**ALTERATION IN INDIAN EDUCATION – BOON OR BANE**

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*“The education system should be always an evolving process by itself”*

* *Sadhguru*

**ABSTRACT**

The education system in India is quite old and complex. Undoubtedly, India has produced many brilliant minds that are making us all proud. However, the Indian education system is not that developed as compared to other countries. So it’s really important to grow and evolve with time or else India will soon be left behind in the race of development. We are still stuck with the same theory and exam pattern which is making the students less knowledgeable and latent. The Indian education system is facing many issues lately which are obstructing the growth and development of students. Especially the grading system, it determines a student’s intelligence on the basis of their academic grades. Due to which students feel less confident even if they are good at other things. This system doesn’t focus on the fact that every individual has his own unique talents and judging them only on the basis of marks card makes zero sense. Hence, the children try their level best to get good marks in the exam even if they don’t exactly know what they are writing. This makes them book worms who have zero practical knowledge. They don’t get to learn things because they are part of a race where they have to get good marks or else they stand nowhere. Due to lack of practical knowledge many students have become jobless and worthless in the society. They are unable to get jobs based on their education and qualification. Such things point towards meaningful change in the education system. Around the world change is driven by new exciting research on how the brain works and how people learn. It is believed that learners should not only develop what they know but also their skills, attitudes, and values that will help them be proficient people. If this has to happen, they need to actively participate in their learning and be motivated by it. As technology is advancing so rapidly, even learning is acting as a driving change. The students have access to new tools to connect with people all over the world. Unlimited information is easily accessible with just click of a button. The teacher no longer has to hold all knowledge. They are now referred to as ‘critical coach’ who shows students how to select, work with, add to and use information in meaningful ways. Many education systems around the world are feeling challenged because they have to prepare students for today's fast-changing world. People everywhere are struggling with how to interest students in their learning. The knowledge and skills of a student must be developed for today and tomorrow's workplace, which is education or training. This paper targets about the need for alteration in the Indian education system and how this change is a boon. This research paper consists of – introduction, history of Indian education system, reasons for change in the Indian education system and the effect of covid-19 on the Indian education system.

**KEYWORDS**

Education, Technology, Knowledge, Learn, Change

**INTRODUCTION**

India is a rapidly developing country where high-quality education is of great importance for its future prosperity. India is currently in a youth bulge phase. It has the largest youth population in the world i.e. around [600 million young people](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/jan/13/india-600-million-young-people-world-cities-internet) under the age of 25. Education has a crucial role in the development of a person, thereafter, the entire nation. Even though the history of the Indian education system has some positive examples to exhibit but it has been receiving some criticism from the world nowadays and it can’t be denied that we are falling behind when it comes to education for quite a few decades now. Right to education is a fundamental right of every citizen in the country as provided in the constitution of India. The first Indian case to mention about right to education as a fundamental right was Mohini Jain v, State of Karnataka case.1 While a significant portion of the population is lacking the required facilities, the majority that manages to acquire the highest level of education moves abroad in search of better paying job opportunities. The government is paying close attention to education in India and taking every step possible to educate each and every child in India as it is a basic right. This is ensuring that the literacy rate is increasing yet there is obstruction in the process.

1. Mohini Jain v. State of Karnataka 1992 AIR 1858

**HISTORY OF INDIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM**

If we have to talk about the history of education in India, it’s definitely one of the most fascinating story to tell. Structured and organized education has been there since ancient days in India. In ancient India, education is believed to be very disciplined and well-organized during 3rd century B.C. The traditional and religious knowledge used to be the main subject of learning. During that time, tree barks and palm leaves were used as writing pads and most of the teaching was orally done by scholars and sages. Education had become more relevant in India after introducing the Gurukul System of learning which required students and teachers residing together, the knowledge had to be passed generations after generations. Philosophy, religion, medicine, warfare, astrology, etc were the main subjects of teaching. Another unique feature of this education was that it was freely available for all but was allowed a voluntary contribution called ‘Guru Dakshina’ which was mostly afforded by few well-to-do families at the end of the courses. The first millennium began to see the starting of universities like the Takshashila University, Nalanda University and Ujjain. Each of the universities specialized in a subject, where Takshashila focused on medicine, university in Ujjain focused on astronomy, whereas, Nalanda covered almost all the branches of study. Education was widely spread with the availability of schools in most of the villages in India, during the 18th century.. Secular institutions cropped up along Buddhist monasteries. These institutions imparted practical education, e.g. medicine. Many urban learning centres became increasingly noticeble from the period between 500 BCE to 400 CE. Some of the important urban centres of learning were [Nalanda](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nalanda) and [Manassa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manassa) in Nagpur. These institutions passed on knowledge and allured quite a number of foreign students to study topics like [Buddhist Páli literature](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhist_P%C3%A1li_literature), [páli grammar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/P%C3%A1li_grammar), etc. [Chanakya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chanakya) who was a Brahmin teacher, was considered the most famous teachers, linked with founding of [Mauryan Empire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mauryan_Empire).

[Brahmin gurus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brahmin) and Sammanas earlier offered education through donations instead of charging fees or by obtaining funds from students or their guardians. Eventually, stupas, the temples also became centres of education and religious education was compulsory for all , but even secular subjects were also taught there. Students were needed to be brahmacaris or celibates. The knowledge in these orders was often linked to the tasks a certain section of the society had to carry out. The priest class or the [*Sammanas*](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Sammana&action=edit&redlink=1) were passing on knowledge of religion, philosophy, etc whereas the warrior class or the [*Kshatriya*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kshatriya) were trained in warfare. The business class or the [*Vaishya*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vaishya), were taught trading and the working class or the [*Shudras*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shudra) were generally deprived of educational advantages.

The present system of education was introduced by the British in the 20th century, by the recommendations of Lord Macaulay. The British government did not recognize the traditional system of education in India so they declined gradually. Gandhi said that the traditional educational system represented a ‘beautiful tree’ which was destroyed during the British rule.

The first medical college was started in Calicut, Kerala in 1942-43 during the second world war. The shortage of doctors to serve in the military made the British Government decide to open a branch of Madras Medical College in Malabar, which was under Madras Presidency. Post independence, education had become the responsibility of all the states and the Central Government coordinated the technical and higher education by specifying the standards.

In 1964, the Education Commission started functioning which consisted of 16 members where 11 were Indian experts and 5 were foreign experts. This Commission also spoke with many international agencies, experts and consultants in the educational as well as the scientific field. Then in 1976, the education became the responsibility of both the state and the Centre through a constitutional amendment.

The central government through the Ministry of Human Resource Development's Department of Education and the governments at the states prepared the education policy and planning. The National Policy On Education, 1986 and the revised Programme of Action,1992 visualized that free and compulsory education should be provided for all children up to 14 years of age before the beginning of 21st century. Also, the Government of India made a commitment that by 2000, 6% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) will be spent on education, out of which half of it would be spent on the Primary education.

Atal Bihari Vajpayee who was the prime minister back then announced setting up of Vidya Vahini Network in November, 1988 to link up universities with UGC and CSIR. The general marks-based education system was being replaced by the grades-based system.

Education in modern India started with the British era which also led to the study of English language which was given more importance than other language learning. The current education system in India was an idea presented by Lord Macaulay in the 20th century who believed that Indians should acquire modern education so that they come out of their traditional thoughts, interests, morals and intelligence. The western education in India noticed the setting up of several missionary colleges in several parts of the country. After independence, the education sector was mainly controlled by the central government but gradually became a joint effort by the central and the state governments because of constitutional amendment in 1976. By the time 21st century began ,there were education policies and planning like the free and compulsory education for children till 14 years of age and the plan to spend 6% of GDP in education, focusing on primary education more. Even though, India has a rich past when it comes to education, the country is still burdened by high percentage of illiteracy and also high rate of school dropouts.

**REASONS FOR CHANGE IN THE INDIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM**

The Indian education system needs a total mending. We have to stop focusing only on degrees and numbers. We have to focus on merit and quality education. High numbers of enrollment is not a thing to be proud of. Instead of focusing only on enrollments and given them almost fake degrees and certificates, we should guide them towards knowledge, information and self-employment. The Indian teaching system does not really give any worldly or practical knowledge. Our system is centered only on giving admissions and taking exams and determining the student’s intelligence based on marks. In order to de-stress the students, easy ways are being adapted to pass them. They barely have any insight and understanding. The teaching methodology is just about enrollments and pass marks.

There is a fixed curriculum at every level and everyone is expected to stick to that. Complete knowledge is being confined to a few hundred pages. However, there are large numbers of learners who do not study those few hundred pages. They get into these malpractices like shortcuts and cheating. We must follow our own methods which is according to the Indian needs and environment. With the implementation of internal assessment, exam system is completely weak. This method has even given more freedom for students to refer from approved course readings. This is somewhat like a legal cheating process. Nobody understands the Indian realities and needs.

There are so many careers to pursue but in our situation, emphasis is given only to get a permanent and white collar jobs or else a better government job with all the benefits without any accountability. Education should make parents more open minded. Parents are considered the first teachers and home is the first kindergarten for children. The understanding of the parents is how the children will know about the diverse profession choices that are available to them. For example, the farm and agriculture sector have the largest employment opportunities.

There is shortage of qualified teachers which is a big problem in the country. Educators play the most important role in the life of a student. They are like a second mother, who have the expertise and provide the necessary information for students. We live in a period where teachers shape lives, futures and morals. A doctor’s duty is to save the life of a child by proper medical treatment but a good educator can fulfill the core of the child and alleviate him to successfully live. It’s crystal clear, teachers are saints yet they get criticized. They do not have the required support nor do they have any rights or the benefits. Educational programmes are controlled and set up by bureaucrats, who barely have any knowledge or understanding of the real world issues. Only the real educators are to be appointed as specialists and policymakers of the country. This is what attracts talent and empowers the system to face the challenges. We do not give an educator as much as a bureaucrat or a specialist. The situation in state-funded institutions is very pathetic. They have terribly poor infrastructure. Importance should not be for free and compulsory education. However, the importance should be only on quality education. Non-serious students should not be forced to study.

Everybody deserves to get an equal chance to get into the universities who have higher merit. No emphasis should be given to caste, religion or region. Only the poor and people deprived of basic priviledges are to be funded by the state. More attention is to be given to the education of girls. All the learners should be sensitized about the rights of girls. Educational institutions should only be about education and knowledge.

There shouldn’t be any kind of competition among the schools. Ranking should be done on educational institutions. This technique forces the institutions and boards to manipulate or inflate marks and grade. Even the HRD has stopped this practice. Institutions, students and parents must be ready to face the truth, howsoever unattractive it may prove. This is a very important step in the reforms. For example, a few years back, the CBSE suspiciously gave 95 marks in math to each and every student who actually got marks ranging from 79 to 95 marks, and illogically inflated the English marks of all the Delhi students by 12 marks. In Uttar Pradesh, there are examples of 100% moderation, e.g. students with 28% marks in chemistry being given 56% marks in their final results. To avoid manipulation and inflation of grades marks, will create faith in the exam system. This is a unscrupulous method used to get better the quality of education in the country. The grading system is so inaccurate that it fails to give the real picture to the parents and students. The secondary results data hold very valuable information for policymakers and educators. This helps in identifying high and low performing students, schools, regions, socio-economic segments for curative actions.

Satisfaction levels of the students and parents, infrastructure, faculty salary and numbers, environment friendliness, discipline etc are the parameters which should be encouraged. Education policymakers and the exam boards need to seriously consider reforms on the actual performance of schools and colleges in examinations, to improve quality of education and career.While we all understand how crucial education is to shape our lives, it has also been a major problem in our country. We cannot refuse the fact that the Indian government and other institutions are working to improve the existing education system. Although, there are still various issues which are required to be taken care of.

Here are the 7 immediate changes needed in the Indian education system:

1. Rote learning -

We have evolved with time but we still have not been able to move away from rote learning. As we know that IB schools are changing the education system at their level, but we also need to understand that the population that goes to IB schools is very limited in nature. It should also be in kept in mind that not everyone can afford the kind of education system that they offering. Hence, the government needs to take the baton in their hands and eradicate rote learning from the schools at all the levels. The schools should be encouraged to introduce theoretical or the conceptual learning which avoids students to mug up what they are being taught. While this will help students to understand the concepts better, they will also be able to remember and apply them better.

1. Evaluation system –

Marks are still continuing to play the most important criteria in deciding the children’s future and this often comes down upon students as a burdening factor. The pressure to get the highest marks is often the reason why students underperform. Instead of focusing the evaluation on a three-hour exam, the focus of evaluation should be classroom participation by a student, projects, communication and leadership skills and extra-curricular activities.

1. Equal respect to all subjects –

We continue to survive in the education system where science stream topples the stream hierarchy. Students should preferably be pushed to pursue the subject that they are interested in instead of creating a differentiation between the subjects.

1. Better training of educators –

Teachers definitely play the major role in schools and therefore they must be given the best of the class training. After all, they are shaping the future of the nation, the children. Teachers are often considered as second parents. Thus, they should pass on their training in such a way that they are like parents to children who are away from their homes. While teaching, they should create a sociable and pleasant atmosphere where students can feel the empathy and comfort in the classroom which then is reflected in their behaviors.

1. Introduction of technology –.

We are living the renaissance of technology and in such a state, technology and education system cannot be kept apart. Students must be accustomed with technology right from the beginning years of their education so that it does seem like an alien thing for them later. Indian schools must adapt to technology and education and cultivate the same to the students as it is there and where their future lies.

1. Personalize education –

Indian education has to realize that not every student can absorb or learn things faster. Thus, the teaching method also cannot be the same for every student in a class of 50.Some students have faster learning pace and some are slow. Teachers must have a keen eye on observing each of their students. While it is not at all humanly possible for one single teacher to pay attention to each and every student, schools must start using technologies like artificial intelligence and chatterbots which become a helping hand to many teachers as well as students.

1. Teach them the purpose of education –

It should be about humanism. Students must also be taught meticulously about the morals of life and humanistic values. Children should be taught that life is beyond money and that success is never measured in money. If the Indian education system starts taking these points into serious consideration, we can attain the level of the best education system in the world. It is high time that our country should start taking education above the mediocre level that we have implanted and recognize education from holistic approach.

1. Encourage Research Work -

Most of the time our educational system fails to reward those who deserves the highest academic honor. That is why we need an arrangement that will acknowledge the actual contribution. This will help us changing our educational system at a better rate. This will encourage more research and innovation work.

1. Introduction to Different Opportunities -

We are still living in a world where the science stream is considered something great and other streams are neglected. The intelligence of a student is determined on the basis of the stream he/she has chosen. They should be accustomed to several other career options and their choices should not be limited to only science or commerce or arts stream. There are about 2,000 courses on the SWAYAM portal where students can easily access these to learn new concepts as per their convenience.

10) Eradicate Reservation -

22.5% of the available seats are reserved for the SC, STs in the central-government funded higher education institutions. In India, education is not available to all and reservation is a major issue here. In order to grow as a country built on a knowledge economy, driven by highly educated persons, we don’t have to make the best education so globally available that reservation policy will lose its meaning entirely. For example, Online education doesn’t have this reservation policy because it differs. So, this is the best way to get rid of the reservation and make it insignificant.

11) Allow Private Capital in Education -

The central government spends around 4% of its budget expenditure only education. It is because anciently the government did not have the required funds to open new schools or universities in India. Also, the private investors are not much into the education sector because the profit-making is not allowed here. But if profit-making is allowed then this will encourage serious entrepreneurs, innovators and investors to take interest in the education sector.

12) Emphasize on Skills rather than Marks -

“Marks is just a number” But still our education system is more geared towards teaching and testing knowledge at every level instead of teaching skills. This, in turn, leads to underperforming students. There’s a quote – ‘Give a man a fish and you feed him one day, teach him how to catch fishes and you feed him for a lifetime.’ This means knowledge is above all, however it is largely forgotten after the semester exams are over. The schools must lay their emphasis on conceptual learning rather than rote learning. This will enhance the retentiveness rate of the education imparted.

Our current contribution to the education sector is 4.6% of GDP and the government is aiming to achieve around 6% of GDP for education in the coming years. But still, there are several other issues that need to be taken care of. The literacy rate in India is just 74.04%. According to the “Annual Status of Education Report 2017”, it was assessed that about 25% of students in the age group of 14-18 years could not even read basic text fluently in their own mother tongue, and more than half of them faced challenges in completing basic arithmetic. This shows the lack of quality education in our education system. We need to move towards quality education and not rote learning.

**The effect of Covid -19 on the Indian education system**

Covid-19 has negatively affected the education system in India. This forced the government to shut all educational institutions. But then the government provided with the e- learning program. E-learning is considered be more attention-grabbing and interactive in comparison with classroom educating. Covid-19 has prompted us to rethink the traditional mode of teaching. Online training seems to make up for the shortfall for classroom training for a interval of more than five months. Subsequently, digital training is likely to be built into mainstream training. Furthermore, it will present an open door for educators to provide you with custom-made studying solutions for each student. Covid-19 surely introduced the concept of online education and it has proven to be more efficient than classroom learning.

**CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

Education is so commercialized these days and it’s high time we alter it by making necessary changes because education like everything in this dynamic world needs to keep evolving. The education system has to help in the overall development of the individual and so that they are ready to face this challenging world. It is also observed that alteration in the education as and when required not only helps the individual grow but also helps the country develop. Altering the education system is definitely a boon as it shows how progressive a country is and also how it gives utmost importance to education.

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