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"SPECIAL ISSUE ON EDUCATION"

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IC Centre for Governance
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The IC Centre for Governance has been set up in with the objective of collective thinking and acting on important issues of governance. It believes that public governance is too serious a matter to be left entirely to the state and that the involvement of the Civil Society is not only desirable but also essential. The Centre seeks to strengthen the capacity of Civil Society and government for ensuring good governance.

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"This issue of the Journal is delicated to Dr. Abid Hussian"

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A combination of steadfastness of character and harmonious conduct in every sphere is a rarity in the civil service. Abid Hussain was a living example of such a persona. In a country where the music of most of us dies early in life, Abid Saheb played the music of his soul till the very end. And we will continue to hear it for ages.

Abid Hussain (1926 - 2012)

Abid saheb to his juniors and Abid Bhai to friends, he always saw the bright Sun even when there were dark clouds gathering all around. His belief in hope was contagious. Always immaculately dressed with his salt and pepper hair flowing flamboyantly, he brought an air of cheerfulness in his long strides wherever he went. Equally fascinating was his nonchalant, ever youthful attitude towards life. Evidently, he felt the presence of some invisible force guiding him.

Abid Saheb wished everyone well. His new year greeting cards were special. They were folded the wrong way with his message written in his own hand. One does not know how he found time to write personal messages to hundreds of his admirers. And on each one of them, there was a sketch of a rose on a stem in his flowing hand. Even the flower seemed to look upwards with hope.

I remember one of Ghalib's couplets he thoughtfully wrote for me on a new year when there was enough to pull me down; *'Ek birahman ne kaha hai ki ye saal achchha hai'* (A wise man has said that this year is propitious).

But behind all his charm and bonhomie lay a surprising toughness. He saw things simply, but always clearly. A reading of his reports on a variety of subjects would prove the unambiguity of his views. Despite his looks of elfin benevolence, he was not subservient to anyone. Once talking about the challenges for the civil service, he said, "We are in the front lines align and front lines are everywhere".

Public service was the natural choice for someone with as wide interests as Abid Saheb's. He was expansive and could accommodate contradictions. In fact, he brought contradictions closer to each other. At his artistically kept residence, you mingled with staunch rivals and long lost friends. His hospitality knew no boundaries.

Though well read, he wore his erudition lightly. 'Babu' was his characteristic cheerful way of addressing his younger admirers, who went to him for advice or help. I have heard him speak on as diverse topics as transport development, Asian architecture, crisis in governance, philosophy and ecological engineering. At times, he spoke in poetry and people listened to him with moist eyes.

He abhored the dubious logic of politics and refused to espouse a political ideology. Any political party would have loved to have him in its fold. But he didn't care for honours. He assiduously championed hundreds of initiatives of the civil society and helped promote welfare of the under privileged.

His death is India's loss. The void left by his departure will be difficult to fill.

Dr Abid Hussain shared the chairmanship of IC Centre for Governance with his friend Justice M N Venkatachaliah since the inception of the Centre. As a mark of our tribute to this remarkable man, we dedicate the present issue of the Journal to him.

The Core Group of the Centre has also resolved to institute an annual Abid Hussain Memorial Lecture in his memory.

Prabhat Kumar

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EDITORIAL

The Centre for Governance has this indomitable desire to be abreast of the contemporary reality of the Indian governance system in all its aspects. Thus when the Core Group tasked us to do an in-depth study of the current educational reality, we pulled all the stops and went for the best.

We are using the royal plural not only because of the editorial prerogative, but also because there are two of us.

We kick off with a philosophical disquisition by J.S.Rajput on what should be our curriculum concerns if we were asked to draft a revised curriculum framework for 2012.Is it not surprising that a Government which is so busy dismantling the IIT examination system or deleting all the cartoons from NCERT textbooks (obviously on the assumption that education is too serious a matter to be mortgaged to humour or satire) has no time to have a relook at its NCF 2005?

We come immediately to brass-tacks. Although the Government brought in the Right to Education Act. N.K.Ambasht finds that it has not read the small print its own draftsmen have put in the law. How on earth are they going to admit children to schools based on the policy of age-appropriate admissions?

A similar conundrum is posed by Madhav Chavan and Rukmini Banerji, who have a database rooted in their practical experience of the Pratham Foundation and the ASER centre. What sort of a primary education system are we running if the bulk of those in Class 5 do not have the literacy or numeracy skills of classes 1 and 2? Fortunately, there are solutions in both the papers which can solve the problem if the Government listens to the experts.

Let this be considered a new phenomenon, we have Vinod Raina documenting the exact manner in which voluntary

agencies acted as a pressure group in enforcing change. Perhaps there would have been no Right to Education Act, if the civil society had not fought for it?

We next come to another major failure of the educational system. Santosh Mehrotra, along with an array of experts, examines the data of education and employment during the last two Plan periods and comes to the conclusion that the employment situation is not getting any better.

Mahesh Verma gives the answers when he examines the totally misdirected vocational education programme of the MHRD and the equally ineffective vocational training programme of the Ministry of Labour. Both are busy in an ineffectual turf battle and have failed to produce graduates who are employable. The conundrum has yielded another idea. Skills are being generated by industry on the job. Why not have a National Qualification Network, to formally recognize the skills already acquired? There is an area of massive confusion here, which could possibly yield to a sustained onslaught by the Centre of Governance which has no turf to protect.

We have two comprehensive papers on the higher education system. Furqan Qamar from his perch as the Vice Chancellor of the newly established Central University at Dharamsala in Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh takes us on a guided tour. He analyses what has been wrong with the system all these years despite the many Commissions and Committees that have given their expert advice. He examines the major solutions currently under consideration. His conclusion is pessimistic. The Government has not learnt much from its past failures. What they are trying out is more of the same, which is bound to fail.

Furqan pleads for a totally new look at this sector, so that it could be rid of its antediluvian governance structures, its University Courts, its Chancellors, its Vice Chancellors, all reminiscent of a colonial era and replace it with a lean and mean structure, where powers would not be vested in a few individuals but there would be fully empowered Pro Vice Chancellors and Heads of Department, with the power to

sanction and spend so long as they provided the outcomes. He pleads for transparency, accountability, more funds and infrastructure grants to currently understaffed and ill-equipped universities. Furqan's ideas about improving State Universities & Colleges deserve serious considerstion.These seems to be areas for the Centre for Governance to intervene in.

We also have a learned paper from Kavita Sharma, who takes a look at the Indian higher education system from the point of view of globalization and the emergence of the private sector. There are both challenges and opportunities here and we would do well to bring Kavita's concerns on to a larger platform where these would get the attention they deserve. We hope it will be possible to do so before the already decrepit higher education system of India is swamped by the tidal tsunamis of undirected globalization and misdirected commercialization.

We also have a piece on the whole area of Public Private Partnership (PPP) in education, contributed by B.P.Khandelwal. This is a comprehensive paper in which all kinds of initiatives by the private sector have been analyzed. He has also looked at different models of public-private collaboration. This paper completes the view provided by Kavita's paper and can be used in any future discussions on the subject.

A.K.Merchant writes on the important theme of value education. After a long period of hibernation, the government seems to have woken up to the importance of value education. Perhaps the change of guard at the Secretary's level explains this sudden turnaround (We have not forgotten his definitive statement on Government policy in the National Seminar on Value Education conducted a couple of years back at the Sri Sathya Sai International Centre on Human Values). CBSE has announced a massive input of value education in classes 9 to 12. Whatever be the reason, we are happy at the turnaround. The Centre for Governance should strike before the government changes its mind.

Merchant has cited the example of the Bahai school run at Panchgani, Maharashtra. Panchgani is also the training

ground used by the Initiatives of Change for its training programmes. Senior officers of the IAS, IPS, IRPS and other services have also felt the charm of Panchagani. Elsewhere we also bring you a poem "A Tribute to Panchgani".

All the talk of value education would be just hot air unless we train what B.G.Pitre calls the "Inspiring Teachers". All teacher educators need to pay heed to the mechanism described in this paper for converting dross into precious metal.

Last but not the least, we bring you a brief write-up on the "Padho aur Padhao" project launched by the Anusheel Foundation. This project has undertaken the daunting challenge of educating the inmates of Tihar Jail in Delhi.

While placing this special number on education in the hands of the readers, we are conscious of the fact that we have hardly scratched the surface of a vast subject. We hope to return to you with one more such number in the near future.

M K KAW

SYED SHAHID MAHDI

J. S. Rajput

Curriculum Concerns - 2012

Context

Education is the universally acknowledged key that empowers and opens the doors to every individual to lead a dignified human life that does not suffer from dependence and subjugation. It gives everyone a chance to contribute effectively and creatively to the eternal human quest for a better tomorrow. Elementary education is a fundamental right; it is an essential and necessary ingredient of this right to life. Not everyone needs to go to higher education and hence, school education must prepare learners for life; and for living. It must be noted that education in India was never considered merely as a preparation for earning a living. It was to be a comprehensive process of 'drawing the best out of heart, hand and head. The transformation in value-premise of education is now not only visible but impacting all of its stages. Higher education and professional education focus only on market requirement in a highly competitive environment; every other expectation from education and learning gets relegated to background. Majority now accepts that 'the ultimate goal of higher education is to prepare the learner and thereby the society only to create material wealth'! According to them it is knowledge that creates wealth, so wealth creates knowledge society! Heart and hand are losing their place in scheme of things. It is all mind power and 'future empires shall be the empires of knowledge"! While the curricula of education at various levels may still contain inputs that are supposed to cater to body and spirit in addition to 'mind', in pragmatic reality, even learner attainments are judged by the performance of the mind alone. Current global trends have greatly complicated the process of curriculum development in education at every level. The impact of LPG: liberalization,

privatization and globalization have drastically influenced every area of human action and activity. It has created wealth; but only for a small minority. When one acquires far more than one's legitimate due, others somewhere get deprived of their genuine share. Consequently, the world suffers injustice, deprivation, exploitation, violence and all such avoidable traits that were supposed to diminish considerably if not completely vanish with the advent of universal education. Hence, every aspect of education including its content and process need a thorough scrutiny in specific contexts. The discussion on curriculum follows in this background.

Curriculum for Growth and Survival

Curriculum is one of the most significant of the terms in the vocabulary of the teachers, teacher educators and education policy makers. Its interpretation varies from just a specific course of study to entire gamut of learning in the process of education that draws out the best from 'body, mind and spirit'. It is well "recognized that curriculum is a key element in the educational process; its scope is extremely broad, and it touches virtually everyone who is involved with teaching and learning.[1]" In easily comprehensible terms we could consider a curriculum; as encompassing general education coupled with skill development which; at secondary or postsecondary level; must include works and experiences associated with preparation for life and living. And preparation for life just can never follow a uniform pattern as the same is governed by socio-economic and cultural considerations specific to communities and nations. When ninety percent of India was living in villages, Gandhi gave the curriculum of Basic Education that emphasized productive skills, working with hands and preparation for life in a self-sufficient village that was to offer peace, harmony and tranquility. He wanted the revival of village economic life; and hence his focus on acquiring skills related to village occupations. To him education was primarily the process of character building and an all round development in which earning a living following value-based path was one of many elements. Gandhi quoted Huxley in Hind Swaraj who defined education, referring to an educated person as:

"That man I think has had a liberal education who has been so trained in youth that his body is the ready servant of his will and does with ease and pleasure all the work that as a mechanism it is capable of; whose intellect is clear, cold, logic engine with all its parts of equal strength and in smooth working order… whose mind is stored with a knowledge of the fundamental truths of nature… whose passions are trained to come to heel by a vigorous will, the servant of a tender conscience… who has learnt to hate all vileness and to respect others as himself. Such a one and no other, I conceive, has had a liberal education, for he is in harmony with nature. He will make the best of her and she of him."

In whatever manner one visualizes education in totality; the basic remains the same - preparing a liberal, open minded, broad hearted, committed and sincere person. With changing times, it is only necessary to reframe the strategies in the current terminology Presiding over the Session of the Indian Science Congress held in Pune in January-2000, eminent scientist Dr. R.A. Mashelkar[2] presented a five-point strategy for growth, development and advancement of India and the Indian society;

*Women centered Family
*Child centered education
*Human centered Development
*Community centered society; and
*Innovation centered India

These five elements comprehensively articulate the guidelines for practically every sector of governance. These have the potential to become the key components of deliberations and concretization amongst those entrusted with the task of formulating policies and designing schemes and programmes for proper implementation. The most important component would be the quality of manpower in specific fields, specified sectors and specialized vocations. This quality would depend on the quality of education they receive and, hence, the criticality of a dynamic curriculum.

One of the most important achievements of the 20th century was the global acceptance of the responsibility to

extend elementary education to every child on planet earth irrespective of any conceivable diversity of any dimension[3]. Millions of children world over are still outside the pale of elementary education in spite of sincere and active global efforts to achieve the already-delayed target. While the developed countries were already experiencing the advantages of universal education on which they had developed the edifice of higher, professional and technical education, the newly independent countries faced many problems in persuading communities and diverse sections of their society to appreciate the need for education; both for boys and girls.

Today, this situation has changed drastically in a positive direction. People from every strata of the society now demand not only education for both boys and girls but they insist on "quality education coupled with skill acquisition" that may prepare them to lead a dignified, creative and value-enriched life.

Ever-changing human aspirations and expectations from education were very comprehensively summarized in the 'Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century'[4] which was released in 1996 and retains its validity on the strength of its sheer clarity and foresight to envision the future and relate it pragmatically to the existing global realities including the fast-evolving potential of ICT in the global village: "In confronting the many challenges that the future holds in store, humankind sees in education an indispensible asset in its attempt to attain the ideals of peace, freedom and social justice… education has a fundamental role to play in personal and social development. The commission does not see education as a miracle cure or a magic formula opening the door to a world in which all ideals will be achieved, but as a one principal means available to foster a deeper and more harmonious form of human development and thereby to reduce poverty, exclusion, ignorance and war."

The apprehensions and doubts that were being associated with the new techniques and technologies relevant to educational expansion, learner attainments and skill

acquisition no longer deter people from accepting and adopting change. The shape of classroom has changed. There is self-learning and learning by choice and not in rigidly prescribed formats of time, place and content. There is another aspect that has emerged very prominently and is now a known cause of concern to nations, communities and individuals. The sensitive thread between man and nature stands snapped. From Ozone hole, world has moved to the situation in which even a common citizen appreciates the import of the query: the survival of the planet earth is at stake!

In the national context everyone knows with rather personal familiarity that our rivers and forests are vanishing, mining and extraction of mineral resources is playing havoc with the lives of people. The glare and glamour of materialistic pursuits have relegated spiritual quests to some isolated corner. The expectation was that expansion of educational access would result in advancement of human values that are common to every civilization, region, faith and religion. In principle none questions the universality of Truth, Peace, Nonviolence, Righteous Conduct; and Love[5]. In practice, there was never so much of violence, distrust, bigotry, hunger, poverty, preparation for war in the name of strategic readiness! Nations with millions of their hungry citizens living inhuman lives spend beyond their capacity on deterrent readiness against a possible attack from outside! On the other side even a ten-year old is now told by all around him that we are living in a global village! It is also well known that never before human beings had gained so much knowledge of the forces of nature as now. This knowledge and the techniques and technologies derived out of it by human beings through their own endeavour and ingenuity have all the potential to ensure a dignified life to every human being irrespective of any conceivable diversity. Why this is not happening is the most pertinent question before education of today and tomorrow.

Equality, Human Dignity and Justice

One of the most outstanding features of the Indian freedom struggle was its excessive emphasis, for genuine

reasons; on universalizing elementary education. Gandhi had realized it when he was in South Africa and he realized it through inflictions of insults and humiliations on his physical self and mental makeup. He was a visionary and instead of limiting these to himself, an individual, he extended it to all his countrymen and then to the deprived and depressed everywhere on the globe. He realized how simply because of illiteracy and ignorance, a vast majority of human beings is deprived of its basic natural and fundamental rights and how because of it, injustice and exploitation takes shape as inhuman cruelties that billions have suffered for ages. When he was in the thick of the freedom struggle, he became more concerned about education and its content. He wrote on January 24, 1922

"We should remember that immediately on the attainment of freedom our people are not going to secure happiness. As we become independent, all the defects of the system of elections, injustice, the tyranny of the richer classes as also the burden of running administration are bound to come upon us. People would begin to feel that during those days, there was more justice, there was better administration, there was peace, and there was honesty to a great extent among the administrators compared to the days after independence. The only benefit of independence, however, would be that we would get rid of slavery and the blot of insult resulting there from."

"But there is hope, if education spreads throughout the country. From that people would develop from their childhood qualities of pure conduct, God fearing love. Swaraj would give us happiness only when we attain success in the task. Otherwise India would become the abode for grave injustice and tyranny of the rulers."

As the world became a global village, strangely enough, the complexities of life and human relationships have experienced far more tension and turmoil than ever before. The expansion of education did not result in proportionate acceptance and internalization of the values of brotherhood and eternal human unity Articulation of these complexities has to be matched with the advances in sciences and consequent technologies to establish a balance between limitations of human endeavour and aspirations that often become limitless in the absence

of reason and logic. While education passes on the essence of knowledge gained over centuries by various civilizations, its main task is to prepare citizens of tomorrow who would care for the future of the planet earth and towards that would realize how essential it is to maintain cordiality of human existence on one hand and prevent any further deterioration of the bonds between man and nature. It is a tough task to develop the content and process of education that would respond to current requirements and, more importantly, create a future worth living, living in peace, religious harmony and brotherhood. The curriculum of education has to remain ever-dynamic and responsive.

Curriculum Development and Transaction

Young people are told that the "World is Flat"[6]. India, in eyes of external demographers is passing through a golden period of demographic advantage as the ageing nations of the world are waiting for Indian young persons who would constitute over 65 percent of its population to look after their manpower needs. Consequently, the curriculum of education at every stage has to encompass these and related challenges prominently in its ambit and ensure its extension to the process and pedagogy of teaching and learning. The issues of morals, ethics and values are under debate and discussion practically on daily basis everywhere but not much of the outcomes are really seen in practice. The process of educational expansion has faced several problems which could be analyzed to find out why the deterioration in quality has become a matter of concern and why the 'only ray of hope' has not shown the path towards peace and tranquility? Independent India had its priorities clearly cut out for governance: rehabilitation of the displaced from Pakistan; hunger, poverty, and shelter, health and all that a newly independent nation exploited and resource-squeezed for centuries would face. Education obviously lacked requisite resource inputs and, in spite of best intentions, delays and dilutions became inevitable. Even now, most of the schools lack basic amenities including acute shortage of teachers. Declining interest amongst the bright and brilliant young persons for the teaching profession, inadequate support systems for innovations and research,

exodus of the worthy to greener pastures abroad are factors relevant to the total process of teaching and learning at every stage. Clearly the curriculum transaction also requires well-oiled support system. Even if the curriculum incorporates all that it could, its effective transaction shall always depend on available infrastructure, quality of teachers; policies and the commitment of those who formulate these policies. It is now well established that India continued with its inherited system and structure of education after independence. It was designed for a few as that alone was the requirement of the alien rulers. When such a system is universalized for all by a nation, cracks are bound to develop and systemic failures are inevitable. The diminishing credibility of government schools is one of the consequences of this 'continuity' and is known to all. Privatization in education should normally be welcome as it indicates people's interest and willingness to contribute to the cause of education and preparing better citizens for tomorrow. This was the traditional Indian approach in establishing schools and higher education institutions. The current trend in privatization in education is a different story. Education and health are considered the most secure areas of investment that ensure assured returns at high level. Now the anomaly in the education system at this juncture is characterized by resource squeeze, faculty shortage, commercialization and scant regard for the personality development aspects of the learner. It would be naïve to assume that a fulsome curriculum transaction would not be impacted by the presence of these debilitating factors. Curriculum developers have to take note of these factors as well. The techniques and technologies that are ever-evolving under the impact of the ICT are not necessarily reaching the teachers and teacher educators at the same pace. While some of the institutions are well-equipped and sufficiently resourceful to acquire and utilize, through proper training of the staff, all that is new and advantageous, most of the schools lag behind. Wide gaps exist in curriculum implementation at the grassroots level and this trend is on the increase. Learner attainment studies often present a dismal picture on the part of majority of the learners and it is a cause of worry for everyone. The principles

of equality, equity, social justice and comparability of levels of learning get clouded under these conditions. Hence, some products of schooling are deficient as compared to others for no fault of theirs. Curriculum developers often rue that they are not in a position to take note of these extraneous factors. To some extent they may be right but a harmonious blend of the expectations and reality has to be established by the policy formulators and implementers. Curriculum developers must interact with them apart from receiving research and survey inputs of the previous cycle.

NCERT Curriculum Frameworks

Curriculum developers of today must also realize that the relationship between teacher and learner remains powerful even in current times when learning and knowledge can be acquired from a variety of ways. New technologies are now acknowledged as effective but majority amongst teachers have yet to acquire and master these. Over the last four-five decades, the terms like joyful learning, learner centered teaching, constructivist approach, learning by doing have come under public discourse prominently. All of these have contributed in efforts to make the curricula more relevant and responsive to the demands of the times. It must be acknowledged that the NCERT through its curriculum frameworks of 1975[7] and 1988[8] contributed greatly in generating awareness on critical concerns like environmental degradation, gender sensitivity, child marriages, value inculcation, national integration and social cohesion. In addition, the National Curriculum Framework of School Education NCFSE-2000[9] highlighted the national goals of secularism, democracy, justice including gender justice; social cohesion and religious amity. It also aimed at developing respect for human rights and an attitude to perform fundamental duties with commitment and sincerity. The weaker sections including SC/ST, women, children with impairments and minorities can no longer be ignored to remain underprivileged. It highlighted how education could contribute to their upliftment and empowerment. It acknowledged the need for and significance of the local knowledge; the knowledge that students bring with them;

criticality of life skills; lifelong learning, internalization of the need to contribute to social cohesion and religious amity. It also emphasized on value inculcation and character building. It took note of the tension between materialistic pursuits overshadowing spiritual quest that has been leading the human advancement in every civilization. The next National Curriculum Framework[10]; NCF-2005: again brought by the NCERT; highlighted aims of education in the contemporary context and prominently included: independence of thought and action; sensitivity to other's well being; response to new situations; predisposition towards participation in democratic process; and readiness for participation in economic process and social change. Towards this, it emphasized the need for a curriculum that 'goes beyond the textbook. Essentially, the basics of curriculum framework are governed more by the external happenings and developments and hence the curriculum is process of mutual support and assistance of what happens in the classrooms and how that and the learner interact then and in life with the externals. The ingenuity of the curriculum developer, its implementer and its evaluator depends on how far they assimilate the 'current' epistemology and put it in action.

Curriculum for Quality- Education

Essentially every cycle of curriculum development and renewal aims at enhancing the quality of education to every learner without any discrimination. In actual practice every learner receives the curriculum as is visualized and imbibed by the individual depending upon one's interest, orientations and capabilities. The curriculum when transacted derives its efficacy from several factors that include learning environment, pedagogy adopted and the competence, commitment and professional readiness of the teacher. Further, it is significant to know that every learner brings his/her own learning. It could be derived from socio-economic and cultural factors. It could include hunger, malnutrition, traumas, absence of love and care or an excellent upbringing in initial years. The diversity of individual learning experiences enriches the group's own knowledge and the teacher has to build upon it

as delicately and in as harmonious a manner as is within his/her competence. Primarily, the process, environment and the content are critical. Further, to remain pragmatic in their formulations, resources, management and administrative systems, monitoring and evaluation systems and procedures are major considerations before curriculum developers. The quality concerns could also be expressed as:

"A high quality education therefore, implies an environment that actively seeks out learners and assists them to learn-using a wide range of modalities, recognizing that learner is linked to experience, language and cultural practices, gifts, traits and interests. Such an approach recognizes that people learn in different ways, each emphasizing different senses and abilities.

A high quality education also welcomes the learner adapting to meet learning needs. It is inclusive and it strives to ensure that all learners, regardless of sex, age, language, religion and ethnicity are reached, and that they have the possibility of participating in, and learning from, organized learner activities.[11]"

Every learner brings with her/him a large amount of learning and it becomes the learning brought by the group in which he/she participates. Huge amount of diversities in characteristics, skills, conditions and situations could be determined in understanding it. Some of these may not necessarily be conducive to learning ahead in a formalized manner. It poses a serious challenge to the ingenuity not only of the teacher but also remains a significant concern before curriculum policy makers and curriculum developers as it impacts both the content and pedagogy. It has to be pragmatically recognized that it is no longer valid to emphasize only 'one learning style' but to accept that there are 'preferred learning styles'. In developing countries it has posed serious practical concerns. Initial attempts to have a uniform syllabus or a textbook that ignores local/regional elements of curricula have contributed to lack of interest in continuing in schools contributing effectively to the dropout rates. Such considerations obviously require professionally competent

teachers who use learner-centered pedagogical strategies and skill acquisition approaches. There has to be sufficient anticipation of a learning environment in which learners are able to express themselves; their views, thoughts and ideas; without hesitation and invariably remain an active partner in the entire process of teaching and learning resulting from the efforts of the curriculum developers.

Envisioning the Second Decade

High expectations from curriculum development and its renewal would be met only when the strength of the process of curriculum development is articulated scientifically and has the potential to analyze and sift all the inputs that must be received from all possible quarters that have any relationship to those golden words: aspirations, expectations, progress and development. The process has to be locally/ regionally appropriate and relevant; in the absence of which the subsequent development of the syllabus and learning outcomes would be impacted in credibility and acceptability apart from its utility. Curriculum change no more remains confined to educators and educational experts only. It is imperative to ensure detailed consultations with general public and local experts and newly emerging areas which are impacting life and labour market in the globalized world. It would require considerable ingenuity to balance the priorities of various groups. It would also be equally tough to get rid of what has become obsolete and to bring in what has become presently relevant and; what would be impacting far more in years to come. Hence the significance of lifelong learning and acquisition of new skills are the most prominent of the challenges before curriculum developers.

Schooling of fixed years is now a process of lifelong learning; hence the process of curriculum development must incorporate the necessary elements to equip the learner accordingly. Certain basic elements have to be part of the process: From teaching it is now learning; it is no more transfer of facts but student's construction of knowledge; memorization of information beyond certain initial stages is

unacceptable as it has to be analysis, synthesis, evaluation and application. World over, now emphasis is on learner attainments; and that too in terms of totality of the process of growing up. Parents and the doyens of the employment market are now asking questions about personality traits, value internalization, capacity to face complex situations, willingness to accept new challenges and keenness to innovate even in adverse circumstances. Hence curriculum is no more a mere product but both "as process and product.[12] Now it has to be interactive methodology that must take into account the round-the –clock presence of the ICT around the learner. The shape of classroom has changed and one could say it extends itself beyond any definable boundaries.

In the gamut of human endeavor, activities, aspirations, complexities of living and relationships, expectations and concerns to see family advancing ahead in a world that values peace and harmony; curriculum developers must delineate certain specific aims, objectives and strategies to proceed ahead in their task. In such an articulation the following shall certainly find a place

1. Knowledge is to be acquired from various sources and through varying styles and strategies; thus extending the scope of curriculum far beyond the classrooms;
2. In the times of ever-increasing complexities, the skills and attitude to tackle unforeseen situations through innovative and creative capabilities must be acquired and internalized;
3. Eternal human values of Truth, Peace, Nonviolence, Righteous Conduct and Love are the critical key to a world that believes in peace and harmony;
4. Learning requires concentration and attention but it must not be made burdensome. Instead, every effort must be made to make it learner friendly and interesting to generate interest in further learning including self-learning;
5. Respect for democratic values, the universality of 'serving and caring for others who are in need' and keenness to perform fundamental duties honestly to ensure that

everyone gets his/her rights remains one of the most sought after goals;

6. A sense of pride in the national culture, heritage, literature, scriptures, , contributions to world civilizations and proud moments of history must find a place in the curriculum;
7. Future generations are to be prepared for making significant contributions in the elimination of poverty, ignorance, ill-health, casteism; dowry; untouchabilty, violence, bigotry;
8. The citizens of tomorrow shall have an added responsibility, irrespective of their stations of work, to contribute in ensuring justice, health, community cohesion and generating awareness to shun unscientific and injurious practices;
9. Curriculum must leave enough scope for nurturance and sustenance of multiple talents and creativity amongst all learners in various domains of knowledge;
10. Freedom, flexibility, relevance and transparency in the selection of content, transaction and procedures at each stage of education;

It is always possible to reword the above formulation but what matters is the totality of the aims and objectives and their potential to enhance the dynamism and capacity to respond to change in education.

Specific Inputs

Curriculum policies as also the curriculum development and renewal are ever-dynamic processes that lose their efficacy if the process of assessing the possible impact of external changes on education gets diluted for any reason at any stage. The curriculum in 2012 in India must make children aware of the gaps that are being created in the society consequent to the present economic policies and various agreements pertaining to liberalization and privatization. The promise of social justice and equality of opportunity is just getting obliterated. In the name of economic advancement and inviting investment, the

state acquires farmer land at a pittance under one clause and allocates it to money-bags for their farm houses! It is a sensitive issue, but people must get their rights and educated citizens must come to the rescue of those who may otherwise never get justice; as in this example in which farmers have illegally been made landless and; thereby totally resourceless. How can they get justice in a system which is known for its delays and long durations? The aspects of social cohesion, mutual trust and sense of justice can come in only when education prominently focuses on high quality. "Nothing short of excellence in every aspect of school education is the first imperative for meeting the multifarious challenges of today and tomorrow. In other words, the curriculum must stand on the three pillars of relevance, equality and excellence[13]". Enriching the curriculum so that it goes beyond textbooks and connecting knowledge to life outside school were emphasized in the National Curriculum Framework prepared in 2005.[14]

Biases and imbalances still exist in Indian society in spite of constitutional provisions made over 62 years ago and serious efforts made in pursuance of the same by enactment of several relevant legal provisions and Acts of Parliament. Rural urban divide on one hand and that between the rich and poor on the other is increasing. Further, caste, religion, ideology, gender, region, language etc. continue to be unscrupulously used to favor or to seek favors. With the Right to Education RTE-Act having come in force for over two years, one expects that such discriminations and biases shall be eliminated from education. The curriculum must create an awareness of the provisions of equality which if tempered with must be asked for as a constitutional right by the aggrieved person. Curriculum could be strong vehicle to remove prejudices and complexes that have deprived billions of their fundamental rights over centuries.

Equality amongst sexes is a fundamental right guaranteed under the Constitution of India. The state has been empowered to exercise positive protective discrimination in favor of the disadvantaged, deprived and deficient. The 1968 Policy on Education opened the way for teaching of science

and mathematics for both boys and girls during the first ten years in school. It was a forward looking bold step which has paid rich dividends to the nation and opened up opportunities to millions and millions of girls after the NCERT curriculum framework of 1975 was made available to all the states and school boards. There was added emphasis in the National Policy on Education 1986/92 which moved to 'education for women's equality and empowerment'. The curriculum has to take note of this aspect and particularly ensure that its transaction would be before more and more rural girls. India needs gender inclusive and gender sensitive curricular strategies to nurture a generation of boys and girls who are equally competent and are sensitive to one another, and grow up in a caring and sharing mode as equals, Education of learners with special needs requires special pedagogy and investigation into individual aptitudes and requirements. Similarly specific considerations for the learners from disadvantaged groups are necessary. Likewise, no nation can ignore the responsibility of identifying the talented and nurturing them, if necessary in separate establishments and schools or institutions. Curriculum development now also comes under pressure from certain quarters which make specific demands. These may come from green activists, voluntary agencies working against drug abuse, or for children's rights; human rights; population and family life education; consumer protection; legal literacy; education of the migrants; peace education; rights of the tribal people and so many other aspects. It is a serious exercise to weigh the suitability of suggested inputs and at the same time ensure that curriculum does not become a load. Under no conditions, curriculum is allowed to extend beyond the physical and mental capacities of the learners of each stage. One of the strategies that help is that of relating education to world of work which begins right from initial years and could be suitably pursued further. Mahatma Gandhi's dream of 'thinking fingers' could be realized in this approach. One of the prominent outcomes would be the genuine respect for work of every level and variety. The total scheme of teaching, learning and working must also provide opportunities to the learner to 'construct knowledge'. According to the NCFSE-2000: "The

acquisition of knowledge through active involvement with content and not imitation or memorization of the material is at the root of construction of knowledge. In the constructivist setting the learners have autonomy for their own learning, opportunities for peer collaboration and support occasion for learner generated problems that drive the curriculum, time for self observation and evaluation and also for reflection". The teacher becomes a facilitator of learning and tends to act as such ensuring availability of resources and enabling them to decide how to learn and why to learn. It is the responsibility of the curriculum developers to ensure the transactional feasibility of the key elements of cognition emotion and action. The multiple intelligence approach offers learners opportunities to explore significant concepts and topics and to think about them on their own in many ways and to make sense of what they find or infer.

Strengthening of national identity remains relevant and pertinent as ever before even in times when certain sections are swayed away by the glare and glamour of the Western culture of materialistic accumulation and unbridled consumerism. In this effort considerable part could be played by integrating indigenous knowledge with the modern scientific advancements wherever possible. India's response to the impact of globalization would, in such a case, be more sound, logical and non-injurious. Responding to the phenomenon of globalization would lead to new scope emerging for traditional disciplines of social sciences and foreign languages. Further new approach to areas like active citizenship and human rights, environmental issues and common core of human values that would create a world imbued with social cohesion and fully prepared and equipped 'to live together' and respect diversities of all the conceivable varieties. ICT is to be appropriately infused and the curriculum of tomorrow shall give greater space and attention to linking education to life skills. The overarching umbrella of value nurturance, moral upliftment and developing aesthetic sensibilities shall always guide every action and interaction. Education in every nation must have its deep roots in the culture and heritage of the nation. Curriculum planning should ever remain conscious

that the general principle of education everywhere being 'rooted to culture and committe to progress'. The secular fabric that India has successfully woven for over two thousand years in the recorded history is its most outstanding possession. Initial acquisition of knowledge and skills must also all along take cognizance of the need to connect the processes to society and life outside the learning formal education centre. Learning extends far beyond knowing and doing, essential though these two are. In life the criticality of 'learning to be' and learning to become 'shall have a real supportive role in 'learning to live together'.

Evaluation and Managing the Curriculum Change

It has always been stated the single most significant reform in education should relate to evaluation system. The annual single Board examination has proved ruinous to millions and millions of learners each year. Now things are changing. The class ten Board examinations have been made optional; grading system in place of marks has been introduced; and at the elementary stage no failure system has been introduced. Pedagogically correct both of these are causing severe anxiety at the implementation stage. If teachers are not trained, system suffers from teacher absenteeism and the teacher taught ratio is heavily skewed, it would be impossible to look after the individual learning needs and all the advantages of continuous and comprehensive evaluation would be lost. Same would be the fate of recommendations like laying stress on mastery learning approach by using diagnosis and remediation for weaker students and enrichment inputs for the brighter ones. Use of different methods of grading scholastic and co-scholastic areas would also become non-implementable. Alternative evaluation procedures for learners with special needs, record keeping and reporting; peer evaluation and all such suggestions do require trained teachers who work in a congenial environment and have sufficient time and willingness to perform these tasks. Practically each of the curriculum frameworks emphasizes the need for reforms but mere articulation has little meaning unless the support system in right measure is in place and functional in real

practice. Introduction of new pedagogy and assimilation of new technology requires huge training programmes for in-service teachers and drastic changes in the curriculum of pre-service teacher preparation programmes.

Gradually it is being realized that curriculum change and renewal suffers every time due to deficiencies that are perennially known. The impact of any curriculum change hinges mainly on the following:

1. Dynamic nature of the curriculum that offers opportunity to the inclusion of the local element of the curriculum; encourages the teacher to innovate and ensure learner participation.
2. Encouragement to the utilization of environment and community resources;
3. Strong systemic support including availability of infrastructure, equipment, teachers in adequate numbers and arrangements for their training at regular intervals.
4. Committed immediate management support.
5. Strong political will and insight.
6. Teachers' understanding of the aims and objectives of the curricular changes.
7. Availability of adequate teaching learning materials including multimedia packages.
8. Monitoring mechanisms to provide remedial inputs to teachers
9. Institutional arrangements to keep teachers aware of relevant inferences emerging out of research and surveys.
10. Enhancing teachers' self-confidence as curriculum developers and associating some of them in the process at state/national levels.

The challenge before the Indian education system is to implement the recommendations that already exist beginning prominently from the report of the National Commission on Education of 1964-66 to this date. While these have been

rightly revisited on several occasions through policy changes and curriculum renewals; the implementation strategies have never shown desired level of keenness to ensure implementation with commitment. If that could be ensured, the outcomes in quality and learner attainment would show remarkable improvement.

Notes:-

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N.K. Ambasht

Age Appropriate Admission Under Right to Education Act: Policy Implications

Indtroduction

The Right to Education Act provides for right of admission to every child to the class appropriate to his age, without regard to his/her previous schooling. The child has to cope up, within a short and yet reasonable period of time, to come up to the levels of the peers in the respective classes. This throws up many problems of far reaching implications than meets the eye at the first glance .The abolition of promotional examinations may imply that each child progresses according to her/his own pace of learning. A whole range of challenges, both to educational planners and teachers, have been thrown to the system, calling for serious consideration of the implications. These need to be addressed systematically and logically by institutions responsible for developing wherewithal necessary for right implementation, to avoid the danger of wrong implementation and declaring a right intention as impractical. Particularly, the organizations like the NCERT, SCERTs and DIETs need to be prepared to handle the issues arising out of this simple looking and right meaning initiative.

The Act provides for admission of the child to the class that (s)he should have been had (s)he been admitted to class I at the age of 6. Thus a child who never went to a school or dropped out in between before completing Class VIII has to be admitted to the class relevant to her/his age.

Implications

It will be immediately obvious that the implications are many and multi dimensional. Whereas it throws the challenge

of taking the child from initial level of learning to the desired level of entry to the appropriate class, it also provides for the opportunities of harnessing the experiential learning, with or without formal school learning. Let us examine these for possibilities of a child who never went to school but has grown up learning in the society and operating in it, for a number of years ranging from 2 to 7 years. Also take the child who went to school up to class 1,2, 3,…and dropped out and has been out of school for the last 1,2,3,4,5 years. Thus a straight jacketed approach will not be applicable in each case. We will have to examine what are the assets of the mature child and what are his/her deficiencies due to absence of or partial formal learning.

Assets with the Child

The child's major assets are related to the factors of age maturity and experiential learning.

So the matrices would be:

- extent of previous schooling if any,
- extent of experiential informal learning,'-age- maturity
- better psycho-motor control
- experience of the socio cultural milieu,
- using the practical aspects of formal learning.

The educational planners will have to take into account these assets available with this kind of child and make the best use of these while planning a remedial program for them. It also implies that this will have to be modular in nature as profile of such children will be different from one another depending on the differences on the above noted parameters Therefore, it may be necessary to have an entry level profile of each of such children, This would further lead to the necessity of adoption of individualized instruction method. Also such children, having been exposed to process of more intense socialization will have faster pace of learning after starting hiccups of literacy and numeracy skills. The learning graph

of such children shoots up at a much faster rate than usual school children

Experiments made by this author in practical situation at the Sri Sathya Sai Primary School of The Sathya Sai International Centre for Human Values New Delhi have amply demonstrated the effectiveness of this approach where such drop out or un-enrolled children had completed the full primary five year course in much shorter duration ranging from six months to one and half years. Multi grade teaching was adopted and it was seen that a child was at different grade levels in different school subjects simultaneously.

Thus each child was subjected to individualized instruction. It was also seen that a child could be, say, at grade one level in mathematics, grade two level in language and grade four level in social science .The teacher of a usual school does not have the training or capacities to adopt these techniques and methods. They will have to be prepared for the task implied, for meaningful implementation of the RTE Act imperatives.

Challenges

A mass scale teacher reorientation programme will have to be launched after preparing a very comprehensive and yet simple training manual which will take into account the following aspects:

Learners entry level profile

The Minimum Levels of Learning, developed by the NCERT for the primary stage will have to revisited and revised to club various learning outcomes. Also, these will have to be developed for the classes VI to VIII . Once this has been done, the teachers will have to be trained to assess the entry level profile of each child on the MLL chart of each subject and plot the progression every week in terms of competencies attained by the respective child

Assessing the previous learning, multi dimensional matrices

Assessing the previous learning may be at two levels namely at oral level and at written level. The child may be well

adept in using mathematical concepts of addition, subtraction, multiplication, division etc and yet may not be able to put it down in writing with proper notations. Thus the teaching challenge will be limited to introducing and practicing the use of proper notation. Similarly the child may be able to understand and articulate concept of family, neighborhood etc but may not be able to express the same in proper written form with paragraphing etc. The challenge for the teacher is to take advantage of the experiential learning and harnessing it to formal learning. Therefore, the dimensions are varied in every subject and one has to take into cognizance the previous learning of each child and devise strategies for them at individual level, subject wise.

Remedial Teaching programs

The teaching methodology will, therefore, be individualized and will be remedial in character and spirit, taking advantage of the child's age, maturity and experience of operating in the society. This will therefore imply a shift from the classroom teaching where the group of learners is the point of focus of teaching. It is well known that present day teacher directs his teaching to the average student and the very bright or slow learners are out of his or her purview .Here the individual learner has to be addressed and the approach has to be diagnostic and remedial in nature

The profile

The profile of each learner will have to charted with the assets and deficiencies, weekly progress record which have to be maintained of the individual learner .The progression of the learner in each subject will be charted every week and when the child has reached the end of the continuum of the Minimum Levels of Learning (MLL) in each subject, the learner has attained the goal of the concerned class and may now proceed with the rest of the group

Task Ahead

Therefore, the task before us is developing MLLs for the entire elementary stage, building on the previous experience of primary level. This will have to be revisited for grouping

some of the competencies into rational learning units. These could be in the following domains.

Bridge courses

The bridge courses for such students will have to be modular in nature and will be offered to the students as per their individual needs. Thus the package will be individualized to specific need of the child.

The teacher will have to be empowered with the tools and technique of identifying the needs of individual learners The teacher education curriculum will have to be looked at once again. Mass orientation programs may have to be developed using multi- media approach augmenting face to face interaction in a planned manner.

Integrated approach

In such type of approach where previous learning in different subjects is at different levels, subject wise approach may not be congenial. Since the child has grown in a holistic experience, fragmented subject wise approach is not congenial. Experience related learning episodes may be useful signifying the synthetic approach as contrasted with analytical fragmented subject wise approach. Thus, language, science, mathematics and social science could find expression in one or two learning episodes.

Minimum Levels of Learning

The Minimum Levels of Learning (MLL) for Primary Stage was a very useful conceptual approach propounded and executed by the NCERT. Of course, there were certain points of criticism and these could have been addressed had it not been abandoned and terminated at primary level only. There is a need to give it a fresh look, revise it to make it more holistic and extend this to cover the elementary stage as a whole, in the light of the imperatives of the RTE Act 2009.

Individualized instructions

Of necessity the requirement will be to address the specific learning needs of each individual child in each subject area.

Thus one cannot escape the individualized instruction method, if the imperatives of the Act are to be addressed sincerely. We have already indicated it earlier in this paper.

Learning materials

As mentioned earlier, the learning materials will have to be developed appropriately to the requirements of individualized instruction. There could be self learning materials such as charts, comic book style learning materials, play way learning materials, game book and of course textual materials. Looking at the vastness of the country and the varied levels of infrastructural developments, e- learning or use of TV, Internet may be adopted wherever possible, but should not become fundamental necessity until such time every school in the remotest village has such working facility. We, therefore, need to undertake this task of preparing modular learning materials on priority basis.

Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE)

Since the child's progress in each subject will be at different pace depending on his/her previous learning and experiences. The pace of learning will be at variance not only with respect to the pers on but also with respect to subjects. The evaluation, therefore, will have to be continuous and comprehensive at the same time.

Progression according to learning

If we implement the above, it would emerge that the child's progress in different areas of learning will be at varying pace .Therefore, CCE becomes all the more relevant. So the terminal set of competencies at the end of elementary level become seminal and intermediate stages of class wise competencies will lose their significance. Each child will progress according to its pace of learning and will progress to next level. The concept of classes may therefore become redundant to be gradually replaced by levels of learning in each area. .

Teacher Preparation and Training

Teacher's orientation will have to be drastically changed if these are put into practice. As mentioned above we may have to adopt a large- scale in- service teacher orientation programme. Simultaneously, we will have to give fresh look to the Elementary Teacher Education curriculum and incorporate these elements so that future teachers are equipped with necessary knowledge and skills to face the challenges that they will be confronted with.

Merging Challenges for Curriculum Planners and Policy Developers

The implementation of this simple statement that each child will be admitted to age specific class has much wider and deeper implications than is ordinarily thought. The work will have to start at the level of organizations like the NCERT, SCERTs and NCTE. It is high time that a debate on the implications of enforcing the act and concomitant initiatives in the directions suggested above are undertaken. The entire elementary level curriculum, with an integrated approach will have to be undertaken. A relook into Primary stage Minimum Levels of Learning to compress the levels into more reasonable and practical competencies and extension of Primary Level MLLs to cover the elementary level are imperative. Based on the competencies, CCE strategies will have to be developed. Modular learning materials will have to be developed as suggested earlier in this paper. Strategies for policy implementation may have to be enunciated and operationalised.

Conclusion

The RTE stipulation calls for urgent initiatives on behalf of the Governments, educational bodies like the NCERT, SCERTs, DIETs, NCTE and various NGOs involved in the task to consider the implications of the innocuous stipulation under the Act and start work in right earnest. If we do not wake up to this call for age appropriate admission as stipulated in the Act, we will be left with nothing but failure

because we have not applied our mind to its implications. This may be a wake- up call to all the educational planners, thinkers and implementers. Also it may lead us to rethink the entire approach in the formal elementary stage, adopting the above modular, appropriately paced learning, synthetic and experiential ,life- related system as against bookish rote memorization examination oriented system. Thus a simple statement in the RTE Act should lead to a much desired and awaited reform in Elementary Education.

Madhav Chavan & Rukmini Banerji

The Challenge of Achieving Desirable Levels of Learning in Elementary Education

The background

Is there such a thing as desirable levels of learning? This question pits the pro-measurement people versus the anti-measurement people around the globe and more recently in India. India has experimented with prescription of Minimum Levels of Learning to the point that during training sessions in Maharashtra teachers were often asked to answer from memory what competency 2.3.7, for example, stood for. After an initial burst of enthusiasm, the whole thing just disappeared, perhaps to the relief of all teachers and officers, good or bad. It was an exercise in extremely centralized micromanagement that went nowhere. Today we seem to have gone to the other extreme where the governments and their academic authorities shy away from saying anything about what children should have learned, say, by the end of eight years of schooling. We have laws guaranteeing education but silent about guaranteeing learning. The teacher is supposed to conduct continuous comprehensive evaluation of children in the class and not conduct examinations, which is not bad at all. However if this assessment iis anchored in the textbook -led grade -level curriculum, then it defeats the very purpose for which it was conceived.

The Indian Constitution was amended in 2002; the child who entered school then is 15 or 16 years old today. The child who entered school when NCF2005 was created is entering Std 7-8 this year. The one who entered school when the Right to Education Act was passed in 2009, is entering Std 3-4 today. Is the destiny of the child entering school in 2012 going

to be shaped any differently by education than that of the child who entered school ten years ago? Here, destiny is not a supernatural phenomenon but the probability of a child in a remote village in or a highly deprived urban slum in India succeeding in getting a skilled job or entering an institution of higher learning as a result of better education available to him or her. Jobs and opportunities are said to be opening up in large numbers as the economy grows and somehow more and more young people are getting there. But, does school education play a role in this?

The evidence

India entered two sacrificial lambs, Tamil Nadu and Himachal Pradesh, in the PISA 2009+ tests (PISA stands for OECD's Program for International Student Assessment). The results of these tests in which there were 75 participants, including the above two from India, put the Indian students at the absolute and relative bottom of the heap. The PISA rankings put Kyrgyztan at number 75 and our two states at number 73 and 74 but the scores chart also says that sampling in the Indian states was not up to PISA standards. This means we ran the race, came second last, and then failed the drugs test. Just the ranking is not enough to understand how bad the situation is. PISA has five levels of reading and math literacy ranging from 1 to 5. On this ladder, the nodal score of Indian students is at 1b, the lowest possible for reading literacy and 1 for math literacy. Further, it has to be understood, that the sample for the assessment was drawn from all those 15 year olds who have survived in school up to this age. So, all those who discontinued education for one reason or another are not even a part of the sample. Only about 17% of these sampled students were found to be at the threshold of acceptable reading and math literacy as per international standards. That would make it about 7-8% of all Indian children of age 15.

These test results created a stir in the media. However, what is more interesting is that even after one year of declaration of these results, no government source has said what they plan to do to improve the situation. First, asking the

students to participate without preparation was a bad idea. The reading literacy test does not stop at basic fact retrieval from texts but goes beyond to assess if the student can make connections between statements in the text and arrive at reasoned inferences and conclusions. This is something Indian students are just not used to. Hence, even if children were fluent readers, it is possible that they had no clue how to go about answering the questions. Second, now that we know how bad our scores are, not doing anything about it means that the government was not serious about this assessment at all. It is quite apparent that in the Government of India the Ministry responsible for school education does not believe in assessment while the Planning Commission does. It appears that the sacrificial lambs were sent into the assessment to satisfy the Planning Commission and nothing more.

The PISA assessment results are not surprising at all

From 2005, a much lower level assessment of reading ability has been conducted by ASER for all rural districts in India. ASER shows that about 50% children in Std 5 across India can read Std 2 level texts or higher but the rest are lagging far behind. The ASER numeracy test also for Std 5 shows that barely 28% children can do long division while 38% can just about recognize numbers up to 100 but cannot do even a subtraction with borrowing. With this dismal base of learning, how much can our children achieve as they get older and move into higher grades?

There is a fair amount of other rigorous large scale empirical evidence on children's learning outcomes that has been accumulating in India over the last five to ten years. What does all this evidence tell us?

First, regardless of how learning is measured, the levels in India are woefully inadequate. For basic learning outcomes as mentioned above, each year from 2005 onwards, for all rural districts in India, ASER data repeatedly has pointed to a harsh and unchanging fact of elementary education in our country - close to half of all Indian children even after five years of schooling are unable to read fluently or do basic

arithmetic operations.[1] These figures have remained relatively unchanged over time; and as a result it has been said that India is in a "big stuck".[2] If we consider NCERT (i.e the Union Government's measurement) periodic assessment of learning levels in different grades at different points in time, the broad picture is similar; average scores by subject are not impressive and there is little improvement over time.[3] Further, if we look at assessments done by Education Initiatives of elite English medium schools in metro areas, we find that while these children satisfactorily perform tasks that are anchored in the curriculum or are based on rote learning, they do not do well on tasks that require any critical thinking skills.[4] The recent PISA assessments also show that Indian teenagers are far behind their counterparts in many other countries in terms of analyzing, communicating and reasoning skills.[5]

Second, although children's learning level may be low in any given grade, as they move from one grade to the next, more children advance to higher learning levels . For example, a study that followed a cohort of 24,000 Std 2 and Std 4 students over 18 months found that there is improvement in our children's performance across all tasks over time. However, these gains were far lower and slower than what is expected of children in each grade.[6] Also, it should be noted that while in each cohort more and more children are able to perform the next level tasks with passage of time and school attendance, the percentage of children who reach a level of say Std 2 level reading by Std 4 remains the same for each cohort. The productivity or effectiveness of the system to convert non-readers to readers or less able to more able remains unchanged.

Using data from ASER, from Education Initiatives and from APRest (a set of studies in Andhra Pradesh), the economist, Lant Pritchett, constructs learning profiles of children over time. Each of these data sets shows that the gain in learning year on year is slow and that the trajectory of learning improvement is shallow.[7] In his own words, "I also find this formulation of the learning problem - that three out of four don't learn enough to pass a low threshold in a year -

the most stark and striking."

Why is this the case? Why are we unable to teach our children even the basics over five years? What are some of the realities in our schools that get in the way of effective teaching and learning?

According to DISE reports for 2010-11, 13% of rural primary schools have less than 25 students and another 24% of primary schools have between 25 to 50 students. This adds up to almost 40% of schools in India which are small schools with one or two teachers.[8] So small schools are a feature not only of the rural landscape but also of cities where increasing numbers of children are going to private schools. Based on the national sample of schools in ASER 2011, we see that 58% of Std 2 classes sit with at least one other grade and 53% of Std 4 classes do the same. Using ASER data from 2007 t0 2011, we see that this "multigrade" figure has been steadily rising in this period. The Inside Primary Schools study data shows that in Std 2, 42.6% of classes observed sat with another grade and another 28% sat with children from two other grades (in addition to Std 2). Similar patterns were observed for the Std 4 classes as well. The available data points to an important reality of Indian schools - large number of small schools and a majority of schools where classes are grouped with more than one grade sitting together.

As if multi-grade situations were not tough enough from a teaching point of view, our classes also have children with a diverse range of ability levels. Look at the table below : Let us focus on Std 4.

The simple data in this table tells us a lot about the ability composition of the Std 4 cohort. The ASER reading task has four levels. Each child is marked at the highest level s/he can reach comfortably. Thus each child is placed in a mutually exclusive category. (The numbers total to 100 across each row). From the data, we can see that about 40% (4.7+14.4+21.2) of all children in Std 4 are not even at Std 1 level. Approximately 25% are able to read at Std 1 level but not higher and close to 35% of all children are able to do the highest level task, which is reading the Std 2 level text.[9] This means that at least 65% of

All India : ASER 2011	Table 1. % Children by grade and reading level : All schools 2011					
	Unable to even recognize letters	Can read letters but not words	Can read words but not sentences	Can read a simple 4 line paragraph (Std 1 level text) but not higher level or longer text	Can read simple story fluently (Std 2 level text)	Total
Std 3	8.5	22.9	28.4	21.5	18.8	100
Std 4	4.7	14.4	21.2	25.7	34.2	100
Std 5	3.5	9.7	14.6	24.1	48.2	100

children currently enrolled in Std 4 are at least 3 years below grade level after four years of schooling. Clearly, two thirds of all children in Std 4 need urgent, immediate and essential support to quickly build the foundational skills of reading and comprehension that should have been built in earlier grades. (The same patterns are visible for basic arithmetic as well).

Despite this tremendous diversity in the composition of classes by grade and ability level, much of our teaching in primary schools is based on grade level textbooks. The assumption is that as children move from one grade to another, they have mastered the content and skill expected of them in the previous grade. Carrying the example of Std 4 forward, the teacher and at least some of the children in the group that she has to teach, have the Std 4 textbooks with them. On the first day of school in Std 4, the child is expected to start with Chapter 1 in the Std 4 textbook with the expectation that he or she understood and could do everything that s/he had in Std 3. These textbooks have language and content that are far higher than most children can cope with. There are vast gaps between the expectations articulated in textbooks and children's actual ability to cope with them. For example, most states expect children by Std 4 to be familiar with numbers well above 1000 and to be able to do operations and computations with them. However, data from Inside Primary schools shows that more than 60% of children even in Std 5 are struggling to do numerical subtraction problems with borrowing even with numbers of three digits. Children's ability to solve word problems is even more unsatisfactory.

Faced with the reality what is a Std 4 teacher supposed to do? Which children does she teach and what does she teach them? By law, according to RTE, she is accountable for teaching Std 4 curriculum. In fact, the RTE law states unambiguously on the one hand that the teacher shall complete the entire curriculum within specified time, and on the other directs him/her to assess each child's learning ability and provide additional instruction as required. It is more than obvious that an average Indian teacher is not capable of performing ordinary teaching tasks effectively. Yet, the law is suggesting she handles everything with attention on every child while completing the whole curriculum of children of each grade in her classroom. The end result is that typically the teacher uses the textbook prescribed for that grade and teaches from it even though a majority of her children are well below that level. In a multi-grade situation, the teacher has to deal simultaneously with two or three sets of textbooks and multiple levels of ability. Is it surprising then that more and more children get left behind without the hope of a helping hand? In fact, that children make any progress year on year is a testament to children's own efforts of learning by themselves - since clearly classroom teaching is not directed at helping them to learn.

One major aspect of education in the developing world is that most parents are semi-literate and semi-educated who feel completely inadequate and powerless to help their children at home. A dysfunctional school and no help from home means that the child's formal learning will never really take off at all. The above paragraphs indicate what can be done in schools. But that may still be inadequate if the child has no support from home or outside school. Parents who can afford it have been sending children to private school based on its perception as a better performing and more effective school. In states where there are few private schools large proportions of government children go to private tutors (Percentage of Std 3 government school children going to private tutors is - Bihar 43%, Odisha 42%, W Bengal 67%, Jharkhand 22%).

The chart below shows that a much higher percentage of government school children who go to tutors can read when compared to their classmates who do not go to a tutor. Clearly, lack of home support or support outside the school, especially when schools are failing, is a very important factor in achieving higher learning levels.

Table 2. Percent of children in government schools who can read depending upon whether they go to tutor or not.

Based on ASER2011W	Bengal Government school		Orissa Government school		Bihar Government school		Jharkhand Government school	
	with tutor	without tutor	with tutor	without tutor	with tutor	without tutor	with tutor	without tutor
% Std 3 who can read Std 1 text	53.88	32.85	55.91	27.61	35.46	27.85	38.14	24.03
% Std 5 who can read Std 2 text	44.05	34.95	52.77	31.28	53.79	44.05	52.94	33.09

What works

The research and data discussed above gives some insights into some of the structural features of our schooling system which impedes children from learning at a reasonable pace. Some of these constraints include the age-grade organization of schools and as well as the structure and sequence of the curriculum, the diversity of ability levels in the classroom and the lack of support to teachers to help them translate good teaching concepts into practice. But what if some of these conditions are altered, would we see a different learning profile ?

An interesting impact evaluation was carried out in Bihar by the researchers at MIT - JPAL (Poverty Action Lab). In this study, Bihar government and Pratham together implemented a set of interventions. One was a month long summer camp for children of Std 3-5 who were not as yet at Std 2 level. The goal of the summer camp was to enable children to read simple text fluently and be able to do arithmetic operations with numbers up to 100. The grouping of children, the methods for teaching and the materials were all aligned to

achieve these clearly stated goals. The second intervention was centred around efforts during the school year to enable children to reach grade level learning. In both cases, school teachers and village volunteers were involved in a concerted collaborative effort. The impact evaluation used a randomized design in which different treatments were randomly assigned to different groups of schools and villages in West Champaran district in Bihar. Children's learning outcomes were tracked over a course of 2 years. The findings are startling. The learning gains made during the summer camp were higher than that during the school years. Also the advantage that the 'camp children' gained over the 'non-camp' children during the summer camp was retained over the two year period when the sampled children were tested again.

What are the implications of these findings? There are three clear learnings from Pratham's large scale experience and from the accumulated evidence. Typically children in many primary schools in India are organized by groups rather than by grades; the usual groupings are ones where the smaller children or the early grades sit together with older children in another group. We see from our experience and from research evidence that when children are grouped systematically by ability levels their learning accelerates. In this situation, they are taught from the level they are and taken towards the goals that have been set. The research findings also show that under these conditions, the same teachers are able to teach more effectively during the summer camp than during the school year. The reason for the teaching-learning success is straightforward. The age-grade grouping and textbook/curriculum was not used in the summer camps. Instead children were grouped and taught by ability level. The focus was on achieving the basic skills of reading and comprehension and arithmetic - the goals were clear and attainable and all elements of teaching-learning were aligned to achieve these goals. Teachers could achieve results under these conditions; whereas when they are teaching textbook content to age-grade based classes there is little progress.

A similar exercise was carried out in Punjab (in 2008 to 2010) on an even larger scale. Punjab government and

Pratham together implemented a basic reading and math program called Purrho Punjab. For all its 14000 primary schools, the government put aside 2 hours a day for building the basic foundations of learning. During this time, children from different grades were grouped by "mahal" or ability level and one teacher was assigned to each "mahal". Training, materials, monitoring and measurement were all integrated to achieve the basic learning goals. Over a two year period of implementation, there was a 30-40 percentage points increase in basic learning levels of reading and basic numeracy.

Since 2009, Pratham has been working on a fairly large scale with an approach called Combined Activities for Maximized Learning (CAMaL). This is a more advanced approach than the Learning to Read approach that Pratham had worked on before this period. Whether learning to read, comprehending texts, learning numbers, or solving math problems, children are encouraged to work as a class, as small groups, and on individual tasks while combining "do-say-read-write" activities that also involve thinking, drawing upon their experiences and so on. When this approach is further combined with focused learning goals for ability-based groups, we find that children older than 8 years learn rapidly. The summer camp strategy has now been adapted to short 'learning camps' in schools and communities followed by handholding by volunteers between learning camps in a village. We find that like in summer camps, the children make quick jumps in learning levels indicated by reading fluency or ability to carry out math tasks and they retain or enhance their learning. Some may see this as 'just remedial' but when the whole country has poor learners at all levels such measures are not just remedial but become a core necessity to create a foundation upon which the child is enabled to learn more on his/her own.

These experiments show that learning levels can rise and accelerate even with the existing resources if goals are clear and children are systematically organized in ability groups. Broadly, the entire business of teaching is adapted to where the children are today and then enabled to move to where they need to be.

The way forward

No matter what standards and methods of assessment are used, the unavoidable conclusion is that the quality of education in India is extremely poor. It is obvious that the foundations are weak and hence large numbers of students, who now are enrolled in schools, have poor or no real access to skills and knowledge starting at upper primary and secondary schooling levels. We may automatically promote children to Std 8 to ensure that they do not face humiliation of being branded 'failures' by repeating a class but we have created conditions that will cause lifelong humiliation to a large majority of our children who will lack relevant productive skills and knowledge.

The National Curriculum Framework, which is already seven years old, says, "Though we strongly advocate an integrated approach to the teaching of different skills of language, the school does need to pay special attention to reading and writing in many cases, particularly in the case of home languages". This is a very ambiguous policy statement made almost grudgingly because focusing on specific skills somehow is seen to be in conflict with the holistic and integrated approach. NCERT set up a Reading Cell in 2008 and attempted to set up similar such cells in all states only to wind up the Cell in three years with nothing to show. Most developed countries regard teaching as a special foundational skill. It is not limited to 'reading' alone but a wider use of reading as a means of acquiring and constructing knowledge. We need to focus on reading in the wider meaning of the term as a key skill that can enable learners to move up in the educational ladder.

In case of mathematics too, NCF prominently points out a problem that "majority of the children have a sense of fear and failure". Clearly overcoming this sense of fear and failure that the teachers and parents too carry from their childhood only to pass on to next generations is the main problem to tackle. NCF has some very good ideas on how to teach math. Unfortunately, these ideas have not found their way into classrooms even after seven years. Perhaps the

implementation machinery itself is not convinced that math can be interesting and not all that difficult to learn. In fact, our experience is that children learn math much faster than they learn reading and nuances of languages.

The governmental policy has gone anti-assessment and anti-learning-outcome measurement since NCF2005 was adopted, and now the Right to Education Act has made it a law not to assess except through individual continuous comprehensive evaluation by the class teacher. A system that was not accountable is made further unaccountable in the absence of any measureable goals to be achieved at any stage of the school curriculum. The principle of child-centered education is certainly good but the question is whether we as a society know how to bring about a cultural shift across the country and whether we have the will, the strength, and the mechanisms to do that.

The problem of education at our stage of development is less about "what", and more about "how" and "by when". It is the "how" that will put limitations on the "what" that is achievable "by when". The NCF has outlined a 'perfect' or 'ideal' or even idealistic approach which cannot be faulted until we come down to the issues of 'how' and 'by when'. A nation that is changing rapidly economically, demographically, and socially needs to have a sense of urgency that is not reflected in how we think of changes in education.

The 'perfect' or the 'best' is the enemy of the 'good' or the 'best possible'. Our education policy must have a sense of priority in the short term while also keeping the long term in view. We need to have a clear perspective of how we are going to transform our education from where it is today in steps to reach the near ideal situation, if at all we are going to get there. The holistic and integrated approach seems to profess an overall and all round change in everything although the proponents surely see that the situation can only change over a period of time. This is a very difficult approach to follow on massive scale in a country that is semi-literate and lacking in skills and knowledge due to its poor educational past. Lack of visible change can be further demoralizing and can discourage

further attempts for change. An alternate that is possible is to change some key factors rapidly and universally in small steps so that the current demoralized system gets a sense of achievement. This positive change in turn can fuel a desire to do better and better. Improving teacher ability is not going to happen overnight but with step-wise success, improved teacher training has a better chance.

Let us come back to the initial question for this paper - what are desirable learning outcomes? Based on the reality of India today, we urgently need to build the skill base of our children - skills for communication and expression, for reading, for writing, for critical thinking and for problem solving. Without these skills, children will not learn how to learn. These skills need to be built and strengthened, nurtured and sustained through primary school years. It is only once these are in place that children will be able to absorb and construct knowledge. We need to move away from the limitations of textbooks which are rigidly tied to the age-grade system; textbooks are equated with content and knowledge.

Rather than assuming that we have one teacher for each grade and that each grade is homogenous by their level of learning, we need to accept the multi-grade and multi-ability level reality of our classes. Children can be grouped into broad groups - preschool to Std 2, Std 3 to 5 and a third group which spans Std 6 to 8. Each of these phases should have learning goals/skills that have to be mastered by the end of this phase. We need to fix clear learning goals by phase, goals that are clearly understood by teachers and parents. Progress towards these goals needs to be reviewed annually to plan for the next steps.

Foundational skills of reading with understanding and arithmetic need to be built in the early years and need to be in place by the end of Std 2. Then there is the backlog - children who are in Std 3, 4 and 5 who do not have the foundational skills of reading and arithmetic as yet. There are some children like this who are still in school even in the higher grades. Urgent, immediate action is critical for this group. Without fast action, the future of millions of children will be in

jeopardy. This backlog - children left behind - has to be enabled to accelerate forward fast. All our efforts in the coming years need to be focused on achieving strong foundations for basic skills for learning in these early years.

Notes:-

1 See www.asercentre.org for ASER reports from 2005 to 2011

2 The term "big stuck" has been coined by the economist Lant Pritchett for characterizing learning levels in India in recent years.

3 See www.ssatcfund.org

4 See www.ei-india.com

5 See www.pisa.oecd.org

6 Inside Primary Schools 2011. Published by ASER Centre, New Delhi.

7 See Pritchett and Beatty 2011 "The Negative Consequences of Overambitious Curriculum" and also article in ASER 2011 report "ASER and Learning profiles: The pace of learning is too slow".

8 Elementary Education in India: Where do we stand? Analytical tables 2010-11. NUEPA. (Both rural and urban volumes).

9 Since ASER is a "floor" level test and the highest task is reading a Std 2 level text, we do not know from ASER what proportion of children are reading at a level higher than Std 2.

Vinod Raina

Voluntary Agencies as Pressure Groups in Enforcing Change

The Case of Right to Education

After efforts spanning over a hundred years, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RtE) became a reality on April 1, 2010. The engagement of civil society (individuals, VA's/NGO's) with children's right to education, or universal education, can be examined in three time frames: a) attempts and campaigns to have a legislation, b) drafting of the legislation and c) implementation of the legislation. In between one can identify a variety of independent efforts by civil society groups and individuals to make up for the lack of access and quality of elementary education, from times before independence. What is, however, often ignored in the usual description of NGO efforts is the complex and often invisible relationship between these efforts and state processes, which will be the running theme in what follows.

Pre-Independence Efforts

The pre-independence attempts to usher in universal education is fascinating since it involved the interplay between some stalwarts of the greatest civil society movement for national independence in the World, like Gokhale and Gandhi and the educational policy making in British India. Ignoring the much ridiculed minutes of Macaulay of 1835, policy making for India's education could be said to have begun with Wood's despatch to Lord Dalhousie in 1854. In this despatch Wood recommended that:

- An education department to be set in every province.
- Universities on the model of the London University be established in big cities such as Bombay, Calcutta and Madras.

- At least one government school should be opened in every district.
- Affiliated private schools be given grant in aid.
- Indian 'natives' be given training in their mother tongue also.

The British government claimed that largely because of the war of independence of 1857 (which they called the 'mutiny') most of these recommendations could not be implemented. A more compelling reason, mostly suppressed, was that the British government did not come forth with finances that were required to implement these recommendations.

Consequently the educational situation, particularly in rural areas, worsened by 1880s. The reviews of the progress of education made during 1855-80 by the government emphasized the need for expanding the education of the masses. This led to the setting up of the First Education Commission in India, led by Sir William Hunter in 1882, popularly called as the Hunter Commission. The Education Commission was especially required to make an enquiry into whether the government had actually neglected primary education and how its condition could be improved. The Commission gave suggestions regarding the policy to be followed. It said that *"the elementary education of the masses, its provision, extension and improvement should be the main part of educational system to which strenuous effort of the state needed to be directed in a still larger measure than heretofore"*. The Commission traveled to various provinces for consultations, and many Indian leaders demanded that right to education should be introduced in India. Taking note of the fact that a Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act had been passed for British children in 1870, for the first time in India's history, the Commission suggested that a similar legislation be introduced for the benefit of Indian children.

The Commission's recommendations received meager financial and administrative backing and the state of primary education, but for scattered private and social efforts, remained bleak. It was in these conditions that the

foremost attempt towards universal education was made by Gopal Krishna Gokhale who lobbied for a right to free and compulsory education legislation in 1906. He persisted with his lobbying and with the following preface

"I beg to place the following resolution before the Council for its consideration.…the state should accept in this country the same responsibility in regard to mass education that the government of most civilized countries are already discharging and that a well considered scheme should be drawn up and adhered to till it is carried out.. The well being of millions upon millions of children who are waiting to be brought under the influence of education depends upon it..."

brought in a private member's bill in the Imperial Legislative Council in 1910, one hundred years before such a bill was passed by the Indian Parliament in 2010! The Gokhale bill was however rejected. Gokhale's attempt was preceded by the action of the Maharaja of Baroda who introduced compulsory education for *boys* only in the Amreli taluk in 1893, which was extended to the entire state in 1906. Gokhale's failed attempt was revived by Vithalbai Patel in 1917, and he was successful in getting such a law for compulsory education passed (it was called the Patel act). By 1918, the compulsory education act was extended to every province of British India. So why did not the condition of school education still improve? Because all these laws stressed on compulsory rather than free education, putting no compulsion on the British rulers to increase educational budgets. The compulsion was also on parents and not the governments; records suggest the collection of a paltry amount from parents who were punished under the act in Baroda.

Universal primary education received a further blow in 1930 after the Hartog Committee recommendation for better quality rather than larger access, hindering further the spread of primary education.

Enter Gandhi

It is in this background one ought to analyse why Mahatma Gandhi was forced to begin his campaign in 1937 for universal

education when at the ripe age of 67 he made his radical proposals for mass education that he thought were appropriate for India. It has remained a matter of debate *(Raina, Vinod;" Integrating Work and Education"; Contemporary Education Dialogues; Volume 4:1 Monsoon 2006)* whether Gandhi advocated work-based education as a means of self-support in order to circumvent his disappointment regarding the inability of the state to fund universal education, or as a pedagogic necessity, or both. His plea for adequate finances for universal education was met with a response that if at all, the way out was to utilize revenues from liquor sales. That meant he had to either give up his stand on prohibition, or his plea for universal education with state support, which he expressed quite plainly: *"the cruellest irony of the new reforms lies in the fact that we are left with nothing but liquor revenue to fall back upon, in order to give our children education" (Harijan 5:222)* .This seems to have led Gandhi to propose a national system of education that would be self-sufficient, rather than solely dependent on state funding thus:

"but as a nation we are so backward in education that we cannot hope to fulfill our obligations to the nation in this respect in a given time during this generation, if the programme is to depend on money. I have therefore made bold, even at the risk of losing all reputation for constructive ability, to suggest that education should be self-supporting …. I would therefore begin the child's education by teaching it a useful handicraft and enabling it to produce from the moment it begins training. Thus every school can be made self-supporting, the condition being that the State take over the manufacture of these schools" (Harijan 5:197).

His enthusiasm for self-support was expressed more forcefully after Narhari Parikh, a teacher at the Harijan Ashram at Sabarmati provided figures in defense of self-supported education from his school. This led Gandhi to assert that:

"Public schools must be frauds and teachers idiots, if they cannot become self-supporting" and, "corporate labour should be, say after the first year of the course, worth one anna per hour. Thus for twenty-six working days of four hours per day, each child will have earned Rs. 6-8 per month….We should be

intellectual bankrupts, if we cannot direct the energy of our children so as to get from them, after a year's training, one anna worth of marketable labour per hour".

That he clearly saw links between education and vocation in terms of alleviating unemployment is clear from his answer to a questioner: *"you impart education and simultaneously cut at the roots of unemployment" (Harijan 5:261).*

The self-sufficiency argument of Gandhi strongly suggests that he was professing an income generating vocational education. It is well known that one of his dissenters to this approach was none other than Rabindranath Tagore. Tagore considered the emphasis on vocation and training in Gandhi's formulations deeply reductionist, asserting that the purpose of education was liberative rather than merely vocational. He in particular took exception to Gandhi's emphasis on weaving education around the Charkha. The two engaged in a fascinating public debate on these issues.

Gandhi of course did stress on the pedagogic importance of linking work to education, pleading for a system that considered work as a starting point to delve into history, geography, technology and science, exemplified by his famous passage about the use of *takli* to learn not only about spinning, but the history and geography of cotton, history and technology of the spinning wheel and so on. He also stressed on the nurturing of the 'cooperative' and 'peaceful' values in children, when work was the basis of learning, rather than mindless rote learning. Above all, he pleaded for an education that would integrate the head, heart and the hand.

In an article written in May 1937 entitled 'Intellectual Development or Dissipation?' Gandhi developed the central premise that *'Man is neither mere intellect nor the gross animal body, nor the heart and soul alone. A proper and harmonious combination of all the three is required for the making of the whole man and constitutes the true economics of education'.* He then gave the outline of his vision of an alternative pedagogy:

"As against this, take the case of a child in whom the education of the heart is attended from the very beginning. Supposing he is set to some useful occupation like spinning, carpentry, agriculture etc., for his education and in that

connection is given a thorough and comprehensive knowledge relating to the theory of the various operations that he is to perform and the use and construction of tools that he would be wielding. He would not only develop a fine, healthy body but also a sound, vigorous intellect that is not merely academic but is firmly rooted in and is tested from day to day by experience. His intellectual education would include knowledge of mathematics and the various sciences that are useful for an intelligent and efficient exercise of his avocation. If to this is added literature by way of recreation, it would give him a perfect well-balanced, all round education in which the intellect, the body and the spirit have all full play and develop together into a natural, harmonious whole" (Harijan; 5:104).

It would appear that Gandhi was trying to do many things through his radical suggestions linking work with education. Along with deeply philosophical perceptions regarding the purpose of education, he seems to have been trying to solve practical problems like funding for education and unemployment. It does become somewhat difficult to separate the philosophical and the instrumentalist in his formulations. The Tagore-Gandhi exchange aptly highlights the contested nature of the subject since it provides insights to the resistance to the concept of work-based education even at the time of an emotionally charged atmosphere, conducive to do something new, during India's independence. The intellectual and practical resistance to his views must have been considerable that in spite of his unquestionable stature, *nai talim* did not find favour for incorporation into mainstream education and was experimented as a non-state alternative. Identifying such resistances would seem to be vitally important in forging an implementational strategy in contemporary India that is radically less conducive to Gandhi's thinking.

Independence and the making of the Constitution

The Constituent Assembly was obviously cognizant of the efforts in the years leading up to independence and universal education was one of the important agendas it debated upon. With the Imperial Legislative Council reluctant to pass a law for free primary education, expectations must have been high that independent India's constitution would incorporate it within its provisions. Statements by the first education

minister of independent India, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad during the time the constitution was being drafted seemed to suggest that the right to free and compulsory education would finally be granted to India's children. The expectations were justified since the Constituent Assembly Sub committee on Fundamental rights placed free and compulsory education, in 1947, on list of Fundamental Rights through the draft clause 23:

"Clause 23- Every citizen is entitled as of… right to free primary education and it shall be the duty of the State to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution for free and compulsory primary education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years."

Simultaneously in the same year, the Ways and Means (Kher) Committee was set up to explore *ways and means* of achieving Universal Elementary Education within ten years at lesser cost. However, in April 1947 the Advisory Committee of the Constituent Assembly **rejected** free and compulsory education as a fundamental right (costs being the reason). It sent the clause to list of "non - justiciable fundamental rights" (later termed as 'Directive Principles of State Policy). During the 1949 debate in Constituent Assembly the First Line of 'Article 36'…*"Every citizen is entitled as of right to free primary education and it shall be the duty of the State to..." was removed and replaced with "The State shall endeavour to..."* Finally in 1950, Article 45 of Directive Principles of State Policy was accepted: *"The State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years".*

Thus, even an independent India, with Ambedkar, Nehru, Maulana Azad and other stalwarts of the freedom movement at the helm, was unable to confer a justiciable right on its children, citing the same reason the Britisher had, that the costs could not be managed. The inadequacy of the final Article 45 was foreseen by K.T. Shah in his note of dissent in April 1947 thus:

"Once an unambiguous declaration of such a (justiciable) right is made, those responsible for it would have to find ways and means to give effect to it. If they had no such obligation placed upon them, they might be inclined to avail themselves of every excuse to justify their own inactivity in the matter, indifference or worse.

The truth of this prediction was confirmed by the noted economist L.C. Jain who found absolutely no mention of the word 'education' in the first ten budget speeches of the country; the period in which the state was supposed to *endeavour* to provide elementary education to every child in the country.

Post independence Voluntary and NGO interventions

As is well documented, the Nehruvian thrust in years after independence was more on higher education rather than on universal basic education. The initial years saw the setting up of the University Grants Commission, IITs, the Central Institute of Education under Delhi University and a host of research institutions under the CSIR, ICMR, ICAR and so on. As a consequence, basic education continued to lag behind. In the absence of access to government schools, particularly in rural areas, voluntary efforts began to mushroom to try and provide some form of education to deprived children. The dismal state of the country's literacy levels, which are directly connected to the absence of eight years of elementary schooling, were revealed by successive decennial censuses after independence. At the time of independence of a total population of 300 million, only 21% were literate. By 1991, even though the literacy rate was about 52%, the population was close to a billion. Which implies that in 1947, there were about 230 million illiterates in the country, the number had escalated to around 450 million in 1991.

Having given up on providing free and compulsory education as a right, the state interventions were directed more at adult literacy and non-formal education to vast populations of out of school children, with voluntary agencies and NGOs acting as delivery institutions. As for policy interventions, the most significant was the setting up of the Education Commission

in 1964 (popularly called the Kothari Commission) which gave its report in 1966. Even though the report provided a very deep vision about the links of education to national development, and called for the setting up of a common school system, it fell short of strongly recommending making basic education a fundamental right. It however made up for that by recommending, the first time ever, that the state should spend at least 6% of its GDP on education, something that has not happened even after the Right to Education was legislated in 2010.

There was a massive spurt in education delivery. NGO efforts after the sixth and seventh five year plans expressly called for NGO partnerships in delivering basic services, and line departments started setting aside funds for NGOs under various schemes. The National Adult Education Program of 1976 and the Mass Literacy Campaigns of the 90s decade are examples of such joint efforts of the government and civil society groups. The Non-Formal Education scheme of MHRD, whereby NGOs were encouraged to open such centers for children was another such example. This resulted in a massive expansion of service delivery NGOs, many found dubious later on, to access government funding. As a result, the pressure on the government to bring in a justiciable right to education receded, and in my opinion, between 1950 to around 1990, there were negligible attempts by the voluntary and NGO sector to pressurize the government into bringing such a legislation.

Supreme Court's Critical Intervention

A number of events took place simultaneously in the early nineties to alter the scenario regarding elementary education in the country. The first was the Unesco's Education for All global summit in Jomtien that urged all countries to move towards universal education. International funding was promised to countries that were seen to be at the bottom. Consequently, for the first time loans from a variety of International Finance Institutions and development agencies, like the SIDA, World Bank, European Commission, DFID etc were contracted in the elementary education sector. This opened up a new

modality of civil society involvement. Hitherto, NGOs would act more as delivery institutions and sometimes as policy pressure groups, like in 1985 when the Policy on Education was being prepared. The coming in of international funding saw a different set of professionals from the civil society being contracted as highly paid consultants to carry out a variety of tasks at the behest of international donors. Many of these tasks, which were or should have been performed by state institutions were taken over by civil society consultants, in many ways weakening and marginalizing the institutions of the state.

Through central schemes like the District Primary Education Program (DPEP) and later, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), both supported by international funding, the government attempted a rapid expansion of access through questionable means like opening up of non-formal type of Education Guarantee Centers rather than regular schools, and replacing regular teachers with a variety of untrained contract teachers. This greatly affected the quality of government schooling. With a corresponding increase in the spending power of a segment of middle class Indians through the fifth and sixth pay commissions and opening up of the economy that helped create a larger elite class, middle classes demanded something better than the downgraded government school system, resulting in the rapid expansion of the commercial and private school system. Attempts by civil society groups to alert the governments to such mindless quality diluted expansion which had the backing of foreign donors, met with swift retribution, like the closing down of the much acclaimed Hoshangabad Science Teaching program by the Madhya Pradesh government, which was run as a collaboration between various voluntary agencies like Friend's Rural Center, Kishore Bharati and later Eklavya, and the state government during its thirty year history. One can safely sum up that the quality of government schooling, already an issue, deteriorated further since the early 90s. Quality came to be associated with the special schools of the government, the Kendriya and Navodaya Vidyalayas not open to general public, and the burgeoning commercial school system for the

rich and elites. The vast majority of the country's children were condemned to a deteriorating government school system.

Amidst this scenario of international funding and deteriorating government school system, a completely unrelated happening was a judgment of the Supreme Court: the Unnikrishnan judgment of 1993. In the course of the judgment, the Supreme Court observed that combining the right to life Article 21 of the Constitution with the Directive Principles (Article 45), the right to education existed in the Constitution till the age of 14, and it was dependent on the economic capacity of the state only after age 14. This was like a bolt out of the blue. The judgment lacked mandamus, so it was incumbent on the government to take notice of such an interpretation of the Constitution by the Supreme Court, so as to bring in an appropriate legislation.

This saw the beginning of a civil society movement to pressurize the government to bring in a right to education legislation. Many different NGOs came together under the banner, the National Alliance for Right to Education (NAFRE) that started lobbying and demonstrating for bringing in an act as per the Supreme Court's verdict. This forced the government under the Prime Minister Dewe Gowda to refer the matter to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on education, which recommended that the constitution should be amended to include free and compulsory education as a fundamental right. The civil society movement continued when the NDA came to power, and it was finally under the NDA regime that the 86th amendment was passed by the Parliament in 2002. The amendment inserted a new article 21A in the fundamental rights chapter of the Constitution which read *"The state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children in the age group 6 to 14 years through a law that it may determine".*

So there was a twist in the tail. The implementation of Article 21A was made dependent on a law, and the state had a choice that it *may* bring it in. There were other problems with the way Article 21A was drafted. The Constitutional debates and Article 45 of Directive Principles had always

talked of *children up to age 14,* which meant from birth to 14. Article 21A had knocked out children in the 0-6 age group from a justiciable right, who were relegated to a new reading of Article 45 under the 86th amendment, as children who were now dependent on the *endeavours* of the government to receive Early Child Care and Education (ECCE).

From draft Bill to an Act

Civil society groups were furious with the 86th amendment on these grounds, as also because the government still had to initiate measures to bring in a legislation to give effect to article 21A. The NDA government, before it lost power in 2004 did make a draft of the Right to Education Act, without any consultation with the civil society. This draft more or less gave legal sanctity to the modalities of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, including its non-formal, education guarantee, and a host of other questionable measures, like holding parents responsible under compulsion with punishments for default. Civil society groups were quick to denounce and reject the draft.

With the coming in of the UPA government in 2004, a different modality was put into place. One of the most democratic institutions that has been functioning in the country in the area of education since 1924 is the Central Advisory Board for Education (CABE). It is chaired by the Union Education Minister, has central Ministers from social sector ministries, state education ministers, heads of central education institutions like the NCERT, NUEPA, CBSE etc, vice-chancellors and representatives of civil society groups engaged in education as its members. For reasons that are completely unclear, the NDA regime did not constitute this body when it was in power during the period 1999-2004. The UPA government revived it immediately after it came back to power and set up a CABE committee to draft the Right to Education legislation. Because of the composition of the CABE, the committee was heterogeneous since it had central and state ministers, bureaucrats, educationists and civil society representatives as its members. Consequently, the proceedings of the committee and its smaller drafting group

were opened for consultations with a variety of concerned groups, like teacher unions, private school managements, state level officials and civil society members working with disabled children, child labour etc. Serious differences were debated within the drafting group, the committee and the full CABE on a variety of issues. One of the most contentious issues was the place of private schools within the common school system. Since the final draft could not provide for a common school system and had to limit itself to a 25% neighbourhood quota for disadvantaged children in private schools, there were dissensions amongst civil society representatives on what was ideal and what was feasible under the Constitution. Faced with Article 19 of the Constitution that allows private schools to function, and gives them right to charge fees (upheld by the Supreme Court even in the Unnikrishnan judgment), it was not possible to bring private schools in the ambit of a common school system (conceded even by the Kothari Commission) for providing free education to every child from their neighbourhoods.

Many civil society groups rejected the legislation on this ground and burned its copies when it finally became law in 2010. The other contentious issue concerned the special schools of the government, the Kendriya, Navodaya, Sainik and similar schools. Civil society groups demanded that under the act they should be on par with any other government school for the purposes of admission and other entitlements. The government was adamant that their special character should be maintained, making a member of the drafting committee comment that this amounted to governments running 'private schools' for select sections of society. The government view prevailed, much to the chagrin of civil society members. But on many other issues, the civil society viewpoints prevailed even though the government had different views. These include putting the compulsion on the governments rather than the parents to ensure enrollment, attendance and completion of elementary education by every child; doing away with detentions and replacing pass/fail kind of examinations with Comprehensive and Continuous Evaluation, setting up of school management committees

with 75% members from amongst parents of the children in a school; giving the monitoring role to an independent body like the NCPCR; the norms and standards of every school; the definition of free entitlements to a child; the bringing in of disadvantaged groups for special entitlements; end to social and other discrimination in the school; and the chapter on classroom transaction.

The major confrontation between the government and civil society groups however erupted after the draft was accepted by the full CABE in August 2005and made public for comments on the MHRD website. Instead of introducing it in the Parliament, the Prime Minister referred it to a high level group of Ministers, who concluded, as had many other government groups concluded in the 100 year history, that it was too expensive to fund! They therefore recommended that instead of a central legislation the states should be asked to bring in their own respective legislations, with a carrot and stick policy of providing higher funds from the central scheme Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan to those states that bring in such a legislation. This caused a furor; not only did the states reject this but civil society groups remonstrated that this would make a joke of Article 21A and the 86th amendment. Many civil society groups went into a campaign mode demanding the bill be presented in the Parliament at the earliest. The stalemate continued for two years till August 2007 when a delegation of civil society members, backed by the ongoing nation-wide campaign and armed with detailed calculations regarding requirement of funds was finally able to convince the Prime Minister at a stormy meeting that it was feasible to fund the legislation. This set the stage for the introduction of the Bill in the Rajya Sabha in December 2008. However the Bill could not be debated in the Lok Sabha before the general elections of 2009 and it was only after these elections that the Lok Sabha passed the Bill, which received presidential assent in August 2009, But it had to wait for another seven months before the Act was notified for implementation, along with article 21A from April 1, 2010.

Processes of Implementation

Judging from the events as they have transpired since April 2010 when the act was notified for implementation one

conclusion is obvious: the implementational agencies of the country were completely unprepared for the Act. Because of being a concurrent subject, the major responsibility for implementation lies with the state governments, who have been kind of waking up to the reality and enormity of implementing the Act. Civil society groups played a major role in making state functionaries and district officials aware of the provisions of the Act through numerous meetings and workshops in every state. Many of these efforts were initially backed by UNICEF who also helped prepare awareness materials, including a detailed FAQ document on the act.

In the meanwhile, the MHRD set up three groups comprising of civil society members who a) drafted the central and model rules for the Act, b) wrote the document that harmonized the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan scheme with the Act and c) worked out the framework for implementation of the Act to guide state governments in preparing their annual work plans. At the state level, many civil society groups campaigned for the states to bring in their rules at the earliest, and in many states participated in the formulation of the rules; which have been prepared by all the states by now.

At the grassroots level many civil society groups have taken on the task of capacity building of the School Management Committees, particularly in the preparation of School Development Plans as a major responsibility. Hundreds of groups are involved in this exercise all over the country right now. Many groups are trying to help the state governments to work out the modalities of mainstreaming 'out of school' children through special trainings, as per the provisions of the Act.

Monitoring has however become a major task that civil society groups are involved in. At the national level, a confederation of major NGOs has come together to form a RtE Forum that has been presenting a critical review of the implementation of the act at large conventions in the past two years. The Forum has also established state units which have also presented such audits in their respective states. Outside the Forum many state and national groups have

been engaged in the monitoring exercise from the district level downwards. Help lines, grievance redressal mechanisms and other modalities for helping children and parents are still being worked out. As for justiciability, many legal aid groups have come up in many states in order to find legal redress to violations; the Social Jurist in Delhi is a fine example of such work.

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) and the respective state commissions have been designated as the agencies under the Act to monitor the implementation of the Act. The NCPCR was in a nascent stage of formation when the Act was notified in 2010 and the SCPCRs were not even constituted in many of the states then. Gradually, SCPCRs are coming up. The NCPCR however took a bold decision in the very first year of implementation. Realising that the task of ensuring that the right of each of the 20 million children across the country was Herculean requiring grass roots presence which it does not have, it decided to form partnerships with civil society organisations for just that purpose. Going a step further, it appointed its state representatives from amongst the civil society in most of the states of the country. Subsequently, NCPCR/SCPCRs have been conducting social audits and public hearings on the implementation of the act in many remote areas of the country. That children and parents are making use of the right can be gauged by the number of complaints a single state commission, namely Delhi, received by the second year – over 15,000; of which they had redressed over 10,000 by September 2011.

As per the act, MHRD constituted the National Advisory Council within the first year; which is composed of both civil society and institutional representatives. The NAC-RtE is working at present through seven task forces. One of these task forces dealing with Awareness and Community Mobilisation took the initiative to launch a *Shiksha ka Haq Abhiyan* from November 11, 2011 (national education day) from the Muslim dominated and educationally challenging area of Mewat in Haryana. Under the Abhiyan, a group of

three trained volunteers drawn from grass roots civil society organisations had to visit each and every school in the country (around 13 lakhs) by March 2012 with a survey tool to inform the parents and community about the rights of their children and to collect primary data from each school to assess its requirement in order to come to the norms and standards prescribed by the act.

Unfortunately these efforts have remained somewhat invisible in the media and other communication channels that have been dominated by the various complaints of the private schools, particularly regarding their obligation for providing admissions to 25% children in their neighbourhoods who come from disadvantaged groups. The other issues they have had is with the no detention policy, selection for admissions on random basis outlawing tests and interviews and fulfilling the norms and standards as prescribed by the Act for every school, government and private. The media attention was diverted to the petition they filed in the Supreme Court which called for the annulment of the Act since, as they alleged, it was unconstitutional. Many state government's more or less suspended implementational aspects concerning private schools, awaiting the Supreme Court verdict, which was finally delivered in April 2012, upholding the constitutional validity of the act and the 25% neighbourhood quota. The civil society groups were active here too since the Supreme Court opened the case for submissions from the public, and many civil society groups filed their submissions with the court through their lawyers.

Issues of Civil Society with the Act

By definition, civil society groups and NGOs do not form a cohesive force. Where as they may form alliances from time to time on important issues, in many other areas of conceptualization and work, their approaches may be fragmented or worse, divisive. It is therefore no wonder that such difference of approach is evident even in the case of a fundamental right, like that of education. The greatest worry has been expressed by those groups who had used the state's apathy in previous years to set up schools for deprived

children. Many of these schools have motivated teachers and use innovative pedagogies. Under the act, these schools too shall have to conform to norms and standards which the civil society groups running these schools have been resisting since they feel they can either not fund the upgradation, or argue that since quality is so good, they need not upgrade infrastructural and teacher qualification norms. This is similar to the demand of minority schools, which was granted by the Supreme Court for unaided minority schools in its recent judgment. But minority schools have claimed this as an immunity based on article 29 and 30 of the Constitution, where as NGO schools have no such immunity.

One must also recognize the strong presence of corporate funded civil society that has come up in a big way in India in the post-liberalisation period. With scales of funding that is overwhelmingly larger than of the grass roots NGO, and with political and media clout, many prominent civil society organisations have the backing of industry think tanks and lobbying groups to enforce policies that are in line with market forces and private interests. One of the major issues in relation to RtE that these groups have taken up is the mandatory compulsion on 'low budget private schools' to conform to the norms and standards prescribed under the act. Claiming that these schools provide better 'quality' at low fees, these groups have been campaigning that these schools should be exempt from the norms and standards, just as the low cost non-profit innovative schools are also demanding. With the present political climate definitely in favour of market solutions, one is not sure what impact this kind of civil society lobbying will have on the Act as it stands today.

The civil society response to the right of education could therefore be summed up as following:

i) A majority of groups that feel the Act in the present form has many shortcomings, but provides an avenue to increase government spending and improve the quality of the government school system; while keeping up the pressure to improve the Act through amendments. The setting up of a CABE committee to examine the extension of the right to

pre-school (ages 4-6) and secondary school (ages 14-16) is an example of such pressure.

ii) Groups that are unwilling to support anything but a common school system that eases out fee charging private schools. Though unclear, they consider that the Act in the present form will promote privatization. They are therefore opposed to the present Act.

iii) Groups and think tanks that feel the government can not, and **should** not (a neoliberal view) be involved in running schools. They consider that private schools provide better quality and are more efficient, and the government should fund a child through vouchers and other means to go to a private school, or the government should give charters to private entities to set up schools funded by the government. This group is either indifferent or opposed to the rights framework. There is however no precedent in the world of private schools having been in the vanguard for universal education of children.

iv) Minority groups that feel the Act is a violation of their right to manage schools as they please under article 29 and 30 of the constitution.

v) Groups who run non-profit innovative schools who feel that they should be exempt from the Act since they are doing a fine job with less resources. Understandably, if not publicly opposed, they are lukewarm or indifferent to the right to education act.

In all this it is often forgotten that the Act is about the right of the child, and not of the school. The Act decrees that it is the right of the child to have one teacher for 30 children, have a separate room for each class, have functional toilets separate for boys and girls, have play space, have designated hours and days for teaching and learning, have free entitlements like uniforms, books, writing materials or any other item that deprives the child from attending school including special equipment for the disabled child, mid day meals cooked in a separate space and so on. People who ask for exemption from passing on these rights to children are

in effect either saying that the children should not have a right to such facilities, or the level of quality of their schools (mostly self-certified or designated by questionable 'mass testing' methods) compensates for the lack of these rights.

One might argue that the good civil society initiatives that can not muster their own finances should not be allowed to close down as a consequence of the Act and the governments must find a way to make up for those norms and standards that the civil society groups are unable to fund. However, the observation of the Supreme Court that the Act should be seen as *child centric* rather than *school centric* might have some bearing on these issues in future.

In a hundred year history, from Gokhale, Gandhi and other tall leaders that drafted our Constitution, to more modest civil society groups, backed by the Supreme Court's interpretation that made the right to education possible in 2010, the country has come a long way; even though many of the ills of basic education have remained more or less the same, as has been the government's response (both states and central) in not providing adequate funding even though they are compelled to do so now that the act is a reality. How much the present legislation will remove these ills and compel the governments to act in prescribed time frames is a major issue that challenges the larger segment of civil society that is engaged in critically supporting its implementation, while striving simultaneously in the improvement of its provisions.

B.G.Pitre

Creating a Cadre of Inspiring Teachers

Educationists tend to envision such an educational framework as ideal as has its source in the eternal philosophy, relevant for all people and for all times to come. This perennial philosophy has always guided our goals and aspirations in the past. The foundation of education has always been spiritual.

The Current Scenario

However, nowadays when a teacher passes out of the portals of a teacher training college and joins the mainstream of the teaching profession, he discovers that there is much dichotomy between theory and practice. His seniors generally advise him to keep his college texts aside and 'be practical', because the expectations from a school management are, almost invariably, not good character of the students, nor even an all round development of personality, but good academic results. In fact, invariably a teacher is judged by standards based upon these considerations. The option before such a teacher is very clear: follow your own idealism, the voice of conscience, and face the axe; or join the mainstream of competitive, self-centered rat race, churning out students who are 'programmed' to live a selfish, sometimes 'successful' life, yet a life full of tension & conflicts.

The methodology adopted for such information-based education is well known to all. This has been going on in our country for the past sixty years. If we introduce a new topic in the syllabus, such as Population Education, we invite some so called 'experts' who 'explain' the topics to the teachers. This information then filters down to the students when the trained teachers return to their schools. The methods used for this

purpose are text reading, revision & tests, guidebooks and tuitions. This is so well established that the teacher fulfils the need most efficiently. Everybody is happy. The Government has responded to the need of the nation, the 'experts' have once again come to the rescue of the Government by devising a new curriculum and training of teachers, the publishers have printed new texts, and the teachers have received a Certificate. Only the students have an additional burden of studying a new chapter; however, they take it in their stride because essentially nothing has changed. In fact, even 'Distance Education' could be a more practical idea under such circumstances when the number of teachers is large and the relevant technology is available; in this way, the training can be imparted at any time during the year instead of the teachers being called during a vacation.

Thus, we breed and encourage teachers who become 'experts' in their own subject. They teach the subject, not the students. They can tell you the exact paragraph on the exact page where an answer to your question lies. Since they know everything, the tendency of these teachers is to go on telling, go on explaining to the students. Many of them cover the entire Standard X syllabus in IX Standard itself. This ensures that students do first revision, second revision and so on. The more they do it, the more they think the results will improve. And in fact, the results do improve. Such a teacher produces good results and because of this he is in demand as far as schools are concerned. In other words, his approach matches with the philosophy of the school. It is to produce good results and bring more trophies to showcase them behind the Principal's chair.

The 'Explaining' Teacher

What is the difference between education and schooling? We give students an annual examination in April and most fare well; if we give them the same question paper in June when they return to school after the vacation, most will fail. What then have we achieved in a whole year's study? On the other hand, some schools have a tremendous long lasting positive influence on the students. Imprint of the school is seen on them

even after 20 or 30 years. I think it was Bruner who said that, "Real education is that which remains when everything else is forgotten." Sri Sathya Sai Baba has said, "True education is not merely for a living, but for life." That means its impact should permeate every activity all through life. One approach prepares students for a short term memory while the other prepares them for long term application. Therefore, who is an ideal teacher will depend upon what is our philosophical stance, what is valued in our school system.

The questions which arise are: What is the co-relation between teaching and learning in these schools? Which approach is supposed to provide good education to the students? Which approach builds good character in the students? It is the philosophy which determines how a teacher will have to prepare the students to attain that particular goal. The 'explaining' teacher does his job very well for short-term memory. And if we want our school to have only this much, then he is your ideal teacher. He is doing what you are asking him to achieve. He may be a creative teacher but his creativity is not valued; if you expect good results, he is giving you that. Short-term goals are concrete, such as 100% results or prizes students win. But if you want a teacher to give long term benefits to the students in their life, build character, good conduct, integrity, honesty, then the methodology will be different. Those words are intangible and you can not go to the market to buy them. The source to obtain them is the 'inspiring' teacher.

Let us look at it from a different point of view. We elders, the educated community, intellectuals, and inheritors of our national ethos, are all 'programmed' to think, feel and act as we have been taught in schools for the past sixty years or more. Material progress and concrete achievements have been the sole criteria and rationale for all our schemes & programmes in education. This has created a 'vicious chain' of action & reaction; and we are trapped in an inflexible, conservative education system. Why do school science, mathematics or social studies texts need revision every 5 to 10 years? Obviously, such changes are mostly superficial, at times cosmetic. Short term goals always win over long term ideals.

What has changed?

Academicians tend to believe that 'educational' inputs in schools provide leverage to new perspectives and thrusts in the community, and solutions to existing problems. For example, the Kothari Commission boldly declared that 'Destiny of the nation is shaped in the classrooms.' Therefore we find that when our students show scant respect to our political leaders, we dig in the past to add a chapter on Freedom Movement in the textbook. When we come across problems in the adolescent groups, or the rate of growth of population does not decline, we introduce 'sex education' or 'population education' in school textbooks. When people become insensitive to the gifts of nature, and degrade the environment, we add a whole book in the school curriculum on Environmental Education. In practice, therefore, our decisions have always been 'symptomatic' rather than 'preventive'. Recommendations of the Mudaliar Committee on vocationalisation in education (1953) or the National Policy on Education (1986) were also 'First Aid' measures. Periodically the curriculum and texts were revised, and large scale training programmes were conducted by the 'experts'. After all they are 'experts' and they should know what is best for us. Thus, the avowed, long term, goals of education are dumped to the dustbin in favour of popular, temporary goals.

It should be obvious to us that in the final analysis, social climate determines educational policies, and not the other way round. The community's expectations are concretized into educational inputs for our children. And, since social forces & perceptions are transient and temporary, which may change every five years with the change of government, we are trapped in a time-warp. Periodically, new Commissions are set up, agencies are asked to prepare new curricula based upon their recommendations, trial & training Courses are organized for the teachers, and the conservative system has won once again. The teacher is used to implement policies not initiate them; an inspiring teacher has no role in the process.

There was a time when we were told that the 3Rs (Reading, Writing and Arithmetic) provided the benchmark for a literate

person. After 65 years of independence, we now admit that we failed to reach this benchmark all over the country. In education, crash programmes have been launched regularly and periodically, and they have crashed. Albert Einstein once said, "The significant problems we have created cannot be solved at the level of thinking we were at when we created them." How true? In fact, the problems have multiplied. Then in the middle of 20th century, the rationalists dominated the scene. The 4th R, Reasoning, became the whip to flog the superstitious mindset. Rationalism, scientific temper, logical reasoning, became our goals of education. IQ was the only criterion to judge individuals in all selections. Impressed by the glamour of technological and material progress in the 'objective' world, we severed our link with the 'subjective' internal reality.

I must admit that, from time to time, over the past fifty years, attempts have been made in the field of education to make it more value based. However, here again we have used the same tried and tested methodology to imbibe values. Chapters have been added (or modified) to existing language or Social Studies texts, or Moral Science books have been prescribed, even classes were alloted in some States for Value Education, questions are included at the end of the chapters, marks are given, class ranking is noted and Report Cards are filled in. Thus, the same method of reward & punishment, drilling and memorising, is adopted for "man-making" education as for other topics. This is a great fallacy because it keeps the teacher and school away from achieving the goal of an all-round development of the students. It keeps the 'inspiring' teacher under-valued in favour of the 'explaining' teacher.

Education and Educare

Education is from outside to inside process whereas Educare is from inside to outside process. Even Froebel said that true 'education is to make external what is internal.' Swami Vivekananda's classical definition generally accepted is that 'education is the process of manifestation of the perfection already present within'. Gandhiji talked about the

goal of education as development of body, mind and spirit. Sri Sathya Sai Baba defined it in following words: "Educare means to bring out the human values latent in every human being; and bring out means to translate them into action in our daily life." Thus, there is unanimity at the highest level in understanding of the goals of 'True Education', and these have always been eternal, long term.

If the processes of Education and Educare are opposite, can the methodology be the same for both? Can we employ the instructional strategy of Education to the Educare process? The methodology employed for filling the mind with information (Education) is totally wrong when it comes to bringing out values from within (Educare). In the first, all knowledge of the physical world, external to the student, as observed through the senses is systematically, analytically, logically, processed and filled in the "Head". In the second, values latent in the "Heart" are manifested in the student's behaviour. Yet, while considering the preparation of teachers, we have all been routinely accepting a particular approach which can only go to produce more 'explaining' teachers rather than 'inspiring' teachers.

The root cause is now easy to understand. The overpowering influence of examinations, the undue emphasis of reasoning & memory in shaping our life, are so great that we are unable to look deeply and beyond into this aspect of Education. We tend to teach the way we have been taught; a hundred or more years of so called 'modern' schooling has made us insensitive to this revealing aspect of Educare. We are imprisoned by our own system of education.

We now understand that human beings have not just one centre (the left brain hemisphere or the Head) but two; the second is the intuitive brain or the Heart in popular language. In the past 50 years, science is gradually coming to understand and accept this duality. Logic is cold but human beings are 'warm'. Most of our decisions and actions have their origin at a deep subjective level. It is being realised that the fifth R, Righteousness, should be allowed to blossom in us.

A Paradigm Shift

There is a deep significance in what Mahatma Gandhi once said, "I bow my head in reverence to our ancestors for their sense of the beautiful in Nature, and for their foresight in investing beautiful manifestations of Nature with a religious significance." Educational programmes at all levels need to be organized in view of these new insights. Activities, techniques and text material provide the flesh and blood to the body of any curriculum. Yet, that gives no guarantee that the 'spirit' is present. That life-giving element is provided by the perennial philosophy. Do we not accept that despite all the dependence on logic by the legal system, not just letter but also the spirit is crucial in judicial pronouncements?

Educare is transformational. It is like planting a seed and nurturing the plant with love and care until it grows into a robust tree. Then it can look after itself, even giving solace to others under its shade, and offering its fruits and flowers. For a student, and in turn for the teacher who is being prepared, Educare is experiential. They need to experience the strength of the new methodology in order to develop faith in it. True education is an act of 'faith' because the outcome blossoms and lasts many years beyond the school age.

There is a need to think and act differently. It requires a paradigm shift in our outlook, a quantum jump in our thinking. We need to plan for educating the community at large in a language they understand. We have to raise psychological, rather than logical, approaches. We have to link our methodology to long term goals in which the current journey gets aligned and merged. We need to set up a 'virtuous chain' whereby perceptions of the whole community change, programmes change thereby, and people change. Every change is an 'ex-change'. Populist slogans must give way to inner inspiration. Short term measures must be in tune with the long term goals. Once again it may be reiterated that the foundations of any education programme have to be spiritual.

In the final analysis, if we have a value-based education close to our heart, and if we want to be the instruments

to foster this philosophy in the country, we need to take a decision at the macro-level spreading awareness in unanimity that it is the inner reality, the conscience, which needs to be awakened in order that the artificial and superficial barriers between castes, religions and languages are eliminated. These obstacles will dissolve in a climate of holistic understanding of the inner reality.

If the basics of Educare are understood and accepted, the instructional methodology for teacher preparation can then be worked out. To begin with, a one week Awareness Course can be organized; the main objective for this will be to inform and motivate. This should be considered as a first step, not the only step. Our actions and decisions must be borne out of conviction that this is not a one-time exercise but an on-going initiative. Long term perspective is necessary; policies and decisions should not change with change of government or transfer of higher authorities. The programmes must be rescued from the shackles of red tapes and autocracy.

Moreover, the motivation can be sustained only if, on return to their schools, the teachers find the school ambience supportive of the goals of Educare. This requires an understanding and commitment on the part of the school management including the Principal. We need to encourage initiative and flexibility but expect dedication on the part of the teachers. It is best if all teachers in some schools are trained together, rather than one or two teachers from a large number of schools. Peer group support is essential. Thus, it should be a school-intensive project, emphasising quality rather than quantity.

Simultaneously, long term (6 weeks or more) residential Courses should be initiated for a select group of teachers, Principals and educationists. In a sense, this is promoting a Gurukul type of system where the teacher and the taught live together and the impact of the teacher is felt deeply by the students. The objective would be 'transformation', developing self-motivated, practitioners of the education programme to lead the on-going dissemination & expansion process. The essential motto is, as Sri Sathya Sai Baba says, "First Be, then Practice, then Tell." Without an insight into the theory

of the Educare principle, and without personal experience and practice, a teacher will never have the moral authority to face the students. Teacher training must begin with conviction, continue and spread with dedicated effort, and end with experiential application. An inspired teacher is a lifelong learner, always absorbing knowledge through experience and introspection.

The Inspiring teacher

Sri Sathya Sai Baba has compared the process of education to a child riding a bicycle. There are two wheels of a bicycle. It is the back wheel which gives the bicycle the dynamism, the movement, to go forward. The front wheel, controlled by the handle, gives it the direction. Both are important. Similarly, a child needs the family support to go forward in life; but it is equally important that the child should know where to go, in what direction to go, how to proceed, and when to apply brakes. A car without brakes will certainly lead to an accident; similarly, in life controls are needed. To teach these controls and to give the direction to life is the job of an inspiring teacher.

Let us presume that a teacher with idealism joins an ideal school which has set a clear direction in which it aims to implement its philosophy. Here the inspiring teacher merges his own expectations and goals in that of the school. He now has a wider field of action, a supportive environment, an opportunity of self-expression. It is only in this particular situation that he will be able to retain the inspiration. Actually, an inspiring teacher is always in search of an ideal school management as much as a school management is looking for an inspiring teacher. Unless there is a congruence of mind and heart between the two, things will not work out well. A strong synergy must exist between the two. If a school can give the best environment to an inspiring teacher, the teacher, in turn, will give his best to the school.

The inspiring teacher does not need periodical pats on the back; he does not need rewards from time to time to maintain his motivation. Unlike the explaining teacher who comes to you once in a while to remind "Sir! I have done this or that",

an inspiring teacher will not come to you for rewards. He is self-motivated; his inspiration comes from within. He puts that into practice in his own life, in conduct. The inspiring teacher is a life-long learner. He practices what he preaches. An inspiring teacher is a natural leader; he leads from the front. He says what he thinks, and he does what he says. There is complete harmony between his thought, word and deed. The emphasis is always on harmony. Therefore his impact on the students is deep and long lasting.

The inspiring teacher not just fills the head but also opens the heart. He commands a moral authority and therefore the respect, even reverence, of his students. As Mcluhan had said: "The medium is the message." He is the medium; he is the Message. His communication is between heart to heart. Students remember him for a long, long time. If we introspect, we will realise that the history of mainkind is 'his story', the story of such few individuals who were inspiring teachers. Whether we set up a system of 'Creating a Cadre of Inspiring teachers' or not, we should at least work towards an environment in which they will be able to blossom to their full potential.

Dr. Kavita Sharma

Higher Education: Challenges of Globalization and the Private Sector

Contemporary Public Higher Education in India

The situation of higher education is not very encouraging in India. While there has been a massive expansion of higher education after independence, making it the third largest after USA and China, it is very inadequate in terms of access, equity and quality. Currently it provides access to around 17-18 per cent of the relevant population (numbers vary) and efforts are being made to reach about 25-30% by 2017. To do it in the public sector alone might be extremely difficult and so the private sector might need to be co-opted. This is because the financial requirement as estimated in the 12th Five year Plan is about 413 thousand crore rupees. The number of seats that need to be created are 21 million and over 140 million children will need skill development. There is just no way in which public finance can meet this requirement but the task has to be undertaken if economic development has to go forward. It is also important to note that currently India spends about 1.1% of its GDP on higher education while South Korea, over 2% and USA over 4%. Of course there is a whole range of how much countries spend on higher education but the simple point is that India has to spend more on higher education than public finance has the capacity to allocate.

Increasingly, the relationship between higher education and economic development has been established the world over leading to the "massification" of higher education and moving towards its universalization. This has linked it firmly with employability raising questions about relevance and quality of higher education. The need to simultaneously

expand to increase access, create equity and tackle the issues of relevance and quality by upgrading existing institutions has put a strain on the resources available for the public funding of higher education. This has led to the emergence of the private sector in higher education that has prioritized subjects like engineering, medicine, management, media, law, applied sciences and technology together with subjects related to the service industry and skill development. Social sciences and humanities are facing neglect which gets emphasized as more and more higher education moves to the private sector. Further, there is an acute need for research to promote knowledge formation and its dissemination in which boundaries between disciplines get blurred. All this means that the way we think of the organization, financing, governance structures and delivery systems of higher education has to be revisited with regard to state funded institutions and the emergence of the private sector which has grown while policy for it has lagged behind.

In India, the strains in the system are more than evident as there are only a few research universities at the top and the bottom does not adequately fulfill the requirements of demand and so has little time to devote to relevance and quality. The skill formation is inadequate and too dysfunctional to meet the requirements of a growing and diversifying economy. While IITs and IIMs may be internationally competitive, they are only niche institutions which cater to a very small percentage of student population. One of the fundamental causes of malaise is, perhaps, what Prof. Altbach points out that the mass of institutions of higher education have no clarity of vision about their purpose and aim. The universities are neither provided resources nor have the mandate to build a distinctive and innovative profile which is essential for successful academic systems. So they continue as an undifferentiated mass repetitively producing more of the same. If there was clarity on what different institutions are attempting to deliver, then their funding sources and patterns could also be diversified.

The accountability in the system is so diffuse and distributed that no one can be held responsible for delivery and

outcomes. This leads to mediocrity. It is only natural because most academic arrangements in India have been derived from British colonialism and were not meant to be effective or encourage quality. The most affected is undergraduate education as the affiliating system puts the undergraduate colleges under the universities with their highly bureaucratized and controlled environment. It impedes innovation as they have to follow the common centralized policies without any autonomy. The universities, in turn, receive their funding from the government. So while they have formal autonomy they too are basically under the control of Central or State governments. Also, they have been politicized which makes them ideologically blinkered and contentious. All this has made issues of quality assurance very problematic.

The Emergence of the Private Sector

What has been the societal and systemic response to this situation? At least two things have happened. One is that it has led to the emergence of a very substantial private sector that has stepped in to absorb the rising demand for higher education especially in areas of professional and management education. The second is that the government itself has realized that it will not be able to meet all the financial requirements of the demand and has tacitly recognized the need to involve the private sector. Therefore it has allowed elements of private education to enter the public sector universities and colleges through mechanisms like `self financing courses' that run concurrently with public funded programmes. Also, self financing institutions have been affiliated to public universities and they now far outnumber the public funded colleges. Most of them are in the southern states of India. Many private deemed universities have emerged which indicates that the government seeks private help and lacks a transparent policy or legislation. There is another group of private institutions in the non-university sector that are run by private and corporate initiatives like NIIT and APTEC. By law they can't award degrees but they attract students because of the quality and relevance of their programmes and the training that they offer.

By the 1980s the student preference shifted to professional programmes over academic disciplines, particularly in areas related to engineering, medicine, management, computer applications and others because of economic and political factors. Finding a vacuum and sensing an opportunity, the private providers took to the professional sector in large numbers and did well. They were supported by an unarticulated paradigm shift in the government itself. This can be seen from the various policy statements that emerged at this time.

The National Policy on Education, 1986 stated that

resources to the extent possible will be raised by mobilizing donations, asking the beneficiary communities to maintain school buildings and supplies of some consumables, raising fees at the higher levels of education and effecting some savings by the efficient use of facilities. All these measures will be taken not only to reduce the burden on state resources but also for creating a greater sense of responsibility within the education system.

The position was reiterated in 1992.

Among the first indications that policy on private sector would reach the realms of implementation came in the recommendations of the Eighth Plan (1993-1998) which stated that the opening of new universities and colleges should not be encouraged. Also that private sector and voluntary agencies be involved in the opening and running of higher education institutions with proper checks to ensure maintenance of standards and facilities. Higher education institutions were to be made as self financing as possible. The protests of the academic community were muted by stating that the quality of education would not be compromised. Earlier, the Report of the Gnanam Committee (1992) had also stated:

It will not be possible for the state government to fund adequate resources to create endowment funds for each university. Universities, however, should make efforts to raise their own resources but it must be ensured that there are no conditions attached like preference on admission etc.

Raising of resources should not affect academic standards and universities should lay down guidelines for the same.

This position was not unique to India. It was in keeping with what was happening globally and had been stated by the International Commission for Education for the 21st century in 1996 in its report "Learning: the Treasure Within."

It is not only justifiable but also desirable to raise money from private sector in order to ease the pressure on national budgets. Private funding can come from variety of sources, contribution… by families and students towards fees.

In 1997, the Ministry of Finance in its White Paper on public subsidies called higher education a "non-merit" good. This was significant because it could have had long term consequences for public financing of higher education as it made individuals the main gainers from it and hence not deserving of public subsidies. This is an old and continuing debate. If higher education is a public good it must be completely supported by the government because society by the education of the citizens improves human capital, encourages civic involvement, and boosts economic development. The private good or "non-merit" counterargument is that higher education largely benefits the individual and therefore students should pay a significant part of their post secondary education. Perhaps there is truth in both and the answer need not be an either/or proposition. In that case a policy in which both can co-exist can be formulated. This has not been done so far in the public domain as a national policy.

However, the government has been more than aware of the resource constraints and has tried to address the problem by introducing the Private Universities Establishment and Regulation Bill in August 1995 in the Rajya Sabha. It was referred to the Standing Committee for obtaining its views on involving the private sector. However, the Bill just faded away. Since the matter continued to be discussed at various forums, the HRD Ministry set up a core group in 1999 for their views and recommendations on various issues pertaining to higher education. Nothing came of it probably because it was politically contentious and the private sector too was very

resentful to some of the provisions of the proposed bill like those pertaining to endowment fund, regulation by the government bodies and free education to one-third students. The Birla-Ambani Report of 2001 also suggested the involvement of the private sector, minimal subsidies for higher education and the resources so saved to be used for school education.

The 11th plan had a massive increase in the outlay for education and several new initiatives were envisaged which would lead to a substantial expansion of higher education like the establishment of central universities, world class universities and colleges in every district. Even if it could all be implemented, it would still require massive inputs from the private sector to meet the demand for higher education. An even larger outlay is expected in the 12th Plan but given the increase in secondary education, India's youthful demographic profile, and the existence of already large private sector, a clear policy on private higher education and acceptance of public- private partnership will have to emerge.

However, there is resistance to the idea of privatization among a vociferous and influential section of society which is a hindrance in formulating a concrete national policy towards private higher education and its role. The contention of this section is that "education has never been a commerce in this country, making it as if one is opposed to the ethos, tradition and sensibilities of the nation." But these contentions are not reflected in the actual practices. For example, medical care even more than education should be the responsibility of the government, but the moment one is sick there is rush for the best private nursing home. There is obviously some hypocrisy here which is evident in the education sector as well. Flourishing coaching academies, tutorial colleges and parallel colleges collect substantial fees for unregulated academic programmes and these are willingly paid. Fees are also willingly paid for the sought after schools and computer institutes but when it comes to formal higher education any fee increase meets with fierce resistance.

Massification of Higher Education

Massification of higher education across the world has

been attempted through both the public sector and the private sector. In Japan, over 77% of education is private while in South Korea it is even higher. Philippines has over 70% private higher education. Private sector educates more than half the population in countries like Mexico, Brazil and Chile. Private universities are expanding in Africa . China and India too have significant private sector. However, Western Europe does not have a large private sector except for Portugal and in USA, the perceived bastion of private education, its role has reduced with the massification of higher education. The fall of communism has brought significant higher education to the countries of former USSR and to the large majority of Central and East Europe. A few of these countries have only a tiny private sector but in several others it peaks at around 25-30%. It is mainly in the developing countries that the demand for private education is very strong probably due to the desire of using education and human resource development to accelerate economic growth.

Impact of Globalization and Democracy

The demand for higher education is being driven by at least two factors: globalization and democracy. Globalization can be seen as "the widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide `interconnectedness'. It is the "overarching international system shaping the domestic politics and foreign relations of virtually every country. It involves the inexorable integration of markets, nation-states, and technologies to a degree never witnessed before – in a way that is enabling individuals, corporations and nation-states to reach around the world farther, faster, deeper, and cheaper than ever before, and in a way that is also producing a powerful backlash from those brutalized or left behind. We have gone from how big is your missile to how fast is your modem? We have gone from a variety of economic ideologies to a choice between, free market vanilla and North Korea." While the polarities may not be as extreme as are made out here, but in today's context, as Henry Feignenbeoun observes, it is taken as axiomatic that education and spread of knowledge are essential to increase international competitiveness because national and global economies are interconnected and based on information and its exchange.

It is no wonder that internationally there has been much debate and discussion on higher education. October 1998, for instance, was a very significant year for the world of higher education as representatives of 128 nations responsible for education, including higher education, met for the first time in Paris under the auspices of UNESCO to discuss issues of common concern and to agree on the general direction that higher education must take in the twenty first century. The Conference was unanimously of the view that a renewal of higher education was essential for the whole society to face the challenges of the twenty-first century. These included intellectual independence of individual creation and advancement of knowledge; and education and training to shape responsible enlightened citizens and qualified specialists, without whom no nation could progress economically, socially, culturally or politically. The Declaration of the World Conference emphasized that since society was increasingly knowledge-based, higher education and research had become essential components of cultural, socio-economic and environmentally sustainable development of individuals, communities and nations. The development of higher education, therefore, ranked as among the highest national priorities of nations throughout the world because without it, the required human resource could not be created.

The Conference was preceded by a widespread mobilization of partners, national policy makers, institutional leaders, professors, researchers, students, professional sectors and others. Regional Conferences were held in Havana in November 1996, Dakar in April 1997, Tokyo in July 1997, Palermo in September 1997, and Beirut in March 1998. Findings, declarations and plans of action of these conferences provided inputs for the Paris Conference. These were complemented by studies and analyses undertaken by some fifty governmental and non-governmental organizations charged with preparing a series of thematic debates on important issues of higher education. Twelve debates were structured around three main domains. The first was on higher education and development considered as requirements for the world of work. Under this were to be considered higher education and sustainable

human development contributing to national and regional development; and higher education staff development as a continuous process. The second domain was new trends and innovations in higher education that encompassed students' vision of higher education for a new society; the use of new information technologies, challenge and opportunities in research and the contribution of higher education to the education system as a whole. The third domain dealt with higher education and its relationship with culture and society. It had under its umbrella, women and higher education; promoting a culture of peace, mobilizing the power of culture; autonomy and social responsibility and higher education.

At the Conference itself the delegates dealt with issues pertaining to the changing missions of higher education in the twenty-first century. These included interaction of higher education with society; the impact of the change process on higher education together with diversification; increased flexibility of systems and promotion of lifelong learning; and access to higher education. All these factors provided elements that went into the Declaration and Framework for Action that the Conference adopted at the end as "World declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-First Century: Vision and Action" and "Framework for Priority Action for Change and Development of Higher Education." The Conference resolved that "beyond its traditional functions of teaching, training, research and study, all of which remain fundamental", higher education must "promote development of the whole persons and train responsible, informed citizens, committed to working for a better society in the future.' It has led to intense activity around the world as country after country has tried to assess the role of higher education in development and what needs to be further done.

The Task Force on Higher Education and Society was convened by the World Bank and UNESCO in the year 2000 to bring together some of the world's foremost education and development experts. Based on research, intensive discussion and hearings conducted over a two-year period, the Task Force concluded that without more and better education, developing countries would find it increasingly difficult to benefit from the global knowledge-based economy.

Globalization is intimately connected to democracy and the empowerment of individuals who seek opportunities in an increasingly shrinking world. As Friedman points out, two major events have been responsible for this. One is the end of the Cold War, which has also been a struggle between two economic systems – capitalism and communism. Second is the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989. Now there is primarily one system in the world and while there may be many variations of it keeping in view the local milieu, everyone has had to orient and adapt to it one way or another. With the spread of democracy, regulated or centrally planned economies have become an idea of the past. Henceforth, more and more economies would be governed in consonance with interests, demands and aspirations of the people, that is, from ground up rather than by planning from top down.

Friedman argues that there have been three great eras of globalization. The first from 1492 when Columbus set sail opening trade between the Old World and the New World, until around 1800. It shrank the world from large to medium. Globalization was about countries and muscle. The driving force was, "how much muscle, how much horse power, wind power or later, steam power your country had and how creatively you could deploy it."

The second era of globalization lasted roughly from 1800 to 2000, interrupted by the Great Depression and World Wars I and II. This shrank the world from medium to small. The key agent of change in this era, the dynamic force driving global integration, was multinational companies. The multinationals went global for markets and labour, spearheaded first by the expansion of Dutch and English joint-stock companies and then the Industrial Revolution. In the first half of this era, the impetus was given by falling transportation costs, thanks to the steam engine and the railroad; and in the second half, by falling telecommunication costs because of the development of technology. The global economy matured because there was enough movement of goods and information from continent to continent to create a global market, and global arbitrage in products and labour.

Around 2000, the third phase of globalization began. With it, the world shrank further from small to tiny and

simultaneously flattened the playing field. What gives this phase of globalization its unique character is the new found power for individuals to collaborate and compete globally . The new information technology has made us all next-door neighbours. It is now for individuals to ask themselves where they fit into the global competition and opportunities of the day and they can, on their own, collaborate with each other globally. The individual empowerment is the most important new feature of globalization but companies, small and big, have also got newly empowered in this era and seek opportunities of growth and expansion for themselves.

Individuals push for higher education as they see in it an attractive personal investment which can bring them rich rewards in terms of long term income and employability in comparison to individuals with lower formal qualifications. Both these have contributed to the promotion of market elements in higher education particularly through increased privatization which has helped to meet the demand for massification, diversification and the increased access. It has created heterogeneous and complex systems that are required to meet the new and diverse demand which has made it nearly impossible to maintain a pattern of detailed regulation of higher education. Hence, new forms of governance, financing, curricula and flexible delivery and evaluation systems are needed.

Apart from an increasingly integrated world economy, new information and communications technology, and the emergence of an international knowledge network, English language has gained in prominence as an international language of communication and work. Without it, it is not possible to prepare students for the globalized world, the by-product of which is internationalization of higher education. This includes enabling students to study abroad, setting up branch campuses overseas, internationalizing the curriculum or engaging in international partnerships. Both these factors, too, have contributed to the promotion of market elements in higher education particularly through increased privatization.

Early Private Higher Education

However, resistance to private education continues, although it is resilient enough to persist and grow. Why is that? After all India has had a long experience in this area. In colonial times institutions of higher education were started with little or no support from the Government. Socio-religious trusts, societies and even individuals took the initiative motivated by their ideals and philanthropy. The Sikhs in Punjab formed the Khalsa Diwan in 1873 which established Khalsa schools and colleges. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan founded the Mohammad Anglo-Oriental College in 1877 which grew into Aligarh Muslim University in 1920. The Jamia Millia Islamia was founded by Dr. Zakir Hussain in 1920. The Arya Samaj founded a number of schools and the Anglo Vedic College in Lahore in 1886. The Deccan Education Society was founded in 1880 and started the Fergusson College. In Bombay, the Victoria Jubilee Technical Institute was founded in 1887 through local initiative. Dr. Annie Besant of Theosophical Society founded the Central Hindu College in 1909 which was handed over to Banaras Hindu University Society when she joined Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya in 1917. In 1921, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore started Viswa Bharti at Shantiniketan. Mahatma Gandhi motivated the establishment of several institutions in the 1920s – Gujarat Vidyapeeth, Kashi Vidyapeeth, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth.

The rulers of princely states too took a keen interest in higher education and contributed to the establishment and development of universities like Mysore University (1916), Osmania University (1918) and Annamalai University (1929). Business Houses too made their contribution to higher education and continued till much later after independence although philanthropy in this field mostly died out after 1947. The efforts of Jamshedji Tata led to the establishment of Tata Institute for Science, now called Indian Institute of Science at Bangalore. Educational programmes initiated by G.D. Birla at Pilani in the early 1900s culminated in the establishment of the Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani in 1964. B.M. Birla started the Birla Institute of Technology, Ranchi in 1955. Banasthali Vidyapeeth (1983), Thapar Institute

of Engineering and Technology, Patiala (1985) and Bharti Vidyapeeth (1964) are all examples of private initiatives.

The situation was not unique to India. Many of the earliest universities of Europe, too, were the products of non-governmental initiative during the second half of the Middle Ages. They were set up as autonomous institutions by a royal or papal decree. They had a public orientation and were accountable to the secular or religious authorities. The distinction between the public and private spheres was not marked in medieval times and hence the dichotomy between public and private institutions was also less clear. It is only in the 17th and early 20th centuries that the modern state expanded and included higher education as its function.

The motivations for state control then were not very different from what they are today—politics and economics. The same factors that led to the 'nationalization' of highr education might end up in its privatization or at least in a mixed sector. The process began in the 1660s with the emergence of the modern state which came to regard the universities as the suppliers of qualified labour and so sought increasing control over them. As the functions of the state grew, new institutions were started by it or the existing ones regulated so that they could be used to train new members of administration. By the 19th century, the autonomy of the universities was impacted as the state sought to regulate the organization of the universities, syllabus, teaching staff and students. The growing role of government funding of universities has been accompanied by greater oversight over them. The ministries of education and similar public administrative structures exercise detailed control over university life. It has gradually become so overbearing that in the last decades of the 20th century, this steady growth of persistent control of the state over universities has started to be questioned. However, the situation is complex because in the process, the universities themselves have become dependent on secular authorities at all levels – financial, administrative, educational and political. Freedom is frightening.

Hence a direct correlation can be seen in the expansion of the government's economic and social role and the government

control over universities. The social welfare state required highly qualified people like teachers, social workers, doctors, engineers, accountants and others. This impacted syllabus formation and priority in the funding of types of programmes thus privileging some over others. It meant that expenditure on higher education became a budgetary and political priority and funding was made available for required skills and achievements in scientific research required for military, economic and social life. It also led to the need for mass higher education as more and more workforce was required.

This was the European pattern of higher education which was copied all over the world including India. With the rise of North America, the North American pattern which is different from the European model because of the development of a federal state system and its limited role in the higher education is also beginning to emerge intensifying the debate on the state control of universities and the autonomy required in a democratized and globalized world.

In pre-independent India, as mentioned above, a large number of institutions had been established through private initiative but once independence came, the state took over and this led to the demise of philanthropy in this sector. For obvious reasons, India chose to follow the European model and more particularly the British model. In this model, since the government had a large control over institutions of higher education, the number of private institutions became insignificant. Higher education was seen as a state responsibility and as an instrument for training elites especially for civil service and public administration. In pursuance of this ideology, private higher education was either prevented from being established or not allowed to continue to function.

Contemporary Private Higher Education

Therefore, private education had existed earlier too, and private higher education has emerged now; what is the difference between the two? Historically, private institutions were established as not-for-profit institutions like the universities. However, the recent growth of private institutions is profit

seeking. Even when for profit institutions are not allowed the private institutions are usually for profit whatever may be their claim to the contrary and the regulatory mechanism is not able to deal with them. Further, most private institutions are not universities but specialized institutions that provide higher training in some specific fields of study. Research, especially in basic sciences, is usually weak in them and often non-existent because of the large outlay it demands. However, in recent times, attempts to gain legitimacy have prompted them to show some amount of research activity but it largely remains cosmetic because it is difficult for them to find philanthropic sources of funding and they have no access to public research funds. So whatever finance is required for research has to be cross subsidized from teaching funds and this involves raising tuition fee, already high compared to public universities, to a point which is not a viable option. As the system matures, some amelioration may take place.

Right now, most private higher education institutions cater to undergraduate demand which satisfies the current needs of the labour market as this brings immediate returns. However, high end programmes demand heavy financial outlay which in turn means very high fees. Since there are no takers for this, either the quality gets diluted or private education gets confined to the popular courses of social sciences, economics business, management and others.

The issue of quality becomes an urgent one for them since they find it hard if not impossible to compete in terms of fees with public institutions. Also these institutions face problems of getting good teachers. Most of them have to rely on part time teachers from public universities or their retired faculty. The dearth of faculty disturbs the teacher student ratio that further dilutes the quality. Further, when teachers from public institutions `moonlight' it creates tensions between the two sectors with its own consequences. Public angst too rises against them because lack of quality and high fees means that the employment returns do not match the individual investment and expectations.

Further, at the policy level the expectations from private institutions are usually not met. Given the fact that they have more flexibility, it is expected that they would increase

diversification both in terms of geographical reach and subjects taught being more responsive to labour market demands. This does not happen because the very nature of private institutions makes them gravitate to capital cities or major urban centers. And the subjects get confined to those that are popular because of market demand. In fact it is the public institutions that are geographically diverse because of the involvement of local and regional authorities. They also have the wherewithal to innovate, if they could only get out of their straitjacket.

whatever may be the constraints on private higher education, the evidence seems to suggest that they are set to become a permanent feature of the higher education landscape. This is because higher education is likely to persist as an important priority in policy terms, the government may not be able to cope with its rising financial demands and expectations, and this will give a push to private higher education. There will also be financial challenges on how to expand the supply of higher education but these will be in both the public and the private sector. Unless there is a policy that will take into its ambit the concerns of both the sectors, the likely response will be the strengthening of market mechanisms which can increase the unregulated growth of privateness in the system. The consequence will be commercialization of higher education and the victims will be the stakeholders – teachers, students and parents. Teachers will be underpaid and hired on contractual basis with their services being dispensed with during vacations. They will have career uncertainties. Students will not get quality education and parents will pay exorbitant fees in their quest for professional degrees for wards. Hence it is vital to have in place a public policy with regard to private education to avoid the ills of commercialization. But this will be a complex and controversial issue especially in countries where private institutions have remained minimal or there are ideological issues and public sentiment to grapple with.

Since private education usually gets a boost because of massification, initially at least, it will tend to focus on absorption of unfulfilled demand but gradually these

institutions may position themselves as high quality/ high cost alternatives to mass/ low cost public higher education. In the course of time, they would not want to be seen as second choice institutions for those who could not get a place in public sector institutions. In the post massification phase, the demand absorption pattern can also give way to niche institutions which present alternatives to mass higher education rather than reinforcing it.

Private institutions will gradually seek greater legitimacy. The first endeavour will be to strengthen their teaching mission both in terms of programmes and faculty. They will also start paying more attention to research. Up to now the teaching element has been dominant but they will focus on research for legitimacy. They will attempt to improve their academic pedigree with better qualified staff, increase the number of research centers affiliated to them and develop good post graduate programs. In addition, they are also likely to develop good strong student support mechanisms because both academic quality and students are equally important to them.

Models for Private Higher Education

Many models for private education are already available in the country. There are at least four distinct ones. One is the Manipal model where the approach is to provide access to students who can pay and who may not have got admission for various reasons in a public sector university. Manipal Academy of Higher Education is a pioneering center for self financing higher education, managed and funded by private enterprise.

The second is the marketing model in which already existing institutions receiving aid from the government, central or state ,are allowed to start some professional courses at the undergraduate and postgraduate level on the self financing pattern.

The third is the sponsoring model which is popular with the corporate sector in which it sponsors its managerial and executive personnel to enable them to update their skills

and knowledge. For this they are attached to some leading institutions for a short period of training.

Finally there is the franchising model in which self financing institutions have to select courses designed by the university and follow the teaching as per norms prescribed by the affiliating university. However, these colleges do not receive grant from the government. Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, Delhi has a large number of privately managed self-financing courses in different professional fields such as engineering, technology, management studies, medicine, pharmacy, education, law and others are affiliated to it.

Governments will increasingly develop accreditation and evaluation mechanisms often as an instrument to curtail private institutions. This will gain relevance as for-profit institutions emerge as they are already doing in many countries of the world and even the not-for-profit ones behave like for-profit ones. Private institutions too will seek accreditation to legitimize themselves and proclaim their quality.

Need for Government Policy

However, the acceptance of private higher education will essentially depend on the role of the government. The government has to be clear, and build a national consensus on the issue. Right now there is divergence and the public perception is negative with a fair justification. At the same time, paradoxically the private sector continues to grow while policy lags behind. Therefore, benign negligence of the private sector or allowing its covert entry will not do. If the government needs the private sector for resource mobilization and its other strengths, it has to facilitate it and see it as complementary to its task of discharging its responsibility of expanding the higher education base. If this is the perception, then potential private providers can be facilitated and given some incentives. For this, the most important is appropriate legislation because it will embody the will of the state and bring about clarity on the rules of the game. It will save the private sector education from perpetual litigation and harassment. Security by legal action would constitute the first step in promoting quality private participation in higher education.

Regulation implemented with integrity can lead to open and transparent policies that can attract big corporations with enough funds to establish quality institutions and staying power to not expect immediate returns.

Lacking a national legislation many states have already enacted laws for the establishment of private universities, sometimes with disastrous consequences as in Chhatisgarh. But state legislation is not enough. The national will must be made clear through a national policy which should have basically three components: (i) promotion, (ii) facilitation and (iii) regulatory control. Promotional role needs policies that stimulate private efforts through expansion of higher education. Facilitation requires enacting of appropriate legislation. Regulatory control is needed to ensure good quality in private institutions as well as to safeguard against any exploitation of the gullible public.

Right now higher education seems to be stuck in a quagmire. It is clear that India is affected by global trends but is unable to deal with them. If it has to meet the challenges, it has to systematically create an internationally competitive academic system. For this it will have to rise above ideological biases and politics to reform its outmoded structures of academic governance, structures and delivery systems and build a national consensus by a continuous Center-State dialogue on higher education both in the public and the private sectors. A tall order perhaps but without it the Indian higher education system can deliver neither nationally nor compete globally.

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Furqan Qamar

India's Experimentation with the Development and Reforms Initiatives in Higher Education

The Reforms Agenda in Higher Education

Higher Education in India is presently undergoing reforms and this time the focus is on structural reforms aimed at fundamentally altering the way the higher education system is to be governed, regulated, monitored and funded. Starting with the Prime Minister's new initiatives in higher education, as announced from the ramparts of the Red Fort in 2007, the 11th Plan, focussing on expansion and mitigation of regional imbalances, increased the allocations for higher and technical education by over nine times pegging the Gross Budgetary Support (GBS) to an unprecedented level of Rs. 84,979 crores, targeted to raise the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education from 10 percent to 15 percent and provided for the establishment of a large number of new central universities (16), world-class universities (14), Indian Institutes of Technology-IITs (8), Indian Institutes of Management - IIMs (7), National Institutes of Technology-NITs (20), Indian Institutes of Information Technology -IIITs (20), Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research - IISERs (5), Polytechnics (1000), Model Colleges of Higher Education (373) besides upgrading, strengthening and supporting hitherto uncovered universities (150), uncovered colleges (6000), underfunded universities (160), underfunded colleges (5500) and up-gradation of State Engineering colleges (200). Noticeably, it was only around this time that the recommendations of the Moily Committee for the implementation of 27 percent reservation for the OBC were also initiated.

Simultaneously, a series of steps for basic and structural reforms were also introduced, for it was believed that mere

expansion and mitigation of regional and social group imbalances would not be sufficient and conscious efforts will have to be made to reform the higher education system so as to improve quality and bring in excellence. The reforms agenda so initiated spans all aspects of higher education including academic, administration, governance, financing and regulation. Since then, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has been working hard to enact a series of legislative measures based on the combined (critics might say 'conveniently picked out of the') recommendations made by the Yashpal Committee on Revival and Rejuvenation of Higher Education and the National Knowledge Commission (NKC). While the Central Universities Act leading to the conversion of three state universities and establishment of twelve new central universities, one in each such state which did not have a central university yet, received the Presidential assent and became law in 2009, none of the other flagship legislative measures like the (a) establishment of the National Council for Higher Education and Research (NCHER) which seeks to subsume the UGC, AICTE, NCTE, (in a way all existing regulatory bodies ,except those concerned with health and agriculture); (b) Prevention of Malpractices in Higher Education; (c) Foreign Educational Institutions (Entry and Regulation); (c) establishment of the National Authority for Regulation of Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Educational Institutions; (d) establishment of the National Educational Tribunal; (e) creation and establishment of 14 world-class/innovative universities have as yet been passed by the Parliament. So much so that the amendments in the IIT Act and NIT Act seeking to bring under their ambit the newly established IITs and NITs and the IISER are also pending as on date.

History of Reforms in Higher Education in India

This is not the first time that the higher education sector in the country is being proposed to be reformed. We have had a tradition of initiating reforms in higher education rather too frequently - on an average, at least once in every fifteen years. The process began immediately after Independence with the constitution of the University Education Commission under

the chairmanship of Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan in 1948 and has continued through the National Commission on Education (Kothari Commission, 1964-66), National Commission on Teachers in Higher Education (1982), New Education Policy (1986), Acharya Ramamurty Committee (2000) Programme of Action Document of the National Education Policy 1986 (1992) and, most recently, the National Knowledge Commission (2007-09) led by Sam Pitroda and the Committee for the Revival and Rejuvenation of Higher Education under the chairmanship of Professor Yashpal (2009). Should we include in the list the Gajendragadkar Committee on Governance, Gnanam Committee on Administrative Reforms, Suneri Committee on Gnanam Committee Recommendations, Pylee Committee on fee policy and Punnayya Committee on Financing of Universities and Colleges and numerous other committees concerning specific issues like curricula, administration, governance, funding, autonomy and accountability, we will have no parallel in the world as far as the urge for and frequency of generating ideas for reforming the higher education system is concerned. Besides, the Pay Review Committees appointed once in every ten years, have invariably gone beyond fixation of pay and have made series of recommendations for improving the teaching-learning process and more importantly, making teachers more accountable and performance oriented. Reports of the Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) have also had sections, if not separate chapters, on reforming the higher education system. Lately, a series of guidelines and regulations, encompassing nearly all aspects of higher education - admission, fee-fixation, attendance, discipline, examination, governance, and even curricula, have also been mandated by courts of law. It is, thus, also a fact that the recommendations of all the commissions and committees have been taken quite seriously and have been sought to be put in action through a series of legislative measures, regulations, guidelines and directives.

Structural Changes have been Messy in the Past

Previously efforts to enact legislation for the entry and regulation of private universities in 1991 have almost been shelved. So was the case about an earlier effort to transform

the University Grants Commission into the Higher Education Development Commission/Council. Barring a few exceptions, most efforts to bring about structural changes in higher education through legislative process have historically been challenged and consequently, the reforms introduced through administrative measures by issuing guidelines, directives, recommendations etc have not only been piecemeal but have also made the administration, governance and regulation of higher education somewhat messy. Even when the occasions have permitted reforms through legislative measures, we have hardly been able to think drastically different. While most commissions and committees have felt that various enactments for the establishment of universities are archaic and require amendment to bring them in tune with the global best practices and effective to the contemporary challenges, the new legislations including the Central Universities Act enacted as recently as in 2009, are hardly any different than the old ones.

Comments on Central Universities Act, 2009

These universities were expected to be role models for other central and state universities and presented an excellent opportunity to frame a legislation that could have been distinctively different to provide for governance structure, decision-making processes, and administrative setup in order to ensure institutional autonomy and performance-based accountability. Sadly, however, the Central Universities Act 2009 is hardly different from the conventional legislation governing existing central universities. Except for a few changes to the effect that these universities would strive to introduce academic reforms, and that search committee for the selection of Vice chancellor would have three nominees of the Visitor as against one in the existing universities, this Act is no more than a replica of the old legislation as far as the governance structure, decision-making bodies, officers, their role, responsibilities and powers and administrative set up are concerned. Governance structure and administrative set up including the university authorities (Court, Executive Council, Academic Council etc) and officers (chancellor, vice-chancellor, registrar etc), powers and functions, decision-

making processes and the role of the central government under this new legislation is exactly the same as found in any other central university.

Envisaged as a role model, these new central universities could have been given an Act designed on the principles of modern management and governance so as to ensure a lean, mean and efficient administrative structure and decision making process reflecting good management practices, leadership and governance, as the content and purport of the Bill will determine generic make up of the proposed universities. New legislation should have ideally specified quantifiable and measurable global benchmarks of academic, administrative and financial functioning in order to ensure objective and performance-based public accountability and provided for an effective institutional mechanism to insulate universities from political and bureaucratic interference. Individual universities and their decision-making bodies could have been empowered to take their own decision within the overall national policy framework. Some of the university authorities and officers such as 'University Courts' and 'Chancellors' could have been redefined with enhanced roles and responsibilities, as in their present form, these institutions seem to have outlived their utility. University Court has no function except to consider and approve the Annual Accounts and Annual Reports of the University while Chancellor is assigned two ceremonial roles of chairing the meetings of the Court and presiding over the convocation. The new law could have easily provided for an empowered governance structure whereby the top management, authorities like Executive Council and Academic Council and officers like the Vice Chancellor could have been freed from day-to-day routine decisions, and administrative functions so as to focus on vision, strategy, policy making, coordination and fund-raising. The new Act could have provided for a team of Pro Vice Chancellors each being responsible for Policy Planning, Academic Coordination, Administration, Examination & Evaluation and Budget & Finance. The idea of shared governance and decentralised administration such that individual Schools of the university could be empowered to take their own academic, administrative and financial

decisions, albeit within the overall policy framework of the university and subject to overall regulation and monitoring of top management. It could have at least reconsidered changing the procedure of appointment of Deans and Heads by prescribing a more effective procedure rather than by rotation in order of seniority from amongst the professors of the school. They should have been appointed by the Executive Council on the recommendation of the Vice Chancellor either from the pool of professors within the university or from anywhere else. The Vice Chancellor should have been empowered to constitute his/her own team of Deans and PVCs

Recommendations of NKC & Yashpal Committee

At times, it has also seen that while we begin with radical and innovative ideas but by the time it is translated into action through legislation they get so drastically changed as to the very purpose for which they were originally conceived. As a result of all these things, the more we seek to change higher education it stays the same and the problems continue to persist in eternity. National Knowledge Commission (NKC) lamented that higher education in the country is over-regulated and under-governed and found multiplicity of regulatory authorities at the root of all the ills. It accordingly suggested the establishment of an Independent Regulatory Authority in Higher Education (IRAHE) to take over the approval, recognition and regulatory functions of the UGC, AICTE, NCTE, MCI, DEC etc, leaving UGC to focus exclusively on the funding functions while other regulatory bodies were to be transformed into professional councils charged with the responsibility of prescribing standards for professional conduct and qualifications. NKC was countered by the Committee to review the functioning of the UGC AICTE etc. The committee later got its mandate changed to become a committee to make recommendations for the renovation and rejuvenation of higher education. It so happened that this committee also reached the same conclusion albeit for somewhat different reasons. It argued that the multiplicity of regulatory authorities with overlapping and conflicting mandates have led to compartmentalisation of knowledge and since advancement of knowledge is at the fringes of disciplines,

such a stringent compartmentalisation of disciplines has been detrimental to higher education. Arguing for porous boundaries between disciplines, the committee made a strong case for all universities to become multi-disciplinary. It also concluded that multiplicity of national level regulatory bodies was to be blamed for the present state of affairs in higher education and felt compelled to recommend establishment of a National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER) to subsume all existing regulatory bodies.

Such articulations have been at the root of all the legislative measures that the MHRD has been working on and with so much wisdom expended in the drafting of a series of legislative measures, it was hoped that the new regulatory framework for higher education would create a conducive and congenial environment for sustainable development and excellence in higher education. Sadly, there are still no signs that the proposed Bills are likely to become law soon. In the meantime, most of the draft Bills have undergone many rounds of changes to accommodate the varying views and interests of many stakeholders. At this stage no one can be sure as to what form these legislative measures would finally take and as a result even those who have been quite optimistic about these pieces of legislation are getting increasingly wary about the outcome and they are now not as much enthusiastic about their potential for either improving the state of affairs in higher education or for promoting quality and excellence.

Multiplicity of regulatory authorities in higher education has indeed been a major issue and needed urgent rectification by whatever reckoning one analysed the situation. The National Council for Higher Education and Research (NCHER) Bill had originally been conceptualised as a lean and mean organisation charged with the responsibility to discharge all the functions and a little more than what either the National Knowledge Commission or the Yashpal Committee had envisaged for it. The UGC, AICTE, NCTE and DEC were intended to be subsumed by it and all the general, professional and technical higher education, whether in the formal or in the distance mode, were to come under its ambit. Mid-course correction ensured that the medical, dental, legal

and agricultural higher education would be kept outside its purview. The composition of the proposed council, in a revised version of the draft, is also proposed to be drastically changed to make it a more representative body by accommodating representatives of the states. The chairperson and members of the NCHER which in the original draft were to be appointed by the President of India on the recommendations of a Selection Committee headed by the Prime Minister with Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Minister for Human Resource Development and the Health Minister as its members, out of a panel of names suggested by collegiums comprising eminent scientists, professionals and laureates is also under discussion as it is seen to be too cumbersome.

The National Authority for Assessment and Accreditation Bill

The National Authority for Assessment and Accreditation bill seeks to establish a national level body to licence agencies to accredit institutions of higher education. All higher educational institutions including, the central universities, state universities, private universities established under state legislature, deemed universities, colleges, institutes, institutions of national importance established by an Act of Parliament, and their constituents are proposed to be brought under the ambit of accreditation to be undertaken by the agencies registered and licensed by the National Authority for Accreditation. Once in place, the legislation would redefine the role and functions of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) which is charged with the responsibility of accrediting the higher educational institutions and the National Board of Accreditation (NBA) which presently accredits programmes of studies in technical education. The draft of this Bill has also undergone some changes and going by the latest information, presently a committee is working to frame rules and regulations consistent with the draft legislation. What is important to note is that this draft bill originally contained many clauses whereby it was dependent on the effective functioning of the NCHER and a few clauses of this law might come in conflict with the NCHER.

The Educational Tribunal Bill

A Bill seeking to establish a three tier structure at the District, State and National Level of Educational Tribunals for fast-track adjudication of disputes in higher education has also been in circulation. The three-tier structures envisaged under the Bill is to consider disputes concerning service matters of teachers and employees and also matters concerning students and other stakeholders with any higher educational institution, whether a university or a college or an institutions imparting higher education. These tribunals are also empowered to adjudicate disputes in matter of affiliation of colleges and also any dispute between any higher educational institution and any statutory body governing any subject of higher education. The scope and mandates of tribunals set up under this Bill are so wide and all encompassing that there is a strong likelihood that it may be incompatible with the regulatory framework conceptualised under the NCHER Bill.

Innovation Universities

The idea of establishing 14 world class universities as envisaged under the 11th Plan has undergone most dramatic changes. Criticised on the ground that world class institutions are not created de novo, it was decided that such universities shall be called Innovation Universities. To give effect to the Innovation Universities, MHRD came up with a concept note on Brain Gain Policy which delineated core criteria distinguishing these universities from others. The concept note also specified strategies for attracting best talent to teaching and research, for it was recognised that it is the quality faculty that makes the difference. It talked about providing right incentives and providing academic and intellectual freedom at par with the globally acclaimed universities. it emphasised on providing adequate funding unhindered by bureaucratic questioning from within as well as from outside the institution. I went to the extent of suggesting that amount spent by these universities on research and teaching could be kept out of the purview of CAG audit and that scrutiny and accountability of the fund would be measured by outcomes rather than processes. The

concept note focused on unshackling of universities from Governmental interference and sought to justify enhanced autonomy by measuring performance in terms of higher standards of teaching and research. It had been hoped that these laudable ideas would get translated into action in the Innovation University Bill and thereby paving a way for other universities and higher educational institutions to claim similar privileges. The draft of the Innovation University in its present form has been a disappointment for it now only seeks to establish a few more universities in a more or less self-financed private universities mode.

Overall Comments

The above are but only a few examples drawn from the most recent experiences of bringing structural reforms in higher education which amply indicate that they make the environment uncertain and cause delays which adversely affect the normal functioning of higher educational institutions. Besides, past experiences suggests that most often such recommendations that seek to create new structures get implemented, whereas the substantive changes are often conveniently forgotten the noise and dust that the air of change causes. Perhaps it is easiest to set up new institutions than addressing the more substantive issues of promoting quality and excellence and making higher education more inclusive. At times, changing the institutional setup and existing structures may become necessary but the new regulatory structure alone will not bring about all the desired results, unless the same has been designed with regard to the causes of the failures of the existing institutional framework. Though the NCHER was conceptualised as the single autonomous regulatory body to provide direction to all higher education in a holistic manner, the way the recommendations of the National Knowledge Commission and the Yashpal Committee have been understood and being translated into action, it is becoming increasingly clear that the new regulatory framework shall cause other kinds of multiplicities. While under the prevalent regulatory framework, there were multiplicities across disciplines and domains of knowledge, the new regulatory framework is bound to create new kind of multiplicities across different regulatory

functions - NCHER for policy and norms, National Accreditation Authority for licensing agencies for accreditation, National Education Tribunals for grievance and dispute redressal, Prevention of Malpractices for overall regulation and so on. Since different authorities and institutional frameworks are being created through separate enactment, the possibilities of inter-institutional conflicts and turf-war can also not be ruled out.

Besides, there are also indications that the NCHER would now perhaps be the last one to see the light of the day and in the mean-time other legislations may get enacted. This will lead to a problem of its own kind, for most other laws provide for interconnectedness with the NCHER even to the extent that in certain circumstances the new institutions and authorities created under them are dependent on the guidance received from the NCHER. Seen in this context, it would have been better if we had conceptualised a single National Higher Education Act providing for establishment of all the different authorities and discharge of all the functions that are now proposed to be done through many different pieces of legislation. Further, the new regulatory regime would not necessarily succeed simply because it is new and has replaced the old ones. All the problems of higher education are not attributable only to deficiencies in the regulatory structure alone. It must be realised that any structure, old or new, can be only as good as the people who run the affairs of these institutions. The new structures may provide for a different compositions and process of the selection of the top bosses but it could be no guarantee that the same would drastically improve the working and efficiency of the organisation as a whole. Had it been so, the AICTE would have been rated as more efficient organisation than the UGC because it came into existing almost thirty years after and had a much different composition and process of top management and senior officials. Institutions exist, function and operate in a particular socio-cultural and economic context and this context is uniquely different to each culture. Our context is markedly different than most other countries of the world and therefore a model that has worked in one country context may or may

not work to our advantage. These two major determinants of institutional efficacy i.e. the people and the context, take generations to change and therefore what can be tried with success in immediate terms is the processes of decision making and implementation. It is therefore imperative that the new institutional structures come up with a different kind of processes that they will adopt to guide and regulate higher education, failing which they shall meet the same fate as their predecessor.

Given the above analysis, it should, therefore, no more surprise anyone to find as to why the analysis of the problems and policy prescriptions given by the Radhakrishnan Commission in 1948 (or for that matter even by the Sadler Commission on Calcutta University in 1913) seems so relevant to our present day problems. Conversely, quite often the conclusions and policy recommendations of the recent committees are hardly any different than those made decades earlier. The most glaring example that could be cited here is that of reforming the examination system in higher education. The semester system, the choice-based credit system and the comprehensive continuous internal assessment which form the core of the academic reforms specified in the 11th Plan document are hardly any different than what was conceptualised and prescribed by the University Grants Commission (UGC) as early as in seventies. It may be recalled that many universities then had implemented the semester system but soon reverted back to the old practice of annual examination for they found it unsustainable. The most critical question should therefore be as to how come that such practices are sustainable in the IITs and IIMs but not in the universities and colleges? What are the critical characteristic preconditions that need to be put in place in order to ensure that such initiatives could be sustained in letter and sprit? Sadly, most reports have somehow missed on this critical issue.

Objectives of Higher Education

What compounds the problem further is the ambivalence and ambiguity with regard to three or four critical issues concerning higher education. At the forefront is the lack of

clarity about the aims, objectives, purpose and functions of higher education. We are not able to clearly define the balance that higher education ought to attain between the philosophical goals of self-enlightenment and development of humane society and the more immediate and mundane objectives of jobs and placements. We require higher education to give emphasis on liberal arts and humanities but expect them to justify their relevance in terms of placements statistics and progression rates of their graduate. While it is true that the two goals are neither contradictory nor independent of each other, they are significantly different in terms of orientation and approach.

Autonomy and Accountability

Closely linked to the first issue is the issue of autonomy and accountability. So far, no one has ever challenged the idea of university autonomy and governments after government have only been more emphatic in expressing their commitments to protect preserve and promote autonomy in higher education but it is a historical fact that universities today are not even ten percent as autonomous as universities used to be five decades ago. Accountability being the other side of the same coin that has autonomy on one side has been used as a lever to adversely impinge on the autonomy of higher education and their institutions. Increasingly the rules and regulations governing higher education are being designed by agencies external to the higher educational institutions and insistence on adherence to these rules, regulations and procedures has increased manifold. Even if the government may have kept itself at an arm's length on this, the regulatory agencies and statutory bodies, which themselves have lost much of their autonomy; have become rather more proactive in encroaching upon the autonomy of higher educational institutions. Public funded universities in India never had financial autonomy and even though academic and administrative autonomy had little meaning without financial autonomy, whatever little they had are also disappearing. Failure of the institutions of higher education to perform on indicators specified by the outside agencies (after all, how long and how far can you swim if you have been tied down to your neck by the shackles

of bureaucratic control and processes) has provided further justification to intervene and the vicious cycle has come to stay.

Too much of a formalisation, uniformity and standardisation, that have been introduced in higher education have proven counter-productive. Nowhere else is it more pronounced than in the area of selection and recruitment. We have come a long way from those days when people were appointed on the recommendations of heads and deans, what to speak of the vice chancellors, had authority to offer faculty positions at will. Some may have indeed misused their powers and authority but the solution that we devised in the form of structured approach of all-India advertisements, statutory composition of selection committee with mandatory Visitor's nominee and UGC observer has not necessarily ensured best selection. Some would even say that this has only led to making selections at the lowest common denominator. What we, perhaps, need is a system that accord highest degree of autonomy to the institutions of higher education with the provision of holding them accountable not in terms of adherence to the prescribed procedures but in terms of accomplishment on pre-defined objectives and thereby making it abundantly clear that autonomy does not mean freedom to do whatever you want to do but autonomy means freedom to do what you are expected to do. Equally important is the issue of internal autonomy and governance in the institutions of higher education. Our organisational structure and administrative practices appear frozen in time. Our universities are overly bureaucratic organisations and highly centralised. While we clamour for autonomy and insulation from external political and bureaucratic interventions, we have been quite reluctant in according autonomy to our own schools, faculties and departments. While it is lamented that the MHRD and UGC do not trust our wisdom and seek to remote-control, universities themselves do no better when it comes to treating our own schools, faculties and departments.

Ambiguity over Privatization

Besides, we seem confused about private participation and

internationalisation in higher education as we are not sure as yet whether it is in the larger national interest to continue with and strengthen the public sector in higher education or to gradually move towards greater participation of private sector and foreign educational providers in higher education. While we seem to have settled for a mixed-mode higher educational delivery system, we are yet not ready to accept that the private sector should not be expected to behave the way public sector does. This confusion manifests in a variety of ways but most importantly in the draft legislation and regulations in this regard. While their statement of purpose begins with the idea of attracting such institutions in the country with a view to enhancing capacity and promoting excellence, they end up prescribing such restrictive requirements as to discourage even the keenest entrants. In the absence of a clear-cut policy framework, the nation has become a haven for a large number of unscrupulous private higher educational institutions and foreign educational providers.

Over 90 percent enrolment in Engineering, Management and other similar higher education is in the private colleges. So is the case of Medical and Health education. The deemed (130) and private (82) universities together constitute over 35 percent of all universities in the country and are poised to sharply rise in view of the fact that letters of intent in good numbers are already issued to many more promoters. The case about colleges of higher education is no different as over 80 percent of them fall in the category of self-financed private colleges. The propensity of the private sector to proliferate has been so strong that past efforts to curb them have been thwarted to a large extent. When Chhattisgarh experiment of establishing 110 universities in less than two years was scrapped, the private sector soon found a way out in the deemed university route and while MHRD and UGC are still struggling to effectively regulate the deemed universities in the country, the establishment of private universities under state legislation has become already become a favourite. Notwithstanding the apprehensions about the motives, intentions, working and performance of the private and deemed universities, an effective regulatory mechanism to

encourage and incentivise genuine private investment and discourage, dissuade and penalise the bad ones is still awaited. The Private Universities (Entry, Operation and Regulation) Bill that was introduced way back in 1991 could never become a law. It is hoped that the new regulatory framework that is conceived under the proposed National Commission for Higher Education and Research (NCHER) and the Bill on the Prevention of Malpractices in Higher Education Bill that is presently under consideration of the Parliament, will put an effective restrain on the unethical practices across all institutions of higher education and at the same time put in place a transparent and objective framework for the entry and operation of enlightened and committed private investment in higher education.

No less vital is our inability to appreciate that the triple objectives of expansion, equity and excellence are not necessarily compatible with each other, at least in the short-term, and that it calls for a trade-off. It would be a frustrating experience to mandate inclusion in higher education and at the same time demand performance in terms of excellence, particularly if we go by the globally recognised benchmarks of excellence which are invariably based on parameters of exclusion and elitism. It is indeed true that ultimately policies of inclusion would bring in social, cultural and economic diversity in the institutions of higher education which, internationally, is considered as a necessary condition for excellence. But at the same time, it is also a fact that in the short run, particularly if the institutions operate on minimum bare resources, they may find it extremely difficult to justify their existence in terms of excellence alone. It is apparent that we, as a nation, are also unable to appreciate higher education for its contributions and are perennially in search of that perfect model which exists only in Utopia. What further complicates the situation is that in the absence of authentic, consistent and reliable data we identify our problems all wrong and even if diagnose the problems right, there is every possibility that we might end up prescribing wrong solutions. It could well nigh be argued that the higher education system suffers from bad diagnostics and overdose of prescriptions.

GER of 20%

India may not have the best system of higher education but it is indeed one of the largest system of higher education found anywhere in the world and much of this has come about in the post-Independence period. Beginning with a meagre enrolment of less than one hundred thousand at the dawn of Independence, we are now the second largest system of higher education in the world with nearly 20 million enrolment and 0.65 million teachers. With more than 559 university level institutions and more than 31000 colleges, we are undoubtedly the largest system of higher education in the world. United States of America with about 17 million enrolments has no more than 4300 institutions of higher education whereas China with nearly 25 enrolments has less than 4000 institutions of higher learning. All countries of the European Union put together have about 8000 institutions of higher education of which France alone has about 5000. Even in relative terms, participation rate in higher education as measured by the GER is not as low as the National Knowledge Commission wanted us to believe. By the latest data, we are nearing a GER of 20 percent. Sad as the state of affairs are, we do not as yet have a reliable data on actual number of students enrolled in higher education and as a result different estimates arrive at a varying number. Besides, there is a very strong likelihood that enrolment data is under reported as it does not cover all post-senior secondary enrolment. Should we include enrolment in all tertiary level institutions including polytechnics and also the large number of students appearing as private candidates (which according to guesstimate could be as high as 20 percent of the enrolment in regular programmes), the GER is bound to be much higher. Still, there is no scope for complacency and we must aspire for even higher GER if we wish to stand in the rank of the developed nations.

The Problem of small-sized Institutions

What is, however, worrying is that the country has a very large number of small sized institutions. Average enrolment works out to be a little more than 500 per college and slightly in excess of 6000 per university. The distribution across

institutions is highly skewed such that an overwhelming majority of colleges many decades-old operate at sub-optimal level and are academically and economically non-viable. Most colleges remain under temporary affiliation for decades. Only a third of the colleges have been fit enough to receive recognition under Section 12 (B) and to receive development assistance from the UGC. There are also universities in the country that do not meet the basic conditions of infrastructure, courses, faculty and students to get recognition under Section 12(B). In fact, no more than 160 universities in the country are eligible to receive development assistance from the UGC. Large numbers of small institutions make scarce resource so thinly spread as to be able to make any impact and it is the quality that becomes the foremost casualty. Equally crucial is the fact that even the distribution of institutions in the country is highly skewed. At the commencement of the 11th Plan, while on average the country had over 30 colleges per district, as many as 373 districts, many with larger concentration of minorities, had significantly lower number of colleges. So was the case with universities and other premier higher educational institutions. Even though there were 24 central universities in the country, as many as 16 states hadn't one. IITs and IIMs in the country were too few for the large number of students aspiring and deserving to be admitted therein. It was in this backdrop that expansion strategies for higher education in the 11th Plan included establishment of a large number of centrally funded higher educational institutions and also enlarging the extend and magnitude of coverage to a large number of higher educational institutions in the state sector. Sadly, however, most of the schemes aimed at supporting the state sector and improving quality and promotion of excellence in higher education could not take off. Much of the allocations for higher education during the 11th Plan could not be utilised due to the uncertainties that the reforms agenda created leading to the delayed or non-implementation of many an envisaged schemes.

Many see the low GER a consequence of the supply side constraint and argue for the establishment of more number of higher educational institutions. What we, however, need

to do is to increase the intake capacity of existing higher educational institutions by expanding their infrastructure, physical facilities, opening of new disciplines, hiring of additional faculty failing which we shall continue to be saddled with large number of single-discipline and poor-quality institutions. Country already has more institutions of higher education than found anywhere in the world but of most of these universities and colleges are under-funded, have poor physical and academic infrastructure, invariably operate at sub-optimal, often even at sub-critical level and are, thus academically and economically non-viable and inefficient. It is time that we focus our attention to improving quality and promoting excellence in the existing higher educational institutions. Also, setting up new institutions does not necessarily increase enrolment in higher education unless they are perceived to be quality institutions. The mad rush for admission that we see in some selected institutions across the country is not as much reflective of the supply constraint as it is of lack quality higher educational institutions.

Possibilities in 12th Plan

Since state universities and colleges affiliated thereto accounts for over 80 percent of enrolment and faculty in higher education, we must invest in improving their quality failing which we may not be able to make much headway. In this regard, 11th Plan had provided for (a) incentivising states for expansion, inclusion and excellence in higher education (Rs 6,200 cr); (b) additional assistance to already covered universities and colleges (Rs 3,000 Cr); and (c) assistance to uncovered universities and colleges (Rs. 7000 Cr). Ideally, these three schemes should have been treated in holistic manner and the allocation of Rs. 16,200 cr could have been used with ingenuity for improving the conditions of the existing universities and colleges so as to help them attain at least some degree of excellence. May be during the 12th Plan, we may consider (a) identify some 50 state universities (1-2 universities from each state, preferably the unitary and residential ones with teaching departments and those that underwent NAAC accreditation and scored A or higher grade) and promote them as premier and flagship

universities positioned as teaching-cum-research universities; (b) identify another 50 state universities from amongst those that underwent NAAC accreditation but scored higher than B but lower than A grade and support them to overcome their academic and infrastructural deficiencies; (c) identify 1-2 colleges in each district (based on their location, size in terms of enrolment, faculty, number of programmes offered, and popularity of their courses etc) and develop them into model multi-disciplinary colleges and accord them autonomy. This way we may be able to improve the quality and intake of 600-750 colleges; (d) identify say about 1500 colleges from across all regions of the country, based on their historical reputation, popularity and potential of attaining excellence and upgrade them to the level of teaching universities; (e) provide support for improving the teaching-learning infrastructure in existing universities and colleges; most universities and colleges, in particular a majority of the state universities and their colleges, lack adequate number of good classroom, basic lab facilities, well-stocked libraries and even workplace for their teachers. Needless to say that inability to provide critical complimentary resources is also at the root cause of under-utilisation/wastages in higher education; (f) consider increasing the intake capacity in departments, colleges, programmes and courses that attract a large number of applications for limited number of seats; seat to application ratio could be used as an indicator for their popularity and also ability to attract adequate number of students on their campuses. Such an intervention will thus enable students get admission in the courses/institutions of their preference.

The Rising Cost of Higher Education

It also has to be realised that barriers in accessing higher education also emanate on account of inability of masses to afford higher education, which is becoming increasingly expensive with the entry and proliferation of private self-financed higher educational institutions, which today dominate the higher education scenario as far as the professional and technical higher education is concerned. Participation rate in higher education for the elite and the upper middle class in India is nearly cent per cent. Whereas for the deprived,

under-privileged, dalits, tribals, poor, agricultural labourer, daily wage earners, minorities, the participation rate in higher education is significantly lower than the national average.

The situation is likely to further aggravate in times to come as high-fee charging self-financed, tuition funded higher educational institutions are not only dominating the professional and technical higher education, the public universities and their colleges are also increasingly resorting to self-financed programmes of studies particularly in the high demand professional and technical disciplines. Consequently, the cost of accessing higher education has been increasing by leaps and bounds. Succumbing to pressure from the electorates, increasing number of states have started full or partial subsidisation of the cost of private/self-financed higher education accessed through private self financed institutions, in particular by the SCs, STs, OBCs and women but many are waking up to find their reimbursement burden becoming unsustainable. General category students, who are not necessarily economically well-off, are resorting to borrowings. A situation like this warrants timely attention of the policy planners. Making higher education inclusive with equitable access to higher education, therefore, has to be accorded top most priority. Reservation, quota and affirmative action are essential but will also have to be supported by a large number of scholarships, fee-waiver and effective loan programmes.

Mere ensuring access to higher educational opportunities shall no more be sufficient to satisfy the demand for higher education for students and their parents today aspire for that kind of higher education which they perceive to be of high quality, relevant and useful to them in securing jobs, placements and security. They crave for excellence, which they often define it in terms of opportunities for social and economic upward mobility through means of educational attainments. Seen in this context, most of our higher educational institutions appear to be doing very poorly. Dated curricula, dilapidated infrastructure, dwindling intellectual capital and archaic administrative and governance system are the obvious causes and effects. Worst affected are the state universities and colleges affiliated to them, which account

for over 80 percent of the faculty and enrolment in higher education in the country. On an average, nearly 50 percent of the sanctioned faculty positions in these universities have continued to remain vacant for decades. There seems to be ban on creation of new faculty positions and also on filling up the existing vacant positions. Lately, the trend has been to make interim arrangements through contractual, part-time, visiting and guest lecture basis. Even in centrally funded institutions, nearly 30 percent faculty positions are found vacant at any point in time not because of any ban but simply due to non-availability of suitably qualified candidates and procedural delays. While non-availability of suitably qualified candidates to take over the middle and senior level faculty positions has been addressed by increasing the retirement age for the faculty in the centrally funded institutions, it may not take us very far.

With only 0.65 Million teachers to cater to the needs of about 20 Million students presently enrolled in higher education, our Student-Teacher Ratio (STR) at over 30 is perhaps highest in the words. Ideally, we must target this ratio to a maximum of 10 in case of research universities, 15 in case of primarily teaching universities and a maximum of 20 in case of undergraduate colleges. Going by the optimal Student-Teacher Ratio, it is obvious that we need nearly 1.5 Million teachers to sustain the present level of enrolment. The requirement shall rise to over 2 Million as we peg the target enrolment at 30 Million by the end of the Twelfth Plan. Thus we are faced with the challenge of attracting and nurturing talent; creating a culture of creativity, innovation, research and performance; improving quality; and promoting excellence amongst the existing available teachers in higher education.

Development of adequate number of quality faculty requires revamping of the postgraduate programmes with sufficient intake across all disciplines with strong emphasis on developing teaching and research skills so as to provide steady flow of talent to the PhD programmes across all disciplines. It also calls for large number of high quality PhD programmes across all disciplines that develops, hone and perfect teaching

and research skills amongst the researcher. To be able to attract quality talents in teaching and research career, we need to have good number of scholarships, fellowships and stipend scheme for those who wish to pursue postgraduate and PhD programmes. But more importantly, we shall have to create enabling conditions and conducive work environment for teachers in colleges and universities. We shall also be required to have strong in-service capacity enhancement and leadership development programmes to equip teachers in higher education with latest tools and techniques of teaching and research and also to prepare them to take leadership roles and greater responsibilities. Most importantly, we need to provide global exposure to the faculty so as to broaden their horizon and exposing them to the best global practices in curricula development, pedagogy, teaching and research and also to act as moral boosting and confidence development.

As a nation we have been alive to the needs and urgency of quality faculty development programmes and in almost all of the above parameters a number of initiatives and schemes have already been put in place for quite some times now. Universities were encouraged and supported to have postgraduate programmes in all disciplines and as a result nearly 20 percent ennrolment in higher education today is at the postgraduate level though the distribution is somewhat skewed as postgraduate enrolment in certain professional and technical discipline is considerably lower than the average. Emphasis has been given to expanding the PhD programme and a large number of scholarship and fellowship programmes in the form of the Junior Research Fellowships, Senior research Fellowships, Teacher Fellowships, Maulana Azad National Fellowships for Minority students, Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe candidates, Kothari Fellowship and Fellowship for non-NET candidates in the Central Universities and a number of other Fellowships by the DST, DBT, ICSSR, ICHR, ICPR etc. Over time, the number and amount of these fellowships are being enhanced substantially to make them further lucrative to attract talent.

Pay scale, career progression, promotional opportunities

and job security of teachers in higher education are now at par with the best alternative career options in the public sector. Time-bound promotion based on academic performance has been introduced to incentivise and motivate faculty. Universities are encouraged to provide research grant and start-up grant to their faculty to help them embark on research and publications at a large scale. Schemes like funding for taking up major research and minor research projects by the MHRD, UGC, AICTE, DST, DBT, ICSSR, ICHR, ICPR etc have been expanded to offer opportunities to a much larger number of faculty members across all categories of institutions in almost all disciplines. The UGC-CSIR conducted National Eligibility Test (NET) and equivalent examinations in the form of State Level Eligibility Test (SLET/SET) to screen and identify eligible candidates for teaching positions in Universities and colleges are now over two decades old. Continuous education and in-service faculty development in the form of summer schools, winter schools, faculty development programmes, teacher fellowships, quality improvement programme and orientation and refresher courses by over 50 Academic Staff Colleges have been in place for quite sometimes now. Recent initiatives to support faculty members to travel abroad for short duration is aimed at exposing teachers in higher education to the best global practices. Obviously, at the policy level, initiatives are all in place to address most of the major impediments in producing and developing quality faculty for higher education. These may have to be continued, further strengthened and fine-tuned to become more effective and make impact. However, there is a growing realisation that an analysis of issues relating to faculty shortages, non-availability of quality faculty in sufficient numbers to meet the need of expansion, inclusion and exclusion and performance orientation in the faculty at the aggregate level helps in articulating the gravity of the problem and indicates generic solutions.

Problem of Faculty

Universities and other higher educational institutions across the board are, however, still faced with the challenge of finding suitable candidates for filling up vacant faculty

positions at the level of Professors and Associate Professors across all disciplines. Persons with required level of academic attainments in terms of teaching and research experience, publications, patents and consultancy are simply not available. The problem is all the more serious in case of the newly established universities and institutions as well as newly established Schools, Departments and Centres in the old and established universities. There are a variety of reasons for such a sordid state of affairs. Such a serious shortage of the faculty and dwindled talent pool at the level of Assistant Professors is caused largely due to the direct or tacit ban on creation and filling up of faculty positions particularly in the state universities and their colleges over a fairly long period of time in the name of resource crunch and economy drive. A substantial proportion of the limited number that are available are found to be with poor academic attainment which is largely due to the fact that they are from such colleges that neither have the kind of infrastructure nor support system that is needed to promote and nurture teaching and research culture. This could also be because that many such candidates had been engaged on contractual basis with consolidated remuneration by their institutions and were not necessarily the best in their field for the better and the brighter would not have opted to apply and might have moved elsewhere. Besides, the available talent pool is seriously constrained on account of limited exposure to best practices for they did not have the opportunity to study and pursue research in a variety of institutions nationally and internationally. In addition to the above, some of the policy measures that were taken and rightly so to make teaching as a lucrative career option to attract and retain talent in higher education such as time-bound career progression scheme for promotion of teachers in their parent institutions, parity in pay and seniority of promoted and directly recruited faculty and pay parity between the college and university teachers, on the flipside, have drastically reduced the incentive and motivation of faculty to move from one institutions to another for promotion.

Short-term measures like increasing the age of retirement of teachers can only serve a limited purpose and that too

only for a very short period of time. Some of the proposed solutions like joint appointment, adjunct faculty, emeritus professorships, national professorships etc are also of limited utility as the number of highly qualified senior faculty in the existing institutions are so limited and so hard pressed for time that they would not be able to spare and spend quality time with other institutions and if compelled to do so they will be distracted from their focus and their productivity would decline. Often espoused suggestions that persons of Indian Origin serving as faculty abroad may be roped in is also not likely to take us very far for the best of such resources might already be holding tenure track positions and may not be willing to come back unless offered compensation commensurate with what they are getting in their present assignments. Involving professionals and practitioners from the industry and other walks of life in teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate levels has also been suggested as a supplementary measure. While such faculty may meet the immediate requirements of engaging classes and bringing in experience from the field they may not necessarily be of much help in promoting research and publications.

Teachers being the backbone of higher education system are simply irreplaceable despite all advancements in the information communication technology and increasing access to global knowledge based. So far, however, the focus has largely been on making them more accountable rather than on creating necessary and sufficient conditions for the effective discharge of their duties and functions. Sadly, however, the more we try to discipline them, the more they seem to be going astray. Indeed we have made pay scales better but we continue to remain oblivious to the fact that we also need to create conditions for them to work and perform. Even in the best colleges in universities located in the metros, teachers are hardly provided with office space. At the best, they have access to a seat in a common room and even that may be on first come first serve basis. Common rooms are hardly places to do any academic work. One can very well imagine the situation in colleges located in small towns and remote villages. Even in universities, over half of the faculty members have no assigned workplace, what to speak of other

facilities like phone, fax and PC on their desk. Classrooms, where faculty and students are expected to spend most of their time on the campus, invariably are the most neglected and least priority places on most campuses. We may also need to free our teachers from the trivia and non-academic work - a phenomenon that has lately grown out of proportion. Increasingly, our teachers are getting more and more engaged in computation and collation of attendance, admission-related work, coding, decoding, tabulation etc. With appropriate use of technology, efficient deployment of non-teaching staff, engagement of research scholars as teaching assistants and involvement of students through schemes like earn-while-you learn, the faculty need to be persuaded to focus their attention to more substantive academic work like designing and development of curricula, improving pedagogical practices, use of ICT in teaching-learning process, enhancing effectiveness of classroom experiences of learners, research, publication, funded projects, consultancy etc.

We have also been somewhat impatient with our higher education system and have been changing our policies and programmes rather frequently. Nowhere else is it more glaring than in case of policies pertaining to the preparation and recruitment of teachers in higher education? UGC-CSIR NET was made a mandatory requirement for becoming teachers in higher education. But even before the same could be implemented across board, the requirements were relaxed for those completing their PhDs by a stipulated date. The stipulated date was extended twice, leading proliferation of spurious PhDs to obviate the need to go through the rigours of qualifying the eligibility test. While we have once again made NET a compulsory condition, exemption is to be given to those who do their PhDs from the institutions that implemented the 2009 regulations issued by the UGC in this regard. Had we stuck to the original idea, by now there would have been some semblance of order in the recruitment process.

While structural reforms is presently in the focus there is a real danger that such critical and substantive issues may be put on back-burners because of financial constraints. It is true that our approach to financing higher education has often been inconsistent with the aims and objectives of higher education. Public investment in higher education has been cyclical to the

extent of often being volatile. We virtually nationalised all private higher educational institutions by bringing them into the fold of grant-in-aid system during the first two decades of Independence. However, by late seventies, we started cribbing over the serious resource constraints that the policy entailed and consequently, by mid-eighties, we started tightening the noose and reducing financial support. By early nineties, we were urging economy drive and drastic reduction in resources explicitly calling for self-sufficiency in higher educational institutions. While policy planners wanted resources to be mobilised through donations, endowments, funded projects etc, most institutions either resorted to cost-reduction or could mobilise resources only through fee-hikes and self-financed courses. By early nineties, the ropes were further tightened by demanding mandatory cut down in non-plan expenses. Plan allocation for higher education too declined as a proportion to the total allocation. Some would even say that over time we actually allocated lesser amount in real terms. It is only recently that things have started looking up once again. During 11th Plan, education was given a very high priority as over 20% plan allocations were to the education sector. Allocations for higher and technical education in the 11th Plan were as high as nine times the allocations in the 10th Plan. Thus within the overall allocation to the education sector, higher and technical education receive as much as 30 percent. But most increase in allocation for higher education is under Plan Grant only. The non-Plan grant which is mainly meant for recurring and maintenance expenditure is still much less than what it ought to be.

The 12th Plan Perspective

At the time of writing of this paper, we are already into the first year of the 12th Plan. While the approach paper to the 12th Plan is already in the public domain, it may take a while before we come to see the 12th Plan document, though the broad contours are already visible. In all likelihood, the 12th Plan would take the agenda of the 11th Plan further forward and the focus is likely to remain on the triple objective of expansion, inclusion and excellence in higher education. Allocation for higher and technical education during the 12th Plan could be pegged anywhere between 1.30 Lakh Crores

to 2.10 lakh Crores. There might be emphasis on increased participation of the private sector in higher education but the support to public sector is likely to continue with added emphasis. Lest rapid quantitative expansion lead to decline in the quality of higher education, the 12th Plan is bound to focus on creating enabling conditions to ensure that quality of higher education is not only maintained but also enhanced. It is also quite likely that the emphasis on access, equity, quality, research, governance and funding shall continue. Obviously, the consolidations rather than further expansion may be the key focus in the 12th Plan. Let us also hope that the 12th Plan would not lose sight of the substantive issues that are vitally critical to the health and survival of higher education.

Santosh Mehrotra

Non-Agricultural Employment during 12th Five Year Plan

Introduction

Indian economy has been experiencing an unprecedented economic growth for almost a decade. One of the structural transformations that any developing economy must undergo is a declining share of agriculture in output and employment over time, and corresponding rise in share of industry and services. Even though the share of agriculture in gross value added (GVA) has declined to 15 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) during 2009-10, more than half of the workforce (53%) is still dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. The share of industry and services in output has increased sharply in the last 20 years but their share of employment still remains low, at 22.7% and 24.4% respectively in 2009-10. Thus, creating decent and productive non-agricultural employment during the 12th Five Year Plan will be a massive challenge. In other words, the focus of 12th Five Year Plan should not only be on employment creation outside agriculture, but that employment should be productive employment.

In order to ensure productive employment with decent work, two kinds of transitions would be needed: first, movement of unskilled labour from agriculture to unorganized industry or unorganized services; second, movement of labour from informal employment in the unorganized sectors to either formal employment in organized sectors (preferably), or at least informal employment in the organized sectors. We discuss each one of these transitions in this paper.

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In the light of this conceptual framework we will examine in section 2 overall employment trends in the non-agricultural sectors over the 2000s (divided into two time periods i.e. 1999-2000 to 2004-05, and 2004-05 to 2009-10). In section 3 we will analyse employment trend in organized and unorganized non-agricultural sectors. The last section summarises major findings along with policy implications.

Overall employment trend in the non-agricultural sector

In this Section we examine labour force and workforce participation rates over the period 1999-2000 to 2009-10, the work force estimates over the past decade, and the unemployment rate by Usual Principal and Subsidiary Status (UPSS). Labour force participation rate (LFPR) and workforce participation rate (WFPR) between 1993 and 2009-10 has been declining (IAMR, 2011). One of the important reasons for declining LFPR is rising participation in education. The Right to Education for 6-14 years old will ensure that even those who turn 14 will continue in school – especially since there is a high likelihood that the RTE will be extended to age 16 (to cover classes 9-10). Moreover, with the introduction of the National Vocational Education Qualification Framework (NVEQF), and vocational education starting with class 9, there is a probability that drop-out after class 8 (age 14) will decrease, and children will continue in vocational education (IAMR, 2011a). This in turn poses greater challenge to the policy makers as the well educated youth will always expect better quality jobs and the policy makers will have to ensure that it happens.

The workforce had increased during 1999-2000 to 2004-5 by 60 million, but the corresponding increase in the second half of the decade is only two million. Education is one if the important reasons for declining workforce participation rate. There is a growing absence of those under 25 from the workforce because they are increasingly in school. Further, since the 1980s, there has been a near consistent decline in WFPR for women (Mazumdar and Neetha, 2011; Rangarajan

et al., 2011). Their employment fell because young women are attending school, which is where they belong.

Overall, employment in the economy which was 397 million in 1999-2000, increased significantly to 457.5 million in 2004-5, but grew rather marginally to 460 million in 2009-10. This increase does look rather marginal particularly when compared with high growth rates that the country has been experiencing for almost a decade now. An interesting trend that emerges is the absolute decline in unorganized employment in 2009-10 as compared to that in 2004-5. (Table 1).[1] On the other hand, organized employment increased by 10 million during the same period. The share of organized sector employment was around 14 per cent in both 1999-2000 and 2004-5. However, in the second half of the decade it has risen to 16 per cent. That is, unorganized sector employment has declined from 86 per cent in 1999-2000 and 2004-5 to 84 per cent in 2009-10.

Table 1: Employment in Unorganised and Organised Sector (in million)

Sectors	2009-10	2004-5	1999-2000
Unorganized	387.34	394.9	342.6
Organized	72.88	62.6	54.1
Total	460.22	457.5	396.8

Source: For 2009-10, computed from NSS 66th round, for2004-05, and 1999-200 NCEUS, 2007

Employment trend in organized and unorganized non-agricultural sector

As per the definition of unorganized sector adopted by National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector (NCEUS), "the unorganized sector consists of all incorporated private enterprises owned by individuals or households engaged in sale and production of goods and services operated on a proprietary or partnership basis and with less than ten total workers". We follow the NCEUS definition for the purpose of this analysis.

Table 2: Employment in Unorganised and Organised Non-Agricultural Sector (in million)

Sectors	2009-10	2004-5	1999-2000
Unorganized	145.3	142.1	110.4
Organized	70.1	56.4	48.7
Total	215.4	198.5	159.1

Source: For 2009-10, computed from NSS 66th round, for2004-05, and 1999-200 NCEUS, 2007

The share of employment in the organized and unorganized segments of non-agricultural sectors shows interesting insights. There has been a consistent absolute increase in employment in the organized non-agricultural sectors from 8 million the first half of the decade to 14 million in the second half. The greater pace of increase in organized sector workforce during 2004-05 and 2009-10 is also reflected in the rising share of organized sector in total non-agricultural employment, despite a decline in 2004-05 (Table 2).

Since one of the most important segmentations in the Indian labour market is that between employment into organized and unorganized sectors, we examine both industry as well as service sector employment under the categories of organized and unorganized segments.

Table 3: Employment across various sectors (in millions)-1999-2000, 2004-5, 2009-10

Employment across various sectors (in millions)				Absolute increase in employment (in millions)	
Sectors	1999-2000	2004-5	2009-10	1999-00-2004-5	2004-5-2009-10
Agriculture	237.67	258.93	244.85	21.25	-14.08
Manufacturing	44.05	55.77	50.74	11.72	-5.03
Non manufacturing	20.84	29.96	48.28	9.11	18.32
Services	94.20	112.81	116.34	18.77	3.53
Total	396.76	457.46	460.22	60.70	2.76

Source: NSS Employment & Unemployment Surveys, various rounds

Agriculture saw an absolute increase in employment in the first half of the decade from 238 million in 1999-2000 to nearly 259 million in 2004-05 (Table 3). While in the latter half of the decade there was a decline in absolute numbers employed in agriculture from 259 million to 245 million, the problem remains that total agricultural employment at the end of the decade was still higher than at the beginning of the decade. That means that the process of structural change in employment that one would expect with a period of very rapid, in fact unprecedented growth in output in the economy outside of agriculture, is not occurring.

In manufacturing, there is an absolute increase in employment in the first half of the decade from 44 million to nearly 56 million in 2004-05. This increase by nearly 12 million in manufacturing in the first half of the decade was, however, off-set by a decline by 5 million in the second half of the decade (Table 3). Several different reasons could have combined to produce this rather grim outcome of a fall in manufacturing employment when output in manufacturing was growing. First, wage increase has been faster in the second half of the 2000s than earlier – driven perhaps by a greater shortage of skilled staff. Between 1994 and 2010, the wage differential between a particular level of educational attainment and the level of attainment just below has increased. Thus the situation emerging is that the supply of workers at lower levels of education is increasing faster than demand while the demand for workers with secondary or tertiary education is exceeding the supply. A second reason for the adverse employment outcomes could be that the structure of output (in manufacturing or services) shifted towards products or services that are much less labour-intensive by 2010 compared to 2005.

Non-manufacturing industry has been the star performer in terms of generating employment in the decade. In the first half of the decade non-manufacturing employment increased from 21 million in 1999-2000 to 30 million in 2004-05, or nearly 50% increase from employment in 1999-2000. But in the second half of the decade, the absolute size of employment in non-manufacturing by the end of the decade was 1.6 times

or compared to 2004-05, or 2.3 times relative to the level in 1999-2000. In fact over the entire decade there was an increase in non-manufacturing employment by a total of 27.5 million jobs. The most important contribution to the increase in non-manufacturing employment over the decade came from the construction sector (the increase was 8.5 million during the first half, while 18.1 million during the second half). Mining and quarrying has seen a small increase in employment, and electricity, gas and water supply have seen a very marginal increase.

Despite significant growth in service sector employment during the first half of the decade, second half of the decade witnessed a rather sluggish employment growth in the service sector. Employment in service sector increased by only four million during the second half of the decade. Trade is far away the most important contributor to employment in service activities, and it accounted for a third of total services employment in the economy both at the beginning as well as at the end of the decade.

The other interesting service sector is real estate in which there was a consistent increase in employment throughout the decade, from 2.7 million in 1990-2000 to 4.7 million in the middle of the decade, to 5.7 million at its end. This is hardly surprising given that both housing as well as infrastructure investment in the 11th Plan period has been growing rapidly. We saw above that construction contributed the largest increase in total employment in the economy in both the first and second halves of the 2000s. The increase in employment in real estate is a mirror image of the increased construction activity. We know that investment in infrastructure at the beginning of the 11th Five Year Plan (2007-08) stood at 4.4% of GDP, but its share in GDP is expected to rise to 7.5% in the terminal year of the 11th Five Year Plan. Hence it is not surprising that both construction (within industry) and real estate services have seen a consistent increase in employment.

One can foresee that this trend will remain unabated during the 12th Five Year Plan. This is because investment in infrastructure is expected to grow from $500 billion during

the 11th Five Year Plan to 1 trillion dollars in the 12th Plan, i.e. to nearly 10% of GDP. Even more importantly the share of private sector in infrastructure investment, which was 30% of all infrastructure investment during the 11th Five Year Plan is expected to rise to 50% at the end of the 12th Plan. In other words, the scope for increase in employment in real estate services is going to be significant, just as expansion of employment in the construction sector is going to increase during the 12th Five Year Plan.

In Table 4 we provide a detailed analysis of organized and unorganized employment, for agriculture, industry and services for three points of time: 1999-2000, 2004-05 and 2009-10.

Table 4: Number of workers (in million) by sector, 1999-2000, 2004-5, 2009-10

Workers (in millions)	1999-2000			2004-05			2009-10		
	Total	Unorg-anized	Orga-nized	Total	Unorg-anized	Orga-nized	Total	Unorg-anized	Orga-nized
Agriculture	237.67	232.2	5.47	258.93	252.8	6.09	244.85	242.11	2.74
Manufac-turing	44.05	30.92	13.13	55.77	39.71	16.06	50.74	34.71	16.03
Non Manu-facturing	20.84	13.89	6.95	29.96	20.64	9.32	48.28	30.36	17.92
Total Services	94.20	65.62	28.57	112.81	81.72	31.09	116.34	80.15	36.19
Total Work-force	396.76	342.64	54.12	457.46	394.90	62.57	460.22	387.34	72.88

Source: NSS Employment & Unemployment Surveys, various rounds

We have already seen earlier that structural change in terms of employment has hardly even begun during the period of rapid economic growth of the 2000s, despite rapid growth in industrial and services output. The numbers employed in agriculture at the end of the decade is in fact more than what it was at its beginning. The share of the organized segment of agriculture in total agricultural employment (238 million in 1999-2000 and 242 million in 2009-10) was barely 5.5 million at the beginning and fell further to 2.7 million workers at the end of the decade, while numbers in the unorganized segment slightly increased from 232 to 242 million.

In manufacturing, unorganized sector employment increased from 31 million to 40 million during the first half of the decade. However, 5 million workers in unorganized employment in the manufacturing sector in 2004-05 had lost their jobs by the end of the decade; as a result total unorganized manufacturing employment had fallen to 35 million. Organized manufacturing, which accounted for 30% of total manufacturing employment at the beginning of the decade, increased its share to only 31% by the end of the decade. In other words, to the extent that organized employment constitutes an improvement in the scale of decent work over unorganized sector employment (see Section 1), over the decade of rapid economic growth there was not any improvement in this regard either (Goldar, 2011a and b; Nagraj, 2011; Kannan and Raveendran, 2009; Mazumdar and Sarkar, 2004).

Table 4 shows that there was a very sharp increase in employment in the unorganized segment throughout the decade. In particular, construction sector witnessed an increase in employment from 17.54 million to 26 million in the first half of the decade and a further increase to 44 million during the second half of the decade. The most surprising phenomenon is that the organized segment of construction also saw very sharp increase in employment, from 4.6 million to 6.35 million in the first half of the decade. The most stunning increase is the doubling of employment that occured in organized construction in the latter half of the decade within a matter of five years from 6.35 to 14.91 million.

In the latter half of the decade when manufacturing employment, both organized as well as unorganized, was declining the organized segment of services continue to see a growth in employment. But the unorganized segment of services saw a fall in employment from 81.7 million to 80 million in the latter half of the decade. More than half of this decline in unorganized segment employment in services was accounted for by the decline in employment in wholesale and retail trade, which is perhaps a reflection of the overall fall in economic activity in the aftermath of the downturn of the Indian economy after the global economic crisis.

Major findings

The analysis presented here suggests that there has been an increase in relatively decent, productive work in the sense that there has been an increase in the share of industry and services in total employment, with agriculture's share in employment declining, and a corresponding increase in non-agricultural employment. In other words, there is not only an absolute increase in non-agricultural employment, where wages tend to be better than agriculture, but also an increase in the share of non-agricultural employment in the total employment in the country.

Organized segment employment has grown – from a share of 14 % at beginning to 16% of total employment at the end of the decade – an absolute increase of 19 million workers. The growth of this share is a welcome development. But clearly, the shift is small in a whole decade of rapid growth of output, and that should be worrying to policy makers concerned about promoting decent employment.

In agriculture, there was an absolute decline in total employment of approximately 14 million. One would have expected that at least in the allied activities in agriculture – horticulture, animal husbandry, forestry and fisheries – there would be an increase in employment. However, on the contrary, employment in these activities declined in absolute terms from 50.8 million to 34.6 million in the latter half of the decade. With younger women in rural areas remaining longer in education, and with males migrating for rural non-farm or urban work, the burden of such work is falling upon women. Women were already burdened with household chores, and with increasing work on the family farm producing essential food crops, these additional allied agricultural activities are getting squeezed out in terms of the woman's time allocation. Clearly these allied economic activities in agriculture are in urgent need of policy support by both state and central government if they are to flourish, and employment in these activities is to be increased.

In non-manufacturing sector, the largest increase in employment throughout the decade of the 2000s has continued

to take place in construction. Since infrastructure investment and investment in housing is expected to grow very sharply during the 12th Five Year Plan, construction will continue to provide a source of escape for agricultural labour desirous of moving out of agriculture. Organized segment employment in construction may well also continue to grow. It is the increase in organized construction employment that has driven the absolute and relative rise of organized employment in the latter half of the 2000s.

Manufacturing employment increased sharply in the first half but then declined in the latter half of the decade. The fact that it fell just when there was a sharp increase in manufacturing output should worry policy-makers. The hope of the new proposed National Manufacturing Policy (NMP) is that not only will manufacturing will become an engine of growth during the 12^{th} Plan but it will also provide at least 100 million additional decent jobs. Unfortunately NMP has no answer as to why these sectors will be able to generate any more employment than they are currently doing.

Service employment had increased between 1999-2000 and 2004-05 from 94.2 million to 112.8 million; however, in the latter half of the decade it has grown only marginally. Almost all the service sub-sectors experienced a robust growth of gross value added through out the decade. It is remarkable that in the latter half of the decade when manufacturing employment, both organized as well as unorganized, was declining the organized segment of services continued to see a growth in employment. However, the sluggish growth in employment despite considerable growth in output is a matter of concern for the policy makers.

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Notes:-

1 Organised and unorganized sectors are defined as per NCEUS definition

M C Verma

Imparting Marketable Skills through Vocational Education

In a situation of severe general unemployment all categories of labour force suffer but there are more often situations of unemployment in some categories, under-employment in others and severe unemployment in some, all existing together! On the other hand there are vacancies/jobs without suitable persons to fill them. Indian organized manufacturing and even some parts of service industry are currently suffering from this acute situation of non-availability of suitable skilled employees in whose absence they cannot employ many other supporting staff.

Many sectors, in recent past, have used different approaches for alleviating this problem including setting up own institutions while others have set up long grooming courses as part of employment to make up for the lack of skills exhibited by the best persons available to them in the market. Some amount of in-house training is considered normal and practiced all over the world in most occupations/professions. This often gives the wrong impressions to academics that it was never their responsibility to prepare their students for the labour market but the problem lies in the inability of such (in-house trained) employees to have skills/certificates/diplomas which are marketable in other organizations to which they might wish to migrate after some period spent with the first employer. In a free democratic society it is everybody's right not to be stuck within a particular sector or employer. It is also everyone's right to move to a job with higher skill/education requirement than what s/he started with. In other words, portability of training/skill qualification is a requirement of modern democracies unlike the earlier model of 'Guilds' in

Europe or Master Craftsmen in other countries, including India.

Another major issue confronting modern democracies in that concept of portability is not only applicable for migration from one employer to another but also from a lower qualification/certificate to higher qualifications/certificates, in one or more steps. This would require a strong framework of training/skill qualifications to be administered by an autonomous organization outside the Govt. Departments providing training and which would permit testing of Skills & related education at a time of the beneficiary's convenience whether such skills were acquired by Self-study or through brother craftsman or via 'employer-provided in-house training' or through a 'training provider' accredited by the Govt. or Employer-organization. The essence of the training framework lies in its utmost flexibility for judging/testing skills of any student (client in the context of a fee charging training provider) who approaches the Administrator of the framework. This implies that the Govt.-funded (partly or fully) organizations will have no preference in getting their students/ trainees tested by the autonomous organization and will have to compete for obtaining better grades for their students like anyone else in the field of 'training providers'. All these ideas look fairly simple and reasonable but have been found to be very time-consuming and complex in implementation in various countries trying this new philosophy of training. Some countries that have implemented such a framework include NewZealand , Australia and Switzerland but even they have not completed the details required for all varieties of training qualifications by way of writing down 'competencies' and their various components. The EU, including UK, has also worked out a National Qualifications Framework though it differs from country to country. One has to imagine hundreds of competencies to be tested for a modern economy and their different gradations for different tasks expected to be performed at the shop-floor whether directly with own hands or through the computers that have invaded the workplace even in India.

Vocational Education and the Indian Planning System

Vocational education has been part of Indian planning system for a very long time and the Planning Commission has funded various schemes over the last five decades at the State level or the Union level via Centrally-sponsored schemes. One of the most talked about schemes was Vocationalisation of Secondary Education as recommended by the first Education Commission (Kothari Commission) in 1964-66. The Commission had come to a view that, based on its Manpower projections made with the help of the London School of Economics(LSE), at least 25 % of the students in the Secondary Education should be 'diverted' to the vocational stream. The assumptions made by the LSE for the detailed calculations about the economic growth rates in different sectors, occupational divisions and the linkages between Occupations & Educational levels and to what extent these connections between Occupation-educational level or specific economic sectors & Occupations were rigid were not in the 'public domain'. The Govt. of India, however, went by the directive of the Commission of 25% vocational stream etc. at Secondary Education level!

We should not forget that Sixties was the period of classical manpower planning starting with major volume of Prof. Harbison of the USA, a supposedly free economy in 1961. In the heyday of classical manpower planning inspired in India by the great success of the Soviet Union as well as Prof. Harbison and the perceived shortage of High-Level Manpower by way of Doctors, Nurses, Agricultural .Scientists, Engineers-both degree & diploma holders-,Managers and Teachers etc. the GOI set up a high-powered Directorate of Manpower in Ministry of Home Affairs. It not only encouraged setting up new institutions for higher education including diploma-level engineers, Agricultural Colleges/Universities, Teachers Training colleges, Medical Colleges etc. but also decided on number of seats in each discipline in these institutions. This was almost a copy of what Soviet Union was doing as part of Centralised planning. The interesting point is that in NONE of these efforts was Middle level manpower was discussed. They

were considered only adjuncts to the great 'Nation-building' endeavour of the Federal Govt. by way of new big Universities & other technical institutions of 'national importance'. The Institute of Applied Manpower Research (IAMR) set up later under the Planning Commission, certainly discussed this issue of middle level manpower by way of technicians/supervisors, medical technicians. auxiliary nurses and midwives and others in their various research papers but was unable to get its recommendations implemented by various Govt. Departments. There was hardly any private sector activity in this area except through charitable & voluntary organizations but the Ministry of Labour found itself in-charge of industrial training outfit set up during the British time as part of its World War-II war effort to train Indian personnel as essential support for their (and Indian) troops. The nomenclature of 'Labour & Rehabilitation' helped it gain resources to develop its network of Industrial Training Institutes with its separate Directorate of Employment &Training (DGE&T). Unlike the role of State Govts., which was accepted as crucial for development of School education & Higher education and Vocational education, the role of the State Govts in this field of training was more limited to accepting the detailed directives of the DGE&T for implementation of the development plans of ITIs, including recruitment of Instructors, Curricula, teaching materials and preparation of student trainees for centrally mandated examinations conducted originally under the National Council for Vocational Training (NCVT) but later devolved to the State Councils. The reasons for this level of centralization in ITIs Vocational training probably lie in greater uniformity in vocational training field, at least in the initially started mechanical trades and lack of experience of many State Govts. in running such courses.

The actual number of ITIs post-independence varied much more between States than in case of Schools/Colleges and many State Govts. started training in trades for which there were, in fact, few takers either in terms of willing students or employers and often enough, even teachers trained for those trades? All this was noticed as early as early Sixties and perhaps, that is how the transfer of responsibility to the States started with setting up of State Councils. The more capable students and

their teachers however, continued to prefer training for the national level examinations conducted under the auspices of the NCVT, rather than SCVTs (State Council for Vocational Training). The post-training 'apprenticeships' however continued under the National Apprenticeship Council in the federal Ministry. of Labour which was created for the specific purpose of providing hands-on training at actual factory floors in the hope that the trainees so apprenticed would get absorbed in the factory itself after satisfactory performance and would be an asset both to the factory and their own families. It is a different matter that due to various external threats/conflicts and consequent failure of the ambitious Second and Third Five Year plans in generating sufficient economic growth, the expectations of Vocational Training Planners were not fulfilled and the successful pass-outs from ITIs suffered from significant levels of unemployment. The close linkage of successful training and getting suitable employment quickly was thus broken. Interestingly, the same scenario played out a little later for the pass-outs from engineering colleges, both for Degree & Diploma holders and the GOI had to allow them to also partake of Apprenticeships under the National Apprenticeship Council though these apprenticeships were meant mainly for the ITI pass-outs originally.

The Apprentices Act 1961 continues to be the prime legislation with its Central Apprenticeship Council at the National level under whose directions all 'formal' apprenticeship training is conducted all over the country . The Convener is Tripartite/Quadra-partite in structure with the Union/State Govts. on the one side and the Trade Unions & Employers on the other. In fact, after the prescribed period of training the apprentices appear at an All India Trade Test conducted by the NCVT, not the State level bodies. As per the data available, only about three lakh seats are available in the entire country! Obviously, all these efforts were directed to roughly 7% of the total employment i.e. that within the 'organised' sector of the economy, the rest being considered 'un-organised' or 'Informal' economy without many regulations and laws to follow! The whole body of Labour laws, both from the Union Govt. or the State Govts., generally cover/look after the interests of the 'organised sector' workers who form the

bulk of the Trade Unions. The ancient practice of apprentices or training under Master Craftsmen continues almost as before since the number of persons employed in this informal economy continues to swell due to our population growth and the position was considered so grave in 2007-08 that the Prime Minister had to give directives to the Labour Ministry that the goal of formal training must be raised to 500 millions by the year 2022. The Second National Labour Commission which reported in 2001-2002 had already raised its voice for the same purpose and pointed out that only 5% of the young labour force (age 18-24) in India was properly trained and the entire work force needed to be covered urgently.

Experiences of Other Countries

The problem of the unorganized sector employees/workers/ self-employed is not unique to India and exists in most developing countries. For example, the International Institute of Education Planning (UNESCO), Paris in its August 2011 Newsletter referred to the case of many African economies where Informal Apprenticeship (IA) dominates. They refer to it as a 'written or oral agreement' under which young people can acquire technical and occupational know-how i.e. all skills relevant to a trade. The agreement is embedded in social norms and tradition reinforced by reputation, social sanctions or reciprocity. These countries have found that almost 90 % training being provided by IA, it is time to re-structure their systems of Technical and Vocational Education and Training to incorporate traditional apprenticeships, including certification mechanisms. It has to be recognized that upgrading informal apprenticeship can boost the skills base & improve growth and development potential of an economy. The IIEP also noted that in comparison with training in the centre-based formal TVET (Technical and Vocational Education & Training) system, training in an enterprise-based apprenticeship system is more cost effective.

We should also look at the relative successes of the organized and formal centre-based efforts made in the South East Asian nations (East Asia Miracle economies). The Second National Labour Commission pointed out succinctly the achievements

of Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Thailand and even Indonesia in terms of provision of regular formal training to a majority of their work-force (over 90 % in Korea!). In comparison to the industrialised economies of the West/Japan the achievement of Korea was stunning, even before it was admitted to the OECD. It was also noted earlier by international/ILO experts that at least South Korea and Taiwan typified HRD-led development as against the then prevailing consensus of Physical Capital formation through State controlled development. Even the People's Republic of China initially emphasized HRD and human development, though under tightly controlled society through the Communist party. The World Bank study did give credit to HRD for faster economic growth in those 'Miracle' economies. The question surely arises as to whether Indian approach through centralized planning for the High Level Manpower was in-sufficient for our conditions.

It can be argued that India does not have to learn from the poor countries of Africa which have in any case, small populations but we cannot say the same for the East Asian nations like Thailand, Malaysia, Korea, Indonesia and China. The initial conditions of growth did however, differ from India based on each country's past history but each of us was trying to accelerate our economic growth with our own models. The model we adopted for initial heavy industry development was based on Soviet experience where consumer goods were given much less importance initially and emphasis was placed on self-sufficiency rather than inter-dependence via export promotion. Each country emphasized educational development though some invested relatively less resources in Elementary & Middle level education & training than others. We perhaps thought that with our ancient system of indigenous craftsmanship still intact, higher education including higher technical education deserved more resources. As mentioned earlier, this was embedded in the emphasis placed by the Directorate of Manpower in the Fifties and early Sixties but the slant continued in the Seventies and even till Nineties. The studies of the Institute of Applied Manpower Research of that period clearly show that in case of middle level manpower, the 'practicals' had an advantage in finding employment, including self-employment, over the well-educated & trained ITI graduates, who were already suffering from high rates of unemployment.

In a major study in early Eighties made by the Planning Commission it was noted for the first time that these 'practicals' were not good enough for Project exports for the Middle East & North Africa. The Study was conducted due to pressure exerted by the Commerce Ministry and called for major efforts for 'augmentation of training facilities'. The Study recommended major increases in the facilities for training capacity of the ITIs, especially related to the Construction trades despite the existence of large number of ITI graduates in the Live Register of Employment exchanges. A module of entrepreneurship training of about 3-4 days was also introduced in the ITI curricula to orient the pass-outs to creating jobs for themselves! A little before this, and following a different approach, the Department of Rural Development had started a scheme of TRYSEM (Training of Rural Youth for Self-employment) as part of the IRDP (Integrated Rural Development Programme), giving numerical targets for training of rural youth for self-employment in each block. The scourge of unemployment which affected the Engineers after Chinese attack of 1962, was already prevailing in all related qualification-holders, forcing the planners to find alternative (Self) employment avenues!

A number of internal reviews/evaluations of the ITI training programmes were held in the Union Ministry of Labour and the most recent outside evaluation was conducted by the ILO in 2002-'03. Most reviews noted that the employability of ITI technical graduates was not good and Institutional mechanisms for Private sector participation (and potential employment) were not satisfactory. They also discovered that there was not much difference between public sector ITIs/ITCs and private providers of training as regards employability though there was big difference in types of courses taken up. The private providers were more in Non-Engg. Trades than the ITIs/ITCs. They also faced constraints of credit and financing in their training, which could explain their preference for Non-Engg. Trades as they are less costly to run. They also faced regulatory 'hurdles' which varied from State to State and included difficulties of initial registration, accreditation and certification of training courses, mostly bureaucratic in nature. The most important problem of Govt.

financing i.e. supply-driven courses along with fixed durations, teaching materials & the teachers themselves getting out-dated as also lack of flexibility in attendance during day time etc. are well known and cannot be solved without major re-structuring of the entire training apparatus. The Ministry of Labour has accepted the need for a Qualifications Framework and has made attempts in that direction but unless the full Framework is ready for including all kinds of courses and competencies and allows utmost flexibility in moving from one level to another , little progress can be ensured. The need for all this has already been emphasized at the beginning of this paper.

Role of Vocational Education Institutes

Apart from the above noted efforts mainly through the Ministries of Labour and later, Rural Development, the Ministry of Education, GOI had initiated a programme of work education (Socially Useful Productive Work or SUPW) as part of middle level education to impart orientation for learning useful skills within school hours. This was in continuation of Gandhiji's Buniyadi shiksha followed by the scheme of 'Basic education' under Dr. Zakir Hussain. The State Govts. were encouraged by the Education Ministry. to introduce this work oriented education and the Planning Commission supported the same with plan funds. These efforts did not lead to significant results and the GOI finally opted for a Centrally Sponsored Scheme on 'Vocationalisation of Secondary Education' post class 10 in the Seventies. This was in line with the Kothari Commission's recommendations mentioned earlier and the Union Govt. bore a substantial part of expenses on the entire apparatus, including teachers, curricula and teaching materials, class rooms, equipment & directorate staff. After a review in the Planning Commission the scheme was taken out of the Centrally Sponsored list later. However, the Education Ministry soon realised that the apparatus set up with sizeable funds and hopes was getting dismantled in the absence of central funds in most States and therefore, another Scheme (almost a copy) was re-launched during the Seventh Plan. A number of Committees were set up by the Education Ministry to evaluate the scheme and it

underwent periodic reviews in the Planning Commission at the end of each Plan. Later on, a survey was also conducted through the ORG. Finally, in 1999 an independent in-depth review of the Scheme was ordered through a research NGO which threw up rather disturbing findings for the Deptt. of Secondary & Higher Education of GOI. The report was used by the Working Group for formulation of the Tenth Plan (2002-2007).

Some findings of this evaluation are relevant even now and can be mentioned here e.g. rather low utilization of capacities created at the +2 level in Senior Secondary Schools, very high per capita costs of such Vocational education in some disciplines, little or no reality check on which vocations to be taken up in which schools through serious manpower forecasts, hardly any regular teaching staff for any vocation, reluctance of parents to send their wards into Vocational stream and most importantly, poor acceptability of the pass-outs by employers etc. In fact, as was well known, the Study confirmed the fears of Union Govt. planners that the State Govts. were having the scheme mainly because it was heavily funded by the Union Govt. whose commitment to such funds varied from Plan to Plan. There was little realization of the sea-changes being ushered in the economy due to liberalization unleashed in 1991, leading to turbulence in the occupational structure and sudden rise of new things like the IT-related jobs, whether called body-shopping or otherwise.

The most important fact to be taken note of is creation/ existence of over nine lakh vocational education seats as compared to around 7-8 lakh in the ITI system. This Vocational sub-system has its own Institute (CIVE, Bhopal) for curricula & teaching materials preparation and general guidance of the vocational stream sub-divided into 6 sub-streams for specialization viz. Engg. & Technology, Agri. & allied, Health-related, Business & Commerce, Home Sciences, Services & others. Can or should these facilities be ignored in the design of a comprehensive TVET system, even if the courses are currently not dense-enough from potential employers' angle? Most of the ITI courses are also of 2 years duration like the +2 Vocational stream and plenty of equipment & special

classrooms were constructed but being part of secondary schooling, the courses did not give intensive hands-on training and enjoyed too many holidays in comparison! All these are within range of revisions of course and teaching hours schedule as many Vocational schools in Haryana State demonstrated. It must also be repeated that the Ministry of MHRD (Dept. of Secondary Education) is also trying to develop a National Qualifications Framework like the Ministry. of Labour but the progress so far rather little.

The Skill Training Institutions

In the other system of Vocational training, the number of ITIs has certainly gone up by now to over 5300 and with World Bank and support of others like the Industry associations, the equipments and facilities have been improved but they can still produce only about 7.5 lakh graduates. Other technical training institutes like the Design schools, Polytechnics etc. produce around three lakh graduates. In addition, there are around 4.5 lakh training places in the community polytechnics perhaps more relevant to the unorganized work force. Similarly, the Jan Shikshan Sansthan offers 255 types of vocational courses to almost 15 lakh people, mostly Women. Of course, there are 17 Ministries of the Union Govt. providing training in many trades & vocations but the latest estimates still reach only about 32 lakh a year whereas the number of young entrants in the labour force is about 130 lakh a year. If the Korean example is taken for comparison & guidance in our efforts to ramp up training facilities, we must reach about 120 lakh seats a year- making the gap very clear and justifying fully Prime Minister's intervention in this matter. He mentioned in August 2008 while launching the National Skill Training initiative that it should have the capacity to create 500 million certified & skilled technicians by 2022. He also announced that the institutional arrangements had been finalized, consisting of a 'National Council for Skill Development' under the Prime Minister and below that a 'National Skill Development Board' coordinated by the Planning Commission to combine public and private prongs of action and a (NSDC) 'National Skill Development Corporation' as a Non-profit company catalyzed by the Ministry of Finance, to promote skill development in the private sector.

Later in Sept. 2009 the Education Minister said in the Global Skill Summit organized by the CII that the aim was to skill 10 million more people each year than currently. He added that continuous up scaling and up gradation was also needed and while the developed world had a demographic deficit India had a demographic dividend. If the global community realized the enormous opportunity this represented and invested in the talent pool this country offered, it would benefit not just India but the world. Mr. Sibal emphasized that the country was actively looking at partnerships from countries such as Germany which had very good vocational training institutes. Institutes abroad could very effectively set up branches in India or go in for "twinning" as a model.

The NSDC was given the mandate to skill 150 million people by the year 2022 in Public Private partnership mode. This works out to roughly skilling 10.7 million each year starting from 2009. The current emphasis of NSDC is on setting up of Sector Skills Councils. The target is 21 but till 2011-end two had already been set up including Heathcare-related SSC piloted by the CII and Infrastructure SSC. The Bombay Stock Exchange is to support the SSC on Banking & Financial services. The Asian Development Bank was expected to support the entire initiative by providing Rs. 500 crore loan while the GOI provides grants through the Annual budgets. It is expected that projects using this Loan from the ADB will be completed The current focus of NSDC is to create enabling environment for skill development through i) Catalyze creation of large quality Vocational Training Institutions ii) Provision of viability gap funds for scalable, for-profit initiatives and iii) Enablement of relevant support systems directly or through partnerships and, Quality Asssurance, Information Systems, Train-the –Trainer centres. The NSDC Mission also includes emphasis on the unorganized or informal sector workforce but it is not clear how a PPP model can cover these workers who often have no employer-employee relationships or a particular industry orientation. Further since the overall target is skilling 500 million persons by 2022, the Govt. perhaps, expects the rest of 350 million people to be trained by the public sector-- Union Govt. Ministries + State Govts. + Public sector units of the Union & State Govts. through Govt. funds. Is this credible

in the light of what has been noted above regarding capacities of existing Vocational education or Training outfits, unless both of them are expanded exponentially? One estimate given is the need for around 5 lakh training providers in the country scattered all over and training whole range of persons in need in all types of disciplines. This appears to be too high but it is clear that VET provision is a very complex undertaking for a large populous country like ours which also wants to obtain 'demographic dividends' from its young population.

In this context the important question is whether the unorganized sector workers should again suffer from invisibility and neglect? Are there other alternatives say, NGOs which are not considered either Govt. or PPP outfits? We know already that a very large number of them provide need-based training of short durations to the public especially in Urban/Semi-urban areas though a proper survey of their number, their capacities for training, which vocations they cover better etc. has hardly been made. At the time of writing of Delhi Development Report 2006 an attempt was made to make such a quick survey but the Department of Technical education & training of Delhi Govt. showed its inability. This must be true of other States as well and the reasons could lie in the desire of such Training Providers to avoid scrutiny by lying low, almost 'invisible', to avoid regulations of the Govt. The EdCil (Educational Consultants India Limited) however, conducted a survey of eight States for this purpose in 2003-04 and its report came out in 2005. It found that the number of private/NGO providers as also the number of training places was not very large. It however, estimated the total training places in the country as between 8-10 lakhs. The survey failed to include the vibrant metro cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore & Hyderabad which seem to be full of such providers of varying quality levels, over the last 7-8 years of rapid growth. It also excluded, rather naturally, smaller outfits which choose to remain invisible and cater to specific segments like Beauty, Cookery and other small scale repair services. Therefore, it would be no surprise if the current estimate of training places gets doubled and still expanding.

What now needs serious consideration is that if these providers are considered good enough by the residents to pay

fees on which they could be surviving can they be brought out in the open and given incentives for expansion of their facilities and improve their quality and certification procedures. In a sense these providers can directly approach the NSDC for part-funding but they have first to come over-ground and be willing to be scrutinized by the NSDC, if their training programmes are within their mandate. Otherwise, they can be treated as a different category and approach another Organisation or Fund for quality-upgradation, expansion, certification and, support of other types, including part-funding whether they are non-profit NGO or otherwise!

How is Indian situation different ?

It needs to be noted that India in its Second and Third Plans had a grand ambition of following the Soviet example for restructuring its economy towards majority 'organised' and only a small part in the unorganized/informal economy. Though the two wars with Pakistan and that with China demolished this ambition, the planning process did not take serious note of the new conditions so created. We continued to believe that the organized sector will soon dominate the economy ('commanding heights!) though the ratio of organized employment in the total employment continued to slide from around 16-18 % to less than 6-7 % now. The Second Labour Commission noted these ugly facts and suggested measures for protecting the 'Unorganised sector workers' which was followed by Dr. Sengupta Commission in the 11th Plan. The essential point is that when only about 7 % of the Work-force is in the organized modern sector, the real needs of the unorganized/informal sector workers have to be met by any means, through ITI or Vocational school or Polytechnic or NGO training provider-registered or not- or some other way. This is the most pressing need now and to this extent India differs from its more successful Asian neighbours like Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia or even China.

Another major factor to be taken note of was India's inability to 'organise' agriculture despite furtive attempts in the Nehru era to set up huge State Farms and where that was not possible, co-operatise farming at the village level to

use the advantages of 'economies of scale'. Indian farms being generally rather small and therefore considered uneconomic, it was the experts' view that they needed to be increased in size at least for utilizing the farm-equipments, transportation, water and new agricultural techniques. But the proud Indian farmer did not want to have anything to do with these sophisticated arguments. Thus the majority of employment remains outside 'organised' sector. According to the Censuses Indian Agriculture covered over 70% of total employment right through the Seventies. Only recently, the share of agriculture in employment has fallen below 60%, not due to growth of organized industry but due to rise of all kinds of 'services', both modern and old. The ratio of manufacturing in employment has hardly ever gone beyond 16% so far, making the 2012 target of 25 % share somewhat difficult to achieve. The question therefore is whether the Agricultural and allied sectors should continue to be outside training programmes of the kind now envisaged for training 500 million persons by 2022 and if not, what special programmes need to be introduced for these sectors? The related question is what needs to be done to promote manufacturing and services sectors to enable them take a significant share of employment from Agricultural and allied sectors. Since we are discussing in this Paper only Skill development & Vocational Education, we have confined ourselves to the limited area of developing them to obtain marketable products and NOT how to reduce our overwhelming dependence on Agricultural and allied sectors for employment generation, though there are obvious linkages between the two and quite often politicians hope that by expanding training facilities and upgrading skills of a particular type, there could be shift of labour/work force in that direction. Our discussion being confined to Non-Agricultural sector needs of training should thus be considered a limitation of this Paper.

Need for a Skill Development Fund?

The idea of a Skill Development Fund from which training providers can draw upon is not new and has been acted upon in a number of countries especially in South East Asia. However, none of these countries suffer from extremely high

ratio of unorganized/informal sector as India (and South Asia, minus Sri Lanka & Maldives) and had earlier history of faster but export-led industrialization. Any initiative in our case should ideally cover rural areas and Agri. & allied sectors since the target of 500 millions training places includes such work force. There do exist training opportunities for workers/ farmers/fishermen/animal husbandry etc. of these sectors but in the absence of reliable data and targets of modernization of these occupations this paper would not cover them. That leaves basically non-agri. & allied sector workers including rural non-farm work force under our consideration. And, since the Union Govt. has already started the National Skill Development Board & NSDC, a new SKILL Development Fund would be primarily for the unorganized /informal sector non-agri. work force. The aim of this Fund would be to cover all training providers which are unable to access Govt. support from existing Govt. programmes including the latest NSDC. The Working Group of the Planning Commission for the 10th plan had stressed on the following features which are still relevant to the current situation:

- Training needs assessment– both broad assessment and specific training needs
- Identification of self-employment opportunities
- Training methods appropriate for informal sector target group
- Trainers, facilitators and Managers–their nature of functioning and sources
- Financial issues
- Market research or employer surveys
- Training programmes to be job-oriented, so as to minimize skill mis-match
- Multi-tasking to be a part of the training process
- Training, as a matter of principle, to be of relatively short duration and with stakeholders' participation in the design of training schemes
- Training should be a package, consisting of credit and

back up service in addition to skill transfer, so that its effectiveness is maximized.

It was already under discussion at that time that a way out of the paucity of enough seats in Voced/Voc.Trg and the urgent need to improve our ratio of trained labour force in the age group 20-24 was to set up a SDF, as recommended by the 2nd Labour Commission. The same was supported by the above-mentioned Working Group and a token provision was made in the budgets of the both Miny. of HRD and Labour, but by different names. However, neither provision was actually utilized. The idea of SDF has been revived again in relation to the National Skill Development Mission but has not yet fructified. Therefore, an attempt is made below to outline the expected functions of a SDF for the informal sector workers on the basis of already existing experience of training by Union Govt. departments e.g for Handloom workers whose duration is as low as 15-60 days or PMRY under which the duration is 15 days:

- The most important criterion for providing support of the Fund to any Training Provider is that the training to be provided should be entirely relevant to the target group and the training methodology to be used must make training interesting and useful to them straightaway in their present poor quality jobs. This means that a variety of training programmes, utilizing different training methodologies and curricula, should be permitted to flower in the informal sector market of service providers. Different service providers might work out different curricula, durations, methodologies and means of training in different types of setting. There is also no need for such training provided by the training service providers to be accredited/approved immediately by any Accreditation/ Certification agency till some experience is gathered i.e. some amount of trial and error must be tolerated by the Fund.
- A starting point in all such initiatives has to be to assess the training needs of a particular target group the service provider wants to cover or a set of trades. Hopefully, if the provider had some past experience it would make

this assessment quickly and come to define the specific training needs of the target group in question along with training methods, the trainers, facilitators and managers as well as the curricula and training materials. It would also identify the employment opportunities for the trained people, whether going back to their own jobs or develop self-employment opportunities. Finally, it would also judge whether training should be single skill or multi-skill but in any case, the skills to be provided must be utilizable in the existing informal economy.

- Once a training service provider, public or private or NGO, finds that it is competent to provide relevant training for a particular target group it should be allowed to bid for assistance from the Fund, in grant or loan form or mixture of the two. The mandate of the Fund would of course, be laid down by the Government setting it up where it can insist that it would be mainly available for the benefit of the weaker sections of the society, which includes most of the informal sector workers. It could also lay down how the initial corpus will be provided from the government budget and how it would be allowed to access money from other sources e.g. donations, contributions, endowments from individuals or corporates or associations of informal sector beneficiaries. The government has also to give an initial Board of Governors or Trustees of the Fund and specify how they will be selected in the future.
- A training service provider could apply to the Fund after doing its initial research into the training needs, employment opportunities, costs, curricula etc. and ask for X amount from the Fund, for Y number of months and detail a complete scheme of how the training will be organized and how it will meet the costs. It has to fully satisfy the SDF that the grants likely to be released and/or the loans sanctioned are utilized only in accordance with the guidelines laid down and refunded as per contracts signed by it with the SDF. It must also satisfy the Board of Governors of the Fund that the training methodology, the means of training etc. are right for the target group and that after obtaining the particular

training on offer, the trainees would be allowed to come back for the next module to improve upon the training so obtained from this particular provider and obtain a higher level certificate. Therefore, it is clear that the selection of training providers has to be done carefully and they are encouraged & directed to remain in the training field for a pretty long time so that they can themselves learn and improve upon the training modules provided earlier.

- The assumptions under which the training service providers could be persuaded to take up such Non-formal approach to training and take full responsibility for everything are that they understand the philosophy behind the competency-based training, are familiar with how to join one module to another and how to combine pure technical aspects of training with such other components as marketing and how to raise funds for their business ventures. Therefore, if sufficient number of training providers do not make a bid for a particular type of training envisaged by the Fund, arrangements would also be made to orient them to the basics of good training systems leading to a full-fledged competency-based training system, to be accredited with government mandated accreditation body/council.
- Any skill development fund would be as good as the members of the Board of Governors who should therefore, be very competent in their own areas of specialization. The SDF must be supported by a small Secretariat of very competent people who could evaluate the schemes submitted by various applicant training providers and put up to the SDF their recommendations as to their relative ranking in terms of costs on the one side, and likely quality and relevance of training to the target group needs, on the other. The Board should also meet fairly often to take decisions on the various applications for grants/ loans and in any case, every two-three months so that the relevance of training for a particular target group is not lost due to delay in sanctioning a scheme beyond a few months. Finally, the Board of Governors must have means of supervising the day-to-day functions of their Secretariat so that corruption does not seep into the Secretariat and adversely affect their decisions.

Concluding remarks

In this paper an attempt was made for giving a complete view of the current situation in the Vocational education & training front as also an outline of how to fill the gap of training needs of Informal sector workers through the Non-govt. agency of a Skill Development Fund. Some international experience was cited where relevant but it was always clear that India represents a unique case, needing our own indigenous 'solution'. It had to be noted that the two primary ministries had followed different approaches though they claim to have the same larger objective. It now needs consideration whether it is really necessary to have these conflicting (on the ground) approaches for providing vocational education or training, as the two can be subsumed in a single 'Education & Training system', to be organized under a single ministry/department. Many South East Asian countries have a single department for the entire VET +T i.e. Technical & Vocational Education & Training called TVET. Of course, India is a massive country but in reality all such vocational education/training is conducted through State Govts. now. The States are like 'nations' elsewhere and they have to coordinate the two sub-systems of Vocational education & training on the ground. Theoretically, they can start any course or approve any from a non-govt. provider without any intervention from the Union Govt. They already conduct examinations under their Secondary/Sr. Sec. Board of education for giving Vocational Education certificates or under their State Council of Vocational Training. Therefore, if they find gaps in training provision, they can and do take initiatives to fill them up. They can even set up their own Skill Development Fund from own resources and therefore, they can have a single Deptt. of Vocational education & training for gearing up a coordinated response to shortages of trained hands for the modern industry/services or in the unorganized sector of economy.

If shortages of resources is the only reason for a State's poor response to problems of shortages of training it should be dealt with known mechanisms of Finance Commission or greater transfer of powers from the Union Govt. to generate them. But that cannot justify inaction at the State level to

solve problems within their own jurisdiction and largely, within their own control like poor absorption of trained people on the one hand and shortages of key trained persons in specific trades/professions on the other. It is necessary that greater attention is paid by the authorities to remedy this fundamental weakness or flaw in our system of governance. If a single system composed of both Vocational education and training is desirable the Union Govt. and/or the State Govts. should reach that goal as early as possible. It is understood that following this very logic the Union Govt. is trying to get both Ministries on board to have a single 'national Qualifications Framework' applicable to both the sub-systems run by two separate ministries so far. In any case, the informed international opinion is shifting in favour of vocationalisation of general education on one side and, inclusion of minimum general education and 'soft skills' in vocational training on the other. That is reflected in closer working of the ILO and UNESCO in this matter!

B.P. Khandelwal

Public Private Partnership Models in Indian Education

The Concept

In a World Bank study on the Development of Public Private Partnership (PPP), the concept was defined as "a contract that Govt. makes with a private service provider, to acquire a specified service, of a defined quantity and quality, at an agreed price for a specified period". (Taylor 2003).

These contracts may be of several types, varying in degree of complexity, from the area of construction, management and maintenance of infrastructure, to the provision of education services and operations reflected in Voucher Scheme or Charter Schools. It has happened in different ways in different countries; Chile provided govt. subsidies to students who attended private schools; Netherland supports and finances all education, including private schools. Some African countries have different types of govt. and private schools including govt.-subsidized and independent schools, religious schools and partially subsidized community- organized schools. There are significant situational variations across the countries. In developing countries, govts. have subsidized private schools, mostly operated by faith- based NGOs, in the areas of salary, textbooks or per pupil grant.

Manifestation of PPP Models:

The different types of PPP contract include:

- Vouchers, which may help movability with school choices at reduced cost,
- Subsidies which facilitate the use of already built private

infrastructure though with limited availability and loosely controlled service providers,

- Joint govt. (Social obligation) and Private management (with a commercial motivation) operations for the limited purpose of the supply of definite services and
- Purely Private initiatives – aimed at reducing cost and with the potential of reducing educational inequalities and disparities with low educational investments as also outcomes with the ultimate goal of public good.

Thus, whatever be the shape of the contract policy, it fosters mutual trust, has clear objectives and criteria, besides flexibility, accountability and assurance of quality with norms determined by the government.

There is the other side of the coin also in respect of the risks in the many varieties of contracts like the dire need for capacity building of the private providers, poor handling and often biased governance of contractors, increase in competition among them, a low level of infrastructure, and above all handling of critical education or services by IT and management hands with no insight in education.

Therefore, there is a need for the state to create an enabling framework to include defined operational locations for private service providers in education, setting out clear objectives, streamlining procedures with clear cut criteria including transparency in school funding to make the proposition of Public and Private Partnership an enticing one for both the parties.

Historical Backdrop -The Indian Scene:

The Indian Education System, over the years, has been a subject of several major transitions. In ancient times, education used to be differential, mainly going down the family lines. The community patronized home learning locations provided the support for individual development for reinforcing societal roles. The mode of educational transmission was mainly oral discourse and questioning, and evaluation was through observations of performance for judging the attained abilities.

Though not formal in the present sense of the word, the system was certainly very rigorous and exacting. Evaluation was not just that of acquisitions, but more so of the level of internalization of knowledge and proficiencies. Small groups facilitated personal attention of the teachers and enabled them to monitor quality of attainments and progress of pupils progressively. Provision for prompt detection of shortfalls and timely remediation reinforced the entire teaching-learning process. This ensured optimum growth of educands aligned to their inherent capacities for learning. All the elements of Comprehensive and Continuous Evaluation thus existed in the processes of education in both letter and spirit.

In the middle ages, which could be termed as the period of Muslim Rulers, the Muslim Madersas and the Hindu Pathshalas enjoyed a position of prestige. The Maulvies and the Pandits teaching there were held in high esteem in society. These temples of learning did, of course, have a religious overtone. They had no governmental control, but surely enjoyed state patronage and support. There could be no doubts about the high quality of education provided in these institutions (Pathshalas and Madersas). They not only attempted to turn out professionally proficient individuals but more so good human beings with values of service and sacrifice, patience and tolerance, love and brotherhood, courtesy and kindness and so on.

Then came the British who imposed a system of education on India for serving their colonial interests and with the sole purpose of the creation of a manpower for running the administration. The mid-nineteenth century witnessed the beginning of a formal structure of their model of government run and also aided institutions. They attempted to sideline the Indian education system branding it as obsolete and eulogized a value system that preyed on the age old ideas and ideals. They thus declared a system as outdated, which had given the world the concept of the 'Wheel' without which there could have been no industrial revolution in Europe; the concept of "Decimal and Zero" that revolutionized mathematics and have become the foundations of information technology. They even decried Sanskrit which is today accepted as the

most computer compatible language of the world and is the repository of ancient Indian wisdom. Unfortunately to deliberately denigrate this treasury of Indian wisdom they even called Sanskrit a dead language.

While commitment to the society and the community was the perpetual undercurrent of the education of the pre-British period, linkages with jobs became the propelling force of the education of the British Period. Proficiency in the English language became the essential qualification for jobs. This was a great enticement. Thus the British Rulers first obtained political control and then created machinery for governance. We have for quite some time now, after independence, been toying with the idea of delinking degrees with jobs but have not so far succeeded in breaking free of these British shackles.

They also supported a grant-in-aid system which implied offering of limited support to private schools, on specific terms and conditions, as part of their framework.

The post independence period has seen a growth of private sector in education, in a limited way with grant-in-aid of varying shapes, ranging from undertaking total responsibility of the salaries of teachers and employees to partial support to some other items of expenditure.

Private sector has however catered to mostly the elite or the upper middle class with exceptional few NGOs working in distant and backward interior areas. There are also other private organizations operated by religious denominations and philanthropic organizations catering to education. They bear the cost, directly or indirectly, through tuition fees, endowments etc. They are regarded as alternatives to govt. schools.

The period after 1980s has seen the seeping in of private enterprise in education. These private parties, however, have been working in segmentary areas professing quality as their main plank. They also have had takers and have thrived in many instances.

However, the visible reluctance of the Government to loosen controls, to relinquish bureaucratic clutch under educational

provisions and to give way to new state providers posed general reservation among the many private collaborators to join the educational ventures.

The growth of school education has been a mix of govt. school, with support of private schools at different stages of education. The growth position at a glance is placed below:-

Educational Institutional Category	Number of institutions in '000		Size of enrolment (in millions)		Number of Teachers (in '000)	
	1951	2007-08	1951	2007-08	1951	2007-08
Primary	209.7	787.8		135.5		2315.1
Upper Primary	13.6	325.2		57.2		1780.1
Secondary		113.8		28.21		1175.0
Higher Secondary	7.4	59.2		16.25		952.8

The number of schools as reported existing in September 2009 are placed below to have a glance of schools with different management setups:-

S. No.	Category	Govt.		Local Bodies		Private Aided		Private Unaided		Total
		Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age	
1.	Pre-Primary / Pre Basic School	32873	48.47	17756	26.18	2659	3.92	14534	21.43	67822
2.	Primary / Junior Basic Schools	517347	62.85	189021	22.96	54052	6.57	62742	7.62	823162
3.	Middle / Senior Basic Schools	210796	57.32	58066	15.79	39258	10.68	59625	16.21	367745
4.	High/ Post Basic Schools	39166	31.66	10320	8.34	29622	23.94	44618	36.06	123726
5.	PreDegree /Junior Colleges / Higher Sec. Schools	30565	45.68	322	0.48	11953	17.86	24077	35.98	66917
	Grand Total	830747		275485		137544		205596		1449372

Source : Selected Educational Statistics 2007-08 and 2009-2010 MHRD, GOI.

As per the VII All India Educational survey of NCERT, 2002, and the comparison of statistics with those of the (VI Survey) 1993, there is an overall decrease in the enrolment of -4.66% and -9.08% in secondary and higher secondary govt. schools, while it has recorded an increase in private unaided-secondary schools to 15.88% and 11.65% in private unaided higher secondary schools. It is indicative of expansion of private unaided schools.

It is seen as a resultant for the reasons of excess demand and differentiated demand, and disenchantment with the govt. schools. It is believed that inadequacy and infrastructural short comings of govt. schools has led to the shortfall variations in enrolment figures. Demand explosion and financial constraints have been the other causes. Many also argue that increase in private schools are more in response to differentiated demand than excess demand. Inclusive of these, the economic and the sociological dimensions have added demand for enabling education and limitation of government funding; and above all the improved paying capacity of the population has resulted in growth of unaided secondary and senior secondary schools in India.

International Scene

With increased population explosion and the demand for and pressure on existing resources, the universal school education has fallen as a burdened onus on the state to be managed under heavy financial constraints. The emergent initiatives of democratic regimes working for common good have further increased these responsibilities during the last half a century.

New thinking in policy paradigms has also simultaneously emerged out of our political ideology and social policies in the preceding decades. To tackle these, a dual approach was adopted for overcoming the financial constraints of the state on one hand and approach of utilizing multi-providers on the other. In Western Europe, a "New Public Management" approach got evolved envisaging common culture of better and more efficient production of services with provision of incentives. Agreements were then floated, to reach the

deprived sections of the society with constructive government support. This new "politico-economic cult" was evident in such propositions in the States. Then the concept of a public / private collaborative model made an appearance on the educational scene. It ushered in an era of competitiveness and increased efficiency to support the ailing solely government operated system.

The 1990s have witnessed the introduction of Private Finance Initiative Bill (PFI) 1997 in the UK. It was legalisation of the state joining hands with the "Value for Money" dimension in education with the hope of improvement. The legislation also provided monitoring and measuring the gains through a specific indicator, the Public Sector Comparator (PSC) 2001 constructed for the purpose.

In the USA, the schooling movement of 1980s, and governance crisis in US administration resulted in the decline or even collapse of state support to the schools. The "Charter School" model was the outcome. The parents' movement led to schools managed through a governmental contract with the parents' body in a community for running schools under parental management permits. It has been an experiment in community level management and ownership of schools, fostering entrepreneurship with accountability. This also led to a sharp rise in the number of schools under the pattern.

There has been an argument floated in favour of PPP as well as, words of caution against it. Education 'as a market' concept was floated in favour to usher in competiveness, provide flexibility, provide option to choose out of bidders for specific quality requirement and take benefit of increase in risk sharing. The success depended upon the design and specifics of the contract and its implementation for improving efficiency, choice and access. Advantage of multiservice providers and availability of range of initiatives are also referred as arguments in favour of it.

The words of caution against PPP extend from the possibility of leading to privatization and limiting many choices and leading to socio-economic segregation, to the possibility of poorer students being left behind in the not well

equipped public schools (which loose or lessen the support of finances). The concept may also expect to face resistance from stakeholders e.g. teachers and employees, and unions, for loosening influence.

Some Indian PPP Models

A new trend in educational management has also started with the establishment of District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) in 1994 and later with Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). The facts and figures about larger enrolment and increasing number of girls in schools presents a picture of varying degree of success in elementary education. It has no doubt increased the pressure for higher growth at secondary level also. This growth is seen as an opportunity to realize goals and to overcome weaknesses. The situation does however call for caution about the Indian ideals and perceptions and threats in Indian education, with the international funding (DFI) and increasing number of NGOs.

The proposition of PPP with NGO's playing crucial roles has also been regarded as helpful in terms of public good particularly in respect of their accessing the most difficult populations and areas. Private secondary schools of late demonstrated, a significant increase in numbers as more than half of the total. They are also by law (RTE –2009) now required to provide free education to 25% children from economically backward / disadvantaged communities. However, the private partners have so far not been viewed as long term or even reliable partners in the provisions of education.

PPP initiative under RMSA

The country has now been accepting the contributory role of private sector with NGOs in the elementary sector, with varying degree of support, supervision and control by the government. The Right to Education Act is another example of a legal framework proposing a partnership role of government and private sector with conditions.

Consequently, with the increase of enrolment, the private aided and unaided schools have been spreading to cater to semi-urban and rural populations as well. Many religious

and philanthropic organizations have also launched major projects. Uttar Pradesh had even, in late 1980s, allowed and recognized private unaided self financed learning centers, formally allowed and recognized for common syllabus, examination and certification at secondary level. The individual learners' informal and non-formal learning was also allowed under this framework to facilitate poor, out of reach children and above all, girls. Fee collection was the main source of finances without state financial assistance. It is noted that it has widely supported and managed the larger enrolment for standard attainment certification.

The MHRD has came out with a major initiative for setting up schools under PPP (2010) with a target of setting up 6000 model schools, 3500 government and 2500 schools under Public Private Partnership. The targeted student population is 40 lakh, of which 25 lakh would be from socially and economically disadvantaged categories. The scheme aims at evolving innovative ways for enabling and empowering non-governmental schools at for getting engaged in providing world class education, specially to children from low income families at an affordable price.

The partnership envisages an agreement with the private sector undertaking to deliver an agreed quantum and quality of service, on the payment of a "Unitary Charge" by the Government. The scheme is an outcome of felt needs for taking advantage of the strengths of both the private and the public sector for offering education, to accelerate the expansion, supplement investment and enable different models for improving the quality of education and a better outcome of the combined strength.

The proposal accepts that huge investments are required in education and that the private sector capital could offer financial support, in terms of financial efficiency and for supplementing the resources of the governments, with risk coverage of project completion and delivery of agreed outputs shouldered by the private entity. It also envisages that the public funds will be expended only upon delivery of agreed outcomes.

The NGOs, including trusts, societies and not-for-profit organizations are expected to provide infrastructure and manage the school including the teachers and staff. Capital expenditure too has to be borne by the private entity, with their ownership. Government proposes to bear recurring academic support to 1000 select students from EWS categories and in respect of the rest about 1500 will be left free to be charged fee by the private partners. Govt. will also bear additional 25% of monthly recurring expenditure of select students for infrastructure. This support will continue for 10 years, and only recurring academic support shall be provided thereafter.

There will be a consensus agreement specifying the rights and obligations of both the parties. It envisages sufficient flexibility to private entities to manage their respective schools.

The schools will be affiliated to CBSE and will comply with CBSE norms and guidelines for structures, educational supports, professional inputs and management, with additional obligations of providing mid-day meals, uniforms, textbooks and annual health checkup. The teachers will be paid not lower than the salary scales of the Kendriya Vidyalaya Schools. The government also proposes to setup an independent nodal agency for monitoring the operations of the scheme.

This proposal has drawn on the experience of the ongoing models of government assisted private sector agencies of which, the government aided private schools, the residential schools in each assembly constituency in Andhra Pradesh, the bock level Adarsh Schools of Punjab and PPP schools in Rural Rajasthan are examples.

FDI in Indian Education

Ever since the emergence of the concept of globalization and consequent liberalization, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) has played an important role in India. In education, it started with professional education and then percolated to general education as well.

It was first introduced in the industrial sector of which the Indian Steel Plants at Bhilai Rourkela and Durgapur are examples of International Collaborations. Engineering was the next area of FDI focus with the promise of the transfer of technology as the bonding string. Information Technology was the next area of collaboration where India needed hardware and could offer software solutions in exchange. Management Education was, in sequence, the other area of foreign linkages.

In this context, it can be specifically stated that education has a long gestation period. Investors in the IT and Management Sectors were mentally unprepared for an extended wait. They lost their patience and so gradually their efforts got slowed down and finally stopped in many cases.

FDI, however, has still survived in the area of health. Wherever these were govt. operated programmes, they have touched the common man and if they have been purely privately operated ones, they are catering to only the higher and the upper middle class.

FDI has got attracted mainly to Higher Education in most cases and quite successfully too. In the school education sector, just because it is often only expenditure and not profit oriented investment, it has not attacked investment in any great measure. However, so far as school education is concerned, foreign investment is not really needed. The private enterprises of the country are fully capable of fulfilling the need of the governmental agencies for support for a balanced outcome.

However, Foreign Direct Investment appears to be appropriate for foreign institutions in India but regulatory measures will surely be necessary for ensuring transparency and accountability.

Conclusion

These PPP models in fact seem to be a mirror image of governmental helplessness and disability in performing its legitimate functions. It was hoped that with the imposition of the EDUCATION CESS the financial constraints faced by

the public exchequer would improve, but it has not happened. The monetary allocations have no doubt been made but there have been erosions in their journey to those for whom they had been made. A trickling outreach of the funds could not really do much. The normal expectations have, therefore, turned out to be overshooting of even humble conservationally attempted targets. The money has been mainly spent on recruitments and building constructions. The outcome of this expenditure has not become visible inspite of the drum-beating about it.

Education is crucial for progress and prosperity. Neglecting it will be against our own interest and stakes of diverse kinds. The pitiably low GDP allocation to education in fact reflects the evasion of our responsibility. The government and communities could, in this context, have demonstrated a greater degree of commitment.

Corporate Social Responsibility in the middle and lower business sector in India has by and large been just cosmetic, even though some large business houses are really doing exemplary work.

In the West, we know, the corporate sector customarily allocates a part of its profits for philanthropic activities like education and health. They do this as a gesture for repaying their debt to the society from which they have earned it. There is no expectation of any financial returns from these gestures of goodwill. In India, the lower class and middle class business houses have to a great proportion entered education with a profit making motivation and a commercial approach.

Compulsions in India are different. Inspite of all international pressure for globalization, liberalization and economic reforms, India has not withdrawn the subsidies, because India espouses the concept of a "Mixed Economy" – a middle path between Private and Public Sector economies, of which USA on the one hand and Russia on the other have been examples at the two extremes.

It also needs to be noted that even in the service sector where the private agencies have come to operate in a big way, they have only so far been able to touch the tip of the ice-berg in mainly catering to the elite sections of the society and

the common man still remains untouched and unbenefited by them. He is still dependent on the less efficient services of the public sector agencies. The concept of "inclusiveness" thus stands defied.

So far as elementary education is concerned, the govt. and the public body (Municipal) schools are undoubtedly playing a great role. The phenomenal rise in the literacy levels which the country boasts about and even quotes as an achievement is a contribution of mainly the public sector schools.

It has also been noticed that when in the West the government found it unwieldy to manage schools by remote control, they entrusted them to the community. As the community had a stake in the future of their children they invested time, effort and finances in managing these schools to the best of their abilities. In a way these school were private enterprises run for public good.

In India, the private aided schools represented a similar picture where the government offered a part of the support and the sponsors shouldered the rest of the responsibilities for running the school. The government however, held the reins of the rules and regulations that governed them, while they enjoyed autonomy in several other matters.

The private unaided schools, too, are required to function within the parameters of the Education Acts and case-laws. They do not possess unlimited freedom for making unlimited profits, When the Delhi Schools arbitrarily increased fees for implementing the recommendations of the Sixth Pay Commission, the Delhi High Court constituted the Duggal Commission for examining the related issues and preparing guidelines in this regard.

The management of these private unaided schools has also procured land from the State as in Delhi at concessional rates and had also got registered as Charitable Societies. They were thus bound by law to grant freeships to the extent of 25% of the students from the economically backward sections of society, an idea to which they had subscribed to at the time of procuring land. This is now an imperative provision of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education

Act 2009 (RTE). The schools had filed a writ petition against these provisions, which has been turned down by the Supreme Court of India. The scene is similar to that in South American Countries (Chile) and African Countries.

The above examples are enough to indicate the legal bindings on the schools, particularly the unaided private schools and the PPP model has, therefore, to be understood in this backdrop, which upholds the concept of philanthropy and community welfare as an essential element of education upheld by the teacher, the bureaucrat, the politician and the judiciary.

All said and done, we must recognize the realities. The fact is that the govt. will find it difficult, if not impossible, to squarely cater to all the needs of education. The entry of the private sector has, therefore, to become acceptable to the stake holders and we have but to allow them some reasonable return for their investments, because their approach is commercial and only partly or not at all philanthropic. But we cannot, at the same time, allow them to operate educational ventures as business or trade or industry. Therefore, there have to be some compromises in traditional stands at both the ends. The government should lay down some realistic norms to allow the private partners legitimate return from educational ventures, than what could be possible reasonable return through equivalent investments elsewhere. The private partners will also need to reconcile to the fact that business tactics are not admissible in education. They will also not be able to have any hidden agenda and demonstrate transparency in their educational dealings for operating in the field of education.

Direction in which PPP model in education ought to move is to essentially have community welfare as its core element. It should present inclusiveness with easy access even to the not so well-equipped school. A natural corollary of this is the reasonable processing of the services provided.

With Foreign Direct Investment flow increasing in India in different sectors, education has to have all cautions of not adversely influencing the framework of joint operations, social

service on reasonable return and no closure or transfer on sale or otherwise, provision of takeover by the government in case of impossibility to continue or indulgence in objectionable activities, other than permitted educational ones and that too on the lines enshrined in the constitution and regulatory provisions.

Yet another thing that needs to be taken care of by the privates partners in their own interest in that the reins of educational operators ought to be put in the hands of educationists; and that the management people including bureaucracy and Information Technology people should support them. This is because the mind-set required for success in educational initiatives is different from other fields and unique as such. Wherever this has not happened success has eluded the enterprises.

As education cannot be run administratively through administrative decisions alone, there is also a dire need for the revival of the Indian Education Service for enabling education to realize its goals of continuity, sustainability and credibility.

A. K. Merchant

Inculcating Values Among Children in India and Abroad with Focus on Baha'i Inspired Schools

The Concept One World, One People

Profound is the confusion that threatens the foundations of society, and unwavering must be the resolve of all those involved in re-fashioning the system of life on our planet on the basis of spiritual principles that nurture and advance civilization. What needs to be acknowledged and remedied is the extent to which young minds are affected by the choices parents make for their own lives, when, no matter how unintentionally, no matter how innocently, such choices condone the passions of the world—its admiration for power, its adoration of status, its love of luxuries, its attachment to frivolous pursuits, its glorification of violence, and its obsession with self-gratification.[1]

The central concern in the relation between education and the forces of disintegration that have assaulted global society is, in essence, not a failure of education per se, but rather, the inability of the educators and curriculum developers to keep pace with, or even lead, the process of transformation to a new age. For, the children of today are the protagonists who will shape the societies of the future. "The greatest danger of both the moral crisis and the inequities associated with globalization in its current form is an entrenched philosophical attitude that seeks to justify and excuse the failures of state policies and programmes. The overthrow of the twentieth century's totalitarian systems has not meant the end of ideology. On the contrary, there has not been a society in the history of the world, no matter how pragmatic, experimentalist and multi-

form it may have been, that did not derive its thrust from some foundational interpretation of reality. Such a system of thought reigns today virtually unchallenged across the planet, under the nominal designation 'Western civilization'. Philosophically and politically, it presents itself as a kind of liberal relativism; economically and socially, as capitalism-- two value systems that have now so adjusted to each other and become so mutually reinforcing as to constitute virtually a single, comprehensive world-view.[2]

Appreciation of the benefits in terms of the personal freedom, social prosperity and scientific progress enjoyed by a significant minority of the Earth's people cannot withhold a thinking person from recognizing that the current materialistic system for managing world affairs, India including, is morally and intellectually bankrupt. It has contributed its best to the advancement of civilization, as did all its predecessors, and, like them, is impotent to deal with the needs of a world never imagined by the eighteenth century philosophers, social scientists and educationists who conceived most of its component elements. The question then arises: "Why should these, in a world subject to the immutable law of change and decay, be exempt from the deterioration that must needs overtake every human institution?[3]

The growing interdependence and the intensifying interaction among peoples of different backgrounds, knowledge and skills pose fundamental challenges to old ways of thinking, believing and acting. How the leaders and decision-makers in a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-lingual society respond to these challenges will, to a large degree, determine whether our country becomes nurturing, cohesive and progressive, or inhospitable, divided and unsustainable. "Earthmen landing on the moon have perceived what poets, philosophers, and prophets have proclaimed through the centuries—the oneness of the human family. Observing our planet an astronaut reported: 'The view of the earth from the moon fascinated me—a small disk, 240,000 miles away. It was hard to think that that little thing held so many problems, so many frustrations. Raging nationalistic interests, famines, wars, pestilence don't show from that distance. I'm convinced

that some wayward stranger in a spacecraft, coming from another part of the heavens, could look at earth and never know that it was inhabited at all. But the same wayward stranger would certainly know instinctively that if the earth were inhabited, then the destinies of all who lived on it must be inevitably interwoven and joined. We are one hunk of ground, water, air, clouds, floating around in space. From out there it really is one world.[4]

Learning: The Treasure Within & the Three Protagonists of Civilization

Throughout human history, interactions among the three protagonists namely the individual, the institutions, and the community have been fraught with difficulties at every turn-- the individual clamouring for freedom, the institution demanding submission, and the community claiming precedence. Every society has defined, in one way or another, the relationships that bind the three, giving rise to periods of stability, interwoven with turmoil. Today, in this age of transition, as humanity struggles to attain its collective maturity, such relationships nay, the very conception of the individual, of social institutions, and of the community-- continue to be assailed by crises too numerous to count. The worldwide crisis of authority provides proof enough. So grievous have been its abuses, and so deep the suspicion and resentment it now arouses, that the world is becoming increasingly ungovernable--a situation made all the more perilous by the weakening of community ties. Added to this is the dilemma due to many divergent and conflicting views on how to address the manifold crises.

The UNESCO document on education in the 21st century titled: Learning: The Treasure Within[5] identified four pillars of education—Learning to Know, Learning to Do, Learning to Be, Learning to Live Together--presents a societal model for ensuring the advancement of civilization, as we know it. All the human sciences—anthropology, physiology and psychology—agree that there is only one human species, although we differ endlessly in lesser ways. Aggressive forms of behaviour must give way to more gentle ideals. The need

for a binding agreement among nation-states demarcating the international frontiers in a just and fair manner, and proportionate reduction of national armaments so that "… weapons of war throughout the world may be converted into instruments of reconstruction and that strife and conflict may be removed from the midst of men."[6] Likewise, rights of the minority of every sort would have to be guaranteed.

The Bahá'í Faith, being the newest major world religion with followers in nearly every country throughout the world, has very much to contribute to value education in India and worldwide. "The fruits that best befit the tree of human life," Baha'u'llah stated, "are trustworthiness and godliness, truthfulness and sincerity;[7] On another occasion He stated: "The Sun of Truth is the Word of God upon which depends the education of those who are endowed with the power of understanding and of utterance. It is the true spirit and heavenly Water through aid and gracious providence all things have been and will be quickened."[8] Indeed, from a Bahá'í view, "training in morals and good conduct is far more important than book learning. A child that is cleanly, agreeable, of good character, well behaved—even though he be ignorant—is preferable to a child that is rude, unwashed, ill-natured, and yet becoming deeply versed in all the sciences and arts…"[9] The Bahá'í Writings include many such thought-provoking statements outlining future education as an integral part of a new world order, a world civilization, and universal peace. Therefore, value education programmes that are Bahá'í inspired, whether carried out by members of the Faith, or others who agree with its principles, are in fact an integral part of a complex but focused global process. For, the human being is believed to be "a mine rich in gems of inestimable value."[10] Neither a fallen creature nor merely the product of socioeconomic forces, the individual is a phenomenon of limitless potentialities: intellectual, emotive, moral, and spiritual.

Essential to the development of these capacities is a realistic orientation to the life of society. The society now emerging on our planet is a global one, inhabited by a human race that is beginning to recognize its oneness and

to insist upon the principle of justice in the administration of its affairs. A mass communications network, unknown to earlier generations, daily extends this awareness to ever larger numbers of the world's population. Bahá'ís believe, however great the turmoil, the period into which humanity is moving provides to every individual, every institution, and every community on earth unprecedented opportunities to participate in the writings of the planet's future. "Soon", is Bahá'u'lláh's confident promise, "will the present-day Order be rolled up, and a new one spread out in its stead."[11]

The educational programmes that will succeed in harnessing humanity's urge to learn, Baha'is believe, are those that accept this reality and capitalize on it. Service to the ideal of a global society will create as yet unimagined possibilities for the expression of human nature. Several important programmes centering on value education are clearly connected with the Bahá'í Faith. Some examples follow.

The Ruhi Institute

"This is the Day in which God's most excellent favours have been poured out upon men, the Day in which His most mighty grace hath been infused into all created things." "Peerless is this Day, for it is as the eye to past ages and centuries, and as a light unto the darkness of the times." "The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens."[12] Therefore, in order to enable every man, woman, youth and child to fulfill their highest potential an educational system has been conceived known worldwide as the Ruhi Institute. The titles of the books as developed by this Institute are by themselves quite illustrative of the range and breadth of the subjects covered namely Reflections on the Life of the Spirit; Arising to Serve; Teaching Children's Classes, Grades I, II & III; The Twin Manifestations; Spiritual Empowerment of the Junior Youth [27 books some of these are: Glimmerings of Hope, Learning About Excellence, Spirit of Faith, Breezes of Confirmation, Drawing on the Power of the Word, The Human Temple, inter alia]; Planning & Teaching the Divine Cause; Walking Together on a Path of Service; Family Prosperity, and the like.[13]

The curricula offer an understanding of problems of present-day society at three levels of comprehension. The first is a basic understanding of the meaning of words and sentences of passages from the Holy Texts, which constitute the core of these courses. Thus, for example, after reading the quotation, "The betterment of the world can be accomplished through pure and goodly deeds through commendable and seemly conduct",[14] the participant is asked, "How can the betterment of the world be accomplished?" At first glance, this type of question may appear too simple. But the actual experience point to some of the reasons for the adoption of a simple approach to this basic level of understanding. The second level of comprehension is concerned with applying some of the concepts in the quotations to one's daily life. And the third level of understanding requires the participants to think about the implications of the quotations for situations with no apparent or immediate connection with the theme of the quotation. Many years of experience with the study and practical application of the guidance offered in these materials has demonstrated that examining ideas at these three levels of understanding helps collaborators create conscious basis of a life of service to humanity and making each participant an agent of positive change for the building of an ever-advancing civilization. In fact, the above system of education allows for the almost infinite development by various user communities of branching subsets that serve particular needs.

Moreover, the operation of the institute board; the functioning of coordinators at different levels; the capabilities of friends serving as tutors of study circles, animators of junior youth groups; teachers of children's classes; and the promotion of an environment conducive at once to universal participation and mutual support and assistance have evolved over time and are being continually improved upon and refined. Of particular significance are the pedagogical principles governing the curriculum: developing capacity in every man, woman, youth and child to serve humanity in the light of Divine purpose in this Age of the "planetization of humankind"[15] "The process may be likened to walking a path of service. This conception shapes both content and structure. The very notion of a path is, itself indicative of the nature

and purpose of the courses, for a path invites participation, it beckons to new horizons, it demands effort and movement, it accommodates different paces and strides, it is structured and defined. A path can be experienced and known, not only by one or two but by scores upon scores; it belongs to the community. To walk a path is a concept equally expressive. It requires of the individual volition and choice; it calls for a set of skills and abilities but also elicits certain qualities and attitudes; it necessitates a logical progression but admits, when needed, related lines of exploration; it may seem easy at the outset but becomes more challenging further along. And crucially, one walks the path in the company of others."[16]

New Era High School, Panchgani, Maharashtra

The New Era High School (NEHS) is located in Panchgani, a hill station town known as an educational centre, in the state of Maharashtra, India. It is a private co-educational internationalist Bahá'í school, drawing students from all over the world; currently having children from 30 different nationalities.

It was founded in August 1945, and was one of the first Bahá'í education projects in India. In the 1970s and 1980s, the school setup programmes to assist the poor and underdeveloped villages in the Chikli Valley region of Maharashtra. NEHS is one of the top boarding schools in India. It did have a higher secondary school (11th-12th) till 1999, but discontinued it from 2000. The shooting of the film Taare Zameen Par[17] took place here.

The administrative management of the Schools is done by the National Spiritual of the Bahá'ís of India through its New Era Foundation Board which appoints an Executive Director for overseeing the day-to-day affairs. The present site was moved into in 1953 and consisted of five buildings. A play field and several added dormitories in 1980s gave the school the room to add over 500 students bringing the total student population to over 1000. In the 1990s the campus went through massive infrastructure growth and renovation--gaining its own power plant, campus fencing, intercom system, phone system for students, parents and staff, three wells, solar

heating for the dining hall and a large garden. Computers handle student records, accounts, maintenance, personnel, and other administrative areas as well as facilitating student-parent communication.

In the Primary Section, a team consisting of 11 teachers who have specialized in value and moral education of primary school students deals with the classes from 1 to 5. The education in the primary school emphasizes learning to think, to reflect and to apply spiritual laws to the life of the individual and society.

In the Secondary Section the Junior Youth Empowerment Program is a comprehensive moral and value education program designed especially for junior youth aged 12 to 15. Over the years of testing and development, the Junior Youth Empowerment Program has been found to equip youth with a profound understanding of their own potentialities and empower them to engage in acts of service to the community. Seven textbooks are currently in use for study in the junior youth groups. These form the major component of a three-year programme. Another nine textbooks will provide a distinctly Bahá'í component of which two are currently in use. Animators are advised to complement study with artistic activities and service projects. As with children's class teachers, the institute coordinator at the cluster level can offer animators assistance in determining how to proceed. However, most often, such projects and activities are selected by the junior youth themselves, in light of their own circumstances and inclinations, in consultation with the group's animator.

The New Era Teacher Training Centre, an innovative institution at the college level, is also located in Panchgani. Being a Bahá'í inspired institution, its vision and philosophy are based on the universal teachings and principles of the Bahá'í Faith. Its operating principle is the oneness of humankind, practiced in all aspects of its activities. The Centre offers a one year teacher training course for pre-primary teachers and a two year teacher training course for primary teachers, both for English medium private schools throughout India. Since the origins of the Centre can be traced back to successful social and economic development activities

from 1975 in rural areas around Panchgani, the Centre has always emphasized the progress of local communities. So its graduates are encouraged and trained to open and run their own rural schools.

At the New Era Teacher Training Centre, the students learn the newest teaching approaches, including cooperative learning and cooperative games. The Centre offers a unique and wholesome blend of practical experiences in community development and teacher training. Students learn to be self-disciplined, self-motivated and self-reliant. They learn the mechanics and techniques of consultation applied to problem solving, planning and evaluation. They learn public speaking and presentation, classroom discipline and management, art, crafts, music and so forth. They have extensive experience in working amicably in groups and in communities. In short, they develop their hidden potentialities and help others to do so.

The Teacher Training Centre works closely with the New Era High School also in Panchgani. It was established in 1945 inspired by the teachings of Baha'u'llah. One of the main basic concepts of this School lies in the nobility of all human beings. All students are considered as noble and having great potential. The moral and value education programme aims at bringing out these potentialities that are hidden in students.

New Era High School envisions that a new generation of children will be able to create a better world with moral and value education which is basically spiritual.

Conclusion

Underneath the present strife, chaos, and confusion in the country, I can perceive the next stage in human evolution. The incredible web of communication in this electrical and electronic age of interlocking computers, of microwave and radio, of telephone, telegraph and television, astonishes and appalls us. It promises that all humankind, not simply we Indians, in this Digital Age will be connected by non-living neurons whose glass, metal, and microwave axons will dissolve time and distance in message exchanges. The

equally incredible network of world transportation by train, automobile, airplane and the rocket is homely and pervading reality. Meanwhile automation with robotics, miniaturization, nano-technology and genome mapping are changing concepts of labour and capital, or production and distribution of goods and services as we fully accept the positive fruits of globalization of humankind.

Achieving a dynamic coherence between the material and spiritual elements of life implies a worldview radically different from whatever comprises the present-day socio-politico and economic structures. It calls for far-reaching spiritual and cultural shifts at all levels of national polity. New modes of thought, new standards and new legal and institutional arrangements are struggling to take hold.

Followers of Baha'u'llah, wherever they reside, are firmly convinced that as the sweeping tides of consumerism, unfettered consumption, extreme poverty and marginalization recede, they will reveal the human capacities for justice, reciprocity and happiness. The optimism that the Bahá'ís feel about humanity's capacity to meet the global educational challenge arises not only from their own experience. Most of the necessary expertise already exists in a wide range of governmental, academic, and other agencies. Around the world, examples abound of the capacity of people to create grass roots networks to tackle such urgent local problems as deficient educational systems. What is needed to ensure success in this global endeavour is unity. "So powerful is the light of unity", Bahá'u'lláh affirmed over 120 years ago, "that it can illuminate the whole earth".[18] The hope of the Bahá'í community is that the experiences it has gained and the scores of examples found in virtually every continent will give birth to a sustained resolve throughout the world to forge that unity of thought essentially to success in the stages that lie ahead. (3,280 words)

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J S Oberoi

'Padho Aur Padhao'

Lifelong-learning Innovations for Empowerment (LIFE) For Inmates of Delhi Prisons

The Project

'Paddho Aur Padhao' - is a project to impart functional literacy and provide vocational education, computer literacy, life skills training and counselling etc. to non-literate inmates of the Central Jails at Tihar and the District Jail Rohini in Delhi. It is a joint initiative of the National Literacy Mission Authority, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India and the Department of Prisons, Government of Delhi .The programme is sponsored, managed and supervised by the Anusheel Foundation, a charitable Trust based in Delhi; and is also supported by State Resource Centre, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, Jan Shikshan Sansthans of West Delhi and National Institute of Open Schooling. Some multinational corporate bodies and an international donor agency have also pledged their technical and material resource support to the project. .

The Context

Lifelong learning is the continuous building of skills and knowledge throughout the life of an individual. It enhances social inclusion, active citizenship, personal development, competitiveness and employability. Correlation between illiteracy, under employment and crime is well acknowledged and literacy disrupts this vicious linkage. UNESCO, therefore, lays immense emphasis on focusing literacy efforts on women and highly disadvantaged populations including prisoners.

UNESCO's Belem Framework for Action (2009) obligates Member- States to provide "adult education in prisons at all

appropriate levels". At any point of time, over 2000 inmates in Delhi Prisons are non-literate, largest number being in Central Jails in the complex at Tihar. It was therefore decided to impart functional literacy along with vocational education and other skills to all non and semi literate inmates, specially females and young adults, with a professional approach and on a sustainable basis.

Objectives

The following objectives guide the project:

- To impart 'Functional Literacy' to non-literate inmates of all Central Jails at Tihar and District Jail Rohini with the perspective of providing the excluded a second chance to empower and enable themselves to deal with challenges of a literate environment and make a initiation in the process of lifelong learning
- To provide vocational education, computer literacy, life skills, counseling and other inputs particularly to selected young adult male and female inmates.
- To provide the inmates opportunities for creative use of time and energies by getting involved in literacy classes and related activities.

Targets

The Padho Aur Padhao covered all 9 Central Prisons at Tihar and District Jail Rohini in Delhi. On record, over 2000 inmates were non literates at beginning of the programme. However, once the programme made inroads in different Wards, the figure of functionally illiterate persons turned out to be much higher. With more than 70% inmates being under trials, the programme faced another challenge of mobile population resulting in constant inflow and outflow of the clients.

Approaches

The project interventions have been specially designed after several rounds of intense consultations with expert agencies in Adult Education including the National Literacy

Mission Authority, and Directorate of Adult Education, Government of India, State Resource Centre, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi and Jan Shikshan Sansthans of West Delhi and Delhi Prisons authorities. The programme has two different approaches as detailed below:

- Information Communication Technology enabled Lifelong-learning Innovations For Empowerment (ICT Enabled LIFE) - for young adult inmates
- Functional Literacy (conventional mode) - for inmates other than young adult inmates

ICT enabled LIFE: Approach was proposed particularly for young adults as they are in active and formative phase of life, more interested in setting life and career goals, more willing to acquire new knowledge and skills, and with more curiosity for learning new technologies. This approach was introduced in Central Jail No. 7 for boys in 18 – 21 age group and Central Jail No. 6 for girls and women. The ICT enabled LIFE has following components:

- Functional Literacy
- Vocational Skill Development
- Life Skills Training
- Counselling
- Computer Literacy and Other Technology Inputs

Functional Literacy: Functional literacy has reading, writing and

literacy /numeracy skills and was imparted through computer based teaching - learning programme. The programme developed by the Tata Consultancy Services is based on Hindi Primer - 'Jan Saaksharta', a NLMA approved publication of State Resource Centre, Indore. The computer aided functional literacy has several advantages including the following:

- High level of motivation among the learners
- Shortened duration of programme cycle
- Faster and better quality of learning – in comparison to

traditional methods

- Flexibility to adjust to the learning pace of learner
- Lower rates of dropout-as compared to traditional methods
- Increased confidence of learners – due to handling of computer

Functional literacy instructions are not confined to 3Rs but directed toward enabling the learners achieve self-reliance in literacy and numeracy, becoming aware of the causes of their deprivation and moving towards amelioration of their condition. Besides, it facilitates the learners in imbibing the values of national integration, conservation of environment, women's equality etc.

Vocational Skill Development: In order to provide opportunities to improve livelihood prospects, programme beneficiaries were imparted training in vocational skills having market demand. Courses for which curriculum has been approved by the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) were offered and these included:

- Cutting & Tailoring
- Jute Bags, Belts and other articles making

Besides functional literacy and vocational skill development, beneficiaries were given orientation in Life Skills with the help of digital Life Skills Tool Kit provided by the International Youth Federation (IYF). Skills covered were: Creative Thinking, Effective Communication, Critical Thinking, Interpersonal Relationship, Coping with Stress, Coping with Emotions, Self Awareness, Empathy, Decision Making and Problem Solving

Counselling: Learners enrolled under the programme were given professional counselling on importance of literacy and having a positive attitude in life. Trained functionaries were engaged by Anusheel Foundation for this purpose.

Computer Literacy and Other Technology Inputs: Realising the importance of technology in contemporary society, neo-literates coming out of basic literacy cycle were

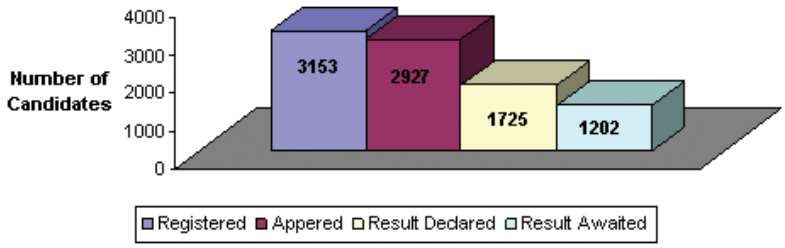
also imparted Computer literacy based on 20 hours curriculum developed by INTEL. Besides, they were also given training in use of calculator etc. In addition, women beneficiaries were trained in bicycle riding as without mobility, the package of empowerment and independence remains incomplete.

Functional Literacy (conventional mode) - for inmates other than young adults and women: Functional literacy in conventional class mode was provided to learners of all Jails other than those housing young adults and women. Primer based classes were conducted by educated inmates trained as Volunteer – Teachers. Central Jail Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8&9 and District Jail Rohini were covered by this approach.

Literacy Skills Assessment & Certification

The National Institute of Open Schooling was requested to carry out learners' literacy skills assessment and issue certificates to candidates. Learners unable to qualify are provided with further support and next chance as per the rules of NIOS. During the financial year 2011 – 13 four rounds of test were conducted (including 2 rounds specially permitted for Padho Aur Padhao only). In all, 3153 candidates (including self-tutored also) registered themselves and 2927 appeared in assessment tests. Result of 1725 candidates appearing in tests held on 20 July & 20 Aug, 2011 was announced and of 1202 appearing in tests held on 7 Feb & 18 March 2012 is awaited (Figure 1).

Figure 1: NLMA - NIOS Basic Literacy Programme Assessment & Certification



Other Outcomes

Selected outcome of the programme during the financial year 2011 – 12 were:

- A new literacy lab was set up at CJ No. 6 with computer tables donated by Anusheel Foundation; and computers and computer furniture arranged by the Prisons Administration.
- A total of 300 learners in 10 batches were enrolled in ICT enabled functional literacy classes and finally 201 learners got NLMA – NIOS Basic Literacy Certificate. All learners completing their basic literacy cycle were put on to post-literacy primer for remediation, reinforcement and application of acquired literacy skills.
- 134 learners had received vocational skills training in Cutting and Tailoring and Jute Craft (on NIFT approved curricula) and Electrical Repairs
- On completion of their literacy curriculum, neo literates were inducted in 20 hours package of computer literacy and in all 193 neo - literates had received computer training during the year under report
- Training in Life Skills was provided to 88 neo – literates.
- 230 inmates from Central Jail Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8&9 and District Jail Rohini were trained as Volunteer Teachers for conducting literacy classes in conventional mode and another 29 trained for conducting functional literacy classes in ICT mode.
- On demand, vocational training was provided to 151 inmates from Jail No. 1, 5 and 8/9

Words of Encouragement

- Sh. Jitendra Singh, Hon'ble Minister of State for Home Affairs, Govt. of India visited Tihar on 17.10.2011 and observed Padho Aur Padhao class at CJ No. 3. He recorded his comments in visitor's book, "Great Initiative! A truly great programme which can be replicated throughout the Country – 'Padho Aur Padhao.' All the best!"

- International delegates of International Conference on 'Women's Literacy for Inclusive and Sustainable Development' (ICWLISD) were led by Mrs. Anshu Vaish, Secretary (School Education & Literacy) Govt. of India on Sept 10, 2011 to observe Padho Aur Padhao. She observed, ".....there should be extensive media coverage of the programme ...."
- Mr. Abhimanyu Singh, Director, UNESCO Office, Bejing was also a member of ICWLISD delegation visiting Padho Aur Padhao. Wrote ".....Model shows national leadership and diverse partnership of government, civil society and NGOs. .... we should showcase the model to other nations ...."

M. K. Kaw

A Tribute to Panchgani

Panchgani

Is Panchgani a plateau in outer space
Where the sun paints everything gold
And the moon silver
And the stars hang like improbable oversized props
Arranged by an amateur event management group?

Or is Panchgani a poetic fancy
Where you let your hair down
Take off the clothes of false ego and hypocrisy
And emerge in your nude primordial selves?

Or is Panchgani a thoughtless state
Where mind ceases to function
Where you do all that you wanted to to do but dared not
For fear that others might laugh,
Like admit that negative feelings were masks
Put on so no one could place you
In this arena of hate?

Or is Panchgani an utter silence and aloneness
Where you are forced to confront yourself
The hidden self you have tried to flee from all these years
And admit in the innermost depths of your soul
That compassion is not weakness
Ideals not an idle chatter
And goodness not a hackneyed religious phrase
Meaningless in real everyday life?

Where tears are permissible
Where you can hold your enemy in tight embrace
And weep together?

BOOKREVIEW

SKILLS PROFILE ANALYSIS
For Management Training
A P Saxena
(New Delhi, Ane Books Pvt Ltd 2012)
pp 160 Rs. 495
ISBN 978.93-8116-215-6

India has a vast population of educated youth with plenty of them unemployed. While the industries are short of personnel, the numbers in employment exchanges for jobs continue to swell. Where then is the problem? The problem perhaps lies in the gap of skills available and those that are required for a job.

There is also this mistaken motion that once you are selected for the civil services by the Union Public Service Commission , you are now "Mr. know all "and there is no need to acquire any skills for the job that is ahead . For that matter, the young MBA often think that all that had to be learnt has been acquired and now the field is open. Nothing could be more wrong.

Training and acquisition of skills is a life long exercise and a continuous process. Whether it is government, the corporate world or even a private venture, management development is a key exercise in the process of growth – both for the individual and the organization.

A P Saxena's book is a very useful addition in this area.

The concept of lifelong education is now increasingly accepted by most organizations with the role of training as a pre requisite for initiating new policies as well as for evaluating the success of implementation of any project or scheme. The book brings out how all participants can be learners and teachers at the same time, all together, in solving the issue of the present while preparing for the future.

The book brings out that the process of management training is an essential part in leadership and several organizations, the services particularly, have linked promotions with training. More and more organizations are now realizing the need to equip their future leaders with the basics in management training and development.

The author explains very clearly that the complexity of an organization can be studied through the analysis of its flows or action patterns and the flows of the operation of the technical core presents a logical place to begin. An analysis of this technical work flow, however, will often lead the analyst outside the official boundaries in pursuit of the technological processes relating to the core of its environment.

This whole subject is so well explained in AP Saxena's latest book where the overarching concerns for organizational needs has been delineated to make the book a must for all trainers and training institutions.

Divided in six chapters the book covers a systematic analysis of managerial skill requirements, the tools and processes, a real time analysis of management needs, how to deal with a project for Management Skills Analysis and finally how to design a Management Skills Programme. A very comprehensive coverage of the subject in a simple and lucid language with practical hints for actually running such a programme is also given as a 25 page appendix.

Writing such a book was perhaps possible only by a person like AP Saxena with his vast background in administration and who has been in this field for a very long time and has covered the subject as a consultant in Indian Institute of Public Administration, Royal Institute of Public Administration, London and later as UNDP's Chief Technical Advisor in Indonesia. The author has been writing regularly now for over four decades and this present volume is a very welcome addition to the literature on management training and with a special reference to the skill profile analysis approach.

Mahesh Kapoor

MAILBOX

I have received the copy of the fourth issue of the Journal of Governance devoted to "Urban Governance ". It has an eclectic collection of article on current and critical issues.

V K Agnihotri
Secretary General
Rajya Sabha

It is very useful and is in great demand for use by our esteemed users, due to the content, the quality of journal and the contributions by eminent authors /contributors. It will add more value to the journal if a select bibliography/further reading list is added in the special issue.

Sunita Gulati
Indian Institute of Public Administration

The articles contained in Journal of Governance are every well written, and cover some of the key issues relating to Urban Governance, for which I compliment the authors and the editors.

Sudhir Krishna
Ministry of Urban Development

I feel that the special issue of the Journal on Urban Governance projects various aspects of the problem. I appreciate the stress on finances of the local bodies and the initiatives taken by some of them to tackle the challenges that confront us . The Journal rightly highlights the stress on capacity building and people's participation .The Kerala model needs to be replicated after such modifications as may be needed to suit local conditions. All the articles are stimulating and thought provoking. The following suggestions are made in response to your kind letter. This is food for thought and may

be considered while bringing out next issues of the Journal. The Journal no doubt gives a macro view of the problem of Urban Governance. It may, however, be necessary to bring out issues concentrating exclusively on

The salient features of a policy which is friendly to rural migrants who migrate to cities on account of economic and other compulsions. The methodology of town planning may have to be revisited to accommodate this important factor in the urbanization of India. Improved connectivity of villages to towns and improved infrastructure in villages ay help to mitigate the problem. The problem of up gradation of skills can be tackled under the national Rural Employment Guarantee Programme by imparting training in skills that are required in urban areas as well, in certain zones that are within close proximity of the urban areas that provide the pull and attract migrants from rural areas .The Economic Times had published an article on this issue and cited a few instances as well. It is possible that there are few success stories in the country to demonstrate the point. Why not highlight them?

A V Gokak

Former Secretary Fertilizers

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N K AMBASHT retired as Chairman of Central Board of Secondary Education. Was the Pro- Vice Chancellor, IASE Deemed University, Sardarshahr for the last one and half years. He is also Honorary Professor Emeritus, International Institute of Adult Education and Life Long Learning. Was also a Visiting Professor in the Faculty of Education, Jamia Millia Islamia.

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