

## SHADOW MARKET: A CASE OF COACHING MARKET IN KOTA CITY OF RAJASTHAN

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**Abstract:** In Kota city of Rajasthan, the localization of such institutions which provide coaching for the entrance examination of IITs, NITs and medical colleges has been done very densely. In Kota, a number of these types of institutes and their sizes are very large as compared to any other city of India. Opportunities for alternative careers for children should always be open so that the failing students in the coaching system can move forward on alternate routes without any difficulty.

**Key Words:** Coaching, Private tutoring, Demand-Supply, Service provider

### INTRODUCTION

Generally, in the formal market of education, all the institutes provide education and training to students and provide some degree, diploma, or certificate after passing an examination. In the shadow market, there are such establishments which provide education and training to the students but do not give them any degree, diploma, or certificate. This type of institutes is known as a tuition or coaching institute. In addition to the formal education market, the size of the above mentioned informal (shadow) market is very huge. It is also called a parallel market of education. The coaching institutions help the students of schools, colleges, and universities, by providing support and training in the mainstream education system. Additionally, these informal institutes give training to the students to prepare for competitive examinations for employment. Apart from this, these coaching institutes also provide training for entrance examinations in reputed technical institutes. Some training institutions are specialized in it, in which the number of students and business size is very large. In Kota city of Rajasthan, the localization of such institutions which provide training for the entrance examination of IITs, NITs and medical colleges has been done very densely.

In Kota, a number of these types of institutes and their sizes are very large as compared to any other city of India.

### BEGINNING OF THE COACHING MARKET

In India, there are a very few seats for admission available in technical and vocational education compared to general education but demand and employment potential of the former is very high. The number of seats available in the best technical institutes like AIMS, IIT and NIIT is very little as compared to the other engineering colleges or universities, that is why the admission is granted by an open entrance examination conducted by these technical institutes. After economic liberalization and privatization, per capita income in India has augmented as well as the employment opportunities in the private corporate sector have also increased. In the corporate sector, the salary packages may be in crores, which is very high in comparison to any public sector. This opportunity was not available to the graduates of the best technical institutions before liberalization. After liberalization, due to the availability of employment on a very high package to the graduates in the private sector, the competition has begun to enter the institutions like IITs. Due to the increasing per capita income, high expectations, and cut

throat competition, the demand for coaching institutions for training for the preparation of entrance examinations has increased very rapidly.

Getting good education in a developing country like India is a valid and effective way of progress and advancement. For people with low, low-middle, and middle-income groups, it is the only viable and effective way to advance their next generation for upward social mobility. Although the rate of success is very low, for every guardian it is a dream, which he attempts to transform, through their children, into reality. For this, he is ready to go to any extent. He also takes a big economic risk which is very risky for people of lower income groups. Thus, the guardians of the Indian middle class become involved in this rat-race. Parents send students to coaching institutions because this has become a trend in which they start believing without any argument. When everyone is doing this in every town, village, city, and state, other parents do not feel the hesitation in copying others because when a lot of people are ready to take a very big risk, then it becomes a trend. In this situation, a person is automatically involved without any hesitation. On the contrary, if only a few people had done this, it could not have become a trend. Caution would have won.

This market was existed in many cities in India, but it started in Kota city of Rajasthan in a big way. At present, many big corporate are available for this kind of coaching in Kota city, and Kota has become a major centre, a hub, for this type of education in the country. Over the time, the demand for said coaching has increased very fast, due to which its prices, quality, and expertise have also increased rapidly. Once free 'gyandaan' has now become high payment for attractive notes, just in a decade.

### **NEED FOR THE COACHING**

At first, admission in the best technical institutes was given on the basis of merit at Class 12 marks. With time, due to the differences in the level of Education Boards of many states and the adoption of generous grading system by sundry Education Boards and the tendency to give a lot of marks in the practical examination, the reliability of Class 12 marks had gone down, i. e., the relation between Class 12 merit and the student's actual capabilities had lost its proportion. For this reason, students of Class 12 were

given admission through a common open competitive examination. Prima facie this system looks fair. But due to increasing demand and expectations, the competition started getting intensified and the students started taking the help of coaching classes for the admission in IIT's and medical colleges. Due to the rapid growth of demand, large corporate and persons of related expertise started coming to this coaching business. With the passage of time, many problems and negative aspects entered into it, which have not yet been solved. Since the best technical institutions are in the public sector only and per student cost is extremely high, there are a limited number of seats. To give equal opportunity to each and everyone in these limited places, entrance exam appears to be one of the best and only justified method and there is no equal alternative to it.

At present, the situation has become so severe that coaching has been almost inevitable to get admission in the best technical institutes. Due to this indispensability, many negative consequences have emerged. Essentially, the purpose of the entrance examination is to select the best out of the available candidates. As the number of candidates is much higher than those of the available seats, there are many negative aspects that have started to appear e. g. aspirants have created a tendency of taking coaching for two consecutive years and 12 hours a day without any leave to prepare for entrance examinations. In such a situation, the trained brain that can crack the entrance examination is selected for the purpose of qualifying the entrance exam instead of selecting the best brain.

For any person's academic performance, both his natural ability and training of the brain are equal contributory factors. The natural ability of the brain is biologically predetermined. So it tells about the developmental potential of a person. But this alone cannot reach the last academic execution. For this, it is necessary to have proper training and conducive environment. Coaching for the entrance examinations is given to the person to train only for the entrance exam. Because of this, the possibility of the selection of the best-trained brain is greatly increased for the entrance examinations rather than the naturally superior capacities. While the aim of the entrance examination is to select the naturally superior brain, the entrance test is not successful in its

objective. It is training that ultimately wins.

### **NEED FOR THE BEST BRAIN**

As the best technical institutes are in the public sector only and the cost per student is very high, they charge much less than the actual cost, because as they are run by full government subsidy. Indirectly it is the contribution of the taxpayers' money. Every citizen of the country has equal rights on these institutions, so here also all are given equal opportunities for admission. Admission is given through a common open entrance examination, which is absolutely fair. Since these are the best technical institutions in the country, they have got the status of institutions of national importance. Here, per student expenditure incurred is many times more than the other general technical institutes. Therefore, for optimal use of limited resources of the country, only the best students should be admitted in order to get maximum output from limited resources. Only the best brain should be allowed to access the rare resources available here so that the country can get the maximum possible benefit of these resources. In the entrance examination rather than the brain with the best natural ability, we are admitting the best-trained brain to crack the entrance which is not in the country's interest. Ultimately, this will reduce the total production of the nation.

### **SIGNALLING DEVICE VERSUS VALUE ADDITION**

The thousand dollar question is: 'Is there a value addition in the abilities of the candidates, by coaching for entrance exams?' There have been many controlled studies for this and it has also been theoretically confirmed that there is no value addition by such coaching. The students who got admitted through coaching and those who had not gotten any coaching do not have any significant difference in the performance in their further studies. It proves that there is no value addition by coaching. The entrance test is simply the medium of an indication or a signalling device. This examination only indicates who the best ones among the competing students are. The training received in the coaching for the entrance examination does not add value to the students' ability as such, which will be useful in their future studies. It is to be noted that most

of coaching institutes/centres have become schools/colleges in the real sense and schools/colleges become only certificate distributors/examination conductors, which is an open secret.

### **ADVERSE IMPACTS OF THE COACHING SYSTEM**

#### **Psychological Side Effects**

Despite the training in the best coaching institutes, the maximum success rate is not more than 10 per cent. Apart from them, there are several other coaching institutes in which success rates are much lower than these. Generally, after passing Class 10, students take admission in coaching institutes and for two consecutive years, they study 10 hours per day, without any breaks, receive two years of training. They are enrolled in nominal or dummy schools. While in reality they study full-time in coaching institutions and at the end of the year they go to school to take the exam only. In such a situation, students have to face many psychological problems. Their development becomes one-sided. They are only engaged in studies. All other aspects of life become secondary to them. The common and empathetic observation could reveal that life comes to a halt; between brackets of time - years, months, days, and hours. Sports, entertainment, social interaction, and community life are almost completely nil for them. They spend all their time and energy in training to qualify the entrance exam only. Many students cannot tolerate so much psychological pressure and mentally suffer from many diseases. Due to physical and emotional fatigue, many of these students commit suicide.

In Kota, parents usually send children aged 13 for coaching. Being a prestigious coaching institute, it sorts out the students by conducting an entrance examination before admitting them. Only after succeeding in it, it gives admission to the best students. In such a situation, it becomes very difficult for parents to get admission of their wards in prestigious coaching institutes. For this, parents also send their wards for personal tuition and coaching for passing the entrance examination of the prestigious coaching institute of Kota. In fact, even before the coaching starts in Kota, children are tortured to endure the heat, cold, and rain in such private tuition

and coaching. Their childhood ends in practice before the age of 13. Instead of playing and having social interaction, they have to constantly study for 10 hours a day, without any leave. Life revolves around the equations of mathematics and many other jargons.

After arriving in Kota, they have to live in very high rented small rooms, where many other students like them are living, and try hard to make the dream of their parents to be true, i. e. to get admission in IIT. Many students are not able to tolerate such pressure of the new environment and the daily tutorial class pressing for a competitive exam every week and higher ranking in it. They have to realise very high expectations of their family and guardians. Before them, there are successful posters of star students, and students are pressurized to get high scores in examinations every week. The coaching institutes adopt the cruellest retrenchment process in this tough competition and sort them out in separate batches according to their ranks. Star students and the star batch remain dominated. Everyone has to try to reach that batch. There is constant pressure to maintain the ranks in the test per week and to move forward in it, and the students continually struggle every day like a ghostly shadow. Once back in the rank, they are sent to the backward batch. In addition to coaching, there is also the pressure to bring higher marks in the Class 12 examination as well. Here there is no place for a mediocre.

These are some anecdotes which reveal the real conditions there. In Kota, 57 students committed suicide in the last five years. For coaching in Kota, parents send children from the age of about 13 years. Recently, Shivad, the uncle of a 14-year-old student, a suicide victim, who is from Kolari village of Dholpur, said, "The child was under the pressure of very high expectations and the family and the neighbours had already started calling him 'Dr. Saheb'. He was not fully prepared to face all these psychological pressures". Similarly, Suresh Mishra, a 17-year-old student, who was from Vidisha, refused to stay in Kota (The Times of India Jan 3, 2016). He is now suffering from a headache, fatigue, and sweating. He now feels partial memory loss, black-out, and sometimes confusion, his father told this. For parents of the middle class, coaching for children here is a very big economic burden. There is no policy for any coaching class or hostel

to refund the fees here. If a student wishes to leave in the middle, then he has to pay all the fees in advance and due to not having a fee refunding policy in between and due to the pressure of the parents, he cannot leave in the middle. This increases mental stress on him. In such a situation, the student is not able to bear the brunt. His sensitiveness diminishes, his personality disappears, and he feels physically and emotionally tired. Due to fear of failure and because of no alternative career, he cannot leave this fierce coaching system in the middle which is continuously grinding him. This has made Kota city not only a centre for students' suicides but in the cruel dreadful coaching factory. Thus, the effulgence, innocence, imaginative eyes, and love for life have all been sacrificed in this race.

#### **LOSS OF NATIONAL INCOME (WASTAGE IN EDUCATION)**

Even if the highest rate of success of coaching institutions is considered to be 10 per cent, then obviously 90 per cent of the students fail. The money, time, and labour spent in coaching by these unsuccessful students are completely useless. It does not have any value addition in their human capital which is useful in their future lives. Many of the students become completely frustrated and irritable. It takes a lot of time for them to become normal, to become mentally normal, and to continue studies in any other side of life. Although no money is spent by the government in the said coaching system, all expenses are borne by private individuals. But whatever time, labour, and money becomes useless, it is a part of the national income of the country which goes waste. This leads to a loss of national income. The size of this loss is very huge. In these coaching centres, many IITians are teaching with postgraduate and graduate degrees, whose salary ranges from 1 to 1.5 crores annually. This is higher than the salary received by a director of IIT. Since the maximum rate of success is only 10 per cent, therefore, the number of students taking training in coaching is 10 times the number of students studying in IITs. For the study in IITs, the amount of money spent in the country is more than 10 times that of preparing for entrance exams for admission i.e., the nation is spending 10 times more money on preparation for entrance examination of IITs

than on running the IITs. It is similar to a government scheme in which the government machinery costs 90 per cent of the money to implement the scheme and only 10 per cent goes to the targeted beneficiaries. In this 90 per cent of the funds are spent only in implementing the scheme. No one is thinking out of the conventional box or in the open horizon.

The only difference is that the government is spending money on students studying in IITs, which is received from taxpayers and parents are spending money for their wards' private coaching. Both the expenses belong to the country and constitute national income. That means the total expenditure on entrance examinations goes waste, from 90% of the parents and students' perspectives. The expenditure incurred on coaching of 10 per cent of the successful students because is not wasted, but looking from nation's point of view, this money is also wasted because of this private coaching there is no such value addition in the human capital of the students, which can be useful in their further studies. The entrance exam is simply a method of selection that indicates who are the best out of all the aspirant candidates.

### **LACK OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY**

For coaching for the entrance exam, approximately 5-6 lakh rupees are spent in 2 years and the success rate is 10 per cent. In such a situation, it is very difficult for the parents of the lower, lower-middle and middle-income groups to provide the said coaching to their children. The middle-class audacious parents take loans, sell property, and invest in the so-called best future of their children, in which the success rate is only 10 per cent. So this system is going to promote inequality. Those parents of the low-income group, whose wards fail in the entrance exams, are gambling in a way. The failing wards are psychologically under too much pressure, take a lot of time to become normal, and are not easily accommodated in employment by studying any other subject. Had the wards not received the coaching and instead been motivated to pursue other subjects of his choice, his faculties must have developed. The stigma of the said failure is shouldered throughout the life. The mental pressure on those wards becomes very high when parents who take loans or sell a property or

reduce their daily consumption expenses by sending their children to the said coaching institutes. The knowledge of such steps further reduces their success rate. In this way, this arrangement causes double edged effects on parents and their wards.

Due to shortcomings in the mainstream school system, the tuition system is flourishing and this is the extension of the coaching system. This coaching system has divided all the students into two classes, one whose parents are rich and the other of not so rich, that is, those can afford coaching and others who are not capable. It has divided the children into two categories in the society. Ideally, there should have been two classes, one of higher order talent and the other mediocre but useful otherwise. Only the best natural intellectuals ought to have had the best opportunity. But in the present system, only the students of wealthy parents have the best coaching arrangements available to them, who get the best opportunity. This is very divisive. It creates inequality and psycho-social problem in the age of prime-youth.

Although admission tests are conducted in regional languages other than English, primarily it is in English which is always the priority in elite institutes. In regional languages, this examination can be conducted only through translation. The effect of the complications that occur, affects the students studying in regional languages. Because of this, they always feel the pressure of mental illness. The higher rate of success of students studying in English medium increases the pressure on students of regional languages. Generally, the parents of only high-income groups are able to send their children to the best English medium schools. If at all the low-income guardians send their children to schools of English medium, they can send them to only mediocre schools of so-called English medium. The above coaching system also increases social inequality which disrupts the chances of equal opportunities.

In 2018, there were 11289 seats in 23 IITs out of which 800 seats were reserved for the girls only. There were 17390 seats in 30 NIT. For Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) the number of registered students in the main examination, 2018, was approximately 1.5 million, out of which only 150000 were selected in JEE Advance. In the year 2018, there were about 60000 MBBS

seats, of which around 30000 were in government medical colleges, for which 1326725 applicants had applied. We can see the increasing trend over the years the students taking coaching in Kota, in the table given below:

Year	Students taking coaching in Kota	
	Medical examinations	Engineering examinations
2010 - 11	17000	65000
2011 - 12	20000	70000
2012 - 13	27000	85000
2013 - 14	35000	100000
2014 - 15	40000	125000

Source: The Times of India, 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2013

According to the National Sample Survey, approximately 7.1 crore Indian students go to private coaching classes and spend about 10 to 11 per cent of the household income. The size of the private coaching industry is more than \$ 40 billion.

Names of these children are enrolled in the register only of some schools, which remain connected to coaching institutes. These students never go any school; they study only for the entrance examinations of medical or engineering. They are completely deprived of the playgrounds of schools, friends, entertainment, poetry, etc. These young innocent students get killed before creativity begins. Two years of expense for a student, which include tuition and living expenses, is around Rs. 600000. While India's per capita annual income (2018) is 103870. In a situation where the rate of success is very low, it is difficult for the parents to spend so much by taking so much risk, also, there are a lot of psychological and emotional side effects on the students.

Whatever is taught in the said coaching, there is no value addition in human capital. It is only the signalling technique. Instead it should have been a better cognitive technique to select the best minds. Therefore, it is inevitable to look for alternative techniques in view of its most daunting and terrible social and economic costs. No coherent evidence has been found so far that there has been a significant increase in the productivity of the

students by the coaching for entrance examinations. A very high number of applicants apply but a few seats are available in India, these entrance examinations are producing many horrible social consequences. There is no evidence that students who get admission after coaching perform better while studying in college as compared to students admitted without coaching (Dang and Rogers, 2008).

Theoretically, it seems that there is no value addition in human capital by coaching institutions. Therefore, it is important to find out the possibility of alternative cognitive techniques. Students across the world are selected on the basis of their overall performance and overall intellectual ability in their schools. Entrance exams are essential for keeping away non-serious and careless candidates, but this cannot be the only criteria on for the final selection. It is necessary to consider several factors such as scores of examinations of schools, interviews, mental aptitude, co-operative activities, regular attendance, etc. by which a student's overall personality and intelligence can be tested. It will be in their interest to allow students to study in mainstream schools, where he/she can normally study all subjects such as social science, maths, poetry, etc. and participate in debates and sports. While under the coaching system, socialization and creativity are completely subdued.

The apex technical institutes in India should focus on postgraduate study and research. Currently, the best course in an IIT is only B.Tech. For B.Tech. in IITs, best students are always available. After doing this degree, all these students immediately become part of the workforce, as they get a very high salary package which is sometimes in crores. Rarely, does any student go for M.Tech. and strive for research. In such a situation, those students enrolled in an IIT for M.Tech. and research related studies are those who do their degree from other mediocre institutes and do not get any suitable employment in the labour market. Thus, in IITs, the quality of M.Tech. and research programmes is affected severely. In these institutions, the maximum expenditure is incurred, which is collected from the hard-earned income of the taxpayer. These institutions are expected to do excellent technical research in the interest of the country. Their faculties and infrastructure are considered the country's

most rare resources. To make the best use of these rare resources, only the best brains and quality students should be admitted so that our output can be maximized. The maximum output can be achieved only if all types of inputs are the best. However, at present, in IITs, the best human resources are not being used for research. After doing B.Tech, the best human resources become part of the workforce in the industries in India and abroad. IITs are unable to attract their own students to pursue M.Tech. and research field studies.

### **POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES**

Alternatively, IIT should change their strategy; they should focus only on post-graduation studies and research programmes. Undergraduate level technical education should be left to other institutions. Currently, IITs are producing graduates for the recruitment of middle level management and technical graduates for large private industries and corporate, where they can work on hefty packages. The only goal in front of students and guardians is to get enrolled in IIT which can give them jobs with the big salary packages. In such a situation, the contribution of the best technical institutes of the country to technological research and development is greatly reduced. In an ideal condition, these institutions should be the best research centres instead of producing graduates. For this purpose, the best students out of the technical graduates produced from other institutes should be selected and they should be employed in Research and Development (R and D) in the best institutions like IITs and NITs.

Similarly, NITs Should also focus on more research and developments and the work of producing graduates should be left to other technical institutes. If only the postgraduate and research work is done in the best technical institutes, then the quality of the research will increase and technology will be developed in the country which is very much needed. Two objectives of higher technical education are: (1) to transfer the available knowledge to the next generation, (2) to create new knowledge through new research so that the horizon of knowledge can be expanded. The best institutes should focus only on the latter one.

Alternatively, in the best technical institutes, instead

of class 12 passed students, only engineering diploma students should be allowed to enter in B.Tech. Because when the class 12 passed students fail to get admission by entrance examinations, their future is adversely affected. For them, it also becomes difficult to get employment by getting other kinds of education in future. In such a situation if he/she is an engineering diploma holder, the candidate can find other doors open before him/her. At present whatever is transmitted in the coaching institutes' remains of no use other than the competitive entrance exams. The road of learning remains blocked. In alternative arrangements in which the diploma holders are given admission, they will be examined in the entrance examination regarding the practical knowledge of the related engineering subject and the interest in engineering. In such a situation, students who fail to get admission despite coaching, the knowledge, and training added at the time of coaching contributes value to human capital in their future life, which increases their productivity and employability. They will not be so much disappointed if they fail, as in the current system, Class 12 students feel after failing entrance exams.

In the present system, although theoretically the Class 12 course is asked in the entrance examination, due to the competition being very high, the level of entrance exam gets higher than the graduation level. The unsuccessful ones prove to be useless for any other gainful activity. In such a situation, if admission is given after doing Diploma or B.Tech. then questions related to Diploma or B.Tech. course should be asked in the entrance examinations. Then students will not have much loss due to coaching even if failing in admission test, as the study done for entrance exams will be useful, which has already been done in their Diploma or B.Tech. The quality of knowledge and training gained during coaching will increase, and these their productivity will also increase.

The current system of coaching we are spending only on a signalling device. This expenditure is far more in comparison to the total expenditure of running IITs. If this expenditure is properly mobilized then, the number of graduates can be increased. The total number of seats should be increased in IITs and NITs. This will also lower the level of competition and reduce wastage on signalling devices, like coaching. The country is currently enjoying

a demographic dividend. It is very crucial to train this young manpower to take full advantage of this dividend so that their productivity can be increase and they can be employed in the country's production process and their direct contribution to national income can be ensured.

The practical experience shows that the mental pressure that comes during coaching in Kota is more than or the same as the pressure students feel while pursuing their study of B.Tech in IIT. However, to overcome all these problems, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), IIT administration, the state governments, and the local administrations have started to put some effort, but they are less effective. The MHRD has tried to increase the weight of Class 12 marks. The IIT administration has tried to change the design and strategy of questions in the question papers of the entrance exams so that coaching institutions cannot take their estimates and reduce the role of coaching institutions. Some of the state governments have also started free coaching arrangements for students of weaker sections. The local administration of Kota has instructed coaching institutes to reduce the psychological pressure on the students. They are instructed to identify the sensitive students through psychological testing and provide them the needed advice and support. Also, they have been instructed to keep a complete holiday once a week. Nevertheless, unfortunately in spite of all the government efforts, there has not been much change in the situation.

### **CONCLUSION**

Parents do not even acknowledge that entering an IIT

or a medical college is not the only purpose and end in this world. It is also important to take into account the abilities and interests of their wards. Forcing our wishes and desires on them is not right. If they want to leave the stream in the middle or want to change their options, they should be given freedom for that. Opportunities for alternative careers for children should always be open so that the failed students in the coaching system can move forward on alternative routes without any difficulty. Alternatively, IITs and NITs should change their strategy; they should focus only on post-graduation studies and research programmes, rather than undergraduate programmes.

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