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Argasia Education PVT. Ltd. (GST NO.-09AAPCAI478E1ZH)
Address: Basement C59 Noida, opposite to Priyagold Building gate, Sector 02,
Pocket I, Noida, Uttar Pradesh, 201301, CONTACT NO:-8448440231

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In defence of India's noisy democracy **(The Hindu, Polity, GS-2)**

Context:- On one hand, India's developmental record has been much more mixed, but on the other China's developmental pathway over the last century has been spectacular. None country ever in history has grown faster and more dynamically. In China not only have hundreds of millions been lifted out of poverty at the same time social indicators have improved dramatically. Since the 1990s LPG reforms, the Indian economy has grown impressively but it remained far behind China in its global competitiveness.

Let's take a debate on Development versus Democracy:-

- The Most fundamental question remains i.e. Can development and democracy go hand in hand?
- Development prospect belongs to type of leadership?
- How can we improve the backslide in our democracy with a pace of development?

What is development?:-

- It is a process that helps to create growth, progress, positive change or the addition of physical, economic, environmental, social and demographic components. The purpose of development is a rise in the quantity and quality of life of the population, and the creation or expansion of local regional income and employment opportunities, without damaging the resources of the environment. Development is visible and useful, must include an aspect of quality change and the creation of conditions for a continuation of that change this may or may not necessarily immediately.

What authoritarian government has done in developmental perspective:-

- **Let us take the example of China:-**
 - China has uplifted hundreds of millions out of poverty and at the same time social indicators have improved dramatically.
 - China is the 1st in the rank of economy in the world in terms of PPP.
 - China is the forerunner in manufacturing and a leader in space.
 - China started from poverty and now reached Zenith by eliminating absolute poverty according to the World Bank.
 - Somewhat or the other, China has also reduced inequality.
- **What are the other examples:-**

- In Africa and West Asia there are authoritarian governments of every stripe that have dominated, and remain world economic laggards.
- Same is true to Latin American military dictatorships of the 1960s and 1970s who had a terrible economic and social record. After the tyrannic regime was over, with the return of democracy and the “pink wave” of Left populist parties that prosperity and social progress were ushered in.
- Taiwan and South Korea are also instructive in the same sense. These economies’ economic takeoffs happened under military regimes and relied on labour repression.

The Issue in Chinese developmental theories:-

- China’s development successes which can be consider as the milestone by some but there is no way to discount the human cost china had:-
 - The Great Famine that took some 35 million lives of Chinese people due to the ruler’s egoism.
 - A cultural revolution that made enemies out of neighbors such as India and somewhat Magnolia and others.
 - A one child policy that devastated families and erased a generation in china.
 - The violent systematic repression of the Uyghur Muslim and Tibetan minorities which can be considered as the most worst form of discriminations, These are not unfortunate excesses or the inevitable costs of development.

What is democracy?:-

- Democracy is good because it facilitates free human choice and it furthers the good of political participation.
- Democracy is no less a good thing. Democracy is good, both intrinsically and instrumentally. On one hand Intrinsically it is a necessary component of the ability of individuals to live freely and autonomously but on the other hand Instrumentally, it is an institutional guarantee that the policies and laws created by a government will have a reasonable fit with the fundamental interests of the people. Thus, we can say democracy is a central point of the quality of life, and a central element in the ability of men and women to live freely and autonomously as human beings.

Let's take a look at the democratic regimes:-

- India in itself is a perfect example of how development and democracy can thrive together. Let us understand in whole.
 - Kerala and Tamil Nadu have done more to improve the lives of all their citizens across castes and classes, because of their model which is based on human development, than any other States in India.
 - In Gujarat for example, The growth has been solid but accompanied by increased social exclusion and stagnation in educational achievement and poverty reduction.
 - In India there seems to be a balance between democracy and development, we can also say democracies are better at promoting inclusive growth.

Why is democracy good?

- Elected representatives have to win re-election, there by power, which means answering to a broad swath of the electorate. So democracy will always take a stand which is good for the people.
- On a broader spectrum of interests and identities, we can say that democracy not only protects against catastrophic decisions, but actually allows for forms of negotiation and compromise that can bridge across interests and even balance otherwise conflicting imperatives for growth, justice, sustainability and social inclusion.
- Democracy can master even the most complex policy goals.
- Many political and social scientists said that common good cannot and should not be determined by science, profits, technocrats or autocratic fiat.
- Indian democracy promotes equality by endowing all citizens with the same civic, political and social rights (As enshrined in our constitution). Indian democracy also protects and nurtures individuality and difference at the same time.

Why, India has not been able to achieve what china as done or issues in democracy:-

- India is too democratic, because taking tough decisions always takes a back seat. Unlike China, which is good in making and implementing key decisions about public investment and various reforms is impossible in the din of multiple and contradictory democratic voices.
- Debate of Right Vs Left many times just hovers around democracy and which kills the development potential.
- Some of the authors maintained that democratic regimes are in general less capable of managing economic development than authoritarian regimes.

- Democratic governments dependent on electoral support in the next election will typically tend to avoid choices that impose hardship on significant numbers of voters.
- Generally, democracies of the developing world, in general and India in particular, the economic elites often manage to retain disproportionate influence within a democratic electoral system.
- Elites have privileged access to the sector of political influence along with education, literacy, campaign finance.

Way Forward:-

- In Authoritarian government development depends on leadership, if leadership is visionary then development will reach to zenith as was the case of China but if leadership is rotten then economies can be laggard as seen in many cases.
- In Authoritarian government, the whims and fancies of the ruler take the central stage rather than development.
- Democracy gives room for improvement as always i.e. change in the leadership.
- A balanced approach, where a visionary leader is the prerequisite for a twinkle, at the same time peoples say and their control on the government has equal weightage.

Swarn Singh

EDUCATION IN INDIA

(GS PAPER-2, Parliament and State Legislatures, Powers, Functions and Responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies, Important Aspects of Governance)

Source- The Hindu, Indian Express, Pib, Ministry of Education, ASER Report)

Definition

- Education is derived from two Latin words “educare” which means to train or to mold, and “educere” meaning to lead out.
- Educere is usually with reference to bodily nurture or support, while educare refers more frequently to the mind.

How does Education differ from Literacy?

o “Literacy” is simply the ability to read and write. It is mostly linked to skills where education is linked with all- round development of man. It not only includes skills but also values, morals etc.

o Literacy is mostly confined to formal schooling whereas education not only includes formal schooling but also parents, family and society at large.

o In contrast with literacy, the goal of education is not necessarily the mastery of a subject but mastery of a person.

o Great philosopher Rabindranath Tagore has also dwelled on education. According to him, the aim of education is creative self-expression through physical, mental, aesthetic and moral development.

History of Education in India

- The earliest education system to develop in India was known as 'Vedic system' with the ultimate aim being complete realization of self. This system was based on 'Gurukul', which fostered a bond between the Guru & the Shishya established a teacher centric system in which the pupil was subjected to a rigid discipline and was under certain obligations towards his teacher.
- The world's first university was established in Takshila in 700 BC and the University of Nalanda was built in the 4th century BC dominated by Indian scholars like Charaka and Sushruta, Aryabhatta, Chanakya, Patanjali etc. made seminal contributions to world knowledge in diverse fields such as mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry, medical science and surgery, etc.
- Prior to the advent of the Modern School system, the content of education was mostly religious and esoteric in nature.
- Since the East India company wanted educated Indians who could assist them in the administration of the land and understand the local customs and laws well, the Britishers also made a few important strides in imparting education. Warren Hastings established the Calcutta Madrassa in 1781 for the teaching of Muslim law. In 1791, a Sanskrit College was started in Varanasi by Jonathan Duncan for the study of Hindu philosophy and laws.
- In 1835, it was decided that western sciences and literature would be imparted to Indians through the medium of English by Lord William

Bentinck's government. Bentinck appointed Thomas Babington Macaulay as the Chairman of the General Committee of Public Instruction. Macaulay's Minute is famous for the propagation of English as a medium of instruction and its 'infiltration theory'.

- In 1854, Sir Charles Wood who was the President of the Board of Control of the company sent a despatch to the then Governor-General of India, Lord Dalhousie. This is called the 'Magna Carta of English education in India.' The Wood's Despatch is known for its contribution towards regularizing the education system from school to university levels; setting up the University of Madras, Calcutta and Bombay etc.
- During the freedom struggle, several leaders like Gokhale, Ram Mohan Roy and Mahatma Gandhi worked for better education for our people, particularly women. Indigenous model of education was a major component of Gandhi's conception of Swaraj and Swadeshi.
- Post-Independence, the importance of education as a precondition for development was very well recognized by the leadership.
- In the last 20 years, education discourse in India has undergone a major transformation and new concepts such as rights-based approach to elementary education; shift in emphasis from literacy and basic education to secondary, higher, technical and professional education; the endeavour to extend universalization to secondary education; reshape the higher education scenario.

Commissions and Committees related with Education over the years

- University Education Commission (1948) under chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan – recommended making higher education

accessible to all sections of society, irrespective of region, caste, gender and region.

- Secondary Education Commission (1952) chairmanship of Dr. A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar- proposed to increase efficiency of production, diversification of high school courses, establishment of multipurpose high schools, introducing a uniform pattern throughout India and recommended the setting up of technical schools.
- Indian Education Commission (1964-66) under the chairmanship of D. S. Kothari- recommended a comprehensive reconstruction based on three main aspects -a) Internal transformation b) Qualitative improvement and c) Expansion of educational facilities.
- National Educational Policy of 1968 was formulated in accordance with the recommendations of the Kothari Commission- It recommended for – provision of compulsory education to children in the 6-14 years age group as proposed in the Indian Constitution; emphasis on regional languages in secondary schools; English had to be the medium of instruction in schools, considered Hindi as the national language and promoted the development of Sanskrit; 6 percent of the national income be spent on education.
- National Policy on Education (1986) – provide education to all sections of society esp. SCs, STs, OBCs & women; provision of fellowships for the poor, imparting adult education, recruiting teachers from oppressed groups and also developing new schools and colleges; Providing primary education to students; education be given to rural people in consonance with the Gandhian philosophy; establishment of Open Universities; promotion of IT in education ; besides opening up the technical education sector in a rather big way to private enterprise.
- National Policy on Education (1992) – The Government of India had set up a commission under the chairmanship of Acharya Ramamurti in 1990 to reassess the impact of the provisions National Policy on Education, 1986. It recommended for – The setting up of the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) as the highest advisory body to advise the Central and State Governments; focus on quality enhancement in education; stressed on developing moral values among students and bringing education closer to life.

- T.S.R. Subramanian committee major recommendations – an Indian Education Service (IES) should be established as an all India service; outlay on education should be raised to at least 6% of GDP; There should be minimum eligibility condition with 50% marks at graduate level for entry to existing B.Ed courses; Teacher Entrance Tests (TET) should be made compulsory for recruitment of all teachers; Compulsory licensing or certification for teachers in government and private schools should be made mandatory; Pre-school education for children in the age group of 4 to 5 years should be declared as a right; mid-day meal (MDM) program to be extended to secondary schools; Top 200 foreign universities should be allowed to open campuses in India.
- The central government has constituted the Kasturirangan Commission (2017) – It drafted a new education policy for India. Points to be focused on in the new education policy – Address key areas of concern – access and participation, quality, equity, research and development and financial commitment to education development.

ASER 2019 report

- The ASER 2019 survey by NGO Pratham was focused on Early childhood education. Its Key findings include:
- Status of Pre-school and school enrolment patterns among young children (age 4-8): More than 90% of young children in this age group are enrolled in some type of educational institution.
- Status of Children in early primary grades (Std I-III): The variation in age distribution which is widest in Std I, decreases in each subsequent grade. And older children continue to do better than younger ones on every task.
- Private schools perform better than the Government schools: They have a learning advantage on all the crucial factors, such as, age distribution in grade one, home factors such as affluence, mother's

education and some baseline abilities that children enter grade one with. They expose children to school-like curricula even before they have entered school.

- Role of Mother's education: Among the pre-primary section, children with mothers who completed eight or fewer years of schooling are more likely to be attending anganwadis or government pre-primary classes. Whereas their peers whose mothers studied beyond the elementary stage are more likely to be enrolled in private LKG/UKG classes.

Important Findings related to School Education in India-

- The enrolment ratios for the elementary level are close to 100 percent. In addition, the gross enrolment ratios (GER) for secondary education have also increased, even though the net enrolment ratio (NER) is still low. Moreover, data shows enrolment is largely similar across gender and castes.

o Despite increasing access, enrolment in government primary schools declined by 2.31 crores in absolute numbers from 2007-08 to 2015-16 while enrolment in private primary schools increased by 1.45 crores over the same period owing to perception of better quality of education.

o The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for Grades 6-8 was 90.9%, while for Grades 9-10 and 11-12 it was only 79.3% and 56.5%, respectively – indicating that a significant proportion of enrolled students drop out after Grade 5 and especially after Grade 8.

o As per the 75th round household survey by NSSO in 2017-18, the number of out of school children in the age group of 6 to 17 years is 3.22 crore.

- As per the 2019 Human Development Report released by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), between 1990 and 2018, mean years of schooling increased by 3.5 years and expected years of schooling increased by 4.7 years in India.
- The ASER surveys estimate that national attendance in primary and upper primary schools is 71.4 percent and 73.2 per cent respectively, with considerable differences across states.
- According to U-DISE 2016-17 data, about 19.6% of students belong to Scheduled Castes at the primary level, but this fraction falls to 17.3% at the higher secondary level. These enrolment drop-offs are more severe for Scheduled Tribes students (10.6% to 6.8%), and differently abled children (1.1% to 0.25%), with even greater declines for female students within each of these categories. The learning outcomes of those enrolled in the The schooling system needs improvement.

Stakeholders in Education – Issues, Challenges & Solutions

- Parents: “Home is the first school, parents are the first teachers.”

o Issues & Challenges

✓ Urban Families-

Lack of time spent with children leads to communication- gap/generation-gap.

Forced decisions on career- choices/selection of stream after 10th Boards, etc.

Passing the pressure to children for high grades.

High income families resort to too much donations to get their

Vocational Education: A need to tap the 'NEET' (Not in Employment, Education or Training)

- The Not in Employment, Education or Training or NEET was a little-known measure in the early 2000s to highlight the vulnerabilities faced by adolescents who had dropped out of education. It assumes even more significance now as we look at youth productivity as a whole—especially of young adults from disadvantaged and high-risk backgrounds.
- According to the OECD, youth inactivity presents the share of young people (age 15-29) not in employment, education or training (NEET) as a percentage of the total number of young people in the corresponding age group.
- Thus, NEETs include all youth left outside paid employment and formal education and training systems. They are NEET because there are not enough quality jobs being created in the system and because they have little incentives or face too high constraints to be in the education and training systems.
- According to World Bank , ILO, (2017) , in India, share of NEET youth is 32.6 (%age of youth population)
- According to OECD & Eco. Survey 2017, over 30%(30.83) of youth aged 15-29 in India are not in employment, education or training (NEETs). This is more than double the OECD(14.56%) average and almost three times that of China(11.22%).

Privatisation in Education

- **Need**

- o The status of higher education continues to be dismal as can be seen in the recently published Times Higher Education (THE) Emerging Economies University Rankings – 2018.

- o Issues in education in India – Lack of funding, poor quality of teachers, poor learning outcomes and problem of brain drain.

- o Amartya Sen says “India is trying to be the first country to become an industrial giant with an illiterate and unhealthy labour force”.

Benefits

- o Better access to infrastructure, faculty, global exposure and wider interaction with global educational institutions along with higher level research and innovation.

- o It will act as a platform for faculty exchange between different institutions resulting in better training of teachers and opening more opportunities for them.

- o It will lead to more competition in the education sector thus leading to better quality for students.

- **Challenges**

o More inequity as it will deepen the already prevalent class divide in the Indian higher education system.

o The privatisation of education has benefited mainly the parallel system of coaching classes. The middle and even the lower class people are spending a fortune on their wards' education by enrolling them in coaching classes.

o Kota in Rajasthan is a classic example of how coaching classes have turned themselves into factories. The students are under tremendous pressure to perform with no time to rest and relax. Some 24 students, taking tuitions at these coaching factories, have committed suicide in 2017, unable to cope up with the rigorous schedule of the coaching classes. And last year, nearly 450 teenagers in AP and Telangana have committed suicide, due to the pressure of academic performance.

o Privatisation will lead to commodification of education as most of the private players in education view it as a business – Issues of capitation fees, poor accountability, fake degrees, fly-by-night operators etc.

o The privatisation should not be an alibi for the corrupt and inefficient functioning of public educational institutions.

Way forward

o An independent mechanism for administering the national higher education fellowship programme should be put in place.

o A Central Educational Statistics Agency (CESA) should be established as the central data collection, compilation and consolidation agency with high quality statistical expertise and management information system should be used for predictive analysis, manpower planning and on process of Vice-Chancellors of universities is transparent and objective.

- o Link at least a proportion of the grants to performance and quality.future course corrections.

- o An expert committee should be constituted to study the systems of accreditation in place internationally.

- o Ensure effective coordination of roles of different higher education regulators, such as the UGC, All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), and restructure or merge these where needed. Amend the UGC Act to provide legislative backing to the tiered regulatory structure.

- o Create a framework to allow foreign universities of global repute to operate in India, in collaboration with Indian institutions offering joint degree programmes.

- o Ensure that the selecti

Khyati Khare

Plutus IAS