

Fundamental Problems with Education System in India: A Critical Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Importance of the role of education in the life of human beings is well known to the society which invented the concept of 'Zero'? Even the colonial Rulers established educational institutions and encouraged the establishment of educational institutions by non-state actors by introducing a system of supporting them by providing financial aid to some extent. The very fact that the makers of the Constitution of India chose to refer to "aid out of State funds" to educational institutions in Article 29(2)17 and "aid to educational institutions in article 30 (2) 18.

Project Zero's research on "Teaching for Understanding" helps educators to answer two essential questions: What does it mean to understand something? And what kinds of curricula, learning experiences, and assessment support students in developing understanding? Our very identity as to who we are and what we think locate us in the educational process (Mohanty 1990). Such an identity comes with a background of social, psychological, political and cultural factors and social constructions such as race, ethnicity, culture and gender (Ghosh

2000). *Value-based education will promote equality, justice, dignity and liberty.*

Lord Macaulay was the father of the present system of education deconstructing the traditional educational system of India. In the words of Gandhi “the colonial powers destroyed a beautiful tree during the colonial rule.” The first medical college of Kerala was started at Calicut, in 1942-43, during World War II. In 1964, the Education Commission started functioning with 16 members of which 11 were Indian experts and 5 were foreign experts. The Commission also discussed with many international agencies, experts and consultants in the educational as well as scientific field. Later in 1976, the education became a joint responsibility of both the state and the Centre through a constitutional amendment. UNESCO believes that education is an essential human right and achieving this for all children is one of the biggest moral challenges of our times. The Right to

education is an integral part of the Organization’s constitutional mandate which expresses ‘the belief of its founders in full and equal opportunities for education for all’ and ‘to advance the ideal of equality of educational opportunity’. In addition, the right to education is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is unfortunate that the problems of educational system have multiplied since independence in spite of the tremendous growth of science and technology. This paper explores and investigates the massive growth of the fundamental problems of education in India

Keywords: Colonial, Constitution, Covenant, Tremendous, Deconstruction, Amendment , Mandate, Educators.

India is signatory to three key international instruments that guarantee the Right to Education – Universal Declaration of

Human Rights, 1948, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Covenant), 1966 and the (UDHR) Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 1989. In 2002, India joined, albeit after fifty-two years of Independence, the host of countries that provide a constitutional guarantee for free and compulsory education. 1 Article 21–A of the Indian Constitution casts a duty upon the State to provide FCE to children in the age group of six to fourteen years, ‘as the State may, by law, determine’. Historically, there has been a demand for a law for free and compulsory education in India and several Central-level

legislative attempts have been taken towards this end. The last of such attempts resulted in the Draft Right to Education Bill, 2005. One of several oppositions to this Bill came from private unaided schools. They lobbied against a provision that required them to make a twenty-five per cent reservation for

poor children.² No one can deny the fact that education is vital to the human resources development and growth of India. The Vedas say that education leads from darkness to light and it is the backbone of civilization. When a child is born he is an animal; parents and teachers make him a sensible and cultured being and a valuable citizen of society. Aristotle gave his views on Education and he believed that education was central – the fulfilled person was an educated person. Aristotle observes thus in *Nicomachean Ethics*:

Anything that we have to learn to do we learn by the actual doing of it... We become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate ones, brave by doing brave ones.’ (Aristotle, Book II 91).

In any education system, higher education encompassing Management, Engineering,

Medicines etc., plays a major role in imparting knowledge, values, and developing skills and, in the process, increase the growth and productivity of the nation. It is unfortunate to note that there are numerous challenges in the educational system in India though central and state governments have done commendable job in raising the standard of education. The education system of India is backward and the old and stereotyped tools are used by the educators in schools and colleges. The schools are the backbone of educational structure but the children are quite unwilling to enter into the schools because of poverty, discrimination and unemployment when the community has the power of education. This power is supposed to overthrow artificial inequalities of blood, birth, race, colour and sex, and create a "new frontier" for opportunity (12). Justice K. Subba Rao, the Former Chief Justice of India stated in the Karnataka Backward Classes Commission

Report (1975) that economic backwardness is the basis of all backwardness (67). Article 46 of the Constitution protects the weaker sections in Indian society the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes but in real life the weaker sections are not interested to get education. The central government has launched many schemes to promote early childhood care and education (ECCE) and the Anganwadi Centers have done wonderful job under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme. This led to the substantial increase in the number of children receiving pre-school education. In 2012-13 the number of children of age 3 to 5+ years increased from 16.7 million in 2001-02 to 35.3 million. But if the enrolment pattern is compared with other developed countries the situation in India is dismal. For example, according to a Report, GER is 23 per cent for China, 34 per cent for Brazil, 57 per cent for U.K., 77 per cent for both Australia and Russia and 83 per

cent for the U.S (Annex 1). In this context, the attempt of Government authorities to increase the number of students by 2020 so as to reach GER of 30 per cent becomes a big challenge. In the National Education Report the government claimed that about 98 per cent of the rural habitations have a primary school within a distance of 1 km. The enrolment in primary education during the period 2000-01 to 2013-14 has increased by 18.6 million (from 113.8 million to 132.4 million) and the enrolment in upper primary education has increased by 23.7 million (from 42.8 million to 66.5 million).

The figures look quite amazing but in real life the researcher has found innumerable fundamental problems in Indian system of education.

1) GENDER INEQUALITIES

The conspicuous problem in India is gender inequality and the fear psychosis in parents who are reluctant to send their girls in schools situated in remote areas. In tribal

societies of Bastar and Santhal the parents are confronted with the increasing threats to the survival, well-being and sustenance of girl child. Increases in female foeticide, further drops in the sex ratio in the Indian population, increased cases of violence against women and dowry deaths speak volumes about the question facing Indian education system. Girls are governed by rigid patriarchal structure and are bound by conventional cultural values and traditions. The patriarchal attitude demeaning the worth of a girl child is contingent on beliefs such as those that daughters will not provide support for their aged parents, and they are a liability because of the dowry. Amartya Sen (2001) rightly points out that “males are quite often neglectful of the interests of females... and make decisions inimical to those interests” (486). Within the educational scenario, the girl children are excluded from an equal educational environment, and their educational

opportunities are oriented towards training them as cultural stereotypes. In India girls from rural regions rarely enter the high school owing to socio-cultural and economic biases such as parents spending their money on their son's education, rather than their daughter, the early maturity of girls, early marriages, mother's preference to train the girl in the household chores (Burra 2001). Martha Nussbaum (2000) writes that "...there are some traditionalists, for whom any support of female education is suspect, as a 'Western' idea and a challenge to long-established customs. Female education is indeed subversive" (16). The great educationists and reformers have laid stress on the need for education to raise the standards of living and to achieve women empowerment. Nussbaum underlines this very eloquently: "Once women are empowered everywhere in the world, nothing will be the same again;

and education is a major source of that empowerment" (17).

Expenditure on Education

The Population of India is increasing everyday but the expenditure incurred on education is extremely low as compared to other countries. The recent 66th round of NSSO survey reveals that between 1999 and 2009, spending on education in general jumped by 378 per cent in rural areas and 345 per cent in urban areas of the country. The survey further reveals that there is sharp increase on spending on the education of children. If we measure the expenses on education as a percentage to GDP, India lags behind. The gap in investments in education in India can perhaps be filled by private sector playing a crucial role. The Government is making efforts to bring transformation in education through PPP model and the private sector is

involved for huge improve the education system in terms of various parameters like GER, quality, investments in education.

own water bottles. The quality education cannot be imparted if there is lack of quality physical infrastructure

CHALLENGES AND FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS OF INDIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

1) Lack of Infrastructure Facilities

Indian schools and colleges lack infrastructure and a visit to a school is very disappointing. In both the private and government run institutions real estate, state of the art class rooms, library, hostels, furniture, sports facilities are non existing. In most of the schools there are no rooms and the classes are held in open or under the trees. There are no mats and blackboards and the students carry their own mats to sit in the class. The clean and fresh water is not available in most of the schools and the students bring their

2) Student-Teacher Ratio

The student teacher ratio in the school and colleges shocking In India, this ratio is very high as compared to other countries. For example, while in developed countries this ratio stands at 11.4, in case of India, it is as high as 22.0. This brings the necessity to recruit quality teachers and strengthen the teachers required to handle classes. The best solution of this problem is the practice of giving part-time teaching assignments. It is also expected to help the students in meeting their education expenses partially. Learned and qualified teachers should be appointed to impart quality education to students. The management of the private schools doesn't appoint regular teachers and engage low quality teachers to cut expenditure. The management saves money but ruins the

career of the students. The purpose of the pay-commission is to pay the salary of the teachers so that they may work in dedicated manner. Education becomes a basic tool for individuals to lead an economically productive life. An economically productive life of the individual not only improves the quality of life of the individual and his family but also contributes to some extent to the benefit of the society at large. Production of goods and

services to a large extent depend upon the availability of technically qualified human resources. Technical education therefore has the potential to directly contribute to the economic prosperity of a technically qualified individual as well as the society. The Supreme Court of India held in the case of *Unni Krishnan, J.P. & Others v. State of Andhra Pradesh & Others*, (1993) that “education is the second highest sector of budgeted expenditure after the defence” and also that it constitutes “3 per cent of the

Gross National Product is spent in education” Finally, the Supreme Court held that “the right to education is implicit in the right to life because of its inherent fundamental importance” and therefore an aspect of Article 21 of the Constitution.

3) **Indian Education Thrives on Rat Race**

Indian education promotes rat race among children in the schools and colleges. The children have to read and cram up the content like parrots without any conceptual learning and understanding of it. It is pity to observe that students who score 95percent marks cut a very sorry figure when they are interviewed by a panel for the jobs. They lack originality and innovation and thus their knowledge remains theoretical and impractical. In real life such book worms fail in life. The western schools and colleges promote

research and originality in students but in India the main focus is on cramming up the crude facts of the traditional subjects. The syllabus curricula are old and obsolete and the pedagogy is conventional based on age old traditions of teaching.

4) Indian Education and the Personality Development

Indian education system lays insignificant efforts for the personality development of children. The main focus of the teachers is not on the personality development of the children but on the academic qualification. The teachers spend most of the teaching hours to prepare students to do well in the traditional type examination scoring good marks and they are least bothered about their personality development. No wonder, the students score high percentage but when they are given a task the students fail miserably. The main criteria in the Indian

schools is the good score card. Indian children are not exposed to outer world and thus they are poor in mental growth and lack originality and innovation. In the modern world the world is like a family as the forces of globalization are impacting every individual. The open door policy has encouraged multiculturalism so personality development is very important to be successful in the competitive society.

5) *Quality of Education*

India is becoming a super economic power in Asia and the role of modern education has increased because of the growth of globalization. Indian education system should adopt certain benchmarking techniques for improving instruction models and administrative procedures in institutions. India needs a thorough study and evaluation of models implemented elsewhere and work out strategies to adopt such models in our system. Benchmarking

would provide benefits to Indian education system in terms of reengineering, setting right objectives, etc. India has shown economic growth pattern, leading the world in terms of information and technology and modernization. India needs reform in “education system”.

6) Growth of Parochialism and Fundamentalism in Education

Indian schools are often called the nurseries of fanaticism as our education promotes too much of nationalism and jingoism. Love for a nation is good but blind love for a nation is destructive and parochial. In Jammu and Kashmir, Nagaland, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh the regionalism is promoted spreading hatred for the north and southern states. Indian education teaches too much of nationalism and it could create a negative values polluting the minds of the youth. The children are

growing narrow minded and self-centered deviating from global outlook. The need of the hour is to evolve education system promoting cosmopolitanism and not jingoism.

7) Recruitment of Inefficient and Untrained Teachers

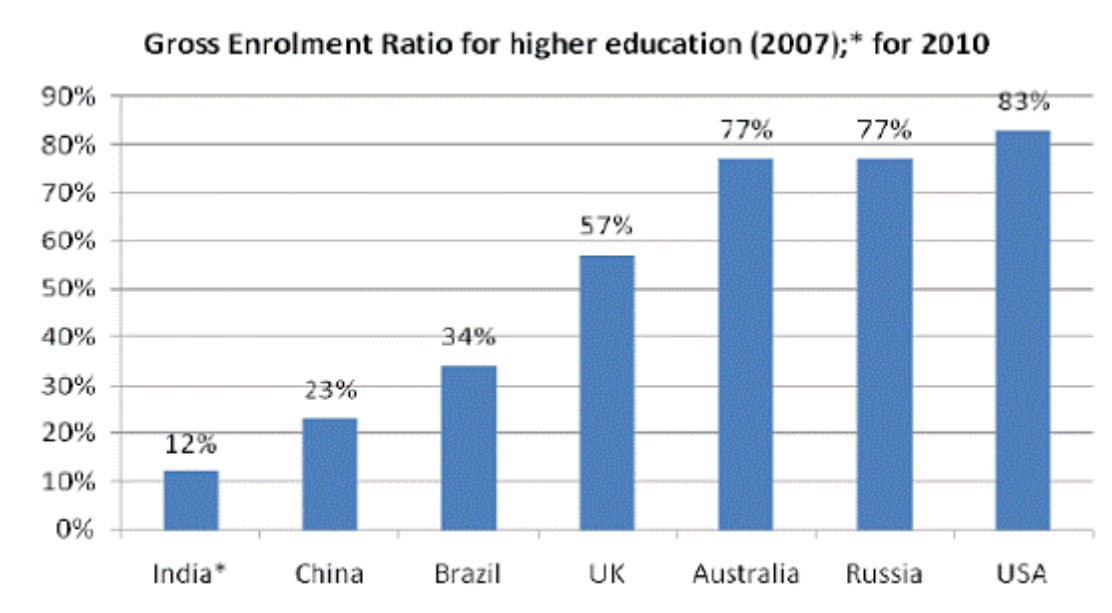
In Indian schools the untrained teachers are recruited to save money and to compromise with the quality of education. Trained teachers are not available in the schools; the untrained teachers are hired on less salary and the result is the collapse of education system. A press reporter visited a government school. He was shocked to note that 90 percent school teachers failed to answer the basic facts about life. Their general knowledge was very poor as many of them couldn't even tell the names of President of India. The unskilled and untrained teachers are a liability on

the institution. A county cannot progress with untrained and inefficient teachers. In the rural and the tribal schools the untrained teachers are employed on low salary. In the majority of schools and colleges the management negotiates with the teachers compelling them to accept low salary. Such untrained teachers vitiate the environment of the temple of learning.

8) Increasing Drop out Ratio in Schools

The drop out ratio in the schools is increasing every day since the environment in the schools is not congenial. The teachers don't take much interest in the growth and building interest in the students. The students have no understanding of the psychology of the children as they act like big bosses of school

administration. The children are threatened and canning is very common. The children are admitted in the schools by compulsion on the promise of giving free wheat and rice but in reality ill-treatment is given to them. The mid day meal project is an utter failure as the newspapers are loaded with news items of children falling sick every day. There is no hygienic environment in the school premises; the kitchens are dirty and old and stale food is distributed making children sick. They are hospitalized and very often they discover the dead rats, lizards and even small snakes in the cooked cereals and vegetables. The parents have lost faith in the Mid-day meal project of the government as the cases of embezzlement of the funds by the teachers are very common.



9) Lack of Creation and Innovation

Indian education system is old and traditional and the teachers are aping the west blindly without any direction. Children lack originality and innovation because the sophisticated facilities are not available. There is no scope for higher learning and research. They only get degrees and are not trained to solve the problems of the country. The standard of education is very poor; it is pity that a first class graduate doesn't

know how to draft a good job letter.

10) Mass Copying and Deterioration of Values

Copying in schools and colleges is a cancer and this is very common in the entire education system. During examination the parents pay huge amount to the body builders and “dabangs” of the city who help the students and the incidents of mass copying is reported everyday in the newspapers. The majority of the examination centers are notorious for

copying and the parents are happy to support the students just to grab the degrees. In the Madhya Pradesh the scam of the fake admissions in the medical colleges shook the country; more than hundred victim committed suicide because of the CBI enquiry and the top political leaders are involved in the scam. In the west such things don't happen but in India the scams, mass copying are very common. The education system doesn't lay stress on the character building and no moral education is given to the students in the schools and the colleges.

11) Mushrooms of the Private Universities and Degradation of the Standard of Education

The central Government passed an act in Parliament and the autonomy was given by the University Grant Commission by Section 22 of the UGC Act. It is noted that

more than 269 Private Universities are given license by this Act. Their main motive is to mint money and uses this autonomy to exploit the teachers. The malpractices are multiplying everyday and the private universities are just distributing degrees. The engineers and the professionals are entering in the job market in millions; many of the universities have very poor infrastructure; the libraries and the research centers are only in books and the teachers are paid very less salary as most of them are recruited on contractual basis. The quality of education is deteriorating and there is tough competition in the job market. I suggest that we need a thorough study and evaluation of models implemented elsewhere and work out strategies to adopt such models in our system. Benchmarking in my opinion would provide benefits to our education system in terms of reengineering, setting right objectives, etc. The country is showing consistency in economic growth pattern,

leading the world in terms of information and technology, modernization various economic activities and pushing for higher share of industries and services sectors of the economy but there is one area which needs reform is “education system”.

Conclusion

To sum up, we need to recognize that the knowledge, skills and productivity of our growing

young and dynamic work force forms the backbone of our economy. To reap the benefits of

such a young work force, the government must implement the reforms in the education system to bring forth new factors of production, namely knowledge, skills and technology. The emphasis should be on quality of education in terms of infrastructure, teachers, accreditation, etc. and affordability of education ensuring poor

and deserving students are not denied education.

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 follows: "The State shall endeavor to
 provide, within a period of ten years from
 the commencement of this constitution, free
 and compulsory education to all children
 until they complete the age of fourteen
 years".

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