Secondary Education in India: An Analysis of Status and Accessibility

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Abstract

Educational development is a mean to achieve overall development in a country. It is a well-known fact that the human resource development cannot be possible without ensuring the spread of education among the masses. Secondary education serves as a link between the elementary and higher education, and plays a very important role in this respect. This paper explores the status of secondary education in India. Itbriefly presents the provisions made under schemes like RMSA for strengthening the secondaryschools in Indiatill the end of 11th five year plan.Though access in terms of availability in secondary schools is satisfactory, picture of provision of facilities in the secondary schools is bleak. Although enough number of teachers are available in secondary schools yet pupil teacher ratio is quite dismal. Further, the availability of trained teachers in secondary schoolsis a big issue.All data used in it have been taken from Secondary Education Management Information System (SEMIS) for the year 2009-10. This paper is divided into three sections. Introduction and development of secondary education is discussed in first section. In the second section access to Secondary Education is discussed**.** Thethird section embodies concluding remarks and *policy implication.*

Keywords: Secondary education, status, accessibility,

Section I

Education is the long term investment in the human capital. It is one of the most powerful instrument for reducing poverty and inequality in society. Therefore ensuring access to quality education for all is central to the economic and social development of the country.India is a very vast country not only in terms of its population size but also in its geographical area and social diversity. The country is divided into 35 administrative units known as the statesand union territories. At present there are 28 States and 7 Union Territories in India.India's total population is 1210193422 with male population 623724248 and female population is 586469174. Density of Population is 382. Sex Ratio of the national average of 940 (Cenus 2011).

Literacy is considered as one of the most basic indicators of educational development of any area. It may therefore be appropriate to look at the literacy figures of the nation. According to Census of India 2011, total Literacy rate of India is 74.04 percent, male Literacy rate is 82.14 percent and female literacy rate is 65.46 %. The increase in total Literacy rate from 2001 to 2011 is 9.00 %.

Secondary education normally takes place in secondary schools, taking place after primary education and may be followed by higher education or vocational training. Secondary education serves as a link between the elementary and higher education, and plays a very important role in this respect. A child's future can depend a lot on the type of education she/he receives at the secondary level. Apart from grounding the roots of education of a child, secondary education can be instrumental in shaping and directing the child to a bright future. Secondary stage of education serves to move on higher secondary stage as well as to provide generic competencies that cut across various domains of knowledge as well as skills,Providing secondary education to all, both boys and girls, with a focus onquality education assumes greater meaning today, when we consider the emerging issues and challenges. Instantly, economic aspirations and also the

democratic consciousness particularly among marginalized sections of population such as the dalits, tribals, OBCs, religious, linguistic minorities and girls seek space in the secondary education system for greater access, participation and quality of secondary Education. (CABE Report-2005)

One of the main challenges for policymakers is to ensure that secondary education should be accessible to young people. In many countries, inequity in access to secondary education is a major barrier to human development, and therefore to economic growth and poverty reduction. Despite significant growth in secondary school enrollments in recent years, developing countries still face enormous challenges. Whereas the primary school completion gap between rich and poor countries has diminished, the gap in the proportion of the population with secondary education has widened in the past 40 years. (World Bank 2009)

Development of Secondary Education

The development of secondary education in India has been mainly theresponsibility of state and UT governments and the role of central government in thisregard has been remained quite marginal. However, it seems that the states, by and large, have beenfocusing more on the elementary education and they have not been able to allocateenough resources on secondary education. Thus, secondary education has got low priorityin many states of the country. It may, therefore, be perceived that the pace of growth in secondary education sector is relatively slow as compared to elementary education.It may be noted that secondary education in India is so far neither compulsory nor free for all children of the country. Further, unlike elementary education, there is no Constitutional directive to provide secondary education to all the children as neither Article 45 of the Constitution nor the Right to Education (RTE) Act 2009 covers the secondary level of education. It is, therefore, clear that there is no official commitment for the universalization of secondary education in the country so far. However, as a result of successful(not 100 percent) implementation of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) programme in the whole country for about 10 years now, it is found that tremendous progress has been made in the area of elementary education and, therefore the demand for secondary education has also increased.

It may be mentioned here that Government of India had set up a committee of CABE on "Universalization of Secondary Education" in September 2004. This submitted its report in 2005. One of the recommendations of this committeewas that "each state should develop a perspective plan for universal secondary education.In order to develop the perspective plan, a comprehensive Secondary EducationManagement Information System (SEMIS) should be developed as early as possible. The SEMIS must especially provide for capturing data on girls, SC/ST, OBC, minorities anddisabled children"As a result of the above mentioned recommendation of the CABE committee twodevelopments took place in the country and these are as follows.One, a nationwide programme on secondary education was launched in thecountry. This programme known as Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) hasbeen launched in March 2009 by Government of India in collaboration with stategovernments. NUEPA developed a framework and operationalized SecondaryEducation Management Information System (SEMIS) in the country and this was launched in 2009-10 and is now operational in all the states and union territories of thecountry.The RashtriyaMadhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) programme has beenimplemented in all the states and union territories since 2009-10 and all the districts ofthe country have been covered under this programme. The vision of this programme is toprovide good quality education available, accessible and affordable to all young personsin the age group of 14-18 years.

Schools/Colleges imparting secondary and Higher Secondary Education

Information on various items related to secondary and higher secondary education hasbeen collected under the Secondary Education Management Information System(SEMIS) that has been managed by NUEPA at the national level. Under this system, dataare collected from all schools imparting secondary and higher secondary education onvarious items and all these schools provide data by filling up a Data Capture Format (DCF) developed for the said purpose. These data areaggregated at the national level by NUEPA.The following Table 4 presents the number of schools/colleges impartingsecondary and higher secondary education in India

Table 1: Number of Schools/Colleges imparting Secondary and Higher Secondary Education (2009-10)

No. of Schools/Colleges imparting Secondary Education (IX-X)	166327
No. of Schools/Colleges imparting only Higher Secondary Education (XI-XII)	28493
Total No. of Schools/Colleges imparting Secondary and Higher Secondary Education	194820

Source: NUEPA (2012): SEMIS 2009-10

Table 1 shows that the total number of educational institutionsimparting secondary and higher secondary education, as reported in SEMIS, was 1, 94,820 in the year 2009-10. No. of Schools/Colleges imparting Secondary Education for grade (IX-X) is 166327. No. of Schools/Colleges imparting only Higher Secondary Education (XI-XII) is only 28493. Hence it is evident that the number of schools with respect to the requirement is not appropriate. Interventions in terms of availability of the secondary schools are required.

Section - II

Ensuring equitable distribution of educational facilities and opportunities is the cornerstone of strategies to overcome educational deprivation and the expansion of education among the masses. Access to secondary education has long been considered as an essential pre-requisite to improve the social and economic status of the people because it prepare the children to be skilled and successfully enter in the higher education sphere.. Access to Secondary Education Despite the centrality of access to secondary schooling as a necessary condition to achieve successful universalization of primary as well as secondary education. Education for All (EFA) initiatives have long neglected transitions and the quality of secondary provision. The access to secondary education can be seen in terms of the number of Secondary schools available in the region. Table 2 presents total number of secondary schools bycategory in India.

Table 2 presentsthe absolute number as well as percentage of government, private aided and private unaided secondary schools in India as reported in SEMIS 2009. It is clear from the table values thatthere are 1, 66,327 secondary schools in thecountry (covered under SEMIS) in 2009-10. Out of which 77766 schools are government schools, which constitutes forty eight percent. It is a cause of concern for policy makers that government schools are lesser than fifty percent whereas it should be hundred percent responsibility of the state to provide secondary education. Private aided schools are 34816 in number which constitutes about nineteen percent. Generally the fee structure of these schools is comparatively high as compared to government schools.Private Unaided Schools are 53745 in number which constitutes about thirty two percent. These schools charge high fees from students and teachers are exploited by paying less and always compromise with quality. With the rise in income inequalities in the society and widening gap between the rich and poor in India in the last decades and after the policies of Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization, school education has not remained in the reach of the masses. Secondly, the lesser number of government schools lower than the requirement is another concern which needs immediate intentions.

Table 2: Total Number of Secondary Schools by Category (2009-10)

Government Schools	77766	48.75
Private Aided Schools	34816	18.95
Private Unaided Schools	53745	32.31
Total Number of Schools		166327

Source: NUEPA (2012): SEMIS 2009-10

The data presented in the above Table 3 reveal that in the country, for every 7,276 persons there is a secondary school. These figures show the access position of secondary education. Number of schools available per lakh population can be taken as an indicator formeasuring the access to schooling facility. Table shows that in India there are 13.74 schools available per lakh population. It shows that the position of access to secondary education in India is far away from satisfactory. Data also present the averagegeographical area served by each secondary school. In India each school serves to about 19.76 square kilometer area. The reason for such a disappointing picture of access to secondary educationin India is that the population andthe density of population is high. From all the table values it can the concluded that secondary schooling facilities are worst in the country. It is, therefore,desired that more secondary schools are required to be opened in the country. Indian government should give priority to the development of secondary education and open more secondary schools to meet the demand for secondary education.

Table 3: Accessibility of Secondary Education in India

Population (2011)	1210193422
No. of Schools	166327
Population served by each school (in Persons)	7276
Area in Square Kilometers	3287240
Area Served by each school (in sq.kms.)	19.76
Schools available per lakh population.	13.74

Sources: (1) Census of India 2011 and (2) NUEPA (2012): SEMIS 2009-10

Section III

Conclusion

It can be concluded that facilities related to the provision of secondary education

Is not satisfactory inIndia, over-all the position of access tosecondary education is bleak. The number ofsecondary

schools per lakh population is very low. Because of high population and high density of population, accessibility of secondary education is a big issue in the country. Further, secondaryschools are generally ill-equipped as a considerable percentageof schools do not have even basic facilities available on the school premises. It is, therefore, desired that government may give more attention in their plans towards the development of education in general and towards development of secondary education inparticular. The government should take full benefits from the public money insecondary education should work with full commitment and sincerity. Indian government should make efforts towards capacity building of their educationalfunctionaries as well as teachers working in these schools.As the demand for secondary education increases, there must be an accompanying emphasis on increasing the quality and relevance of that education. The demand for high skilled workers to actively and effectively participate in the global economy is driving the push for quality and relevance. Policymakers and educators must re-examine every facet of the secondary education system to ensure that young people are gaining the skills and knowledge that they need to be successful in today's world. Only through increasing quality and relevance, secondary education can truly serve as a catalyst to economic growth and poverty reduction.

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