



## REENGINEERING OSSIFIED SYSTEM OF EDUCATION IN INDIA

MAMTA MOKTA\*

\*Dept. Public Administration,  
Himachal Pradesh University.

### ABSTRACT

*Education is the fourth necessity for man after food, clothing and shelter, in today's competitive world. Education is indeed a powerful tool to combat the cut-throat competition that man is faced with at every junctures in life. Access to basic education lies at the heart of development. Modern education was introduced by Britishers in India. After the recommendations of Lord Macaulay in 1835, the entire education policy, the main aim of which to make clerks available for offices. The three tier system namely primary, Secondary and Higher education was also introduced by them. Education is an activity which is concerned both with the individual and with society or rather with individual in Society. After independence, the concern of education articulated during the freedom struggle were revisited by the National Commission the Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) and the Education Commission (1964-66). Education policies, legislative & constitutional provisions & various policies & programmes relating to development of education system in India. We are at a very critical stage in the education sector. The last comprehensive policy on education that were formulated to address the issues and concerns of a pre-liberalisation period. Times have drastically changed since then there has hardly been any change in the education sector over such a long period. Education system that is in place is not relevant to the current requirements. The present paper will focus on Challenges before education system in India & will conclude with suggestions for reforming ossified system of education in India .*

### INTRODUCTION

Education is the fourth necessity for man after food, clothing and shelter, in today's competitive world. Education is indeed a powerful tool to combat the cut-throat competition that man is faced with at every junctures in life. The importance of education in India is indeed rising with passing

time. Though India has always been a great source of learning for many years, it still needs to improve not just on the quality of education but also on the number of people being educated.<sup>1</sup>

For building up a new generation of men and women committed to the process of modernization, an appropriate training and motivation of the individual is imperative. All this is possible through sound system of education.<sup>2</sup> Education is as crucial as health for emerging India.<sup>3</sup> Education is empowerment. It is a key to establishing and reinforcing Democracy.<sup>4</sup>

### **EDUCATION FOR ALL(EFA)**

Education for all(EFA) is an international commitment first launched in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 to bring the benefits of education to “every citizen in every society” Partners comprised a broad coalition of national governments, civil society groups, and development agencies such as UNESCO and the World Bank. In response to slow progress over the Decade, the commitment was reaffirmed in Dakar, Senegal in April 2000 and then again in September 2000, when 189 countries and their partners adopted two of the EFA goals among eight millennium development goals.<sup>5</sup>

### **EDUCATION AS A MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOAL**

The United Nations adopted education as one of the eight objectives of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) defined by the United Nations. Goal 2 of the MDG, “Achieve universal primary education,” is also the most fundamental. Other MDGs of poverty reduction, gender equality and healthcare can only be sustained when today’s children grow up to be educated citizens. The goal of universal primary education also is the only goal that has a 100% target—a fact that emphasizes the importance of the goal.

The target for this Goal is: “To ensure by 2015 that all children complete a full course of primary schooling.” Is the world on track to achieve this goal? To answer this question, we need to look at it from the following perspectives:

- Spending required to achieve the goal.
- Relationship between spending and outcomes.
- Rate of progress needed.

From the point of view of public spending to achieve the goal of universal primary education, the goal does seem achievable. However, several recent studies indicate that the “link between educational outcomes and public education resources is at best weak.”<sup>6</sup>

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The World Education Forum 2000 in Dakar committed signatories to:

(i.) ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality;

(ii.) ending gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality;

(iii.) improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills. (World Education Forum 2000)<sup>7</sup>

### **INITIATIVES TAKEN IN INDIA FOR PROMOTION OF EDUCATION**

Access to basic education lies at the heart of development. Lack of educational access, and securely acquired knowledge and skill, is both a part of the definition of poverty, and a means for its diminution. Sustained access to meaningful learning that has value is critical to long term improvements in productivity, the reduction of inter-generational cycles of poverty, demographic transition, preventive health care, the empowerment of women, and reductions in inequality.<sup>8</sup>

Modern education was introduced by Britishers in India. After the recommendations of Lord Macaulay in 1835, the entire education policy, the main aim of which to make clerks available for offices. The three tier system namely primary, Secondary and Higher education was also introduced by them.<sup>9</sup> Education is an activity which is concerned both with the individual and with society or rather with individual in Society.<sup>10</sup> The framers of the constitution visualized that children upto age of 14 should be covered under free and compulsory education within a period of ten years by the year 1961<sup>11</sup> After independence, the concern of education articulated during the freedom struggle were revisited by the National Commission the Secondary Education Commission(1952-53) and the Education Commission(1964-66).<sup>12</sup>

In India the three comprehensive national policy statements exist on Education.

National Policy on Education, 1968

National Policy on Education, 1986

National Policy on Education, 1986, as revised in 1992

Apart from these National policies on Education, following initiatives have been taken for the development of education in India.

**OPERATION BLACK BOARD:** Launched in 1987-88 aimed at providing essential facilities in all primary schools (two teachers and teacher learning equipments) in phased manner.<sup>13</sup>

**NATIONAL LITERACY MISSION:** Launched on May 5, 1988 to impart functional literacy to nonliterate in the age group of 15-35. It continued through ninth and tenth five year plans. By the end of tenth five year plan (March 2007), NLM had covered 597 districts under total literacy campaign, 485 Districts under post literacy programmes and 328 Districts under continuing education programme. As a cumulative outcome of these efforts, 127.45 million persons became illiterate, of which 60% learners were females, while 23% learners belonged to scheduled castes and 12% to scheduled Tribes.<sup>14</sup>

**DISTRICT PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME:** Launched in 1994, providing access to primary education to all children. The programme is presently in 129 Districts of nine states.

**MOVEMENT TO EDUCATE ALL (2000)** Aimed to achieve Universal primary education by 2010 through micro planning and school –mapping exercises.<sup>15</sup>

### **SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN**

The Government of India initiated in 2002 a programme for universalizing elementary education or education for all –Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.<sup>16</sup> Its major goal emphasize access, equity, relevance and excellence as the main attributes of quality education at elementary stage.<sup>17</sup> Objectives of Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan is that all children in school by 2003, complete five years of primary schooling by 2007, complete elementary education by 2010. bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010 and universal retention by 2010.<sup>18</sup>

### **SAAKSHAR BHARAT**

The Prime minister launched Saakshar Bharat ,a centrally sponsored scheme of Department of School education and Literacy ,Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, on the International Literacy day, 8<sup>th</sup> September day, 2009 .It aims to further support and strengthen Adult Education, specially of women, by extending education option to those adults who have lost the opportunity of access to formal education and crossed the standard age of receiving such education.<sup>19</sup>

### **GOVERNMENT WILL GO AHEAD FOR SETTING 6,000 MODEL SCHOOLS**

Decks were cleared in July 2010 for full and final implementation of the Prime minister’s 2007 promise to the nation to set up 6000 model high schools. While 3500 of these were to be setup by Government in each educationally backward Block, the rest 2500 were to come up in Public Private partnership mode. The Government agreed to sponsor 40 to 50 percent of the students admitted to these schools and bear the recurring cost for them.<sup>20</sup>

### **YASH PAL COMMITTEE REPORT ON HIGHER EDUCATION**

The Yahpal Committee submitted its report on “Renovation and Rejuvenation” of Higher Education in India to Human Resource Development minister Kapil Sibal in New Delhi on June 24, 2009. It recommended the establishment of a National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER) as an advisory body responsible for comprehensive and continuous reforms in the Higher Education Sector. This Commission should be established as a central Statutory body through a constitutional amendment .As per the record the existing regulatory bodies such as the University Grants Commission ,the National Council of Teachers Education, and the All India Council of Technical Education are suggested to be done away with making the way for the proposed NCHER.<sup>21</sup> Following legislative measures have also been taken for promotion of education in India.

## LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Article 45, Of The Constitution of India originally stated:

“ The State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children untill they complete the age of fourteen years. ” This article was a directive principle of state policy within India, effectively meaning that it was within a set of rules that were meant to be followed in spirit and the government could not be held to court if the actual letter was not followed.[ However, the enforcement of this directive principle became a matter of debate since this principle held obvious emotive and practical value, and was legally the only directive principle within the Indian constitution to have a time limit.

Following initiatives by the Supreme Court of India during the 1990s the Ninety-third amendment bill suggested three separate amendments to the Indian constitutionThe constitution of India was amended to include a new article, 21A, which read:

“ The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in a such manner as the State may, by law, determine. ”

Another article, 51A, was to additionally have the clause:

“ a parent or guardian [shall] provide opportunities for education to his child or, as the case may be, [a] ward between the age of six to fourteen years. ”

Article 46 of the Constitution of India holds that:

“ The State shall promote, with special care, the education and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and in particular of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of social exploitation'.”

Other provisions for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes can be found in Articles 330, 332, 335, 338–342. Both the 5th and the 6th Schedules of the Constitution also make special provisions for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

In January 2010, the Government of India decided to withdraw Deemed university status from as many as 44 well known universities from all over the country. The Government claimed in its affidavit that academic considerations were not being kept in mind by the management of these institutions and that "they were being run as family fiefdoms".<sup>22</sup>

## RIGHT TO EDUCATION BILL

The Right of children to free and compulsory elementary education act enacted by the Parliament in August,2009,came into force on first April,2010.With the act coming into force The fundamental Right to education as incorporated in the constitution under article 21 A also became operative.<sup>23</sup> This demonstrates the national commitment to the education of our children and to the future of India.Article 45 of the Indian constitution provides for free and compulsory education for children after enforcement of section 3 of the constitution(eighty sixth amendment

Act)2002-the state shall endeavour to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of the constitution,for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years.<sup>24</sup> Under this there will be total ban on capitation fee.,parents and children will not be subject to screening procedures,norms for minimum qualifications of teachers and pupil teacher ratio will be enforced.There will be ban on private tuitions and no physical punishment will be given in schools.<sup>25</sup>Under Right to Education School Management Committees will monitor and oversee the working of the school, manage its assets, utilise grants to disburse teacher salary and for the upkeep and development of the school, and monitor teacher performance (including granting leave, providing regular assessment reports, and imposing minor punishment).<sup>26</sup>

### **CABINET NOD FOR FOREIGN UNIVERSITIES BILL**

The Union cabinet on March15,2010,cleared the foreign educational Institutions(Regulation of entry and operation) bill,2010.It seeks to allow foreign education providers to set up campuses in the country and offer degrees.It will facilitates the globally renowned institutes to participate in the higher education.<sup>27</sup>

### **PROHIBITION OF UNDER PRACTICES IN PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION**

The group of ministers cleared ‘The prohibition of unfair practices in technical,medical educational institutions and Universities bill drafted by the Human Resource Development Ministry to provide for a central law to curb malpractices.In the legal language the bill will intend to control the malpractices that has entered into the arena of higher education post the corporatization of the domain.These include capitation fees donations ,overcharging for sale prospectus,opacity in admission procedures,misleading advertisements,recruitment of unqualified persons and underpayment of teachers.The bill provides for the punishment of upto three years in jail and Rs.50 lakh as fine.The legislation has build in safeguards against any misuse of authority or unnecessary interference with the autonomy of institutions.<sup>28</sup>

### **NATIONAL ACADEMIC DEPOSITORY BILL 2010**

The Government has finalized a draft law to ensure online electronic storage of academic certificates on the line of share certificates and final instruments.It will eliminate the need to go to institution to get transcript of awards and marksheets.The draft mandates institutes to lodge academic awards with designated depositor.It proposes rupees ten crore penalty and ten year jail for wrong certification. Any person,company or institution (registered with the depository) will have online access to a copy of a academic award upon payment of fees.<sup>29</sup>

### **FUTURE OF EDUCATION IN INDIA**

We are at a very critical stage in the education sector. The last comprehensive policy on education that were formulated to address the issues and concerns of a pre-liberalisation period. Times have drastically changed since then there has hardly been any change in the education sector over such a long period. Education system that is in place is not relevant to the current requirements.

According to UNDP, prerequisites for any developing country to grow economically include 15 per cent of natural resources, 20 per cent infrastructure and 65 per cent human resources. That sustainable economic development with equitable justice requires access to good quality education for human resource development. Not only this, social development of any country presupposes that education should provide trained, qualified manpower even in the health sector. Education thus is a basic ingredient for having healthy and skilled manpower for industrial development.

Government is aware and concerned about the requirements of the education sector. But, it is constrained by the financial resources for developing a viable and implementable policy framework for such a huge population.

Assume that the government has to provide education for all. The current budget envisages crore of rupees for the primary and secondary sector, but substantial portion of this outlay goes in meeting salary and wages, leaving very little for the sector, leave alone any desired improvement.

Another important dimension of a viable education system is relevance to the present time and requirement of a growing economy. Industry is crying for trained skilled manpower, whereas number of unemployed is increasing as the present system is not suitable and relevant to the needs of the developing industry sector.<sup>30</sup>

India ranked 102 out of 129 countries, immediately below Kenya and Nicaragua, in UNESCO's 2009 Education for All Development Index, which scores nations on the spread, gender balance and quality of primary education and adult literacy.<sup>31</sup> According to the UNESCO's Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2010, about 135 countries have constitutional provisions for free and non-discriminatory education for all. It also cited a 2005 World Bank survey, which stated only 13 countries impart primary education totally free of cost. India has very recently joined the league of over 130 countries which has legal guarantees to provide free and compulsory education to children.<sup>32</sup>

### **CHALLENGES BEFORE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN INDIA**

There are certain challenges before the education system which needs to be tackled properly for reengineering of education system in India

- 40% of India's population is below the age of eighteen years which is 400 million is the world's largest child population. Less than half of the India's children between the age six and 14 go to school.
- A little over one third of all children who enroll in grade one reaches grade eight. In India only 53% of habitation has a primary school. In India only 20% of habitation has a secondary school.
- On an average an upper primary school is 3 kilometer away in 22% of the areas under habitations. In nearly 60 % of the schools, there are less than two teachers to teach class I to V.

- On an average there are less than three teachers per primary school. They have to manage classes from I to V everyday. High cost of private education and to work to support their families and little interest in studies are the reasons given by 3 in every four dropouts as the reason they leave.
- Dropout rates are alarming in class III to V, its 50% for boys and 58% for girls.<sup>33</sup> There is 7% rise in student suicide between 2006-2007.<sup>34</sup>
- Vocational sector in India is small and has not grown fast due to poor image. Only about two percent persons of age 15-29 years receive formal education training and another eight percent receives nonformal training.
- More than sixty percent of graduates perform jobs that don't require graduated skills. Higher education enrolment ratio at 11 percent.<sup>35</sup> We have tended to imprison disciplinary studies in opaque walls. This has restricted flights of imagination and limited our creativity<sup>36</sup>
- Due to structural rigidities in education system near absence of competition between institutions and mindset problem is another challenge before education system.<sup>xxxvii</sup> In contrast, the present system has given rise to anarchy. Though, with liberalisation and introduction of economic reforms, licence and permit raj has been abolished for the industrial sector, it is very much in place in the education sector. Multiplicity of agencies and quota systems are adversely affecting the quality and availability of education.
- Further, the accreditation system in Higher education is to ensure certain basic quality in the education imparted. There are only two agencies, UGC and AICTE to do the job. Despite the lacunae, these two agencies are not able to deal with the accreditation requirements. There are reportedly 300 universities and 15,000-18,000 colleges that need constant monitoring for accreditation. It is not feasible for these two agencies to do justice. Moreover, you can't have an accreditation agency which is also an arm of the regulator.
- For children between 6-14 years, for whom education is a fundamental right, the government needs to spend about Rs 85,000 crore. The government expects States to share 50 per cent of this expense. States on the other hand have expressed their inability to do so. So, what is a plausible solution out of this morass.<sup>xxxviii</sup>  
It is shocking that no Indian Institution is ranked among the top hundred Universities in the World. The competency, infrastructure & quality of teaching as well as teaching aids paled when compared to those in the western world. One can't be too sure if Cambridge & Harvard will prefer to setup their campuses in India. Even if they do there is no guarantee that they will send their most experienced & top class teaching faculty to India. The cost of education in these institutions will surely be beyond the reach of average Indian student.<sup>xxxix</sup>
- Though education is in the concurrent list, states are not taken into confidence by the centre and the states are not expressing confidence in going with the new proposed

educational reforms. "This is a federal government, a federal constitution. States have rights. Every state has different requirements and problems in education, especially in primary and secondary education.<sup>xi</sup>

- About 55-60% students in science related areas complete their training only upto graduation; only 10-13% complete their postgraduation, while less than 25 end up with doctorate in Science.
- Likewise in technology related subjects (engineering etc.), whereas 13-15% acquire education upto graduation; only 2% complete postgraduation; and less than 1% complete doctorates.
- Over 30% of the total PhDs awarded in the Indian Universities happen to be in basic science discipline and over 37% in arts and humanities.; while less than 6% of the total PhDs are in engineering and technology related subjects; about 3% in veterinary and medical sciences., around 8% in agricultural sciences and only 4% in education.
- According to an estimate, every year about 16,000 qualified teachers are required to take up teaching positions in higher and technical education institutions, but only 12,000 PhDs are available.
- Though we produce about 3 lakh engineers every year, not more than 25% of our skilled human resources are employable in the ICT sector alone. This reflects poorly on the standard of Institutes of Technical and higher learning.<sup>xii</sup>
- RTE excludes children below the age of six from the purview of the fundamental right to education, thereby denying the care protection early education and support for children provided under article 15(3), 39(e) and (f) and 45. It negates the historic Supreme court verdict in the case of Unnikrishnan vs. State of Andhra Pradesh where the court declared that the right to education is a fundamental right until the age of fourteen years. It contradicts the very fundamental notion of a fundamental right as the universal right of every citizen.
- The RTE Act curtails the opportunity for public employment under article 16 by not extending education upto class 12 as a fundamental right, which is a bare minimum qualification for every citizen to enter even a least earning employment in the age of the knowledge economy.<sup>xiii</sup>

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR REFORMING EDUCATION SYSTEM IN INDIA**

There are given following suggestions if taken earnestly can go a long way in reengineering of education system in India.

- Education in India needs to be more skill oriented –both in terms of life skills as well as livelihood skills.<sup>xiiii</sup>

- Threefold strategy of expansion, inclusion and excellence making education holistic and integrative should be practiced.<sup>xliv</sup> we should get out of the fee determination structure if we want to create world class educational institutions. Mushrooming of coaching centres is both undesirable and expensive than the proper education institutions. Also, students go abroad because they do not find good quality and value for money institutes in India. All this can change and we don't have to reinvent the system. What we can do is to suitably modify and adopt the systems prevalent in some developed countries. We should adopt a system which is easy to administer. One such system is Higher Education System of Australia.
- There should be more emphasis on quality education & there should be emphasis to inculcate the values of morality & nationality among student community .
- There needs to be effective gatekeeper to ensure appropriate standards of quality for foreign schools seeking to enter Indian market. There should be effective regulatory framework for the anticipated "Foreign Invasion" of educational institutions.<sup>xliv</sup> There should be focus on decolonization of education. Local knowledge holder, segment, artisan, businessman, storytellers, farmers, and government department should be enlisted to share their experience.
- There is need of holistic development of students. Students should be given opportunity to develop their learning, critical analysis, research, problem solving, imagination, self-expression, decision making, self introspection, teamwork and wisdom skill.<sup>xlvi</sup>
- Ossified system of education should be changed. Much emphasis should be given to curiosity and creativity rather than on cramming, tutorial exams and marks sheet.<sup>xlvi</sup>
- First attention should be given to the health and nutrition of the children to ensure that they have the physical energy and natural attention span needed for learning. Nutritional and medical supplements are provided to under-nourished children from low income families. Free exercising and play are encouraged to build strength and stamina.
- Children learn spontaneously when their interest and curiosity are awakened. 'Teaching' is confined to brief periods according to the natural attention span of each child, which is normally 15-30 minutes daily during the first two years. It should never be extended beyond the child's span of interest.<sup>xlvi</sup>
- "Laws and Bills don't make children go to school. Initially, there will be problems in implementation of Right to Education Act because while everyone must take some time to understand their social responsibility.<sup>xlvi</sup> The RTE Act states that if a parent/guardian fails to enroll his child in school, the School Management Committee may impose a penalty by way of compulsory child care. Since the responsibility for ensuring schooling for all children lies with the local authority, it may be appropriate for the local authority (rather than the SMC) to be given the responsibility of penalizing such parents.

- Making learning joyful in the classrooms through host of initiatives like theatre,music,song,dance,debate,skits puzzles and mental maths should be encouraged.
- Promoting sports and games for all students including self defence for girls.<sup>1</sup>
- Conducting capacity building programmes to upgrade the professional skills of teachers is also required. Promoting motivational and leadership training to teachers,principals and officials should be encouraged
- Upgradation of some of the Industrial training Institutes to new colleges offering associate degree would also be useful.
- There is a dire need for aligning Higher education and labour market. Spending on education by Union Government in 2009-2010 budget estimate stood at 44,528 crore(around 0.76% of G.D.P.) it should be increased to 6% of GDP<sup>li</sup> . There should be a partnership between research, academia and the industry sector. If the economy grows at 8 per cent or more, trained and skilled manpower may become a constraint. Industry is concerned about it. There are a number of small agencies, government, research and industry which have been thinking on these lines. Unfortunately, earlier there was no common platform for meaningful exchange of ideas. With EPSI, a major step forward has been taken in this direction .
- Along with Central Universities equal attention should also be paid to State Universities and should be given a chance to fly. Transparency in the selection of Vice chancellors is a must & setting up a national registry with names of eligible persons for the posts of chancellor can stop political meddling in the selection process.<sup>lii</sup>
- The UGC should consider providing 100 percent grant to recognized universities in order to block state government's interferences.<sup>liii</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Four basic requirements of a good education system – Access, Equity, Quality and Relevance. These are interwoven and needs to be incorporated together. It becomes the fundamental duty of the government to have enabling provisions to provide access to all those who desire to be educated. If the government is not able to do so, it should allow the private sector to come in and provide a system where all these basics are met. Private sector is already there, but what it needs is the recognition of its role and a uniform and consistent policy framework that allows it to play its role in a proper manner. While there is a lot that the Government needs to do to provide quality education to its people,an equal responsibility rests with the society ,NGOs,Corporate houses to promote and sustain the social consciousness.

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