SECONDARY AND SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION IN INDIA: AN ASSESSMENT AND REFORMS

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Abstract

Education has the potential of transforming lives of people and destinies of countries. It is what prepares young minds for their future roles as productive citizens of an economy, and nurtures the holistic development of their personalities and characters so that they are able to face the challenges of the adult world boldly. The current education scenario in India, however, requires a structural and qualitative change to achieve these goals more effectively. The need of the hour is to reform the education system at both, school level and higher education level, in such a manner that the employability of the target groups is enhanced. This paper, based on the data available, endeavours to analyze the existing scenario of School Education in India at Secondary and Senior Secondary level, and recommends changes to transform this sector so to nurture academically qualified, technically skilled, morally upright and socially responsible citizens of tomorrow.

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1. Introduction

Education has always been accorded an honoured place in the Indian society. It is a life-long process which includes – Formal Education, Non-Formal Education and Informal Education. All forms play their respective roles in shaping the personality of an individual. Ancient scriptures and chronicles of India also testify that the country has had a very rich legacy of school education in the form of *Gurukuls* (today's "residential schools") wherein children spent several years of their childhood and early youth away from their parents to learn various disciplines and skills under the strict tutelage of highly qualified and experienced 'gurus'. The rigorous schedule at *Gurukuls* which included the twin components of theory and practice – experiential learning - prepared the pupils to encounter the challenges of later life most efficiently. In the centuries that followed this golden era, India reeled under the dementing and destabilizing impact of foreign aggressions. No wonder, education suffered a great set back in these tumultuous times. It was during the British rule that the Nationalist leaders realized the significance of educating the masses to ensure national development. In the post independence period, a major concern of the Government of India and the States has been to give increasing attention to education as a factor vital to national progress and society (Department of Education). Hence, a lot of impetus was given to broadening the base of early education.

Today, school-level education in India is imparted through various kinds of institutions. These may include privately-run institutions, government-aided institutions, NGOs run institutions, and Minority established and administered institutions and so on. The levels of education imparted at these diverse centres of school education are varied because of various factors such as the funding agencies involved, vision of and aim of managements, fee structure, geographical location and the socio-economic status of the population being catered to. Ironically, there appears a huge divide between the levels of students passing out from privately-run schools and those that fall under the aegis of the state governments despite the fact that the latter cater to a much larger population of students across the country.

As per the figures of Census 2011, the population of India is 1.21 billion (Office of Registrar General of India, Ministry of Home Affairs) which renders her the second most populous country in the world. Representing almost 17.5% of the world's population [1], the country has

the highest number of children in the world, constituting almost 40% of the nation's population. Children in the age group of 0-14 years comprise one-third of the total population of the country [2].

However, the ever increasing numbers have always out-run all developmental efforts in the education sector, the challenge to meet stipulated target is seemingly unending. To cater to the ever evolving demands of the times, new or modified Educational Policies have been passed by the governments from to time. Following is a brief review of education policies of the country:

II. Constitutional provisions related to education

There are a number of provisions regarding education in the Constitution of India. Following is a brief review of the same:

A.   Fundamental Rights: The Fundamental Rights given in part III of the Constitution of India [3] related to education include:

(a)   Article 15. (3) which allows the States to make special provision for women and children.

(b)   Article 15. (4) states that nothing in this article or in clause (2) of Article 29 shall prevent the State from making special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.

(c)   Article 15. (5) provides that nothing in this article or in sub-clause (g) of Article 19 (1) shall prevent the State from making special provision, by law, for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Scheduled Castes or the Scheduled Tribes for their admission to educational institutions including private educational institutions....

(d)   Article 21. A ensures the right to education directs the State to provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age between six to fourteen years ... It is under this article that the Government of India has passed the RTE (Right to Education) Act 2009.

(e)   Article 29. (2) provides that no citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them.

(f)   Article 30. ensures right to the minorities to establish and administer educational institutions.

B.   The Directive Principles of the State Policy: Part IV of the Constitution of India [4] provides for principles that are fundamental in governance of the country and it is the duty of the State to apply these principles in making laws. Following principles deal with education:

(a)   Article 41. provides for the right to work, to education and to public assistance in certain cases (i.e unemployment, old age, sickness ...).

(b)   Article 46. relates to the promotion of educational and economic interests of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections.

C.   Fundamental Duties: Fundamental duty provided for in Part IV-A of the Constitution of India [5] related to education is:

Article 51 A. (k) provides that a person who is a parent or guardian is required to provide opportunities for education to his child or, as the case may be, ward between the age of six and fourteen years.

D.   Seventh Schedule: The Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India [6] consists of three lists – Union List, State List and Concurrent List. Education was in the State list initially but was shifted to the Concurrent List by the 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1976 to bring uniformity in the field of education all over the country besides enabling more co-ordination between the Centre and the States. Education is listed at Entry No. 25 of the Concurrent List and includes technical education, medical education and universities subject to the provisions of entries 63, 64, 65 and 66 of List I; vocational and technical training of labour.

III. National Policies for Education

A brief review of the National Policies for Education to achieve goals set in the Constitutional provisions is as follows:

A.   National Policy for Education (1968)

Efforts to put education on a strong and broad footing were initiated by the Government of India soon after Independence. Problems of educational reconstruction were reviewed by several commissions and committees set up for the purpose including Secondary Education Commission

(1952-53). Subsequently, the first education policy was formulated in 1968 and some salient features of this policy regarding school education are [7]:

- Free and compulsory education for children up to the age of 14 years;

- Increase the status, emoluments and education of teachers to increase the quality of education;

- Academic freedom to be provided to teachers to pursue and publish independent studies and researches;

- Teacher education especially in-service education, should receive due emphasis;

- Need to develop languages both at the regional and national levels;

- Equal educational opportunities to all irrespective of the regions;

- Education of girls should receive emphasis as it helps in accelerating social transformation;

- Need of intensive methods to develop education for the backward classes and especially among the tribal groups;

- Identification of talent for cultivation of excellence in diverse fields;

- Special emphasis on development of education for Agriculture and Industry;

- Practical training in industry should form an integral part of such education;

- Need to increase facilities for technical and vocational education at this stage. These facilities for secondary and vocational education should conform broadly to requirements of the developing economy and real employment opportunities;

- Spread of literacy and Adult Education.

B.   National Policy of Education 1986 (as modified in 1992)

This policy advocated a warm, welcoming and encouraging approach towards the needs of the child as the best motivation for him to attend school. It iterated that a child-centred and activity-based process of learning should be adopted at the primary stage, and that the learners must be allowed to learn at their own pace. It called for essential provisions at the primary level with reasonably large rooms where children be provided toys, charts, boards and playthings. It emphasised on [8]:

- Non-Formal Education

o   The non-formal education programmes, meant for school dropouts, for children from habitations without schools, working children and girls who cannot attend whole-day schools, will be strengthened and enlarged;

o   Modern technological aids to be used in teaching-learning processes to improve the learning environment;

o   This policy is aimed at giving highest priority to solving the problem of children dropping out of school;

•   Vocationalization – Emphasis was given to vocational education in the proposed educational re-organisation to enhance their employability and to reduce the mismatch between the demand and supply of skilled manpower and also an alternative to higher education. As per the policy efforts were to be made to provide children at the higher secondary level with generic vocational courses which cut across several occupational fields instead of being occupation specific.

•   Vocational Education to be a distinct stream intended to prepare students for identified occupations spanning several areas of activity. Such courses to be provided after the secondary stage, but keeping the scheme flexible they may also be provided after class VIII.

•   The designing and establishment of vocational courses or institutions will be the responsibility of the government as well as employers in the public and private sectors. Special emphasis to be given to women, rural and tribal students, and deprived sections of the society.

•   Graduates of the vocational courses will be given opportunities under the pre-determined conditions for professional growth, career improvement and lateral entry into courses of general, technical and professional education through appropriate bridge courses.

•   Non-formal, flexible and need based vocational programmes will also be made available to neo-literates, youth who have completed primary education, school drop-outs, persons engaged in work and unemployed or partially employed persons with special attention to women.

•   It was proposed that vocational courses should cover 10% of the higher secondary students by 1995 and 25% by 2000. Efforts to be made to see that a substantial majority of the products of vocational courses are employed or become self-employed. Review of courses to be undertaken periodically. Government to review its recruitment policy to encourage diversification at the secondary level.

IV.   **Present State of Secondary and Senior Secondary School Education in India**

It is imperative to know that the future profession or career of every child is decided at the stage of senior secondary if not at the secondary level. The choice of stream/subjects (Medical, Non-medical, Commerce and Humanities) determines a child's profession/field in higher education. Hence, the significance of this level in the journey of school education needs to be understood.

To achieve this, we must analyse the current situation on the basis of various parameters like growth of institutions, enrolment rate, drop-out rate etc. However, the impact of the progressive steps taken by various governments since independence in this field is clearly visible in many fields and can be studied under various heads such as

A.   **Number of Recognised Educational Institutions:** Table No. 1 provides information on the number of recognised Secondary and Senior Secondary educational institutions in the country since 2000-2001. A steady rise is visible in the number of institutions over this period of time.

Table-1: Number of Recognised Educational Institutions

Level Year	Secondary (in hundreds)	Senior Secondary (in hundreds)
2000-01	877	384
2005-06	1060	536
2006-07	1122	574
2007-08	1138	592
2008-09	1221	642.29
2009-10	1222	717
2010-11	1312	720.46
2011-12	1283	841
2012-13*	2189	1224
2013-14*	1335	1036
2014-15*	1353	1093

Data Source: *For School Education:- (i) figures for 2001-2002 to 2011-12: Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India (website: http://mhrd.gov.in/statist) (ii) figure for 2012-13 & 2014-15: National University of Educational Planning & Administration, New Delhi (website: http://dise.in/)* Figures related to School Education are provisional.*
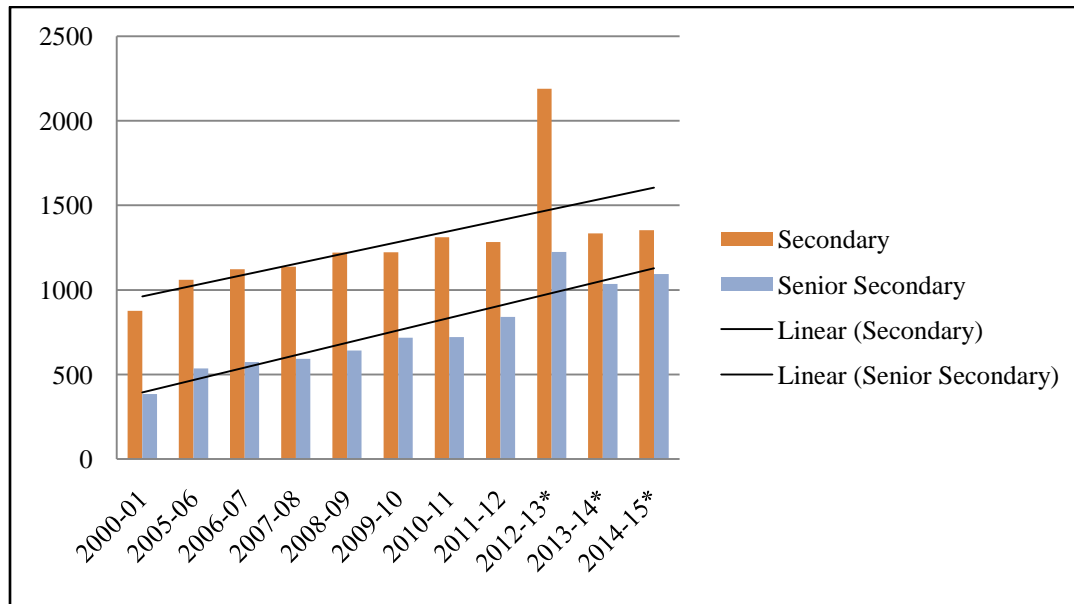

Fig. 1. Number of Recognised Educational Institutions: Secondary and Senior Secondary

Data Source: *For School Education:- (i) figures for 2001-2002 to 2011-12: Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India (website: http://mhrd.gov.in/statist) (ii) figure for 2012-13 & 2014-15: National University of Educational Planning & Administration, New Delhi (website: http://dise.in/)* Figures related to School Education are provisional.*

Fig. 1 which showcases a pictorial representation of the aforementioned data clearly exhibits a steady upward trend in the number of institutions at both secondary and higher secondary levels in the last 15 years.

B.   Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)

Concomitant to the rise in the number of educational institutions, the Gross Enrolment Ratio in the country for all categories of students especially at the Secondary and Senior Secondary level also shows an upward trend over the years as visible in Table 2 and Fig. 2.

Table-2: Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER): All Categories of Students

Level/ Year	Secondary (IX-X) 14-15years			Senior Secondary (XI-XII) 16-17years		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2004-05	57.4	45.3	51.7	30.8	24.5	27.8
2005-06	57.6	46.2	52.2	31.4	25.2	28.5
2006-07	58.6	47.4	53.5	31.5	26.1	28.9
2007-08	62.6	53.2	58.2	36.3	30.4	33.5
2008-09	64.8	55.5	60.4	37.5	31.6	34.5
2009-10	66.7	58.7	62.9	38.5	33.5	36.1
2010-11	69.2	60.9	65.2	42.3	36.2	39.4
2011-12	69.0	63.9	66.6	47.6	43.9	45.9
2012-13*	69.6	67.0	68.1	41.9	39.5	40.8
2013-14*	76.8	76.5	76.6	52.8	51.6	52.2
2014-15*	78.1	78.9	78.5	54.6	53.8	54.2

Data Source: School Education: *(i) figure from 2004-05 to 2011-12: Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India (website: http://mhrd.gov.in/statist)*
*(ii) figure for 2012-13 and 2014-15: National University of Educational Planning & Administration, New Delhi (website hppt://dise.in/) * Figures are provisional*
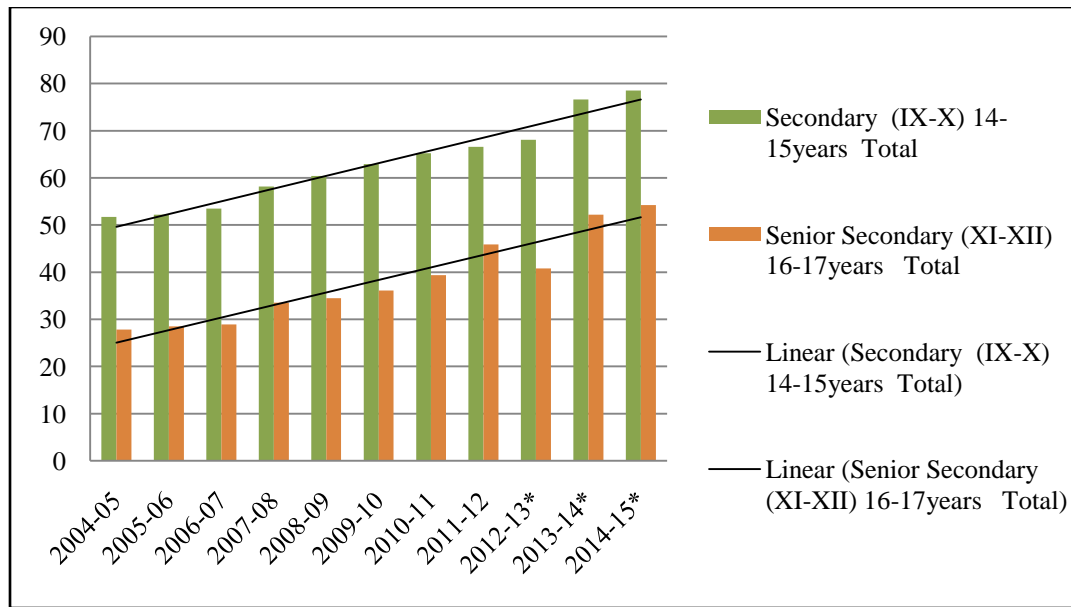
Fig. 2. Total Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER): All Categories of Students

Data Source: School Education: *(i) figure from 2004-05 to 2011-12: Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India (website: http://mhrd.gov.in/statist)*

*(ii) figure for 2012-13 and 2014-15: National University of Educational Planning & Administration, New Delhi (website hppt://dise.in/) * Figures are provisional*

According to the Unified-District Information System (UDISE) 2015-16, the GER of boys and girls at secondary level is 79.16% and 80.97% respectively, and GER of boys and girls at senior secondary level is 55.95% and 56.41% respectively [9].

C.   Drop Out Rate

According to a report by Montreal based UNSECO Institute for Statistics and Global Education Monitoring, India has 47 million youth of secondary and higher secondary school-going age dropping out of school [10]. It is indeed a matter of grave concern for the government since such unqualified, unskilled and unemployable young men do not add anything positive to the growth of national economy rather become a huge burden. The Average Annual Dropout Rate at secondary level is 17.86% from IX to X class [11].

D.   Emergence of Private Coaching Centres

The discord between the syllabi taught in the schools at 10+2 level in the streams of Medical and Non-medical, and the demand of the Entrance Exams for Medical and Engineering Colleges has made class-room teaching especially in urban/metropolitan schools redundant while Coaching Institutes are mushrooming in every city.

- According to a Survey Report by NSSO, 26% of students (27% of males and 24% of females) were taking private coaching during January – June 2014, in India combining all levels of education.

- The private centres charge heavily from hapless parents who are forced to pay hefty fee both in the schools and in the coaching centres. The emergence of "Coaching Cities" such as Kota in Rajasthan as a major hub of coaching centres for medical and engineering streams is a recent but dangerous trend.

- Moreover, the two different levels of syllabi which the child is forced to cover simultaneously at two different places and levels puts tremendous pressure on his young mind. No wonder, the cases of suicide and depression in this stage are increasing at an alarming rate.

E.   Gap between the levels of teaching in the Government run schools and privately owned schools

Research findings also show that private schools are imparting quality education to children as compared to government schools. However, as per the government policy, all privately managed/public schools must offer seats to the wards of economically weaker sections of the society. It is owing to this that even the under privileged sections of the society are sending their children to the private schools for their better future [12].

V.   Suggestions for Improvement in Secondary and Senior Secondary School Education

Some measures to bring effectiveness in school education at the stated levels can be categorised as   follows:

A.   Need for Psychological Guidance

- By the time children join the High School level, they are struggling to handle psychological problems and physical changes triggered by the onset of puberty. This is a very crucial period in which pupils need to be handled very carefully. Their unpredictable mood

swings, relationship issues, behavioural complexities coupled with the pressure to perform – all lead to complicated situations within the classroom and outside. These can prove detrimental to the self-esteem and confidence of the student leading to poor performance and low grades. Hence, students must be offered counselling at regular intervals – psychological, educational and career related. Concomitantly, teachers must also be trained from time to time to handle moral, psychological and behavioural issues with sensitivity and care.

- At this level too, every student must participate in at least one activity, be it art, music, dance or sports, for these activities not only act as stress busters but also impart life-sustaining qualities of patience, team work and co-operation among learners.

- Students at the secondary and higher-secondary are highly impressionable. They are deeply influenced by the electronic media especially films. Their love for this medium can be harnessed very effectively to instil certain character building qualities in them. Screening of popular films, short films and documentaries such as "Lakshya," "Border," "Ghazi," "Gandhi," "Subhash Chandra Bose," "Shaheed," Manthan," "Rangroot" etc., followed by discussions on various socio-political issues tackled in the film, its characterization or music can go a long way in sharpening their critical thinking and speech skills.

B. Regular Monitoring of Courses/Syllabi

- In order to revamp the Education scenario there is a dire need at the Higher Secondary level to assess and re-assess the viability of the courses periodically and align them with the needs of the industry. The courses/departments/institutions which have out-lived their utility should either be scrapped or modified to suit the contemporary needs.

C. Impetus on ICT-based Pedagogy

- Recent studies have shown very encouraging and positive results of ICT based pedagogy at all levels. Use of smart or interactive boards, visualizers and projectors has turned virtual classrooms into a reality. Not only have they added variety into classroom teaching but also improved the receptivity and retentive power of the student. Hence, governments should invest more in this direction and also impart training to the teachers in using these teaching aids effectively.

D.   Enhanced Allocation of Funds

-      It is a known fact that the schools run by the government in India exhibit a higher intake of students from the economically weaker section than privately owned schools primarily because of a huge difference in the fee structure. This disparity is also visible in the quality of infrastructure, basic amenities and standard of education disseminated. This dismal state may be attributed to the fact that the Union government invests less than 3% of its annual budget on school education [13]. Moreover, the existing infrastructure is insufficient to cater to the demand generated by a steady increase in the number of students commensurate with the increasing population. Evidently, governments at both levels, central and state, need to pump in more money in this sector to provide better and bigger infrastructure, provide learning and teaching aids, upgrade laboratories and other elementary amenities in the schools.

-      Needless to say, the plight of schools in rural areas is even worse. They struggle not only with dwindling number of students and deficient infrastructural amenities but also with dearth of qualified teachers, for most of them prefer to work in towns and cities rather than in rural and far-flung areas.

E.   Reforms in Admission and Evaluation:

The number of students admitted in an institution should be as per the infrastructure available. Periodic assessment of the available infrastructure and courses should be done to maintain viability. A portion of funds to be spent under the Corporate Social Responsibility can be diverted towards providing adequate infrastructure to the students.

-      Students need to be filtered out at various stages in the educational system so that in case the student is unable/doesn't want to pursue studies further, he/she is provided with requisite skills/skill-based courses to earn his livelihood.

-      The evaluation system needs to be spruced up. It must not allow students with a perpetually very poor academic performance to advance to the next level. He should not be given more than 3 chances to clear a class. If he fails to do so, he should be shifted to the Skill-based Stream of Courses to enable him acquire some life-sustaining skill.

-       In certain districts/villages/areas, there are several government-managed schools in close vicinity and do not have requisite student strength. In such cases, it is beneficial to merge

those institutions, even if they are of different levels (primary, middle, secondary and senior-secondary) to make the optimum use of the infrastructure, amenities and faculty, and to make them financially viable.

- A good option can be to promote Public Private Partnership (PPP) to run the rural or sub-urban schools effectively. Even Corporate houses in the area can be roped in to contribute in the upgradation or maintenance of schools under the tenet of Corporate Social Responsibility. They may also be asked to adopt at least one school in the rural/sub-urban sector compulsorily and maintain it.

F.   Introduction of Skill-based Courses

- India is a very populous country having the highest number of child labour in the world. Children are found working in hazardous industries as unskilled workers in the urban areas of the country, especially the metropolitan cities. There is a dire need to make education skill oriented right from middle classes to ensure that these children are equipped with some employable skills by the time they leave their schools. At least one Skill based course should be mandatory for academically and financially poor students studying in Government schools, especially in the sub-urban and rural sectors. The industry can be involved at different levels to absorb these children (after the completion of their courses/education) in the local industries where they may even be provided apprenticeship while studying.

- More ITIs (Industrial Training Institutes) need to be opened to make technical education/skills accessible to a greater population.

- There is a need for complete coordination in providing skill based courses right from the middle school level to secondary and senior-secondary levels, and then at the college level so that the students can pursue the courses of their choice even at the higher level to acquire proficiency in a graded manner in the field of their choice.

Categories	Proposed Courses
Students with good academic records > 60%	Computer Applications, ICTs, Mobile phone repairs, Auto repairs
Students with poor academic	Manual jobs like – Plumbing, Repair of Automobiles,

record (Boys)	Electrical Appliances and other white goods. Weaving – power looms, painting boards, leather work, Masonry, Gardening, First –Aid and Nursing.
Students with poor academic record (Girls)	Art & Craft, Candle-making, Jute work, Leader Craft, Cane Weaving, First-Aid & Nursing, Nanny work, Cosmetology, Beauty Care, Embroidery/Knitting, Interior Designing/Cooking.

● Each school must offer at least 2 courses/choices to the pupils, and hire professionals or practitioners from the market of industry to teach the students.

● Initially - at the middle level - the students should be exposed to a variety of courses so that their aptitude and capability can be determined. Later – at the senior school level they may be given the freedom to opt for any two courses of their choice. To make these courses effective the following measures can be adopted:

○ A blend of both, theoretical and practical knowledge needs to be imparted for establishing a solid base.

○ The course content can be spread across IX-X and XI – XII classes with apprenticeship/ training interspersed within the syllabi.

○ While undertaking the course the students above the age of 14 years may be allowed to earn while learning.

○ In the case of rural areas, the students can work in collaboration with the local industry to develop the common/shamlat land of the village. In such a case, both the industry and the students will be benefitted.

○ People from the industry can be called upon to conduct workshops to enrich the students and give them hands on training.

○ Each Corporate House with an annual turnover of 100 Crores be asked to adopt 1-2 schools and sponsor/contribute constructively in improving its infrastructure in the form of building, furniture, computers, sports facilities etc.

● Physical Education and Sports is an unexplored area that needs to be taken further with short term and long-term courses in skills requisite for various sports, sports goods industry, coaching and the like.

- MOOCs can be made an important part of the curriculum. The benefit of MOOCs is that they can be referred to as and when required by the students at their convenience for better understanding.

- Teaching in all schools should be for 5 days in a week as it is in the universities or professional institutions. This not only reduces pressure on our natural resources and civic amenities but also allows more time to the students for self study, for pursuing their hobbies and spending quality time with their parents and grand-parents. Peer pressure, heavy load of syllabus, extra coaching, paucity of leisure time and long working hours of parents leave a negative impact on young minds.

G. Bolstering the Morale of the Faculty

- The government must set up an education regulatory body to monitor private educational institutions and ensure that the quality of education imparted, fee charged, facilities provided, remuneration given to the functionaries and conditions of work are as per the standards set up by the higher authorities.

- Government must try to attract talented, motivated and meritorious teachers by offering them lucrative pay packages and other facilities.

- More TTIs (Teacher Training Institutes) need to be opened to train teachers in the effective use of various ICT based tools useful in classroom teaching. Regular orientation of teachers in sync with the additions/reforms in the curriculum can go a long way in enhancing their pedagogical skills.

- Moreover, recruitments on permanent basis must be made from time to time instead of promoting ad-hoc teachers for short durations. Ad-hocism does not benefit anyone, whether the students or the teacher or the system in the longer run.

- The financial benefits due to the teachers must be disbursed timely. No country can progress if its teachers have to beg, struggle and fight for their genuine rights in the streets.

- If the nation wants to check brain drain, we must provide better infrastructure, more conducive learning environment, more academic freedom to the faculty and facilities for innovation in our institutions of learning.

- Though education falls under the purview of State Governments, decisions pertaining to the welfare of teaching community such as career-related promotions, pay enhancement as per

recommendations of Pay Commissions, and granting of Pension to teachers must be controlled by the Centre.

• School teachers especially those employed in government schools, must be allowed to focus on teaching. They should not be assigned any other duties such as election duties, census etc. beyond teaching and mentoring their students. This involves wastage of valuable teaching time.

• A teacher who himself/herself lacks motivation cannot inspire a child to be an achiever. It is, therefore, important that the government offers timely incentives to the teaching community in the form of appropriate salaries, up-gradation of remuneration at regular intervals, health, housing and pension facility apart from intangibles like respect and recognition.

VI. Recent Endeavours by the Government

A   The Ministry of Human Resource development, Government of India has launched its flagship programme – '*SamagraShiksha*' – an integrated scheme for school education. This scheme intends to [14]:

• extend support to the States from pre-school to senior secondary levels;

• completely overhaul the existing Schemes in school education to enable smooth transition between different levels of school education;

• increase budget outlay from Rs. 28,000 crore in 2017-2018 to 34,000 crore in 2018-2019 and to 41,000 crore in 2019-2020 i.e an increase of 20%;

• grants will be given to schools for buying books for the libraries, Sports equipment etc.;

• support 'Operation Digital Board' in all secondary schools over a period of 5 years; and

• equip children with all-round skills – academic, extra-curricular and vocational.

This Scheme is a paradigm shift in the conceptual design of school education by treating 'school' holistically as a continuum from pre-school, primary school, upper primary, secondary and senior secondary levels.

B   University Grants Commission has approved UGC (Online Courses) Regulations, 2018. Under these regulations Higher Educational Institutions can offer Certificate, Diploma and Degree Programmes in full-fledged online mode at graduation level in regular mode (of

classroom teaching) or in Open and Distance Learning mode and from which at least one batch has been graduated and approved by the statutory councils, as applicable [15].

VII.   Conclusion

It is a known fact that the existing system of school education at all levels is modeled on the policies designed in the 19th century by the Colonial rulers in commensuration with the educational needs of the country in those days. Times have changed, and so have the needs of this highly competitive globalized world. It is therefore, imperative to bring about a paradigmatic shift in the existing system by replacing the conventional, merely theoretical and rote learning of languages, sciences and arts to something more practical and concrete. Hence, instead of following the unilateral purpose of preparing students only for the university level entrance examinations, our schools must also impart life-supporting skills to bolster their employability quotient, and empower them with technical and manual proficiency to be entrepreneurs or self-employed enterprise owners in the future.

Thus, to generate a greater and more positive contribution of the young generation in the national economic growth, and to enhance their visibility in the international market, the seeds of change have to be sown at the stage of school education, and it must be done now.

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