

# Education Reforms



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### Abstract

The role of education in development, social change and social mobility has been recognized as a vital component in every developmental effort in a modern society. The National Policy on Education concurred with the view that education is vital for shaping the future of the society and signified it as the mainstay of all national endeavors particularly in societies, which have chosen a democratic path of development.

India has paid considerable attention on education at all levels since independence. Improvement in literacy rates and enrolments at different levels of education reveals that these efforts have been rewarded to some extent. The infrastructure for the development of education has been expanded greatly. However, the issues and problems of access, equity, quality, relevance and inclusiveness in education, especially higher and professional education that confronted the education system of the country right from the beginning continue to haunt it even today. While increasing access is clearly important, but access has to be with equity and inclusiveness. It is equally important that the issue of significantly improving the quality of what is taught and learnt in our schools and colleges should receive far more attention.

**Keywords:** Education Reforms, Quality Education, Consonance, Skill Development, Rebooting Education

### Introduction

#### Imperatives of Education Reforms

Besides the diagnosis of the ills of our higher educations, many commissions, committees and individuals have also suggested possible approaches to deal with these ills. In spite of having statutory bodies for higher education at the central and state levels one fails to obtain a coherent set of meaningful policy guidelines. Ever since the nation recognized the value of higher education for promoting economic growth and social development, the pressure for reforms has been escalating. It is necessary to recognize the fact that disjointed reforms will not produce the necessary impact on the education system. Reforms are inevitable in any vibrant system of education. Reforms are propelled by a variety of compulsions such as economic, social, cultural, political, strategic and so on. Technological developments induce several innovative reform measures. Initiatives for reforms are also launched at times to prevent deterioration of the higher education system and to enhance its prestige. Post-Independent India has witnessed many attempts to bring the higher education to be in consonance with the emerging necessities. In any case reforms have to be dynamic in character to address the changing needs. Higher education system in India has come into major scrutiny in recent years resulting in several reform initiatives. The major initiatives relate to expansion, inclusion, quality, autonomy and financing.

Our society has come to realize the need for securing a global respectability to the education system.

#### Challenges

There are various challenges in the sector of better education in India. In its quest for modernization and pursuit of economic growth, aimed at lifting hundreds of millions of people out of poverty, providing high quality education and healthcare to its population are the greatest challenges that India has to address. The policy makers and the political executive in India should address the following challenges in reforming the higher education system:

1. How to create an equitable and accessible higher education system of high quality?
2. How to foster competition in providing education services and offer choice to the students?
3. How to promote the importance of a true liberal education?
4. How to enhance public financial provision for higher education?
5. How to establish an independent regulatory framework to ensure standards and quality?

**Reforms****RTE Progress**

The RTE (Right to Education) is an act in India enacted on 2009. Government of India and all Concerned see it as a major reform for underprivileged children in country. The main game changer point in RTE is the seat reservation (25%) in educational institutes. According to a study conducted by IIM-A & Central Square Foundation total reserved seats in private sector institutes i.e. 2.14 million only 29% are filled.

| State | Seats Filled (%) |
|-------|------------------|
| Delhi | 92%              |
| UP    | 2%               |

Source- IIM-A & Central Square Foundation

As shown in Table in Delhi 92% seats were filled and in UP only 2% seats were filled (Which is very low as compared to national average i.e. 29%) under this Act So there are lot of variations in ground reality in deferent parts of country. There are wide variations – in Delhi, 92% of the seats were filled up and in UP, it was only 2%. So Delhi is an example for other states which have below 29% seats filled, they must follow the practices which are followed by Delhi to improve this situation

**Budget and Education**

In the budget session February 2015, all were expecting a lot for industry and specially for education and skill education sector and as the expectations budget is more focused on infrastructure, social sector and skilled education. There is a strong focus to push public investment rather weak private sector investments in the infrastructure. According to finance minister of India 2022 will be a historic year for this country as that year will be 75th year of Indian independence and that year is projected to educate the skill for youth of the country to make them capable of self employment. To accomplish this vision the main target is to open a senior secondary school with 5 km of each student and also upgrade 80,000 schools. And add 75,000 middle schools or upgrade them to senior secondary level. Finance minister also focused on the outcomes of the schools.

All the previous skill development initiatives of the government that are running under the different ministries and banners will be undertaken by the single National Skill Mission of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Ministry. This ministry will regulate the standards and outcomes of 31 Sector Skill Councils. Rs 1,500 crores has been allotted for a newly announced scheme i.e. Deen Dayal Upadhyay Gramin Kaushal Yojana to enhance the skills of Indian youth. Under this scheme the cash benefits are directly deposited in the bank accounts of the students. This feature is announced to ensure that no student will be unable to get education due to the lack of financial assistance for higher education. For this a fully digital financial aid authority will be established to regulate this scholarships and loans through Pradhan Mantri Vidya Lakshmi Karyakram. If the government of India is able to implement these proposed initiatives then it will entirely change the picture of education sector especially for higher education.

**Rebooting the Education Sector**

Now there is a great need to reboot the education sector of India to get the maximum benefits of large young population of India. And the HRD minister Smriti Irani must grab the new opportunities to reboot this sector.

In her proposed manifesto she focused on skilled education by raising the fund for education to 6% of total GDP of India. Which is previously 3.2% - 3.5%. 6% of GDP is a great amount to truly revolutionised the education sector. This step can do major improvements to provide education to every child and also improves the quality of education.

And there is another area which requires great attention i.e. shortage of teachers in all sectors. According to the survey of Technopak in 2013 the requirement of total teachers in Indian Universities is 1.16 million and actual faculty number is 810,000. The shortage of teachers is 350,000 which is fatal for the education sector. And by 2020 this shortage will be 1.38 million teachers.

Availability of finance for education needs urgent attention. In most developed countries, if a deserving student is unable to finance her education, They get financing on easy terms, But in India, finance for education is not an easy cake. Bottlenecks free availability of finance is very important to reboot the education sector

**Assessment of Quality**

The accreditation system prevailing in various countries provides a measure of the educational quality. Through the accreditation process, an agency or its designated representative evaluates the quality of a higher education institution as a whole or of a specific educational programme in order to formally recognize it as having met certain predetermined minimal criteria or standards. The result of this process is usually the awarding of a status of recognition, and sometimes of a license to conduct educational programmes within a time-limited validity. The process can imply initial and periodic self-study and evaluation by external peers. The accreditation process generally involves three steps with specific activities: (i) a self-evaluation process conducted by the faculty, the administrators, and the staff of the institution or academic programme, resulting in a report that takes as its reference the set of standards and criteria of the accrediting body; (ii) a study visit, conducted by a team of peers, selected by the accrediting organization, which reviews the evidence, visits the premises, and interviews the academic and administrative staff, resulting in an assessment report, including a recommendation to the accrediting body; and (iii) examination of the evidence and recommendation on the basis of the given set of criteria concerning quality and resulting in a final judgment and the communication of the formal decision to the institution and other constituencies, if appropriate.

Quality measurement should be based not merely on institutional assets (Input factors) but also should include the process factors (teaching/learning innovations, transparent governance, academic autonomy, leadership etc.) as well as the outcome factors (alumni reputation, social appreciation, etc.).

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Indian Higher Education is a large system with nearly four hundred and eighty university level institutions and over twenty thousand colleges. The growth in professional institutions has also been manifold. With significant expansion of higher educational institutions, both publicly and privately funded, a mandatory accreditation system that could provide a common frame of reference for students and other stakeholders to obtain credible information on academic quality across institutions is required. Accreditation is the principal means of quality assurance in higher education the world over and reflects the fact that in achieving recognition, the institution or programme of study is committed to external review to meet certain minimum specified standards and also to continuously seek ways in which to enhance the quality of education.

The Eleventh Plan approved by the National Development Council (NDC) provides a three point agenda in regard to accreditation, namely; introduction of a mandatory accreditation system for all higher educational institutions; creation of multiple rating agencies with a body to rate these rating agencies; department-wise ratings in addition to institutional rating. Presently, accreditation is not mandatory and there is no law to govern the process of accreditation. There are two Central bodies involved in accreditation of institutions; the National Accreditation Assessment Council (NAAC) and the National Board of Accreditation Board (NBA). The NAAC was set up in 1994 by the University Grants Commission (UGC) to make quality an essential element through a combination of internal and external quality assessment and accreditation. The NBA was constituted by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), as an autonomous Body, under section 10(u) of the AICTE Act, 1987.

Since the volume and range of demand far exceed the capacity of these two bodies there have been suggestions to empower other organizations to undertake this responsibility. It is expected that with the passage of the legislation to provide for accreditation of higher educational institutions and to create a regulatory authority for the purpose many of these issues will be resolved at least for some time to come.

#### **Conclusion**

If all reforms discussed above are enacted with whatever changes the Government deems fit, can provide a strong foundation to overcome the present aberrations and elevate the credibility of Indian higher educational qualifications among the community of nations. Hopefully, if the proposed instruments emerge through the legislative process, and perhaps go through the judicial scrutiny, and if implemented in their true letter and spirit, there will be some light at the end of the tunnel. In the meantime those who are concerned about the future of higher education in India should seek to understand the basic rationale behind these measures and help to address them in their own domains of involvement in whatever way possible. Since the nation's economic future and global stature are intricately associated with the credibility of higher education system, one

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can only hope that there is sufficient wisdom in the society not to let the present state of entropy to persist

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