

INDIAN SCHOOL TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVE ON GLOBALISATION OF EDUCATION A Case Study of Atomic Energy Education Society School Teachers

Dr. M. RAJESH and SINDHU. P. NAIR
Regional Director & Assistant
Regional Director Respectively At
Indira Gandhi National Open University
INDIA

ABSTRACT

Globalisation has become an enduring reality of our times and more so in the field of education. Teachers are the harbingers of change in the global economy and school teachers have a major role in shaping the attitude of the society towards all social and economic phenomena including that of globalisation. At the Regional Centre of IGNOU situated at Cochin, Kerala a unique training programme was conducted for a year to train school teachers of the Atomic Energy Education Society (AEES) one of the elite educational organisations of the country in ICT applications. This opportunity was utilised by the researchers to conduct a study that holds multiple portends for policy makers to channel the direction of the forces affecting the globalisation of education.

Keyword: Globalisation of education, teachers and globalisation of higher education.

INTRODUCTION

Globalisation a phenomenon by which any activity becomes worldwide or the barrier to it becoming so gets dismantled. Globalization is very often used to refer to economic globalization that is integration of national economies into the international economy through trade, foreign direct investment and capital flows. Though the phenomenon of globalization covers all fields including arts and cultures, in popular parlance, it mostly refers to an economic phenomenon (wikipedia : 2008)¹.

As far as education is concerned, globalisation is not a new phenomenon either economically, or culturally. The current phase of globalisation of education is closely associated with the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). Therefore it would be pertinent to see the stipulations laid down by GATS.

MODE1: It covers the aspect of Cross- Border Trade; this covers all those activities in which a producer exports a service from its own territory to a consumer in a foreign country. For example, an educational Institution in India provides an on-line educational programme to students in another country.

¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Globalization>

MODE2: It pertains to consumption abroad. This takes care of all those cases where a consumer goes abroad to obtain a service. For example if a patient goes abroad for treatment it is a case of a service consumed abroad or a student from one country visiting a foreign country to obtain a degree.

MODE3: It covers within its ambit the aspect of commercial presence. This implies that a service provider from one country sets up business subsidiary or branches in another country. For example, if IGNOU establishes its branches in foreign countries, it indicates the commercial presence of IGNOU in that country.

MODE4: It deals with the Movement of Natural Persons. In this case a member of the service-providing firm goes to the domestic territory of another country to provide a service there. Such movements are only for a short period of time. For Example, a Distance Learning institute of India sends its administrative officer to Dubai to manage the affairs of its branch there for a period of Five years.

GATS enjoin upon its members certain obligations that can be grouped under two categories:

- General Obligations and
- Specific obligations

The General obligations are those that apply to all the service sectors irrespective of whether a country has made commitments on them or not. These can be noted as follows:

1. **Most Favoured Nations Treatment (MFN):** GATS stipulate the acceptance of Most Favoured Nations Status (MFN) in the case of services too. The MFN status stipulates that any commercial advantage provided to one of the signatories on a particular product must be provided to all other signatories who export a like product to the country. For Example, if Government of India permits Anadolu Open University to run its programmes in India, the same facility must also be extended to Singapore National University if the latter requests the Government of India for the same.
2. **Obligations related to rule framing and implementation:** GATS enjoins its members to internationally notify/publish changes in laws, rules and regulations that have a bearing on international trade in services. Similarly, any regulation that the members frame to deal with business relations between service providers, especially those dealing with Foreign Service providers must be based on objective criteria and must be applied equally to all service providers (Friends of Earth:2002). Further, "Paragraph 4 of Article VI of the GATS calls upon the Council for Trade in Services to develop new disciplines to ensure that non-discriminatory measures relating to qualification requirements and procedures, technical standards and licensing requirements and procedures do not constitute unnecessary barriers to trade. As part of the implementation of this provision, the Services Council established the Working Party on Professional Services (WPPS) with the mandate to develop such disciplines in the area of professional services and designated the sector of accountancy as a priority"(ITD:2003)².

² www.itd.org/eol/e/wto06_18.htm#note1 (visited in 2003)

3. **Rules related to the working of Monopolies:** The GATS signatories should ensure that working of monopolies for providing services should not in any way violate the working of the country's MFN obligations(Friends of Earth:2002)³.

On the other hand Specific Obligations apply only to those service sectors in which a country has made commitments. They are

1. **Market Access Obligations:** As regards the market access obligations of member nations, GATS is very categorical in its approach. It states the following

"When a member undertakes a commitment it must indicate for each mode of supply what limitations, if any, it maintains on market access. Article XVI:2 of the GATS lists six categories of restrictions which may not be adopted or maintained unless they are specified in the schedule. All scheduled limitations on market access therefore must fall into one of these categories. They comprise of four types of quantitative restrictions as well as limitations on foreign equity participation and on the types of legal entity permitted."(ITD: 2003)⁴

National Treatment Obligation: GATS in its National Treatment obligation "under Article XVII requires members to accord to services and service suppliers of any member treatment no less favourable than that it accords to services and service suppliers of national origin"(ITD:2003)⁵

In the study that follows, an attempt is made as to judge the perception of school teachers as regards the impact of globalisation of education under GATS is concerned.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted using a multipurpose questionnaire through which the requisite information was sources both on the numerical and descriptive scales. The attempt being at getting a holistic understanding of the participants' perception on globalisation, both scales were felt as required.

A number of graphical methods were used to suit our analytical requirements. The sample technique adopted for the selection of the same is Simple Random Sampling.

The Sample

The study was undertaken on the Atomic Energy Education Society school teachers who had been deputed to attend an Information and communication technology training programme under the auspices of IGNOU Regional Centre Cochin.

Though totally more than 1600 school teaching staff is to attend this programme, a random sample of 68 participants were selected to conduct the study. The randomness of the sample ensures that the sample is unbiased.

The Age - Wise details of this sample is given below in Table 1 and chart A

³ Friends of Earth (2002 Edition)

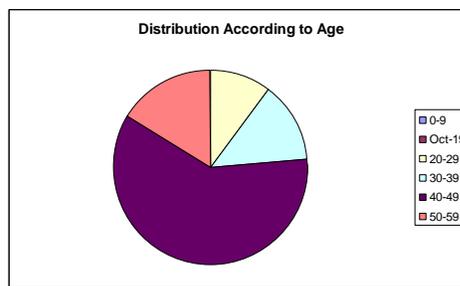
⁴ www.itd.org/eol/e/wto06_27.htm#note2 (visited in 2003)

⁵ www.itd.org/eol/e/wto06_27.htm#note2 (visited in 2003)

Table: 1
Age-Wise Distribution

Age (Class Interval)	Number (Frequency)
0-9	0
10-19	0
20-29	7
30-39	9
40-49	41
50-59	11

Chart A

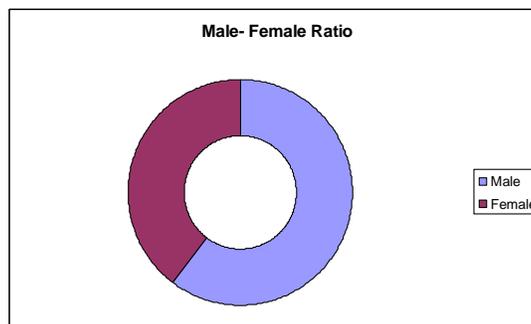


It can be noted here that the maximum number of respondents are in the age group 40-49. The Male/Female distribution of the sample is given in Table 2 and Box B

Table: 2
Male/Female Distribution

Male	Female
41	27

Chart B

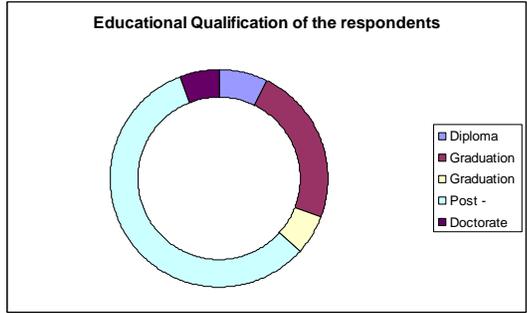


More than 60% of the respondents are males. The details of qualification pertaining to the sample is given in Table: 3 and Chart C

Table: 3
Qualification of the Selected Sample

Diploma	Graduation (Non-Technical)	Graduation (Technical)	Post - Graduation	Doctorate
5	16	4	39	4

Chart C



We can see that the respondents are highly educated. All of them atleast possess a graduation degree and most of them are post graduates (57%). In this way the credibility of the opinions expressed could be counted upon.

The details regarding the Teaching Experience (in years) of the sample of participants is given in Table: 4 and Chart D

Table: 4
Teaching Experience (in years)

Class Interval	Frequency
0-4	4
5-9	6
10-14	13
15-19	18
20-24	19
25-29	8

Chart D

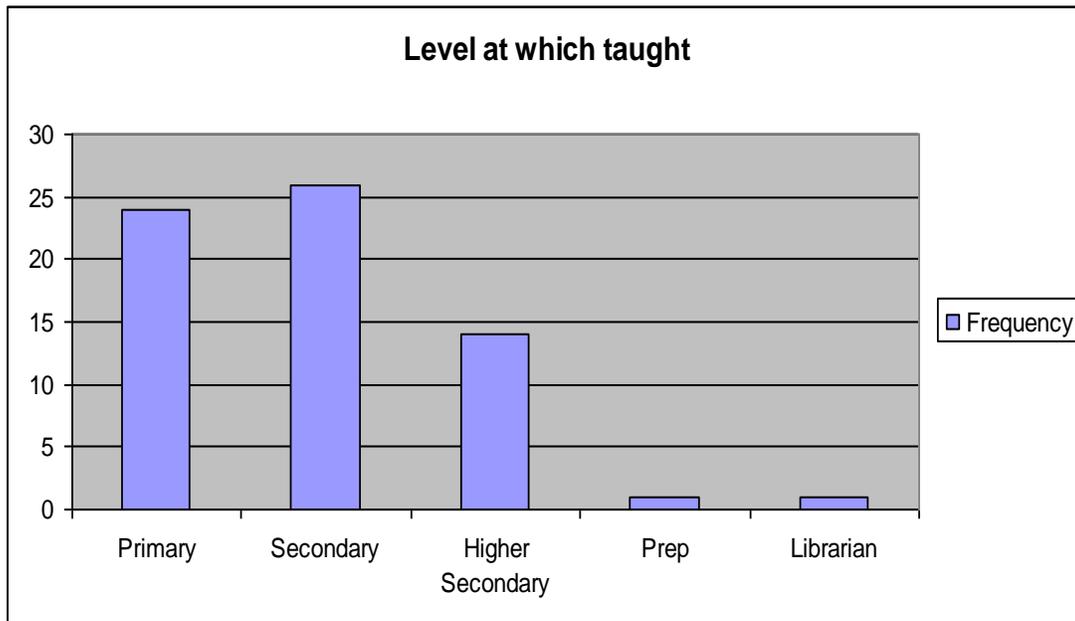


The details regarding their teaching experience level is given in Table 5 and Chart E

Table: 5
Teaching Experience Level

Level	Frequency
Primary	24
Secondary	26
Higher Secondary	14
Prep	1
Librarian	1

Chart E



GLOBALISATION OF SCHOOL EDUCATION

Globalisation being a very distinct and vast issue area, it was felt that a number of aspects should be gauged in order to arrive at a clear picture about the perception of AEEs teachers on the issue of globalisation.

The sequence of questions raised and the responses received are given below.

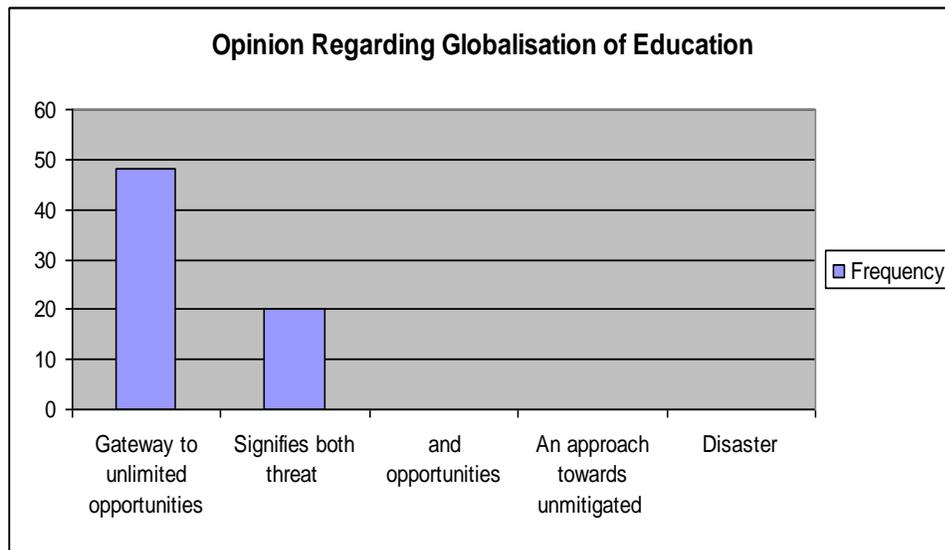
The first question that was put forth to the participants was their opinion regarding the overall impact of globalisation on the field of education.

The response elicited is depicted in Table: 6 and Chart F

Table: 6
Opinion regarding the overall impact of globalisation
on the field of education

Opinion	Frequency
Gateway to unlimited opportunities	48
Signifies both threat And opportunities	20
An approach towards unmitigated Disaster	0

Chart F



The response elicited here is quite interesting to note. Almost 30% of the respondents feel that there could be both opportunities and threats as a result of globalisation of school education.

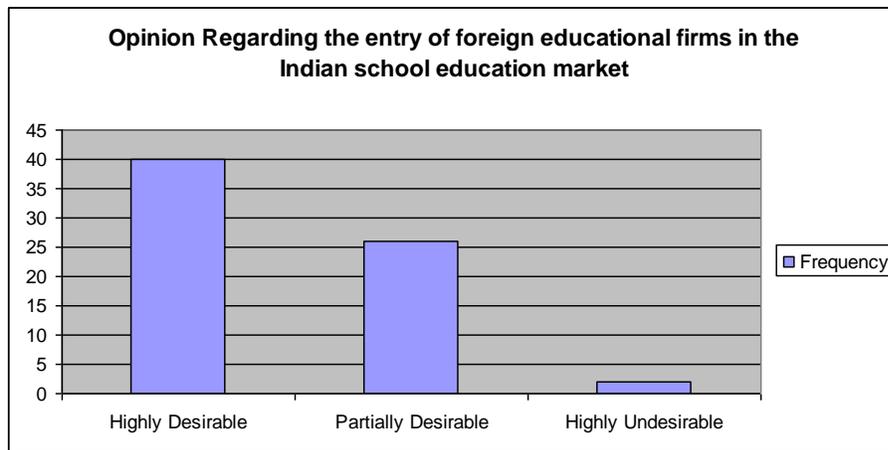
The remaining 70 % feel that it is a gateway to unlimited opportunities, signifying that there is indeed a groundswell in support of globalisation of education. The most significant aspect noted here is that none of the participants feel that it is an approach towards unmitigated disaster.

The responses to the question as to whether the entry of International Education Firms in Indian School Education Desirable or not is tabulated in Table: 7 and Chart G below

Table: 7
Is the entry of foreign educational firms desirable?

Responses	Frequency
Highly Desirable	40
Partially Desirable	26
Highly Undesirable	2

Chart G



It is interesting to note here that more than 97% of the respondents feel that the impact of GATS will either be highly desirable or at least partially desirable.

The teachers those who have stated that the entry of international educational firms into the country is highly desirable have given the following reasoning for their argument:

- The entry of foreign institutions into the country may result in the improvement of teacher- student ratio which is at present abysmal.
- The foreign firms may bring in new technology, especially those related to ICT that would improve the digital infrastructure of Indian schools.
- It may enable students to compare the performance of Indian institutions with that of foreign ones and thereby could be a choice of quality.
- The introduction of innovative teaching techniques will result in an improvement in the quality of the teachers.
- It may also make Indian students more confident and competitive.
- The introduction of the latest developments in the field will hasten India's entry into the comity of developed nations.

- It will enable the teachers and the students both to understand the latest trends in educational technology
- It may lead to ensuring better availability higher education options due to international coverage.

On the other hand, the teachers who have stated that entry of foreign educational firms is partially desirable have stated the following as the major reason for their view:

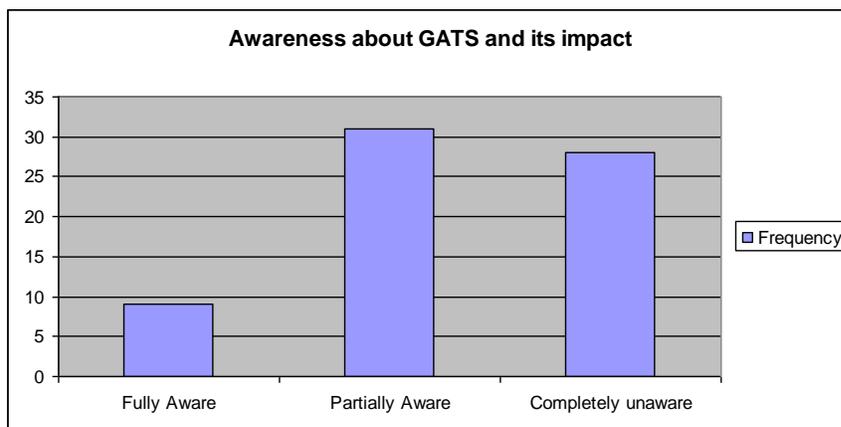
- It is only to be welcomed partially so that our heritage and customs remain intact.
- The primary objectives of Indian and foreign firms may not be uniform.
- It may partially be welcomed with the view only of improving Indian education to global levels
- Only partially desirable since our emphasis should be on primary level education whereas the emphasis of these institutions would be on secondary level education.
- A combination of Indian traditional system and foreign inputs is most desirable.
- Those who view the entry of foreign institutions as highly undesirable primarily base their arguments of the issue of erosion of Indian cultural values. They state that India has its own unique set of values and ethos, which needs to be preserved.

As regards the level of awareness about GATS and its impact on education among teachers, the following aspects were tabulated in Table: 8 and depicted in Chart H.

Table: 8
Are you aware about GATS and its impact on education?

Opinion	Frequency
Fully Aware	9
Partially Aware	31
Completely unaware	28

Chart H

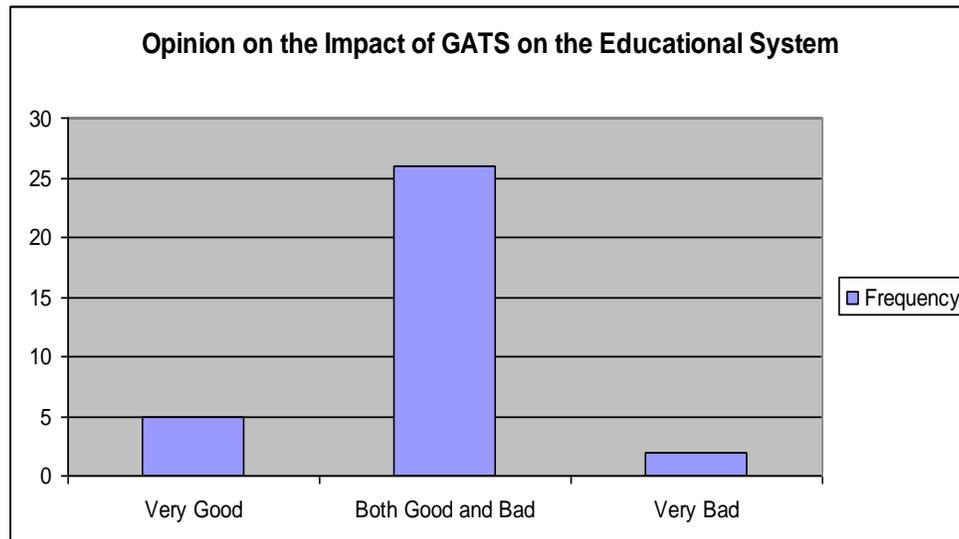


The depiction shows up a matter of very deep concern. Only 13% of the respondents are fully aware of the impact of GATS on education. The rest 87% are either only partially aware or completely unaware. This brings us to the need of a very strong awareness drive as far as GATS is concerned. The next question raised was on the perceived impact of GATS on the educational system of the country. The responses elicited are tabulated in Table: 9 and depicted in Chart I

Table: 9
Impact of GATS on the educational system of the country

Opinion	Frequency
Very Good	5
Both Good and Bad	26
Very Bad	2

Chart I



The respondents who view the impact of GATS as Good for the educational system state it would lead to better job opportunities for the students on account of a rich syllabi. The competency of the learners will also improve up to a very great extent. It is further stated that Indian students would get an opportunity to access high quality foreign education, while staying in India. Such students will also get an opportunity to know about foreign culture. While there may be positive aspects to the issue, most respondents have expressed their fears about its adverse effects.

- It is feared that without proper regulation and enforcement globalisation of education could affect adversely the quality and standard of education in the country.
- It could result in brain drain

- Could ultimately negatively affect our unity, integrity and culture.
- Since it is assumed that the primary motive of foreign firms is different from Indian firms, it could adversely affect national interest.
- Vernacular languages could get ignored
- It could restrict our freedom in implementing our own education policy.
- There could be a conflict of values.

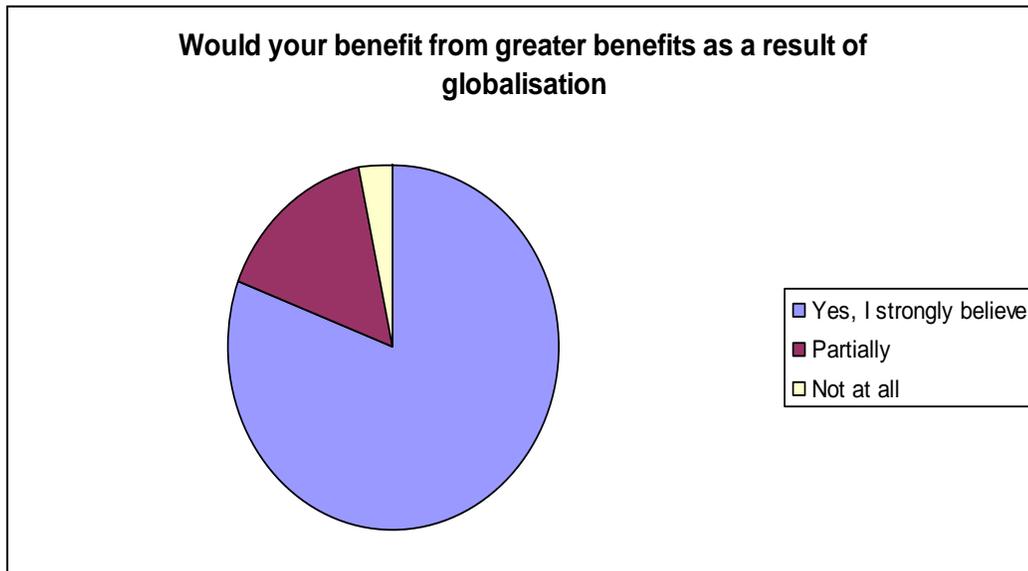
On a more personal note it was enquired whether the teachers felt that they could benefit from greater opportunities provided by globalisation.

The responses are tabulated in Table: 10 and charted in Chart J.

Table: 10
Do you believe that you will benefit from greater opportunities as a result of globalisation?

Opinion	Frequency
Yes, I strongly believe	55
Partially	11
Not at all	2

Chart J



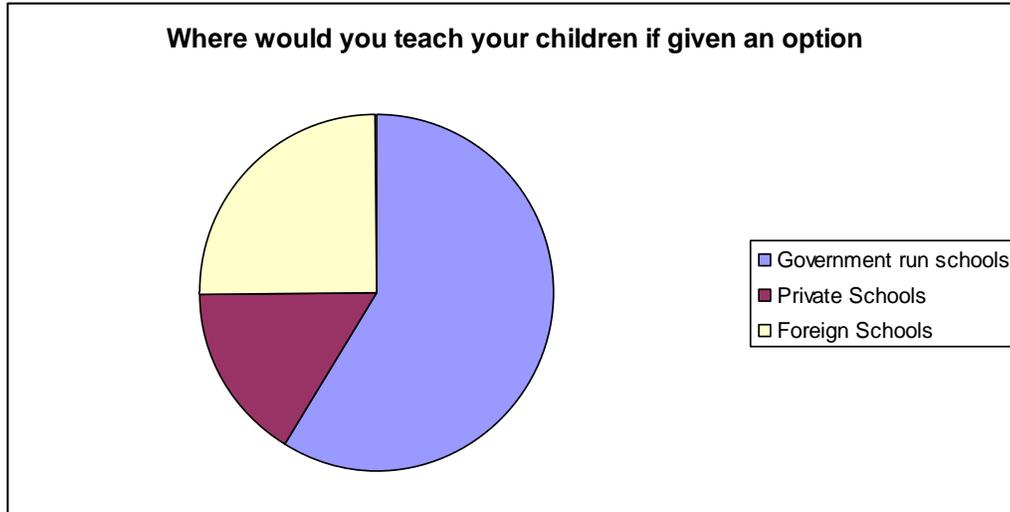
It was indeed surprising to note that most teachers, that is more than 97% felt that they would be in a position to gain from the process of globalisation of education in some form or the other.

Continuing with the personal note, it was further enquired as to where they would like to teach their wards and the responses are given in Table: 11 and Chart K.

Table: 11
If given an opportunity,
where would you like to teach your children?

Opinion	Frequency
Government run schools	37
Private Schools	10
Foreign Schools	16

Chart K



It was indeed surprising to find that most of the respondents (55%) preferred to send their wards to government schools. Those respondents who stated that they would send their wards to government run schools state that:

- **Government schools are appropriate for the economically weaker sections of the society, who form the vast majority of the population in the country, due to their low fees.**
- **Government schools have more experienced teachers, where as in private schools, the teachers keep changing frequently.**
- **The government schools besides being cost effective are dependable and accountable**
- **They follow, uniform curricula and policies.**

The respondents who stated that they would prefer Indian private school state that the important reasons for their decision are:

- **That private schools provide better results, include latest technologies and also use latest equipment**
- **That they have better infrastructure**
- **They have dedicated staff**

The respondents who prefer to send their wards to foreign institution state that:

- **The learners are given the latest technologies and facilities**
- **They have excellent infrastructure**
- **The student tend to become more competent**
- **The students get more international exposure, experience**
- **The teaching modules will become more flexible in character.**

The respondents were also enquired about the new probable challenges that the educational system could face in the context of globalisation. Their responses were as follows:

- **One important challenge is to fine tune our teaching methodology in accordance with global teaching learning systems.**
- **Another challenge for the teachers is to learn the latest ICT and teaching methodologies.**
- **They also have to take care of the skill upgradation aspect**
- **The teachers may have to adapt themselves to an entirely different teaching culture.**
- **The teaching community will have to better compete with the teaching communities of other/foreign institutions.**
- **The teaching community will have the challenge of upholding the Indian culture, values and customs.**

The respondents also felt that the following New Teaching Learning Practices could emerge in the context of globalisation

- **Demonstration and practical based teaching would emerge. Teacher's role should be that of a motivator.**
- **Satellite based education would emerge**
- **Greater focus would be on demonstration and interactive techniques**
- **The teacher-student gap would be greatly reduced.**
- **There would be a shift from a mark centred approach to a knowledge centred approach**
- **New concepts like the E-Libraries, Online Learning, Virtual Class rooms etc would gain prominence.**

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- **The most important result of the study is that if the AEES teachers are taken to represent the microcosm of Indian Government school teachers, there is surprisingly a wide support for globalisation. It is felt that globalisation could bring in the latest technologies, the latest pedagogic techniques and also the latest attitudes into the Indian education system.**
- **It is felt that as a result of globalisation, the teaching – learning process could undergo a sea change. E-Learning, Online education, practical based learning etc could become common as a result.**
- **The teaching community feels that the major challenge of globalisation would be that of adaptation to the latest techniques and the need for common upgradation of skills.**

- Though the teachers feel that they would still prefer their children to study in government run schools, they still feel that foreign schools could have the advantage of better technology and better pedagogic processes.
- There needs to be a blend of Indian and foreign values as far as the pedagogic changes in the newly envisaged system are concerned. The finest aspects of the Indian teaching tradition when blended with the western tradition can indeed bring out amazing results.
- The awareness levels about GATS and globalisation per say, is a matter of deep concern. The fact that even among a group that is highly educated, the level of awareness is so low, indicates a matter of very serious concern.
- Another result of the study is that even though a clear understanding of GATS may not be there, a concern about the maintenance of quality on account of the entry of foreign firms exists. This concern was voiced by many teachers.
- The AEES teachers feel that there could be a number of challenges to the teaching community on account of globalisation. They aver that the adaptation process may not be very smooth.

CONCLUSION

The study has brought to light many important facets of the perception of Indian school teachers as regards globalisation of education. Globalisation is a multidimensional phenomenon with numerous portends. Under the auspices of GATS globalisation has acquired a definite structure, meaning and scope. The teachers of AEES represent the very elite of school teachers working under the government machinery. It can be concluded from the study that while they generally support globalisation, they are alive to the changes that it can bring and the adaptation needed to that extent.

BIODATA and CONTACT ADDRESSES of AUTHORS



Dr. M. Rajesh has done his Ph.D on the topic "Indian Distance Education institutions in the era of GATS". He did his M.A and M.Phil in International Relations and also possesses a Post Graduate Diploma in Distance Education and a Post Graduate Diploma in International Business Operations. Further he has also successfully completed an Advanced Certificate from WIPO World Wide Academy on Copyrights and related rights. His major research interests are in the field of globalisation of Education, Economics of Education, Student Support Services etc. He currently holds the position of Regional Director at IGNOU Regional Centre, Mumbai, India. His contact address is

Dr.M.Rajesh
Regional Director
Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU)
Regional Centre, First Floor, Om Leva Vikas Niketan, INDIA
E-Mail Address : rajesh_cawes@yahoo.com, rajeshmignou@yahoo.co.in
Telephone No. : +91- 9869087130



Ms.Sindhu P Nair has done her Bachelors degree in Engineering and holds a Masters degree in Business Administration.She had also done her Post Graduate Diploma in Distance Education. Presently is working as Assistant Regional Director in Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) Regional Centre, Cochin. Her contach address is

Ms. Sindhu. P. Nair

**Assistant Regional Director
GNOU Regional Centre
Kaloor P.O, Cochin, Kerala, INDIA
E.Mail: spn_07@yahoo.co.in
Ph. +91- 9895033281**

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