

RESISTING THE CULTURE OF  
SCHOOLING SERIES  
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# " HIGHER EDUCATION FOR SALE"

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## EDITORIAL NOTE

The hue and cry about the 'McDonaldization' of education should make us reach for our critical faculties. First, despite their ubiquity, McDonald's restaurants account for only a tiny proportion of the food that people eat. Second, McDonald's is successful because people like their food. Third, their secret is to offer a limited range of dishes as commodities that have the same look, taste and quality everywhere.

Commoditization. It's an ugly word that my spellchecker rejects. But it is a key process for bringing prosperity to ordinary people by giving them greater freedom and wider choice. Products that were once hand crafted and expensive become standardized, mass produced and inexpensive. Personal computers and cellular telephones used to be specialized items for the elite. Today they are mass-market consumer items.

When products become commodities there is fierce price competition between manufacturers and profit margins are squeezed. Producers hate this and industries often have to restructure, but consumers benefit greatly.

What are the implications for education? Is the commoditization of learning material a way to bring education to all? Yes it is, and open universities in a number of countries have shown the way. By developing courseware for large numbers of students they can justify the investment required to produce high quality learning materials at low unit cost.

Such materials can be used successfully outside their country of origin after local adaptation and translation. Commoditizing education need not mean commercializing education. The educational community should adopt the model of the open source software movement. We can imagine a future in which teachers and institutions make their courseware and learning materials freely available on the web. Anyone else can translate and adapt them for local

use provided they make their new version freely available too.

In this way, teachers all over the world can be freed from the chore of reinventing the wheel of basic content. They can then concentrate on adapting the best material, helping students to study it and assessing their competence and knowledge. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology has shown the way by making its own web materials available free. Let's hope this heralds a worldwide movement to commoditize education for the common good.

- John Daniel  
Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO

## McEducation for All ?

We recently came across John Daniel's editorial note, "Higher Education for Sale", in UNESCO's Education for All bulletin (October 2002). It raises several serious questions regarding the agenda and vision of the Education for All global initiative. Is UNESCO promoting the commoditization and homogenization of human learning? How could it suggest that the multinational corporation McDonald's is a good model for the world's education systems (particularly those in the Global South) to emulate? What is UNESCO and EFA's stance regarding the Global Economy?

What is perhaps most disturbing about Mr. Daniel's note is the lack of critical analysis about the long-term harmful effects of McDonaldization - not as a chain of fast-food restaurants, but as a larger process of rationalization of society.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Daniel's key premise is that McDonaldization brings prosperity, freedom and wider choice. Yet, as members of civil society, we feel it is precisely this claim that needs to be more critically interrogated.<sup>2</sup> In this spirit, we would like to take the analogy of McDonald's a bit further in order to explore its implications for education and local communities in more detail.

### **What is the effect of McDonald's on our health and well-being?**

The food on McDonald's menu may fill one's stomach quickly and cheaply, but its impact on our health is dubious at best. High in fat, low in fiber, hamburgers and fries (the food McDonald's is famous for) have contributed to rising cholesterol rates and growing obesity — the tickets to a slow demise via heart disease, diabetes or cancer. Plus, given how hamburger meat is produced (through factory farms and squalid slaughterhouses) there also exists the serious threat of

<sup>1</sup> Sociologist Max Weber described that the Western world would become increasingly "rationalized" - that is, dominated by efficiency, predicatability, calculability and nonhuman technologies that control people. An important aspect of rationalization is that it allows individuals little choice of means to an end. Institutionalized rules, regulations and organizational structures are given full power over human beings in order to produce optimal results (Ritzer, 2000).

<sup>2</sup> Several critiques have been launched against the McDonald's model which must be taken seriously. See McDonaldization of Society (2000), Fast Food Nation (2002), The Food Revolution (2001), and Jihad vs. McWorld (1996), for example.

tragic death from Mad Cow Disease or infection by the E. Coli bacterium. The fast-food lifestyle does not bode well for our social or emotional health either. Food-on-the-go sadly signals relationships-out-the-window. It suits those who have little time to be with their families or friends, much less to engage in meaningful conversations or creative expressions. McDonaldization thus spreads sickness and undermines both healthy individuals and vibrant communities - the public is left to bear the costs of the industry's private profit.

In relation to education, we must ask, if the commoditization of learning materials (even if they happen to be from MIT) can lead to imagination, to holistic analysis, to deep ethics, to greater self-awareness? Or does it simply mean feeding people more decontextualized information (which is irrelevant at best, and neo-colonizing/debilitating at worst)? While being able to buy commodified degrees on the open market, alongside cell phones and personal computers, will surely benefit the middle-men of the Global Economy and those who run open universities, it is highly doubtful that it will really nourish and inspire most individuals and communities in the Global South.<sup>3</sup>

#### **What is required to sustain the McDonald's model?**

To more fully evaluate the McDonald's model, it is important to understand what is required to keep the golden arches standing. The McDonald's menu does not function in isolation, it requires an entire sub-structure to fuel it and an entire super-structure to manage it. Though it is true that McDonald's only feeds a small portion of the world's population, its footprint on the planet is quite significant.

<sup>3</sup> See David Noble's Digital Diploma Mills (2002), where he describes commodification as the "disintegration and distillation of the educational experience into discrete, reified and ultimately saleable things or packages of things." Commercialization and profit-making is very much linked to the process of commodification. We must question Mr. Daniel's claim that commoditizing education could be done along the lines of the open source software movement. Precisely to challenge control and uniformity, to de-legitimize the monopoly-of Microsoft and to create space for diversity and sharing, did that movement begin. It is totally at odds with and irreconcilable to McDonald's philosophy and approach. We only wonder how Mr. Daniel proposes to handle all of the commercialization (in terms of tuition courses, textbooks, uniforms, degrees, etc.) that is already taking place in education today as a result of commodification.

Internally, the fast-food industry has been shown to dehumanize its own employees, leaving them with little mobility, few benefits or security, and no chance of organizing for change. The assembly-line fragmentation, mechanized technologies and surveillance techniques eliminate individual uniqueness, judgement and creativity (and the natural mistakes that emerge from these), which is what guarantees the "same look, taste and quality everywhere." Consumers fare no better -- they are counted only as "numbers served." Like the cows and chickens at factory-farms, customers are coldly and efficiently herded through McDonald's superficial system without being touched by it. Little or no emotional bond is allowed to develop among customers, employees, managers and owners. Indeed, McDonaldization intent is to take the "human-ness" of human beings out of the equation altogether.

Externally, McDonald's and its like-minded clones have devoured diversity in both local economies and the environment. Roughly 75% of the money spent at corporate franchises like McDonald's is immediately sucked out of the local economy, thus further impoverishing many communities.<sup>4</sup> Small family-owned restaurants have gone bankrupt when forced to compete with deep-pocket fast-food corporations. The small farmer has been crushed by the growth of "factory farms", where livestock is raised in horrifying conditions, fed the dismembered parts of their own species, pumped full of antibiotics, and murdered in massive slaughterhouses. Global control is centralized in the hands of McDonald's and its few "certified" suppliers.<sup>5</sup> They see no harm in clear-cutting rainforests (hundreds of acres of land a day), or in contributing to a worldwide water crisis, in order to meet the demands of industrialized livestock production. Transporting food across the world, as well as elaborately packaging it, further adds to global pollution.

If one accounts for the hidden costs of McDonaldization, it becomes clear that the model is anti-diversity, anti-creativity and anti-

<sup>4</sup> See Bringing the Food Economy Home (2000).

<sup>5</sup> Here we find that the Global Market's mantra of competition rings hollow. Virtually every industry (ranging from beef to poultry to potatoes) related to McDonald's is dominated by a handful of corporations. McDonald's (oftentimes in collusion with the American Government) sets the rules and only the big-boys are allowed to play in this monopolistic game.

democratic. We must ask what else would be killed — in terms of diverse ways of knowing, languages, dynamic roles and responsibilities, local cultures and contexts — if education continues to follow the same violent and unsustainable course?

**What about vegetarians, vegans, diabetics, heart patients, slow food activists, those who do not like greasy food, etc.?**

One must also question the "fact" that people *like* McDonald's processed food. Lest we forget, the fast-food industry spends billions of dollars a year on advertising to convince us of this. They manipulatively market to children (preying upon their feelings of loneliness, insecurity and boredom) and to parents (preying on their feelings of guilt) to secure a captive audience for generations. And what about those of us who really don't want to eat fast food? Must we all be forced to eat it, even if we believe it is unethical and/or harmful to us? Do we have the choice to say no, or better yet, grow our own organic foods? Or will we be ostracized as "fundamentalists" or "impractical health freaks" if we try to exercise this basic aspect of human dignity?

The same queries apply to education and its lack of respect for diverse learners. Commoditization pro-actively creates a situation of artificial scarcity in order to establish and maintain a niche in the market. This requires devaluing the spontaneity and multiplicity of learning spaces and learning styles, intelligences, expressions, worldviews, etc. that exist in the world and instead, marketing a single homogenous commodity called "education" that all must consume.

The McDonaldization of learning must be exposed for what it really is - a techno-fascist imposition that gives the illusion of free choice and equality. It represents a lack of faith in each and every human being's capacities to decide upon and create their own learning communities, and assumes they cannot learn (or eat or create anything) without a pre-determined set of institutionalized options forced upon them. Worse yet, it holds in contempt those who do not like its homogenized options - labelling these resisters as "uneducated", "superstitious", "backward", etc. At its core, it is inherently anti-learning.

It is time for us to face the harsh reality that much of the schooling (formal as well as non-formal) process is already McDonaldized i.e., run according to a highly centralized, one-size-fits-all, assembly-line mass production model which views human beings as "capital" or "human resources". For the vast majority of people, such type of factory-education has become a mind-numbing, relationship-numbing and soul-numbing experience. It does not and cannot bring about profound forms of learning in the world. Rather than further hyping and expanding the reach of the fast-food solution, we invite you to join us in a much-needed process of fundamentally rethinking the Education for All global initiative — particularly its core assumptions around the purposes and processes of learning and its view of human beings vis-a-vis the Global Economy.

Meaningful learning, deep knowledge, collective wisdom and innovative action do not come from slick, pre-packaged course materials and efficient one-way transmission of information. MIT knows this, every lifelong learner understands this, why doesn't UNESCO and the EFA global initiative? The time has come for us to move beyond having dehumanizing solutions continually imposed upon us by distant experts (who do not know us and don't really care to know us) and, to work together to co-create more diverse and nourishing learning opportunities for ourselves and our children. We should not be afraid to reinvent the wheel again and again. Indeed, that may be required if we wish to reclaim and regenerate the essence of learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and to create a more just and peaceful world for all.

- *SHIKSHANTAR ANDOLAN*  
*Shilpa Jain and Manish Jain*  
*April 10, 2003*

**Sense and Nonsense of the McDonaldization of  
Education:  
A Response to John Daniel's "Higher Education for Sale"**

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John Daniel's editorial note in *Education Today*, the newsletter of UNESCO's Education Sector, of October-December 2002 on "Higher Education for Sale" is shortsighted. The fallacy of Daniel's claim that McDonaldization is good for education lies in its generalization. It does not attend critically to the larger picture of which phenomena like McDonald's — whether the real chain of fast food restaurants, or a metaphorical equivalent in some other area, providing a readily available and affordable commodity — is a part. It also errs in that it assumes implicitly that the learning human being can be defined as the consumer of a product. From a human development perspective, the latter assumption is a dangerous proposition.

It is well-known, from the vast literature on research into the cost-effectiveness of distance education, that significant economic gains can be derived from spreading the cost of the labor-intensive process of design and development of high-quality instructional interventions and materials. Gains can also be had by running supporting educational infrastructure over a large number of potential beneficiaries. In fact, this argument has been used extensively - and with increasing success - in positioning distance education as a viable, and sometimes preferred, alternative to more traditional forms of educational delivery. A similar rationale drives the current trend towards standardization, continual improvement, and reuse of so-called learning objects. As long as people make wise use of such possibilities to economize, by reusing available educational resources and spreading the cost of their use (by making them fit the learning needs of many), there is no problem. There is a problem, however, when such principles are being unwisely advocated as a major opportunity to solve the world's educational problems. As much as McDonald's is not a major contributor to solving the world's food problems, commoditization of education is not a major response to the learning needs of the world. Nor is it necessarily appropriate to



the nature of today's most prominent learning needs. In fact, one should apply great caution when using the principles of commoditization, if one wants to ensure the integrity of human learning. By comparison, the occasional visit to a McDonald's outlet may not damage anyone's health, but the proliferation and generalization of McDonald's-like eating habits definitely will.

Another serious problem lies in the underlying assumption of Daniel's editorial note: that all that needs to be done is to expand access to materials and processes that were hitherto in the hands of the traditional schooling systems. No questions are being asked about the appropriateness of those schooling systems for today's world; neither are questions being raised about the meaning of human learning in the context of our turbulently changing planetary society, as distinct from the much more linearly conceived world of the past. No prompts are offered that might generate thinking about possibilities to radically change the educational enterprise, while we attempt to bring education to all.

Daniel largely misses the point when he responds 'yes' to the question he himself poses in his editorial note: "Is the commoditization of learning material a way to bring education to all?" His affirmative response reveals a vision of human learning that gives little attention to what human development should focus on, namely the capacity to constructively interact with a world in change and to creatively contribute to how that world evolves as a place for all of humankind to feel at home. Such human development would focus on exploring diversity instead of feeding ready-made pieces of content.

Daniel's response also reveals a vision of the educational process that is dangerously narrow, as it sees learning as the consequence of the provision of materials. I believe this to be wrong. While I am aware that the availability of high quality learning materials is often a crucial ingredient of an environment that encourages and facilitates learning, the mere presence of such materials is frequently not a sufficient condition. The learning process - if it is to lead to any reasonable depth of understanding and thus to the development of abilities that allow people to think and act autonomously, contributing to the well-being of their communities and society - is infinitely more complex than what Daniel surmises.

To summarize, I thank John Daniel for having provoked my passion. I hope he and his colleagues in UNESCO will be ready to look beyond the narrow metaphor he proposes in his editorial note, and beyond the often too narrow rationales that have driven the EFA movement, contradicting some of the better thinking that emanated from the 1990 World Conference on Education for All. A more serious look at what actually happens in schools and different alternative structured learning environments around the globe is urgently needed. Learning materials, schools, distance education systems, or teachers are not ends in themselves. They are means that serve social and human development purposes that require a more serious exploration - not by the experts but by the citizens of this planet at large - than what is proposed in Daniel's editorial note.

## **McEducation: A New Tool of Subjugation**

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The term "McDonaldization" is not just limited to the McDonald's restaurant chain; it is a process that leads people towards a homogenized culture, promotes uni-lingual mass communication and even makes profits by selling indigenous cultural values, humanistic sentiments, learning processes and interactions as commodities. It is basically a Trojan horse, the most modern and fastest tool for spreading imperialism, to further subjugate indigenous spaces of learning and reflections to dominant socio-cultural and economic circumstances. The schooling system has been the most trusted and tested ally of this imperialism for the last two hundred years. It has prepared the ground for imperialism by colonizing the minds of the masses.

But (fortunately or unfortunately) in last two hundred years, this schooling system could not enslave all six billion people of the world. Many people resisted it in different ways. Therefore, Ideologues' of imperial powers (MNCs) strategized a new way to sell their products, to indoctrinate the next generation as 'efficient' consumers. 'Education For All' was introduced with 'innovative' approaches for commoditizing learning. By the co-option and support of international organizations and government institutions, all the energies of 'civil society' organizations have been re-focused to implement this agenda all over the world. In this situation, we should not be surprised if someone is proudly sharing the idea of commoditization of education.

Let us be clear: EFA is not about the promotion of learning. It is about increasing consumers and developing markets along some of following terms:

- Giving literacy on a mass level, so that neo-literates can read the 'made in\_\_\_\_' brand name marks on products of corporations and can buy them.
- In EFA, the emphasis on computerization is just to increase compu-consumption market. Distance learning approaches (online course, etc.) are also supporting the marketing of computers and Internet services and are promoting the advertisement industry.
- Killing indigenous mode of expressions: linguistic and cultural imperialism by trying to mainstream everyone into the education system and/or literacy classes.
- For McEducation, every learner's eagerness to learn is important only inasmuch as it can be converted into a profitable commodity. It has nothing to do with their socio-economic and psycho-cultural context and circumstances. It never cares about their indigenous cultural assets but only uses them as consumable decoration pieces.

The devastating consequences of McEducation outweigh any of its short-term benefits. McEducation may be able to create new opportunities (of enslavement), but these will be only for those who can afford it. We should never expect learning from this process, whether MNCs or UNESCO promotes it.

#### **What can we do?**

We can resist these approaches at all levels and protect our learning rights, especially from pseudo-intellectuals, mal-practitioners and so-called experts of education. It is very easy to sit in an air-conditioned halls of five star hotels, having lavish lunches and mineral water bottles and, in the din of ringing cell phones, to discuss the learning needs of the communities, living hundred of kilometers from these hotels. But it is not easy to go to these communities and learn learning approaches' from them. Because these schooled people cannot relate their mal-intellect to the living learning of communities. Again, the enslavement of the schooling system is at fault.

So we have to counter such 'Visions' of education and schooling, which are purely based on the promotion of McWorld, a World where just one language, one culture and one taste is desired to make more and more profit. We should counter such agendas on two levels: 1) We should de-intellectualize these notions and 'Visions' on every forum organized at the national and international levels. 2) We should engage our communities in reflective learning processes to strengthen and articulate their own visions of learning, so that they can build their own ozone layer to protect their natural learning processes from the severe effects of pseudo-intellectuals' artificial visions. •

John Daniel's statement on "Higher Education for Sale" in the UNESCO Newsletter is as ridiculous as it is dangerous. However, just because it is silly, it cannot be ignored. Instead, it reflects the sinister designs of those who run our world. In other words, it represents the views of several influential and powerful people, even though these people may not openly come out in favour of standardization, homogenization, commodification, and globalization of higher education as Daniel does.

Shikshantar's detailed, persuasive, and lengthy rebuttal is both timely and welcome. It focuses on the 'real' issues that plague the education sector rather than dwell on platitudes and slogans. The responses collected by Shikshantar not only show how dangerous the analogy between McDonald's and higher education is, but also attack the McDonald's model of fast food itself. I endorse Shikshantar's efforts and join my voice to those of millions of people around the world who wish to live lives of dignity and autonomy rather than being subjected to external controls, of all those forces who wish to rob human beings of their selfhood and humanity.

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## **From Consumers to Co-Creators...**

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While reading the McEducation dialogue several concerns came to my mind:

We need to understand this relationship between creators and consumers. In the modern world, the relationship is marked by a divide, which separates the two and mostly brings them together in a space controlled by the Market. The relationship is also based on the assumption (fueled by the many institutions that shape our life) that there is limited space for only few creators. It is by design that the majority are converted into consumers, which serves the commercial interest of a few. We therefore need to understand this relationship, its underlying hierarchy, and ask questions about its present status.

Creation in the modern world gets de-linked from its core purpose and gets enmeshed in the net spun by the entertainment-consumer market. Why do we create? That is the question we all should be asking ourselves. Or, rather why are we not involved in creating -- a process which that is so intrinsic to our life and collective well-being? The danger in McEducation is that we are made into such numb receivers, that we never think to ask these questions.

I ask myself about the purpose behind my expressions, my creations. When we create something why does it have to be placed on the menu in the public domain? What is our need to seek public approval? Is it appreciation? Assessment from experts? Commercial consideration?

At the core of my need to create is to communicate, to share my beliefs and perceptions, to express my concerns and ideals. On another level it is to satisfy my inner need of

creating meaning, exploring my thoughts and feelings so that they mesh together into a fine web of my own and act as a mirror for discovering myself. The process is of healing, and of learning. When I share it with others it is not in order to please them, as is the condition today, but to generate dialogue.

Dialogue is crucial for my own growth as a creative person, and to understand what it means to others. Does my creation strengthen my relationship and contribute towards my communities' well-being? Dialogue also helps me in reflecting about the process, and makes me aware of my limitation. Dialogue on my self, my creation and the community opens up several possibilities. Possibilities of co-creation, partnerships, apprenticeships, governance and other engagements which I never considered important. The act of sharing is also intimate. It opens up my private world to others, dynamically merging the public and private spheres, a vital process missing from today's impersonal world, and invites others to do the same. When I am ready to start the dialogue based on my experiences and reflections, the conversation is natural. The interaction transcends competitive concerns and becomes rooted in human spirit and nurturance. While McEducation may efficiently spread Information', it effectively destroys this possibility of dialogue.

The journey of self-discovery, finding meaning through one's own efforts and taking control of one's creation, is an irreversible, joyous and spiritual process. Such insights over the years have convinced all of us at Abhivyakti <[www.abhivyakti.org.in](http://www.abhivyakti.org.in)>, where I work, to spread the value of becoming engaged with the creative process. It is what we call promoting producers over consumers. We are convinced that a society that stresses the importance of having a producer in each of its citizens would be a dynamic society. A society different from the present, which has more consumers than it has producers. More producers would mean variety in art forms, stories, innovation in design. Most importantly, this diversity wouldn't be solely for commercial purposes; the reason for its birth would be much more complex and organic.

For creators self-motivation is crucial. Motivation will provide energy to engage with the process of creating over energy-draining consumption. It would also mean all living spaces would throb with creative energy, making them vibrant and alive, and thereby lessen the focus on a few urban centres, which are today hotbeds of media activities. An environment of producers would mean that all systems would be creating meaning. It would mean ourselves, our children, families, our communities would be involved in the process of creation. Being in the environment that nurtures producers and not just materials would mean evolving our thinking, emotions, and relatedness.

As more people get engaged in the production process, it would widen the network of dissemination. Imagine having a plural and multiple nodes of exchange all over the place. It will not only reduce the role of mass media being the sole distributor of entertainment and news, but will effectively reduce the domination of the market and the few who control it. Rich, vibrant, personal, multi-sourced and organic culture would emerge making life colorful, communal and connected. Creative expressions would be part of life, part of the community and vital ingredients of discovering our human spirits. The monotony and uniformity of McEducation for All can never generate such energy. The actual spirit of communication is to bring forth such processes and contribute towards laying the foundation on which creative and critical communities emerge. •



## **Education: A Commodity for Sale**

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"Higher Education for Sale" makes for ironic reading. Writer John Daniel UNESCO's Assistant Director General for Education, advocates 'commoditization' of education materials in the same way the McDonald's has commoditized its food products. He tells us the qualities of McFoods: a "limited range of dishes as commodities that have the same look, taste and quality everywhere" and "McDonald's is successful because people like their food."

Now we try to understand the implications of this proposal. Education is a cultural and social phenomenon. It is one of the major factors shaping our (those who have access to the present education system) lives. The education materials, which are to be taught to the children, have to be chosen carefully to suit the pupils' social and cultural environment. Just imagine the study/reading material prepared by some American Institution/Company on Indian cultures or social systems. Why should students in India read material prepared by some alien about the caste system in India? Should some executive of a MNC in the West prepare study material for Indian students on India's political system? (As if the World Bank, IMF and the WTO are not already "teaching" us more than enough about everything, from drinking water to poverty alleviation, to fiscal management, trade and good governance.) Even on the subjects like science, which might be considered by some as 'universal' in terms of content, there has to be examples and experiments taken from the daily life of the society the children come from.

If learning materials are commoditized, what will happen to the diversity of ideas? If the students from every country will study the courseware prepared by the same company/institutions, will there be any space for thinking something new or fresh on any subject? How will study

material as a commodity, present the different points of view that exist on any given issue?

The fact is, education is now a service to be traded both within a country and internationally. This suggestion for the commoditization of education could have not come at a better time. The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) has been enforced in the WTO, and education is part of it. So TNCs, big universities and research institutions in the West and their mentors, the World Bank, IMF and the WTO, have discovered a trillion dollar business. Daniel's suggestion should be seen in the light of GATS.

GATS suggests four ways of trade in education: study abroad (Consumption Abroad), education delivered by foreign teachers (Presence of Natural Persons), long-distance learning between countries (Cross Border Supply), and creation of foreign establishments (Commercial Presence) and, quite obviously, emphasizes the privatization of education. GATS does not specifically mention trading in education materials, except for the materials that go with long-distance learning ("Cross Border Supply" in WTO jargon). But Daniel's suggestion that commoditized books and other educational materials prepared by some institution can become standard courseware for teachers all over the world is quite dangerous.

As we know, trade in education services does exist even now in India, probably in all four forms. Indian students do visit abroad for higher education (their number is increasing); and our universities get students from neighboring countries (though much less in number). We have seen more and more institutions from abroad, mainly the West, setting up shop in India, or offering their long distance courses. What GATS is going to do is pressurize governments to promote these activities and remove any 'obstacles' in free trade of education. We have already seen the decrease in public investment in education and opening of private universities. GATS is going to take all this to the higher level. Lest we forget,

the primary objective of GATS is to increase economic growth through increased trade in the service sector.

Daniel claims the commoditization of education materials will help universalize education, by providing standard, high quality education materials at large scale. However, he defends that this will not necessarily lead to the commercialization of education, and also suggests that these materials should be made available on the net for everyone. Two questions are important here: One, why would institutions/companies, which have created these materials as commodity, provide it to all for free? After all commoditization means business (and money), and prevailing market rationale demands that these institutions would want their investment back plus profits. Two, even if some of these companies decided to provide information to everyone for free on the internet, what proportion of the world population's will actually have access to it? Maybe we should start the McComputers for All global marketing campaign?

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