
**EDUCATION FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN CHANGING
COMPETITIVE WORLD**

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ABSTRACT

The Education is among the important factors that contribute towards economic development. Education imparts positive disposition and requisite knowledge and skills to individuals with a view to prepare them to live in harmony and to ensure their productive participation in the national economy. The macro-economic studies indicate positive correlation between Education and Economic Growth for many countries including India. The studies at micro-level or state level are scanty to bring out the specific contributory factors in the realm of Education that significantly contribute to overall economic development of specific states. In addition, to understanding the influence of education on economic development in specific situations, urgent executable actions are required to be identified for sustaining the fast pace of economic development in all the regions in the country. The important actions for their expeditious implementation in Education sector include Effective Implementation of Education Policy, Norms and Laws with Quality Curriculum, Teaching-Learning Material and Facilitation of Conducive Educational Environment; Expeditious Betterment in Government Schools and Monitoring of Private Schools, especially at the Primary level; Improved and Enriched Syllabus and Activity Based Learning to impart Practical Knowledge; Increased in Budgetary allocation; Health Education and ensuring hygiene, sanitation and cleanliness in schools. The actionable points in specific and regional settings of the schools needs to be identified and be given appropriate priority in the working of educational set up.

Keywords: Education, Macro-economic, Socio Economic Development

INTRODUCTION

The mutual relationship between education and economic growth has always garnered enormous interest. In the recent past, many studies have been conducted by economists and educationists on the scope and nature of connection between these two vital factors. The studies conducted in this area in the Indian context have led to interesting and useful insight, for instance Tilak (2007) shows that while the education at secondary and tertiary levels may not be necessarily correlated with economic growth of the country, however, the education at elementary level does play an important role towards reduction in poverty, decrease in infant mortality, increase in life expectancy and in reducing economic disparities with positive contribution in the overall development of the country. Studies also show that gender inequality in education is one of the biggest problems in Indian society. This inequality is further aggravated in case of females from

rural areas and socio-economically disadvantaged communities and groups (Ruther, White, Kanh, 2016).

The well articulated ideas of the relationship between education and economic growth come from the proposition about what they have to do with one another or what direction policy changes should take, with regard to the two (OECD 1989; Patel 2003). The quality education is the need of the hour as the development of intellectual skills and knowledge equip learners and be available as professionals, decision makers and trainers in different areas to fulfill the expanding needs of nation building. The traditional system of education, where students passively attend lectures and focus on acquiring high percentage of marks in theoretical examination, is not sufficient for today's world. The purpose of education today is to transform students into active learners, innovators, researchers, scholars, trainers and as positive role models. They need to acquire in-depth understanding of the practical world and be active participant in the development. This is specially for developing countries that reconise increasing appreciation of the relationship between education and the economy.

EDUCATION IN INDIA

India, which has been marked as a developing country is now emerging as fast developing economy characterised by structural and functional changes and global participation. The associated changes that are being witnessed include expansion of service sector, intense international trade competition and the changing nature of employment characterised by changing requirements within occupations and continueing technological innovations. This is likely to continue in the foreseeable future with unpredictable requirements and innovative approach to synchronise their fulfilment.

These changes are occuring within fierce international competition where income and job opportunities are dynamic. The emerging scenario requires macro as well as micro level economic adjustments and institutional dynamics to deal with competitive and demanding situations. The aforesaid can be substantiated with the help of literature.

In a recent study Kotaskova et al (2018) have published the case study on the impact of education on the economic development in India by utilization of econometric estimations with the Granger Causality Method and the Cointegration Method. It is claimed thatt these methods can be used to create models that could shed light on the claim that education plays a central and significant role in economic growth of India which could consequently be used as an example for similar countries in Asia or around the world. It is reported that there is compelling evidence proving a positive connection between education levels and economic growth in India which might influence governmental actions and shape the future of India.

Chakraborty and Krishnankutty (2012) have studied the relationship of economic growth and the expenditure on education in an absolute term and expenditure on education as percentage of aggregate expenditure. The study done in four different categories (i) all the states taken as whole (ii) states with no special category (iii) special category states and (iv) North Eastern States taken together. The findings of study indicate that expenditure on education is having a

positive and significant influence on economic growth in the entire category, however, expenditure on education as percentage of aggregate expenditure does not show significant correlation with economic growth for North Eastern States.

The Education is the most powerful tool for change and hence it must train the minds of those being educated to cope with the change. Students need to be made thinkers, problem analyzers and solvers, decision makers, and the leaders. Even though *economic performance* is an objective of education and *education* serves as one of the many factors for advancing objectives of economic growth, however, economy and education are changing in many ways that increase their interdependence. As a case in point, a major part of employment in India is *structural*, i.e. many of those unemployed are “unemployable” and so cannot be employed despite the availability of various job vacancies. (OECD, 1989; Nagar 2018).

Further, education and training are major features in various countries' government policies to help some groups, youth/underprivileged/women, in the labor market. Thus, three important questions arise in the context of education:

- should education be made compulsory,
- who should pay for education, and
- who should provide education?

The answer to the first question is fairly obvious. The reasons cited for making education compulsory are broadly protection of children, income redistribution and positive externalities. It is well believed that no one should be prevented from gaining a minimum level of education because of lack of parental income, i.e. the demand for education with respect to income should be inelastic. Hence, the *amount of resource allocated towards education is independent of who pays for it. In India, the legal provision of free and compulsory education exists to resolve any ambiguity in the matter.*

It is important to see that who should pay and provide for education, have definite implications for financing of education. There is no universal agreement on the question of provision. Many parents opt out of the system and provide private education for their children. Those who go through the state education system have dearth of choices. These are the parents who cannot avail, afford or purchase alternative educational opportunity.

There are several arguments put forward in favour of state provision of education: it creates a uniformity of standards, the state can employ educational experts to determine the best educational experience and related outcomes, Ministries can research new methods and techniques, and institutions in the Government can implement them efficiently when they seem to be improvements on current practices. It entails the monopoly of the state over the provisioning of education.

Opponents of monopoly of the state funded education argue for more market driven determination. This argument is forwarded on the basis of certain advantages e.g. it would give more choices of schools to parents and their children who usually have a fair idea of what kind of education is needed and whether they are getting it at the school currently being attended. This

would penalize schools with poor academic and discipline record. Salaries would not be uniform across all schools; instead the earnings of schools and the salaries of teachers would vary with the success of individual schools in attracting students.

FINANCING OF EDUCATION IN INDIA

Providing free education to children has been a commitment expressed through various policy decisions contained in important documents in India. The Policy guidelines decide the modalities of financing of elementary education. In India, major changes have been witnessed at the policy level in financing of education. Priorities within the education sector have also been changing. Nevertheless, elementary education occupies a place of priority in Five Year Plans in comparison to higher and technical education. The Central Government plays a key role in the development and monitoring of educational policies and programmes; while the State Governments bear the responsibility of implementation of these policies. Free and compulsory education to all children until they complete the age of 14 years has been one of the most pertinent recommendation in every policy.

In 1966, the Kothari Commission had recommended that the public expenditure on education should be of 6 percent of GNP by 1986. Subsequently in 1996, the Saikia Committee examined the financial implications of the proposal to make free and compulsory education a fundamental right. It reiterated the need for an expenditure of 6 percent of GNP on education with 50 percent of it earmarked for primary education (an additional finance of Rs.40000 crores in next five years). In 1999, an Expert Group headed by Tapas Majumdar, made estimates for additional fund requirements for Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) – it was in the range of 137000 crores over the following 10 years. The National Common Minimum Programme and CAME committee also had similar recommendations. These recommendations repeatedly emphasize the need for higher investment in education. An overview of constitutional and legal recommendations at the national level for universalisation of elementary education and education policies related to financing of education is given below.

- In 1948-49, Kher Committee recommended that a fixed percentage of Central (10 percent) and Provincial (20 percent) revenue collection should be earmarked for education and that around 70 percent of the total expenditure on education should be earmarked for the local bodies and provinces. Then, according to the Constitutional Mandate of 1950, *“The State shall endeavor to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education to all children until they complete the age of 14 years.”*
- One of the most significant lists of recommendations for development of education in the country comes from the Kothari Commission of 1964-66 which included the following:
 - Public expenditure on education should reach the level of 6 percent of Gross National Product (GNP) by 1986
 - Vocationalization of secondary education
 - Strengthening of centres of advanced study and setting up of small number of major

universities of international standard.

- The National Education Policy (NEP) came up in 1968 as a follow up of Kothari Commission recommendations, with included the following suggestions:
 - Investment on education to be gradually increased to reach a level of six percent of national income as early as possible.
 - Focus on science, technology and agriculture
 - Provision of food and effective education at primary level on a free and compulsory basis.
 - Equality in education for rich and poor: common 10+2+3 education structure throughout India and eventually free schooling upto class 10th.
- The Secondary Education Commission, 1972 emphasized more on increasing incentives in the educational sector:
 - To assume certain direct responsibility for reorganization of secondary education and give financial aid for the purpose.
 - Encourage private contribution through tax exemptions (income tax, property tax and custom duties)
 - Industrial education cess should be levied for furtherance of Technical and vocational education at secondary stage.
- In 1974, through 42nd Constitutional Amendment, education was transferred from State list to the Concurrent list of the constitution.
- National Education Policy (NPE) of 1986, contain significant recommendations and specially addresses the following issues:
 - It shall be ensured that free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality is provided to all children up to 14 years of age before we enter the twenty first century.
 - Resource support for implementing programmes of educational transformation, reducing disparities, universalisation of elementary education, adult literacy, scientific and technological research, etc. will be provided. For this actual requirements will be computed at regular intervals and outlay on education will be stepped up so that more than six percent of national income is allocated from eighth five year plan.
 - While the role and responsibility of the States in regard to education will remain essentially unchanged, the Central Government would accept a larger responsibility to reinforce the national and integrative character of education, to maintain quality and standards (including those of the teaching profession at all levels) and to study and monitor the educational requirements of the country.
 - Additional resources to be raised by mobilizing donations, asking beneficiary communities to maintain school buildings, and effecting savings through efficient use of resources.
- *The NPE, 1986 still remains as the new education policy which is followed and a new policy is desired to be formulated to take care of the developments since 1986 as also the emerging future challenges.* The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment passed by the Parliament in 1992 gave statutory recognition to local governments, and included school education in the list of their responsibilities. Local bodies were to play an important role

in financing and implementing education programmes.

- An important milestone, the Unnikrishnan Judgement in 1993, said that every child/citizen of this country has a right to free education until he completes the age of fourteen years.
- The Saikia Committee of 1996 had the proposition to allocate 6 percent of GNP for expenditure on education with 50 percent of it be earmarked for primary education. The committee also recommended additional expenditure of Rs. 40000/ crores over next five years on elementary education.
- Education Ministers' Resolve, 1998 said that universal elementary education (UEE) should be pursued in mission mode with holistic and convergent approach.
- National Committee's Report on UEE came out in 1999 emphasizing that UEE should be pursued in mission mode with a holistic and convergent approach with focus on preparation of District Elementary Education Plans for UEE. It supported the fundamental right of education and desired quick action towards operationalization of the mission mode towards UEE.
- In 2001, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan the flagship programme for universalisation of elementary education was launched.
- The 86th Constitutional Amendment passed in 2002 has the provision of free and compulsory education to children between age 6 to 14 years, as also the provision of early childhood care and education for children below six years.
- A proposal for Increased spending on Education came in 2004 with following features:
 - Raise public spending in education to at least 6 percent of the GDP with at least half this amount being spent on primary and secondary sectors. This will be done in a phased manner.
 - A cess of two percent on all central taxes is to be levied to finance the commitment towards universal access to quality basic education.
 - The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme will be universalized to provide a functional Anganwadi in every settlement and ensure full coverage for all children.
 - North eastern States will be given special assistance to upgrade and expand infrastructure.
 - Education cess introduced for raising additional financial resources needed to fulfil government's commitment to universalize elementary education.
- The MHRD in 2005 formulated the National Curriculum Framework for school education.
- The CABE Committee Report, 2006 recommended the following:
 - The additional financial requirement for universalising secondary education as percent of GDP works out to be around 0.18 % in 2003-04 and to 0.86 % in 2019-20.
 - With 6 percent of GDP earmarked for education, the shares of elementary, secondary and higher secondary (as % of GDP) will be 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

Lastly, one of the most significant development in the Education Sector is the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009 which came into force from April 2009. However, policy statements could not take shape in reality and actual expenditures in the education sector have fallen far short of these targets with the trend continuing over the years.

In India, there are various sources of state financing of education. The (FYP) allocations have been the most significant of these sources. Ever since the commencement of economic planning in 1951-52, the education sector has remained the priority sector of the central as well as the state governments. However, within the education sector, priorities have been changing. In the first five year plan, top priority was given to elementary education, keeping secondary education at the back burner. The situation changed during the second and third five year plans, when the higher education and technical education got prominence. The pattern of public expenditure remained almost the same during fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh Five Year Plans.

After the Third Five Year Plan, the education commission (1964-66) was appointed to advise 'on the national pattern of education and on the general principles for development of education at all stages and in all respects'. Incorporating the recommendations of the Education Commission, the Fourth Five year plan aimed at providing free and compulsory education up to the age of 14. It was stated that the "facilities for universal elementary education are prerequisite for equality of opportunity." The Fifth Five Year Plan laid emphasis on ensuring equality of opportunities as part of the overall plan of ensuring social justice.

By the mid-1970s, the education sector had expanded considerably and the states found it increasingly difficult to meet even the recurrent expenditures of the sector.

Primary education again came into prominence from the sixth and seventh Five Year Plans onwards because of high spending on centrally sponsored schemes and programmes. The Sixth Five Year Plan (1978-85) argued for higher allocation of resources to lower levels of education. The sixth five year plan proposed that universalisation of primary education (for the age group 6-11) would be achieved by the end of the plan i.e. 1985 and universalisation of upper primary level for the age-group 11-14 by 1990. The universalisation of elementary education, eradication of illiteracy in the age group of 15 to 35 years and strengthening of vocational education to relate education with the emerging needs in the urban and rural settings were the major thrust areas of the the Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-97). The Plan stated that in the overall population in the school going age group, the focus would be on girls, who account for two-thirds of targeted population for education, and among adults the focus would be on women's literacy which has a beneficial impact on literacy of children as well as other national objectives like population control and family welfare.

A major step in the elementary education sector came with The Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007), when the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) was given impetus with clear focus and defined medium-term goals. The major targets of SSA are: All children in the 6-14 age groups should have access to primary schools, upper primary schools or their alternatives within a walking distance of one kilometers and three kilometers respectively. There should be one upper primary school for every two primary schools. All schools should have buildings, toilets, drinking water,

electricity, playgrounds, blackboards and other basic facilities. There must be provision of one classroom for every teacher at the elementary stage. Enrollment of all children in schools or alternative arrangements by 2003 shall be achieved. All children to complete five years of primary schooling by 2007, universal retention in the primary stage is to be achieved by 2007. The dropout rate is to be reduced to less than 10 percent for grades VI-VIII by 2007. To improve the quality of education in all respects covering content and process to ensure reasonable learning outcomes at the elementary level, specially in literacy, numeracy and in life skills. Major thrust is to be provided to bridge all gender and social gaps in enrollment, retention and learning achievement in the primary and upper primary stages.

However, the Central Government was faced with shortage of requisite funds for SSA till 2004-05, when it received combined external support from the World Bank, DFID and European Commission. The resource base was further augmented through the imposition of two percent Education Cess on all central taxes.

The Twelfth Five Year Plan emphasized that quality as mandated under the Right to Education (RTE) has to be realised in tangible terms and the implementation of the RTE would have to be monitored in terms of learning outcomes. Thus, quality issues and determinants thereof such as availability of trained teachers, good curriculum and innovative pedagogy that influence the learning outcomes of the children have to be ensured. Teacher absenteeism and lack of accountability has to be addressed through active community involvement in management and ownership of schools. Pre-service and in-service training of teachers has to be mounted on a mission mode. Possibilities will have to be explored for involving private sector more meaningfully to achieve the objective of expansion and quality improvement. The entry barriers of the private schools for education of children from disadvantaged households need to be re-examined.

As a result of five year plan priorities, there have been changes in the educational sector e.g. during 1950-51 and 2014-15, the number of primary schools in India increased from about 210,000 to 847118. (MHRD, 2016) In the country, the number of schools imparting primary education is 577832 and those imparting elementary education is 1431702. The enrollment at primary and upper primary levels has increased to 134.8 million at primary level and 64.9 million at upper primary level. The gross enrollment rates in primary education has increased from 81.9 percent in 1993-94 to 105.98 percent in 2012-13 and that in upper primary education, from 54.2 percent to 82.5 percent during the same period. Major improvements have been achieved towards education of girls and the rural and poor children. There is not only rise in overall GERs, but the gap between rural and urban enrollment has narrowed down, as did the gender gap and the expenditure gap in the rural and urban segments. The net enrollment ratio (NER) at primary and upper primary level being 90.8 percent and 64.2 percent respectively has been a cause of concern.

Now, the NITI Aayog, has come into existence and ritual of formulating the Five Year Plans have been discontinued. There have, nevertheless, been various developments in education since then. In the regime of the present government, under the direction of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), NCERT prepared the comprehensive list of Learning

Indicators and Learning Outcomes at the Elementary Stage which was circulated to 6 million teachers in elementary schools in the country. The document on indicators contain class-wise learning indicators and the stage-wise curricular expectations in all subject areas. Several initiatives are currently being undertaken for effective implementation of various policies and programmes like Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), Information and Communication Technology, ICT in Schools, Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Teacher Education (CSSTE), Shaala Siddhi and Rashtriya Avishkar Abhiyan to improve the quality of secondary education. Several new schemes namely, Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA), Global Initiative for Academics Network (GIAN), Impacting Research, Innovation & Technology (IMPRINT), Technical Education Quality Improvement Programme (TEQIP), Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya National Mission on Teachers and Teaching (PMMMNMTT), Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds (SWAYAM), National Digital Library, campus connect programme, Uchchar Avishkar Abhiyan, Unnat Bharat Abhiyan have been formulated and are being implemented to improve the quality of higher education.

The Union HRD ministry under its direction and supervision has also introduced some salutary reforms like, the abolition of the automatic promotion until class VIII provision (s.16) of the RTE Act, 2009 and introduction of compulsory class VIII and class X board examinations; legislation of the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) to determine admission into all medical colleges countrywide; introduction of the National Achievement Survey to assess average learning outcomes of class X students in schools affiliated with national and state examination boards; conferring substantial academic and administrative autonomy on ten public and an equal number of private universities designated National Institutes of Excellence. However, the promise to enhance education spending to 6% of GDP is still a distant dream.

While the central government has been increasing expenditure on elementary education in absolute terms, however, there has been decline in education expenditure in relation to national GDP through much of the 1990s onwards. Another significant development in the field of financing of elementary education has been the advent of centrally sponsored schemes (CSSs) in education sector in particular and in social sector in general. The CSSs have been the mechanisms devised at the central government however; the responsibility of implementation was with that of the state governments. The objectives, strategy and methodology of implementation have been prescribed by the central Government with supporting funds released to concerned States based on their requirements and demand raised in this regard. Some prominent CSSs for advancing elementary education, designed in the nineties were Operation Blackboard (OBB), Non-formal Education (NFE) and Teacher Education (TE), Mid Day Meal (MDM), Scheme for Free education for girls, District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) and the Integrated Education of Disabled Children (IEDC) for both elementary and secondary levels of education. While the earlier schemes were targeted towards improving school infrastructure, the later schemes were incentive-based. However, the implementation and success of these schemes has had mixed results in different parts of the country at levels of education.

The impact of education covering quality and levels on the economy has been studied by many researchers and evidence from their publications show that education is an important factor in enhancing and promoting economic growth (Patel, 2003). Panchamukhi (1981) made a study to examine the extent to which the policies of expansion had achieved the aim of equitable distribution of education and concludes that even in an educationally advanced environment; participation in education was severely constrained by socioeconomic inequalities. Gulati (1981) in the study on 'Profiles in Female Poverty' found that that despite of economic, social, cultural and occupational changes taken place in Kerala the position of the underprivileged, oppressed sections of society, especially the position of women belonging to this category had not changed much. Ahmad and Nuna (1985) conducted a study on "Inequality in the literacy levels of population in Maharashtra". They concluded that the policy measures adopted so far to universalize literacy among the socially backward communities, particularly in rural areas, have not delivered success. Kundu and Rao (1985) made an attempt to study the inequity in educational development in India, and found out that the disparity in education for all the categories have declined significantly. Tilak (1987) on "Economies of Inequality in Education," provides ample evidence to show that investment in the education of weaker sections is more than justified even from the point of view of economic returns alone, quite apart from the social, historical and cultural implications.

Self and Grabowski (2004) proved that primary and secondary education is not just strongly correlated with the economic growth of the country but it also has a strong causal impact on the economic growth in India. Their analysis also proved that all education levels are related to each other as well. Lastly, there is a significant impact of gross enrolment rate for secondary level of education of female population on the human capital stock. If women enroll in the study, they tend to finish the studies. (Kotásková, 2018)

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

In the emerging scenario characterized by the ever expanding knowledge based service sector and also its interface with the logistics and manufacturing sectors, the countries all over the world are now increasingly and critically becoming dependent on *human capital* for their development to augment for their traditional resource base. The importance of Free-wheeling quantitative growth is no longer an answer in a world where key to growth is quality of economic performance and competitiveness. In today's changing economic and technological environment, persons need to enter the labour market with a minimum and utilizable competency level, the education and training - both have to remain *concurrent*, and the research and development need to be carried on in a setting that is responsive to near and long-term economic and non-economic concerns to facilitate transfer of knowledge for expanding skills.

The convergent and mutually reinforcing impact of globalization and the technology driven information and communication revolution have radically changed not only the methods and structure of production, but also the relative importance of factors of production. A well trained workforce and well informed people, that can apply not only know-how, but is also capable of analysis and decision making – in relation to know-why are the key factors of development, main drivers of growth and major determinants of global competitiveness. To fulfill the emerging

needs of the socio-economic development in the current context in which the change is constant, education system is required which can integrate the emerging needs of changing world and provides both- the foundation for learning, as well as developing core skills and competence that encourage creative and critical thinking. In addition, it is necessary to develop an effective lifelong learning system to provide continuing education and skill upgrading to persons after they have left formal education in order to provide the changing skills necessary to be competitive in the new global economy. Thus, to create a sustained cadre of *knowledge workers*, India needs to develop a more relevant education system and reorient classroom teaching and learning activities, starting from primary school and to cover different levels of education.

In order to facilitate and enhance access to education, the role of the private sector will have to be brought into the mainstream within the frame-work and direction of advancing socio-economic growth. A pragmatic approach to enhance the equity and access should be given due attention. A knowledge-driven economy not only requires higher skills in the competent workforce, but also requires continuous updating of their knowledge and skills to adapt to changing demands. The rate of increase in jobs that require higher qualifications and competence levels is expected to accelerate in the foreseeable future. Lifelong learning and continuing education are likewise expected to expand, leading to a blurring boundary between initial education degrees and continuing education certificate obtained based on acquired on the job experience, training and performance. In the global knowledge-driven economy, a global labor market exists that allows companies to recruit talent from all over the world. Thus there is a growing demand for degrees and credentials with international recognition. The issues of access, equity, quality, relevance, and efficiency shall be the major drivers of Indian education in order to gear up the path towards knowledge economy. We will have to put in positive and constructive efforts as stakeholders of higher education to build the, knowledge economy for the prosperity of our region, nation and world as a whole. The institutions in India are required to be continuously strengthened in terms of their infrastructure and quality of education so that their degrees, diplomas, certificate and recommendations attract global recognition and confidence in their passing out students and trainees. These knowledge workers shall play vital role in the national development through their participation in economy in the country as well as globally.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It may be noted from the foregoing discussion in the previous sections that our education system is required to keep pace with the changing world and the complexities within the country, therefore, urgent changes and improvements in our education system are needed and have become inevitable. While the efforts are being made by the Government as well as the institutions and the individuals through volunteer efforts, the material output is only indicative of island of success and has not been in proportion to the requirements of the our nation and the society. According to the World Bank's Human Capital Index (HCI) 2018, which ranks countries based on their success in developing their human resources, India is ranked #115 among the 157 countries assessed. Thus, the system is in want of a critical overhaul for which following recommendations are made to increase efficiency, enrich quality and produce better equipped students and citizens for contributing towards socio-economic development of our country:

1. Effective Implementation of Education Policy, Norms and Laws

The studies show that while Policies, Frameworks, Laws and the Acts have been evolved, passed and adopted in the educational sector, however, the implementation of positive intentions has not reached the intended targets at all levels. The strengthening of implementation mechanisms and structures can have a major impact on the working of the education system and also on the awareness levels of people. The increased awareness of Citizens about their rights and duties is one of the most important prerequisite of effective and efficient governance.

2. Expeditious Betterment in Government Schools, especially at the Primary level

There is urgent need for augmenting the facilities and improve working of the Government schools at all levels with higher priority on primary level. While, the Government schools employ teachers and other supporting staff based on well accepted norms related to their qualifications and training and also these schools serve the majority of population, especially in rural and far flung areas, the working and performance of these schools remain to be improved. The Government schools need to become agents of change in the policies and reforms in the country for which urgent steps are required to improve their working and participation through administrative and incentive based measures. The Government schools still advance the cause of providing quality education to everyone regardless of one's ability to pay – the improvements need to take care of the obligation of Governments at different levels. The orientation and empowerment of teachers for initiating innovations for the purpose are required to be strengthened.

3. Improved and Enriched Syllabus with Provision of Providing Practical Knowledge

The syllabus has remained theoretical at all levels with some variation in the science related subjects. The advent of computers has made it possible to demonstrate the actual life situations and impart experience to the students to enrich their learning and relate knowledge for application in a practically feasible manner. The curriculum and syllabus are required to be improved to take advantage of technology. The teachers are required to be imparted knowledge and skills for the use of computers and information and communication technologies (ICT) in the teaching-learning situations to make the process more close to actual situations and fascinating to students. The facilitation of teachers and the schools is extremely important to achieve the improved situation in schools with willing participation of all concerned stake holders.

4. Increase in Budget allocation

While, in absolute terms the budgetary allocation for Education has been increasing in India, which takes care of increasing population, however, the improvement in allocation is required to be linked to GDP of the country which shall take care of the quality, reach and relevance of education. There has been realization to reach the level of 6 percent of GDP to be allocated to education sector; however it remains at 3.65 percent of GDP for the year 2016-2017 without the hope reaching the level of 6 percent in the near future which shall still be less as compared to most of the developed countries.

5. Health Education

The health education to sensitize individuals for better health through preventive and wellness measures is one of the most important areas which require immediate attention and practical action. The programmes of holistic health including yoga, exercising and other workout programs should be included in our education system to help in inculcating cherished values and a healthy mind in the children.

6. Public sanitation and Cleanliness

The education must inculcate the habits of cleanliness and observing the maintainance the public sanitation systems through socially responsible behavior. The facilities could only be gainfully utilized through our responsible behavior and habits for their functioning. The students need to sensitize to realize that public sanitation facilities are there to facilitate cleanliness and they should not be converted into source of diseases for the public with their critical locations in publically crowded places. The education of today shall contribute towards the clean and healthy India, tomorrow. Public sanitation system should be improved and more awareness campaigns should be enforced.

The above recommendations are in line with the felt needs and they are definitely not in contradiction to the various policies and recommendations given by the Government and supporting nodal agencies. In the today's context the urgent action is required for implementation of the policies and programmes that have emerged through experts' participation in different fora and through different agencies as also through systematic research at the interface of education and socio-economic development. The need of the hour to have an intergrated plan taking care of above narrated policies and programmes for implementation in missionary mode to accrue expeditious results.

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