



EDUCATION SYSTEM IN INDIA: AN OVERVIEW

M. Swapna

M. A- Economics Department Of Economics Osmania University

ABSTRACT

India has emerged as a global leader and a strong nation. Education is the key to the task of nation building as well as to provide requisite knowledge and skills required for sustained growth of the economy and to ensure overall progress. According to the Census Data 2011, India is overpopulated with a population of 121,01,93,422 which means India today is a powerhouse of talent of 121,01,93,422 plus. In order to convert the population from a challenge to an opportunity, the area that requires immediate attention is education and training. 25% of Indian population is still illiterate and out of the total population of 1.21 billion in India, 220 million children go to school. India's GER (Gross Enrolment Ratio) is 12.4 percent. The GER in developed countries is between 50 percent to 70 percent. Our current education system selectively discards talented students with inquisitiveness, ability to ask questions and dream to do something challenging, something better for the society. This paper is an attempt to evaluate Overview of India's Education System, analyses the growth of education in India during last two decades and suggests ways to ensure that education remains both affordable and accessible to all.

KEYWORDS : Education, Literacy, Illiteracy, Training, and Educational Institutions.

INTRODUCTION:

Since we achieved independence in 1947, our national leaders attached importance to education. There has been steady effort to spread education to all levels of Indian society.

To strengthen the **Indian Education System**, an educational policy was adopted by the Indian Parliament in 1968. Education was made an important and integral part of the national development efforts

Our Government assumed full responsibility for the proper education of the children and adults. Hence, right to primary education or elementary education is now a fundamental right in India.

Primary education system

At the time of our Independence, majority of the children were deprived of the benefits of **primary education**. Since then, India has made good progress in the field of primary education.

Statistics point to the fact that a large percentage of children in age group 6-11 years have been enrolled in school. At some places, the enrollment rate is 90 percent

However, it is proving very difficult to bring the remaining into the ambit of universal primary education is because of reasons such as:

- Some live in inaccessible areas,
- Lack of parent's interest to send their children to school,
- There is a deep-rooted prejudice against educating girls,
- There are practical difficulties of distance and inaccessibility of schools.

Other difficulties faces by the primary education sector are:

- The syllabus of our primary students is quite heavy. A little child of primary school has to read a large number of books.
- Many books were written in a way that doesn't create interest in young minds.
- We have less teachers and professors that our needs.

Moreover, the dropout rate is so high that universal elementary education (UEE) is quite an elusive goal.

Non-formal education

Since, education is important for the growth of developing nation like India; various steps have been devised to cut the percentage of dropouts. Non-formal education – to offer educational facilities for the drop-outs and to fulfill the desire for additional education in the grown-up-drop-outs is being given a new orientation to make it purposeful and to attract a broad spectrum of the drop-out population.

In Indian Education system, adult education programmes covers the age group 1-35 and has been vigorously implemented by the government with the cooperation of many voluntary agencies. Even then much has to be done to realize the target which is 100% coverage adults.

Secondary education system

Secondary education is the fulcrum or central point of a nation's education system. With regard to the pattern of secondary education experiments have been going on since Independence. The 10+2+3 system of education which was recommended by Kothari Commission of 1965 is now being implemented in almost all the States and Union Territories of India. This system (pattern) provides for two streams – the higher secondary schools; the academic streams paving the way for higher education and the vocational stream of terminal nature. However, very few schools have been able to offer this terminal education. As a result, schools with academic streams still abound, thereby defeating the very purpose of reducing the acute competition for college education.

In many States education is free up to the lower secondary level, and in a few states education is free up to the higher secondary stage.

Higher education system

Higher education system in India is imparted through about 180 universities and nearly 4500 colleges. In addition there are several institutions imparting specialized knowledge and technical skills. Since education is a State subject. The State Governments in India are free to open new university. Grants Commission is an authority which dispenses grants to the universities. However, its formal sanction is not necessary to open a university. Taking advantage of this provision many State governments in India have opened a large number of universities in recent years.

The tremendous increase in the number of students and of educational institutions has given rise to the term 'education explosion'. No doubt, this has resulted in serious problems such as inadequacy of financial resources and infrastructure and dilution of personal attention to the education and character-formation of the students. Also, there is the unwanted side-effect of enormous increase in the number of educated unemployed.

Medium of education

Uncertainty and vacillation have marked the government's policy about the medium of education in India. Mahatma Gandhi wanted basic education to be imparted through the mother tongue. Our Constitution provides that facilities for primary education in mother tongue should be provided to all Indian citizens. For this purpose, the Central Government may issue directives to the State Governments. Thus, the requirements of linguistic minorities are attended properly. Even before Independence, most of the students in schools had their education through the regional language/mother tongue.

We need to create a balance system of education. Education should be imparted through the Mother tongue and through English language as well. Studying in one's mother language is very important. It develops a feeling of love and respect for his mother language. Since, most of the cultural and epic books are written in mother language, a person would be devoid of his own cultural richness if he is unable to read book written in his mother language.

Improved curricula

There is a general feeling that the **curricula** adopted for different stages of education are substandard. This impression is not borne out by facts. The syllabus for irrelevant and various course in schools and colleges have been updated and upgraded. The NCERT (National Council for Educational Research and Training) has set the right tone in this respect. Regarding recent changes in the curricula in schools and colleges, a mention may be made of the introduction of physical education and services like National Social Service (NSS) and National Cadet Corps (NCC) as part of the curriculum and of the inculcating of emotional national integration through teaching of Indian National Movement. Constant review of the syllabus and methods of teaching in the light of the innovations and methods adopted in advanced countries has certainly resulted in improved standards.

Work-oriented education system

Work-oriented education system was advocated by Mahatma Gandhi and others. However, vocational education system in India has proved an up-hill task. The present pattern of 10+2+3 with a vocational stream has touched only the fringe of the problem. The fact is that people resent being taught crafts and traditional occupations in the school. However, the modern commercial education which imparts skills in typing, shorthand, reception and the like has met with better popular approval and demand. The core of the issue is whether education and employment should be de-linked. Such de-linking will have the great 'merit' of reducing attraction for college education. But de-linking or jobs from degrees and certificates is fraught with unforeseen dangers. In any case employment can be provided only on the basis of certain qualifications.

Correspondence education and establishment of "Open Universities"

In recent times new educational opportunities have been invented, one such being **correspondence education** system. Today almost every university in India is offering correspondence courses for different degrees and diplomas. In fact correspondence education has opened new vistas for the educational system which could not successfully meet the challenging problem of providing infrastructure for multitudes of new entrants into the portals of higher education. The public demand for higher education was initially met through evening colleges; now correspondence education has come to the rescue of the worried education administrators. The latest innovation of '**open university**' has also been introduced in India in the form of Nagarjuna University at Hyderabad. An open university imparts education only through correspondence; and, in this respect, is to be differentiated from the regular universities which take up correspondence education in addition to the college education. Correspondence education provides an important means for drop-outs to improve their qualification and, for the employed the means to improve education and service prospects. In course of time the glamour for college education may decline if correspondence education is made very effective. The Indira Gandhi National Open University has been created at a national level.

CONCLUSION:

All the positive steps taken till now are welcome. However, implementation of the initiatives is a key to success. These are some points that the nation will have to consider upon. And the path ahead isn't that easy. Walls, windows, doors and teachers will not make a school, till we have hungry children wanting to be in the fields and factories, to earn their meals. The Vision and Mission of Education for all will have to inculcate and imbibe in one and all, leaders and followers that for every child born poor and needy, there will have to be a well-drawn plan, to ensure that s/he doesn't remain so – for if we fail in providing the basic needs of food and shelter to a child, she/he will never see the light of the day, through education – at least. A healthy mind comes in a healthy body. The nation should strive towards total health of children, education will follow. Education for the masses is a massive task. It would need a single minded focus of the State, to implement this programme in a country, which is the 7th largest in the world in terms of size and the 2nd most populated of all. Reform in education is a cultural, political, financial and administrative challenge. The children of today are to be the citizens of tomorrow. We as a citizen of today will able to provide a slate to every child and a pen to write his/her own future. And we will achieve this at least in the coming decade.

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