

INDIA AND EDUCATION – MICRO STUDY

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Abstract

Education is a powerful tool in the hands of the educated. The world is known to expect from a learned man. In the Indian scenario the education was initially in the form of gurukula system where the taught went in search of the teacher and gained knowledge by learning and serving the guru. This kind of institution not only taught him the formal education but also taught him as to how his behaviour with the elders and the society got to be along with the values. The form of education slowly changed with the introduction of English education into the Indian society. The Indian Society was not able to adapt to the changing scenario immediately hence the transition period was very tough. But slowly the changes introduced by the Britisher with the aim of creating clerks for their companies were able to produce enormous result at the world level. Though this change can be perceived now in the present 21st century, in the form of best education system which is able to produce many good English speaking and knowledgeable persons, the seed was sowed by the British. After independence, though Constitution aimed at making education compulsory to every citizen, it remained a dream as education became a costly and cumbersome affair for the poor. The paper aims at bringing about the issues in the present and system and the possible solution that can be brought about to bring changes in the educational system in India.

Key Words: Definition of Education, Classification of Educational Aims, Education and Constitution, Key challenges in India in Educational System & Suggestions.

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1. Introduction:

The President of India Shri Pranab Mukherjee

Education is the true alchemy that can bring India its next golden age. Our motto is unambiguous: All for knowledge, and knowledge for all.

Central Hall of Parliament, New Delhi, 25th July 2012¹

Education is the medium through which the complete development of human beings can be assessed. Education is a universal phenomenon which is existent since times immemorial in various methods like formal or informal education. The informal education may be in the form of socialisation. It not only helps man in self-development but also helps in overcoming all hurdles of life by expanding his horizon in an assertive way. At the individual level it helps man to break all his bias or preconceived notions. Education gives direction and induces in every man to act as a stimuli by strengthening their further reasoning power. Education helps every human being to take on risk in a rational way and helps him to interact in better ways among his fellow men. Any form of Education leaves behind an enriched individual who in turn can contribute to the economy of any nation.

Education helps the nation to grow, the statistics of educated people in a given society would prove how a nation can prosper in all these resourceful people are utilised to the best of their ability.

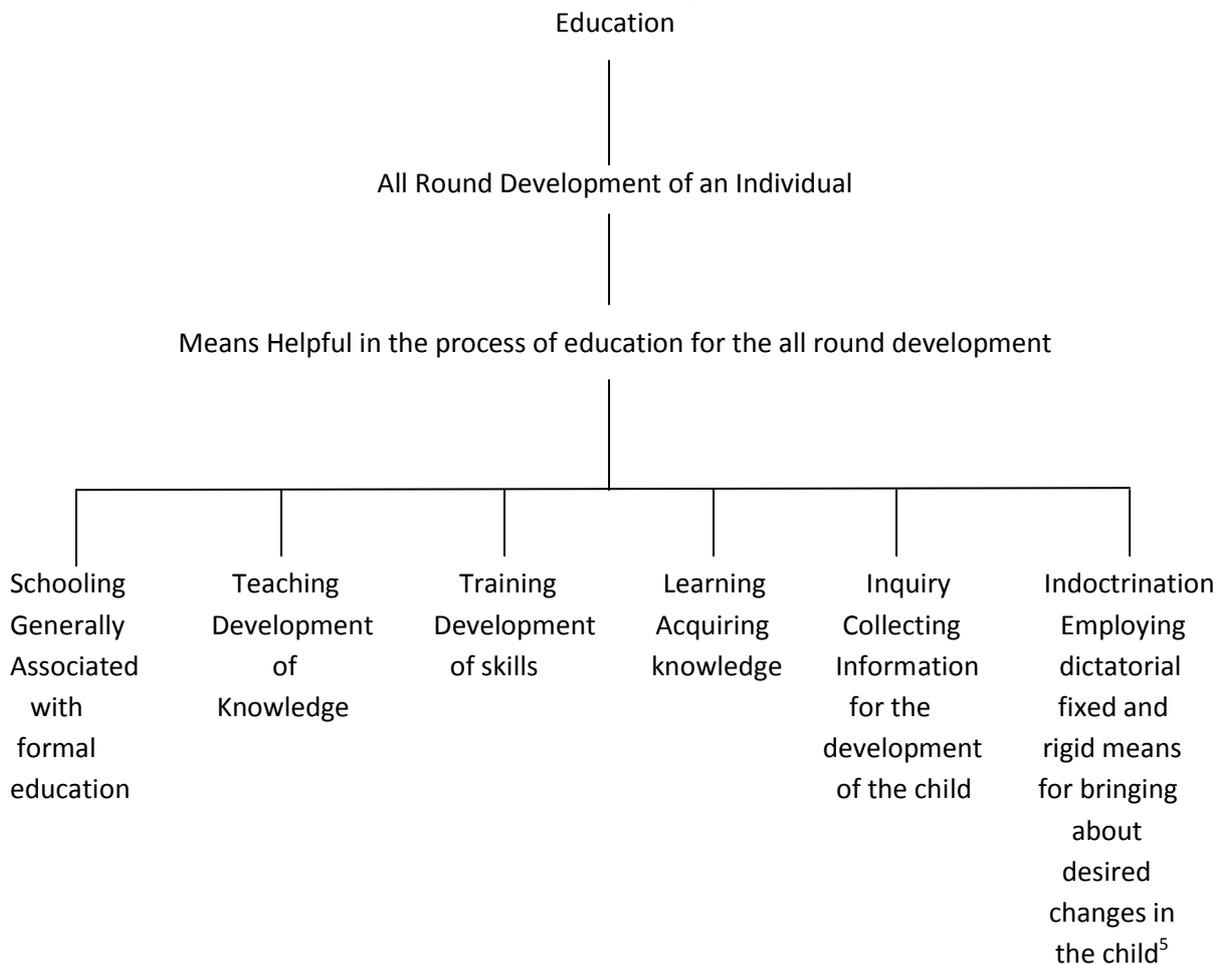
Definitions:

The term ‘education’ has a very wide connotation. Philosophers and thinkers from Yajnavalkya (around 1000 B.C) to Gandhiji (1869 – 1948 A.D.) have given the meaning of education in accordance with their philosophy of life with the result there have emerged divergent concepts of education and different definitions. The concept of education is like a diamond which appears to be of a different colour when seen from a different angle².

Education is the process of brining desirable change into the behaviour of human beings. It can also be defined as the process of imparting or acquiring knowledge and habits through instruction or study. When learning in progressing towards goals that have been established in accordance with a philosophy which has been defined for, and is understood by the learner, it is called Education³.

The modern world is confronting two general problems which are not only affecting the pattern of human life, but also inflicting their full impact on education. These two problems are called “information explosion” and the “Population explosion”. They are like two horns of dilemma in education- more things to learn and more people to be taught. Information explosion really means an explosion of knowledge, new frontiers of knowledge are opening day by day and the horizon of human knowledge and understanding is expanding very fact. Population Explosion is immensely affecting traditional pattern of education⁴.

Education and the status of its components may be explained in the following forms:



“Education is the means of social continuity of life”, says Dewey in Democracy and Education⁶. Locke’s prescription for education stresses that virtue is to be attained by the formation of good habits through a long and rigorous discipline of the appetites throughout childhood and youth. Montaigne sums up the tradition by quoting a story from the Greeks: “Agesilaus was once asked what he thought most proper for boys to learn. “What they ought to do when men” was the reply⁷.

2. Objectives of the study:

- 1) Understand the real meaning of quality education
- 2) Contribution of Quality education to the modern society.
- 3) Challenges in Quality education
- 4) Initiatives to be taken by the policy makers.

3. Classification of Educational Aims:

The field of education has tried to contribute to the modern society by classifying education with certain aims. Education is a purposeful and planned activity which is undertaken by the educator and the ends in view. The aims of education are classified as Individual, social, cultural, democratic and totalisation.

Individual Aim: Education should aim at the training and development of the Individual, only a well trained individual can understand his rights in his society and his obligations to his community.

Social Aim: The social role of education in a democratic society is to ensure equal freedom and equal opportunities for every individual. The democratic education should pay attention to individual dignity, equity, fraternity, liberty, faith in the individual education. Appreciation of individual contributions to the group welfare, growth of discrimination and good citizenship.

Intellectual Aim: Acquisition of knowledge for the sake of knowledge is necessary for enlightenment. Knowledge is necessary for success in any profession. Knowledge is essential for intellectual development, adjustment to environment, spiritual growth and social efficiency. Knowledge should be worthy of use and it should be a means rather than the goal.

Cultural Aim: Aim of the education must be to produce the cultured person who aims to seek the aid of knowledge to understand the traditional values. The education that is imparted from the cultural point of view lends a new beauty and charm to the personality of students.

Vocational Aim: Vocational Aim implies education for employment or livelihood. Some educationists are of the opinion that education should have a utilitarian aim. Vocational education is the only hope of children with lower intelligence⁸.

The necessity for aims in education is justified for the following reasons:

Aims provide a line of action to the teachers: Education becomes a joint enterprise when teachers act shoulder to shoulder. If there is no consensus the general aims of education will be reduced to a muddle.

Aims are necessary to assess the outcomes of the educative process: Aims helps in measuring the success and failure of work done. An aim is the yard-stick with which one can measure the efforts and the achievements of the young scholars.

Aims are necessary as they allow us to act intelligently and to act with a meeting:

Aims are necessary as they give direction and zest to the work of the pupils

Aims are necessary for efficient school administration and organisation.

Aims are necessary to help the parents and the general public to appreciate the work of the school⁹.

Purpose of Education in Society:

Education is Self Empowerment, financial Stability and Dignity of Life, growth in Personal Aspiration, on the Job Efficiency, helps Plan Ahead, stops mind being idle as an idle mind is the evil's workshop and helps both the Job Seeker Vs. Job Provider¹⁰.

Education and Constitution:

The Constitution (Eighty-sixth Amendment) Act, 2002 inserted Article 21-A in the Constitution of India to provide free and compulsory education of all children in the age group of six to fourteen years as a Fundamental Right in such a manner as the State may, by law, determine. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009, which represents the consequential legislation envisaged under Article 21-A, means that every child has a right to full time elementary education of satisfactory and equitable quality in a formal school which satisfies certain essential norms and standards.

Article 21-A and the RTE Act came into effect on 1 April 2010. The title of the RTE Act incorporates the words 'free and compulsory'. 'Free education' means that no child, other than a child who has been admitted by his or her parents to a school which is not supported by the appropriate Government, shall be liable to pay any kind of fee or charges or expenses which may prevent him or her from pursuing and completing elementary education. 'Compulsory education' casts an obligation on the appropriate Government and local authorities to provide and ensure admission, attendance and completion of elementary education by all children in the 6-14 age groups. With this, India has moved forward to a rights based framework that casts a legal obligation on the Central and State Governments to implement this fundamental child right as enshrined in the Article 21A of the Constitution, in accordance with the provisions of the RTE Act¹¹.

One of the measures for achieving the goal of Education For All (EFA) was the 93rd Amendment of the Constitution passed in the Lok Sabha on November 28, 2001 to make the right to free and compulsory education for children for 6-14 years of age of Fundamental Right and also to make it a Fundamental Duty of the parents/guardian to provide opportunities for education to children in the age group of 6 – 14 years¹².

The subject of Education has been transferred from List II to List II (State to Concurrent List). The desired socio-economic goals can be achieved in the country through education. Parliament can secure uniformity in standards and syllabi of education so very necessary to achieve national integration. Parliament can minimize disparities in the levels and standards of education as between the various states. In 1929, the Board of High School and Intermediate Education, Rajputana was 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)¹³.

Entry 25 now runs as: "Education including technical education, medical education and universities, subject to the provisions of entries 63, 64, 65 and 66 of List I; vocational and technical training of labour. Under Entry 66, List I, the Centre has power to see that a required standard of higher education in India is maintained¹⁴.

In Unni Krishanan Vs. State of AP¹⁵, the Supreme Court has held that every child up to the age of 14 years has the fundamental right to free education and State is obligated to follow the direction of Art. 45 and such right is, according to the Supreme Court a part of the right to life as Art. 21 is to be construed in the light of Arts. 41, 45 and 46 of the Constitution. On the basis of the above directions every State Government has now ensured that any child citizen shall have free primary education.

To promote the educational advancement of the socially and educationally backward classes of citizens i.e., the OBCs or the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in matters of admission of students to unaided educational institutions other than the minority educational institutions Parliament introduced Article 15 (5) by the Constituion (Ninety-third Amendment) Act, 2006 (5 of 2007) to

provide greater access to higher access to higher education including professional education to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes¹⁶.

In Ashoka Kumar Thakur Vs. Union of India, directed the Union of India to set a time-limit within which Art. 21A is going to be completely implemented. This time-limit must be set within six months. In case the Union of India fails to fix the time-limit, then perhaps this work will also have to be done by the Court¹⁷.

Since its creation in 1945, UNESCO's mission has been to contribute to the building of peace, poverty eradication, lasting development and intercultural dialogue, with education as one of its principal activities to achieve this aim. The organisation is committed to a holistic and humanistic vision of quality education worldwide, the realization of everyone's right to education, and the belief that education plays a fundamental role in human, social and economic development¹⁸.

4. Key Challenges For The India In Educational System:

Educational systems all over the world are faced with continuing crisis of various kinds ranging from growing inequalities in the educational system, declining qualities educational, dualisms, to the total irrelevance of the system¹⁹. The conflict which rages around out schools is not a conflict between public and private institutions. It is a conflict between two different /college's types of learning. Until we understand it as such, we are not likely to solve the many problems it involves – the acute shortage of teachers and schoolrooms, the financial exigencies and the curricular confusion that fill the headlines²⁰.

The relationship between educations and their community is seldom seen as a partnership; instead, teachers and administrators often feel isolated, forced to perform a difficult task with inadequate resources. Parents, the business sector, and taxpayers bitterly debate the purpose of schools and sometimes attempt to micro-manage their operations²¹.

There has been tremendous emphasis in recent years on the need for closer cooperation between school, further education institutions and industry. Although philosophers have always propounded that education is for living, the tendency in the practice of the traditional education, has been to ignore that living includes learning to earn a living²².

In general education itself has become so profitable a business that quality is lost in the increase of quantity of professional institutions with quota system and politicization, thereby increasing unemployment of graduates without quick relief to mitigate their sufferings in the job market of the country²³.

Other issues in present education are:

- a. Vague policy on education
- b. Lack of finance
- c. Absence of a comprehensive plan
- d. Problem of curriculum
- e. Methods of teaching
- f. Problem of teachers
- g. Problem of continuing education²⁴.

25% of the Indian population is illiterate. Only 7% of the population that goes to school managed to graduate and only 15% of those who enrol manage to make it to high school and achieve a place in the higher education system.

A few reasons why education in India is given less importance in some areas are as follows:

- 80% of schools are managed by the government. Private schools are expensive and out of reach of the poor.

- More hands to earn remains the mentality amongst many families and therefore little kids are set out to fend for the family over going to school to garner an adequate education, in the most literal sense of the word.
- Infrastructure facilities at schools across rural areas and in slums dispense very poor quality of education.
- The teachers are not well qualified and therefore not well paid and therefore are not willing to work hard enough. This has been a classical Catch-22 problem that the government has been trying hard to fight against²⁵.

According to Dr. S.C Vats, Chairman, Vivekananda Institute of Professional studies, the three action points for developing higher education in India are:

1. The churning of researchers and doctoral research candidates should be regulated.
2. The Vice Chancellors of universities should be provided with enough flexibility to fix the pay scale of these researches and scholars.
3. Fast track sanction of funds for research in newer areas²⁶.

5. Suggestions or Recommendations:

What needs to change in Indian Education System?

What is needed today is that the system of national education propagated by Gandhiji should be accepted as an instrument of social change. Its aim is to instill such experience in the child as will persuade him to remain honest. Through it, dignity of labour, social responsibility and a liberal attitude is developed²⁷.

Focus on skill based education

Reward creativity, original thinking, research and innovation

Get smarter people to teach

Implement technology infrastructure

Re-define the purpose of the education system

Take mediocrity out of the system

Personalize education – one size does not fit all

Allow private capital in education

Make reservation irrelevant²⁸

Educative activities must have a direct relationship with daily situations.

Education must concentrate on reaction rather than action²⁹.

Semester system must be scrapped as students education limit only to curriculum and there is shortage of time even on the side of the faculty as they are aiming at only completing the syllabus and are not able to contribute to the overall development of the pupil. Every system should contribute to understand the inequality in status of every student and try to bring about equality.

Recognition should not be given to such educational institution which does not abide by the standards set by the Board. Reduced fee structure is bound to attract many poor students to the schools and colleges. Education as far as it concerned as knowledge must be given in the local language. English must be taught only as a communication skill. Rather if the whole system of education is in English the poor would not venture to attempt it.

The mid day meal scheme is a very good programme to attract the poor to the line of education, which should be adopted by every state. Such schemes are not to be aimed as the short term policy of the Government as it might be a failure at the initial stage but it may be able to produce result in the long term.

Greater flexibility is required in the education system. Examination is merely seen as memory test, where people who are able to reproduce what they had learnt or by hearted and such

people are considered brilliant. The analytical or critical oriented education which would foster research must be adopted. There needs to be attitudinal change among the teachers. The valuation system puts the student with a low feeling. The valuation of the answer script has deteriorated; the situation many a times is a do or die for a student. The error in the system must be corrected.

6. Conclusion:

As J.F. Brown rightly pointed out Education in any country and at all periods reflects values of the ruling class and influences it. The main and ultimate aim of the education should be to gift useful and law abiding citizens to the society. Though India has achieved in the field of education by bringing children to school and even elders to schools in some areas, the statistics proves that there is enough drop out after the initial schooling or preliminary education. Men discontinue education as they are the bread winners of the family and every boy child is expected to contribute to the family. With regard to the female, she has look after her siblings and girl child is often seen as a burden on the family and married at a very early age. It is very tough task to change the mindset of the people, which they have learnt since generations. A positive step can be taken in this road by making few changes in the system, we must realise that each individuals who seek knowledge have different aims in life. The talent and the aim of the student must be evaluated, assessed and taken into consideration before we thrust the syllabus. The Indian scenario can only think of formal education, the education need not be classroom oriented. The field to achieve are various, eg, sports, the education hence can vary according to the field sought by the student. Though 100% literacy is achieved in certain states, the system has failed to bring many to the schools. The immediate objective of the education should be to change the pedagogy and attract and bring about new approaches that are adopted in other developed countries into our main streams, to achieve our goal. Though any suggestions would fall short of the destination, an attempt towards the goal could never be wrong, even if it has certain shortcoming on implementation.

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