

## ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN SECONDARY EDUCATION

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### INTRODUCTION

Education is the birth right of every child. The Central Government and State Governments have formulated various schemes to ensure that no child remain uneducated. However, there are various problems faced in our education system. Although there has been a significant increase in the number of school going children, they face a number of problems. The problems of Senior Secondary school education are dealt with in this chapter. We must make consistent and concerted efforts to remove the obstacles and find solution to the problems. Secondary education spreads over the age 15-18 years. These years of transition and adolescence are the most crucial years of the student life. Students' physical structure undergoes a fast change during this period and there are various sort of emotional transformation and mood swings. This is the stage where students have to shift from education to the world of work; secondary education must equip the students by sharpening their skills and talents to make this transition quite smooth. The girls have to experience more difficulties in this transition because of age-old beliefs, social bias, prejudice and taboos prescribed for females in the society.

Various commissions pointed out the defects in secondary education from time to time. It has been generally felt that secondary education in India gives more emphasis on academics and fails to enable students to handle the problems of day-to-day life efficiently; it does not prepare them for pursuing higher education adequately. Many of the students tend to fail in the first year of their degree course, in the examination conducted by the university. The students don't find themselves confident and suitable to enter life confidently. The training and education available there don't equip the students well so as to get a good and respectable job helpful in leading a good life.

### HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SECONDARY EDUCATION

Wood's Despatch of 1854 resulted in the establishment of the Department of Public instructions in India, in 1855-56. The system of grant-in-aid guaranteed in the Despatch encouraged Indians to open secondary schools throughout the country. Private agencies took initiation of running secondary schools, which resulted in an unprecedented expansion in Secondary Education. Social and political awakening in the country also contributed to this expansion. During the period 1902-1921, the number of secondary schools rose to 7,530 as against 5,124 in 1905. From 1921 to 1937, there was a steady increase in the number of

secondary schools amounting to 13,506 by the end of 1937. Modern Indian languages were used as medium of instruction. The problem of providing vocational education came into vogue. Expansion of Secondary Education fell short during the period 1937 to 1947. Mother tongue was introduced as the medium of instruction.

Post-Independent India witnessed a crash programme for the improvement of Secondary Education. As a result of the recommendations of Secondary Education of 1952, an All India Council of Secondary Education was

established in 1955, The National Council of Educational Research and Training emerged as an autonomous body in 1961 to promote research and training in education. Attempts were made to improve science education during the year 1964-65. State evaluation units have been established in almost all the states. State governments nationalized production of textbooks. Multipurpose schools were started in 1954 as recommended by the Mudaliar Commission.

### **VARIOUS COMMISSIONS AND THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING PROBLEMS AND ISSUES IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL**

Education has continued to evolve, diversify and extend its reach and coverage since the dawn of human history. With the passing on of time there occur rapid changes in the society. Such social changes necessitate a continuous renovation of the educational system from time to time. Our present educational system at the secondary level has its legacy to British rule in India. The famous Wood's Despatch of 1854 recommended a uniform pattern of Secondary Education throughout the country. Since then, there have been several attempts made to renovate the educational system that would suit the socio-cultural identity of our country. Different commissions were appointed and two important policy statements have been declared on account of this. The commissions have successfully pinpointed the challenges and issues confronted by the secondary educational system in India.

**The Secondary Education Commission (1952-53)** under the chairmanship of Lakshminaraswami Mudaliar made a comprehensive study of the Secondary Education in India, with special reference to the following aspects:

- to enquire into and report on the present position of Secondary Education in India in all its aspects; and
- suggest measures for its recognition and improvement with particular reference to:
  - (a) the aims, organisation and content of Secondary Education;
  - (b) the relationship to primary, basic and higher education;
  - (c) the inter-relation of secondary schools of different types; and
  - (d) Other allied problems.

The Commission had a comprehensive study of the secondary educational system and could identify the major problems and issues that confront the system. The Commission found that there is the urgent need for:

- a re-examination and restatement of the objectives of education at different stages of educational development;
- educational needs of democratic India are to be focused on, training the pupils in true citizenship, self-sufficiency, character formation and socialism;
- improvement of vocational efficiency as a must for attaining self-sufficiency;
- development of personality of individuals; and
- Education for leadership.

**Indian Education Commission (1964-66)** felt that education in India must necessarily emerge from Indian experience, thought, culture and local conditions. For this purpose, Secondary Education in India was thoroughly

studied and compared with latest developments in education in other countries. The Commission identified three important facets of Secondary

Education that would bring about desired educational revolution:-

- internal transformation so as to relate it to the life, needs and aspirations of the nation;
- qualitative improvement so that the standards achieved are adequate, keep continuously rising and at least in a few sectors become internationally comparable; and
- Expansion of educational facilities broadly on the basis of manpower needs and with an accent on equalisation of educational opportunities.

The Commission found that such a revolution would make Secondary Education a powerful instrument of social, economic and cultural transformation necessary for the realisation of our national goals. For this, the issues that are to be tackled through education are:

- Education is to be related to productivity through making science as an integral part of all courses, introducing work experience and vocationalisation of education.
- Promotion of social and national integration through introducing a common school system of public education, making social and national service an integral part of education at all stages; developing all modern Indian languages, and taking necessary steps to enrich Hindi as quickly as possible so that it is able to function effectively as the official

language of the union; and promoting national consciousness.

- Education is to promote modernization through the adoption of science-based technology.
- Education should act as an instrument for social change. For this educational system has to be dynamic, should undergo periodic renovation both in its quality and quantity.
- Education is to reflect the social, moral and spiritual values of the children so that they become self-disciplined.
- School education is to follow a secular policy respecting all religions. For this the state is to promote a tolerant study of all religions so that its citizens can understand each other better and live amicably together. The study should highlight the fundamental similarities in the great religions of the world and the emphasis they place on the cultivation of certain broadly comparable moral and spiritual values.

### **National Policy on Education (1968)**

National Policy on Education, 1968 is a government resolution evolved through a discussion and deliberations of the Indian Education Commission (1964-66). The Government of India was convinced that a radical reconstruction of education on the broad lines recommended by the Education Commission is essential for economic and cultural development of the country for national integration and for realising the ideal of a socialist pattern of society. Since then the resolution has become the basis of educational reforms in India. The policy holds that educational opportunity at the secondary level is a major instrument of social change and transformation. Facilities for Secondary

Education should accordingly be extended expeditiously to areas and classes, which have been denied these in the past.

There is need to increase facilities for technical and vocational education at this stage. Provisions of facilities for secondary and vocational education should conform broadly to requirements of the developing economy and real employment opportunities, such linkage is necessary to make technical and vocational education at the secondary stage effectively terminal. Facilities for technical and vocational education should be suitably diversified to cover a large number of fields such as agriculture, industry, trade and commerce, medicine and public health, home management, arts and crafts, secretarial training *etc.* Games and sports should be developed on a large scale with the object of improving the physical fitness and sportsmanship of the average student as well as of those who excel in this field.

The policy also envisaged a broadly uniform educational structure in all parts of the country. The ultimate objective should be to adopt the 10+2 pattern, the higher secondary stage of the years being located in schools, colleges or both according to local conditions.

#### **National Policy on Education (1986)**

The National Policy of 1986 marked a significant step in the history of education in post-Independent India. Since then, tremendous changes have taken place in the field of education. With the elapse of time new challenges and issues crop up in the ever changing societal context. Government of India realised these new challenges and issues and resolved the New Education Policy on Education in 1986 after a comprehensive appraisal of the existing educational system, followed by a countrywide debate.

The New Education Policy visualises a total re-orientation of the entire educational system with its main focus on the Broad Goals of Education, since most of the challenges in education are closely linked to them. The Broad Goals restated in the Policy are:

- Emphasis on the socio-economic wellbeing, competence and creativity of the individual. This encompasses:
  - (a) physical, intellectual and aesthetic development of personality;
  - (b) inculcation of a scientific temper and democratic, moral and spiritual values;
  - (c) development of self-confidence to innovate and face unfamiliar situations;
  - (d) creation of an awareness of the physical, social, technological, economic and cultural environment;
  - (e) fostering a healthy attitude to dignity of labour and hard work;
  - (f) a commitment to principles of secularism and social justice;
  - (g) dedication to uphold the integrity, honour and foster the development of the country; and
  - (h) promotion of international understanding.
- Development of knowledge and skills in various areas relating to various subjects, languages, communication, hobbies, games and sports.

- Development of knowledge and skill in employment opportunities in the context of a particular pattern and rate of development.
- Integration of individual into the social system. Besides the regular role, education must inculcate suitable habits for health care, mental application, management of time and conservation of physical, mental and emotional energy.
- Education as a means of Equalising Opportunities, so that a person belonging to any religion, caste, creed, sex or economic strata, would have the chance of developing him or her potentials to the full.
- Development of Sense of Right and Wrong-through moral and spiritual values.
- Development of Spirit and Adventure and Mass Participation in various programmes like protection of the environment, energy conservation, population control etc.

The New Education Policy holds that Secondary Education begins to expose students to the differentiated roles of science, the humanities and social sciences. This is also an appropriate stage to provide children with a sense of history and national perspective and give them opportunities to understand their constitutional duties and rights as citizens.

## CONCLUSION

Life in the coming decades is likely to bring new tensions together with unprecedented opportunities. To enable the people to benefit

in the new environment will require new designs of human resource development. The coming generations should have the ability to internalize new ideas constantly and creatively. They have to be resolved with a strong commitment to human values and to social justice. Our educational system should be such that it upholds the democratic values and fosters religious tolerance. At the same time, it should promote self-sufficiency through equipping children with maximum skills and intellectual competence for better employment opportunities. This aspect of education is of paramount significance for it is basic to the economic development of the country. The needs of the community and optimum utilization of the community resources are to given prime consideration in educating children.

This will help in strengthening the relationship between school and community and in making education life-oriented. Thus, the different aspects of curriculum construction and their concomitant issues rightly justify the urgency of restructuring the existing Secondary School Curriculum in a manner, which would satisfy the individual and societal needs of our country. Efforts should be made to develop a gender friendly curriculum. The curriculum must be designed to nurture natural talents and capabilities of the students, viz. language, logical and analytical ability, physical fitness, sports, general awareness, nature and environment etc. These crucial years in student life must offer suitable opportunity for nurturing and honing their inherent skills.

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