



ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT IN THE EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION IN INDIA

Mahfooz Alam¹

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Abstract

Education does not begin at school, it begins at birth. It ends, not when the person graduates from any educational institution like colleges and universities, but at his death. Hence, education is a lifelong process. “Any modification brought about in the behavior of an individual as a result of his interaction with the environment constitutes learning” (O’Connor, 2016).

The concept of education is still in the process of progression and this process never comes to end. The process of progression gives a different meaning to education within the parameters of the social terms and conditions.

Key words: Education, Learning, Government, Parameters

Introduction

“Education is the process of training man to fulfill his aim by exercising all the faculties to the fullest extent as a member of society.”

- Aristotle

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¹Academic Associate, Indian Institute of Management, Email: mahfoozalam49@gmail.com



According to *Ross James S.*: “The whole of education; intellectual, moral and physical, consisted in leading out the innate knowledge, virtue and the powers of the child making the potential actual.” The meaning of education has been visualized in different ways in the post-independence period by the Indian thinkers and educationists. Among the many great thinkers who have contemplated on the meaning of education, some of them have been discussed here. According to *Mahatma Gandhi*, education not only moulds the new generation but it also reflects society’s fundamental assumptions about itself and the individuals who comprise it.

India has always accorded a considerable high importance to education. The education system that was evolved in the ancient India is known as the *Vedic* system. The ultimate aim of education in ancient India was not to simply gain knowledge or preparation for life in this world or life beyond, but it intended to complete “realization of the self”. (Peddle, 2000) The *Gurukul* (it was an education system in ancient India) system fostered a bond between the *guru* (teacher) and the *Shishya* (pupil) and established a teacher-centric system in which the pupil was subjected to rigid discipline and was under certain obligations towards his/her teacher.

The world’s first university was established in *Takshila* in 515 BC (Phuoc, 2010). The University of Nalanda, or the ‘Nalanda Mahavira’, as it was known at the time, built-in 4th century BC, was one of the world’s first great universities. In its time, in the 7th century AD, Nalanda University had some 10,000 students and 2,000 teachers (University of Taxila, n.d.). The subjects taught at Nalanda University covered diverse fields of learning covering; science, astronomy, medicine, logic etc. as diligently as they applied themselves to metaphysics, philosophy, *Samkhya*², *Yoga-Shastra*, the *Veda*, and the scriptures of Buddhism and different other philosophy (Almeida and Cutter-Mackenzie, 2011). Transcending ethnic and national boundaries, Nalanda University attracted pupils and scholars from China, Indonesia, Korea, Japan, Persia, Turkey, and many other parts of the world.

Currently, education in India is provided by the public sector as well as the private sector with control and funding coming from three levels: central, state, and local. Under the Indian constitution, the provision of free and compulsory education is a fundamental right to children between the ages of 6 and 14. The ratio of public schools to private schools in India is 7:5 (Education, Rayan, 2018). Education is today mostly paid for and almost entirely administered by governmental bodies or non-profit organizations (Varghese & Michael, 2014).

Synonyms of Education

We may find a number of synonyms of the word ‘education’. The word ‘pedagogy’ is sometimes used for education. *Pedagogy* and *pedagogue* come from the Greek *paidos* "boy, child" plus *agogos* "leader." *Pedagogy* refers to the teaching profession as well as the science of education, for example as a college subject. This might be one reason that the word, *pedagogue*, is often used for a teacher who is overly interested in rules and details, hence the science of teaching, rather than actually getting through to his or her students (Oxford dictionary: definitions). When a systematic study is attached to this concept it is termed as Science. Thus pedagogy is the science of instruction for leading the pupils. The most common word *Shiksha* is derived from the Sanskrit verbal root *Shas* which means to discipline, to control, to instruct or to teach. Similarly, the word *Vidya* is derived from the Sanskrit verbal root *Vid* which means ‘to know’. *Vidya* is thus, the subject matter of knowledge. This shows that disciplining the mind and imparting knowledge were the foremost considerations in India. When we review so many synonyms of the word ‘education’ we find that education is a complex idea. The scope of education has not been expressed through one single term (Dash, 1996).

Definitions of Education

Mahatma Gandhi: “I hold that true education of the intellect can come only through a proper exercise and training of the body, hands, feet, eyes, ears, nose, etc. In other words, an intelligent use of the bodily organs in a child provides the best and quickest way of developing his intellect. But unless the

² It is most related to the Yoga school of Hinduism, and it was influential on other schools of Indian philosophy (Bilimoria, Prabhu, & Sharma, 2007). Sāmkhya is an enumerationist philosophy whose epistemology accepts three of six pramanas (proofs) as the only reliable means of gaining knowledge. (Source from Wikipedia)

development of the body, and mind goes hand in hand with a corresponding awakening of the soul, the former alone would prove to be a poor lop-sided affair”.

Swami Vivekananda: “Education is the manifestation of the divine perfection, already existing in man”. He argued about educating men and women as two wings of a bird, as it is not possible for a bird to fly on only one wing. So, according to him, there is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the condition of women is improved.

Sri Aurobindo: “Education which will offer the tools whereby one can live for the divine, for the country, for oneself, and for others and this must be the ideal of every school which calls itself national.”

Socrates: “Education means the bringing out of the ideas of universal validity which are latent in the mind of every man.”

Plato: “Education is the capacity to feel pleasure and pain at the right moment. It develops in the body and in the soul of the pupil all the beauty and all the perfection which he is capable of.”

Aristotle: “Education is the creation of a sound mind in a sound body. It develops man’s faculties, especially his mind so that he may be able to enjoy the contemplation of supreme truth, goodness and beauty of which perfect happiness essentially consists of.”

Rousseau: “Education of man commences at his birth; before he can speak, before he can understand he is already instructed. Experience is the forerunner of the perfect.”

Spencer: “Education is complete living.”

Pestalozzi: “Education is natural, harmonious and progressive development of man’s innate powers.”

Froebel: “Education is enfoldment of what is already enfolded in the germ. It is the process through which the child makes internal into external.”

Education System in India

India’s most impoverished families are eager to access education and want their children to break out of the cycle of poverty and low educational achievements. At the time of India’s independence, less than a fifth of the population was literate (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2018). After independence, efforts were made to expand the access to education. But the fact that access to education was a moral obligation enshrined in the Directive Principles of State Policy (Article 45) kept it beyond the purview of an enforceable right. Education was a state subject in the Constitution before 42nd Constitutional Amendment in 1976 brought about a fundamental change by transferring education from the State List to the Concurrent List (The constitution of India provides for a division of powers between the Centre and States. It divides the entire subjects into three lists).

"Early childhood education, or ECE, is included in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030 that was approved by India among many countries around the globe. SDG Target 4.2 states that by 2030 countries should ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education" (Bhattacharjee et al., 2019).

Since the formulation of the National Policy on Education, 1986/92, significant changes have taken place in the education sector (Pawariya, 2016). A significant development relating to the education sector in India has been the establishment of constitutional and legal underpinnings for achieving universal elementary education. National Policy on Early Childhood Care and Education (2013), which aims to provide "developmentally appropriate pre-school education for three to six-year-olds with a more structured and planned school readiness component for five to six-year-olds. The recently created *Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan* (The Holistic Education Mission) scheme will focus on digital education and it will enhance the use of digital technology in school education from pre-nursery to class 12 through smart classroom and digital boards.

“*Samagra* means a holistic approach to treat education as a whole. The scheme is very appropriately named as it sees school education holistically without segmenting it into various levels of education,” Subsuming three already existing schemes *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (Education for All Movement), *Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan* (National Mission for Secondary Education) and *Teacher Education* (TE), this scheme will enhance the learning outcomes of students along with bridging the social and gender gaps in school education.

There are currently two main ways of accessing early childhood education in India. The most widespread comprises the 1.3 million *Anganwadi*³ Centers run by the Ministry of Women and Child Development across the country under the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS). There is a burgeoning private sector, with more than 40 percent of privately managed primary schools reportedly offering pre-primary LKG and UKG classes as well. Some states in India offer a third possibility as well, in the form of pre-school classes integrated within the government primary schools, provided, for example, in Assam and Jammu & Kashmir (Ministry of Human Resource Development, 2018).

According to the Right to Education Act, 2009: “which represents the important legislation envisaged under Article 21-A of the Indian constitution has entitled every child between the age of 6-14 years with the right to free and compulsory education), enrollment in formal schools should begin at age 6 years with ECE exposure recommended for children between age 3 and 6. However, 26 of India’s 35 states and union territories allow children at age five to enter class 1. National trends from the recently released Annual Status of Education Report (ASER 2018) indicate that enrolment patterns broadly meet these policy prescriptions (Bhattacharjea et al., 2019)”.

The draft National Education Policy, 2016, provides a framework for the development of education in India over the coming few years. It seeks to address both the unfinished agenda relating to the goals and targets set in the previous national policies on education and the current and emerging national development and education sector-related challenges. Recognising the importance of quality education in national development, the National Education Policy 2016 places an unprecedented focus on significantly improving the quality of education at all levels and on ensuring that educational opportunities are available to all segments of the society (Development, 2016).

The fast pace of generation and application of new knowledge, especially in the fields of science and technology, and its impact on the daily life of people brings into focus the importance of introducing learners to the rapidly changing world of knowledge (James & Woodhead, 2014). The need for the development of social skills, including life skills that meet the demands of the emerging knowledge economy and society, highlights the need to promote the acquisition by learners of knowledge and skills on a life-long basis to enhance their capacity to adapt to changing skill requirements. The changing social contexts of education as well as the national concerns for achieving the goals of equity and inclusion demands a revamped approach to education for enhancing opportunities for all learners to become successful in their learning experience and making all educational institutions responsive to the learning needs of diverse student population groups in order to ensure equitable educational outcomes for all (Tilak, 2008). The main aim is to provide high-quality secondary education to all the Indian adolescents up to the age of 16 by 2015, and senior secondary education up to the age of 18 by 2020 (Centers, Abul, & Azad, 1992).

Administration in Higher Education

"Administration consists of getting the work of government done by coordinating the efforts of people so that they can work together to accomplish their set tasks."

- J.M. Pfiffner

“Fundamentally, the purpose of educational administration is to bring pupils and teachers together under such conditions as will more successfully promote the end of education” (R.C. Mishra: History of Education Administration: p.277). Higher education has expanded rapidly in recent decades reflecting the

³ *Aaganwadi* is a type of rural child care centre in India. They were started by the Indian government in 1975 as part of the Integrated Child Development Services program to combat child hunger and malnutrition.

growing importance of the sector in promoting economic growth. An integral part of this concept and related reforms is the granting of more autonomy to institutions of higher education to plan their activities, mobilize resources to implement programs, and monitor activities (Dossani, 2012).

Quality assurance in higher education is today the top priority of the policy agenda. Post-secondary education needs to prepare graduates with new skills, a broad knowledge base, and a wide range of competencies to enter a more complex and interdependent world (Peddle, 2000a). Quality is a multi-dimensional concept, and several mechanisms for quality assurance and management at an individual and institutional level are needed. Systems of accountability and accreditation with a robust regulatory mechanism are essential to the process of sustaining and improving quality (Jain, 2017). Coordination and determination of standards in institutions for higher education, research, and scientific and technical institutions is a constitutional obligation of the central government. It is necessary to involve all stakeholders to institutionalize internal processes in favour of quality as an island of excellence cannot serve the massive requirement of higher education. The class has to be the concern of all institutions, and excellence will flow from good quality institutions and appropriate governance structures. Higher education (HE) in India has experienced an unprecedented expansion accompanied by diversification of the sector (Dossani: 2012). The unplanned development of the industry poses challenges for enhancing and maintaining quality. The country had established external quality assurance agencies in the 1990s to assure external quality. The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) was set up by the UGC in 1994 to accredit universities and institutions of general higher education, and the National Board of Accreditation (NBA) was established by the All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) in 1994 to accredit programs and institutions. NAAC accredits institutions and certifies for the educational quality of the institutions based on several criteria. There is a dire need to undertake reforms in the entire higher education sector, beginning with regulatory structures and going down to the institution level. Some of the possible approaches of reform agenda which could be considered are:

1. Create independent, quality assurance frameworks to address the quality deficit in higher educational institutions. Setting up of an Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) is one such mechanism to ensure quality within the institutional framework and linking it with the standards set by the quality assurance agencies.
2. A governance structure wherein appointment of Vice-Chancellor and Professors are through a transparent and competitive process.
3. Restructuring the existing regulatory bodies and relook at their multiplicity in a rationalized manner.
4. Autonomy matching with accountability: Need to re-align the regulatory functioning in such a way as to promote the autonomy of institutions. This approach envisages that we embrace a paradigm shift to facilitation rather than regulation; Single point clearances for grants; encourage global quality institutions. The autonomy of institutions would also be achieved by conferring degree-granting powers to colleges and conferring autonomous status on colleges. To ensure horizontal and vertical mobility of students, we need to ensure that uniformity is achieved in terms of syllabi and curricula through a framework; all institutions adopt choice Based Credit System (CBCS).
5. Need to revisit the issue of multiplicity of entrance and eligibility examinations and explore the possibility of a single national test so that we have a National Testing Service (NTS) for this purpose, which could be developed through consultations and debate.
6. Indian government permitting foreign education providers in India for proper regulation and internationalization of education by enhanced collaborations.
7. Norm based funding of higher education rather than personal demand-based inspection governed funding. UGC is the primary vehicle of routing funds to central and state universities and colleges for financing. Adopting a norm-based funding approach could be considered for improving efficiency in grant disbursements.

8. Increasing funds for the State universities and their affiliated colleges that account for more than 90 percent of the enrolment and suffer from severe fund constraints and poor governance, leading to poor quality.
9. Autonomy for central educational institutions.
10. Prevention and prohibition of unfair practices to ensure that merit is the sole criteria for admissions.
11. Capitation fees and misleading advertisements to be curbed and punished severely.

Role of Government in Education Administration

1. Use Of Information And Communication Technologies (Ict) In Education:

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have made rapid strides in the past couple of decades. Many experiments have taken place in the country, and a large body of knowledge has accumulated regarding the use of ICT in education. However, the potential of ICT in schools has not been fully harnessed. The use of ICT in training remains limited, and there is a need to accelerate efforts to use ICT for fostering quality education (Friedman, 2015).

Government of India approved a new plan, Global Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN) in higher education aimed at tapping the talent pool of scientists and entrepreneurs internationally to encourage their engagement with the institutes of higher education in India so as to augment the country's existing academic resource, accelerate the pace of quality reform, and elevate India's scientific and technological capacity to global excellence.

New possibilities have opened up for the use of information technology in different ways, not only to manage the sector but also to directly assist in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning, expansion of education opportunities, and improving educational planning and management. ICTs can also be harnessed for remedial education, training of teachers, adult literacy programs, skill education, a learning tool in higher education and even as governance and management tools (Ramachandaran, 2015). IT-based applications for monitoring the performance of students and schools as well as for school management are currently being used in several states. *MHRD* has recently launched *Shala Darpan* that allows parents to monitor the attendance, performance of their wards. Ministry of Human Resource Development has also initiated the new android apps like; E-Pathshala ("It is National Mission on Education through ICT (NME-ICT) being executed by the UGC. The content and its quality is the key component of education system, high quality, curriculum-based, interactive e-content in 70 subjects across all disciplines of social sciences, arts, fine arts and humanities, natural and mathematical sciences, linguistics, and languages have been developed by the subject experts working in Indian universities and other R&D institutes across the country. Every subject has a team of principal investigators, paper coordinators, content writers, content reviewers, language editors and also multimedia team").

Swayam (this is done through a platform that facilitates hosting of all the courses, taught in classrooms from Class 9 till post-graduation to be accessed by anyone, anywhere at any time. All the sessions are interactive, prepared by the best teachers in the country and are available, free of cost, to any learner. More than 1,000, specially chosen faculty and teachers from across the country have participated in preparing these courses. The courses hosted on *Swayam* are in 4 quadrants – (1) video lecture, (2) specially prepared reading material that can be downloaded/printed (3) self-assessment tests through tests and quizzes and (4) an online discussion forum for clearing the doubts. Steps have been taken to enrich the learning experience by using audio-video and multimedia and state of the art pedagogy/technology).

Swayam Prabha ["The *Swayam Prabha* is a group of 32 DTH channels devoted to telecasting of high-quality educational programs on 24x7 basis using the GSAT-15 satellite. Every day, there will be new content for at least four hours which would be repeated five more times in a day, allowing the students to choose the time of their convenience. The channels are uplinked from BISAG, Gandhinagar. The contents are provided by National Program on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL), Indian Institute of Technologies (IITs), University Grant Commission (UGC), Commission on Education and

Communication (CEC) (International Union for conservation of Nature), Indra Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), National Council of Education Research and Training (NCERT), and National Open School (NIOS). The INFLIBNET Centre maintains the web portal”].

NAD (“The vision of National Academic Depository (NAD) is born out of an initiative to provide an online storehouse of all academic awards. National Academic Depository (NAD) is a 24x7 online storehouse of all academic awards viz., certificates, diplomas, degrees, mark-sheets, etc. duly digitized and lodged by academic institutions/boards/eligibility assessment bodies. NAD not only ensures easy access to and retrieval of an academic award but also validates and guarantees its authenticity and safe storage”) for online courses to provide free education. There are several similar ongoing efforts and new initiatives and experimentation in this field. What is required is a well-coordinated strategy that can boost full-scale use of ICT to improve education in India.

2. Equity Issues: Closing Gender and Social Gap

Though substantial progress has been achieved in increasing enrolment in pre-school education, children from disadvantaged population groups' still lack access to pre-school education. Children from economically disadvantaged groups are more likely to receive less opportunity to participate in pre-primary education. Regional disparities continue, as do differences in access depending on the socio-economic background of students (Ranson & Tomlinson, 2018). The discrepancies in Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education are significant. The number of out-of-school children (OOSC) has declined significantly since 2000. The amount and proportion of out-of-school children remain much higher than the national average in some states. The ratio of OOSC has been higher than the national average for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and Muslim children. This indicates that these children need more exclusive and focused attention.

As per the ASER (2018) since 2007, the enrollment of children in the age group 6 to14 has been above 95%. The proportion of children (age 6-14) who are not enrolled in school has been below 3% for the first time and stood at 2.8% in 2018 (Pradesh & Pradesh, 2018). In 2006, the all India proportion of girls in the age group 11 to 14 who were out of school stood at 10.3%. In that year, nine significant states had out of school figure for girls (age 11-14) above 10%. In 2018, the overall proportion of girls in the (age 11-14) group out of school had fallen to 4.1%. The figure is more than 5% in only four states (Bourne, 2015).

The relatively higher gender gaps in youth and adult literacy rates remain a principal challenge. India continues to be characterized by a higher level of gender gap (8.2 percentage points) in youth literacy rate, with the youth literacy rates for the male and female population (age 15-24 years) in 2011 being 90 percent and 81.8 percent, respectively. India also continues to be the country with a higher level of gender gap (19.5 percentage points) in adult literacy, with adult literacy rates for the male and female population (age 15 years and over) in 2011 being 78.8 percent and 59.3 percent, respectively. It is clear that significant efforts are needed to raise the literacy levels of girls and women.

3. Education for All: Policy Framework

Obtaining quality education is the foundation for improving people's lives and sustainable development. Significant progress has been made towards increasing access to education at all levels and increasing enrolment rates in schools, particularly for women and girls. Necessary literacy skills have improved tremendously, yet bolder efforts are needed to make even more enormous strides for achieving universal education goals (Kohama, Giffard-Lindsay, and Khan, 2007). For example, the world has achieved equality in primary education between girls and boys. India is one among those countries which have achieved that target at all levels of education. From 1950 onwards, the government of India has created policy instruments to promote Universal Elementary Education (UEE) in an attempt to eliminate all forms of discrimination based on caste, community, and gender (Landry & Neubauer, 2016).

Government, businesses, and the people themselves have put education as one of the top sustainable development goals priorities. In the last 15-year development agenda, for the millennium development goals, we discovered that when it came to education, there was a good amount of political will. Many, though not all, governments expanded their education budgets and prioritized knowledge in

their national agendas (Govinda, 2002). This commitment contributed to increasing the number of children accessing primary school worldwide. Enrolment in primary education in developing regions reached 91 percent in 2015, up from 83 percent in 2000, and the number of boys and girls enrolled in primary school almost equalled. We need educational systems that target our efforts on the most vulnerable children, or we will further exacerbate existing inequalities by leaving them behind in equalities that will undermine education's contribution to healthier and more peaceful societies (Pradesh & Pradesh, 2018). Educating girls, in particular, is a crucial strategy for reducing harmful practices, addressing the curse of child marriages, and improving health outcomes (Aggarwal, 1998).

We also need to focus our efforts to help every child not only to secure necessary skills but develop the competencies they need to thrive, fulfil their potential, and contribute to a better society.

Challenges in Education:

The decade from 2001 to 2011 saw the country's literacy rate record an increase of 9.21 percent, and the problems remain in moving beyond access, to a focus on learning and ensuring equity. Over one-third of children drop out before completing the full cycle of elementary education. The majority of children not in school are from vulnerable and marginalized groups, including from schedule castes and scheduled tribes' groups, religious minorities groups, and children with disabilities (Tilak, 2004).

A look at promising intervention from across the country reveals certain principles at work;

- A realistic assessment of ground reality regarding enrolment, attendance, and learning outcome;
- Addressing inequity through differential financial allocation and with empathy. Identifying the most deprived is a good starting point – to make sure that the system can reach out to the last child first – and working one's way upwards to cover the less deprived.
- Forging closer community, school, and system linkages through real devolution of powers (not just responsibility) and enabling empowered local action. There is a wealth of experience in the country, especially in the NGO sector, to empower communities to demand their entitlement and monitor programs meant for them; Creating open communication channels between education administrators/implementers and local officials, teachers, parents, and children. The most potent lesson internalized from the right to information debate in the country was that creating a free flow of information becomes a powerful tool in the hands of people to access all levels in the government as well as civil society;
- Energizing the school system through improved classroom practice and assessment processes, strengthening science education through labs, centers, and related activities and use of communication technology, like the radio, to reach out. The schools do not stand alone – creating a vibrant learning environment in and around the school, using local as well as modern technology to make learning a creative and exploratory exercise, can indeed turn the tide and energize the school (Africa, 2015).
- It is providing academic resource support to teachers and teacher educators in a manner that fosters creativity and respects teacher experience, skills, and knowledge.

For the Right to Education Act (Parliament of India enacted *RTE Act* on 4 August 2009, which describes the modalities of the importance of free and compulsory education for children between 6 and 14 in India) to be realized, it is essential that children receive quality, early childhood education to lay the foundation for lifelong learning. But ASER 2018 data shows that even several months into Class 1, nationally, more than 40 percent of children are unable to recognize letters of the alphabet, let alone read words or connected text. While this is relatively high, it translates into approximately 20 million children not attending pre-school, especially those who are from the most impoverished socio-economic families, and those who live in rural areas. When children enter primary schools directly, without quality pre-school education, thus, without school readiness, children are more likely to drop out and not learn up to their full potential.

Summing Up

Education serves as the backbone for the development of nations. The countries with the active, impressive, need-oriented, saleable, and useful system of education come out to be the leaders of the world, both socially and economically. It is only education which can turn a population that is considered to be a burden on society into productive human resource. Sir Percy Nunn argues; “Nothing good enters into the human world. Except in and through the free activities of individual men and women and that educational practice must be shaped to accord with that truth”.

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