

# Equity and Viability: Unravelling Fee Regulation in Indian Professional Education

Ankita Karulkar<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Varsha Borgaonkar<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, BMCC Centre, Savitribai Phule Pune University.

<sup>2</sup>Research Guide, BMCC Centre, Savitribai Phule Pune University.

## Abstract:

This research paper delves into the task of regulating fees in higher education institutions, with a primary focus on professional education. As the demand for college education continues to rise, finding a middle ground between ensuring student affordability and justifying the financial sustainability of colleges becomes paramount. The study navigates the factors influencing fee structures, emphasizing the impact of regulatory measures on students' ability to afford quality education. This research seeks to unravel the intricate dynamics that contribute to fee regulation challenges in college settings. The ultimate goal is to provide insights that assist policymakers in crafting regulations that strike an equitable balance, fostering access for students while acknowledging the financial viability imperative for colleges. This research aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on creating a fair and sustainable fee framework that benefits both colleges and their diverse student populations.

**Keywords:** Professional Education, Fee Regulation, Affordability, Financial Sustainability, Students, Regulatory Measures, Policy Considerations

## Introduction:

In the landscape of higher education, the issue of fee regulation within professional education institutions stands as a critical and evolving challenge. With a growing demand for specialized skills and knowledge, the equilibrium between ensuring student affordability and maintaining the financial viability of educational institutions becomes increasingly complex. This research delves into the multifaceted dimensions of fee regulation, focusing specifically on professional education, where the stakes for both students and institutions are high.

As the pursuit of professional education becomes more integral to career aspirations, striking a balance between accessible education and sustainable institutional practices is imperative. The challenge lies not only in determining the factors that influence fee structures but also in crafting effective regulatory measures that address the diverse needs of students while acknowledging the financial imperatives of educational institutions.

This study aims to navigate the intricate dynamics surrounding fee regulation, emphasizing the impact of these measures on students' ability to access and afford quality education. By scrutinizing local perspectives, we seek to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by professional education institutions in finding this middle ground.

As we embark on this exploration, our goal is to contribute valuable insights to the ongoing discourse on fee regulation, offering a foundation for policymakers to craft equitable and sustainable frameworks that foster student access while ensuring the financial health of professional education institutions. In doing so, we aim to shed light on the nuanced interplay between affordability and viability, paving the way for a fair and effective fee regulation system within the realm of professional education.

**Objective:**

1. To identify the key factors influencing fee structures in professional education institutions.
2. To assess the impact of regulatory measures on students' access to and affordability of quality education.
3. To examine the challenges faced by professional education institutions in maintaining financial viability while ensuring student access.
4. To provide insights that contribute to the development of equitable and sustainable fee regulation frameworks in professional education.

**Literature Review:**

Determinants of Tuition Fees in Indian Higher Education:

Authors: Sharma, A., & Kapoor, R.

Publication Year: 2021

Description: Sharma and Kapoor's paper delves into the complexities of tuition fee determination in Indian universities. Drawing on economic indicators, government policies, and institutional considerations, the authors analyze the multifaceted factors shaping tuition fee structures. The aim is to offer a comprehensive understanding of the intricate landscape that governs fee policies in the Indian higher education system.

Impact of Tuition Fees on Access and Affordability in India:

Authors: Mehta, S., & Desai, N.

Publication Year: 2022

Description: Mehta and Desai's research investigates the repercussions of changing tuition fees on student access and affordability in Indian higher education. Through an exploration of enrollment patterns, demographic shifts, and socioeconomic considerations, the authors aim to provide insights into the broader impact of tuition fee alterations on the accessibility of quality education for diverse segments of the population.

Challenges Faced by Indian Educational Institutions in Fee Regulation:

Authors: Singh, A., & Khanna, N.

Publication Year: 2023

Description: In this paper, Singh and Khanna examine the challenges encountered by Indian higher education institutions in effectively regulating fees. The study delves into issues related to financial sustainability, quality assurance, and meeting the diverse needs of students. By identifying and discussing these challenges, the authors aim to provide valuable insights that can inform strategies for navigating the complexities of fee regulation in the Indian educational landscape.

Equitable and Sustainable Fee Regulation Frameworks in Indian Higher Education:

Authors: Mathur, P., & Verma, V.

Publication Year: 2021

Description: Mathur and Verma's paper focuses on policy considerations, offering insights into the design and implementation of equitable and sustainable fee structures in Indian higher education. By drawing lessons from recent developments and successful models, the authors aim to guide policymakers in crafting fee regulation frameworks that strike a balance between financial health and the accessibility of education.

Student Perspectives on Tuition Fees in Indian Higher Education:

Authors: Patel, A., & Gupta, R.

Publication Year: 2022

Description: Patel and Gupta conducted a qualitative study exploring student perspectives on tuition fees in Indian professional education institutions. Through interviews, surveys, or focus groups, the authors aim to provide a nuanced, human-centric understanding of how students perceive and are impacted by tuition fees. The insights from this research are expected to contribute to policymaking that is attuned to the needs and concerns of the student population.

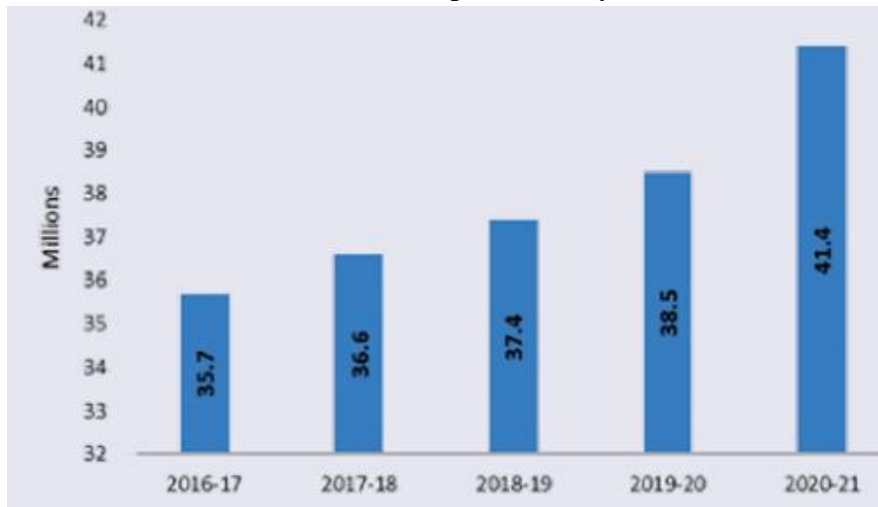
### **Research Methodology:**

In this research, a mixed-methods approach is employed to comprehensively investigate fee regulation in professional education in India. Quantitative data, encompassing tuition fees, enrollment figures, and demographic variables, will be collected from a purposively sampled set of diverse professional education institutions. Concurrently, qualitative insights will be derived through semi-structured interviews with students and institutional administrators to illuminate their perspectives on fee regulation, challenges encountered, and potential avenues for improvement. Quantitative analysis, employing descriptive statistics and regression analysis, aims to unveil patterns within fee structures and enrollment trends. Thematic analysis of qualitative data seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of the impact of fee regulation on students and institutions. Ethical considerations prioritize participant confidentiality, informed consent, and responsible data handling. Recognizing potential limitations, the study emphasizes validity and reliability through triangulation of data sources and rigorous qualitative analysis. A well-defined timeline ensures the efficient execution of the research, contributing substantively to the understanding of fee regulation dynamics in professional education institutions in India.

### **Results and Discussion:**

The enrollment has experienced substantial growth over the past five years, escalating from 3,57,05,905 in 2016-17 to 4,13,80,713 in 2020-21, indicating an increase of approximately 15.89% . The annual growth rate in enrollment has exhibited noteworthy improvement throughout this period. Specifically, the surge in enrollment from 2019-20 to 2020-21 reached 7.3%, marking the highest annual increase within the last five years.

Below figure shows the students enrolment over the period of 5 years from 2016 – 2021



As reported by the Financial Express, more than 70% of individuals in rural areas in India face challenges in completing their 10th-class education, with 40% opting not to pursue further education. This trend is not confined to India alone; globally, the cost of education has witnessed a significant rise. According to a report from the Georgetown University Center on Education and Welfare, the average expenses for an undergraduate degree, including tuition fees, student accommodation, and other related costs, surged by 169% between 1980 and 2020.

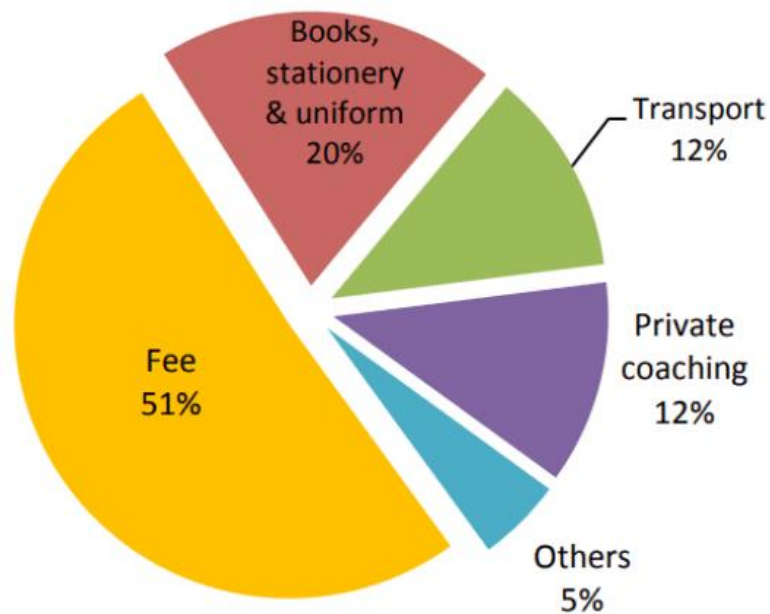


Chart: Components of Expenditure on Education by [CARE Ratings](#) (2019)

According to information referenced by The Hindu Business Line, findings from the National Sample Survey revealed a 30.7% rise in the cost of primary education from 2014 to 2018. Additionally, the fee structure for graduate courses experienced increments of 5.8%, while post-graduate courses saw an increase of 13.19% during the same period. Data sourced from the Unified District Information System

for Education indicates that around 39% of students aged 20-24 opt to discontinue their college education to contribute to their families' efforts in augmenting household income.

According to the National Statistical Office (NSO) survey conducted in 2017-2018, the expenses for pursuing IT or computer-related courses were estimated at INR 58,928, while the cost associated with management education amounted to INR 58,555.

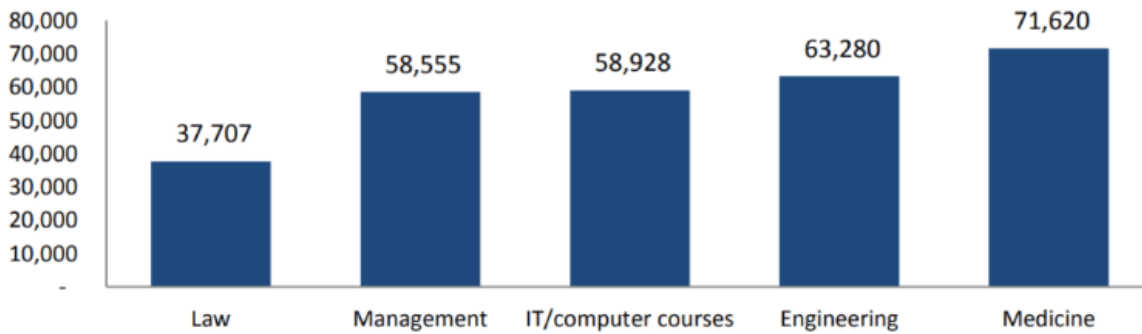
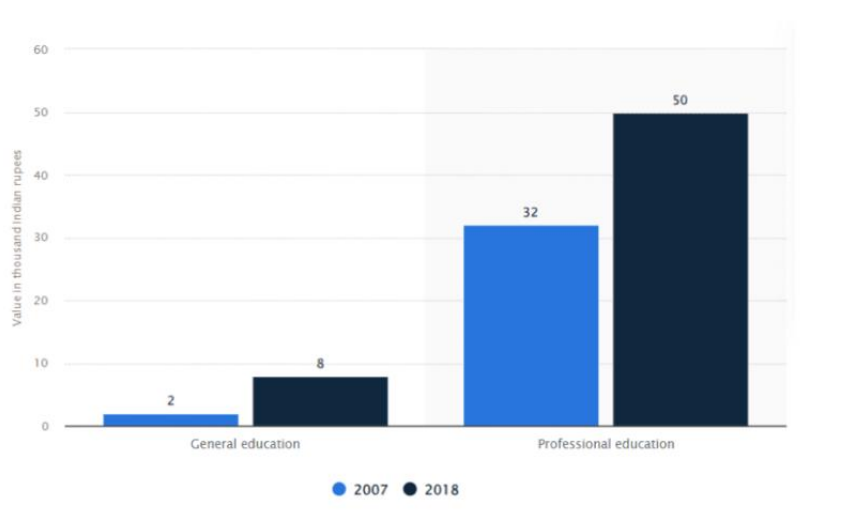


Chart by CARE Ratings

Examining the data survey by Statista for the years 2007 to 2018 regarding the annual cost of education in India, the average expense for professional education in 2018 was INR 50,000 per year nationwide. However, there has been a noteworthy increase in the cost of both general and professional education in preceding years..



### Conclusion:

In conclusion, this exploration into fee regulation in professional education in India underscores the complexity of balancing financial sustainability with student accessibility. Economic conditions, government policies, and institutional considerations intricately shape tuition fee structures, impacting student enrolment and institutional viability.

### Suggestions:

**Equitable Fee Policies:** Develop and implement fee frameworks that consider socio-economic diversity, ensuring fair access to education.

**Transparent Communication:** Enhance transparency in fee structures and communicate the rationale behind adjustments to foster trust between institutions and students.

**Financial Support Innovation:** Explore innovative financial support mechanisms, such as income-contingent repayment schemes or targeted scholarships, to alleviate the financial burden on students.

**Periodic Policy Reviews:** Regularly review fee policies to assess their impact and relevance in changing economic and educational landscapes.

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