

# EDUCATIONAL REFORMS IN SCHOOL EDUCATION AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS ON TEACHER EDUCATION

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**ABSTRACT:** Today, when it is globally acknowledged that lower education should be a right and higher education a privilege, at present we in India seem to be the grip of an overriding ideology which is governing our economy, society and culture. This is the ideology of marketisation, globalization and privatization. In order to meet the challenges of 21st century it becomes essential to bring about education reforms in India. There are various factors that mar the quality of education in India. Hence education should be socialized by bringing parity between education in schools belonging to private and public sectors. The present paper deals with reforms needed in school education and in teacher education institutions.

Education is some thing that makes and also unmakes a nation. A right type of education may inculcate the right spirit of morality among citizens while a wrong type may just do the reverse. Education may also provide social equality to citizens in a particular society. So while all children should receive the same education at school level, only those who do well at the lower level should be able to get higher education. The best way to do it is to socialize education by abolishing all private educational institutions at the lower level so as to ensure social equality among all citizens. The other way is that the government must ensure parity through its own agencies, between education in schools belonging to private and public sectors. The second option is difficult to implement. Hence most advanced countries in the western world including the United States, Japan and rich countries of the South-East Asia have either done away with private schools or have brought them under strict supervision and control so as to ensure of equality of education at the lower level among all children.

In these countries only those who do well at the lower level are encouraged by the state as well as private agencies to pursue their higher studies at the expense of the public and private sectors. Most institutions of higher learning therefore have partnership forged with private industrial houses which sponsor higher education and research that they consider useful for themselves

The policy of giving equal education at the lower level to all citizens in order to give them an equal opportunity to compete for contributing to the society and state was first advocated by the ancient Greek masters such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. They had also advocated that only those who do well at the lower level of education must have the privilege of receiving higher education. Even Gandhiji in his scheme of education suggested that all children must receive similar education in their mother tongue, and that it should be so down to earth that it be funded by the local communities in which the individuals lived. He stressed that higher education be funded by captains of industry who needed the services of those who would receive it. Thus, this conception of lower

education a right and higher education a privilege is not totally alien to Indian thought.

Today if we look around us, we find this principle being applied in almost all the advanced countries in the world. Taking specifically the examples of the United States which represents the occident in advancement; Japan, the most successful country of Asia; and China the only communist country that matters today, we find that the said principle of education is rigourously applied in all the three.

In the United States, there is massive state funding for high school education, which may be a combination of Federal, State and local funds for the implementation of the 'No Child Left Behind' (NCLB) Act. This Act seeks funding for qualitative education, prevention of drop-outs, feedback on achievement of each individual student and preparation and awareness activities for students who come from low income groups. The state intervention through funds is meant to eliminate the gap between the economically advantaged and disadvantaged peers.

Speaking about higher education in the United States Peter D. Echer and Jacqueline E. King in their work, "An Overview-Higher Education in the United States" write that the higher education in the United States is still profoundly influenced by the Jeffersonian beliefs about limited government inference. They also point out that higher education is guided by the market rationale and also by the principle of giving equal opportunity to all to compete for it ([http://www.acenet.edu/bookstore/pdf/nou\\_higher\\_ed\\_overview.pdf](http://www.acenet.edu/bookstore/pdf/nou_higher_ed_overview.pdf)). State grants, and loans to students for higher learning depend on a student's meritorious performance (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FASA>).

In China there is a law on Nine Year Compulsory Education in accordance with which primary education is to be imparted in schools located close to the student's residence. Though tuition is free, the parents pay a small amount for books, transportation, heating and food. Students from poorer families receive stipends, and certain sections of the society are encouraged to institute their own schools. Chinese language and mathematics account for sixty percent of the scheduled class time, and a foreign language (usually English) is introduced in the third grade. In rural areas, the farmers pay an education tax to the country government in support of the wards education. This money is used to pay salary of teachers, construction of new buildings and repair of old ones and for improvement of infrastructure facilities.

As far as higher Education in China is concerned, the state universities in China are much more advanced than the private ones. The students are admitted in institutions thorough the National Higher Education Entrance Examination (Gaokao). There are top ranking institutions that act as role models for lesser ones.

In Japan, education for all school children is free and compulsory through the ninth grades. Even the textbooks are provided free to the students. But the upper secondary school education is not compulsory, and private upper secondary schools account for about 24% of all upper secondary schools. But neither private nor public upper secondary schools impart free education in Japan. If we look at higher education in Japan, 80% students are enrolled in private institutions, but the best universities are state owned. Students aiming at national universities take two tests: one at the national (a shikin) level, and the other at the university (Niji Shiken) level. There is university level test only for private universities.

In India however, the scenario is a dismal one. Here lower education in schools is a lucrative industry in the hands of capitalists who cater to the needs of anglicised English speaking rich class. Here sons and daughters of the rich only attend, and most such schools are affiliated to central boards such as the ISC and CBSE. The children of the poor are taught in vernacular languages in these lesser schools affiliated to provisional boards in various states.

At the higher level most education is state-sponsored and the funding is rarely adequate. The best brains are trained and even facilitated by government bank loans to go abroad to study and settle there. It is very rare to find a first rate Indian intellectual who has been trained abroad returning home. Those who do, flaunt their foreign degrees to dominate the system of education in India which is already reeling under the impact of globalization.

A new trend is the coming of foreign university franchise (s) to India which will push the indigenous Indian universities further down. There will soon be three classes of high educated Indians-one who have gone abroad to earn their degrees; two, those who earned their degrees from foreign universities in India; and three, those who obtained their degrees from Indian universities. In this scenario the rich in India would be the major beneficences while the middle classes and the poor would be relegated to the background.

## What India Must do:

1. Equalize lower education.
2. Ensure that at least half the seats in private education institutions be reserved only for those who deserve it.
3. Review its policy of caste-based reservations that may not be needed if equal education is given to everyone at the lower level, and deserving candidates are sponsored for higher education as is done in the advanced countries.
4. Have an equitable policy regarding the language in which education is to be imparted.

## Implications on Teacher Education:

One of the persistent problems in India has been to prepare teachers who can provide quality education. The gap between what the teacher is trained to do and what the teacher is in fact called upon to do has grown great. School education should be directly linked to the training of teachers. In order, to have excellence in teacher education a sound programme of professional education of teachers is essential, hence the concept of competency should be introduced. Maintenance of quality in Education Research, developing potentialities of

information communication technology, and curriculum changes in the teacher education programme will help in bringing excellence in teacher education institutes.

The Focus, should be on Pedagogical content knowledge

The content knowledge should also include focus on the subject which the pupil teacher will be required to teach in school. Other curriculum changes, should be that the practical aspect of teacher education program should be improved. Besides the class room teaching other experiences such as involvement, of the practice teacher in organizing co-curricular activities should be recast. Orientation programmes should be included for would be teachers. These programs should enable teachers, to experiment with new ideas and establish integration of theory and practice in education. We therefore need competency based training.

Due to lack of resources and interest on the part of government, in India, private sector has stepped in to run teacher education institutions, on a large scale. Some of these education colleges despite lack of government aid are doing exceedingly well at the academic level, but the governmental regulations, needs to be very vigilant in this case, in order to ensure that very competent teachers are recruited and are paid standard grades. The governmental machinery needs also to be vigilant about the performance of both the teachers and students in order to ensure that all pedagogical institutes whether government owned or privately run, impart healthy and sound education with the help of latest multimedia technology as well as very well equipped libraries.

The Education Commission (1964-66) has rightly stated that “for the quality improvement of education, a sound programme of professional education of teachers is essential”.

The quality of school education can be improved. Variety of factors like poor curriculum, deficient pedagogy, negligent teachers and parents, gross under funding of school education in India need to be improved. The discrimination of schools should be mitigated by the government. In order to ensure quality in teacher education institutions merit and not money should be the criterion of admission. The teachers should be appointed for full time and not just ad hoc and guest lectures. These institutions should be affiliated to established universities inviting university regulations and not claim, the status of deemed universities whose number has grown up by leaps and bounds.

**CONCLUSION:** Thus, India needs reforms in school education in conformity with the dictum that lower education should be the right of every individual and higher education based on merit be a privilege. This is what nearly all advanced countries are practicing today. And unless India does it this it will not be able to join the comity of advanced nations in the age of globalization.

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