



SANSAD MEIN SHIKSHA

(Education in Parliament)

2014-2015

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Students Islamic Organisation of India

**Sansad Mein Shiksha – Education in Parliament
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Prologue

Human resource development is the main priority for every Government. Education is the main tool for the development of human resource. If the education field improves in a better way its reflection could be seen in human resource development.

Students Islamic Organisation of India (SIO) by analyzing the debates pertaining to the ups and downs of educational sphere by the Parliamentarians that take place in the Parliament is persevering to place it before the Government and the general public, as we had done in Karnataka for past 3 years. The main objective of these reports is to explore the quality of the questions raised and how successful they are in trying to discuss the core of the problem.

Government of India allocated a grant of Rs. 69,074.76 Crores to Education Sector out of which there was an increase in the Higher education sector from Rs. 23,700 Cr in 2014-15 to Rs. 26,855.26 crore in 2015-16 & decrease in the school education sector from Rs. 46,850.00 to Rs. 42,219.50.

The RTE act is the most substantive declaration of the Government's commitment towards the education. But the Act has several shortcomings. There are several critical gaps which have damaged the spirit of the act. Even after the enactment of Right to Education Act, after the lapse of 5 years Government is merely emphasizing about the 25% free seats. In last three years Government has sent around 20, 00000 students to private schools by paying their school fee. This is Government sponsored privatization.

Implementation of other aspects of the Act and awareness among the public is essential. On the training of teachers, in the text and teaching patterns whether the values enshrined in the constitution is included, whether the learning ability and skills among children is really being boosted, whether learning is developed in child friendly and child oriented modes, growth of physical and mental abilities among children should have been discussed when the Right to Education is being debated.

According to the ministry the gross enrolment ratio of children in the 6-14 year age group was 97% in 2013-14 up from 86.8% in 2005-06. The literacy rate has been gone up from 64.84% in 2001 to 72.98% in 2011. But the learning outcome of children is very poor. The Government of India through the NCERT has been conducting National Achievement Surveys (NAS) for class 3, 5, 7/8 to check the learning achievement of students at regular intervals. Survey results of class 3rd have revealed that in language average achievement of students was about 64%. In Mathematics the average achievement was 66%. In language about 65% children were able to listen to the passage with

understanding & respond correctly to the question thereon, 86% children were able to look at pictures & match the correct name related to the picture, nearly 59% children were able to answer the question correctly after reading a short story themselves. In Mathematics, 69% children could do 2 digit additions, 65% children were able to subtract 3 digit numbers, 63% were able to do multiplication, 57% students could do division, 59% students were able to find out place value, 66% were able to correctly answer questions on geometrical shapes, 66% could do measurement of time correctly, 77% were able to answer questions on data handling, 78% could do correctly on money related questions & 69% could do correctly on patterns. Class 5th survey – In language average achievement of students was about 50%, Mathematics – 54%, in EVS – 54%. Class 8th – In language average achievement of students was about 46%, Mathematics – 32%, Science – 36% & Social Science it was 38%. The achievement of rural students in Mathematics, Science & social science was slightly higher than the urban students'. The literacy rates are lower than the national average in eleven states namely Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, J&K, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan & Uttar Pradesh as per census 2011. Female literacy rate in states such as undivided Andhra Pradesh (59.15%), Bihar (51.50%), J&K (56.43%), MP (59.24%), Jharkhand (55.42%), Rajasthan (52.12%) & UP (57.18%) is below 60%. Government must take some serious steps to eradicate illiteracy.

RTE mandates a non detention policy and ensures automatic promotion from class 1- 8th standard. This provision does not help achieve learning & ensures only student's progress from one class to another without ensuring minimum learning outcomes. In AP, the no-detention policy has been in force since early 70's. This has adversely impacted the learning outcomes in the Government schools².

In the Article 30 of the constitution of India the main objective of special rights to the minority communities; to establish educational institutions and to run their administration so as to bring them to the main stream. However, today those having the badge of Minority Institutions don't fulfill that objective. But their objective has turned commercialization of education. Under these circumstances Government by keeping these institutions out of RTE has further given free license to carry on the commercialization of education. Our representatives in Parliament must discuss on this. Let there be a survey of the quality & fees being charged by the Minority Institutions and how many students of Minority community are provided education in those institutions.

According to HRD Ministry the average dropout rate for the primary level was 4.67%, upper primary level was 3.13% & for the secondary level was 14.54% during 2012-13. The highest was in

Odisha 49.86% in Secondary level & in Karnataka it was 39.92%, Bihar it was 30.14%. The centrally sponsored scheme of RMSA was launched in 2009 with the objective to enhance access to secondary education by providing a secondary school within a reasonable distance 5 Kilo meters of every habitation & for improving quality of Education imparted at secondary level & removal of gender, socio-economic and disability barriers. The fund sharing pattern between centre & State is 75:25. Except for North – Eastern States for which it is 90:10. Till now 10513 new schools are approved³. But still dropout rate is high in secondary level in many states. Parliamentarians must debate on this.

As per Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE) 2013-14 at elementary level only 58.05% schools have play grounds, at Upper primary level only 77.06% schools have playgrounds. In Rajasthan only 50.05% primary schools have playgrounds & 69.32% High Schools have playgrounds. But Rajasthan Government is concerned about implementation of Yoga in Schools. 40% schools do not have basic facilities like Physical Education Trainers, Playgrounds & playing equipments which are essential for the development of full personality of a child. This is the state of affairs of our schools. A serious discussion is to be held on this state of affairs.

There is increasing partiality in educational sphere. Privatization has galloped. During the past 15 years the number of private institutions has multiplied. Near about 60 to 65 % higher secondary schools are under private control. Similarly 65-70 % pre-university colleges are being run by private managements. The enrolment in private schools is increasing every year in 2006 the percentage of 6-14 age group children enrolment in private schools in rural areas was around 18.7% & it was 30.8% in 2014. According to the ASER report in Haryana 53.6%, Uttarpradesh - 52.8% & in Punjab 49.3% STD 1-8 students goes to private schools.

Educational sphere promotes the social inequality. To eradicate the social inequality Common Schools must be established. In Gram Panchayat and ward levels model schools are to be established. There ought to be a policy implementation of all the children compulsorily pursuing education in those surroundings. Linking education & the rampant discriminatory practices and inequities, there is no denying of the fact that the problem lies at the core foundations & vision of the schooling system itself. Ranging from bottom to top are the municipality schools for the poor children: the central schools for central govt. employees, Private schools for rich & elite section of the society. A genuine attempt must be made at common & equal distribution otherwise the goal of equity in access & opportunity will remain unrealized (Sukhadeo Thorat).

Mother tongue should be the medium of instruction all through the school, but certainly in the primary school. Many studies have

shown that children who study through the mother tongue medium do not suffer any disadvantage, linguistic or scholastic, when they compete with their English medium counterparts. The mother tongue as a medium of instruction can eliminate the linguistic & cultural gaps caused by the difference between school language & home language. A smooth transition from home language to school language in terms of discourse can be ensured if the mother tongue is the medium of instruction. The NCERT in its 1986 report recommends that the medium of early education should be the mother tongue of the learners because it enables people to participate in national reconstruction, it frees knowledge from the pressures of limited elites, it builds interactive & interdependent societies, it provides greater opportunity for the advice & consent of a great number of groups & thus is a better defence of democracy, it leads to the decentralization of information & ensures free as opposed to controlled media & it gives greater access to education & personal development through greater number of people⁴.

The gross enrolment ratio (GER) in higher education was 19.4% in 2010 -11 has reached a level of 20.4% as per provisional report of All India Survey on Education. In absolute terms, enrolment in Higher Education has increased from 2.74 crore in 2010-11 to 2.86 crore in 2011-12. But 12th Five Year Plan aims to raise the country's GER to 25.2% by 2017-18 & to reach the target of 30 by 2020-21. Minister said Government will reach this target through Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) which aims to achieve equity, access and excellence in higher education through assistance to state universities. The fall in ratio in higher education is mainly apart from the economic reasons, the non-availability of colleges also remains the principal reason says Knowledge Commission in its report; there is a necessity of establishing government colleges having degree and post-graduate courses at Taluk & District levels closer to the students. In Graduation and post-graduate syllabi there is a necessity of inclusion of self employment promotions. So, the Government should assist the state Governments in establishing Higher Education Centers in each and every District Headquarters.

During the Year 2013-14 25 new medical colleges were established (12 in Pvt. Sector & 13 in Govt. Sector), thus enhancing the medical colleges in India from 336 to 381 (205 in Pvt. Sector & 176 in Govt. Sector). A total 6200 number of MBBS seats were increased in this year. The admission capacity in the year 2013-14 was about 50,078 students at undergraduate level & about 24,239 seats at postgraduate level in India⁵.

Deficiency of Doctors, on the increase of Medical seats and the debates on establishing new medical colleges continues. But this problem will be solved only when the State Govt. run public universities open Medical branches. Government must close Medical council of

India & bring all the Medical Colleges under State Govt. run public universities. Regulation of fees in private colleges and there ought to be simplification of procedures in securing medical & engineering seats. Our representatives must discuss on the implementation of legislation ensuring no more commercialization in these sectors.

Govt. allocated Rs. 100 crore to Madrasas through the Scheme for Providing Quality Education in Madrasas (SPQEM) to encourage Madrasas & Maktabas to introduce science, mathematics, social science, Hindi & English in their curriculum. The scheme aims at providing Madrasa students education comparable with National Standards, for which affiliation with the NIOS is integral to the scheme. The scheme is a voluntary one; Madrasas have the choice to opt for the scheme. But the Madrasa students are not able to continue their education in Universities except some of the central universities. Because there is no provision to admit Madrasa background students in State Govt. run Public Universities & no Arabic or Islamic Studies departments. Arabic Chair has to be opened in all the State Govt. run Public Universities. All the Universities should commence undergraduate & post graduate courses in Arabic. As Arabic attains prominence even in terms of the geo- political situation of Middle Eastern & African Countries including all Muslim Countries, The Government must make provision to include Arabic in language selection at intermediate & University level education. Madrasa students must be made eligible to join these courses.

In this report analysis on school education and higher education is undertaken by Dr. Niranjana Radhaya V. P., Prof. G Haragopal, Mr. Ramesh Patnaik and Ms. Sushvi. Thanks to them. With a sincere hope that this analytical report named "Sansad Mein Shiksha" will be a manual for discourse for our Honoured Representatives in the Parliament.

Mr. Thouseef Madikeri

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¹ The question number 229 answered on 23/07/2014 in Lok Sabha.

² Journal of Educational Planning & Administration Volume XXVIII, No. 4, October 2014 pp. 407-414

³ Question No. 1935 answered on 23.07.2014.

⁴ Position paper of NFG on Teaching of Indian Languages (NCERT).

⁵ www.mciindia.org

THE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON SCHOOL EDUCATION IN INDIAN PARLIAMENT LACK VISION

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The Parliament, known as Sansad in India assumes greater significance in view of the basic principles and assumptions associated with parliamentary democracy. A parliamentary form of government acknowledges the fact that in this system, Parliament derives its power directly from the consent of the people expressed through periodic elections and it exists to implement the *aspirations* of the people. The parliamentary system also ensures the best possible participatory democratic system and active interaction between the people and their representatives. In this system, the executive is not only emanates from Parliament but is also accountable to Parliament for all its acts of omission and commission. This accountability of the Executive to Parliament is based on the principle that since Parliament represents the *aspirations* of the people, it should be able to oversee and keep the Executive under control and constant surveillance.¹

In essence, the Parliament is basically a body elected by the people to fulfill their aspirations in accordance with the Constitution and also the promises and commitment made during periodic elections. In order to make the citizens aware of the deliberations in Parliament, the Lok Sabha Secretariat has taken several steps to record the proceedings.

A careful reading of the unstarred questions raised and the answers obtained from the honourable Minister of Ministry of the Human Resource Development are utterly disappointing. Most of the questions raised by the honourable Parliamentarians looks like an exercise of asking the questions to get the answer which is already in the public domain. For instance, an unstarred question raised by Shri. Jayadevan.C.M. on the question 'whether the government proposes to devise a new education policy?', the Minister of Ministry of Human Resource Development has answered the question by pasting a paragraph that is available on the Ministry website². It indicates that

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1. As quoted by N.K.Sapra, Joint Secretary, Lok Sabha Secretariat India in his paper presented at the Association of Parliamentary Librarians of Asia and the Pacific (APALAP) Eighth biennial conference held in New Delhi, India on, 18-22 January 2005. Emphasis added.

2. http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/upload_document/Themes_questions_SE.pdf

either the honourable member is unaware of such an important process or the minister is not bothered to send a set of documents to all members to keep them informed about the process of policy formulation which is predominantly the domain of elected representatives. Does it mean the government is not transparent enough in the process or just for the namesake they have hosted it on the website?

Most of the answers obtained through the unstarred questions are already available in the documents published by the Ministry and other related departments of the ministry. For instance, the unstarred question³ raised by Adv,Chintaman Navasha Wanga and Shri. P.C.Mohan regarding the post of teachers lying vacant in various Kendriya Vidyalayas in the country was answered on 26th November 2014 with an annexure that runs to 21 pages.is it a good practice to burden the exchequer to get the answer for questions which is already available in he published documents. Many a times the questions are repetitive and the answers are stereotypical.

he questions raised questions lack vision on the core question of *"What kind of national education system need to be built"* to address the fundamental problems faced by the current education system in terms of access, retention, quality on the one hand and the contents of education, parameters of teacher education, equality in opportunities and above all social justice in order to achieve the core Constitutional values embodied in the preamble of the Indian Constitution to create an egalitarian society in the long run.

Surprisingly, no questions neither aagainst on-going commercialization, privatisation, commodification and Public Private Partnership (PPP) of education in the country nor communalisation and saffranisation of education by appointing people from extremely right ideological wing represented by RSS and Sangh Parivarto key educational positions. Let alone raising the questions related to onslaught of World Bank and World Trade Organisation in the area of education.

In conclusion the questions raised and the answers obtained in Lok Sabha reveal **that** there is no theoretical basis for the formulation of questions based on the Constitutional Valuesor the effective implementation of the previous policies of 1968, 1986 and 1992 (Revised Policy). As all of us know, the earlier policies were formulated on the basis of the Constitutional Values affirming to build a National System of Education based on the Common School System⁴ rooted in

3. See unstarred question no 1429 raised by Patil Shri Chandrakanth Raghunath answered on 4.3.2015 in Lok Sabha

4. See Para 4(b), 3.2 and 3.3 respectively in the 1968, 1986 and 1992(Revised) National Policy on Education

5. <http://www.teindia.nic.in/mhrd/50yrsedu/g/T/HB/0THB0601.htm>(The NPERC refers to Common Schools in Chapters 3 and 4 of its Report. In Chapter 3 it states that except for a small number of schools in the Urban Sector, the majority of schools which are in the rural sector are already common schools and neighbourhood schools. Unless the Government and local body schools are upgraded through infrastructural and academic inputs the common school system cannot become a reality and the present division of the country between those who have access to the few privileged schools and those who gain admission in the poor quality schools will persist. Educational policies, including the NPE, 1986 take a stance in favour of the majority but there is little evidence that action has been taken in keeping with these intentions. The NPERC states that all schools in the country should become community schools. Through involvement with the concerns of the community around, the schools would become neighbourhood schools as a first step towards fully entering into a Common School System)

the neighbourhood school principle based on the recommendations of Education Commission and further referred in the Review Committee to review National Policy on Education (NEPRC).⁵

In the light of all these developments, it is need of the hour to bring all primary stakeholders; students, parents, teachers, social movements together to build a massive movement not less than second freedom struggle to build a national system of education rooted in the principle of neighborhood common school system fully funded by the state to realize the larger goals of social justice and equality as enshrined in the Constitution.

A Note on Questions in Lok Sabha on School Education

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National Committee of Students Islamic Organisation of India (SIO) has collected records of Questions and Answers in Lok Sabha from July 2014 to March 2015. I should congratulate the organizers of SIO for having categorized the documents on sub topic wise. The whole of the documents are related to literacy and school education and the sub topics are literacy, enrolment of children, infrastructure in schools, teacher vacancies, posting and training, measures for disadvantaged sections of the society and mid-day – meal and such other student support measures.

The committee must have expected that there should be serious discussions in the top most legislative body of the nation in the interest of educational rights of the people and for the progressive development of the society on the basis of the values enshrined in the preamble of the Constitution of the land, **democracy** – equality, equitable opportunity and affirmative action of the state, **secularism** – right to faith, right to ideology, right to disseminate beliefs and ideologies, recognition and democratization of all religious and cultural identities and recognition and development of all languages and dialects and **socialism** – equal rights over means of production to really become equal. The National Committee of SIO must also have believed that Parliament of India is very conscious of the sovereignty of the country. It also must have believed that Parliament must be discussing seriously on the growth of self-centrism in the students due to commercialization of education which reduced most dynamic, progressive and selfless sections of the society to one of self-seeking lot.

Dear friends, I should tell you the truth that the experience I gathered wandering through the discussions in the Lok Sabha through the documents you have supplied to me is utterly disappointing. Of course, the documents that you procured include lot of statistics which can be used for advocacy both at centre and in states. The questions are repetitive and the answers are one stereotypical. The answers essentially included select paragraphs from the introductory chapters of different Legislative Acts and Centrally Sponsored Schemes and some statistics. No question was raised on the policies of the government. In the provided papers, I could not find any question against commercialization, globalization for trade, centralization of decision

making, bureaucratization of campus life and safranisation of history and reduction of education to one of skill and professional training. No question was raised against siphoning of public funds to private operators through the schemes of Public Private Partnership (PPP). No question was raised against the possible commitment for market access to World Trade Organisation (WTO) in higher education sector. Again Parliament spent a minute on the growth of self-seeking mind in the youth. However, let me place a brief summary of the questions and answers on some sub-topics.

Literacy: In response to a question raised by a member of Lok Sabha, HRD Minister, Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani, in her course of answer stated that 'in order to improve female literacy rate in the country, Government is implementing Saakshar Bharat Programme since October 2009 in rural areas of all districts that had adult female literacy rate of 50% and below as per the census of 2001, including left-wing extremism affected districts, irrespective of their literacy rates, including 60 million women and with special thrust on disadvantaged groups. Saakshar Bharat Programme addresses age group of 15 years and above. The target has been set to raise the literacy levels to 80% and to reduce the gender gap to 10 percentile points, besides bringing regional disparities, by the end of XII Five Year Plan (2012-17). Government in India take targets, spend money in the name of the projects and produce records of completion of the targets but we never find any real change on the ground. Many persons who are listed as literates by government agencies not only cannot read newspapers but also cannot write their own name properly. As per the census 2011, the rate of literacy is 72.99 with Male 80.89 and Female 64.64. But, if we make a survey in the field, situation will be found far away from these figures. SIO may go for a sample survey in few villages and *bastis* and compare their results with that of the statistics provided in the census tables by government.

Enrolment at Elementary Stage: In response to a question (Q. No 2076) raised by Shri Om Birla, a Member of Lok Sabha on 23rd July 2015, the HRD Minister stated that 'the Right of Children for Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 mandates free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of 6-14 years in the neighbourhood school till the completion of the elementary education of satisfactory and equitable quality. Andaman Nicobar Island and Lakshadweep are the two UTs which have reported universal enrolment and there are 20 states where the number of out of school children is less than one percent of the total child population'. Further, the annexed table shows that only 0.85% of children in the relevant age group 6 - 14 years at all-India level are 'out of school' during academic year 2014-15. But, these statistics are highly inconsistent. The same can be established from the dropout rates provided in another table which is annexed to the answer provided to another question raised by another

member of the Lok Sabha (Shri Ponguleti Sinivasa Reddy) on the same day by the same minister. The minister states that 'according to the District Information System for Education (DISE), 2012-2013 (Provisional), the annual average dropout rate for the primary level was 4.67%, for upper primary level was 3.13% and for the secondary level was 14.54% during 2012 – 13, in the country'. When the dropout is so high, how come it that the out of school children make such a small percentage as 0.85% for the same age group. Two years do not make such a great difference in a country like ours in the area of education.

Measures to check dropout: The HRD Minister in course of responding to Sri Ponguleti Sinivasa Reddy (MP) referred above gave an elaborate answer regarding the steps taken to check dropout of students from schools. "The Central Government is implementing several schemes in collaboration with state governments to ensure educational development in the school education sector. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is being implemented in accordance with the norms and standards of the Right To Education Act (RTE Act, 2009) to enhance enrolment and retention of children, with context specific interventions for SC/ST students and a multi pronged approach for reducing drop-out rates. This includes, *inter-alia*, strengthening of school infrastructure and facilities, residential hostel buildings for children in habitations not covered by regular schools, provisioning for additional teachers, regular training of teachers, provision for free text books and uniforms for the children. The Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme (KGBVS) providing for setting up of Residential Upper Primary Schools for Girls from SC, ST, OBC and Minority Communities. The Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS) is also being implemented with a view to enhance enrolment and retention of children in schools. Further, the Rashtriya Madhyamika Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) which has been launched for universal access to secondary education aims at removing gender and socio-economic disparities in access to education. The National Scheme of Incentive to Girls for Secondary Education (NSIGSE) launched in May 2008 seeks to reduce the drop outs and to promote the enrolment of girl child belonging mainly to SC/ST Communities in secondary schools. Enrolment drives in areas having concentration of SC/ST groups, special coaching/remedial teaching and sensitization programmes are sum of the other measures undertaken under RMSA to reduce drop-out rate." Sorry for quoting the minister at length. This is quoted in full because this is the stock answer, in essence, which the minister advanced for each and every question raised in the Parliament. Schemes are many but all are deficient and poorly implemented and so are not fetching any plausible results. After implementation of SSA for fifteen years, RMSA for six years and RTE Act for five years, the condition and infrastructure and facilities remain very poor. The poor condition of facilities is well displayed in an answer of the minister to another question (Q. No 329/25th Feb, 2015): '2,03,318

schools do not have toilets, 5,57,882 schools do not have electricity, 54,553 schools do not have water and 5,21,893 schools do not have playgrounds in government sector.' Aren't the figures speaking a bitter truth?

Policy Perspective: If government really want to check the drop-out of schools and develop quality in education it should implement the following norms: a) the buildings and infrastructure and facilities of the schools should be developed to a standard level, b) there shall develop a situation where girls and children with special needs are provided with all facilities according to their needs, c) students' support measures like nutritious mid day meal, uniforms and range of other measures are to be upgraded, d) qualified teachers in sufficient numbers shall be appointed on regular basis, e) the course content and pedagogical practices are to be developed to properly engage the students of all backgrounds and f) mother tongue of the student shall be made medium of education minimum at school level to start with along with effective teaching of English as subject both in government and private schools. Providing equitable and quality education and democratizing education is possible only when commercialization of education is abolished and Common School System is established throughout the country. To start with, at the minimum government schools shall have all the provisions enumerated above and the policy of deploying mother tongue as medium of education should be universally implemented. However, government does not have any policy in this direction and unfortunately no MP raised questions on these policy matters. No number of schemes can replace a proper public policy.

Teacher Vacancies and Quality Education: The great scientist Einstein said that the purpose of school was not to produce skilled young persons and rather it should produce persons with inquisitiveness. The school should develop thirst for knowledge. Really, a quality school education is that which develops knowledge, creativity and analytical approach for building a just society that can live in peace and prosper. These finer qualities cannot be developed without teaching of proper subjects like social sciences, natural sciences, literature and fine arts. In fact, all subjects are to be taught to the children with a view to develop thinking faculty in them and also for developing them into good social beings. But our schools are developing aversion for books and critical study. The concept of quality in education is reduced to one of obtaining marks and ranks and which in turn are obtained by mugging up lessons. No question in the Parliament was raised on the very purpose of the education and pedagogical methods. In any case, quality education cannot be provided without a class teacher for each class at primary level and subject teacher for each subject at secondary level. Again it requires additional and trained teachers for sports and fine arts. RTE Act, 2009 which is under

implementation from 1st April 2010, only provides two teachers in primary schools with enrolment less than 60. Under this Act, 80% primary schools in India get only two teachers for five classes. Again, the Act provides only one teacher to teach mother tongue of the child, Hindi and English at upper Primary level! Even the two teachers as provided by the Act for five classes in primary schools are not posted regularly. Lakhs of posts are left vacant for years together. Let us see the facts. In course of responding to a question (Q. No. 1536/4th March, 2015) in the Lok Sabha, the minister for HRD provided the statistics of vacancies of posts. They are 4,97,033 posts! Again, government agreed responding to another question (Q. No. 350/25th Feb, 2015) that 4.5 Lakh under-qualified teachers are working in 19 states/UTs. How can government schools achieve any quality in education on the basis of an Act with such poor provisions and that too not implemented!

Disadvantaged and Marginalised: In our country, Dalits and OBC are discriminated, needs of girl child and disabled are neglected, religious and linguistic minorities are marginalized and poor in all social sections are put to many difficulties. A school should create a condition that no one should feel any difficulty due to any of the factors listed above. It should be a place of equality and provide equitable opportunity. But, many of our schools are not built and maintained so. Even teachers are not sensitive to different disadvantages. Smt. Smriti Irani, Minister for HRD again has stock answer for question raised by MPs in different occasions regarding disadvantaged sections of the children. However, the statistics speak otherwise. While the total Children With Special Needs (CWSN) enrolled in government schools is 23,48,646, the total Special Teachers appointed for them are only 19,778. On calculation we find it to be around 120:1 (not 20:1 it is 120:1). This shows how much attention is being given to the children with special needs. The total budgetary expenditure by central government is Rs 16,81,158 Crores for the financial year 2014-15. Expenditure by central government for building ramps in government schools in the same year is only 58.32 Crores! It is difficult to express the value in percentile points. It comes to be 0.0035% or otherwise 35 Rupees in Ten Lakh Rupees. Government has got so great a concern for the children with special needs! So, many schools till date do not have ramps. One should note here that needs of children with disability other than the loco-motor disability are totally ignored by the RTE Act. For example, there is no provision in it for blind, deaf and dumb and mentally disabled children. Tragically, this does not seem to be a matter of concern for the Parliament at all! Toilets, kits, Braille books, hearing aids and such things are but rare. If you want to know interest of the Central Government in the minority education, read the fantastic answer given by the HRD Minister to Q. No 262 dated 25th March 2015. "The Ministry of HRD implements two schemes under which funds have been earmarked for the educational empowerment of the minorities.... Scheme for Providing Quality Education in Madarsas

(SPQEM) and Scheme for Infrastructural Development of private aided and unaided Minority Institutions (IDMI) (Elementary, Secondary, Senior Secondary Schools) ... An amount of Rs 375.00 Crores has been earmarked for SPQEM and IDMI during the year 2014 – 15. Out of this, an amount of Rs 11.01 Crores has been released till date to 118 minority Institutions” So, the fact is that the government makes meagre allotments and even that meagre allotments are not released.

Good Question: One can get relief from a single question raised on 16th July, 2014 by Sri Hansraj Gangaram Ahir. The question is very interesting and appropriate. “Whether the government is considering providing quality and equitable education to the children of labourers who are migrating to other places in the wake of increasing industrialization in the county?” The single reason for which the children of central government employees are provided with opportunity in Kendriya Vidyalayas is that the employees transfer from one place to another place and children shall not suffer for this. Let us agree to the logic. Then Mr. Hansraj is right when he asked why this very provision shall not be extended to the children of migrant labourers. After all they are also the young citizens of India. But the minister did not feel embarrassed to reply that 'Kendriya Vidyalayas are opened Not for migrant labourers.'

Conclusion: The discussions in Lok Sabha in the given period do not lead us to anywhere. The questions raised are essentially trivial and stock answers were provided to each of the question casually. There is no effective debate on educational policies that are being pursued by the government. No question could be found on the saffronization of education even. The Parliament is not bothered about the move of the central government to give commitment for market access in higher education sector to WTO which, it is widely apprehended, risks the very sovereignty of the nation in the long run. It is really disturbing that the highest legislative body is not discussing the policy related questions in the field of education. It may be the need of the hour that the students' organisations and teachers' organisations debate more widely on educational policies and ultimately influence the Parliament to take the issues seriously. Otherwise the ruling and opposition parties can compromise on the critical interests of the people like education among themselves and with corporate forces leading to the distortion of the very development paradigm.

Higher Education in Parliament: Issues & Challenges

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Knowledge is the key resource for global competitiveness. The processes of liberalization, privatization and globalization (LPG), along with technological revolution have further strengthened the significance of a knowledge-based society. In order to realize India's aspirations to become Developed Nation by 2020 by achieving 25.2% GER set up 12th Five Year Plan by 2017-18, the country cannot ignore the significance and contribution of technical education in a situation of both an opportunity – demographic dividend of its youth, especially in the 18-25 age group and the challenge of channelizing them through the present confusing to chaotic situation of higher education in India.

Regarding technical education, AICTE is the sole authority for approval of technical education. As per clause 2 (g) of the AICTE Act, 1987 the 'technical education' means programmes of education, research and training in engineering, technology, architecture, town planning, management, pharmacy, and applied arts and crafts, and such other programmes or areas as the Central Government may, in consultation with the Council, by notification in the official Gazette, declare. Though, technical education could not see much development in pre-independence phase but in post independence era the role of technical education was very much realized and was felt to assess the requirements for different grades of scientific and technical manpower, taking a comprehensive view over a period of the subsequent ten years of the needs of government (Civil and Defence), of teaching and research, and of industry, agriculture, transport, medicine, and other fields dependent on the use of scientific and technical manpower. It got further boost in post liberalization phase and witnessed overall transformation keeping in view the increasing aspiration of youths and nations development as well. Expanding the system itself was a requirement, therefore, government realized to expand the various variants of institution of technical education. The most significant aspect of technical education in post-liberalization phase is that the very recognition of private players in providing technical education. The reason was government in itself was unable to finance for large number of institutions and secondly due to specific skills which was demanded by emerging new industries. Therefore, as requirements of development was changing, as nature of skills and as a result establishment of institutions under Public-Private Partnership became

a very acceptable norm in the domain of higher education particularly in technical education.

Keeping in view the above mentioned requirement of technical education as far as Polytechnics education is concerned its number state wise, or its relation with employment scenario particularly in backward areas of the country government under the scheme of 'Sub-Mission of Polytechnics' provides financial assistance to 500 government and Government aided polytechnics subject to maximum of Rs. 2.00 Crores per polytechnic to upgrade infrastructure facilities like labs, equipments, etc. The number of polytechnics identified for upgradation under the scheme in respect of State of Bihar is 12 and 13 in case of State of Jharkhand.

As far as Indian Institute of Information Technology is concerned (IIIT), the Government has approved a Scheme based on Public Private-Partnership (PPP) model for setting up 20 New Indian Institute of Information Technology with an outlay of Rs. 2808.71 Crores on 7.12.2010. A total of sixteen proposals from fifteen States including Gujarat, Karnataka and Kerala have been approved by the Ministry. Gujarat has already started its Academic Session in 2013-14 with 60 students each in Computer Science and Electronics & Communication. However the Government of Karnataka has been requested to forward the MoU and MoA. In case of Kerala, MoU and MoA have been signed and IIIT Kottayam Kerala Society has been registered. It is significant to note that out of 20 IIITs in order to reach full capacity in nine years from 2011-12 to 2019-20, the Central Government has approved establishment of 16 IIITs in PPP mode. It clearly shows the increased participation of private players in the domain of educational set up. Such high number of participation given to private players raises critical issues of accessibility and affordability for large number of students as professional education by nature itself is costly.

In a particular question regarding number of Engineering and Technical Colleges, it is critical to know that along with Diploma PG and UG level that out of 34 States and UTs the total number of Diploma institutions was 3799 in 2014-15 in comparison to 2571 in the financial year of 2011-12. At the same time regarding PG the total number of institutions increased from 1400 in 2011-12 to 2334 in the financial year of 2014-15. At the UG level the total number of institutions from 3286 in the financial year of 2011-12 went up to 3389 in 2014-15. If we see State wise State like Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh has shown remarkable demand of establishment of such institutions.

There is total 6097 number of Engineering College was functioning in the country with intake of 2688323 in the financial year of 2012-13 whereas this number went up to 6220 with intake of 2952466 and 6375 with intake of 3182690 in the financial year of 2013-14 and 2014-15. As far as vacant seats are concerned at the UG level trend is

showing declining importance of some of programme like Architecture which had 5.25% seats vacant in the 2011-12 went up to 9.50 and 12.00% in 2012-13 and 13-14 financial year. In the programmes of Engineering & Technology, Hotel Management and Catering Technology and Pharmacy also show the same trend. It was more visible at PG level where 26% posts remained vacant in the 2011-12 and 31% in 13-14. In MCA it was 24% in 2011-12 and 31% in 2013-14. In Diploma the trend is almost same.

There are total 201, 126 and 152 Engineering universities/institutions were opened during 2012-13, 2013-2014 and in 2014-15 financial year in overall 23 States and UTs. Out of total of all the above mentioned in three financial year, Maharashtra constitutes the highest number (68) of institutes followed by Tamil Nadu(66), Andhra Pradesh (43), Karnataka (25) and Kerala (25). Some of Northern States like Uttar Pradesh (54) established the highest number of engineering universities/institutes in these financial years. Meanwhile, State like Himachal Pradesh got only 4 institutes in 2013-14. Jammu & Kashmir with only one institute in 2014-15. In North-Eastern part Assam got only 1 institute in the above three financial years and Tripura got 2 institutes in 2014-15.

Recently based on PPP model the government has approved a scheme for setting up 20 New IITs in the respective ratio of 50:35:15 by the Central government, State government and industry (57.5:35:7.5 in the case of North-Eastern region). Concerned State government will provide 50-100 acres of land, free of cost and encumbrances.

Upto 10th Five Year Plan, there were 20 NITs were functioning in the country. The 11th Plan had provisions for setting up 10 new NITs so as to have in all States and major UTs. Accordingly 8 new NITs have been established in different parts of country. As far as Andaman & Nicobar is concerned as such there is no proposal even in 12th FYP to set up an NIT there but Puducherry is catering to the needs of A&N Island by way of sharing 50% of home state quota seats. In addition, the students of A&N Islands have been allocated 47 supernumerary seats in NIT—Durgapur.

There are 6 new IIMs are being set up in different parts of India like Bihar, Odisha, Maharashtra, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, and in Andhra Pradesh. As teacher student ratio is prescribed for IIMs is 1:10. However in the total 7 new IIMs of Shillong, Rohtak, Ranchi, Raipur, Trichy, Udaipur, Kashipur the total strength of faculty is 146. 119 are in position viz a viz 27 are in shortage.

As a part of expansion plan as per the Approval Process Handbook 2013-14 a company established under section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956 may also establish technical institutions. In this regard any Private or Public Limited Company/Industry having turnover

of at least Rs. 100 crore per year for previous 3 years may apply to AICTE for approval of new technical institutions in Engineering and Technology, Pharmacy, Architecture & Town Planning and Hotel Management and Catering Technology.

With such a massive expansion the finance issue becomes more critical especially in the context that many existing institutions are struggling with inadequate infrastructure and qualified teacher.

Regarding expenditure in opening up of the Engineering institutes, the Minister said that as expenditure is centrally not available because these institutes are established by Society/ Trust/ Companies/ State Government etc. who maintain their individual accounts of their institutions. However, Ministry has set up eight Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIITs) under PPP mode and also released 19.5875 crores to 6 IIITs during the financial year 201-13 to 2014-15.

In a situation when Land and finance issue is a matter of debate at national level it is significant to see that how the issue of land and finance is also affecting institutions of higher education in country. As far as finance of NITs and IITs is concerned Rs. 5600.00 crore and Rs. 12500.00 crore respectively under the twelfth plan has been allocated as support to NITs and IITs, including new ones. The requirements in the 12th Plan as per the revised cost estimation of 2012-13, for setting up of 10 new NITs and 8 new IITs are now Rs. 8981.69 crores and Rs. 15665.00 crores respectively. Out of the Eleventh Plan allocations of Rs. 2600.00 crores and Rs. 6080 crores, Rs. 132.00 crores and Rs. 1196.00 crores were sanctioned to the new NITs and IITs, respectively. The 12th Plan allocations, accordingly, made as per requirements based on 2007-08 cost estimates and on actual expenditure by the new institutes in the 11th Plan, and hence were on lower side.

An analysis of cost and time over run indicates that delay in allocation of land by the respective State Governments and increase in cost of constructions as a result of time over-run was the main reason for delays and consequential escalated costs.

Professional or technical education by nature is quite costly. It becomes more critical in a liberalization phase when government is more oriented towards getting support of private players to fulfil the demands of technical education which makes this education much more costly therefore the very humane face of state becomes important for those who cannot afford it.

Therefore 5% seats are sanctioned as supernumerary seats under the AICTE 'Tuition Fee Waiver Scheme' mandatorily applicable to all approved technical institutions of AICTE offering Bachelor Programmes, Diploma and Post-Diploma programmes of three/four year duration. Students getting admitted in the AICTE approved institutions can avail this facility if the income of their parents is less than

Rs. 4.5 lakh from all sources.

In this context as far as admission in IITs is concerned that is based on category wise All India Rank in JEE (Advanced), subject to the condition that the candidate is within top 20 percentile of successful candidates in his/her respective class XII Board Examination and respective category or should have secured 75% (for Gen, OBC-NCL) or 70% (for SC, ST, PwD) of aggregate marks in the class XII Board Examination. The modified criterion would be applicable from JEE (Advanced), 2015.

In order to maintain accessibility and keeping in demand for higher education government has announced establishment of IITs in 5 States of Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Goa, Jammu and Chhattisgarh however States of Bihar, Odisha, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh & Punjab will get IIMs and State of Andhra Pradesh for one new IIIT.

As society is becoming more open and giving more space of education for women, they prefer to opt technical or professional course as it is another way to maximize the benefits of education to get easily employed. Therefore, in a significant move towards women education especially technical education, AICTE has approved one women's engineering college during academic year 2014-15 in the name of 'New Horizon Institute of Technology and Management', Thane, Maharashtra, which is affiliated to the University of Mumbai. The AICTE has approved Electronics and Electrical Engineering, Mechatronics Engineering, Mechanical, Civil and Computer Engineering courses at the UG level. Each discipline has 60 seats. It is set up by New Horizon Education Society not by the Central Government as per information given by University of Mumbai.

With increasing number of institutions and with the entry of private players in educational domain and has transformed educational landscape especially technical or professional education in many ways. There is no doubt that establishment of institutions of higher education has got now an inbuilt system of profit maximization and getting far away from its very purpose of being dynamic and providing quality and qualified manpower. It is being reported that one the one hand there has been demand and supply mismatch and at the same time there has been lack of skill even among those who are coming out of institutions and entering into for job market. Therefore, increase in unemployment. In this context in order to control the unemployment, though the Ministry itself has not conducted any study in this regard, however AICTE has introduced the Employment Enhancement Training Program (EETP) with the vision of enhancing employment amongst fresh engineering graduates, imparting business and soft skills for sustained performances, career success and to meet growing industry demand and also scheme namely National Employment Enhancement Mission

(NEEM) to offer on the job practical training or non-technical stream or have discontinued studies of degree or diploma course to increase their employability. There are two models for operationalizing the EETP i.e. one in Discrete Mode for those who had passed out of the system and other is continuous mode for those who are still studying. Under the EETP, training is provided by faculty members drawn from diverse fields and trained by industry associations, complemented by expert faculty from industry. The course content is finalised by centralised committee in consultation with industry/ CII/ ASSOCHAM/ NASSCOM etc. At the end of the programme certificate is issued to the qualifying candidates by respective institute/industry/ bodies/association. AICTE is in collaboration with BSNL to conduct a programme to facilitate technical institutions to respond to the need of providing state of art telecom equipment based operational skills to engineering graduates to enhance their qualification, competence, and employability by enhanced skill up-gradation. AICTE has signed an MoU with BSNL to use the training facility and faculty of BSNL for the benefit of students in AICTE approved institutions under EETP.

Such development shows that even after so many years of independence there is still disengagement at all levels (policy, research, practice) in the context of higher education.

In order to ensure quality, AICTE as the regulator of technical education has notified the regulations and Approval Process Handbook containing norms and standards for granting approval to technical institutions. Besides regulating them AICTE also help these institutions financially for enhancement of quality of education through its different schemes such as Research Promotion Scheme (RPS), Faculty Development Programme (FDP), Innovation Promotion Scheme (IPS), Quality Improvement Programme (QIP) etc

In a significant move Ministry has launched a programme called Unnat Bharat Abhiyan on 11th November 2014 with an aim to connect institutions of higher education, including IITs, NITs and IISERs etc. with local communities to address the development challenges through appropriate technologies. This programme has basically two broad objectives. Building institutional capacity in institutions of higher education in research & training relevant to the needs of rural India and provide rural India with professional resource support from institutions of higher education especially those which have acquired academic excellence in the field of Science, Engineering & Technology and Management.

It has been felt and Irizarry's (1983) also argued that India's tryst with industrialization is the absence of a reciprocal, supportive relationship among government, industry, and scientific-technological infrastructure besides continuously dependent technologically on imported machinery and equipments and as a result which hampers the

development of R&D. Further, this dependence has been not only physical but also in intellectual inputs such as blueprints, standards, technological specifications and the knowhow for mechanical installations and operations.

Therefore, in the 12th Plan government has launched a National Initiative for Design Innovation under which 20 new Design Innovation Centres (DIC), one Open Design Schools (ODS) and a National Design Innovation Network (NDIN) would be set up in existing publically funded institutes of national repute like IITs, NITs, Central and State universities to facilitate optimal utilization of the existing resources including faculty and land. All these will cover from Science & Technology to Liberal Arts. ODSs are expected to ensure maximum reach of design education and practice in educational institutions and free sharing of its courseware through the Internet. NDIN is expected to be a network of design schools that work closely with other leading institutions of industry and academia, NGOs and government to further the reach and access of design education, to promote design innovation in all sectors, and to develop wide-ranging collaborative projects between institutions. During the financial year of 2013-14, DIC were established in five institutes---IIT Mumbai, IIT Delhi, IIT Guwahati, IISC Bangalore, and University of Delhi.

In keeping the recommendations of Anandkrishnan Committees and to improve the overall quality of higher professional educational institutions besides their degree giving authority, such institutions are declared as Institutions of National Importance through Acts of Parliament. In a move towards declaring as Institutions of National Importance in recent times Government of India has upgraded Cochin University of Science and Technology (IIST) an 'Institutions of National Importance'. In this direction the erstwhile Bengal Engineering and Science University (BESU), Shibpur has been upgraded as Indian Institute of Engineering Science and Technology (IIST), in March, 2014 under the National Institutes of Technology, Science Education and Research Act, 2007. The Institute of Technology- Banaras Hindu University has also been converted into Indian Institute of Technology, Varanasi an Institute of National Importance with the enactment of Technology (Amendment) Act, 2012.

In another significant move under the item of 'Development of Certification & Testing Modules for Virtual Technologies (VTUs) & creation of VTU, multi media research and international programmes which envisaged under National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (NMEICT) is being proposed. Though its pilot study is being done by IIT Kanpur which is still incomplete.

There has been issue of corruption in technical professional institutions In this regard total 712 institutions were inspected by AICTE

in financial year of 2014-15 in comparison to 2011-12 in which total 1007 institutions were inspected. 1425 institutions were inspected in 2012-13 however only 888 institutions were inspected in 2013-14. It is also significant to know that States like Tamil Nadu (45) followed by Orissa (35) and West Bengal (33) violated the norms of AICTE in the 2014-15 financial year. Some of States and UTs like New Delhi, Chandigarh, Punjab, Haryana, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Manipur did not report of any normative violation in the same financial year. In the case of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Manipur, Goa it is significant to note that their previous record has also been quite remarkable. In case of violation AICTE has taken punitive action against the institutes who violated the norms of AICTE as per the provisions under Chapter-4 of Approval Process Handbook of AICTE

There have been cases of cheating, irregularities and malpractices during the engineering entrance examination conducted by Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). In All India Engineering Entrance Examination (AIEEE) in 2012 total 28 cases were reported. However, in JEE (Main) 2013 the number was 70 and in JEE (Main) 2014 the number was 53 cases. In response of such irregularities and cheating the result of all these candidates was cancelled

As far as taking action regarding unregulated technical institutions is concerned, AICTE which is a Statutory Autonomous Authority that exercises its powers under AICTE Act, 1987 issues notices to unapproved institutions available on record of the AICTE to close down the programs or to approach the AICTE for seeking approval. The copy of notices is also endorsed to the concerned state authorities for information. Besides such action in order to ensure awareness among general public it also issues public notices in newspapers cautioning the students not to take admission in such unapproved institutions. And time to time it also updates the list of such fake institutions on AICTE website.

To stop such menace AICTE grants approval to run Engineering and Management Institutes strictly as per the AICTE's Approval Process Handbook issued from time to time under the All India Council for Technical Education (Grant of Approvals for the Technical Institutions) Regulations, 2012.

To further stop such menace Hon'ble SC of India in the case of Bharthidashan University & anr. Vs. AICTE has held that although universities do not require prior approval of AICTE to commence a new department or course and programmes in technical education, they have obligation or duty to conform to the standards and norms laid down by the AICTE for the purpose of ensuring coordinated and integrated development of technical education and maintenance of standards. The AICTE may cause an inspection of the university, which has to be as per the provisions under relevant rules/ regulations of the AICTE. Further,

all institutions running technical education programmes in affiliation with any university requires prior approval of AICTE.

Having said this, it is significant to mention that India is on a crucial juncture of development paradigm and moving towards 'knowledge economy' where market is dominant and require specific skills, therefore, providing quality education and skills becomes the paramount responsibility on educational institutions. As it is claimed that some of southern states has been pioneer for providing technical manpower to nation and at the same time has been successful for satisfying the aspirations of youths. However, over a period of time these States, though, provided a good start but today also witnessing an unusual development in terms of transformation of education and particularly higher education more into a business entity and severely getting affected with the quality of technical education. Situation has got deteriorated to such an extent that an engineer is getting employed in an industry not because he or she is an engineer but he or she is having some operational knowledge of computer. Therefore, once what was viewed as a 'social demand' approach for liberal arts and science to the provision of educational facilities, is being redefined in the context of technical education due to lack of man-power planning activity and disengagement at policy, research and praxis level. Therefore, it was also felt in the domain of technical education that it is an essential safety valve as well as a means of upward social movement in a highly structured society like India, where a degree already commanded social prestige.

Therefore, it becomes very significant on the part of state to take the responsibility of providing quality technical education in a resource crunch country like India where still large section of people are out of domain of higher education. Having said this, the very interface between education particularly technical education, economic development and employments besides its relation with industry needs to be unfold in a much more meaningful manner.

Higher education in general and university education in particular has been ever present in the educational landscape of India. However, the very core component in terms of curriculum, pedagogy and relation between teacher and taught has undergone changes over a period of time. However, in post-independence the very role of higher education was conceptualised in terms of nation-making project with strong emphasis on character formation as visualised in Radhakrishnan Commission. The role of State was seen very significant as education in general and higher education in particular was responsible for transforming India on modernization and developmental path. As India has been stratified society structurally and as result a large section of people remained outside the domain of education but peoples participation in freedom struggle was making them aware about their

socio-political and economic rights. In post-independence India State realized the very constructive role of education in overall development of its citizens and nation as well. Therefore state initiated various welfare policies and in 70s socialistic movement also played crucial role for bringing socio-political upsurge in the country. This awareness resulted in demand for education particularly higher education. Besides Government, people were also realising that it is education and particularly higher education which can empower them in true sense. Therefore, demand for education in general and higher education in particular grew and as a result pressure on existing universities for greater enrolment and thereafter expansion of institution to accommodate this demand. Since independence to 1990s many Commissions and Committees were constituted either to define the emerging role of higher education in order to modernise India or to examine its role in terms of economic development. However, 1990s saw a paradigm shift in education realm and particularly higher education. As India also became a partner of celebration of LPG (Liberalization-Globalization and Privatization) Policy with the larger world. It was a defining moment in the history of not only Indian economy but its impact can be better visualised in its education sector not only in terms of finance therefore the changing role of State from this critical domain but also the very core component of education. The very purpose and role of higher education was seen more instrumental delimiting it with creation of employer. As its commodification role can be understood by Birla-Ambani Report which argues, among other things, for an overall change in the approach to higher education where full cost recovery from students of public higher education institutions and immediate privatisation of entire higher education except those areas of education involving 'discipline that have no market orientation' was proposed. Delinking of higher education with state and giving it in the hand of few large industrial houses where it can become another tool of profit maximization either through packaging of courses or making teaching community just as machines. Therefore, downsizing higher education through starving universities of resources, freezing appointments, and encouraging commercialisation.

At this point of time where India has huge young population and still starving with resources and Indian service sector is major contributor of economy, therefore, the very role of university is being seen in terms creation of employer who can serve this exploitative market disarming them with lack of dissent and democratic values. As it is being argued that Higher education is critical to India's aspirations of emerging as a major player in the global knowledge economy. The global competitiveness of Indian industry and also its employment generation potential is clearly dependent on availability of required skills and trained personnel.

In this context it is seen that government is just not trying to expand the system by introducing number of institutions but also World Class University with major focus on research and innovation but also many schemes to promote skills of university students. Therefore, the supply of qualified manpower can match with industry demand.

As demand for higher education is going, Government in the 11th Five Year Plan (2007-12) envisaged setting up of one Central University each in States which did not have any Central University till then. Accordingly, 16 Central Universities were established by the Central Universities Act, 2009 in different un-served States. However, 12th Five Year Plan focuses more on scaling up of capacity in existing institutions rather than increasing the number of institutions, with exceptions of new institutions needed to address critical regional and social gaps.

Besides this MHRD has decided to open 18 new educational institutions of higher learning in various states. As a part of this programme Indian Institute of Management is being opened in Bihar, Odisha, Maharashtra, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and in Andhra Pradesh. Indian Institute of Science Education and Research in Andhra Pradesh, Indian Institute of Technology in Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Chhattisgarh, and in Goa. Indian Institute of Information Technology in J&K and in Andhra Pradesh. National Institute of Technology in AP. Central University in AP. Tribal University in AP. Jai Prakash Narayan Centre for Excellence in Humanities in Madhya Pradesh.

As a part of this expansion the UGC supports access & expansion by financing development of the Central universities, recognition of new State universities and Colleges, regulation of private and deemed to be universities and establishment of Community Colleges.

Besides, above mentioned ways there has been increasing trend of emergence of Private universities. According to UGC data there are total 37204 Government and Private colleges are functioning in the country during 2012-13. Out of this Andhra Pradesh has 4881 where as Maharashtra has 4862 colleges. Uttar Pradesh has 4787 colleges.

As a part of this expansion there is a need to examine the match between expanding institutions of higher learning and infrastructure and ensuring quality of these institutions.

As far as position of faculty is concerned, as per the UGC, while 37.5% and 28.8% of teaching and non teaching posts were lying vacant as on 31st March, 2014 in 39 Central Universities whereas 17.4% and 23.6% of teaching and non-teaching posts, respectively, were lying vacant in 8 Deemed to be Universities that receive maintenance and full salary grants from it.

In order to mitigate the situation arising out of shortage of teachers the Government is taking measures such as superannuation

for teachers in Central Educational Institutions has been enhanced for sixty five years, teachers are being re-employed on contract basis, mobility of academic staffs have been made more flexible. UGC has launched "Operation Faculty Recharge Programme" for augmenting the research and teaching resources of universities to tackle the faculty shortage in universities system. Universities have been permitted to engage adjunct/guest/contractual faculty to the extent of 10% of the sanctioned strength.

Thus, moving more towards fulfilling the teaching learning environment of universities through contractual mode raises very fundamental questions about ensuring the very quality of university research and education which again Government has adopted very calculative and standardised assessment method in terms of mandatory assessment and accreditation of higher educational institutions. Besides this reforming affiliating system, regulation of private and deemed to be universities which has become norm of a day on the name of sites of higher education , minimum qualification of appointment of teachers where in emerging private and deemed to be universities the emphasis is more on mannerism than subject of knowledge of a person is examined, minimum standards for grant of first degree which is not difficult today to get it because distribution of certificates has also become an work of agent where both certificate gainer and certificate seller are part of this employment collaboration and at the same time on the name of equity entry of Corporate Social Responsibility norm is being applied. In this neo-liberal domain where education and particularly higher education is being seen as a profit maximization the very nature of philanthropy has changed. As Government recognises that a recognised philanthropic organisation in the education sector can either be in the form of a company (Registered under the relevant Societies Registration Act) or a Trust (Registered under the relevant Trust Act). Philanthropic contribution in social sectors, including the education sector, by a company, is governed by the provisions of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) under the Companies Act, 2013. As per this Act, the Board of every company, having net worth of rupees five hundred crore or more during any financial year, shall ensure that the company spends, in every financial year, at least two per cent, of the average net profits of the company during the three immediately preceding financial years, in pursuance of its CSR Policy.

As far as research is concerned which is one of the very pious purpose of university which is based on the premise of expansion of knowledge there is more focus on introduction of information technology. As a part of this the UGC through collaboration National Mission on Education through ICT (NMEICT) has undertaken e-content development of post graduate programme called e-PG Pathshala.

More than 700 courses in various disciplines in engineering and science are available on-line under National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL). E-content for 8 undergraduate subjects has also been generated by the Consortium of Educational Communication (CEC) in collaboration with its Media Centres. Over 100 Virtual Labs in 9 Engineering & Science disciplines, comprising about 770 experiments are currently ready for use and available. 1500 Spoken Tutorials are available on line and more than 200 courses for design have been created. Though there is no proposal yet from Government side for introduction of online courses in IITs, IIMs or in Central universities at UG and PG level. However university students are being encouraged for joining Massive Online Open Course (MOOC). As IIT Madras along with NPTEL partners and NASSCOM have run three Massive Online Open Course (MOOC) of 10 week each in March 2014.

IIT Bombay has also come out with several individual course offerings (subjects) in various modes through forums such as MOOCs and recorded courses through their Centre for Distance Education both at UG and PG level. IIT Bombay is also ready with SAYAM (Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds) platform. Through this, not full courses, but several subjects (papers) for UG and PG syllabus are to be offered as online courses.

UGC through its various programmes like Universities with Potential for Excellence (UPE), Colleges with Potential for Excellence (CPE), Special Assistance Programme(SAP), assistance for Strengthening of Infrastructure for Science and Technology (ASIST), Assistance for Strengthening of Infrastructure for Humanities and Social Sciences etc to improve the access and quality of higher education.

In this globalization and instrumentalization phase international collaboration has become a accepted norm to emphasise on expansion of knowledge through research and innovation. As a part of this collaboration “Obama-Singh” 21st Century Knowledge Initiative (OSI) is very significant which aims at the development and enrichment of Junior Faculty at Indian Institute of Higher Learning. OSI enables Indian Higher Educational Institutions to pursue objectives through exchange visit of faculty, administrators, post graduate Indian students and US graduates students who can demonstrate the ability to work independently.

As far as International collaboration is concerned in this regard as a part of the Indo—U.S. partnership for on-line education, an MoU has been signed between IIT Bombay and edX, USA for Massive Open On-Line Courses (MOOCs) on June 25, 2013 during the India-U.S. Higher Education Dialogue, 2013. IIT Bombay has already offered 3 courses on the edX platform to the global community under the cooperation.

SWAYAM platform will offer course for all Indian learners, including to those who are not enrolled in any college or university. The online course will progressively reach out to a very large number of Indian learners.

Therefore, these initiatives are more oriented towards making sites of higher learning more as a professional school and in the direction of creation of entrepreneurial university reducing the domain of knowledge as rudimentary phenomena.

Under this creation of Entrepreneurial model of university which is already taught in Management courses in colleges the UGC has started a scheme on skill development based higher education as part of college/university/ Diploma/ Advanced Diploma/ under the NSQF. The B.Voc. Programme is focused on universities and colleges providing UG studies which would also incorporate specific job roles and their National Occupation Standards (NOS) along with broad based general education. This would also enable the graduates completing B.Voc in becoming entrepreneurs and creating appropriate knowledge. The UGC has also started a scheme of Community Colleges during the XIIth Five Year Plan, with special emphasis on expansion of skill-based programmes for imparting career oriented education and skills to students.

To give further push to skill based vocations, a scheme of "Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhaya KAUSHAL Kendra" has also been approved by the Commission. These schemes provide financial support to meet operational expenditure including engagement of guest / visiting faculty/ resource persons, hiring services, contractual lab staff etc. in creating skilled manpower. Government has also plan to launch Comprehensive Skill Development Programmes to further harness the demographic dividend.. Thus, the Government is implementing several schemes namely Community Colleges, B.Voc Courses, Career Oriented Courses and Kaushal Kendras to offer more vocational courses throughout the country and equipping students with the necessary skills and knowledge to eliminate the shortage of manpower in science, technology, academic and industry. Besides this the Ministry has also launched Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) and Credit Framework for Skills for vertical and horizontal mobility of the student in skills and general education. MHRD and AICTE have launched credit Framework on 11th November, 2014, which allows vertical and lateral mobility within vocational education system, is an effort to integrate skill and vocational development with maintaining general education. The Credit Framework, using the NSQF and National Occupation Standards (NOS), is an exercise in recognising skills and education as part of an integrated learning system.

Further, to harness the 'demographic dividend' of this country the UGC has also incorporated the skill oriented and value added courses

Scheme entitled 'Introduction of Career Oriented Courses (COCs)". Under this particular scheme UGC is providing financial assistance to Universities/Colleges, eligible to receive grants from the UGC. To make such courses more popular at the level of certificate/ Diploma/Advance Diploma which run concurrently with the conventional Degree like B.A, B.Com/ B.Sc. The above mentioned efforts are in the direction of to bridge the skill gap among college students in the country. These facts clearly indicate how higher education is being more moulded towards making it more vocational.

In order to skill the large number of educated youths and keeping the changing nature of economy and as a result demand for skilled manpower from Industry. For this purpose a separate Ministry namely "Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship" has been set up to meet the above mentioned objectives. At the same time MHRD had linked Skill Development with quality education through the National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF) notified on 27th December, 2013 to enable a person to acquire desired competency levels, transit to the job market and at an opportune time, return for acquiring additional skills to further upgrade their competencies and ensure holistic development.

As India is witnessing "Demographic Dividend" and it is the responsibility of State that people who cannot afford higher education especially premier institutions of learning do not remain outside from this domain. Therefore, accessibility and affordability becomes very important for large section of people in this economically resource staved country and higher education becoming more costly in this market drive neo-liberal economy.

In this regard the government has undertaken several regulatory measures to keep the cost of higher education affordable. The fees in Centrally Funded Technical Institutions are approved by statutory bodies like IIT Council for IITs and NIT Council for NITs. For other institutions, the Board of Governors of individual institution determines the fee or the hike in the fee if any. The fee in government universities and colleges is nominal. Fee for state private universities is regulated by the concerned state government.

While the fees payable by the IIT students are gender-neutral, the SC/ST students are exempted from payment of tuition fees irrespective of their parental income. The students, whose parental income is below Rs. 4.50 lakh per annum are entitled to free hostel seat, basic messing and pocket allowance. Under the Merit-cum-Means Scholarship, students (Other than SC/ST Categories), upto 25% of intake strength, whose annual parental income is less than Rs. 6.00 lakh, are also exempted from payment of tuition fee and are paid a stipend for ten months in the academic year. The IIMs and IISERs are also providing fee concession and assistance to the students coming from weaker sections as an effort to ensure that the students from weaker sections

are not deprived of education because of financial reasons.

In this Digital Age, Digital Literacy is becoming very important. In line with the objective of the 'National Policy on Information Technology 2012' to make one person in every household in the country e-literate, a scheme for IT Mass Literacy (now renamed as National Digital Literacy Mission) has been approved in April 2014. The Scheme aims to train 10 lakh persons at two levels of literacy, one in every eligible household in selected Blocks in each State/ UT of the country. Out of this, 1 lakh candidates are to be trained by Industry, NGOs and others through their own resources/under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and remaining 9 lakh candidates would be supported by Government.

Scheme for 'Digital Saksharta Abhiyan' (DISHA) under 'Digital India'. A Scheme entitles 'Digital Saksharta Abhiyan' to make 42.5 lakh persons digitally literate in selected households throughout the country. Here also it will be done with the support of industry, NGOs etc.

Out of the total target of candidates to be supported by the Government, 50% seats would be reserved for SC/ST and BPL categories for which 100% training cost would be borne by Government. For the remaining 50% seats, 75% of the training cost would be borne by Government. All the candidates trained under the scheme would need to undergo a certification examination by an agency identified by the Government. The Certification fee for all the targeted candidates trained would be reimbursed to the Certification Agency.

The person selected for training would be in the age group of 14-60 years under 'Digital Saksharta Abhiyan' (DISHA).

The objective of both the scheme is to provide digital literacy training at two levels, relevant to the need of the trainee, which enables the beneficiaries to use IT and related applications for their livelihood earning and employability.

UGC has issued the UGC (Establishment and Maintenance of Standards in Private Universities) Regulations, 2003 which provides that the admission procedure and fixation of fees shall be in accordance with the norms /guidelines prescribed by the UGC and other concerned statutory bodies. The UGC has also issued the UGC (Institutions Deemed- to- be Universities) Regulations 2010 which provides that the level of the fees charged for the courses offered in Deemed-to-be universities shall have a reasonable relation to the cost of running the course. The UGC has further issued the UGC (Institutions Deemed-to-be universities) (Amendment) Regulations 2014. According to these amended regulations the Deemed-to-be universities have to mandatorily publish a Prospectus before commencement of admission process indicating the details of the fee structure, the number of seats approved for each course, the age limit prescribed for candidates etc. The regulations prohibit such Universities from publishing any

advertisement inducing students for taking admission claiming to be recognised by appropriate authority where it is not so recognised.

Indian higher education is undergoing sea change and the above mentioned changes clearly shows that sites of university learning or higher education is taking the shape of more instrumentality. It is one sector which is being examined that how to make it more productive or to make 'higher education' more 'practical for job oriented' and or around the theme of how much of 'practical education' is to be introduced into 'vocational' instruction. In post 90s either it is Birla-Ambani Report or the very knowledge Commission which is more concerned with harnessing the epoch which is being defined as 'knowledge economy'.

There is no doubt that India is undergoing transformation in economy, society or polity and this change can be easily realised in this globalization liberalization phase where education particularly higher education has become a tool and site of university to exercise that tool to redundant this site to just learning few technicalities which is needed to this global market.

Government of India is also on this direction to harness these changes with the help of its sites of higher education. However, what we are missing here that the sites of higher learning has to do with some larger and more fundamental question of what constitutes 'higher' about higher education. While reflecting on the higher education situation of India in 1980s Altbach has rightly commented in his work 'Higher Education Reform in India: Experience and Perspective' that Indian university system is afflicted with sclerosis rendering it almost inflexible to reform and innovation. To a large extent the question of inadequacy, inefficiency, and vagueness that characterises the whole course of higher education in the country now. In post 1990s, with the diversification and emergence of private universities and gradual retreat of state from the domain of higher education has deepen these issue which needs to be understood in more deeper manner because this is one area which decides the destiny of nation, which is the source of not only enrichment of mind with higher abstractions but also develops aesthetic sense and makes the society and polity more humane.

Higher Education Debate

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The report on education is a very useful document prepared by Students Islamic Organisation of India based on an analysis of the parliamentary debates on the subject. This idea of looking at a policy from the discussion by the "policy makers" is an innovative initiative. The analysis throws up certain striking trends and also the limitations of the very perspective of parliamentarians.

The discussion on technical education as brought out by the report shows the expansion of technical education, particularly the technical and engineering education. The initiatives to expand the IITS, IIITs, and engineering universities through PPP mode and also encouraging private capital in technical education is very evident from the data on this facet of education. At another level a number of initiatives are seen in skill up gradation through poly technics and on line mode.

In this entire debate what is missing is that at no point a question has been raised as to what exactly the man power requirement is given the direction of development. Do we really need so many engineering graduates? Do we have the infrastructure for quality education? A number of engineering graduates are getting placement not because of their technical qualification but some computer skills. What are the implications of this expansion on other sectors and segments of the society? Does PPP mode cater to the needs of a highly inequitous society? Does it not promote more inequalities between the castes, classes, regions and rural urban areas?

Large unemployment among the engineering graduates is a fall out of a short-sighted policy as it ignored the structural questions. The report points out how education became more expensive and unaffordable to those from low income families. The humane face of the state getting lost, private players who entered the business of education are more motivated by profit making whether investors be allowed to make profits through education is a more fundamental moral question? The consequences are already evident in the fact the regulatory agencies like AICTE have become vulnerable and a number of unhealthy practices entered in the evaluation and approval of the courses and institutions.

Another question pointed out by the report is investment in R and D. As it remained hampered, we continue to import technology, machines and tools rendering the economy dependent on the external support. Given this backdrop the report calls for more interventionist

role of the state and not retreating from its very legitimate function.

In the final report the concerns about the impact and consequences of neo-liberal model have been brought out very well. The paradigm shift led to commodification of education, entry of large industrial houses, privatization of educational institutions, profit maximization and teachers being reduced into machines. Although the government started a number of publicly funded institutions of higher learning, the entry of private universities was stepped up. There is also a shortage of teachers. As far as research is concerned, the focus is more on information technology than production of new knowledge.

There is international collaboration through Indo-US partnership of on-line education. The process of globalization can be noticed in the initiative popularly known as "Obama-Singh" 21st Century knowledge initiative. The domain of higher education has come to be looked upon more as entrepreneurship with rudimentary elements. There is the initiative for choice-based-credit system inspite of large public pressure against this move. The focus also shifted from basic learning to job-oriented education.

The entire report-technical and general of SIO of India is indeed a very meaningful contribution to the ongoing debate on higher education. This has brought out very key concerns largely based on parliamentary debates. The message is clear that education is something more than technical and skill development. It has to be cast in a larger social and philosophical context. Secondly, education cannot be left to the vagaries of the market forces. It has to continue to be primary responsibility of the state. Any attempt to abdicate this, responsibility by the state will have huge social and political costs.



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