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# Strengthening Basic and Higher Education for Improving Human Resource Development in India

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## ABSTRACT

*This paper provides an overview of higher education and human resource development in India. The aim of this research is to analyze how India is focusing on quality education to enhance its human resource. To achieve this there is need for continuous skill development. The constitution guarantees the right to education under article 21 A to its citizens. It places India's national educational policy and achievements in old education policy particularly against those people with which it is now increasingly compared especially weaker section of society. Second, the paper examines funding of education by the Centre and States which impacts the quality of delivery and ultimately reflects on the literacy rates, learning achievement levels, resources, and teacher inputs. Third, the paper investigates the objectives of National Education Policy 2020 to achieve global standards in education. Last, the paper discusses some major public education initiatives. The concluding section suggests a future agenda and appeals for rigorous evaluation of the impacts and costs of the numerous existing educational interventions, in order to learn about their relative cost-effectiveness for evidence-based policy-making.*

**Keywords:** Policy, Achievement, Evaluation, Effectiveness, Education, Initiatives, Skill.

## I. INTRODUCTION

At independence, India inherited a legacy of large-scale illiteracy and lack of proper provision for education. An attempt was made to make education free and compulsory in 1911 by the freedom fighter Gopal Krishna Gokhale in a phased manner. Implementation was to be left to the local bodies especially for families having income less than rupees 10 per month. Unfortunately this attempt did not succeed because many maharajas and prosperous Indians felt that they would not be able to employ children in the fields.<sup>3</sup> It was only with the adoption of the Indian Constitution that article 45 under the Directive Principles of State Policy direct it the

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<sup>3</sup> Kumar, Krishna, (2005): Political Agenda of Education: A Study of Colonialist and Nationalist ideas, 2nd edition (New Delhi: Sage).

States to provide free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of 14 years.<sup>4</sup> The Kothari Commission 1964-66 had proposed common school system to be adopted in a phased manner with increase in public spending on education up to 6% of the GDP on education. In 1990 the Ramamurti Committee also stressed on strengthening the common School system to develop quality education and bring equity among all. The National Policy on Education adopted in 1992 reflected the callous attitude of the government in bringing about a strong common School system. Under the RTE schools are mandated to reserve 25% of the seats for children belonging to the weaker sections under section 12(1)(c). To compensate for this private schools are to be reimbursed for every student who is enrolled under this provision by the states. At the first post-independence census of 1951, only 9 per cent of women and 27 per cent of men were literate. It was resolved by the framers of the constitution that the new Indian state would endeavor to provide free and compulsory education to all children up to age 14 by 1960. This goal turned out to be elusive and the deadline for its achievement remained a dream till 2002 when the eight sixth amendment was made to the Indian Constitution which introduced Article 21 A making education for children between the age of six to fourteen free and compulsory. For implementation of this right the Right of children to Free and Compulsory (RTE) Act, 2009<sup>5</sup> was enacted. While even today this goal remains unfulfilled in the true sense, there has been very encouraging progress in schooling participation and other educational outcome indicators in recent times. To understand this there is need to examine effective access to education and see how other quality indicators impact real learning. The National Education Policy of 2020 emphasizes on recognising and identifying unique capabilities of each student by sensitizing teachers and parents for promoting holistic development.

## **II. CHALLENGES IN ACHIEVING COMPULSORY EDUCATION**

In spite of the reasonable contribution of the government to primary and secondary education it has not been able to meet the ends due to the following reason:

1. Structural deficiencies: These include far-flung government schools, lack of proper infrastructure including buildings, furniture, toilets and playgrounds. Due to extreme poverty the many students are not able to procure books and study material. Even when they are supplied books by the government there is inordinate delay leading to the students missing out on precious time.

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<sup>4</sup> Balagopalan, Sarada (2003) "Neither Suited for the Home nor for the field: Inclusion, Formal Schooling and Adivasi Child", *IDS Bulletin*, 34 (1): 55 – 62.

<sup>5</sup> The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 Act No. 35 of 2009.

## 2. Administrative difficulties:

Absentee teachers in Government schools, low salary of teachers in Private schools add to the dismal quality of education. The education of girls has been found to be specially hampered due to lack of toilets which forces them to drop out.

Duties are imposed on the Centre, States and Local bodies along with that of parents and schools to enforce RTE Act effectively. Even so Primary education still faces many hurdles. However, today the along with primary and secondary education higher education is of very essential to develop the skills required by industry where graduates and postgraduates can get employed and contribute towards the economic growth of the nation.

There are some world class institutes of Higher education like the Indian Institutes of Technology, Indian Institutes of Management, Indian Institute of Science, National Institute of Technology, etc. However, they are very miniscule in number compared to the number of students who are queuing for entry to these institutes. These models of State sponsored centres of excellence should be replicated hundred times to benefit more youth. The entrenched interest groups do not want the sector to open up as it will throw competition. Other challenges in Higher Education is shortage of faculty which results in high teaching load affecting their research capacity.

### **III. MONEY MATTERS: ANALYSIS OF BUDGET EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION IN INDIA**

Today United States of America and China are two big economies of the world but there are other developing countries which can harness their human capital to achieve economic growth by focusing on education. The World Bank in its report in 2005 had indicated that India is expected to grow as a strong economy due to its democracy and its large mass of skilled, English speaking workers especially in sciences.<sup>6</sup> The literacy rate in India as per the National Survey of India is 77.7% in 2022 an increase of 4% from the year 2011.<sup>7</sup> The median age in India Today is 28.4<sup>8</sup>, while in China the average age is 37 and in US 45 and in Japan and West Europe it is 48. This large population of India provides a large working population which can be inducted in the labour force to accelerate growth. However this can happen only if this population is appropriately skilled and employable.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> World Bank (2005): India and the Knowledge Economy: Leveraging Strengths and Opportunities, World Bank, Washington DC, April.

<sup>7</sup> Retrieved from <https://www.theglobalstatistics.com/literacy-rate-in-india/>

<sup>8</sup> Retrived from <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/india-population/>

<sup>9</sup> C.P.Chandrasekhar, Jayati Ghosh, Anamitra Roychowdhury, the demographic dividend and young India's

It is observed from the table that the States/UTs are contributing about 77% of the total revenue expenditure on education in the country while Centre contributes about 23% to the education sector as a whole. The total revenue account of Rs. 845926.21 crore constitutes 15.22% of the total budget of the Centre and the States/UTs for 2019-20. The total expenditure budgeted by Central and State Governments of India for the year 2019-20 for education is given in the following table:

#### **Expenditure on Education (Sector-wise) by Education 2019-20**

<b>Sector</b>	<b>States / UTs Expenditure</b>	<b>State % Share</b>	<b>Centre Expenditure</b>	<b>Centre % Share</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>Total % Share</b>
<b>(1)</b>	<b>(2)</b>	<b>(3)</b>	<b>(4)</b>	<b>(5)</b>	<b>(6)</b>	<b>(7)</b>
<b>Elementary Education</b>	<b>255599.92</b>	<b>49.75</b>	<b>47471.30</b>	<b>51.19</b>	<b>303071.22</b>	<b>49.97</b>
<b>Secondary Education</b>	<b>184233.94</b>	<b>35.86</b>	<b>8973.13</b>	<b>9.68</b>	<b>193207.07</b>	<b>31.86</b>
<b>Adult Education</b>	<b>678.37</b>	<b>0.13</b>	<b>92.20</b>	<b>0.10</b>	<b>770.57</b>	<b>0.13</b>
<b>Language Development</b>	<b>2096.42</b>	<b>0.41</b>	<b>525.17</b>	<b>0.57</b>	<b>2621.59</b>	<b>0.43</b>
<b>University &amp; Higher Education</b>	<b>51070.40</b>	<b>9.94</b>	<b>19743.87</b>	<b>21.29</b>	<b>70814.27</b>	<b>11.68</b>
<b>Technical Education</b>	<b>14261.68</b>	<b>2.78</b>	<b>15574.67</b>	<b>16.80</b>	<b>29836.35</b>	<b>4.92</b>

<b>General Education</b>	<b>5821.02</b>	<b>1.13</b>	<b>353.30</b>	<b>0.38</b>	<b>6174.32</b>	<b>1.02</b>
<b>Total Education</b>	<b>513761.76</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>92733.64</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>606495.40</b>	<b>100.00</b>

*Source: Government of India, Ministry of Education, Department of Higher Education, Planning, Monitoring and Statistics Bureau, New Delhi, 2022.*

It is found that education helps people to learn skills which assist in using resources judiciously full stop and therefore education helps in economic growth of the people. Countries like Singapore Hong Kong South Korea have focused on elementary education to improve economics status of people especially during the latter half of the 20th century as pointed out by the World Bank in a study conducted in 1993.<sup>10</sup> However, India's expenditure on education (3.1% of the GDP) is far less than the leading countries like Norway or New Zealand (more than 6% of their GDP).

Analysis of the sector wise expenditure made by government of India and the state and union territories shows that the central government has contributed 51.19% of its budget on education to elementary education mobile for higher education the contribution is 21.29%. Similarly states and Union Territories contribute 49.75% of their total budget for education to elementary education while for University and Higher Education the contribution is nearly 9.94%.

#### **IV. IMPERATIVE TO DEVELOP HIGHER EDUCATION**

Primary and secondary education have been important for the development of countries in the past, but in the current globalized world, primary and secondary education are not sufficient to meet the challenges each country faces. Instead, higher education is now considered pivotal for development, due to its critical role in expanding the production possibilities of countries. The reason higher education is becoming a key factor for economic growth is because the globalized society requires highly skilled human resources to compete with advanced countries. The National Education Policy 2020<sup>11</sup> stresses on The National Education Policy 2020 will strengthen quality higher education by having Universities and colleges which develop thoughtful, well rounded and creative individuals. The focus will be on enhancing literacy and numeracy for all students it emphasizes flexibility in learning so that there is no strict separation

<sup>10</sup> Shigesaburo Kabe, Human Resource Development in Asia: Expected Role of Higher Education, University of Ottawa, retrieved from [www.worldscientific.com](http://www.worldscientific.com).

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/5294663\\_Salient-Featuresofnep-Eng-merged.pdf](https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/5294663_Salient-Featuresofnep-Eng-merged.pdf)

between Sciences and arts or between curricular and extracurricular activities or between vocational and academic streams. It emphasizes on multi-disciplinary teaching to develop holistic education. Emphasis will be on conceptual understanding and enhancing creativity and critical thinking. The focus also is on enhancing life skills through use of Technology. The use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is to be enhanced especially after the experience during COVID- 19 experience which adversely affected students who could not access education due to lack of computers and internet data. The institute of Higher Education must be multi discipline and the medium of instruction should also be in the local languages. They must have academic and administrative autonomy able to innovate and excel. There must be greater focus on research and innovation. Constitution of National Research Foundation will help in enhancing research in all sectors. NEP 2020 aims at increasing gross enrolment ratio from 26.3% as it should in 2018 to 50% by the year 2035. There will be multiple levels of exit and entry options in the three year of four year undergraduate programs. The Academic Bank of Credit will simplify the process of transfer of students from one higher education institute to another. The Model Public University is like IIT and IIM to be called Multidisciplinary Education and Research in Universities (MERU) which will aim at attaining highest Global standards in quality education

## **V. CONCLUSION & SUGGESTIONS**

With global meltdown the possibility of skilled workers getting job opportunities worldwide has increased. They must have the skills required to compete with the best and will help in economic empowerment of their families and the society as a whole. To achieve this there is an urgent requirement of upgrading education in India from primary level to higher education. The national education policy 20 20 has laid the road map for achieving learning opportunities from early childhood to adult education ensuring inclusion and gender equality. It puts great emphasis on flexible learning and ensuring skill development which is aligned with the Sustainable Development goal number four which mandates States to focus on Vocational and Technical skills to promote Global citizenship. Through free and compulsory education from 6 to 14 years has helped India to lay the ground work for primary education but there is need for strengthening and improving Higher education so that the youth are employable and industry ready. Institutes must collaborate with the industry making students employable and industry ready.

Infrastructure facilities are one of the important factors for the implementation of ICT programme in rural areas. Existing infrastructure in schools and colleges needs to be improved for the successful and unhindered implementation of ICT. Improved Faculty strength and

exposing them to latest development with regular training is also important. Education is a human right which enables other rights and governments must enforce this in the true spirit if they want their human resource to develop as per the demands of the market and for the economic and social development of the country. This will happen if education at all levels is accessible, affordable and effective in building the skills and personality of the students. Faculties must be trained and paid well. Opening foreign universities will fuel competition and improve the education sector. Limiting regulatory control to minimum requirement will give flexibility to take innovative measures to further improve teaching and research.

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