

Right To Education for Human Resource Development in 21st Century India: A Policy Perspective

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Abstract: *School education is the fundamental requisite to improve human resources. A sound school system should be in place guided by 'right' policy. Firstly, this paper examines the role of school education policies in promoting human resource development. Secondly, a brief evaluation of Indian education policies will enable us to understand the areas of shortcoming. Thirdly, the paper will critically analyze Right to Education in India as the new fundamental right promised by the constitution of India, a human right and the latest public policy on school education. A rigorous analysis from policy perspective is urgent as 21st century brings new challenges for the education system in the form of globalization, liberalization of economy, multi-culturalism, increased demand for English language proficiency, a new set of soft skills, entrepreneurship and increased competition. Lastly, the paper will discuss policy options available and best suited to optimize human resource development in India.*

Keywords: *School education, human resource development, fundamental right, right to education*

I. Introduction

In recent times India has witnessed a great leap in economic growth. This success story has been possible because of economic liberalization and the opportunities it brought along in the form of free market, increased private investment, employment in diverse sectors such as Information Technology, business process outsourcing industry, retail etc. According to The Independent, 2005, the computer software development industry has grown exponentially. It continues to diversify and create jobs. Earlier the industry was offering basic computing services which turned into high level software development. Well-known companies like Motorola, Hewlett-Packard, and Cisco Systems bank on Indian software development. Bangalore is now known as the Indian Silicon Valley owing to the unprecedented growth and proliferation of information and technology based companies (The Independent, Sunday, 21st August, 2005, p 8). India has increasingly become the chosen destination for out-sourcing and off-shoring research and development facilities. A large number of youth have been able to secure jobs in call centers on account of English language skills. India is most sought after choice by many UK companies for out-sourcing of jobs (People Management, 1st June 2006, p13). The credit for this economic growth also goes to awakening of the nation's political class towards the urgent need of developing human resources through education as is evident by the increased budgetary allocation to education and various reforms to invigorate the system. The demand for accelerated educational reforms has been more nuanced and collective after the 1990's liberalization policies came into effect.

Positive relation between education and human resource development is well established as it is at the heart of the development process. Though India adopted the path of a planned economy to ensure attention is paid to all important areas such as agriculture, industry, technology and science, health and social welfare, the education sector remained largely neglected till the early 1960's when the first National policy on education was formulated and implemented from 1968. This policy and various other revised versions could not achieve the targets of universal primary education and universal elementary education. Literacy rate after more than 60 years of independence is near 74%, which means that illiteracy and inadequate access to schools along with poor quality of education remains the biggest hurdle in effective human resource development and to meet the challenges of 21st century.

This paper explores the role of Indian school education policies in human resource development. It will attempt to find out ways in which education policymaking has affected the human resource development; the demands of human resource development in 21st century; whether school education supported by Right to Education can meet these demands; policy options available and best suited to optimize human resource development in India in the context of the 21st century challenges.

II. Methodology

This paper draws from the case study work to evaluate the changes in school education with the implementation of right to education act, 2009. Field work was undertaken in Guwahati metropolitan area from Aug 2010 to Jun 2011 through interviews with important stakeholders in school education sector including

teachers, school principals, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan officials, teacher-training instructors, research scholars, parents and educationists. Primary data regarding present status of school education, implementation of Right to Education in last three years, shortcomings and possible positive outcomes was collected through school surveys and direct observation. Further, a theoretical linkage with human resource development in India in the context of the 21st century was made using literature surveys.

III. School Education and its impact on Human resource development

At the outset, it is important to understand what is meant by human resources. In education sector all persons including managers, principals, heads of educational institutes, students as well as teachers constitute human resource. Harbison and Meyers define human resource development as the process to maximize knowledge, skills and capabilities of people. When seen through the perspective of economics, it would mean effective utilization of human capital to fuel the economy's growth whereas political scientists would see it in terms of increasing the capabilities of people to effectively contribute to the political and administrative affairs through voting and debating; a sociologist would opine that the development of human resource would add to the capacities of people to live a more meaningful life in the modern world (Abdullah, 2009 a). According to Nadler and Nadler, human resource development consists of organized activities which are undertaken during certain period of time and which are responsible for effecting behavioral change (Abdullah, 2009 b). Holton states that 'human resource development aims at learning and performance, thereby profiting both the individual and the organization' (Abdullah, 2009 c). Gourlay states that in the process of human resource development the focus remain on the essentials of training and learning for the individual, and that it would formulate effective business policies as well as increase competency (Abdullah, 2009 d). According to these various definitions of human resource development it is clear that when we talk of human resource development in education, we are essentially elaborating the twofold functions of education as the process of development and as the tool for furthering the same development.

As the first and foremost aim of a public policy is welfare and development, it is imperative that education policy be regarded with special care and focus so as to promote the process of development and that the tool of education can be used effectively to enhance human resources development. Education does not simply mean an ability to read, write and use numbers. It adds to rationale understanding of the society we live in. It empowers people with knowledge and set of skills required to upgrade and develop one's own life as well as that of the community. Also, education is a major determinant of the status of other indicators of socio-economic development. Political philosophers such as Thomas Jefferson and John Dewey have recognized and emphasized the important role of education in democratic countries (Berger, 2003:626). If people are educated and well-informed they can effectively participate in the political affairs of the nation. Education makes people informed and helps them make collective demands for better social services, governance, effective and equitable use of public resources. Education also helps in alleviating poverty and child labour. With education the poor can effectively combat social ills like class and caste discrimination. So education can play a decisive role in the social upliftment of the poor as well as the marginalized as a major basis for discrimination in India is the caste hierarchy of a person. (Dreze and Sen, 2002:143). Education offers the opportunity for the poor and disadvantaged people to succeed and realize a life full of dignity, equality and freedom. Education also helps them in attaining socio-economic freedom (Millan, ActionAid). Education, especially school education is the edifice on which human resource can be developed. Educated citizens will be less dependent on government programs as they are well-equipped to be enterprising and utilize their education and skills for gainful employment. The World Bank Policy Paper on Primary Education (1990, 1995, and 1999) accepts that education, particularly primary education increases the productivity of people through improved literacy, numeracy and health status. The World Bank Study (1991, 1998) has reiterated that education enhances the people's understanding of themselves and of the world around them. It also enhances their quality of life, creativity and entrepreneurship skills.

Some examples of educational reforms from developing countries are inspiring and can be emulated. When South Korea invested first in primary education sector in 1970's, it spent four-fifths of its education budget on basic education. So the foundation of school education system and human resource development was laid (Tomasevski, 2001: 15). Bangladesh was one of the first few developing countries to implement school incentive programs. In Food for education, poor families were given wheat as an incentive while the girls who attended secondary school were paid a cash stipend. Their parents were also made to promise not to marry off them before the age of 18 years. The impacts of these programs were positive and reduced gender-parity as well as child labour (Kuenning and Amin, 2004). A few developing countries could achieve or were very near to achieving the aim of universal elementary education by improving access to basic social services, health and education. 10 countries were studied: Cuba, Cost Rica and Barbados, Botswana, Mauritius and Zimbabwe; Kerala and Sri Lanka, Malaysia and the Republic of Korea. It was found that in these countries the state supported basic social services and there was a synergy between health and educational interventions. A

nutritional floor was ensured for people as well as recognizing the 'agency' role of women; giving women the freedom to engage in work outside the home to be able to earn independently, have ownership rights and opportunity to access education (Mehrotra, 1998). Developed countries like Japan and the USA have a strong public/common school system. These countries have reaped the benefits of an educated and skilled human resource. India will continue to lag behind if we ignore the Common School system funded by the government and dither in making policy level reforms.

IV. HRD Challenges in the 21st century India

The 21st century has brought along various technological advancements in the form of fast computing, information system, increased innovations, and inter-dependence of countries for resource and technology flow, multi-national corporations, global economy instead of localized national economies and so on. The Indian economy has also undergone a sea change owing to the policies of liberalization and open economy starting from the 1990's. However, these phenomena pose a big challenge to the existing industries and the manpower resources. Some of the major challenges to the human resource development in India can be explained as following.

1. **Globalization and changes in the Indian economy.** The economy is not just about manufacturing and trade as there have been various changes. Now the jobs, businesses are more in the nature of service providers like Information and Technology, knowledge and research-based, innovation and creativity oriented. More and more doors open for specialized jobs which require constant skills up-gradation.
2. **Organization and Functions.** Companies have changed in organizational structure and functioning. Earlier businesses were relatively small, family-owned and were run privately whereas nowadays the companies are open to public investment. The organizations have become more complex where human resources are major asset and managing it, developing and its optimum utilization has become a specialist job. High level of specialization is critical as the industries demand skill intensive technology.
3. **New, different skills required.** The workers as well as the managers are facing multidisciplinary and complex problems where they have to think out-of-the-box, communicate effectively and showcase good team work and interpersonal relations. Soft skills, Computer literacy and increased proficiency of English are demanded for better cross-cultural communication. It means that skills and competencies through education are very important and only quality education can promote these. The facilities for soft skills training further the learning of the hard skills so we see the complementary relation between the two.
4. **Increased competition.** With the expansion of market and increased presence of foreign companies, the competition has become manifold. On one hand this has raised quality standards and on the other the competition requires competent and well qualified employees. The workers have to be more responsible and contribute positively to production through innovation and creativity. They have to be more flexible and adaptable to sudden changes and new requirements.
5. **Endemic poverty and illiteracy.** In a vast country like India, problems of poverty and illiteracy have been major hurdles in effective utilization of the human resource available. The government is hard pressed to make effective policies and increase investment in social sectors to provide basic services like education, health and food security. We need education which boosts productivity, growth and employment and also reduces poverty through redistributive effect.
6. **Insurgency and political instability.** The states like Jammu and Kashmir, Assam, Odisha and Jharkhand are ridden with various conflicts of terrorism, regionalism, naxalism and insurgency. This is affecting overall development of many regions in the country. Combating these problems and bringing peace is the foremost priority for the government to be able to implement development plans. The preamble of UNESCO's general conference in 1946 starts with the sentence, 'Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed.' (Dobinson, 1953) It is universally accepted that only education can bring peace and development.
7. **Population and increasing urbanization.** The problems of population explosion and rapid urbanization create challenging scenarios for the policymakers and planners where they have to plan for providing housing, sanitation, health and welfare. It puts heavy burden on the exchequer and required funds for development have to be used to provide basic facilities to the burgeoning population in the cities. The school education has to be oriented towards science promoting agriculture, economy, health, medicine and sanitation.

V. Education Policies in India: An Analysis

The education commission headed by Dr.Kothari (1964-68) and the subsequent National Policy on Education 1968 was the first official policy signaling the Indian government's commitment to elementary education. Most important issues taken up by this policy were to establish a Common School System which could strengthen access to education and pave the way towards a socially cohesive nation. These schools would

be open to all children irrespective of their caste, creed, community, religion and economic status. The poor would also be able to send their children to these schools as these would be state-funded charging no tuition fee. This recommendation was not accepted. A review of the status of education system was again undertaken by the Ministry of education along with the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration. This resulted in the National policy on education, 1986 which laid stress on the goal of universalization of primary education. Schemes like Operation blackboard and District primary education program were introduced in 1990 to accelerate reforms and improve the status of schooling. This was followed by Acharya Ramamurti committee which reviewed the National Policy on Education 1986, resulting in a revised National policy on education 1992. For the first time, a recommendation to include Right to Education as a fundamental right in part III of the constitution was made but not implemented (Aradhya and Kashyap, 2006). Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was approved by the union government in November 2000 and laid emphasis on achieving the goal of universalization of elementary education through time-bound integrated approach (Aggarwal, 2011:555).

Despite the overall progress the education system has been plagued by vicious ills producing unemployable graduates; around 40 million youth are literate but unskilled in any trade. Indian economy loses billions of rupees every year in poor maintenance, repair and training the factory workers. According to a Union Human Resource Development ministry report around 53% of the 220 million children enrolled in primary schools drop-out before they reach 8th class. Around 8.1 million children in the age group 6-14 years are still out of school. There is a shortage of 508,000 teachers all over India (Education World, 2011: pp. 66-73.). It means that millions are semi-literate as they could not complete even elementary schooling and millions are illiterate and ignorant. The system has not been able to attract adequate number of professionally qualified teachers and also to achieve either universal elementary education or universal primary education. According to the 2011 census the literacy rate is 74 % and there are still 320 million illiterates. Gender discrimination persists with a literacy gap of 17%. The sex ratio has fallen from 927 girls to 1000 boys in 2001 to 914 girls to 1000 boys in 2011 (Education World, 2011). The process of education in India is found to be discriminatory and affect the access to education. The groups which face discrimination are the Dalits (people belonging to the lower castes), Adivasis (tribals), religious minorities and even among these, it's the girls who have to face the discrimination most (Hindustan Times, 31 Mar 2005). Irony is that these are the very groups of people which need to be lifted out of the vicious circle of poverty and inequality to improve the human resources of our country. School education and performance of students is one of the human resource indicators and the statistics show a grim picture of Indian school education system. It points at the ineffective policies and programs and their failure to meet the demands of human resource development in the modern times.

Reasons for poor policy performance as well as policy dilution leading to the dismal educational attainments are many and can be summarized under the following heads.

1. Outdated Truancy Model of Education System. In this system dating back to the pre-independent colonial times, provisions are made to monitor and punish defaulting children and parents. In the whole process the cause for truancy is not tackled with as the state/government does not take upon itself to redress the root cause of truancy, which is poverty. Indian governments, even after independence have continued to allow the outdated system which was concerned with monitoring attendance rather than providing enabling environment to realize universal primary/elementary education by tackling problems of child labour, child marriage, inadequate housing facilities, malnutrition, unemployment etc. As the National policy on education 1968 was the first official policy on education, the system continued to reel under the outdated system and educational practices (Aggarwal, 2011: 453).

2. Incremental Policies. Existing programs and policies are considered as a baseline and so the new programs or policies just increase provisions, decrease or modify the current program. The gradual increase in investment in school education through inputs like opening new schools, strengthening the infrastructure, providing mid-day meals has not brought about desired results (Hanushek, 2003). This approach is adopted to play safe and not risk major policy level changes which might require heavy investments or institutional reforms.

3. Lack of Requisite Information. When the planners and policymakers don't gather required information they cannot assess the situation very well, neither can they relate education to issues like social transformation and human resource development. Piecemeal approaches like Operation Blackboard, District Primary Education Program, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan can only bring marginal improvements whereas the requirement is of changing the orientation of the system backed by inputs from teachers, parents, scholars, academicians, along with the experts and bureaucrats.

4. Inadequate Resource Allocation. Government statistics show that between 1951 and 1955, public expenditure on education was less than 1% of the total GDP of India (GoI, 2000-2001). In 1976 though education was made a concurrent subject the central government gave no priority to education and continuously invested a less than 3 % of the GDP. Till date no central government has been able to allocate 6% of the total GDP of India promised so very often. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is criticized as being anti-poor and delegitimizing

the government school system through cost-cutting measures like Multi-grade Teaching and employing Para-teachers (Aggarwal, 2005).

5. Mismatch between Requirement and Provisions. In 1964, after a comprehensive analysis of the education system built by the British and the aspirations of the masses, Dr. Kothari recommended a Common School System. This was to strengthen the government schooling and level the diverse society. These recommendations were never implemented. The recommendation of Acharya Ramamurthi committee in 1992 of implementing Right to education as a fundamental right also met with the same fate. Instead we have had programs funded by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank and policies dictated by market forces. As a result the government schools have deteriorated but the private schools charging heavy fees in the form of capitation fees and donation have mushroomed. These schools serve exclusively the rich and the poor are left at the mercy of non-functioning government schools.

6. Institutional Malpractices. Beginning with fake registrations of buildings, overestimation in works and construction, to projecting inflated figures of enrolment for financial-aids or salaries of the teachers, wastage and pilferage in mid-day meal provision, multi-level teaching, para-teachers go on to weaken the public trust in government schooling system. Instances of overloaded teachers employing a high school pass-out to teach students for a lowly salary also abound.

7. Lack of Political Will. A reputed social activist, in his study of annual national budgets remarks that during 1951-1961 the provision of article 45, which read as, 'the state shall endeavour to provide, within a period of 10 years from the commencement of this constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years', lay under a lid; there was not to be found a passing reference to education let alone to article 45 in the budget speeches (Jain, 2008). Later in 1976, education was removed from the state list and placed in the concurrent list so as to give the central government a bigger responsibility in providing education to the masses. With this also no notable change took place in the education scene; the literacy rate was only 52.21 % in 1991 (Sripati and Thiruvangadam, 2004). Even the Right to Education could be enacted as the fundamental right after 16 years of delay as in 1993, the Unnikrishnan judgement made education a fundamental right but the legislation to this effect came through in 2009. The political parties know that elections cannot be won by promoting education so they are least interested in planning and funding for education policies.

8. Lack of Popular Support. People in India galvanize into action when it is an issue of poverty, religion, language, and region as is seen during elections. In absence of awareness and education, issues of welfare like health and education continue to be neglected even by the public. Lack of political voice of the poor and illiterate and utter disregard by the intelligentsia maintains the status quo. The governments continue to adopt cost-cutting measures like multi-level teaching and employing Para-teachers in absence of serious concern and public demand for expansion in schooling system. When it comes to implementation of policies, the local politics interferes and directs the process. The pressure groups have not been as persuasive and proactive at the stage of policy making as that of implementation. This result in local political interests and pressures to direct the policy process and the target groups don't get benefit (Subbarao and Raney, 1995).

VI. Right to Education as Public Policy in India

Right to Education has been recognized as a human right as early as in 1948 with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 26 of the declaration proclaims that, 'Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory... education shall be directed to the full development of human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among racial or religious groups...'. But it is a matter of great concern that more than 776 million adults in the world are illiterate (Taylor, ActionAid). All these people who could not get education have been violated and Right to Education is the tool through which these people can claim their right from their respective governments/states. Like all other rights, the Right to Education is also an obligation on the governments which can be held accountable whenever and wherever violations take place. Education strengthens people's social position by enhancing their knowledge, skills and confidence to deal with the government agencies. Also, the Right to Education is a right enabling people to claim; realize their other social and economic rights.

According to the Amman Affirmation, the Right to Education is a right to participate in and live a meaningful life of the modern world through education. Vast majority of countries have signed up and ratified UN conventions on the Rights of the Child and 76 countries give full constitutional guarantee to the Right to Education, 29 countries give partial constitutional guarantee to the Right to Education (Tomasevski, 2001: 18). Many countries have provided legislative and administrative frameworks to ensure that these rights are realized in practice. Most of the countries giving constitutional right of education have followed the strategy of enacting official legislation first and then follow it with actual reforms. A good example of this strategy is Mexico. On the other hand, some countries like Nicaragua implemented important changes to reform school governance with hardly any legal framework. Both of these strategies have benefits and shortcomings (Gershberg, 1995).

According to the political setup and social conditions of the country a specific approach to educational reforms may be adopted. Another example of right to education guaranteed by constitution is South Africa (1996, Constitution), section 29 (Berger, 2003). So far, in India educational reforms have been made without a legal framework. With the right to education legislation a much needed legal framework is drawn up.

In India the way for right to education was paved with the Unnikrishnan Judgement in 1993 by the Supreme Court. It held that 'though the right to education is not stated expressly as a fundamental right, it is implicit in and flows from the right to life guaranteed under article 21 and must be construed in the light of the directive principles of the constitution.' Now under the Indian constitution, Article 21 –A reads, 'every child between the ages of 6-14 years has a fundamental right to education which the state shall provide in such manner as the state may by law determine.' Right to free and compulsory education act was passed in August 2009 and came into effect from 1st April, 2010. This parliamentary act makes Right to Education the official policy on education. It is now mandatory for the government to expand the government schooling system and provide education of equitable quality to the children of the target group. A provision of reservation of 25% seats at first standard level in elite government schools like the Kendriya Vidyalayas and Navodaya Vidyalayas as well as government-aided and even in private schools is made for the poor and the disadvantaged; they will benefit regardless of their caste status. The government will pay for their education till they complete elementary education. The provision of a National Curriculum Framework (NCF) can work positively to bring all students countrywide at par and also strengthen the feelings of unity and national cohesion. The provision of School Management Committees (SMC) is yet another step to ensure people's participation. The School management committees can also make the teachers as well as the government more accountable.

The Right To Education Act has been subjected to severe criticism from various quarters for its glaring shortcomings, the first being the age of the child. The act limits the right to ages 6-14 years whereas India as a signatory to the United Nations Child Rights Convention (CRC) has accepted the international definition of a child, which is 'a person up to 18 years'. Thus, the act turns a blind eye to the needs of 0-6 year's group of children which is a formative stage and at 14 years of age the child would hardly be in the 9th standard. One cannot get a decent job or even qualify for a vocational diploma without a 12th pass certificate. This means that the act leaves the poor children after they have completed 8th standard to their own destinies. It is clear that such children thrown out of free schooling would be forced to take up labour work. Thus, the menaces of child labour remain to plague the society. There cannot be meaningful human resource development when such a large number of children are being denied the opportunity to schooling and education. This neglect in policymaking further weakens the capacity of the human resources and affects the quality as well as pace of development. The concept of 'free schooling' needs broader definition as studies show that it is not just tuition fee/school fee but other expenses such as stationery, uniform, shoes etc. which become a barrier to access to education for the poor. The provision of automatic promotion up to 8th standard cannot ensure learning. Continuous up-gradation of skills, periodic training and effective learning is a prerequisite of human resource development and is being grossly undermined through this provision. The concept of neighbourhood school is also subject to the government's interpretation and not exactly refers to the immediate neighbourhood of a child. These schools cannot be expected to serve the masses and bridge the social gap as could be done by the Common school system. At the best, it is a half hearted approach towards the public schools fully funded by the government. These provisions are not positive and make the right to education more of a right to schooling with issues of quality education still getting sidelined.

VII. Suggested Policy Options

According to Katarina Tomasevski, UN special rapporteur on right to education, only a human rights approach with following requisites can make sound education system.

1. **Availability.** This means that schools should be established in adequate numbers according to the number of school-age children; that the education should be free and government-funded; that the infrastructure is adequate and that trained teachers are available to support education-delivery.
2. **Accessibility.** This means that the schooling system is non-discriminatory where entry is accessible to everyone irrespective of their caste, class, gender, physical disability and religion. Also it means that positive measures are used to promote an inclusive education.
3. **Acceptability.** This means that the content of education, curriculum, medium of teaching, methods of teaching is relevant, age-appropriate, culturally appropriate, non-discriminatory and of equitable quality. The schools should be safe places and teachers are professionals.
4. **Adaptability.** This means that the education and schooling system is able to evolve with the changing needs of society and can contribute to tackle the societal problems like poverty, gender discrimination and child labour. The content of education should be such that it can be adapted and used for local issues (Tomasevski, 2004)

Now that the right to education has been declared a fundamental right to children, it is logical to shape the policy according to the human rights approach. Incorporating this theoretical approach, the policy options are:-

- Amend the age-related clause in the right to education act and include 0-6 and 14-18 years.
- Establish integrated schools: pre- school to 12th standard according to the number of school-age children.
- Incorporate skills development/vocational subjects in schools.
- Adopt an integrated approach to school education, adult education, youth development, workforce training and teacher training to fulfill 21st century requirements.
- Develop capacity of district administrative machinery and schools
- Involve parents and community in school administration.
- Promote active interface of schools with corporate bodies and businesses.

VIII. Conclusion

Globalization and an open economy has brought with it new challenges for the human resource development in the 21st century. Indian policymakers and planners have recognized the central position of education in human resource development. This is evident by increased outlays for education as well as the implementation of the right to education. Maximum access to schooling to achieve universal schooling and adequate financial support is required to boost the national development. There have been many shortcomings and gaps in policy making. Though much is being said and promised about quality of schooling, skills development, computer literacy by different forums and agencies like the human resource development ministry, National Knowledge Commission, National Curriculum Framework and the five- year plans, not enough is seen happening at schools. The goal of universal elementary education of equitable quality is still elusive. In fact, the status of majority of government schools remains pathetic; schools are still running without adequate number of teachers; basic facilities like drinking water, electricity and toilets are not made available. The Right To Education Act is unique as it gives constitutional validity to the claim of a right to education. A lengthy legislative exercise alongside with public pressure shaped a public policy on education. This augurs well for the nation as education is at the heart of the human resource development. Implementing the policy is an uphill task and is the real test for the institutions involved in delivering the services. The positive provisions of the right to education policy, if implemented in the true sense of the term at the ground level, the schools; can have positive impact on enrolment and retention. But the negative provisions will limit the benefits of the right to education. The HRD minister, Kapil Sibal stated only few days back that at least five more years are required to implement all the provisions of the right to education. So it is early to gauge the full impact of this policy on schooling system. On the whole, this policy is a bold step in erecting a legal framework and regulating the system, still it cannot be termed as a panacea for the existing schooling problems of access and quality. We cannot wait for access to schooling and then work to ensure quality education. To ensure effective human right development practices it is imperative to make the required amendments in the right to education framework and implement the positive provisions without further delay.

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