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Education System in India: A Brief Discussion

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Abstract

Education system is the system of formalized transmission of knowledge and values operating within a given society. For centuries, India has been a major centre for learning and many popular universities existed here. Even today, the country has some of the best Universities in the world. Besides, it is also facing many challenges in its primary education while striving to reach 100% literacy. Through the Universal Compulsory Primary Education, maintaining the quality of education in rural areas has been difficult and Kerala is the only Indian state to achieve this goal. The prime objective of this paper is to briefly delve into chronological growth of education system in India.

Introduction

India has long history of organized education. The Gurukul system of education is among the oldest educational systems. Gurukuls were traditional residential schools of learning. Nalanda which at its peak housed 10000 students is considered the oldest established university. The current system of education with its western style and content was introduced and founded by the British in the 20th century. The entry of westernised pattern of education and the birth of the university system were the result of the 1854 despatch of Sir Charles Wood, well known as Wood's Despatch, to the Governors of the East India Company. It

laid down guidelines for founding of a university system modelled on the University of London, that would affiliate the existing colleges, set standards for courses, prescribe appropriate textbooks, conduct examinations and confer degrees.

But now India is faced with challenges in primary education in order to achieve 100% literacy rate. Universal Compulsory Primary Education has been a challenge with its goal of keeping poor children in schools and also maintaining quality of education. Children from poor and economically disadvantaged backgrounds are forced to drop-out of the school system due to economic reasons. All levels of education from primary to higher education are overseen by the Department of School Education and Literacy and the Department of Higher Education. India has a large formal education system with a target group (6-24 years of age) of 411 million in 2003 (40% of Indian population) that is ever growing. The total number of enrolment in educational institutions was 224 million, with about 6.2 million teachers. The formal system is augmented by the private educational institutes and non-formal education system that includes adult and distance education. The Department of Higher Education has established various Colleges and Universities. Some of the institutes of higher learning have worldwide reputation like the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) etc. In India over 130000 students graduate in Engineering and another 65000 with MBAs every year. The global software industry depends heavily on software outsourcing to India with huge percentage of large and medium sized corporations having operations in India



Objectives of the study:

- To know about the education system as a social concept, its relevance in society and exploring different dimensions with the help of historical background and references.
- To accurately portray the present scenario and the present condition of education system of India

- To know about the problems in Education system in India and the reforms that are to be done in the education system
- To study the causes of illiteracy in India

Research Questions:

- To know about the education system as a social concept, its relevance in society and exploring different dimensions with the help of historical background and references.
- To accurately portray the present scenario and the present condition of education system of India
- To know about the problems in Education system in India and the reforms that are to be done in the education system
- To study the causes of illiteracy in India

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

This research gives an insight into the Education system in India its relevance. It showcases how the system of education has been changed in past years. It also helps in knowing about the different government policies for improvement in Education system and the various non-governmental organization working for improving education standards in India. This research helps in critically evaluating the present system of education in India and the problems in education system. Finally, this research forecasts the reforms that need to be done in the Education system.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY USED:

Research is a structured enquiry that utilizes acceptable scientific methodology to solve problems and create new knowledge that is generally applicable. For any research work to be successful, correct research methodology has to be adopted. We have suggested the traditional background of the concept to add depth and richness to it. It also supplies a sense of perspective and direction to our considerations of the present problems.

The research methodology undertaken in this project can be broken down into three major approaches each with its weaknesses, which need be employed in a study, then, relies largely on the subject of, and questions posed by the research.

COMPARATIVE METHOD OF RESEARCH-

A research can be categorized as comparative research when the researcher compares the people's experiences in different societies, either between times in the past or in parallel situation the present. In the project the different concept of the present education system is compared with the past system of education and the changes that took place in the system.

ANALYTICAL METHOD OF RESEARCH

This research involves in depth study and evaluation of available information in an attempt to explain complex phenomena. The researcher has to use the information already provided to make a critical evaluation of the material. In the project there is analysis of the problem in education system in India and the causes of illiteracy in India. After analysis the type of reforms that are to be done in the education system.

LIMITATIONS-

When comparing with past system of education, we broadly took the old Gurukuls and in brief the establishment of western education system in India by British. The study would have been much better and authentic if empirical method of research would have been used. Due to time and financial constraints the empirical research work could not be completed.

The major drawback of this project is that it does not cover the comparison of Indian system with other countries system of education

History of Education in India

India is often classified as one of the most ancient nations with rich legacies of culture and literary pursuits. According to experts the history of education in India is nearly 5000 years old. Traditionally, only the highest caste – the Brahmins – were taught to read and write. To say it more precisely: the traditional Hindu education served only the needs of boys who belong to Brahmin families. Education was similarly elitist under the Moguls who favored the rich rather than those from high-caste backgrounds. Under the British colonial rule these elitist tendencies were even reinforced. In the year 1600 The East India Company came to India mainly to explore business possibilities but it also thought to establish its own empire in the country. While the supremacy of the British in India increased with the establishment of East India Company, education in general was neglected.

British era

In order to spread Christianity, a number of missionaries came to India and established institutions for education where they propagated the spread of Christian religion through English medium. The increasing efforts of the missionaries with regard to English education led to dissatisfaction among the populace thus, this matter was raised in British Parliament. This resulted in the enactment of the Charter of 1813 which threw light on the policy of education in India and accepted the responsibility of government for spreading education. The charter of 1813 created a controversy known as “the occidental-oriental controversy”. The supporters of the Oriental view were in favour of the old Indian system of education whereas the Occidental view ridiculed the Indian system and attempted to introduce English literature and Western science through the English medium. In 1834, Lord Macaulay came to India during the violent Oriental and Occidental controversy as a Law member of the council of Governor-General. Lord Macaulay played an important role in resolving this controversy and his famous Minute (Macaulay Minute) paved the way for the British system of education in India. Macaulay strongly criticized the eastern system of education and culture and ridiculed it by saying “A single shelf of good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia”. Macaulay’s Minute expressed his mission to create a class of persons who should be “Indians in blood and colour but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect”. Even though Macaulay’s Minute was presuming, it ended the Oriental-Occidental controversy and laid the foundation-stone of modern education system in India and further marked the real beginning of bilingualism in the Indian education system. The British were not primarily interested in the education of masses and, therefore, introduced the idea of Downward filtration. This means that only the Indian elite or top-class people would be educated and through them the lower class would also benefit.

In 1854 a charter was issued by Charles Wood who was then the Chairman of the Board of control of the Company. Thus, the charter is known as Wood’s Despatch of 1854 as he was the main architect of it. This despatch helped to provide education a definite structure, base and shape. The Wood’s Despatch defined educational policy in India as the diffusion of European knowledge. It is said that the Wood’s Despatch laid the foundation of the present system of education in India. Due to the despatch education had a structure with indigenous schools and primary schools at the base and universities at the top. Further, departments were installed in each province to look after the state of education and it recommended the foundation of graded schools (Indigenous

Primary schools, Middle schools, High schools, Colleges and Universities). The despatch introduced a system of grant-in-aid and therewith sought the cooperation of private corporations in the field of education. Further it made recommendations for the expansion of general women's education and vocational education and to establish two universities of Calcutta and Bombay. Wood's recommendation to make the mother tongue the medium of instruction was not followed and English was made the medium of instruction and got firmly established throughout the country. However, the main contribution of the Wood's Despatch was the formation of a system of education from primary school to University. Since then, serious efforts were made by the Government to promote education at all levels but the journey for the government to establish a system that was able to satisfy every section of the society was neither simple nor smooth. Due to dissatisfaction of the people that started surfacing when the outcomes of educational measures undertaken by the government did not seem to match their expectation, several measures for educational reconstruction followed. Some landmark developments in the history of modern Indian education were made during the pre-independence period which cannot be explained further in this paper.

Post-independent period

The prevalent educational system in India is a legacy of British education with some influence of North-American tradition of higher education and a few indigenous innovations to respond to socio-cultural needs of the contemporary society. When becoming independent in 1947, India inherited an educational system with great educational disparities between men and women, upper and lower classes and urban and rural populations. In a badly battered and shattered nation full of historical disparities among various regions and communities, education was seen as a vehicle to bring about justice, liberty, equality and fraternity among the populace of a multilingual, multireligious and multi-ethnic country. The first mile stone in the development of education in independent India was the enactment of the Indian Constitution in 1950 which laid down broad educational policies for the country. In innumerable conferences, committees and commissions, educationists, State Ministers of education and other educational experts were called to discuss the problems of education and offer programs for reconstruction of education in independent India. One of the most important policy statements was the policy statement of 1968 which was a sequel of the Report of the Education Commission (1964-1966), popularly called Dr. D. S. Kothari Commission. The Kothari Commission was built to formulate a coherent education policy for India and according to the commission,

education was intended to increase productivity, develop social and national unity, consolidate democracy, modernize the country and develop social, moral and spiritual values. To achieve this aims, the main pillar of the Indian education policy was free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14. Other features included the development of languages, the equality of educational opportunities and the development and prioritization of scientific education and research. In 1986, Prime Minister Rajiv Ghandi announced a new education policy: the National Policy on Education (NPE). It laid stress on the need for radical reconstructions of the education system in general, to improve its overall quality and gave great attention to science and technology. Even though the central government declared with the policy of 1986 that it would accept a wider responsibility to enforce a national and integrative character of education, the states retained a significant role, particularly in relation to the curriculum. The key legacies of the 1986 policy were the promotion of privatization and an emphasis on secularism and science. Another consequence of the NPE was that the quality of education was seen as a problem and thus, several initiatives have been developed to counter these problems. As a result of these initiatives changes are being made on the ground. A massive infrastructure development and a teacher recruitment drive were initiated nationally. The NPE not only focused on improvements to school environments but also to instructional material and teacher training. Various government schemes target disadvantaged children such as the Alternative, Innovative and Education Guarantee Scheme which provides education in smaller, isolated habitations in rural areas or urban slums and schooling to difficult-to-reach groups such as working and migrating children. A mid-day meal scheme was introduced which aims to provide a cooked mid-day meal to all children attending primary school. Additionally, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) is a program which aims to achieve universal elementary education of satisfactory quality by the year 2010. The Indian government is preparing the universalization of secondary education (USE) with the main aim to provide high quality secondary education to all Indian adolescents up to the age of 16 by 2015 and senior secondary education up to the age of 18 by 2020.

After Independence in 1947, governments have tried to address the limitations of the Indian education system in the framework of its Constitution, and have introduced various policies and programs for widening the access to education, for enhancing the overall quality of education and to promote literacy throughout the country. Although the Indian education system has improved considerably since independence it still is facing manifold problems.

Literature Review

Development of Education in India after Independence

After the implementation of plans, efforts were made to spread education.

Government decided to provide free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of 14. But this aim could not be achieved yet.

In First Five Year Plan 7.9% of total plan outlay was allocated for education. In Second and Third Plan, the allocations were 5.8% and 6.9% of the total plan outlay. In Ninth Plan only 3.5% of the total outlay was allocated for education.

To streamline the education, the Govt. implemented the recommendations of Kothari Commission under 'National Policy on Education' in 1968. The main recommendations were universal primary education. Introduction of new pattern of education, three language formula, introduction of regional language in higher education, development of agricultural and industrial education and adult education.

To combat the changing socio-economic needs of the country, Govt. of India announced a new National Policy on Education in 1986. Universalisation of primary education, vocationalisation of secondary education and specialisation of higher education were the main features of this policy.

National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) at National level and State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) at State level were established to maintain the standard of education. University Grants Commission (UGC) was instituted to determine the standard of higher education.

The following points explain the development of education in India after independence:

1. Expansion of General Education:

During the period of planning there has been expansion of general education. In 1951, the percentage of literacy was 19.3. In 2001 the literacy percentage

increased to 65.4%. The enrolment ratio of children in the age group of 6-11 was 43% in 1951 and in it became 100% in 2001.

Primary education – been free and compulsory. Midday meal has been started in schools since 1995 to check drop-out rate. The number of primary schools has risen by three times from 2.10 lakh (1950-51) to 6.40 lakhs (2001-02). There were only 27 universities in 1950-51 which increased to 254 in 2000-01.

2. Development of Technical Education:

Besides general education, technical education plays important role in human capital formation. The Govt. has established several Industrial Training Institutes, Polytechnics, Engineering colleges and Medical and Dental colleges, Management institutes etc.

These are given below:

(a) Indian Institute of Technology:

For education and research in engineering and technology of international standard, seven institutes have been established at Mumbai, Delhi, Kanpur, Chennai, Khargpur, Roorkee and Gauhati, Technical education is imparted here both for graduation and post-graduation and doctorate level.

(b) National Institute of Technology (NIT):

These institutes impart education in engineering and technology. These were called Regional College of Engineering (REC). These are 17 in number throughout the country. There are other institutes in the country to teach engineering and technical education.

(c) Indian Institute of Management:

These institutes impart education in business management and administration. These institutes are located at Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Kolkata, Lucknow, Indore and Kozhikode.

(d) Medical education:

There were only 28 medical colleges in the country in 1950-51. There were 165 medical and 40 dental colleges in the country in 1998-99.

(e) Agricultural education:

Agricultural Universities have been started in almost all States to improve production and productivity of agriculture. These universities impart education and research in agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry and veterinary sciences etc.

3. Women education:

In India, literacy among women was quite low. It was 52% according to 2001 census. While the literacy among men was 75.8%. Women education was given top priority in National Policy on Education. Many State Governments have exempted the tuition fee of girl's up to university level. Separate schools and colleges have been established to raise level of literacy among women.

4. Vocational education:

National Policy of Education, 1986, aims at vocationalisation of secondary education. Central Govt. has been giving grants to State Governments to implement the programme since 1988. Agriculture, Pisciculture, diary, poultry, typing, electronics, mechanical and carpentry etc. had been included in higher secondary curriculum.

5. Growth of higher education:

In 1951, there were 27 universities. Their number increased to 254 in 2001. In Orissa state, there was only one university in 1951. Now there are 9 universities.

6. Non-formal education:

This scheme was launched on an experimental basis from the Sixth plan and on regular basis from Seventh plan. The aim was to achieve universal elementary education to all children in the age group of 6-14 years. The scheme was meant for those children who cannot attend schools regularly and for full time due to poverty and pre-occupation with other works.

The Central Govt. is providing assistance to State Govt. and voluntary organisation to implement the scheme. Non-formal education centres have been set up in remote rural areas, hilly and tribal areas and in slums. These impart education to children of 6-14 age group.

7. Encouragement to Indian Language and Culture:

After the adoption of National Policy of Education 1968, regional language became the medium of instruction in higher education. Syllabus on science and technology, dictionaries, books, and Question Papers are translated into regional

languages. Indian history and culture have been included in school and college curriculum.

8. Adult education:

Simply speaking adult education refers to the education for the illiterate people belonging to the age group of 15-35 years. The National Board of Adult Education was established in the First Five Year Plan. The village level workers were assigned the job of providing adult education. The progress remained not too good.

The National Adult Education Programme was started in 1978. The programme is considered as a part of primary education. National Literacy Mission was also started in 1988 to eradicate adult illiteracy particularly in rural areas.

The Centre gives assistance to states, voluntary organisations and some selected universities to implement this programme. There were 2.7 lakh adult education centres working in the country in 1990-91. This programme helped to raise the literacy rate to 65.38% in 2001.

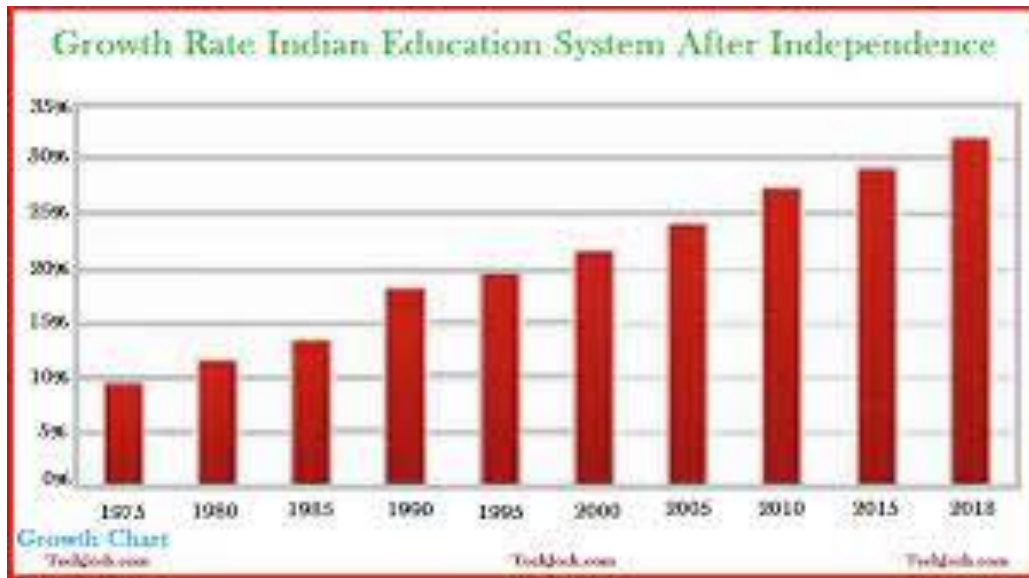
9. Improvement of Science education:

Central Govt. started a scheme for the improvement of science education in schools in 1988. Financial assistance is given to provide science kits, up gradation of science laboratories, development of teaching material, and training of science and mathematics teachers. A Central Institute of Educational Technology (CIET) was set up in NCERT to purchase equipment for State Institutes of Educational Technology.

10. Education for all:

According to 93rd Amendment, education for all has been made compulsory. The elementary education is a fundamental right of all children in the age group of 6-14 years. It is also free. To fulfill this obligation Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) has been launched.

The above discussion makes it clear that a lot of development in education has been made in India after Independence. There is wide growth in general education and higher education. Efforts have been made to spread education among all sections and all regions of the country. Still our education system is ridden with problems.



Immediate changes needed in the Indian education system

While we all understand how crucial education is to shape our lives, it has also been a major problem in our country. There are several issues that the Indian education system is grappled with. We cannot deny the fact that the Indian government and institutions have been working to reform the existing education model. However, there are still several issues which are required to be taken care of.

1. Rote learning

We have progressed with time; however, we still have not been able to move away from rote learning. While we know that IB schools are changing the education system at their level, but we also need to understand that the population that goes to IB schools is very limited in nature.

Not everyone can afford the education system that they offer. Hence, the government needs to take the baton in their hands and eradicate rote learning from the schools at all the levels.

The schools must be encouraged to introduce conceptual learning which avoids students to mug up what they are being taught. While this will help students to

understand the concepts better, they will also be able to retain and apply them better.

2. Evaluation system

Marks still continue to play the most important card in deciding the future of children and this often comes down upon students as a burdening factor. The pressure of marks often makes students underperform.

Instead of focusing the evaluation on a three-hour exam, the focus of evaluation should be classroom participation by a student, projects, communication and leadership skills and extra-curricular activities.

Only then will the students give their best and be evaluated at their best.

3. Equal respect to all the subjects

We continue to survive in the education system where science stream topples the stream hierarchy. Students are pushed to become a machine which only goes for high-profile subjects and subjects like languages, communications, arts are looked down and are not considered high-profile.

Students should rather be pushed to pursue the subject that they like instead of creating a differentiation between subjects.

4. Better training of educators

Teachers play the most important role in schools and hence, they should be given the best of class training. After all, they are shaping the future of the nation, the children. Teachers are often considered as second parents.

Thus, they should be imparted their training in a way that they can act as parents to the children away from their homes.

While teaching, they should create a congenial and home-like atmosphere where students can feel the empathy and love in the classroom and which can then be reflected in their behaviors.

5. Introduction of technology

We all know we have incepted in the era of the fourth industrial revolution. We are living the renaissance of technology and in such a state, technology and education system cannot be kept apart.

Students must be taught about technology right from the early years of their education so that it does not come like an alien thing in their later times.

Indian schools must embrace technology and education with an open heart and propagate the same to the students as it is there, where their future lies.

6. Personalize education

Indian education needs to realize that the absorption power of every student cannot be the same. Hence, the teaching method also cannot remain the same for every student in a class of 30.

Some students have faster learning pace and some are slow. Teachers must have a keen eye on observing each of their students.

While it is not humanly possible for a single teacher to pay attention to every student, schools must start looking at the use of technologies like artificial intelligence and chatbots who can become the helping hand to the teachers as well as students.

7. Teach them the purpose of education

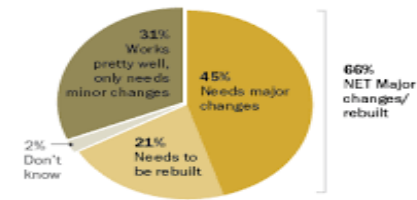
Our education system is still having the features what colonial educators inbuilt. Education is not always about becoming a big, rich person. It should be about humanism.

Students must also be taught in-depth about the morals of life and inculcated with humanistic values. They should be taught that life is much beyond money and success is not measured in money.

If the Indian education system starts taking these points into serious consideration, we can attain the level of the best education system in the world. It is high that we as a country, start taking education above the mediocre level that we have been engrained with and perceive education from the holistic approach.

Views of the Education System

% saying the education system ...



PEW RESEARCH CENTER May 1-5, 2013.
Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.
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India's Struggle against Illiteracy: Causes, Efforts and Conclusions

Literacy Defined:

One who can, with understanding, both read and write a short, simple statement in his everyday life, is a literate (UNESCO).

In consensus with this definition, the census commission of India (1992) put forth the following conditions:

- a. The person should be able to read & write any Indian language;
- b. He / she should also understand such language;
- c. Formal education is NOT a necessary condition.

Main Causes of Illiteracy:

- a. High rate of population growth in relation to low rate of growth in adult literacy;
- b. Ineffectiveness of primary schools in enrolling and retaining students;
- c. Traditional outlook of the lower class in using the services of young children either for earning some additional money or looking after their younger siblings at home.
- d. High level of poverty;
- e. Low allotment of government funds to the education sector.

It also seeks to bridge gender and social gaps. This programme will subsume all existing programme (except Mahila Sanakhya and Mid-day meal schemes)

including externally aided programmes in due course with its overall framework with district as the unit of programme implementation.

The Legislative Efforts:

India is home to almost half of the world's illiterates. If this high percentage is to be compared with the figures of other countries, India trails far behind. There also exists a regional imbalance in terms of spread of literacy. The state-wise distribution of illiteracy points out that the Hindi belt – the states of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh (BIMARU) – depicts a grim picture. Of the total illiterate people in India, more than one fifth are found in the BIMARU region India is a country of Paradoxes.

On the one hand, she is the third largest pool of engineers and doctors and on the other hand around 48% of its population is still completely illiterate. The condition of women is even worse; more than 60% of the women in the country are still illiterates. Of the 14 crore households in our country, around 8.4 crore do not have a literate housewife.

Of the 164 million children in the age group 6-14 years, 82 million i.e. 50% do not attend school. The position of other developing countries like Indonesia, China and South Korea is much better than us in the field of literacy with more than 70% of their population can read and write.

Fund Allotment:

Education has been recognized as critical input for investment in human capital. Plan expenditure on education has also increased rapidly since the first five plan. A high priority has been accorded to this sector in the Tenth Five Year Plan, with an allocation of Rs. 43,25 crore as against Rs. 24,908.38 crore made available in the Ninth Plan, representing an increase of 76%. During the Tenth Plan Rs. 28,750 crores has been allocated for Elementary Education.

The total central plan allocation for education was enhanced from by 18.7% from Rs. 5,920 crore in 2001-02 to Rs. 7025 crore in 2002-03. Out of this, elementary education has received the highest priority.

Schemes and Programmes:

Within the education sector, elementary education has been given the highest priority in terms of sub-sectoral allocations. A number of schemes launched by the central government to meet the needs of the educationally disadvantaged viz. Operation on Blackboard, District Primary Education Programme, Education

Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovative Education, Mahila Samakhya, Teacher Education, National Programme of Nutritional support to Primary Education, Lok Janbish, Shiksha Karmi Project, Janashala Programme and Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana.

The national literacy mission (NLM) was set up by the government of India on May 5th 1988 within objective to end up literacy prevailing in the country. The target population group for the program is aged 15-35 year. The national literacy mission authority, an independent wing of the ministers of human resources and development guides the mission the too initial flagship programmes of the mission – the total literacy programmes and the post literacy programme were merged together under a single project literacy campaigns and operational restoration in September 1999. The first successful literacy campaign by the NLM was in Kottayam, Kerela.

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan or the ‘Education for All’ movement (also referred to as ‘Each One Teach One’, is another important literacy programme aiming at the achievement of universalization of elementary education in a time – bound manner, as per the 86th Amendment Act 2002 that made free and compulsory education is children of age 6-14 years, a fundamental right.

Adult Education Programme:

The basic literacy concept evolved with the expansion of night schools which received grants-in-aid from 1929. Thereafter, upto 1947, the concept of ‘basic education’ was based on traditional programme of night schools. Between 1949 and 1966, the life-oriented approach – ‘civil liberty’ – focused on social education.

For a decade thereafter, functional literacy, a concept based on work-oriented approach was emphasized. During the 1970s ‘developmental literacy’ was introduced. Literacy was, now, not just the process of learning the skills of reading, writing and arithmetic but a contribution to the liberation of man and to his full development.

Education in India needs an overhaul

Even before the pandemic, Indian schools saw high dropout rates and declining enrolment rates.

Over the last decade, learning outcomes for children in India have steadily declined. This is despite an increase in budgeted expenditure on education, from INR 3.6 lakh crore to INR 4.6 lakh crore over a 10-year period (2006-2016).

The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), conducted annually by Pratham and the National Achievement Survey (NAS), carried out every three years by the central government, studies the state of the education system and highlights learning levels, enrolment rates, and major gaps in the system, among other things. These reports reveal that while children are graduating to a higher class every year, very few are performing at their expected levels.

The pandemic has prompted a shift to online education and this is likely to further impact these trends. The ASER 2020 report revealed that 5.3 percent of rural children aged 6-10 years have not enrolled in school this year, compared to 1.8 percent in 2018. In order to better understand and contextualise the consequences of the lockdown on school education in India, it is worth analysing the situation prior to the pandemic.

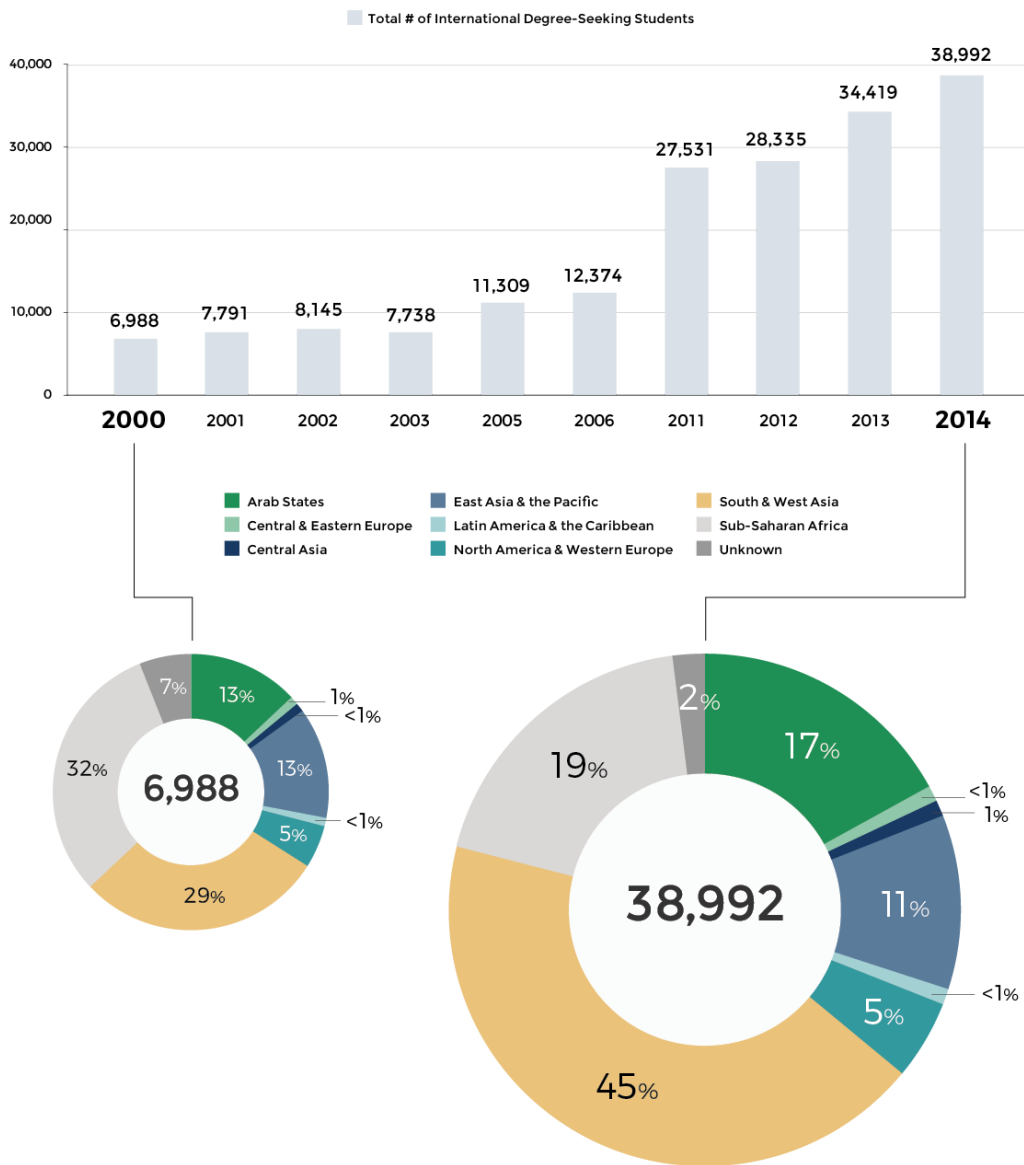
Concluding Remarks on the Progress:

There has been unprecedented progress in the field of literacy in India. For the first time since Independence, the absolute number of illiterates has declined by over 31.9 million in the last decade. Out of 600 districts in the country, 587 have since been covered under Adult Education Programmes.

At present 174 districts are in progress under Total Literacy Campaigns, 212 under post Literacy Programme, 201 under continuing Education Programme. About 96.69 million persons have been made literate by the end of March 2002. 60% of the total beneficiaries are women, while 22% of the total belongs to scheduled castes and 12% to the scheduled tribes.

Over 108 Jan Shikshan Sansthan and 25 state resource centres are functioning. The Directorate of Adult Education is functioning as National Resource Centre. Now more than three fourth of the male population and more than two thirds of the female population are literate. This marks a significant step towards achieving the target of "Education for All".

International Degree-Seeking Students in India by Host Region, Select Years Between 2000 and 2014



Source: Huff Post India

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CONCLUSION

Our high schools are designed to prepare students for college, not the world most will enter. Parents are influenced by society and they want their children to reflect the ideal for success, that is, academics with music lessons on the side,

becoming a polished professional, achieving a status that can change the world. Parents want the education system to maintain high standards so their child has opportunity to achieve this ideal. This sounds great in theory - one out of a thousand will achieve that ideal. The problem is, this standard robs non-college students' job skills they need to enter the real world.

From the beginning of man to the late 1800s, an educational institution was the only source of information and attending them was the only way to acquire information. Times have changed. Today, we are an information society with hundreds of sources of information. Last year's facts, or yesterday's, may not have any value today. Skills learned today will soon become obsolete and new skills must be mastered. For this reason, knowing how to learn, search for and acquire information is more valuable than being a learner-of-facts. Because most high schools' students enter the work force, their knowledge should be measured by their ability to acquire information and turn it into useful knowledge rather than their ability to memorize. For some licensed professions such as lawyers and doctors, learner-of-facts is a necessity.

American students score below many other countries in math and science. What is not understood, many low scoring students are technicians who continue to keep this nation a leader of technology. That is because the same students who show limited interest in learning academics demonstrate great skills and confidence in creating new concepts. Creating the *new* motivates technicians whereas mastering the *old* does not.

Policies that created wealth during the industrial age are leading individuals, companies, and society into dead-end traps. The industrial age is gone and we are entering the technological age. Today, narrow profit margins and fast changing technology are forcing individuals and companies to replace the status quo with continuous change. Businesses must implement a leadership style that inspires a love-to-learn and an environment where change motivates people, because continuous change means efficiency during the 21st century.

The present education system served us well when a professional skill was good till retirement. When a skill becomes obsolete in a few years, then other methods of learning are required. A person cannot keep going back to the classroom every time new technology replaced current skill. We are entering the age where we need continuous education. Continuous education requires the ability to learn without dependency on instructors, which is, learning how to learn. Computer technicians must use self-education techniques to learn beyond the basics.

In South Carolina, 40% the teenagers drop out of high school. In some high schools, 70% of the teenagers drop out. Today's education system is an outdated product that is being rejected by an increasing number of people. There are alternatives that will motivate teenagers to seek a productive lifestyle.[36]

The typical high school teaches 30% of its students to be failures. This is because the curriculum only recognizes academic skills and student's intelligence is measured by this standard. Non-academic skills and associated intelligence are ignored. A person who has the ability to be a first-class welder is labelled a failure. He may never become a welder because self-fulfilling prophecy, based on academics, will determine his fate.

Teenagers are put in jail because they refuse to conform to passive classroom learning environments. Because the education system labels them FAILURES, they turn to criminal activity to be recognized.

Every young teenager wants to learn, be recognized, be somebody and excel. If they can't do it in the classroom, they will find another outlet, usually one that leads to self-destruction.

The present Indian government, the United Progressive Alliance, appears to be committed to

confronting the challenges, as reflected in their Common Minimum Programme). The introduction of a 2 per cent education cess (surcharge) on tax, a stress on employment guarantees and the establishment of a National Rural Health Mission are thus welcome developments in this respect. India's aim of providing basic education for all stems from the empowering and redistributive impact of education. Until recently, literacy, and the related issue of access to schooling, have taken precedence over curricular content. J. Dreze and A. Sen argue: Literacy is an essential tool for self-defence in a society where social interactions include the written media. An illiterate person is significantly less equipped to defend herself in court, to obtain a bank loan, to enforce inheritance rights, to take advantage of new technology, to compete for secure employment, to get onto the right bus, to take part in political activity – in short, to participate successfully in the modern economy and society.[37] Unsurprisingly, literacy rates vary widely between states, and between genders. The northern Hindi-belt states, whose economic performance has been worse than that of western and southern states, have lower literacy rates. Female literacy varies from around 34 per cent in Bihar to 88 per cent in Kerala; male literacy varies between 60 per cent in Bihar and 94 per cent in Kerala. Rajasthan suffers the widest gender difference: female literacy stands at 44 per cent; male at 77 per cent. One of the

main aims of education policy in the 1990s was to accelerate the progress of literacy and school attendance and to create an equitable system for girls, as had been planned by the Kothari Commission in 1964.¹⁵ In recent years, however, attention has shifted away from the provision of basic literacy skills and towards debates surrounding the content of school curricula. These debates have been particularly concerned with the traditionally secular emphasis within education, which has become vulnerable since the successes of avowedly Hindu political parties.

We need to invest much more and have an intensive and proper supervision of primary and high school education than wrongly focusing on higher education and research at the top level, at this time. Recently passed [Right to education bill](#) is a step towards the right direction. But here again we need to remember that many such great policies hardly achieve anything in reality and only limited within government files and the money ends up in the pockets of few selected people.

Whatever money we spend on higher education and research is not going to give us any novel knowledge or technological edge unless we have right candidate behind the costly machines we buy. Now we produce mainly technicians, not scientists or technocrats and feel proud to export such raw materials to manpower-starved developed countries (be it IT or BT, the two main pillars of Indian economy today). This might lead to some degree of prosperity in the short term but we are going to loose in a big way in the long run unless we totally overhaul our basic education system at primary and high school level. It's useless to cut the roots and then water on the top.

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