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## Education System in India: Issues and Challenges

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By

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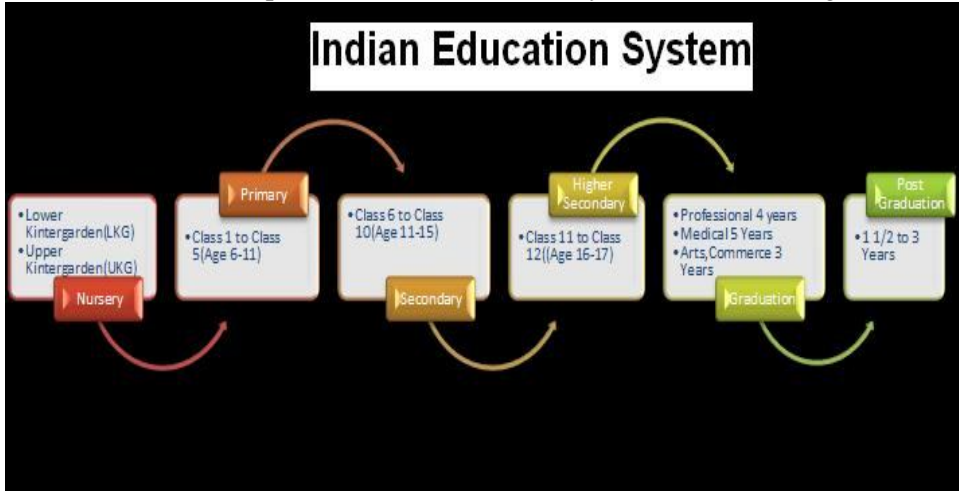
Education is an investment that pays off any time anywhere. And in a world of crumbling economies and turbulent times, where investors spend sleepless nights trying to figure out how their stocks are doing, investing in education becomes even more paramount. By investing in education, governments, corporations, communities, NGOs and individuals can help to prepare the youths for the challenges ahead. If children are really the leaders of tomorrow, then it is time we started investing in them!

All round development of personality is the purpose of education. The education system in India was completely different before the [Britishers](#) invaded India. The Gurukul system, where the young students goes to a teacher's place to complete their education was completely scrapped and new education system was chosen among top priorities (<http://studyadvisor.com/country/united-kingdom>). The [Nalanda University](#) was the oldest university-system of education in the world (Garten, Jeffrey E., 2006). Western education became ingrained into Indian society with the establishment of the [British Raj](#). Now, India's literacy rate is 82 % and it produces millions of graduates every year. [India](#) is one among few countries to have large pool of Engineers and scientists. The education in India is cheap compared to the developed as well as developing countries. The Government of India spends about 4.2 % of the total GDP expenditure (<http://studyadvisor.com/country/india>). The languages of instruction for education in school include both regional and English and English being the preferred one. Education in India is provided by the [public sector](#) as well as the [private sector](#), with control and funding coming from three levels: [central](#), [state](#), and [local](#).

Education in [India](#) falls under the control of both the [Union Government](#) and the [states](#), with some responsibilities lying with the Union and the states having autonomy for others. The various articles of the [Indian Constitution](#) provide for education as a fundamental right. Most universities in India are controlled by the Union

or the State Government. The starting class age for kindergarten is 4 and pre Kindergarten education is not *mandatory*.

The level wise break up of the Indian Education System is shown in fig. 1 as follows.



**Fig. 1: Break up of Indian Education System.**

India has made progress in terms of increasing [primary education](#) attendance rate and expanding [literacy](#) to approximately two thirds of the population [http:// www.worldbank.org.in/ WBSITE/ EXTERNAL/ COUNTRIES/ SOUTHASIAEXT/ INDIAEXTN/0,,CONTENTmdk:21493265](http://www.worldbank.org.in/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/SOUTHASIAEXT/INDIAEXTN/0,,CONTENTmdk:21493265). India's improved education system is often cited as one of the main contributors to the [economic rise of India](#) [India achieves 27% decline in poverty](#), *Press Trust of India*. Much of the progress especially in Higher education, Scientific research has been credited to various public institutions. The private education market in India is merely 5% although in terms of value is estimated to be worth \$40 billion in 2008 and will increase to \$78 billion by 2012.

The [National Council of Educational Research and Training](#) (NCERT) is the apex body for curriculum related matters for school education in India. The NCERT provides support and technical assistance to a number of schools in India and oversees many aspects of enforcement of education policies (B. Nivedita). In India, the various curriculum bodies governing school education system are:

- The state government boards, in which the majority of Indian children are enrolled.
- The [Central Board of Secondary Education \(CBSE\)](#). CBSE conducts two examinations, namely, the All India Secondary School Examination, AISSE (Class/Grade 10) and the All India Senior School Certificate Examination, AISSCE (Class/Grade 12).

- The [Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations \(CISCE\)](#). CISCE conducts three examinations, namely, the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE - Class/ Grade 10); The Indian School Certificate (ISC - Class/ Grade 12) and the Certificate in Vocational Education (CVE - Class/Grade 12).
- The [National Institute of Open Schooling \(NIOS\)](#).
- International schools affiliated to the [International Baccalaureate Programme](#) and/or the [Cambridge International Examinations](#).
- Islamic [Madrasah](#) schools, whose boards are controlled by local state governments, or autonomous, or affiliated with [Darul Uloom Deoband](#).
- Autonomous schools like Woodstock School, [Auroville](#), [Patha Bhavan](#) and [Ananda Marga Gurukula](#).

In addition, NUEPA (National University of Educational Planning and Administration) and NCTE (National Council for Teacher Education) are responsible for the management of the education system and teacher accreditation (Ferguson, N. 2003).

### **Elementary Education**

The Indian government lays emphasis to [elementary education](#) up to the age of fourteen years (referred to as Elementary Education in India Literacy Scenario in India (1951–1991)). The Indian government has also banned child labour in order to ensure that the children do not enter unsafe working conditions. Employing a child under 14 for any work will be a cognizable offence punishable with imprisonment up to two years or a fine up to Rs 50,000 or both, an increase from the current one-year jail or Rs 20,000 punishment. Repeat offenders can be imprisoned for up to three years (Times of India, 29/08/12). However, both free education and the ban on child labour are difficult to enforce due to economic disparity and social conditions (Literacy Scenario in India, 1951–1991). 80% of all recognized schools at the Elementary Stage are government run or supported, making it the largest provider of education in the Country.

### **Secondary Education**

The child enters in the secondary education after passing matric examination. The National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986, has provided environment awareness, science and technology education, and introduction of traditional elements such as [Yoga](#) into the Indian secondary school system. According to provisional totals of the latest census, literates constitute 74 per cent of total population aged seven and above (Rajasthan Talkies, 2011). However, enrolment figures show that a large number of children remained out of school, National University of Educational Planning and Administration.

## **Higher Education**

India's higher education system is the third largest in the world, after China and the United States. The main governing body at the tertiary level is the University Grants Commission (India), which enforces its standards, advises the government, and helps coordinate between the centre and the state. Accreditation for higher learning is overseen by 12 autonomous institutions established by the University Grants Commission, [http:// education.nic.in/Elementary/free%20and%20compulsory.pdf](http://education.nic.in/Elementary/free%20and%20compulsory.pdf). In India, education system is reformed. In future, India will be one of the largest education hub.

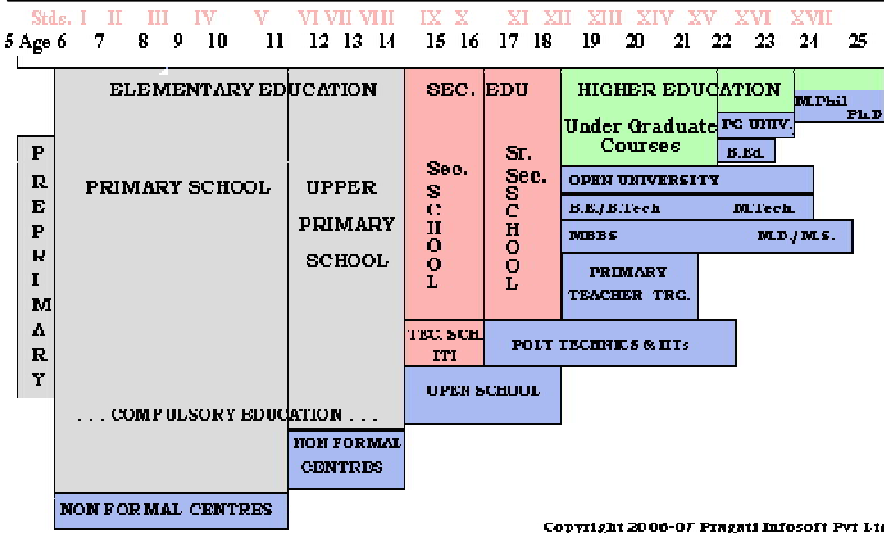
There are about 376 million degree holders in India. There are 25 million graduate degree holders other than technical degree and 3 million engineering *degree holders*. Every year almost 60000 engineering graduates come out of universities. The preferred studies are Science, Engineering and management. The minimum age for under graduate course is 18 years. Most of the undergraduate courses are 3 and 4 years long for a degree in arts or science and engineering respectively. A medical science course is much longer and leads to a 1 year service with government or private hospital.

Three Indian universities were listed in the Times Higher Education list of the world's top 200 universities — Indian Institutes of Technology, Indian Institutes of Management, and Jawaharlal Nehru University in 2005 and 2006 and Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay in top 350 in 2011 (The World University Rankings, 2011-12) and Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee got place in top 400 universities in 2012-13 (The World University Rankings, 2012 – 13). Six Indian Institutes of Technology and the Birla Institute of Technology and Science – Pilani were listed among the top 20 science and technology schools in Asia by Asiaweek "Asia's Best Science and Technology Schools". The Indian School of Business situated in Hyderabad was ranked number 12 in global MBA rankings by the Financial Times of London in 2010 ( "MBA global Top 100 rankings – FT") while the All India Institute of Medical Sciences has been recognized as a global leader in medical research and treatment, (Medical Meccas: An Oasis for India's Poorest | Newsweek Health for Life | Newsweek.com).

The figural representation of the all stages of Indian education system has been shown in fig. 2 as follows.

### **Ph. D.**

All the technical universities, universities and Research institutes who got a grant to offer the PhD degree enable students to participate actively in research. The PhD course goes on from 3 to 5 years



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Fig. 2: All Stages of Indian Education System. depending on the university and area of study.

### Issues and Challenges

However, India continues to face stern challenges. Despite growing investment in education, 25% of its population is still illiterate; only 15% of Indian students reach high school, and just 7%, of the 15% who make it to high school, graduate ([Indian education: Sector outlook](#)). The quality of education whether at elementary or higher education is significantly poor as compared with major developing nations. As of 2011, there are 1522 degree-granting engineering colleges in India with an annual student intake of 582,000, '[SPECIAL REPORT: THE EDUCATION RACE](#)' plus 1,244 polytechnics with an annual intake of 265,000. However, these institutions face shortage of faculty and concerns have been raised over the quality of education, Science and Technology Education. India's education system is divided into different levels such as pre-primary level, primary level, elementary education, secondary education, undergraduate level and postgraduate level (Sramana Mitra, 2008).

According to current estimates, 80% of all schools are government schools making the government the major provider of education. However, because of poor quality of public education, 27% of Indian children are privately educated. According to some research, private schools often provide superior results at a fraction of the unit cost of government schools (Present Education in India). However, others have suggested that private schools fail to provide education to the poorest families, a

selective being only a fifth of the schools and have in the past ignored Court orders for their regulation.

The biggest loophole is the privatization of education in India with a very less control in the hands of the Government. Donations and unexpected demands of money in the form of so called 'fine' have seemingly become a right of private institutions. Such temples of knowledge demand training fees from the students assuring them of a placement. Such an attitude of the educational institutions will cause such a major loss in Indian education that it will take decades to fulfill it.

The position of the private schools was found to be slightly better across all the Indian states. In fact, 25% of the country's students attend private schools. The declining standards of education in public schools have led parents to send their wards to private schools. Parents today are a conscious lot seeking better education for their wards. Despite construction of school buildings in the remotest of villages, class-attendance of students have declined as the parents are moving away to private schools even if the facilities offered are poor in those private institutions. So, it goes without saying that quality education is the need of the hour if one has to compete with the advanced nations. Compared to public sector schools, the results of private schools are much better (<http://sevensisterspost.com/?p=4977#>). The general education system is focused only on examinations rather than training students for the future and really testing their knowledge. Because of this, students are forced to take tests that show only their retention powers, not their actual capacity or knowledge. (P. Nalperumalsamy, 2010, Our Education System Is Only Focused On Exams. Knowledge Is Not A Priority) <http://www.outlookindia.com/article.aspx?281312>.

Recently Indian students participated in an annual convention of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) conducted every year to evaluate the education system worldwide under the auspices of OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) Secretariat. They fared very poorly. A two-hour test was conducted for more than half a million students of the average age of 15 years; they appeared for the test across 73 countries of the globe to assess their capabilities in subjects like Mathematics, Reading and Science. The results were shocking for the Indian students as they came second last (last being Kyrgyzstan) among the 73 countries in all the three categories. In the test Shanghai (China) excelled in all the categories and Asian countries were better than other continents. Even though the states of Tamil Nadu and Himachal Pradesh are considered as excelling in the education system, yet the students of the states who represented the country fared poorly in the PISA test. (Challenges before the Indian education system, <http://www.sevensisterspost.com>).

Poverty can be next issue or a challenge to which our education system is facing. Nowadays the cost of getting education is very high so poor of our society find themselves lost in getting education. Political unwillingness is also a great challenge for our education system. Politicians think that they got five years to fulfill their wishes. Matters of education are just kept in pending. Dearness is another challenge for the education system. Fee of colleges and schools is rising day by day with public schools raising their fee structure in every session but the wages of laborer is not increasing at the same speed. So, poor people find themselves unable in admitting their children in those schools. And government schools do not compete with the public schools or CBSE schools. The next challenge is our corruption which has become the right of all government officers and whole system. In many schools it is found that the fund which was sending to the school disappeared on the way.

Next issue can be the issue of unawareness of teachers about the methods and techniques of teaching. Even they are not interested in these. Teaching is the profession in which a teacher needs to polish his /her knowledge day by day. And because it is the profession daily updating of methods and techniques is compulsory. I think this is the demand of the profession but our teachers are so rigid that they don't want to change themselves.

Next issue is character of teachers. Our teacher's character is going downwards. A teacher is the only person who can change the direction of the society. He is the person who is the center point of any education system. This influences much our society than any other part of the society. This effects much our education than all the above points. But nowadays news in different form can be read in newspapers that a teacher kidnapped his /her students or a teacher raped his student. And due to this many students left their schooling on the mid way.

All these issues and challenges did not rise in a day, they took a long period. If we look back in time, ancient time India was on the top in education and knowledge. This was the country in which students used to come from all over the world to acquire the knowledge and education. No country of the world was even near to it. Then what happened to our great country? The story starts form the invaders first Muslim invaders who came to the country to loot it and tried to destroy the culture and knowledge of the country. After them came the British invaders. They left our country in the condition of a beggar gave us many things like poverty, corruption, injustice, unemployment and many other problems which are now standing up as a challenge for our education system, (Kumar, Dinesh).

And, now as we see in the society that the level of our social, moral, culture values and ideals are going downwards towards hell. We are acquiring western culture and social values which are totally different from ours. We believe in spiritual education and they

believe in physical or worldly education. Then how can we develop our current education system because it provides us only the mob of unemployed youth? Students do not want to go to study.... they try to get good marks by unfair means and teachers do not want to teach .....and they pay their total attention to coaching classes. Private college owners sell the degrees and marks on high rates or bids. This happened due to the mentality of college owners because most of the college owners came in this field belong to the business families or people who had some useless land and little money to invest, they came in this sector due to high profit and not to serve the society, which is natural. Then, how we can think that those people will serve the country and society, because such people think treats with school as a factory, principals/HOD as a managers and teachers as workers.

### **Conclusion**

But at last I shall bind up with these lines that people who are in this field or who are the part of this holy course should think that this occupation is like that doctor's job who gives light to the blind and this job is the part of that holy job of God because God made man but we make them civilized.

“So we should not cheat our duty because we do not cheat anyone we cheat ourselves.”

The present system of higher education does not serve the purpose for which it has been started. In general education itself has become so profitable a business that quality is lost in the increase of quantity of professional institutions with quota system and politicization adding fuel to the fire of spoil system, thereby increasing unemployment of graduates without quick relief to mitigate their sufferings in the job market of the country. So, the drawbacks of the higher education system underscore the need for reforms to make it worthwhile and beneficial to all concerned.

Hassan, M. (2010): “We admire the lotus but ignore the mud around it”

Pitroda, keynoting a major seminar on Higher Education Policies in India, China and the United States organized by the Bridging Nations Foundation in Washington, DC, pointed out that, "Higher education has been key to India's growth in the last couple of decades," and it was all thanks to the country's founding fathers, who recognized the role higher education would play."

Some serious policy making procedure needs to be adopted and implemented soon to improvise the degrading face of Indian education system or else we will not be able to sustain our global leadership after 2050.



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