



Challenges and Opportunities of Education System in India

**Dr.R. Vennila*

Associate Professor, School of Commerce Studies, Jain Deemed to be University, Bangalore, Karnataka, India.

ABSTRACT

India, one of the youngest countries among large economies with a median age of 25 has seen a continuous spur in growth and overall development of the country. Education is a major variable in influencing this development as it has tended to play a critical role in development stories for nations. Education is important for the personal, social and economic development of a nation. Education is important to live with happiness and prosperity. Education empowers minds that will be able to conceive good thoughts and ideas.

Great philosopher Rabindranath Tagore has also dwelled on education. According to him, the aim of education is creative self-expression through physical, mental, aesthetic and moral development. For the smooth and progressive growth for a nation, the essence of education in society is indispensable and cohering, which is why society and knowledge cannot be ever separated into two distinct entities. It is often said that an Education Institution, is a building Block of a Nation and if this building block is overlooked than nothing can stop a building to collapse. Given the fact that India is going to be the youngest nation by 2020, Education will play a vital role in social and economic transformation of society.

The Present Education system in India mainly comprises of –Primary education, Secondary education, and Higher Education. So far, the progress of Education has been of mixed success. Although soon after independence in 1947, making education available to all had become a priority for the government but the discrimination on the basis of caste and gender has been a major hurdle in the healthy development of the Indian society, which in turn has also restricted the educational development of the nation as a whole. While the country made major progress in raising literacy rates and has emerged as an important player in the worldwide information technology there are still various issues in the education system which needs to be addressed and call for restructuring of Indian Education system. Hence in this regard, the study focused on the Challenges and Opportunities of Education system in India.

Keywords: Educational System, Higher Education, Secondary Education and Primary Education

INTRODUCTION

Education, as a discipline, is concerned with methods of teaching and learning in schools or school-like environments as opposed to various nonformal and informal means of socialization (e.g., rural development projects and education through parent-child relationships). Education can be thought of as the transmission of the values and accumulated knowledge of a society. In this sense, it is equivalent to what social scientists term socialization or enculturation. Education is designed to guide them in learning a culture, molding their behavior in the ways of adulthood, and directing them toward their eventual role in society. In the most primitive cultures, there is often little formal learning—little of what one would ordinarily call school or classes or teachers.

Instead, the entire environment and all activities are frequently viewed as school and classes, and many or all adults act as teachers. As societies grow more complex, however, the quantity of knowledge to be passed on from one generation to the next becomes more than any one person can know, and, hence, there must evolve more selective and efficient means of cultural transmission. The outcome is formal education—the school and the specialist called the teacher. Education has always been considered as the only key component of human development and greatest liberating force. Hence, traditionally, education has always held the most venerable position in our society. It is considered as fundamental to all round development of the individual both at material and spiritual levels. Education is intrinsically intertwined with the development process and constitutes the instrumentality of modernization of tradition.

The role of education in economic development has been noted by the researchers (Sodhi, 1985 & Singh, 1974). At the micro level the direct and indirect role of education through value-orientation in economic development has already been established (Bhagat, 1989). Education is also vital to sustain competitive markets and viable democracy. Researchers have shown that increasing the average primary schooling of the labour force by one year can increase output substantially. Even at the macro level, social benefits of elementary education are immense. Educated parents send their children to school; elementary education leads to perpetuation of benefits from one generation to another (Sinha, 2004, P. 628).

LITERACY IN INDIA

India is the largest democracy with remarkable diversity among its population of 1.2 billion which makes up about 17% of the world's population. The 15th official census in India was calculated in the year 2011. In a country like India, literacy is the main foundation for social and economic growth. When the British rule ended in India in the year 1947 the literacy rate was just 12%. Over the years, India has changed socially, economically, and globally.

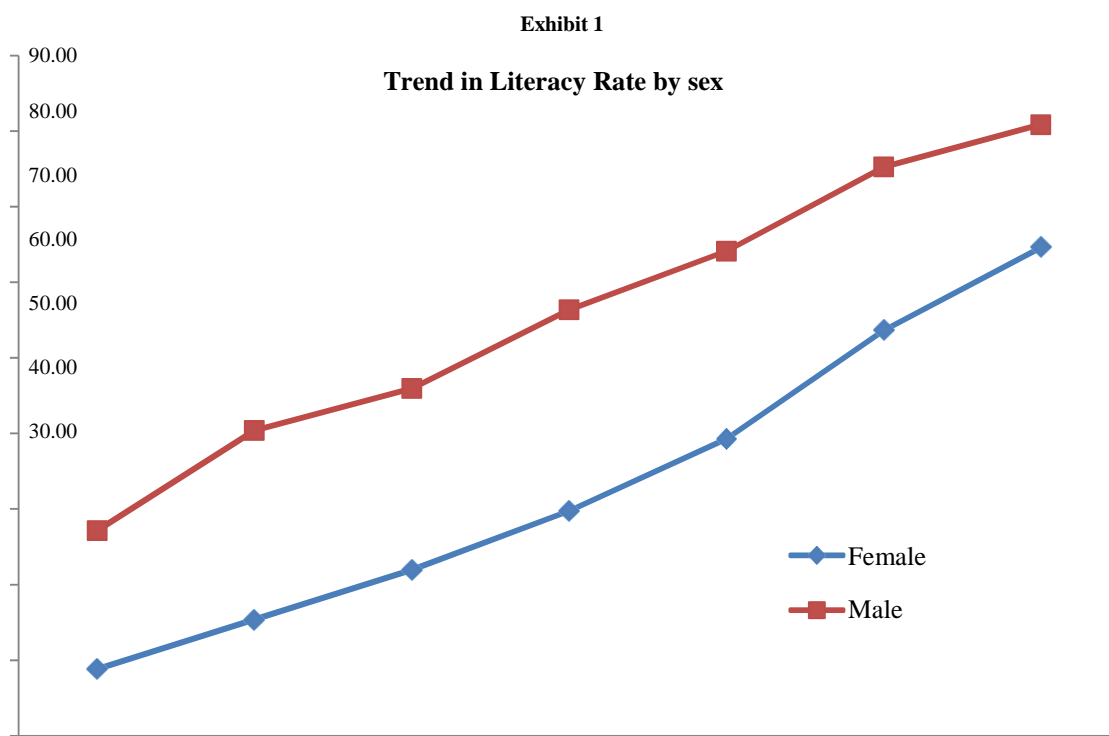
After the 2011 census, literacy rate India 2011 was found to be 74.04%. Compared to the adult literacy rate here the youth literacy rate is about 9% higher. Though this seems like a very great accomplishment, it is still a matter of concern that still so many people in India cannot even read and write. The numbers of children who do not get education especially in the rural areas are still high. Though the government has made a law that every child under the age of 14 should get free education, the problem of illiteracy is still at large.

Table 1
Trend in Literacy Rates in Post Independent India

Year	Rural			Urban			Combined		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
1951	4.87	19.02	12.10	22.33	45.60	34.59	8.86	27.15	18.32
1961	10.10	34.30	22.50	40.50	66.00	54.40	15.35	40.40	28.31
1971	15.50	48.60	27.90	48.80	69.80	60.20	21.97	45.96	34.45
1981	21.70	49.60	36.00	56.30	76.70	67.20	29.76	56.38	43.57
1991	30.17	56.96	36.00	64.05	81.09	67.20	39.29	64.13	52.21
2001	46.70	71.40	59.40	73.20	86.70	80.30	53.67	75.26	64.83
2011	57.93	77.15	66.77	79.11	88.76	84.11	64.63	80.88	72.98
% Increase in 2011 over 2001	24%	8%	12%	8%	2%	5%	20%	7%	13%

Source: Census of India, Office of Registrar General, India.

- Notes:*
1. For 1951, the population male, female and persons refer to effective literacy rates and the breakup of Rural,
 2. Literacy rates for 1951, 1961 and 1971 relate to population aged 5 years and above whereas literacy rates for 1981,
 3. The 1981 literacy rate exclude Assam where the 1981 Census could not be conducted.
 4. The 1991 literacy rate exclude Jammu & Kashmir where the 1991 Census could not be conducted due to disturbed. The 2001 literacy rate exclude MaoMaram, Paomata and Purul Sub-divisions of Senapati district of Manipur



According to Table 1, Women Education in Rural areas was increased to 24% from 2001 to 2011 whereas Men education was increased up to 8% as per the latest census by Government of India. In case of Urban Education Women Education was increased by 8% and Men education by 2%. On the whole the combined education growth was 20% for women education and 7% for men education. It showed the gradual increase in the literacy rate of men and women in India.

Table 2
Comparison of Literacy Rates

State/Union Territory	2001			2011		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Andaman&NicobarIslands	75.2	86.3	81.3	82.4	90.3	86.6
AndhraPradesh	50.4	70.3	60.5	59.1	74.9	67.0
ArunachalPradesh	43.5	63.8	54.3	57.7	72.6	65.4
Assam	54.6	71.3	63.3	66.3	77.8	72.2
Bihar	33.1	59.7	47.0	51.5	71.2	61.8
Chandigarh	76.5	86.1	81.9	81.2	90.0	86.0
Chhattisgarh	51.9	77.4	64.7	60.2	80.3	70.3
Dadra&NagarHaveli	43.0	73.3	60.0	64.3	85.2	76.2
Daman&Diu	70.4	88.4	81.1	79.5	91.5	87.1
Delhi	74.7	87.3	81.7	80.8	90.9	86.2
Goa	75.4	88.4	82.0	84.7	92.6	88.7
Gujarat	58.6	80.5	70.0	69.7	85.8	78.0
Haryana	45.7	78.5	67.9	65.9	84.1	75.6
HimachalPradesh	67.4	85.4	76.5	75.9	89.5	82.8
Jammu&Kashmir	43.0	66.6	55.5	56.4	76.8	67.2
Jharkhand	38.9	67.3	53.6	55.4	76.8	66.4

Karnataka	56.9	76.1	66.6	68.1	82.5	75.4
Kerala	87.9	94.2	90.9	92.1	96.1	94.0
Lakshadweep	80.5	92.5	86.7	87.9	95.6	91.8
MadhyaPradesh	50.3	76.1	63.7	59.2	78.7	69.3
Maharashtra	67.0	86.0	76.9	75.9	88.4	82.3
Manipur	60.5	80.3	70.5	70.3	83.6	76.9
Meghalaya	59.6	65.4	62.6	72.9	76.0	74.4
Mizoram	86.8	90.7	88.8	89.3	93.3	91.3
Nagaland	61.5	71.2	66.6	76.1	82.8	79.6
Odisha	50.5	75.4	63.1	64.0	81.6	72.9
Puducherry	73.9	88.6	81.2	80.7	91.3	85.8
Punjab	63.4	75.2	69.7	70.7	80.4	75.8
Rajasthan	43.9	75.7	60.4	52.1	79.2	66.1
Sikkim	60.4	76.0	68.8	75.6	86.6	81.4
TamilNadu	64.4	82.4	73.5	73.4	86.8	80.1
Tripura	64.9	81.0	73.2	82.7	91.5	87.2
UttarPradesh	42.2	68.8	56.3	57.2	77.3	67.7
Uttarakhand	59.6	83.3	71.6	70.0	87.4	78.8
WestBengal	59.6	77.0	68.6	70.5	81.7	76.3
India	53.7	75.3	64.8	64.6	80.9	73.0

Source: Office of Registrar General, India.

Notes: 1. Literacy rate pertain to the population aged 7 years and above.

2. Literacy rates for 2001 exclude MaoMaram, Paomata and Purul Sub-divisions of Senapati district of Manipur.

According to Table 2, Literacy rate was very high in Kerala at 94%, followed by Lakshadweep with 91.8%, and Mizoram by 91.3% Literacy rate was very less in Bihar at 61.8%.

Challenges of Education System in India

India is the largest democracy with remarkable diversity among its population of 1.2 billion which makes up about 17% of the world's population. Almost 70% of Indian population is rural. The adult literacy rate stands at about 60% and this is significantly lower in women and minorities. Education in India comprises of government, government aided and private institutions of which nearly 40% are government. With the population growth rate of 1.5%, there is tremendous pressure on the education system to provide quality education at affordable price and improve the literacy rate.

Education in India faces following primary challenges:

Quality

Maintaining standard of education in more than a million schools nationwide, offering training programs to teachers, and keeping good balance with education system worldwide is a big challenge. Schools vary in size and resources and are forced compromise in the all round development opportunities they must provide to students.

Access

Having infrastructural constraints and social issues, it becomes harder to make education accessible to all segments of the society (women, minorities, poor).

Cost

The cost of education is very high even for the people and places where it is accessible. E.g. the competitive pressure on students & parents forces them to opt for private tuitions & trainings to supplement the school education.

Social & Cultural

The ethnic diversity in India poses challenges to implement consistent education nationwide. There are more than 300 languages spoken in the country and makes it difficult to offer education tailored to specific social segment. Educating women in some societies is a big issue. Children of poor families are forced to work and miss out the learning opportunities. Illiterate adults have very limited opportunities to get educated at later age in their lives.

Opportunities in Education Sector in India

The Year 2020 saw disruption in the global education system like no other year in our living memory. COVID-19 created a plethora of problems but also brought new opportunities and opened doors to innovation in the Education Sector. The silver lining in this disruption is that as a sector we did not adhere to the “dogmas of the past”. Instead, the entire education sector came together and thought anew and acted anew. School leaders, school administrators, and teachers alike rose to the occasion and adapted to the need of the hour.

Innovative approaches and distance learning solutions were thought of and implemented like never before. Practices, which were previously considered impossible have now become possible due to the quick and concerted efforts by educationists who seized the opportunity to find new ways to make learning possible and managing to keep children and parents positively motivated and engaged all through the year. As we look back at this turbulent year, it's now time to look forward and focus on the trends that will shape the future of education. This pandemic has given the education sector a golden opportunity to pilot changes that would have otherwise taken many more years to implement.

Government Initiatives

Some of the other major initiatives taken by the Government are:

- In 2021-22, the Ministry of Education has been allocated US\$ 12.52 billion, the eight-highest figure allocated to all ministries. The allocation constitutes 2.67% of the central government's estimated expenditure for 2021-22.
- In April 2021, India along with Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan joined the United Nation's E9 initiative. E9 initiative is the first of a three-phased process to co-create an initiative on digital learning and skills, targeting marginalised children and youth, especially girls. The initiative aims to accelerate recovery and advance the Sustainable Development Goal 4 agenda by driving rapid change in education systems.
- According to Union Budget 2021-22, the government allocated Rs. 54,873.66 crore (US\$ 7.53 billion) for Department of School Education and Literacy, compared with Rs. 59,845 crore (US\$ 8.56 billion) in Union Budget 2020-21.
- The government allocated an expenditure budget of Rs. 38,350.65 crore (US\$ 5.28 billion) for higher education and Rs. 54,873 crore (US\$ 7.56 billion) for school education and literacy. The government also allocated Rs. 3,000 crore (US\$ 413.12 million) under Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA).
- Under the Union Budget 2021-22, the government has placed major emphasis on strengthening the country's digital infrastructure for education by setting up the National Digital Educational Architecture (NDEAR).
- In January 2021, in order to mitigate the impact of challenges created due to COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Education issued guidelines for identification, admission and continued education of migrant children.
- On January 15, 2021, the third phase of Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) was launched in 600 districts with 300+ skill courses. Spearheaded by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, the third phase will focus on new-age and COVID-related skills. PMKVY 3.0 aims to train eight lakh candidates.
- In December 2020, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, in collaboration with the Tata Indian Institute of Skills, launched two short-term courses in factory automation.

Road Ahead

In 2030, it is estimated that India's higher education will:

- combine training methods that involve online learning and games, and is expected to grow 38% in the next 2-4 years
- adopt transformative and innovative approaches in Higher education
- have an augmented Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of 50%
- reduce state-wise, gender based and social disparity in GER to 5%
- emerge as the single largest provider of global talent with one in four graduates in the world being a product of the Indian higher education system
- be among the top five countries in the world in terms of research output with an annual R&D spend of US\$ 140 billion
- have more than 20 universities among the global top 200 universities

Various Government initiatives are being adopted to boost the growth of distance education market besides focusing on new education techniques, such as E-learning and M-learning.

Education sector has seen a host of reform and improved financial outlays in recent years that could possibly transform the country into a knowledge haven. With human resource increasingly gaining significance in the overall development of the country, development of education infrastructure is expected to remain the key focus in the current decade. In this scenario, infrastructure investment in the education sector is likely to see a considerable increase in the current decade

The Government of India has taken several steps including opening of IIT's and IIM's in new locations as well as allocating educational grant for research scholars in most Government institutions. Furthermore, with online mode of education being used by several educational organisations, the higher education sector in India is set for major change and development in the years to come.

REFERENCES:

1. Media Reports, Press Releases, Press Information Bureau, RNCOS Report, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Union Budget 2021-22.
2. Literacy and Education – Women and Men in India 2017, Office of Registrar General, India.
3. Marie Lall, The challenges for Indian Education System, Asia Program, Chatham House, April 2005
4. Mohan Gautham, "Education system in Modern India", International Journal of Scientific Research and Education, Volume 4, Issue 1, ISSN : 2321 7545
5. Nand Krishna Soni, Quality Teaching and Higher Education System in India, International Journal of Scientific and research publications, Volume 4, Issue 1, January 2014.ISSN: 2250 3153