

Major issues in Indian Education System

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Abstract - As of today, the Indian education system has become one of our most pressing problems. The most obvious cause for India's shortfall is its out-of-date educational system. I shall explore issues of Indian education in this article. Since independence, successive Indian administrations have faced a number of significant issues in education policy, which has always been an important aspect of the country's development strategy. The following are the major challenges: expanding access and quality at all levels of education; boosting money, particularly for higher education; and raising literacy rates. While Indian management and technology colleges are world-class, basic and secondary schools, especially in rural regions, have significant obstacles. While incoming administrations often promise to boost education funding and implement structural changes, this has seldom happened in fact. The current Congress-led administration will be put to the test when it comes to raising educational standards in India. It will have to address issues about the curriculum's substance as well as the underlying educational problems.

Keywords - Education System, Educational Development, Higher Education, Quality Education, Untrained Faculty, Technology, UGC.

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1. INTRODUCTION

India has a population of 1.3 billion people, 315 million of whom are students. There are 1.4 million schools in India, with over 230 million students enrolled. India has 819 universities and more than 35,000 associated institutions, according to Dr. Education, with more than 20 million students enrolled each year. Despite the fact that India has the most students and colleges of any nation in the world, the Indian education system does not rank among the top 34 education systems in the world. Every year, India's education system produces millions of graduates, many of whom are IT and engineering experts. This personnel advantage has fueled India's recent economic growth, but it also hides serious flaws in the country's education system. While India's demographics are generally thought to give it an economic advantage over other countries (India will have a young population while other countries' populations are ageing), if this advantage is limited to a small, highly educated elite, the domestic political consequences could be severe.

India's education system graduates millions of people each year, many of whom are IT and engineering specialists. This human capital advantage has propelled India's recent economic boom, but it also conceals severe problems in the country's educational system. While India's demographics are generally thought to give it an economic advantage over other countries (India will have a young population while other countries' populations are ageing), the domestic political consequences if this advantage is limited to a

small, highly educated elite could be severe. Education has always been seen as a critical development instrument by Indian administrations. The first section of this article presents a historical perspective on the evolution of India's educational system, showing shifting government policy priorities. Since independence, succeeding administrations' education policies have built on the Nehruvian period's major legacy, focusing on the basic themes of pluralism and secularism, with a concentration on quality in higher education and inclusivity at all levels. The question of money has become a difficulty in achieving these aims; governments have vowed to raise state expenditure while acknowledging the economic potential of attracting private-sector investment.

The second section of this article looks at how current administrations have reacted to these difficulties, which have essentially remained unaltered since Nehru's period, despite previous governments' and commissions' attempts to improve the Indian education system. More recent policy efforts, both those of the previous BJP-led government and those of the present Congress-led United Progressive Alliance, will be scrutinised. It will become evident that the same problems that existed over sixty years ago are still largely unaddressed today, such as the need to ensure that India's poorest and most disenfranchised groups have access to education.

Nehru envisioned India as a secular democracy with a command economy run by the government. Education for all and industrial growth were viewed as essential means for uniting a society separated by wealth, caste, and religion, and constituted the anti-imperial struggle's pillars. Following Independence, school curriculum were saturated with the twin concepts of inclusion and national pride, emphasising the reality that India's many communities could coexist peacefully as one country. This Nehruvian approach to education has left a significant legacy, probably most notably the enshrinement of the pluralist/secularist worldview in the minds of Indians. Subsidized quality higher education via universities like the IITs and IIMs contributed significantly to Nehru's goal of a self-sufficient and modern Indian state, and they currently rank among the world's greatest higher education institutions. Furthermore, policies of positive discrimination in education and employment bolstered the argument for previously underserved social groups to get access to high-quality education. While certain oppressed populations' access remains restricted, it has been suggested that the upward mobility of a few Dalit and tribal families as a consequence of positive discrimination in educational institutions and governmental patronage has developed role models that enable India's democracy endure.

Since the pre- and post-British reign, there has been a significant transition in India's educational system, which continues now. Children were first taught in Gurukuls, which were eventually modernised and replaced with the current education system. After India gained independence, the country's constitution recognised six fundamental rights, one of which was the Right to Education. Every Free education was available to children between the ages of 6 and 14. Among the several components of a social foundation, education is the most important. The use of skilled and well-prepared labour may accelerate the rate of economic growth. Despite our best efforts, we still have a long way to go in terms of instructional improvement.

These are major indicators of one's quality of life. Appropriate investment in these domains will boost labour productivity and efficiency. It's referred to as 'human capital formation' by economists. "The corpus of knowledge obtained by the population and the population's aptitude to employ the knowledge effectively" is what we mean by human capital. Among the different components of social infrastructure, education is the most significant. The use of well-educated and well-trained labour may hasten the speed of economic progress.

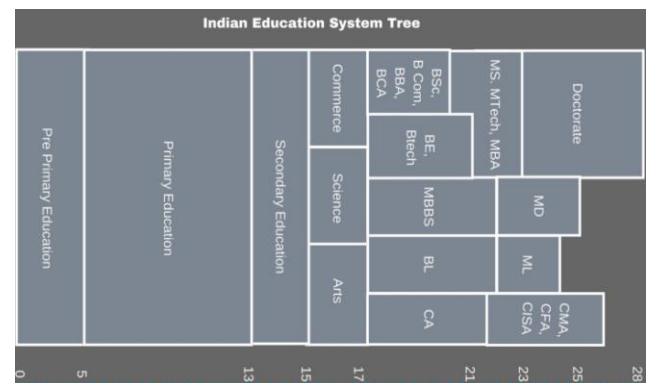
The country's economic development is mostly dependent on the number and quality of workers, as well as natural resources, technology, and money. When we talk about personnel quality, we're talking about work efficiency and productivity force. Many significant elements influence personnel efficiency, including health and nutrition, education and training, housing, clean drinking water, and sanitation.

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2. INDIA'S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IS STRUCTURED AS

The Indian educational system is separated into two parts.

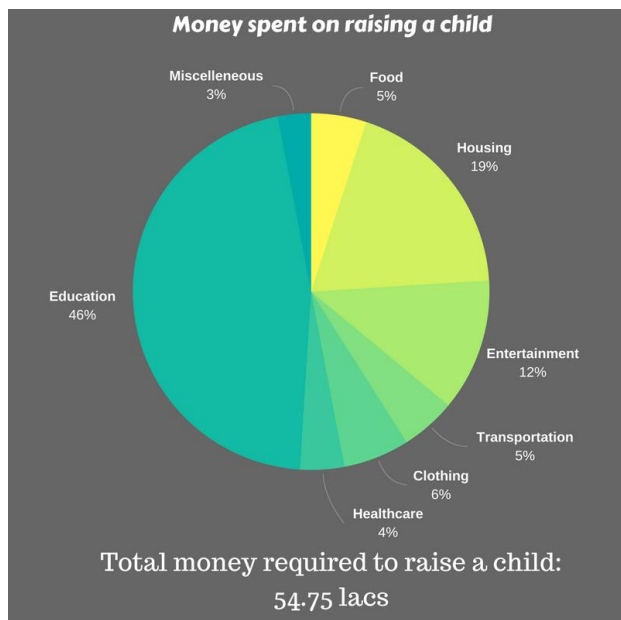
- A. Education at the secondary level
- B. Education at the University



Sports, photography, acting, and music, for example, are considered hobbies rather than professions in India. And this is why they aren't part of the educational system's tree. Furthermore, India's education system is so extensive that the average age of employment in the country is between 20 and 22 years old.

3. HOW MUCH MONEY DO WE PUT INTO EDUCATION?

A large portion of a family's budget goes on their children's education. The following graph depicts the cost of raising a kid.



The typical Indian household spends 25.19 lakhs on their children's education. This accounts for over 46% of all costs associated with raising a kid. And after all that money and effort, students, particularly in the area of engineering, wind themselves jobless or underemployed.

4. EDUCATION'S ISSUES

Despite our greatest efforts, our educational progress has remained stagnant. They are as follow –

4.1 Insufficient funding

The biggest issue in the growth of education is a lack of appropriate money. Education spending has been declining in Five Year Plans. Most educational institutions lack infrastructure, scientific equipment, and libraries, among other things, due to a lack of money. As a consequence, the expected outcomes are not possible.

4.2 Higher education is prohibitively expensive.

In India, university, professional, and technical education have become prohibitively expensive. Technical and professional institutions, such as IIMs, have a very expensive fee structure. MBA courses at IIMs cost Rs. 2 lakh each semester. It is out of reach for the average person. The privatisation of higher education has resulted in an increase of profit-driven entrepreneurs. Higher education is become a very expensive endeavour.

4.3 The Indian language is ignored.

English is used as a medium of education, notably in scientific topics. As a result, rural students who are not fluent in English will be unable to study science effectively in English. They suffer greatly because Indian languages are still in their infancy. In the Indian language, standard publications are not accessible.

4.4 The issue of brain drain

When bright, skilled, and worthy people are unable to find acceptable work in their own country, they opt to seek employment overseas. As a result, our nation is short on talent. 'Brain drain' is the term for this phenomena.

4.5 Illiteracy in the mass population

We have not been able to reach 100% literacy despite constitutional requirements and economic planning. Even now, 35% of the population is illiterate. The number of illiterates in India accounts for about a third of all illiterates worldwide. In advanced nations, everyone is literate; in India, the situation is far worse.

4.6 Primary education's challenges

Our elementary school system has far too many flaws. A large majority of elementary schools lack basic amenities like as drinking water, urinals, and power, as well as furniture and study equipment. A large percentage of elementary schools have just one teacher, while many schools have no instructors at all. As a result, the drop rate is alarmingly high. To sum up, we may conclude that education is expanding quantitatively, but we are still falling behind in terms of quality growth.

4.7 Dedicated to general education

Our educational system is based on the principles of general education. The advancement of technical and vocational education is woefully inadequate. As a result, our schooling is ineffective. As a result, the number of educated jobless people is growing every day. This has been a major source of worry for the government.

4.8 Resources are being wasted.

General Education is the foundation of our educational system. Primary and secondary school dropout rates are quite high. The majority of pupils in the 6-14 age range drop out of school before finishing their education. It results in the squandering of both financial and human resources.

5. INVOLVEMENT AND CONTROL OVER EDUCATIONAL ISSUES ARE LACKING

The Indian has been unable to convey his thoughts on educational programmes or decision-making. His involvement has been limited and constrained when they have been stated. The Indian citizen must get engaged if issues in Indian education are to be handled. He needs more control over the programmes his children are exposed to, such as having a say in what types of courses are included in the curriculum, assisting in the hiring of teachers, establishing employment policies and practises, and all of the other responsibilities entrusted to school

administrations, such as serving on a board of Education.

6. TOO MANY INDIAN EDUCATION SPECIALISTS AVAILABLE RIGHT NOW

Every day, more "instant Indian Education experts" emerge, doing more harm than good to the concept of Indian Education and its progress. Typically, these specialists have all of the answers: they have identified all of the issues and developed solutions, but they delegate implementation to the Indian. Once again, the Indian is handed something to implement that he had no input over. These specialists often rely on brief, superficial studies conducted on a single visit to a reservation or school, or on one or two meetings with Indians who have little or no awareness of the fundamental issues impacting Indians in general. Indian education can do without these specialists who refuse to be reasoned with or who believe they know best for Indians.

7. RURAL INDIA'S EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES

When we speak about education in India, we can't only talk about how education works in India's cities without also talking about rural education, which accounts for over 90% of the country's schools. When we consider bringing about educational reform, we must consider what is preventing India's education system from developing. The following are some of the most prevalent issues that stymie education expansion in rural India:

- **Inadequate transportation** - Despite attempts by local governments to create schools, most communities have limited connection from one location to another. Children sometimes have to travel kilometres to reach these government-funded schools, which deters them from attending on a regular basis.
- **People who live in rural regions have meagre wages** - This is sometimes insufficient to support a family of four or five. Most likely, children from these homes will not be sent to school and will instead be urged to help the family's working member earn some more money. Teachers at rural educational centres in villages, on the other hand, are underpaid, which sometimes leads to a lack of attention from the teachers, causing the students to suffer.
- **Inadequate infrastructure** - This is also a major problem in these rural schools. The majority of the schools lack suitable classrooms, instructional equipment, playgrounds, and even basic amenities like as sitting chairs, blackboards, and other such items. As a result, bad educational circumstances are a major factor in pupils fleeing.

8. EDUCATION THROUGH INTERNET

The convenience of online learning in terms of time and location is attracting an increasing number of students. However, many of them face major obstacles that prohibit them from effectively finishing their studies. Here are the five most frequent eLearning issues students confront, along with some recommendations for how to solve them.

Despite providing obstacles for both teachers and students, eLearning, the newest generation of education, is already putting on a good show. While teachers must put in a lot of effort and time to construct the lesson, students must have the technical skills to decipher the course content. There are five frequent challenges that students confront in eLearning programmes that must be addressed by appropriate efforts for the students' long-term benefit.

i. Struggle to Adapt

Students' learning experiences are completely different when they go from conventional classroom and face-to-face teacher instruction to computer-based training in a virtual classroom. Their intolerance to change prevents them from adapting to the virtual classroom, whilst getting used to (CMS) and computer-based teaching techniques takes time. In a typical classroom, passive listening and taking notes are required, but in an online classroom, they are not.

ii. Technical Problems

Many students are unable to stay up with their online counterparts due to a lack of sufficient bandwidth or a robust internet connection required for online courses. It's tough to follow them because of their weak monitors. The CMS, which makes their learning experience difficult. Furthermore, the majority of them live off campus and struggle to keep up with their studies with the course's technical requirements.

Some of them don't even possess computers and seek technical support from LRC. The best way to solve this issue is to know precisely what type of technology help they'll need before enrolling in a course, as well as adequately equipping themselves to complete it successfully.

iii. Computer Proficiency

Despite the fact that pupils are typically tech knowledgeable and therefore capable of managing computers, computer literacy is a serious concern among today's students. Many of them are unable to use simple applications like Microsoft Word and PowerPoint, and hence are unable to manage their data.

Furthermore, many students find it difficult to solve simple computer difficulties since they lack understanding in this field. Technological Competency, on the other hand, is necessary for students taking online courses since it helps them to easily manage their assignments and courseware.. Students' knowledge of the area is enhanced by basic computer literacy courses; having a basic understanding of computer hardware would allow them to engage in online classes without delays and hindrances.

iv. Organizing your time

E Learners have a tough time managing their time since online courses involve a lot of time and effort. Furthermore, although most people prefer web-based learning programmes because of their flexibility in terms of location and time, they seldom have the time to complete the courses owing to their busy schedules.

v. Self-Motivation

Self-motivation is a vital part of online learning, yet many students are surprised to find that they lack it. Many students fall behind after enrolling in distance learning classes and contemplate dropping out because navigating a digital medium seems to be intimidating. Students must find the drive to follow new educational trends as well as effectively prepare themselves for future educational and job obstacles. Only a positive attitude can help them overcome the problems of eLearning; although this is difficult to practise, students must recognise that it is important in order to enjoy the advantages of E Learning in the future.

E-learning is a positive thing, but it presents certain risks to students in its early stages. They would develop confidence via attitude transformation and technology literacy, allowing them to excel in their courses with a positive attitude.

9. SCHEMES AND CAMPAIGNS TO IMPROVE INDIA'S EDUCATION SYSTEM

The following is a list of government initiatives aimed at improving India's educational system:

- A. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan-** Launched 2001 with the goal of promoting 'Education for All,' upgrading current school infrastructure, and building new schools.
- B. National Programme for Education of Girls–** It is a targeted initiative by the Indian government to reach the "Hardest to Reach" females, particularly those who are not in school.
- C. Mid-Day Meal Scheme** -All students enrolling in government schools, government-aided schools, local body schools, (STC), madrasas, and makhtabs funded by the (SSA).
- D. Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan** -It is a flagship programme aimed at improving secondary education and boosting enrollment

by placing a secondary school within walking distance of every household.

E. Infrastructure Development Plan for Minority Institutes– Minority education will be facilitated by enhancing and improving school infrastructure at Minority Institutions in order to provide formal education opportunities for students from minority groups.

F. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao– In India, there is a programme to encourage girls to attend school. To learn more about the BBBP initiative, go to the SMY website.

10. PROPOSED REFORMS AND CURRENT ISSUES

10.1 Access, quality, and literacy in primary and secondary education

Despite attempts to include all segments of the population in the Indian education system via methods such as positive discrimination and nonformal education, a huge proportion of young people remain illiterate. Despite an increase in primary school enrollment, it is estimated that at least 35 million, and potentially as many as 60 million, children aged 6 to 14 are out of school. There are also significant gender, regional, and caste differences. The key issues include high dropout rates, particularly after Class 10, low levels of learning and success, insufficient school infrastructure, poorly running schools, excessive teacher absenteeism, a huge number of teacher openings, poor educational quality, and insufficient money. Orphans, child labourers, street children, and victims of riots and natural catastrophes are among the 'at risk' youngsters who do not always have access to schools.

Furthermore, there is no universal education system; rather, pupils are channelled into private, government-aided, and government schools based on their financial capabilities and social position. English-language schools affiliated with the prestigious CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education), CISCE (Council for the Indian Schools Certificates Examination), and IB (International Baccalaureate) examination boards, which offer globally recognised syllabuses and curricula, are at the top of the market. Those who cannot afford private education attend government-funded English-language schools that are associated with state-level examination boards. On the lowest rung are poorly administered government or municipal schools, which serve the impoverished majority's children.

This is a concerning and troubling trend. Basic literacy teaching is provided by marginally trained 'para teachers' in India's 600,000 villages and growing urban slum areas. The emphasis on primary education over the last two decades, combined with the rising aspirations of poor communities as a result of their participation in a political democracy, has

already resulted in the majority of children as young as six enrolling in schools/learning centres and residential bridge courses. However, because of the low quality of these institutions and their primitive physical and human infrastructure, many students either drop out of school without learning or continue with minimal learning. To balance off the early disadvantages of the poor in the educational sector resulting from malnutrition, poverty, and health-related debility, a focus on food, livelihood, and health guarantees is necessary at the same time.

As seen by their Common Minimum Programme, the current Indian administration, the United Progressive Alliance, looks devoted to solving these difficulties (see below). In this regard, the implementation of a 2% education cess (surcharge) on taxes, a focus on job security, and the formation of a National Rural Health Mission are all positive achievements. In a world where social interactions involve written media, literacy is a crucial weapon for self-defense. An illiterate person who is substantially less equipped to defend oneself in court or receive a loan, enforce inheritance rights, utilise new technology, compete for secure employment, board the correct bus, participate in political activity – in short, to successfully participate in the modern economy and society.

10.2 Content of the curriculum

The BJP, which ruled coalition administrations from 1998 to 2004, came to power with a Hindutva-inspired agenda, which included the creation of an unified civil code under Hindu law and the building of the Ram temple in Ayodhya. Because right-wing Hindu organisations like the (RSS) and (VHP) account for a significant section of the BJP's electoral electorate, it was assumed that the government would support their chauvinist goals. However, it adopted a moderate approach on most policy issues since it wanted to keep the support of its coalition partners, many of whom were regional and secular in character. In the sphere of education, however, the opposite happened. The NDA's 1999 election programme featured a section named "Education for All," which looked to be in line with Rajiv Gandhi's policies. 'State funding for education has been woefully insufficient,' according to the preamble. Quality education is quickly becoming the privilege of the country's social and economic elite.'

The BJP retained control of the two most senior posts in the Ministry of HRM, which includes education policy, when the NDA came to power in 1999. MM Joshi and Uma Bharti, both hardliners in the party, were appointed Union Minister and Minister of State, respectively. The former was in charge of expanding the RSS school network and appointing RSS members or sympathisers to senior national education boards. Under the phrase 'Indianize, nationalise, and spiritualize, (NCERT) produced a National Curriculum Framework for school education in 2000/01. All foreign components were to be removed from the curriculum

in state schools, according to the framework. The British heritage as well as portions of Indian culture that were segregated were among them.

The new strategy necessitated a significant rewrite of textbooks. The amendments were challenged in court by three activists who claimed that the NCERT had not followed proper consultation processes with the states and that it had attempted to add religious instruction, which is prohibited by the Constitution. This petition, however, was denied by the Supreme Court. Through defects and omissions, the new history and social science textbooks have been accused of encouraging an anti-minority viewpoint. The BJP claimed that it was rectifying previous one-sided historical readings. In three history textbooks for grades 6, 7, and 11, sixteen pages were eliminated. A phrase in one of them claimed that there was no archaeological evidence of settlements in and around Ayodhya in the year 2000 BC. Murli Manohar Joshi revealed in an interview that the revisions were made in response to complaints from Jains, Sikhs, Jats, and others who were offended by the events described in earlier textbooks.

11. CONCLUSION

The BJP's educational reforms did not have a significant impact on the general election in May 2004. Roads, electricity, water, and employment were more crucial in some rural communities than access to education. The NDA's education agenda has shifted in focus, becoming more "communal" and patriotic. These proposals will not be implemented as long as the United Progressive Alliance (UPA), which is headed by the Congress administration is in power. However, education will continue to be a major topic in Indian politics. The government will be faced with a difficult situation with the system's underlying issues, and it will have to undo the NDA's modifications if it wants to stay in power in the long run. As previously stated, the government pledged in its CM Programme, announced on May 28, 2004, to increase public spending on education to at least 6% of GDP levy a cess on all central taxes to 'universalize access to excellent basic education,' and halt the five-year creeping communalization of school curricula. Both the budget and the Independence Day message emphasised the significance of education in combating poverty, with illiteracy being one of the primary culprits. President Abdul Kalam has proposed a 2–3% increase in education spending as a percentage of GDP.

The administration has already faced a barrage of criticism from its critics in the legislature. The CP of India (Marxist) slammed the UPA's textbook reform efforts, saying they "fell short of what the new administration has integrated in the CM Programme's section on education." 50 Relations between the federal and state governments seem to be strained as well. Ministers from five BJP-run states stormed

out of a conference held by the government to establish a new national education strategy in August 2004, according to the BBC. The previous government's efforts to desecularize Indian education were partly aimed at bolstering the BJP's future support base. They also emerged from a broad realisation that India's education system fails a substantial percentage of its young people, either because to a lack of access to school or a failure to educate pupils with essential skills. The Common Minimum Programme is a laudable effort to re-establish India's historic educational agenda, focusing on access, quality, and secularism. While these goals have essentially stayed the same since Nehru's time, it remains to be seen if the present administration will be the first to face and manage the balance between excellence and equality.

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