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## Education System In India: Persuing Reforms And Perspectives In Development

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### Abstract

Indian education system, especially after the introduction of Economic Reforms in 1991, and opening of the economy to the whole world, marked with incidence of a information Technology boom, is looking to compete for the global standards in higher education. The drive is welcome but with a little precaution.

**Key words-** Education System In India, Economic Reforms Persuing Reforms, and Perspectives In Development.

### Introduction

First the 11<sup>th</sup> plan seeks to increase the enrolment ratio in the higher education considerably in comparison to the world average and averages prevailing in the developed countries. Undoubtedly higher education needs to attract higher and qualitative investments. No one would disagree from the fact but one should look upon the reality, not the ideals only. 11th Plan recognized the dual problem of higher education, namely of low enrolment rate and the regional imbalance. It recognized that the 11 % enrolment rate is too low compared to 23% of world average or 36.5 % for countries in transitions or more than 55% for developed countries. To accomplish the target of 15 % GER in 11<sup>th</sup> Plan, a sustained increase of 8.9 % per annum in Gross Enrolment is required (Duraiswamy). Thus a matching expansion in institutional capacity( 378 university assuming thirty thousand students per university and 2602 college assuming 10 college for one lakh population of students between 18 to 24 yrs. (Sudhanshu Bhushan, chapter 10,page 6, UGC Report).

To realise the same,. The 11th Plan thus proposed the following steps to increase the new institutions.

a) 30 new Central Universities, under the initiative of the Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, have been proposed. It also includes setting up of 30 medical and engineering colleges in Central Universities. In addition a Tribal University is also to be set up.

b) On technical education side 8 new IITs, 20 NITs, 20 IIITs, 3 IISERs, 7 IIMs, and 2 SPAs have been proposed.

c) Again on the initiative of Prime Minister 373 new colleges in districts with less than all India GERs with Central assistance on a matching basis from the States have been proposed; and

d) New Polytechnics in un-served districts, 500 new community Polytechnics, and 210 new community colleges have been proposed.

While we look at the economic side of the sincerity of state and central government, we find that Per student public expenditure has registered a negative rate of growth both for Central as well as State expenditure. Overall, per student expenditure has declined at a rate of 2.4 percent since 1992-93. The average real expenditure on higher education per enrolled student declined from Rs 8322 in the period 1981-82 to 1991-92 to Rs. 6790 in the period 1992-93 to 2003-04..

If we have to consistently reform on the same trend in the future also, what would happen to quality education, and eradicating the regional and inter-sectoral imbalances, ensuring inclusive growth in education. So the things are very clear. Either we will have to change the strategies of realising these goals or we shall have to reevaluate the relevance of these objectives. Public expenditure on higher education grew at a very rapid rate till the early 1970s but continued to exceed the rate of growth of national income till the mid-1980s. As a result, the share of public expenditure in higher education to GDP rose in this period. Thereafter, the trend is towards stagnancy or decline. The most noticeable feature is a decline in per student real expenditure on higher education in the period after 1992-93. (Ravi Shrivastav, UGC Report, Chapter 11)

However The Growth Planned and Expected of the educational institutes in for the next decade is even higher than the last decade. Let us have a look at the some of the figures published by AICTE estimating the requirements as projected by the planning commission.

Requirements to achieve the target Gross Enrollment Ratio till Year 2020

- 14000 additional Colleges of general Higher Education
- 12775 Additional Technical and Professional Institutions

- 269 Additional Universities

Basis the assumption that:

- 1000 Students would be admitted in each of college of General Higher Education
- 750 Students would be admitted in each technical / professional institution
- And 1 university for every 100 colleges

(Enrolment Ratio is the total enrolment in a specific level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education in a given school-year.)

But this geometric progression in the number of Technical Education Programs and institutes has resulted in a whole gamut of problems. The problems are varied and they pertain to issues like:

- students getting an optimal quality education
- institutes finding quality faculty resources
- private investors wanting a quick Break even
- reluctance of investors to invest in quality infrastructure beyond the minimum requirement
- dilution of the value attached to technical educational degrees etc.

All this has finally led to a larger problem i.e. **the institutes not being able to fill their entire quota of seats approved by AICTE**. There was a time when getting admission in an engineering program used to be a major achievement for a student. But today getting in an engineering program is not an achievement at all rather It is about the college in which the student secures admission. While the Top Government and Private colleges still enjoy an overfull demand, the majority of private colleges in B and C class cities are a victim of very low demand.

So the rules of the game have changed. The competition is no longer restricted to a geographical area but has been extended to the whole world. This has led to a huge requirement of professionals equipped with technical knowledge across the world - the people who can, and who do, make this happen i.e. the professionals with technical knowledge and skills. The demand of these skilled professionals in the developed countries is met through the already established education network. They have a very strong and highly evolved education setup which encompasses award of degrees through brilliant infrastructure, human assets and modus operandi. The main reason for this is that education has been the focus of developed countries for a long time. And so they not only fulfill their own demand but also attract students from across the world who aspire to acquire world class knowledge.

But the developing nations are not yet there. There exist large need gaps. The issue is not restricted to technical education alone. The major issue is to first educate the entire population i.e. ensure literacy. The next step is to provide for opportunities to all those who have the basic education to go forth and acquire technical knowledge in house. Therefore there is dire need to set up educational institutes at all levels. Further simply setting up the institutes is not sufficient. It is also imperative to set up institutes that impart quality education and deliver a minimum standard that will make the technical knowledge productive for the student.

Now let us look at India specifically. The Government has made a multipronged strategy for tackling the various issues related to education. Recently a bill has been passed that gives every child a right to free and compulsory education between 6 to 14 years of age. Additionally new programs like the public private partnership, mobile education etc are being tested to reach masses even in remote areas with the help of private sector. But all this is to tackle the basic issue i.e. literacy. Can we be sure about the same to the technical and higher education also. Who shall guarantee the quality education to the aspirants of technical and higher education if they don't have a lot of some hundred thousand rupees to pay as fee in management, engineering, medical or IT colleges? Will a poor student who is an average one shall ever get admission to the higher professional skill raising programme, without any difficulty.

In fact the sustainability of the education system and its relevance for the sustainable development is marred by serious doubts. There are serious issues of excellence, inclusiveness and relevance as well as financing of the education system. Penetration of education in different sub stratum of the society largely depends upon the social psychology even if the government takes up special measures to spread it in so called backwards and socially deprived sections for long. Moreover it is also not less important what they aim to do by getting education, or in other words what values the education has to spread. Is it provoking justice, compassion and development on a humane ground or is it spreading had core materialism only. Definitely things doesn't look very well and the system is moving like a big sick elephant which is running on its own strength but when it falls no body has the ability to make it healthy again. Everybody is waiting for this drunkard master to fall rather than to recorrect it and resurrect it.

When we look at the planning and development of higher education in our country, what is apparently noticed is that everything is being planned in a very unplanned way. Infusion of the private investment in higher education is such an example. Private sector has developed itself indiscriminately without any effective regulation of quality and quantity of the product which they produce. In fact, since the initiation

of the economic reform process and an corresponding opening of the economy, a lot of FDI has come into different sectors of the economy and that FDI demands quality skilled professionals to support itself. A corresponding demand of MBAs, MCAs, Engineers, Doctors, Account Professionals and other high skilled labours, has boosted the mushroom growth of the private institutions who are only looking for the profits and margins therein, and correspondingly the industry is getting degree holders of sub graded quality, and the aspirants are earning degrees which has some value in the job market but at a comparatively high price. That monopolistic competition due to absence of a healthy competition from well established world class educational institutes can't be let to run for ever. Opening up the higher education sector for foreign direct investment would be, thus, very important for future of higher education in India. It would provide for an alternative system of governance and development of higher education institutes according to global norms, and would set the globally appreciated standards of performance for rest of the industry. Demand for well qualified teachers and their remunerations shall also rise sharply, making the profession lucrative for intellectuals to join and perform. It would also set the standards for the rest of the industry and will induce for cost apprehension of the quality education which would check for the growth of tiny and cottage deemed universities.

In the same reference, the recommendations of the Yashpal Committee reports are also likely to be implemented to ensure quality education in the higher education sector. It would rationalise the growth of substandard educational institutes to a large extent and would suggest the growth of a sovereign monitoring and regulatory authority of the higher education, and one would expect least political interference induced by the wasteful motives of the state governments, central governments, and individual political leadership etc. in fact, the vested policies of the central and state governments are ever more responsible than the any other factor in the higher education sector in the India and this factor is now must to be curbed to facilitate the flourishing of the quality standards in higher education, in the upcoming years.

Then what we are heading for. Is it a simple growth in the allotment and realisation of the funds for higher education? If we look at the draft of the 11<sup>th</sup> five year plan's draft, UGC Draft on Higher Education Reforms, and Yashpal Committee Draft, one should get an insight that the upcoming focus is on all round overhauling of the education system. But is there sufficient scope for that? Draft has emphasised attaining 15 % GER in higher education and has suggested measures, therefore, to expand institutional capacity and to extensively use the existing one, in the higher education sector. Corresponding policies have to be designed for ensuring enlarged quantum of net investments in higher

education sector, by private as well as public sector on one hand, but on the other hand, what is much required is that the extensive and rational utilization of funds for quality up gradation of the higher education institutes. An effective monitoring mechanism for ensuring that the benefits of invested funds may finally accrue to final service providers and final service recipients, in appropriate proportions of the original resources, should be strictly maintained. If we keep apart the fix investments like building, electricity, internet and cable connection network, the investment on teachers and students are minimal. Library grants are either insufficient or utilized badly. Emphasis should be on grading the books and journals and only the standard books published by standard publishers should be allowed to be supplied in colleges and university. Specific international and national journals as well as text books should be made compulsory for all institutes in every subject, and that list should be finalised by a panel of professors of international fame. It should be ensured that library grants are strictly used according to that list and the list should be renewed every third year. Until we ensure supply of the correct and good reading material in a regular and competent manner to our higher education institutes, talking of quality improvement would just be futile.

Our education institutes are lacking staff. In some places there are extra staffs, but most of the institutes, especially in public sector and on aided list, are being perished due to that shortcoming. Teachers are being engaged more and more in extracurricular and non teaching activities while the existing resource pools is too small even to carry even regular teaching activities only. Much sufferer is teachers and students only. Administrators and officers are realising a substantial part of investment in their private pockets by corrupt manners. Sub graded construction, sub graded library and teaching material, poor maintenances and service delivery mechanism, non technical and non scientific approach towards the educational administration, etc all these factors are pulling us back since long and our politicians and officers all are getting money for every loophole in the system. Everybody is greasing their palm and administrators, politicians, supplier, contractors, non teaching staff; clerical staffs etc. all have become important and all sufficient. Poor teacher comes only in the last but as a slave to only these. He is like a most ignorant and most humble creature in this world of higher education and everybody else has only one responsibility of teaching him what to do and what not to do and in the return to this most humble and most great service what they acquire is the dauntless authority to plunder the sanctity and resources of the higher education institutes for their pick pocketing and for their selfish motives. Teacher has become most humble servant, in fact a toothless one to all of them. This is the present administration of the higher education. Teacher's participation is limited to formation of committees only which are the rubber stamps of the principal mainly because he has the authority to forward one's

CR, Promotion Reports, Grant leave, relieve him for doing upgradation course etc. He has to do what the Principal says, and the principal has to do what the higher Political and Educational Authority says without any if and but. So where is the Teachers Participation in Financial and Administrative policy formation? Without paying any heed to what is happening with them, right or wrong, they are engaged with the students only and the others are left to plunder them and there students. Lakhs and crores of grants come to big colleges and universities. How much of that teacher and students get really. How much benefit do they get actually? It is only marginal benefit. One can remember Rajiv Gandhi for his famous and pinching argument that only 15 paisa out of one rupees reach to the end user. In education, it is even worsening day by day.

So there is an apparent need of reverse marking of college administration by teachers, students, and the society as well. At present, teacher is thought to be root cause of all the problems relating to school assuming that he has not playing his role sincerely. But often the role of college administration is ignored as well as that of the government and the policy makers. People often say that the low paid teachers of private institution work hard than that of the public sector and aided schools. But it is often ignored that who these persons are teaching in private schools and in what condition. They have to work in quite unsecure service conditions and they are exploited to the fuller extent. So what is the remedy to improve service condition in this sector or to throw the public sector too, in those dirty hands that are getting fatty on the blood of the innocent students, guardian and the poor labour teacher? If we allow the private hands to suck the blood in same manner and would let it ignore all quality standards for sake of profit and margins only, any drastic change in the system would be only a dream. In any reform process for the education, the welfare of teachers and students should be in the central place and only teachers should be allowed to accomplish that. Schools should be full of resources but the command of these resources should lie in the hands of the teacher and a decentralised regime to command, control, and to properly utilise these resources should be developed. Resources as well as the responsibility of managing these resources should be handed over to the teachers only and overlapping as well as any ambiguity should be avoided in all respects. Running a school should not be a profit venture for principal and managers only, but also for teachers and students and proper mechanism should be developed for that.

After ensuring supply of standard study materials and good working conditions for the teachers, proper teaching should be insured. We are not America or England. Most of the schools suffer lack of good teachers, proper library and its staff, facilities like projectors, internet connections, computer labs,



technical professional to handle problems in internet, developing and running websites, computerisation of school database and development of respective software, handling of computers and other IT gadgets, etc. we also need proper clerical staff to the clerical work. Drinking water, AC, Refrigerators, Air Coolers, Electricity Fans, and Above all, regular supply of electricity should be ensured. If all the time teachers and students, and principal will have to care about these only, how shall one would be able to take classes regularly and to minute examine the problems of students also.

Thanks to UGC which has now published the new PBAS (Performance Based Appraisal System) for promotion the teachers in higher Education. Who needs to care that in remote area where teachers don't get even news daily regularly, how would they be able to write up an article which will be published in an international journal after the review of a panel of international peer groups in the subject? And who need to care that how many national and standard journals come into the college library regularly. Who need to care whether how much the grants come in library and how it is utilised for sake of maximum personal commission. Thanks to the UGC that it has ignored all such Disparities and has passed a uniform system for all nation. At least if one can not remove these disparities, he can do it ignore. This is best done by UGC. No one needs to care that teacher residences with proper facilities should be developed compulsively in all institutes, especially in remote and distant areas. No one need to care that institute of higher education should be developed in good places, with hostels of students, and teachers who are the central leaders of the process of disseminating knowledge should be provided proper facilitation of life. Alas! Who cares? UGC is Developing Norms of Oxford and Cambridge to develop the teachers without looking into real time problems of teachers, especially in the remote areas, and without ensuring that at the same time if college is not developed on the other criterion as well in the same time, how just it would be to only clutch the teacher. Will it work really or the results would be suffering of the teachers only in terms of promotions and pay loss. Why the only teacher be punished for all the vices. Will u hang the principal, managers, and other authorities also if the teachers of a college/ university does not perform appropriately and doesn't get a promotion in due time. Will u hang them up? Then why the teacher only?

Actually the system is a rotten one. Everybody is interested in himself and nobody needs to care about what is happening. Until the proper facilities are developed in the institutions, and the teacher and students get its real benefit, any drive to mere increase the investment to increase the intake capacity or to expand the institutional capacity will be only an insufficient effort. In higher education it is the Quality



which matters, not the quantity. One has to come out of this dilemma and must ensure that quality upgradation should be on the forefront while expanding investments in higher education.

Economics is the science of incentive and disincentive, but they should not be allocated arbitrarily. Economics of higher education base upon providing good incentives to the teacher as well as to the students in the form of return over his investments. It is not about arbitrarily providing free of cost education to all the students which bring heavy financial burden to the government but bring nothing to the student except a paper degree which has altogether no value in market. Neither it is about providing scholarships to all the class and caste without monitoring how it is being utilized. Power of the economics lies in discrimination and differentiation, rather than in treating all units indiscriminately and uniformity, and in instructing the power of proper incentives for the sustainable development strategy.

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