



STUDY ON EDUCATION SYSTEM IN INDIA

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Abstract: The importance of education in India has been seen right from ancient times. Human education in India can be traced back to ancient times when the Gurukul system existed. In this Guru-Shishya (teacher-disciple) system, those who wanted to study would go to teachers and request to be accepted as a disciple. If accepted, the disciple had to stay at the teacher's place, and apart from learning, he also had to help in other household chores. This system fostered a strong tie between the Guru and Shishya, and it also taught the disciple how to run a household. Teachers of that era taught all the subjects in open classrooms, under the sun. Languages like Sanskrit and holy scripture, as well as metaphysics and mathematics, were part of the learning process. Learning was based more on understanding their surroundings and nature, not just memorizing verses or shlokas

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Introduction:

In ancient times, India had the Gurukula system of education in which anyone who wished to study went to a teacher's (Guru) house and requested to be taught. If accepted as a student by the guru, he would then stay at the guru's place and help in all activities at home. This not only created a strong tie between the teacher and the student, but also taught the student everything about running a house. The guru taught everything the child wanted to learn, from Sanskrit to the holy scriptures and from Mathematics to Metaphysics. The student stayed as long as she wished or until the guru felt that he had taught everything he could teach. All learning was closely linked to nature and to life, and not confined to memorizing some information.

The modern school system was brought to India, including the English language, originally by Lord Thomas Babington Macaulay in the 1830s. The curriculum was confined to "modern" subjects such as science and mathematics, and subjects like metaphysics and philosophy were considered unnecessary. Teaching was confined to classrooms and the link with nature was broken, as also the close relationship between the teacher and the student.

The Uttar Pradesh (a state in India) Board of High School and Intermediate Education was the first Board set up in India in the year 1921 with jurisdiction over Rajputana, Central India and

Gwalior. In 1929, the Board of High School and Intermediate Education, Rajputana, was established. Later, boards were established in some of the states. But eventually, in 1952, the constitution of the board was amended and it was renamed Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). All schools in Delhi and some other regions came under the Board. It was the function of the Board to decide on things like curriculum, textbooks and examination system for all schools affiliated to it. Today there are thousands of schools affiliated to the Board, both within India and in many other countries from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe.

Universal and compulsory education for all children in the age group of 6-14 was a cherished dream of the new government of the Republic of India. This is evident from the fact that it is incorporated as a directive policy in article 45 of the constitution. But this objective remains far away even more than half a century later. However, in the recent past, the government appears to have taken a serious note of this lapse and has made primary education a Fundamental Right of every Indian citizen. The pressures of economic growth and the acute scarcity of skilled and trained manpower must certainly have played a role to make the government take such a step. The expenditure by the Government of India on school education in recent years comes to around 3% of the GDP, which is recognized to be very low.

“In recent times, several major announcements were made for developing the poor state of affairs in education sector in India, the most notable ones being the National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP) of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government. The announcements are; (a) To progressively increase expenditure on education to around 6 percent of GDP. (b) To support this increase in expenditure on education, and to increase the quality of education, there would be an imposition of an education cess over all central government taxes. (c) To ensure that no one is denied of education due to economic backwardness and poverty. (d) To make right to education a fundamental right for all children in the age group 6–14 years. (e) To universalize education through its flagship programmes such as Sarva Siksha Abhiyan and Mid Day Meal.”

The school education system in India is vast and complex. It is overseen by three national bodies: The All India Council for Technical Education, the University Grants Commission, and the National Council of Educational Research and Training. In addition to these, each state has its Department or Ministry of Education, which regulates school education within its jurisdiction.

In India, the literacy rate for people aged seven and above is 74.04%. The male literacy rate is 82.14% while the female literacy rate is 65.46%. The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for higher education in India is 26.30%. The GER is the percentage of people aged 18-23 who are enrolled in higher education institutions. In India, there are more than 700 universities and 37000 colleges.

The education system of India as a whole is not up to the mark. There are many problems in the education system. The quality of education is not good. There is a lot of corruption in the education system. The government is not doing enough to improve the education system.

There are many private schools in India which are providing good quality education. But the fees of these schools are very high. So, only rich people can afford to send their children to these schools. Many public schools in India are not provided with good quality education. The government is not doing anything to improve the condition of these schools.

The dropout rate is very high in India. Many students dropout of school before completing their education.

The School System

India is divided into 28 states and 7 so-called “Union Territories”. The states have their own elected governments while the Union Territories are ruled directly by the Government of India, with the President of India appointing an administrator for each Union Territory. As per the constitution of India, school education was originally a state subject—that is, the states had complete authority on deciding policies and implementing them. The role of the Government of India (GoI) was limited to coordination and deciding on the standards of higher education. This was changed with a constitutional amendment in 1976 so that education now comes in the so-called *concurrent list*. That is, school education policies and programmes are suggested at the national level by the GoI though the state governments have a lot of freedom in implementing programmes. Policies are announced at the national level periodically. The Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), set up in 1935, continues to play a lead role in the evolution and monitoring of educational policies and programmes.

There is a national organization that plays a key role in developing policies and programmes, called the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) that prepares a National Curriculum Framework. Each state has its counterpart called the State Council for Educational Research and Training (SCERT). These are the bodies that essentially propose educational strategies, curricula, pedagogical schemes and evaluation methodologies to the states' departments of education. The SCERTs generally follow guidelines established by the NCERT. But the states have considerable freedom in implementing the education system.

The National Policy on Education, 1986 and the Programme of Action (POA) 1992 envisaged free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality for all children below 14 years before the 21st Century. The government committed to earmark 6% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for education, half of which would be spent on primary education. The expenditure on Education as a percentage of GDP also rose from 0.7 per cent in 1951-52 to about 3.6 per cent in 1997-98.

The school system in India has four levels: lower primary (age 6 to 10), upper primary (11 and 12), high (13 to 15) and higher secondary (17 and 18). The lower primary school is divided into five “standards”, upper primary school into two, high school into three and higher secondary into two.

Students have to learn a common curriculum largely (except for regional changes in mother tongue) till the end of high school. There is some amount of specialization possible at the higher secondary level. Students throughout the country have to learn three languages (namely, English, Hindi and their mother tongue) except in regions where Hindi is the mother tongue and in some streams as discussed below.

There are mainly three streams in school education in India. Two of these are coordinated at the national level, of which one is under the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and was originally meant for children of central government employees who are periodically transferred and may have to move to any place in the country. A number of "central schools" (named Kendriya Vidyalayas) have been established for the purpose in all main urban areas in the country, and they follow a common schedule so that a student going from one school to another on a particular day will hardly see any difference in what is being taught. One subject (Social Studies, consisting of History, Geography and Civics) is always taught in Hindi, and other subjects in English, in these schools. Kendriya Vidyalayas admit other children also if seats are available. All of them follow textbooks written and published by the NCERT. In addition to these government-run schools, a number of private schools in the country follow the CBSE syllabus though they may use different text books and follow different teaching schedules. They have a certain amount of freedom in what they teach in lower classes. The CBSE also has 141 affiliated schools in 21 other countries mainly catering to the needs of the Indian population there.

The second central scheme is the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE). It seems that this was started as a replacement for the Cambridge School Certificate. The idea was mooted in a conference held in 1952 under the Chairmanship of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the then Minister for Education. The main purpose of the conference was to consider the replacement of the overseas Cambridge School Certificate Examination by an All India Examination. In October 1956 at the meeting of the Inter-State Board for Anglo-Indian Education, a proposal was adopted for the setting up of an Indian Council to administer the University of Cambridge, Local Examinations Syndicate's Examination in India and to advise the Syndicate on the best way to adapt its examination to the needs of the country. The inaugural meeting of the Council was held on 3rd November, 1958. In December 1967, the Council was registered as a Society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. The Council was listed in the

Delhi School Education Act 1973, as a body conducting public examinations. Now a large number of schools across the country are affiliated to this Council. All these are private schools and generally cater to children from wealthy families.

Both the CBSE and the ICSE council conduct their own examinations in schools across the country that are affiliated to them at the end of 10 years of schooling (after high school) and again at the end of 12 years (after higher secondary). Admission to the 11th class is normally based on the performance in this all-India examination. Since this puts a lot of pressure on the child to perform well, there have been suggestions to remove the examination at the end of 10 years.

Governing Bodies

The Indian school education system is overseen by three national bodies:

All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)

The AICTE is responsible for regulating technical education in India. It was established in 1945 as an advisory body to the Government of India and became a statutory body in 1987. The AICTE accredited and approved institutions for technical and management education in India. As of 2019, there are more than 3000 AICTE-approved institutions in India.

University Grants Commission (UGC)

The University Grants Commission is a statutory body that provides recognition to universities in India. It also provides financial assistance to eligible universities and colleges. The UGC was established in 1956 and currently has fifty-six members.

National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)

The National Council of Educational Research and Training is an autonomous organisation that advises the Government of India on education policy. It was established in 1961 and its headquarters are located in New Delhi. The NCERT develops textbooks, teacher training materials, and research journals.

School education in India starts at the age of three with pre-primary school. Pre-primary school is

not compulsory and is not part of the formal education system. The pre-primary stage is followed by five years of primary schooling, which is divided into two cycles of two years and three years. After the completion of primary school, children can either attend middle school or high school. The middle school comprises Grades VI to VIII, while high school includes Grades IX to XII. Upon successful completion of high school, students can pursue higher education at a university or college.

Types of Education in India

There are two types of education in India: formal and informal. Formal education is imparted in schools, colleges, and universities that follow a set curriculum. Informal education is provided outside the formal education system and does not follow any set curriculum. It includes training programs, workshops, and internships.

Formal Education:

Formal education is imparted in schools, colleges, and universities that follow a set curriculum. In India, the formal education system consists of five years of primary schooling, followed by three years of middle school and two years of high school. After the completion of high school, students can pursue higher education at a university or college.

Informal Education:

Informal education is provided outside the formal education system and does not follow any set curriculum. It includes training programs, workshops, and internships. Informal education can be beneficial for students who want to learn specific skills or knowledge that are not covered in the formal education system. It can also be helpful for students who want to gain work experience before entering the workforce.

Exclusive Schools

In addition to the above, there are a relatively small number of schools that follow foreign curricula such as the so-called Senior Cambridge, though this was largely superseded by the ICSE stream elsewhere. Some of these schools also offer the students the opportunity to sit for the ICSE examinations. These are usually very expensive residential schools where some of the Indians working abroad send their children. They normally have fabulous infrastructure, low student-teacher ratio and very few students.

Many of them have teachers from abroad. There are also other exclusive schools such as the Doon School in Dehradun that take in a small number of students and charge exorbitant fees.

Apart from all of these, there are a handful of schools around the country, such as the Rishi Valley school in Andhra Pradesh, that try to break away from the normal education system that promotes rote learning and implement innovative systems such as the Montessori method. Most such schools are expensive, have high teacher-student ratios and provide a learning environment in which each child can learn at his/her own pace. It would be interesting and instructive to do a study on what impact the kind of school has had on the life of their alumni.

State Schools

Each state in the country has its own Department of Education that runs its own school system with its own textbooks and evaluation system. As mentioned earlier, the curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation method are largely decided by the SCERT in the state, following the national guidelines prescribed by the NCERT.

Each state has three kinds of schools that follow the state curriculum. The government runs its own schools in land and buildings owned by the government and paying the staff from its own resources. These are generally known as *government schools*. The fees are quite low in such schools. Then there are privately owned schools with their own land and buildings. Here the fees are high and the teachers are paid by the management. Such schools mostly cater to the urban middle class families. The third kind consists of schools that are provided grant-in-aid by the government, though the school was started by a private agency in their own land and buildings. The grant-in-aid is meant to help reduce the fees and make it possible for poor families to send their children. In some states like Kerala, these schools are very similar to government schools since the teachers are paid by the government and the fees are the same as in government schools.

More about Education in India

Let's get an insight into some ways to make the educational system better.

- **Accountability and Parent Involvement**

In order to create a homeostatic environment, it is crucial that students, teachers, institutions and management work together. Teachers should serve as

guides for students and their parents should work in a collaboration to bring better results. If institutions are successful at that, they must be promoted and likewise, if they fail to do so, they must be held accountable for the same. Strategies must be evolved so as to enforce better management, proper usage of resources, increased communication and defined consequences.

- **Technological Integration**

In modern society, technology is all the rage. Technological competence is a very necessary skill, especially so in the future. Students must be exposed to upcoming changes in the field and give them the platform to work on them. This will also help students in their other respective fields, like creating scientific simulations, economic awareness, literary knowledge, other resources etc. It also helps them be globally aware of the socio-economic crisis and motivate students to work on them. Information technology in itself is a popular profession with ever-growing employment opportunities. Hence technology is important for the well-rounded development of the subjects.

- **Revision of the Curriculum**

There is a constant need to revisit the curriculum and revive it as per the needs of the present. Society is constantly changing these days, with new inventions and discoveries almost every day. Hence, it is important that we must check what goes on to the next working generation. They must be well informed on these changes. There must be ways to control the outpouring of information and methods should be formatted as to how to appropriately pass them on. In general, current affairs must be incorporated into their daily modules as consciousness of societal conventions is just as vital for making students functional members of society.

- **Periodic Assessment**

Consistent, well-planned and uniform assessments, both academic and non-academic are integral in the course of development. This is a good way to identify weak and strong areas, interests etc. They can help in filling possible mental gaps and rectifying shortcomings. Healthy competition should also be introduced to keep students motivated for their purpose. However, this competition should be put in check to ensure that it doesn't affect a student's mental health, otherwise, it often ends up doing more harm than good. Stress-free and fair tests can rather boost self-confidence and serve as a tool to instill transparency in the entire system.

- **Personalized Plans**

Every child has different needs and while some policies and strategies can be standardized, it is also important to personalize the learning experience. Students should be provided with the options to opt for training courses that are set according to their preference, in presence of a mentor. It helps to build their interest in studies and promotes improvement in their chosen field. A proficient educational institution will be flexible and accommodating to changing circumstances of the students. Government must also work with the schools to provide them with the necessary tools to establish this.

- **Optimum Training for Teachers**

It is equally important to provide teachers with the appropriate training. There is no shortage of dedicated employees who will be willing to work on actually bettering the system. The problem is that they have little or no customized training with respect to the changing methods and curriculum. They must be provided with proper infrastructure and be equipped with proper tools and resources. Doing the same in rural areas is also important. They should be trained in skill-based and vocational subjects so that students have the option to take up those professions after completing their education. Improving the roots is the first step of revamping the system.

Conclusion

To conclude, the education system in India has a long way to go before it can be considered truly effective. However, many initiatives are being undertaken by the government and various other organisations to try and improve the situation. With time and effort, it is hoped that India will eventually have an educational system that meets the needs of all its citizens.

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