companies Firms Act. This would discourage establishment of fake institutions and exploitation of students.
2. There should be a system of accreditation of these institutions so as to ensure quality of service provided by them. This accreditation can be by an academic accreditation body. Alternatively, the Indian Standard Institution (ISI) or ISO 900 may, with the help of academics, initiate the process of accreditation of service institutions including coaching institutions for admission to engineering and medical courses.
3. The science curriculum of 12th standard should be carefully and continually examined and updated keeping in view the changes and developments taking place in science subjects. This is because there appears to be a gap between what is taught at the school level and what is expected to be known to and learnt by the students of that level.

4. The science curriculum should be more application oriented and devote more time to laboratory experimentation. It should enable the students to clearly understand the fundamentals and their application in real life situations.
5. There is a big gap between the methodology of teaching adopted by the schools and the type of abilities expected to have been acquired by the students when they face competitive tests. Therefore, the methodology of teaching in schools should include an element of confidence building, feedback and correction, articulation of thought, seminars, workshops and mock interviews.
6. There should be regular orientation of teachers about the developments in their subjects, more particularly in science disciplines. B.Ed. programmes focus on the methodology of teaching and not so much on subject matter. There should be subject refresher programmes for teachers in schools so as to enable them to update their knowledge.
7. Qualified teachers in science should be recruited. School management with respect to general environment, regularity of teaching, curricular and co-curricular activities, laboratory facilities, needs to be improved.
8. There is a very clear and loud message for the students aspiring to become engineers, doctors and professionals, that there is no substitute to hard work. Self study, confidence, emphasis on clarifying fundamentals and in depth study are the key factors in achieving success. The Department of science and technology should launch a journal which should focus on clarifying fundamentals of science for school children, narrating to the students the latest developments in science and technology in a simple and understandable manner, publish interviews and biographical notes of successful scientists and students, etc.
9. Agencies conducting competitive tests for admission to engineering and medical courses should bring information and guidelines about the expectations in such tests. Lack of this information results in students spending a lot of money in acquiring it through coaching classes or through any other source.

10. The methods adopted by the coaching institutions regarding feedback, revision of material, management of bright and weak students, use of infrastructure, and management and recruitment of teachers offer a great deal of insight into the quality control of educational endeavor. The formal system of school education can immensely benefit by following some of these measures.