

Educational Reforms in India

Education is very important for any individual as well as nation. Education helps in all round development of personalities which ultimately help the nation in becoming great and powerful. Unfortunately educational planning and implementation has not been quite satisfactory. Many shortcomings have come to the forefront which ultimately derail the developmental activities. That is why educational reforms have become the most in India to correct the shortcomings and failures.

Education is not merely the being one literate, i.e., how to write and read. Education is more than mere literacy. Education involves reason, the correct approach to life, helps one to know that is right and wrong and be moral. Education helps in broadening one's outlook. It removes superstitions and develops critical faculty in individuals. Education helps in increasing awareness of surroundings, social and political issues. It makes people knowledgeable and develops wisdom. Literacy is the beginning or first step towards making one educated.

But unfortunately, in the last 50 years half of the population of India has been literate. Compulsory primary education was to be provided after 10 years of enforcement of Constitution. But it has not been done so. The literacy rate according to 1991 Census is only 52%. The condition of women is still worse, their literacy rate is only 36%. It is said that if you educate a man you educate an individual but if you educate a woman you educate a family. Such is the importance of education of women.

Other lacunae on the education front is that we have been producing only clerks in the system as done by British policy of education. Schooling pattern is not uniform all over India. Various educational policies have been implemented but net result is not upto the mark. Basic education is faulty. Upto Class V the medium of education is not in its mother tongue. The burden of books is greater at lower classes in schools. The effort is not towards learning and asking questions but they are being told just to cram and reproduce in the examination without understanding. The standard of teaching has also gone down. Teachers do not teach properly. The condition of government schools is even worse. But public schools charge high fees by which poor children are deprived of good school education. As a result they lag behind in their lives.

Teaching at schools have not become functional. They do not provide jobs as if the education becomes useless later in life, it is felt. So efforts towards vocationalisation should be made so that it becomes functional and useful. Government's negligence towards education has added the worries. The government's expenditure has been less than 6% of its GDP. Initially it was only 2%. It was recommended by educational policy makers and Commissions that at least it should be 6%. Government has to come out with new education policy to ensure quality education to children and grownups.

At higher levels, campuses have become centres for politics and violence. There is often closure of colleges. Even when they are open, very few classes are held which disappoint students. Centres of learning practice agitations and hartals. Some science institutes like IITs and IIMS are only doing better but practice of brain drain is quite rampant which is a wastage of national resources. This practice needs to be checked. Lack of moral education leads to many problems on the campus and outside the campus. Moral education should be imparted right from the earlier years and at homes. That is why we see degeneration of social values in people. If correct values are instilled at right time, there will not be serious problems of corruption, communalism, casteism, etc. Eve teasing and sexual harassment can also be controlled with right kind of education. Actually education helps in broadening outlook which can change social attitudes and stereotypes which exist in our society. Many of social evils can be nipped in the bud itself like dowry, violence, etc.

So educational reforms become urgently necessary. Government should come out with new education policy by making the education system a uniform system. Medium of instruction should be in the mother tongue upto Class V. Moral education and coeducation should be the norm. Teachers should be retrained and retaught to teach. Only good teachers should be selected not only on the basis of knowledge but also on the basis of attitude and interest in teaching. Higher education should be streamlined. Only seriously interested in higher studies should be allowed to go for it. Degrees should be delinked from jobs. Examination system should be made tight at all levels. They should be made educated in such a way that they should be capable to start their own livings not dependent on few government jobs. Efforts should be made towards encouraging and not cramming. Girls should be encouraged to go for education which can help in reducing the population also.

Reforms in education is long awaited. New education policy of 1985 could not come out with concrete results. The situation has not improved much as it was before 1985. The conditions of government schools need more attention. The infrastructure for education needs urgent attention. The government should spend more than 6% of its GDP on education. Autonomy has to be given to

various research institutes but at the same time accountability has to be demanded in a more forceful manner. The whole system needs overhauling in order to give a better education. Only right kind of education at this juncture can help in solving myriads of problem facing this country.

Essay No. 02

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After Independence, there have been set up several education commissions and committees to bring reforms in the Indian education system. But, as we know, there has been only a limited success in this field. Of course, now there exist many schools which may be considered much better than most of the schools during the pre-Independence period, but much more needs to be done.

At present, we have on the government level a system of 10+2+3. There is high school teaching upto class ten. Then there is 2 year schooling known as 10+2 after that and thereafter there is graduation which covers three years. Thereafter, M.Phil. requires one year and Ph.D. at least two years.

There is actually no end to higher education and then there are so many courses, diplomas and degrees in various disciplines which require different periods of study.

The most crucial question, however, is the general, basic and such education which may be elementary in nature though whatever names, nomenclatures, compartments and components it might be having. This general education is essential for broadening and evolving the mind.

In the public school system of education, education starts with playway methods, nursery, KG-I, KG-11, Class I to VIII, etc.

The most important point in all types of education is that it should be affordable to the common man. There should be no discrimination on any basis. It should be need-based. It should mould the child's personality to the constructive and positive side. It should eliminate cramming and copying. The child should be at the center-stage in this system. His faculties of expression and growth should be developed.