

MA ECON, SEM-II,
CC-6 (ECON OF GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT),
MODULE - 4
STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING EDUCATION

By

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Education helps in understanding, transmitting what you think and creating base for development. Lack of Education is the root cause of many social evils. Our Human resource is largely uneducated. Education touches our area selectively. Historically the rich have got better opportunity for education. There is lopsided distribution of education in the society. The poor are in the most disadvantageous position. Human resource development starts with Education as the foundation. After having basic education one can play significant role in equipping the citizen to deliver maximum goods for the self and for the society. The vision of a strong country can be fulfilled by building upon the contributions of each citizen through education. This clearly indicates the role of education development in country's development encompassing our faster economic growth.

Challenges for Education Development: Education development are the main foundation of human resources. Having a effective learning programme is a major challenge for any Government. The challenge is divided into four categories

- Mandatory Secondary Education i.e. provide Right to Education to all children so that we do not have illiterate adult in future. This is tough. Due to social issues and poverty the enrolment is far lesser than 100 %.
- Adult Literacy Program : The grown up illiterate needs to be educated so that they have self respect, dignity and can understand what is good for them. Many State Governments started Adult Literacy program with a varied success. Making 100 % adult literate is a big challenge.
- Upscale Higher and Technical education : There is mushroom growth of technical institutions in the country. The quality of the technical education varies a lot. Secondly,

many students , even though they do not have interest in Technical Education are forced to undertake the path due to social issue and pressures. As a result we are having shortage of well qualified technical resources on one hand and many people having technical certificate without proper knowledge. This is detrimental in faster Economic development.

The Government is also challenged with drawing an inclusive program to cover all strata of the society, gender and economic disparities. Education Infrastructure needs to be built to provide benefits for all and make all a part of Economic development. Both state and Central Government have drawn many schemes to support the need of the society. No doubt their success is far from the desired.

Initiatives by Government: From time to time Government has come up with many schemes. The scheme has certainly been useful but at the same time a little more focus on outcomes and a better execution could have been more useful. It is welcome that the Modi government has taken over yet another of the previous useful schemes and invested it with high visibility and political commitment. Skill India is all about developing new skills among the country's youth and making India a huge human resource pool diverse enough for the entire world to source from. A point that S Ramadorai made at the launch event is worth emphasis. India's advantage will not lie in cheap labour, but in skilled, productive labour.

In our so-called 'informal' sector, where 90 per cent of the work force toil, caste is a major consideration. It will denote who will get the job of a school teacher and who will be consigned to grind as construction labour, farm hand or brick kiln worker. Religious discrimination is rampant, too. For Skill India's success, India will need a cultural revolution, to erase conservative disdain for manual labour and invest it with dignity instead. The short point is that skilling India is a little more complex than setting up sectoral skill councils.

Elementary Education: The National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986, has prescribed decentralized planning and Management of elementary education. This was to be achieved through direct involvement of the community in form of village Education Committees. The Plan of Action 1992 envisaged micro planning family wise child wise. The aim was to ensure that each child regularly attends the school. Elementary Education refers to class I to VIII, I to V comprising of Primary Education and VI to VII Upper primary.

The universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) was launched in 2002-03. The scheme had five parameters namely Universal access, Universal Enrolment, Universal Retention, Universal Achievement & Quality. A Primary school was planned at maximum one km distance from habitat and the Upper primary on an average every two Primary School.

In August 2009, Government of India came up with RTE Act for free and compulsory Education to every child in six to fourteen years age group. The act lays down the details like teacher student ratio, school working days, teacher working days. The scheme of implementation is under finalization. There is a separate scheme for provision of nutritional support to children in primary classes i.e. class I to V. Under this scheme Government provides

mid day meal to each student. These schemes have been launched with good intentions. Implementation and execution have to be perfected for a better service delivery.

Secondary Education: Secondary Education is defined between classes IX to XII. The schools are in shortage particularly in economically and socially backward areas. Besides, there is mushroom growth of private schools. The quality of Education varies greatly amongst these schools. Government is challenged to provide coverage by quality schools to economically and socially backward areas. The Government has laid down a program to strengthen 44,000 secondary schools and open 11,000 new schools. For taking care of Gender discrepancies Girls hostels are being set up with 100 seats in about 3500 economically backward areas.

Higher and Technical education: The higher Education Infrastructure of India has 480 university level institutions and over 20,000 colleges, both publically and privately funded. They cater to 12.5 million students. India is a young country with 70% population below 35 years. Once again there is wide variation in quality of higher education. To bring inclusive impact Government has planned IIT and IIM at expanded levels. The plans are good but the quality needs to be ensured while executing the scheme. Research is another area where push is required. Proper schemes and integration of research with industry and society needs may give better dividends.

Vocational Education and Skill Development: Higher Education for interested and Vocational Education for all should be the tag line of the Government. This will ensure inclusive and proper development. Besides, opportunities to all Vocational Education need great focus. In this connection, State wise priority needs to be fixed, Vocational requirement deserves to be identified and subsequently, Vocational Education should be imparted accordingly. For instance in the state where massive infrastructure is under development, vocational training in areas related to construction may be very useful. Government of India has constituted National skill Development Council (NSDC) and set up guidelines for speedy skill development. Participation of private players in skill development will go a long way to bring prosperity in our country.

Role of Government: India is the largest democracy in the world. It has 65% population below the age of 35. It is characterized by foreign rule for a long time and varied cultures, languages, demographics across the nation. The Governance is divided in central Government and State Government. For first 30 years the Governance was unified i.e. both Centre and state was ruled by same party making policies implementation a little easier. Afterwards there was emergence of local forces and regional parties with their aspirations. Today, India has to balance between the centre and state aspirations. During the last many years the Centre had a coalition Government making policies implementation more difficult. First time after many decades, the people of India have voted for a single party under the

dynamic and charismatic leadership of Shri Narendra Modi. Although the party has majority at centre, there are still active regional forces. The Government is trying to evolve consensus policies. Only time will say how effective the Government is in direction of achieving the goal.

The disparity in income, social background necessitates the intervention by Government to speed up the growth and reduce the Gap between the poor and the rich in the society. From time to time Government has brought various schemes for the purpose. Unfortunately the Government interventions have been driven by electoral considerations and caste based politics in many cases. If we compare various states in the country some of them have progressed better than the other. The primary reason has been Good Government, a better policy measure and involvement of the masses in the welfare schemes. Consequently, we have got some better progressed states and the rest poorly progressed states.

It is said that if you give someone a fish you solve his one time food problem instead if you teach him how to fish, you solve his lifelong problem of hunger. In this way you really empower him. Empowerment helps in many ways including awareness about one's right. In social context it will help in deciding where the government scheme is going? Is he getting what is meant for him? Is he paying fair price? And so on.. This will also have pressure in reducing corruption. Government brought two famous legislation to empower people in the realm of education development. But the impact is less felt primarily due to lower education development. These are:

Right to Education:

The right of Children to free and compulsory Education (RTE) Act 2009, is a landmark initiative that aims to universalise education for children between 6 & 14 years of age. The act aims to improve school infrastructure and availability of teaching staff. It may be noted that a lot of school in rural areas is run by 1 or 2 teachers. Execution of the same is being debated with respective states and will be implemented. RTE is heavily input focussed and pays less attention to quality of Education.

Right to Information:

The social groups have been raising issues of corruption. Under the pressure of social group Government of Maharashtra brought Right to Information first. A very similar legislation has been brought by Central Government in 2005 famously called as RTI act 2005. This act has helped a lot in terms of seeking details from a Government office. This has been very effective in terms of exposing lethargy in the system and also corruption. Many scandals got exposed using the information obtained from RTI act. Unfortunately this act is not effective in all states. Although there are mechanisms but in some states the agencies do not provide information. Secondly, there is a marked difference between RTI activities in urban areas vs rural areas. Urban areas have got better access to rule. Although this act significantly empowers the people, rural people have not been able to use this leverage due to lack of awareness and less Education. In years to come this can be used as a significant tool for reducing corruption and bringing accountabilities amongst the Government agencies.

