

POST – INDEPENDENCE HIGHER EDUCATIONAL TREND IN INDIA

Sarmila Nag¹

Debkumar Bhattacharya²

¹Lecturer in Education, Sammilani Mahavidyalaya, Kolkata

²Former Associate Professor (Economics), Santipur College, Nadia.

Abstract:

‘Education’ actually constitutes the backbone of a nation; it undoubtedly leads us towards complete living. In our post-independence era, we have given enough importance on building up a sound educational environment in our country reconstituting our Primary, Secondary and the Higher education policies. How far we could achieve our target is a debatable aspect in our present society now. This paper seeks to analyze the overall educational scenario of our country at the moment in general and particularly in developing the higher education framework. We must try to point out through this effort all social discrimination towards different sections of our country people in this regard, the merits and demerits of private infiltration in our higher educational network. We have concluded our paper exhibiting the fact that the targeted double digit growth of GDP is found accelerated through the service sector that needs enough well-trained technical personnel and education sector is the only source that can maintain the required steady supply of such people and it eventually requires an extended modern higher education sector. But it needs enough fund for establishing such centers which the government cannot provide with the meager annual budgetary allocation in developing educational sector maintaining its other liabilities. Private participation is thus irresistible here. What is necessary in this context is the necessary regulation and its imposition on the part of the government, often called “Regulatory Role of the Government”.

A. Introduction:

‘Education’ as we know, constitutes the backbone of a nation. An individual without having the minimum educational expertise (namely the skills like reading,

writing and solving simple numerical problems) can never materialize his or her day to day necessary activities, fails to proceed towards complete living (live like animals).

India, immediately after her independence, gave enough emphasis on achieving her overall literacy as the second most important target to reach next to "Alleviation of Mass –Poverty". Considerable developments undoubtedly have yet taken place here through several successive need-based action plans. But the overall picture still remains gloomy and unimpressive in many respect².

B. Objective of the study :

The present study seeks to investigate the post-independent overall educational scenario of education in general and the participation of the public and private sectors there in developing her higher educational framework in particular. Special attention has been given on the extent of infiltration of private entrepreneur's complementary role with the state endeavor. And, finally considering its merits and demerits, we shall try to reach at certain reasonable conclusions.

C. Reasons behind the faster growth of private participation in Indian Higher Education:

If we examine the growth aspects of GDP and percentage expenditure from GDP on education in general in our successive

five-year plans we find clearly that both the GDP and population of our country are ever increasing since independence but the percentage expenditure on education from GDP is continuously moving in reverse direction mainly to supplement the other governmental obligations and as a consequence our government fails to accommodate the rising popular demand for education and thereby failing to meet the constitutional direction to preserve the 'Right to Education' of our growing population⁴. Factually speaking, it is found that in spite of internationally agreed recommendation of spending at least 6% of the GDP on education sector to meet the rising demand of the people for education on an average, the Govt. of India had to remain confined in between 2.2% and 2.6% of the GDP by any means and it had no other way but to accept the fact unhesitatingly with indifferent role for the sustainability of the other important sectors³.

Let us now enlist systematically the other important reasons behind this scenario very briefly -

- a) To be a part of the present knowledge explosion taking place all over the globalized universe

symmetrical technological advancement inside the country is necessary and it requires high level of investment.

- b) To enjoy enough advantage of the modern hi-tech opportunities we are in need of highly educated and well-trained up dated technical manpower.
- c) Due to several structural and operational imperfections because of the inflexibilities relating to the market demand for expert manpower with the changing social requirements, private participation appears as the only answer.
- d) To meet our democratic obligations and political commitments of imparting quality education through the public sector most cost - effectively in the present globalized era, our planners had no other way but to allow the willing private entrepreneurs unhesitatingly in this field.
- e) Finally, increasing private participation especially in the new areas of higher education provides more and more tax revenue (Education Cess) to the Govt. and thereby reduces its growing Fiscal - Burden (Deficit).

D. Analysis of the Available Data :

It is known to us that private participation in 'EDUCATION' has a number of favorable and unfavorable impacts in our society. Let us now represent the numerical scenario of our educational sector in a precise format with the available data in the following tabular and pictured forms (*Ref- Table1, Graph 1, Fig-1*) attached here to at the end.

While framing this presentation we have consulted all necessary data and reports published from various related sources like the survey conducted by the Government of India , Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Higher Education, New Delhi, 2013 came out under the heading " All India Survey on Higher Education, 2011-2012 " as our primary data source⁶. However, to make the overall picture clearer, we have mentioned certain key Statistics from several other sources herewith for the ready reference of the readers and have explained them in our own view.

The available reports and data clearly exhibit the reality of acute Gender Gap leading to several social, economic and political genders inequalities in our country even after 68 years of

independence. Data available in this context during the last two successive census (2001 & 2011) reports are strongly supporting this fact in a naked eye¹⁴. It unhesitatingly suggesting us to proceed beyond our standard indicators of enrollment and transition and also to explore deep into the schooling experience of children. Gender inequalities in various forms have already been infiltrated as a complex social phenomenon in the institutional structure of our country and thereby affecting our ongoing education system. (Ref– Table 1). In the language of Prof. Amartya Sen, uninterrupted smooth “Entitlement” of the promising learners in our education system will surely enhance their efficiency and effective “Ability” at the end and will finally accelerate our social and economic growth process^{12 & 13}. Their spontaneous access, we believe, will remarkably reduce the overall dropout rates, make transitions between different levels of education smoother, pave their ways towards achieving higher learning. All these must demand a safe and nondiscriminatory educational environment from the State. And well - efficient but easily operable assessment system is very much necessary from the entire education system where teaching

and testing should be integrated simultaneously as the two equally important opposite balancing pillars of the entire process.

Several commissions suggesting various necessary reforms have already been incorporated in our education sector, but the quality of education imparted to the learners has traditionally suffered at all stages. “Education” remaining in the concurrent list in our Constitution, both the Central and the State Governments in India have launched several schemes and programmes both separately and jointly to improve the access of our learners for quality education⁸. During the last two decades, as a part of our National Economic Reform measures and opening up of Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization (LPG) Policies in 1991, certain key programmes were initiated, some notables are ‘Operation Black Board’ (OBB), strengthening of ‘Teacher Education’, ‘District Primary Education Program’ (DPEP), Model Schools, ‘Mid-day Meal Scheme’ (MDM), ‘Sarva Siksha Abhiyan’ (SSA), ‘Rashtriya Uchchattar Siksha Abhiyan’ (RUSA), etc. The success of these programmes are usually assessed through the rising enrolment rates of students, access to their required

facilities, enrolment of girl students and students of other backward sections of our society, etc. at different stages of education. But the ground level reality is not much impressive till now.

Turning to the Higher Education Scenario (our Focal-point) and examining the findings of the above survey report (AISHE, 2011-12) (Ref -6) quite intensively, going through the relevant data collected through this survey report (2011-12) and its progress up to (2012-13) thoroughly, we find that even after 69 years of our political (not economic) independence we could establish only 642 universities of which 196 are privately managed and total number of colleges are 34908, 73% of which are privately management. The AISHE Report, 2011-12 in this context tells that out of the total population within the age group (18-23 years) the total eligible heads to attain higher education were 14,03,17,369 but alarmingly the gross enrollment ratio (GER) was 20.4 where for the male students it was 21.6 and for the female students it was 18.9. The data also reveals that a large part of this population (between 18-23 years) is still remaining out of the higher education network and it eventually could not accelerate our

growth process. (Ref- Graph 1) Turning to the State and type wise number of universities, we find that up to 2011-12 total number of universities was 642 in which State affiliated private universities was 105 and State-run universities was 284 and it reveals that in setting up of universities the State takes the leading role in rejuvenating the academic health of the country. On the contrary, private owned deemed universities and the State private universities together are lacking behind. Our experience while in personal investigation tells that they are no doubt rich enough in providing physical infrastructural facilities to the learners but the quality of teaching imparted there are not upto the mark in most cases, this is mainly due to the discriminatory attitude of the relevant their authorities in engaging and providing real and monetary benefits to the teaching and non-teaching staff in the teaching - learning process¹¹.

When we look into the aspect of management wise number of colleges, we surprisingly find that majority of our colleges within the country (about 73% up to 2011-12) are run by private autonomous bodies and again among these colleges 58% are distinctly private-unaided and 155 of them are private-

aided. These institutions, naturally, are functioning mainly as profit making organizations without giving much importance in implementing the governmental targets of social welfare and inclusive education policies imposed by the education directorates. Only around one fourth of these colleges are purely owned and run by the Government supervision. It is also noticed that their exist wide variations among the States in many respect in setting - up private colleges. While in the context of management wise enrollment in colleges, we find that 70% of these colleges are operating under private sector, aided and unaided altogether but they could totally absorb only 61% of the total demand for enrollment and this clearly represent lower rate in college enrollment in the private sector. Contrary to this fact, in the case of purely Government colleges, the picture is not also much encouraging, where 38.09% of these colleges could absorb only 27.02% of the aspiring students within the age group of (18 to 23 years) and it clearly exhibits the fact that the Government by virtue of its constitutional empowerment, became successful only in framing several educational policies from outside in the post-independent era but in

implementing those policies quantitatively and extensively is lacking far behind.

E. Conclusions:

India, as we know, is a vast developing country of having population more than 130 billion, at the moment with accelerating annual growth rate of population. At the moment she has her Net Reproductive Rate of women in between 15-40 years around 1.5 that actually is generating a Big - push for the high growth rate of population. Right from our independence and in almost all our 5 year economic plans provision for food, shelter and clothes – the basic needs of life were targeted as our main attempts to achieve and education naturally came next to that. However, Mahatma Gandhi, known as the father of our nation, on several occasions, put the highest emphasis on acquiring basic education (BuniadiSiksha) that includes vocational training of individuals mainly to ensure those three basic needs for existence. According to him Human Resource Development must be the ultimate aim of education and that must include ethics and humanity at the same time and this will surely strengthen our social value system in making the backbone of our nation strong enough¹.

Our present Honorable President of India, on several occasions has pointed out his voice of disappointment saying that educating this vast majority of population with at least elementary education is our basic constitutional responsibility; we could not yet achieve it.

Undoubtedly it is a huge task to materialize, presently called 'Inclusive Education' or 'Education for All', to ensure our 'Right to Education'. Empirical evidences tell that in independent India the number of educational institutes has increased considerably with enough public and private efforts, but we cannot unhesitatingly say that the quality and standard of elementary education have increased remarkably up to our desired mark.

Our higher education scenario is distinctly different. We have included a number of names as the recipients of several international prizes, even for noble prizes also from Indian origin, but can we unbiased say that their contributions have really enriched the knowledge and skills of our common people that can help them to capture those basic needs of life finally and led them towards 'Complete Living'? The answer, as we unabashedly know is 'No'.

It is undeniable that we could not yet spent even 6% our GDP in our annual educational budget as internationally prescribed. We could only practically afford from GDP a meager amount for education and even its expenditure is not totally transparent today. Unfortunately, the drainage of educational fund and various other corruptions in educational sector have now become important topics for present day political discussion specially at times of 'ELECTION' but with no effective solution.

The gradual withdrawal of the public sector from the responsibility in educational field gave enough scope for the private entrepreneurs to take entry into the system unprohibitedly in search of exorbitant profit by any means denying the very essence of social welfare and justice. This actually is clearly widening the discriminatory attitude of the State for the people at large. The very objective of "Education for all" is practically now at stake for the downtrodden but unquestioningly we could not deny and even restrict the entry of private agencies in this area of making huge profit. The people and as such the Government of India is feeling helpless in this regard. We think, the Government should apply all its

quality control measures immediately against these private players and compel them to preserve strictly at least 25% of their seats for the admission of low income earners and provide all possible quantitative and qualitative avenues for them indiscriminatingly in every academic session. They can again be advised and often compelled to reinvest a considerable part of their net profit in our potential educational sectors.

It is again alarming to mention here that we have taken several educational policies towards extending women education specially to resist the dropout of the girl children from the educational network and also have initiated many other popular measures in this regard for the benefit of the women at large, but the reality tells that we are practically having a meager participation (only 6%) from these educated ladies in our national workforce. This, we think, is undoubtedly a wastage of our scarce national resources used for educating them and should immediately be addressed with effective steps to raise their rate of participation. The under-age marriage of immature girls must be treated as criminal offence mostly caused by their parents.

At the end, we must prescribe for more and more vocationalization and modernization of our entire education system to meet the regularly growing demand for skilled personnel originating from the various corners of our presently liberalised hi-tech industrial sector (*Ref – Fig 1*). Setting up of digital libraries with in campus Wi Fi Zonal internet facility and abridged CD version of all the essential references and journals for the ready reference of all the learners is an urgent need of the day.

All these, we think, will surely help us to attain the very objective of “INCLUSIVE EDUCATION” in near future.

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Table 1: Graded Inequities in Literacy rates		
	Census 2001	Census 2011
Rural Female ST	32.4	46.9
Rural Female SC	37.6	52.6
All Rural Female	46.13	57.9
Rural Female Non SC/ST	50.2	61.1
Rural Male ST	57.4	66.8
Urban Female SC	57.5	68.6
Urban Female ST	59.9	70.3
Rural Male SC	53.7	72.6
All Rural Male	70.7	77.1
All Urban Female	72.86	79.1
Rural Male Non SC/ST	74.3	79.9
Urban Female Non SC/ST	75.5	81.0
Urban Male ST	77.8	83.2
Urban Male SC	77.9	83.3
All Urban Male	86.27	88.8
Urban Male Non SC/ST	87.6	89.7

Source: Adapted by Vimala Ramachandran from Marie Lall and S Srinivasa Rao 2011⁷

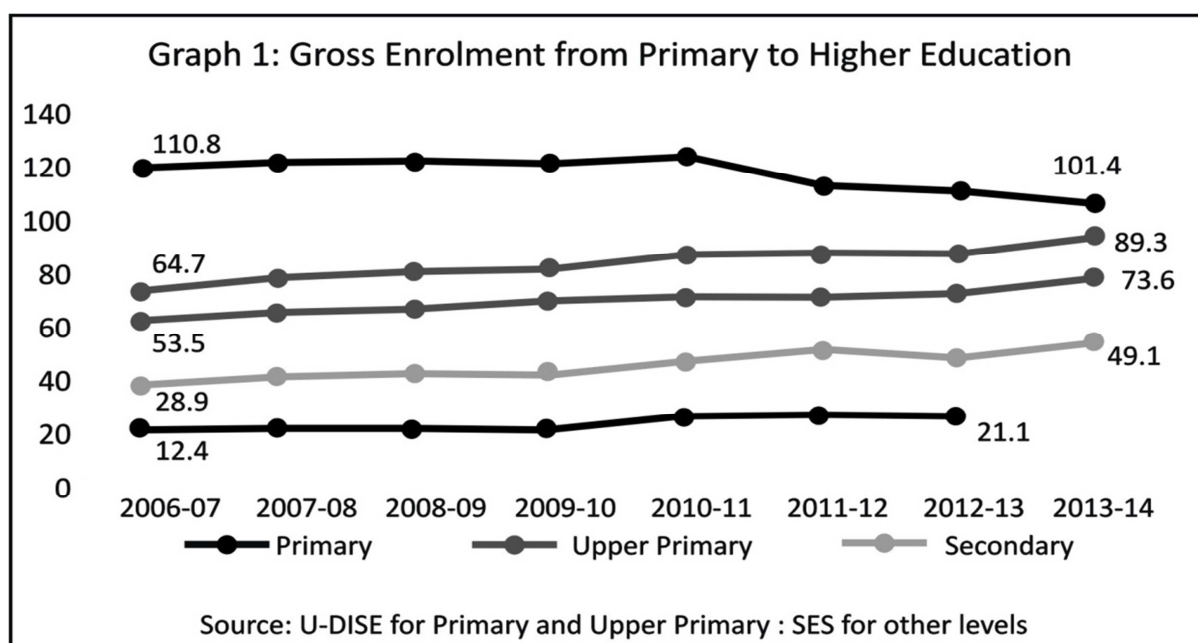
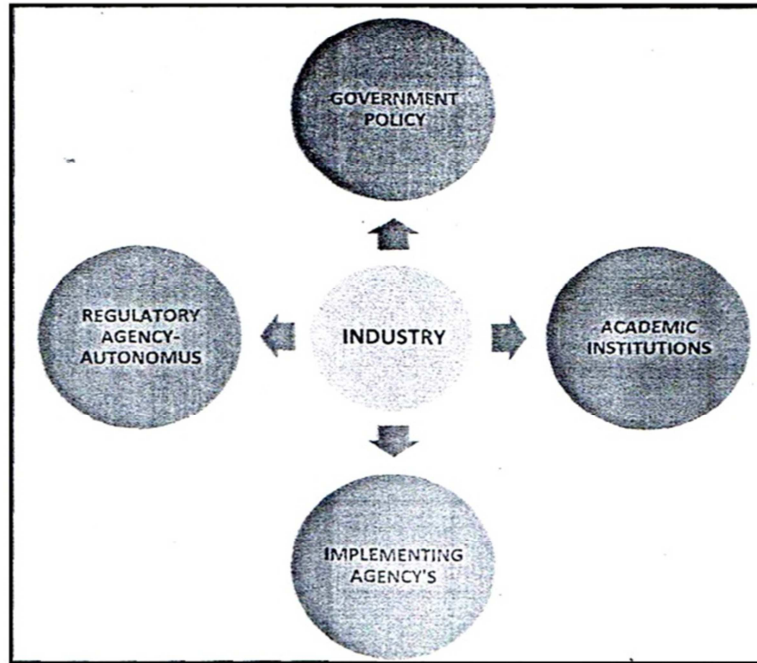


Fig 1 – The Centrality of Industry in Driving Demand for Skills



The Circular inter dependence in between Govt. Policies and their implementation to meet the growing demand for skilled industrial personnel