Chapter - I

Education System in India - An Overview
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EDUCATION SYSTEM IN INDIA – AN OVERVIEW

Education is vital to the human resources development and empowerment in the stages of growth of a nation. In any education system, higher education encompassing Management, Engineering, Medicines etc., plays a major role in imparting knowledge, values, and developing skills and, in the process, increase the growth and productivity of the nation. While the Government is committed to providing primary education and certain facilities/subsidies for higher education, given the higher cost involved in the establishment of higher education institutes, the entry of private sector to run educational institutions, is also there.

Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, said that education not only moulds the new generation, but reflects a society’s fundamental assumptions about itself and the individuals which compose it. The famous philosopher Einstein while discussing the need for education has projected the following fundamentals:

a) To educate the individual as a free individual; to understand and use critical thinking skills.

b) To educate the individual as a part of society – virtually all our knowledge, our clothes, our food is produced by others in our society, thus, we owe Society and have responsibility to contribute back to Society.

c) Through education, knowledge must continually be renewed by ceaseless effort, if it is not to be lost. It resembles a statute of marble which stands in the desert and is continually threatened with burial by the shifting sand. The hands of service must ever be at work, in order that the marble continue to lastingly shine in the sun.

1.1 Education in India:

Education in India is provided by the public sector as well as the private sector, with control and funding coming from three levels: central, state, and local. Takshasila was the earliest recorded centre of higher learning in India from at least 5th century
BCE. The Nalanda University was the oldest university-system of education in the world in the modern sense of university. Western education became ingrained into Indian society with the establishment of the British Raj. Education in India falls under the control of both the Union Government and the State Governments, with some responsibilities lying with the Union and the states having autonomy for others. The various articles of the Indian Constitution provide for education as a fundamental right. Most of the universities in India are controlled by the Union or the State Governments.

India's education system is divided into different levels such as pre-primary level, primary level, elementary education, secondary education, undergraduate level and postgraduate level. The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) is the apex body for curriculum related matters for school education in India. The NCERT provides support and technical assistance to a number of schools in India and oversees many aspects of enforcement of education policies. In India, the various curriculum bodies governing school education system are:

- The State Government boards, in which the majority of Indian children are enrolled.

- The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) which conducts two examinations, namely, the All India Secondary School Examination, AISSE (Class/Grade 10) and the All India Senior School Certificate Examination.

- The Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE), conducts three examinations, namely, the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE - Class/ Grade 10); The Indian School Certificate (ISC - Class/ Grade 12) and the Certificate in Vocational Education.

- The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) conducts two examinations, namely, Secondary Examination and Senior Secondary Examination and also some courses in Vocational Education.

- International schools affiliated to the International Baccalaureate Programme and/or the Cambridge International Examinations.
• Islamic Madrasah schools, whose boards are controlled by local state
governments, or autonomous, or affiliated with Darul Uloom Deoband.

• Autonomous schools like Woodstock School, The Sri Aurobindo
International Centre of Education Puducherry, Auroville, Patha Bhavan
and Ananda Marga Gurukula.

In addition, NUEPA (National University of Educational Planning and
Administration) and NCTE (National Council for Teacher Education) are responsible for
the management of the education system and teacher accreditation.  

The Central and most State boards uniformly follow the "10+2+3" pattern of
education. In this pattern 2 years in colleges and then 3 years of college education for
bachelor's degree. The 10 years is further divided into 5 years of primary education and 3
years of upper primary, followed by 2 years of high school. This pattern originated from
the recommendation of the Education Commission of 1964–66.  

1.2 Primary education system in India

The Indian government laid emphasis on primary education up to the age of
fourteen years, referred to as elementary education in India. The Indian government has
also banned child labour in order to ensure that the children do not enter unsafe working
conditions. However, both free education and the ban on child labour are difficult to
enforce due to economic disparity and social conditions. 80 percent of all recognized
schools at the elementary stage are government run or supported, making it the largest
provider of education in the country. However, due to a shortage of resources and some
other problems, the system suffered from massive gaps including high pupil to teacher
ratios, shortage of infrastructure and poor levels of teacher training. As on March 2012
there were 5,816,673 elementary school teachers and 2,127,000 secondary school teachers
in India.  Education has made free for children for 6 to 14 years of age or up to class VIII
under the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009.

There have been several efforts to enhance quality of education in India. The
District Education Revitalization Programme (DERP) was launched in 1994 with an aim
to universalize primary education in India by reforming and vitalizing the existing primary
education system. 85 percent of the DERP was funded by the central government and the
remaining 15 percent was funded by the states. The DERP, which had opened 160000 new schools including 84000 alternative education schools delivering alternative education to approximately 3.5 million children, was also supported by UNICEF and other international programmes. This primary education scheme has also shown a high Gross Enrollment Ratio of 93–95 percent for the last three years in some states. Significant improvement in staffing and enrollment of girls has also been made as a part of this scheme. The current scheme for universalization of Education for All is the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan which is one of the largest education initiatives in the world. Enrollment has been enhanced, but the levels of quality remain low.

1.2.1 Private education

In India, due to the British influence, a public school implies a non-governmental, historically elite educational institution, often modeled on British public schools which are in certain cases governmental. There are privately owned and managed schools, many of whom have the appellation "Public" attached to them, e.g. the Delhi Public Schools, or Frank Anthony Public Schools. Most middle-class families send their children to such schools, which might be in their own city or distant boarding school such as Rajkumar College, Rajkot, the oldest public school in India. The medium of education is English, but Hindi and/or the state's official language is also taught as a compulsory subject. Pre-school education is mostly limited to organized neighbourhood nursery schools with some organized chains.

According to current estimates, 80 percent of all schools are government schools making the government the major provider of education. However, because of poor quality of public education, 27 percent of Indian children are privately educated. With more than 50 percent children enrolling in private schools in urban areas, the balance has already tilted towards private schooling in cities; even in rural areas, nearly 20 percent of the children in 2004-05 were enrolled in private schools. Private schools often provide superior results at a multiple of the unit cost of government schools. But they fail to provide education to the poorest families.

According to the DISE survey, the percentage of untrained teachers (parateachers) is 54.91 percent in private, compared to 44.88 percent in government schools and only 2.32 percent teachers in unaided schools receive inservice training compared to 43.44
percent for government schools. The competition in the school market is intense, yet most schools make profit. However, the number of private schools in India is still low - the share of private institutions is 7 percent (with upper primary being 21 percent and secondary 32 percent). Even the poorest often go to private schools despite the fact that government schools are free. A study found that 65 percent of schoolchildren in Hyderabad's slums attend private schools.

1.2.2 Home schooling

Homeschooling is legal in India, though it is the less explored option. The Indian Government's stance on the issue is that parents are free to teach their children at home, if they wish to and have the means. Despite the RTE Act of 2009, if someone decides not to send his/her children to school, the government would not interfere.

1.2.3 Secondary education

The National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986, has provided for environment awareness, science and technology education, and introduction of traditional elements such as Yoga into the Indian secondary school system. Secondary education covers children 14–18 which covers 88.5 million children as on 31.3.2011. A significant feature of India's secondary school system is the emphasis on inclusion of the disadvantaged sections of the society. Professionals from established institutes are often called to support in vocational training. Another feature of India's secondary school system is its emphasis on profession based vocational training to help students attain skills for finding a vocation of his/her choosing. A significant new feature has been the extension of SSA to secondary education in the form of the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan.

A special Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) programme was started in 1974 with a focus on primary education, but which was converted into Inclusive Education at Secondary Stage. Another notable special programme, the Kendriya Vidyalaya project, was started for the employees of the central government of India, who are distributed throughout the country. The government started the Kendriya Vidyalaya project in 1965 to provide uniform education in institutions following the same syllabus at the same pace regardless of the location to which the employee's family has been transferred.
1.3 Higher education

Our university system is, in many parts, in a state of disrepair...In almost half the districts in the country, higher education enrollments are abysmally low, almost two-third of our universities and 90 per cent of our colleges are rated as below average on quality parameters... I am concerned that in many states university appointments, including that of vice-chancellors, have been politicised and have become subject to caste and communal considerations, there are complaints of favouritism and corruption.

— Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in 2007

After passing the Higher Secondary Examination (the grade 12 examination), students are enrolled in general degree programmes such as bachelor's degree in arts, commerce or science, or professional degree programmes such as engineering, law or medicine. India's higher education system is the third largest in the world, after China and the United States. The main governing body at the tertiary level is the University Grants Commission (India), which enforces its standards, advises the government, and helps coordinate between the centre and the state. Accreditation for higher learning is overseen by 12 autonomous institutions established by the University Grants Commission.

As of 2012, India has 152 Central Universities, 316 State Universities, and 191 private Universities. Other institutions include 33,623 colleges, including 1,800 exclusive women's colleges, functioning under these Universities and institutions, and 12748 Institutions offering Diploma Courses.

The emphasis in the tertiary level of education lies on science and technology. Indian educational institutions consisted of a large number of technology institutes. Distance learning is also a feature of the Indian higher education system. The Government has launched Rashtriya Uchchattar Shiksha Abhiyan to provide strategic funding to State higher and technical institutions. A total of 316 state public universities and 13,024 colleges are covered under it.
The Government of India is aware of the plight of higher education sector and has been trying to bring reforms. One of the approaches to make internationalization of Indian higher education effective is to develop a coherent and comprehensive policy which aims at infusing excellence, bringing institutional diversity and aids in capacity building.29

1.4 Government Support for Education:

As a part of the tenth Five year Plan (2002–2007), the central government of India outlined an expenditure of 65.6 percent of its total education budget of Rs.438.25 billion i.e. Rs.287.5 billion, on Elementary education; 9.9 percent i.e. Rs.43.25 billion, on Secondary education; 2.9 percent i.e. Rs.12.5 billion, on Adult education; 9.5 percent i.e. Rs. 41.765 billion on Higher education; 10.7 percent i.e. Rs.47 billion, on Technical education and miscellaneous education schemes the remaining 1.4 percent i.e. Rs.6.235 billion.30

1.4.1 Public expenditure on education in India

During the Financial Year 2011-12, the Central Government of India has allocated Rs.38,957 crores for the Department of School Education and Literacy which is the main department dealing with primary education in India. Within this allocation, major share of Rs.21,000 crores, is allocated for the flagship programme 'Sarva Siksha Abhiyan'. However, budgetary allocation of Rs.21,000 crores is considered very low in view of the officially appointed Anil Bordia Committee recommendation of Rs.35,659 for the year 2011-12.

The allocations were aimed at implementing the recent legislation 'Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009. The Government made several major announcements for developing the poor state of affairs in education sector in India, the most notable ones being the National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP). The announcements are; (a) To progressively increase expenditure on education to around 6 percent of GDP. (b) To support this increase in expenditure on education, and to increase the quality of education, there would be an imposition of an education cess over all central government taxes. (c) To ensure that no one is denied of education due to economic backwardness and poverty. (d) To make right to education a fundamental right for all children in the age group of 6–14 years. (e) To universalize education through its flagship programmes such as Sarva Siksha Abhiyan and Mid Day Meal.
However, even after five years of implementation of National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP), not much progress is seen on this front. Although the country targeted towards devoting 6 percent share of the GDP towards the educational sector, the performance has fallen short of expectations. Expenditure on education has steadily risen from 0.64 percent of GDP in 1951-52 to 2.31 percent in 1970-71 and thereafter reached the peak of 4.26 percent in 2000-01. However, it declined to 3.49 percent in 2004-05. There is a definite need to step up again. As a proportion of total government expenditure, it has declined from around 11.1 per cent in 2000–2001 to around 9.98 percent in 2004-05, even though ideally it should be around 20 percent of the total budget. Due to a declining priority of education in the public policy paradigm in India, there has been an exponential growth in the private expenditure on education also. The private out of pocket expenditure by the working class population for the education of their children in India has increased by around 1150 percent or around 12.5 times over the last decade.31

1.5 Issues and Challenges

1.5.1 Expenditure on Education

In terms of expenditure incurred on education, particularly on higher education, during the year 2010–11, the government spent around Rs.15, 440 crore which is about 85 per cent of the revised budget estimates for the year. The 66th round of NSSO survey reveals that between 1999 and 2009, spending on education in general increased by 378 per cent in rural areas and 345 per cent in urban areas in the country. The survey also reveals that spending on children’s education underlines sharp increase i.e. 63 per cent for rural and 73 per cent for urban families. However, the expenses on education as a percentage to GDP, India lags behind some developed/developing nations. The gap in investments in education in India can be filled by private sector which is playing a crucial role.
Table – 1.1

Expenditure on Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Expenditure on education as a percentage in GDP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.K.</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table-1.1 clearly shows that Malaysia is spending 8.1 percent on GDP followed by Switzerland (5.8 percent), France and U.K. India’s expenditure on Education as percentage in GDP is low i.e. 4.1 percent compared to other countries.

1.5.2 Gross enrolment pattern

At present, in India, there are about 1.86 crore students enrolled in various streams of higher education including Business Management. Despite the large number of students studying in various streams, major shift is not witnessed in the productivity as skills and talents are not sufficient to support economic activities and, hence, there is a serious concern on employability of the educated persons. The gross enrolment ratio (GER) for higher education in India was 12 per cent in 2010. The enrolment level is far below several other countries. For example, according to a Report, GER is 23 per cent for China, 34 per cent for Brazil, 57 per cent for U.K., 77 per cent for both Australia and Russia and 83 per cent for the U.S.
Indian Government is trying to increase the number of students by 2020 so as to reach GER as 30 per cent. The launch of new institutes like JRE School of Management can play a catalyst role in addressing the challenge of increasing GER in India. As a positive step, the Government has taken initiatives to incentivise States for setting up/expansion of existing educational institutions, establishment of Universities, expansion of colleges to achieve a target of 1 lakh students enrolment and schemes for setting up model colleges in regions which are below national average of GER.

1.5.3 Capacity utilization

Another challenge in strengthening the Indian education system is to improve the capacity utilization. For example, a recent study on capacity utilization in India for higher education indicates that in case of MBA is about 57 per cent in Maharashtra and 72 per cent in Haryana.
In case of certain states, there are a lot of unfilled seats in institutions. On the one hand, there should be improvement in GER, and on the other, more number of institutions/colleges/schools should be created for providing higher education with utilized capacity.

1.5.4 Infrastructure facilities

One of the factors for lower capacity utilization in India is the inability of upcoming/new institutions to provide necessary physical infrastructure to run the institutions. The infrastructure facilities desirable to rank the institutions of better quality include real estate, state of the art class rooms, library, hostels, furniture, sports facilities, transport, commercial buildings, etc.

1.5.5 Public Private Partnership Model

The Government is making efforts to improve the education system in terms of various parameters like GER, quality, investments, infrastructure, etc. But the main constraint for the Government is a big turnaround with huge investments in education. Private sector is started playing a distinctive role in improving the education system in India. The possibility of public private partnership (PPP) model in education is needed.
This is not only reduce the burden of the Government in incurring high cost in providing basic infrastructure facilities but also lead to construction of state of the art buildings, labs, libraries, hostels etc. Besides, the collaborative efforts between universities/colleges and corporates would help in organizing joint research and development. Thus, facilitating in image building and branding of institutions will make the students more job-worthy.

1.5.6 Student-teacher ratio

Another challenge for improving the Indian education system is to improve the student-teacher ratio. In India, this ratio is very high as compared to other countries in the world. For example, while in developed countries this ratio stands at 11.4, in case of India, it is as high as 22.0. It is even low in CIS (10.9), Western Asia (15.3), and Latin America (16.6).

Figure – 1.3

Student-Teacher Ratio (2008)

Source: “Higher Education in India”, UGC Report, 2008; UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2010; EY Analysis

This brings the necessity to recruit quality teachers and strengthen the teachers required to handle classes. Part-time teaching assignments should be given to students in technical/higher education to handle lower level classes, this will help the students in meeting their education expenses partially.
1.5.7 Accreditation and branding – quality standards

In order to improve the skills and talent of the large populace, there is a need for raising the quality and standards in education system. It is well-known that many professionals (engineers/doctors/management professionals) remain unemployed despite lot of opportunities being open in the globalised world. One of the major factors is the lack of quality education resulting in qualified but not employable. An effective mechanism should be activated for rating and ranking universities/colleges. At present, there is no compulsion for institutions/colleges to get accreditation in India. Government has already mooted a proposal to introduce accreditation. Therefore, standard rating agencies should give accreditation to universities/colleges/schools. In a recent ranking of Business Schools by Financial Times at global level, in the top fifteen, only two of the Indian premier Business Schools appeared at rank no. 11 and 13 for the year 2011. Most of the top ranking business schools were from the U.S. In this ranking, even China was ahead of India. In respect of value for money of these two Schools, it is observed that it is not that high when compared with some of the best U.S. Schools. However, a positive development is that these high ranked Indian Schools possess faculties with doctoral qualifications and of global standards who can deliver quality education to the students. In the world ranking of universities by Quacquarelli Symonds in 2010, out of 200 world renowned universities, only one Indian educational institution appeared in the list, while 53 institutions are in the U.S. According to Webometrics ranking for 2011, no Indian university appeared in the list, but 99 U.S. universities included. This essentially shows that India need to develop Centre for excellence of global standards. In addition to increasing the role of private sector in the development of higher education standards, they should be made to meet certain global rating standards. The JRE School of Management established in collaboration with the largest private education group in Asia-Pacific is striving for quality education with global standards.

1.5.8 Students studying abroad

India has the largest number of higher education institutions. Despite that, the number of students interested in pursuing higher studies abroad is on the rise. In the year 2006 1.23 lakh students opted for higher education abroad, of which about 76,000 chose the U.S. as their destination, followed by U.K., Canada and Australia. However, in 2010–11, about 1.03 lakh students got admission to study in the U.S. with regard to
Australia also, the number is on the rise. During 2004 to 2009, the number of students joining different courses rose from 30,000 to 97,000. Indian students studying abroad doubled between 1999 and 2009. Various factors encourage Indian students to seek admission abroad by taking loans from financial institutions including (a) quality of education, (b) increasing prosperity and aspirations and (c) social prestige and also exposure and experiences gained. These short coming should be recognized while building the educational institutions for reverse trend.

1.5.9 Role of RBI and Commercial Banks

Realizing the importance of education for the economic development and the overall living standards, the RBI is involved in formulating progressive and proactive policy guidelines for lending education by the banking system.

(a) The RBI, in view of the importance of education and the need to bring more students under the category of “education loans”, has classified such loans and advances granted to individuals for educational purposes up to Rs. 10 lakh for studies in India and Rs. 20 lakh for studies abroad, under “priority sector”.

(b) In June 2004, the scope of definition of “infrastructure lending” was expanded to include construction of educational institutions. Accordingly, schools and colleges can avail bank finance for improving their infrastructure. As on March 2011, the share of outstanding loans to educational institutions in the total infrastructure lending of commercial banks was 1.5 per cent.

(c) RBI liberalized foreign exchange rules for acquiring education from institutions abroad. A student can draw foreign exchange equivalent to USD 10,000 under private visit quota at the time of going abroad. The limit of USD 30,000 for education abroad on declaration basis was enhanced to USD 1,00,000 since 17th July 2003. In addition, a student can also draw foreign exchange equivalent to USD 2,00,000 for education purposes under liberalized remittance scheme before leaving the country i.e. before he/she gains the status of non-resident. Students can avail loan from a bank abroad for study purposes on the basis of counter guarantee given by an Indian Bank under approval route.

(d) With a view to facilitate banks, the Indian Banks’ Association has brought out a model scheme for educational loan in the year 2001 which was revised in January 2010. This would facilitate economically weaker sections of the society to avail
educational loans from scheduled banks with modified easier norms. There has been a remarkable spurt in the disbursement of educational loans by commercial banks. The educational loans outstanding amounted to Rs.27,709 crore as at end March 2009 which increased to up to Rs.42,808 crore as at end-March 2011.

Table – 1.2
Educational loans of scheduled commercial banks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>March-2009</th>
<th>March-2010</th>
<th>March-2011</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amount outstanding</td>
<td>27709.5</td>
<td>36359.7</td>
<td>42808.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(in Rs Crore)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No of accounts</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(in Lakh)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(e) A Nodal Officer is nominated at the Central office of the RBI for the purpose of all educational loan issues/grievances.

(f) As part of policy formulation, RBI undertaking activities to educate students relating to central banking, banking and financial system. To educate young scholars, a scheme has been introduced in which every year RBI selects a good number of scholars from different regions of the country. In addition, RBI also set up research and training institution for banking technology.

1.6 Innovations required to Meet the challenges

The challenge of educating millions of young people implies that we need to scale up our educational efforts multi-fold despite having the largest number of higher education institutes in the world. The curriculum of the colleges/universities is more or less obsolete and do not equip students with the necessary skills or impart latest knowledge. If a student passes out of a chosen course, he or she should be employable as a work force. Unfortunately, given the phenomenal share of lack of technical knowledge in the courses of education, students are found wanting in the desired skills and technical soundness. The universities/schools/colleges should regularly revise their curriculum by involving experts from different fields so that the curriculum can lead to knowledge development. The available infrastructure should be used more intensely. A second stream of courses, say vocational, be run in the evening/night so that the available /created infrastructure is better utilized.
Teachers are the most important factors for any innovative society because teachers’ knowledge and skills not only enhance quality and efficacy of education, but also improve the potential for research and innovation. To meet the higher level of GER by 2020, a large number of teachers would be required to educate the growing young population. Students also can be used as teachers, especially good students coming from lower income groups so that they can be partly be compensated. Further, barring some leading schools/universities/autonomous educational institutions, many of the teachers of colleges/universities need to hone their skills/talent. There is a need to encourage teachers to participate in seminars/ workshops/ conferences and receive periodic trainings for updation of knowledge/skills. It is equally important that a feedback mechanism from students should be introduced in universities/colleges to assess and evaluate teachers’ role in the institutional developmental process.

1.6.1 Quality of education

To compete globally in the 21st century, our education system should adopt certain benchmarking techniques for improving instruction models and administrative procedures in universities/colleges to move forward. A thorough study and evaluation of models should be implemented elsewhere and work out strategies to adopt such models in our system. Benchmarking would provide benefits to our education system in terms of reengineering, setting right objectives, etc.

The country is showing consistency in economic growth pattern, leading the world in terms of information and technology, modernization various economic activities and pushing for higher share of industries and services sectors of the economy but the education is one area which needs reform. Though some investments are taking place in the country’s higher education system, world class research facilities are to be provided. Recruiting profound academicians in universities/colleges/research institutions, etc. is needed to sustain and forge lead in economic development. It is important to understand that countries like China, Singapore, South Korea, etc. are moving fast in investing in education system. Therefore, it is imperative that our educational institutions should be equipped with the desired quality and standards which are essentials for transforming the younger workforce into productive ones. Needless to reiterate that in the higher education system focus on use of technology for effective learning by students also need to be encouraged to have cutting edge over our competitors in the globalised world.
1.6.2 Making Education affordable

In India, if education has to reach all deserving students, it should be made affordable. The fee structure in Government owned/sponsored institutions is inexpensive in India. However, in some private sector institutions, which have the freedom to prescribe fee structure and despite broad guidelines from certain state governments, fees are beyond the capacity of poor and deserving students. Ideally, the fee structure should vary for such economically weaker students. The education should not become prohibitively expensive and ensure that no deserving candidate is denied admission just for the fact that he or she does not possess the necessary financial resources.

1.6.3 Ethics in Education

The most important objective of any educational institution is to equip the students with ethical values besides imparting knowledge and skills. This basic human quality is slowly eroding. The RBI as well as Government of India is formulating progressive policies to ensure funds for education. Some disturbing trend in respect of repayment of loans by students is there. If the loans are not repaid after it falls due, the non-performing assets of banks will increase and in the process, banks are likely to be skeptical in sanctioning educational loans. It is, therefore, important that the repayment schedules are adhered to by those students who have taken loans. To encourage banks to give educational loans to all deserving students, the Government is looking into the issue of setting up of a system of insuring educational loans. To reduce default of education loans, The School Alumni Association of students can become active in inculcating ethics and values among students. They can provide the required synergies and linkages in addressing challenges relating to non-payment of outstanding education loans.

In the same coin, as education has to be made affordable to all deserving and poor students, there is a strong need for educational institutions not to over-commercialize education but to uphold ethics in the business of education as well. It is not anyone’s case that the business has to be run unprofitably but the business must be carried out with ethical values for sustenance of educational institutions. Over exploitation should be avoided. Profit cannot be the sole motive for undertaking this business. It must be driven by an unflinching commitment to society which in turn will benefit the business in the long run.
Conclusion

To sum up, the knowledge, skills and productivity of our growing young and dynamic work force forms the backbone of our economy. To reap the benefits of such a young work force, we need to implement the reforms in the education system and also bring forth new factors of production, namely knowledge, skills and technology which have the ability to unleash the productive frontiers of the economy in the most efficient and dynamic way. Besides, taking a leaf from the western hemisphere, India should try to become “knowledge economy” to promote inclusive growth.

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12. a b c d e India 2009: A Reference Annual (53rd edition), 215.
15. ^ a b [1].