

SHOULD ALL PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES BE FREE ?

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Annotation: This article examines whether public universities should be free for all students. It explores the role of free higher education in promoting social equality, increasing access to education, and supporting economic development. At the same time, it addresses challenges such as financial pressure on government budgets and potential impacts on educational quality. By comparing international experiences, the author suggests a balanced approach that combines free access with targeted scholarships and subsidies.

Keywords: free education, public universities, social equality, higher education, economic development, scholarships, subsidies.

Аннотация: В данной статье рассматривается вопрос о бесплатности обучения в государственных университетах. Анализируется роль бесплатного высшего образования в обеспечении социальной справедливости, расширении доступа молодежи к знаниям и его влияние на экономическое развитие. Также обсуждаются проблемы, связанные с финансовой нагрузкой на государственный бюджет и возможным снижением качества образования. Автор сравнивает международный опыт и предлагает комбинированный подход, включающий субсидии и грантовую поддержку.

Ключевые слова: бесплатное образование, государственные университеты, социальное равенство, высшее образование, экономическое развитие, гранты, субсидии.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada davlat universitetlarida ta'limning bepul bo'lishi masalasi tahlil qilinadi. Unda bepul oliy ta'limning ijtimoiy tenglikni ta'minlashdagi o'rni, yoshlarning bilim olish imkoniyatlarini kengaytirishi va iqtisodiy rivojlanishga ta'siri yoritiladi. Shuningdek, bepul ta'lim tizimining moliyaviy yuklamalari, davlat byudjetiga bosimi hamda sifatga ta'siri kabi muammolar ham muhokama qilinadi. Muallif turli davlatlar tajribasini solishtirib, optimal yechim sifatida qisman subsidiya va grant tizimini taklif etadi.

Kalit so'zlar: bepul ta'lim, davlat universitetlari, ijtimoiy tenglik, oliy ta'lim, iqtisodiy rivojlanish, grant, subsidiya.

Introduction: In today's era of globalization, education is recognized as one of the most important factors in the development of society. In particular, the higher education system plays an important role not only in training qualified specialists, but also in developing innovative ideas, ensuring economic growth and strengthening social stability. In this regard, the issue of whether education in state universities should be free or not has become one of the most hotly debated topics today. This issue is being addressed based on different approaches in the experience of different countries, and there is no single view on this issue. The idea of free higher education is aimed, first of all, at ensuring social equality, which implies guaranteeing the right of every citizen to receive quality education, regardless of their financial situation. According to this approach, education is considered one of the basic human rights and is considered necessary to be supported by the state. As a result, access to

higher education will expand for young people from low-income families, which will help reduce social stratification in society. At the same time, an increase in the number of highly qualified personnel will help strengthen the country's economic potential.[7; 104] However, there is another side to this issue. Making education completely free in all public universities requires significant financial resources. This can put a significant burden on the state budget. Especially in developing countries, the implementation of such a system will be difficult. Some experts also argue that free education can lead to a decrease in quality. Since financial constraints are likely to negatively affect the material and technical base of universities, the quality of scientific research, and the qualifications of professors and teachers. Therefore, today many countries prefer to use a mixed system. That is, along with supporting talented and needy students through state grants, scholarships and subsidies, contract education for certain categories of students is also maintained. This approach, on the one hand, creates wide access to education, and on the other hand, serves to ensure the financial stability of the system. This article comprehensively analyzes the issue of free education in state universities, considers its advantages and disadvantages, and draws conclusions on the most appropriate approaches based on the experience of different countries.

Literatur analysis and research methodology:

Scientific studies conducted on this topic shed light on the social and economic importance of free higher education from various perspectives. In particular, Nicholas Barr, in his work "Financing Higher Education: Answers from the UK", emphasizes the importance of a balance between state and individual responsibility in financing higher education. He argues that free education is not always an effective solution, but that targeted grant and loan systems are more effective.[3; 120] Milton Friedman also takes a critical approach to full state financing of education and advocates the need to expand private sector participation. In his opinion, this increases competition and improves the quality of education. On the other hand, Thomas Piketty notes in his work "Capital in the Twenty-First Century" that free education is an important tool for ensuring social equality. International organizations have also paid great attention to this issue. UNESCO reports assess equal access to higher education as an important factor in sustainable development. World Bank studies emphasize that targeted financing systems are more effective than free education.[1; 72] As a research methodology, this article uses a comprehensive approach. First of all, the experience of different countries was studied using the comparative analysis method. Using statistical data analysis, the economic efficiency of free and paid education systems was compared. Also, general conclusions were drawn based on deductive and inductive methods. These methods allowed for a deep and objective analysis of the topic.

Analysis and conclusion:

The issue of free education in state universities is closely related to various social, economic and political factors, and it is difficult to solve it unilaterally. The analysis shows that the free higher education system, first of all, serves to ensure social equality in society. The doors of higher education are opened wide for young people from families with limited financial resources, as a result of which the level of social stratification decreases. This leads to an increase in human capital and an increase in the intellectual potential of the country in the long term. In particular, the experience of developed countries shows that the free or partially free education system is effective in training highly qualified personnel serves as an important factor.

Table 1

Free Public Universities: International Examples

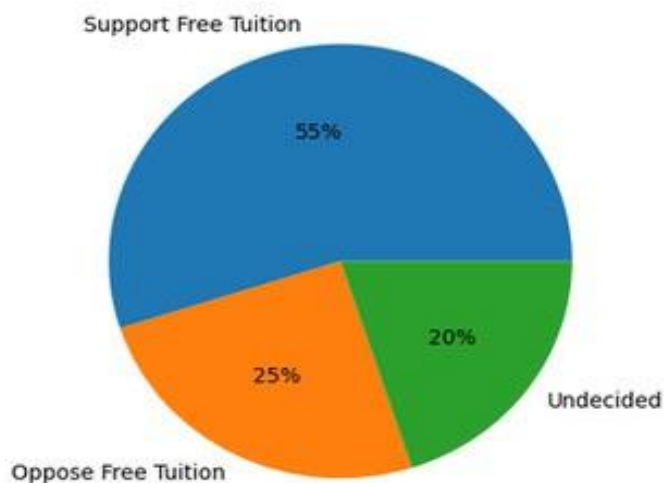
Country	Tuition Policy	Impact on Students
Germany	Completely free	High enrollment, broad access across social classes
Norway	Completely free	Equitable access, strong social mobility
USA	Mostly paid	Limited access, student debt common
UK	Tuition fees with loans	Moderate access, financial support available
Japan	Low tuition, partially subsidized	Improved access but regional disparities exist

However, the economic aspects of this system also require in-depth analysis. Making education completely free in all state universities requires significant financial resources. This will put significant pressure on the state budget and may lead to a reduction in funds allocated to other areas. At the same time, in some cases, the free education system is likely to cause problems such as inefficient use of resources, reduced student motivation, and a decline in the quality of education. Because the lack of a payment obligation may lead to some students not feeling sufficient responsibility for their education.[6; 40] The issue of sustainability of the quality of education was given special attention. If sufficient state funding is not provided, the free education system may negatively affect infrastructure, scientific research, and the potential of professors and teachers. This, in turn, will affect the position of higher education institutions in international rankings and the competitiveness of graduates. Therefore, it is important to maintain a balance between quality and financial sustainability when introducing free education. Rather than making education completely free in public universities, a mixed financing model is considered more effective. That is, while the state supports talented and needy students through grants, scholarships and subsidies, it is advisable to maintain a certain level of contract-based education. Such an approach, in addition to ensuring social justice, also strengthens the financial sustainability of the higher education system.[4; 56]

Diagram 1

Should All Public Universities Be Free?

Public Opinion on Free Public Universities (Sample Data)



Although the idea of free higher education is socially and institutionally attractive, its full implementation in practice depends on the economic and social development of each country. As the most optimal solution, and education remains a sustainable important task.

The issue of free education in state universities is both socially and economically important and complex in one plan. The idea has great capital in terms of ensuring the right of a person to education, equal rights in society and support for talented youth. Free higher education opens a wide door for the profit-making strata. This will in the long term affect the increase in the number of qualified specialists, innovative economic and economic growth. At the same time, the full implementation of this system will not be equally effective for each country. Financing free education requires significant funds, and this can be a burden on the state budget. If this process is not sufficiently developed, there are problems related to the quality of education, such as the lack of infrastructure and the slowdown of scientific work. So, if there is free education, then support and a thorough strategy are needed to implement it in practice. In conclusion, in all countries, the university education is more balanced and visible than free. That is, the state supports experienced and talented students through grants, scholarships and various social programs, while receiving a certain amount of payment-contracting. Such a system, on the one hand, ensures wide access to education, and on the other hand, it serves to maintain its quality and sustainability. In the development of higher education, it is necessary to pay attention not only to the issues of provision, but also to the introduction of modern technologies, international production and training of personnel suitable for the labor market.

Because the real purpose of education is not to be free or cheap in terms of material resources, but rather to benefit from it and society. In general, the issue of free higher education does not have a single solution. Each country must choose the most appropriate model based on its economic situation, demographic situation and social record. Most importantly, the model must serve justice, provision and quality education.

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