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This report highlights the current status of SDG4 in India and covers seven themes. The report has been prepared through a collaborative process in which several CSOs and Teachers union members have contributed. Several national, sub national and grassroots level organisations have been a part of the writing process. The findings have been finetuned and further endorsed through several consultative processes both at national and state level. The report analyses the current status of education in India, challenges and based on it, makes specific recommendations.

Country and Education Context

- Population: 1,350,438,098
- Child Population: 39 percent of the total population
  India is the country with the highest number of out
  of school children in the world.
- 46.6 million children suffer from stunting
- Education for 6-14 years of age is free and compulsory
- The share of Union government spending on education in total budget has decreased from 4.6 per cent to 3.5 per cent in last three years
- More than 150,000 government schools have been closed/merged in the last three years
- The urban literacy rates in the adult age which is categorized as 15 years and above persons is at 82.8% (M= 88.3%, F= 76.9%) while in rural areas in the same age group is quite low at 62.6%

Governments roll out of SDGs: policy mandate, coordination mechanism, indicator, funding commitment

After the SDGs were adopted, the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI Aayog), the premier policy think tank of the Government of India, was assigned the responsibility of overseeing their implementation. A three year action plan for 2017-18 to 2019-20 had been published by NITI Aayog to recommend policy changes and programmes for action. Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), was entrusted with the task of developing National Monitoring Framework for SDGs. A final indicator framework, with a total of 306 indicators, has been developed by MoSPI. Recently, the Cabinet of Ministers of Government of India also gave its go-ahead to establish a National Monitoring Framework on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A high-level steering committee will periodically review and refine the National Indicator Framework (NIF) to monitor SDGs with associated targets. Out of 306 indicators, there are 20 indicators in SDG4 Out of these 20 indicators, only 2 indicators explicitly talks about gender (in terms of male and female). In addition only one indicator specifically talks about children with disabilities. Surprisingly, none of the indicators talks specifically about the socially deprived groups like SC/STs/Religious minorities.

Government has also undertaken the process of mapping it schemes and have aligned it to corresponding SDGs. Recently, government, with support from UNRC has come up with an SDG Index 2018 in which selected 62 indicators. The index targets the progress of all the states and UTs on these 62 indicators, measuring their achievements on several targets.

Speaker’s Research Initiative has been launched for providing SDG-related insights to Members of Parliament. The Lower House of the Parliament has organized several discussions on the SDGs with parliamentarians from both Houses as part of the Speaker’s Research Initiative. An official committee of parliamentarians has been formed to raise awareness on the SDGs among legislators.
State Level Initiatives

17 States have prepared their vision/action plan 2030. States and UTs have identified the planning department or the equivalent as the nodal department for action on SDGs. 6/35 states and UTs have developed their SDG monitoring framework. Most states have initiated identification and finalisation of indicators based on the national indicators framework. While few documents, the government emphasises on the importance of involvement and participation of district level administration, rural and urban local governments in the implementation structure, the mechanism for it still needs to be developed.

Challenges in achieving SDGs

Government has taken positive efforts in developing mechanisms for monitoring and implementation of SDGs in the country. However, the measures need more attention.

Discounting the interconnectedness of SDGs, only a few goals are ‘prioritised’ which is quite a challenge. The SDG Index created by NITI Ayog has no data on many SDGs at all. The SDG Index is being used as a ‘performance index’, and it is becoming increasingly clear that the SDG Index would result, either formally or informally, in ‘performance linked financing’ among states and among districts within states which might lead to worsening of condition of backward districts. The policies are more focussed towards ‘outcomes’ (which can be clearly seen in the action plan developed by NITI aayog) leading to weakening of already existing progressive policies. For example, in the context of education, the action plan talks about doing away with the norms on inputs like teachers qualification and infrastructural norms and focuses more on the outcome. While outcome is important, the means of achieving outcome is through inputs.

Financing remains a big challenge. Though positive steps have been taken by the government like undertaking a mapping exercise of the government run schemes and aligning it to various SDGs; there is a further need to have well-defined and clear plans on financing for SDGs. Interestingly, few states have taken the initiative at the state level and such steps at national level will be a welcome step.

The limited engagement of CSOs in strengthening the monitoring and implementation of SDGs leads to narratives remaining lopsided. It would be pragmatic to engage more stakeholders at all levels, and define their roles in policy making processes and implementation of SDGs.

Discussion on the most critical issues

India is the home for the highest number of out of school children. Though there have been efforts to make education accessible to all by the government, there are still more than 30 million children still out of school. While India has the highest number of stunted children in the world, Early Childhood Care and Education is still not a legal entitlement.

Lack of qualified teachers remains critical at all levels of education. There is a gap of more than 900,000 teachers in the elementary and secondary education itself. Even in the context of higher education, this remains a challenge as almost 45 percent of the teaching jobs are lying vacant. Further, since more than 90 percent of the Teachers’ Training Institutes are privatised, the poor accountability of these institutes severely affects the quality of teachers.

Budgetary allocations made to the education are far below the global as well as nationally accepted benchmark. Public expenditure on education in India was 2.7 percent of the GDP in 2017-18. Further there is a huge systemic lacuna which leads to immense underutilisation of resources.

There is a rampant growth in privatisation of education which are not just exclusionary in itself, but also leads to weakening of the public education system. There is a need to curb this privatisation which creates and also strengthens the already existing hierarchies in the society.

It’s appreciable that a lot of efforts have been taken by the government for the skilling of youth. However, the policies need to broaden their approach. Currently the focus is more on developing a pool of workers to be able to join the industries. What is required is some focus on enhancing the avenues for youth employment. Non-traditional livelihoods still do not find a place in the government programmes.

Even when the literacy rate in India is very low, there are no specific programmes run by the government. The definition of ‘adults’ is also very ambiguous which further dilutes the focus.

The literacy rate among transgender population is at 56.07 % which is not only lower than the average literacy rate among general population, but is even lower than the literacy rates among females in the country.

The government’s step of technically acknowledging the Third Gender is appreciable, however there need for more concrete strategies or programmes to include them in education at par with all other children. The education system as a whole, including teachers, lack understanding and skills of addressing the challenges and aspirations of children who do not fall in the binary of male and female.

Equity still is not in the centre stage while framing any policy. In India, it is the most marginalised sections (Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes, Minorities, transgender, disabled, girls etc.) which are left behind and these sections need immediate attention.
Conclusion and recommendations

India, after being the signatory to SDGs in 2015, has taken several steps to ensure that we achieve what we have promised to the children and people of this country. The indicator framework is available and ministries have been assigned their responsibilities. What needs immediate attention is the financial allocation. Financial resources are a fundamental driver to the SDGs therefore focussing on the issues of availability and management of finance is a crucial step to move on 2030 agenda. However, the commitment for better financial resources for SDG 4 implementation is still very weak. While initiatives like mapping of schemes have been undertaken by the government, there is a need to align its resources as per the needs of SDGs. Lack of reliable data is also an issue that needs attention. For producing reliable data, there is a need to engage and capacitate the local governments too.

Education is the key to achieving all the SDGs and therefore interconnectedness is a must, this needs to be kept in view by the government while chalking out any plan.

Overarching recommendations

- Adequate allocations, as per the national and global commitments, must be made to education and mechanisms to check the underutilisation must be put in place.

- Strong rules to regulate private education providers must be in place and further policies to curb the privatisation of education must be developed.

- There should be more engagement of various stakeholders in education in the process of policy making as well as its implementation

Specific Recommendations

Early Childhood Care and Education

- There is a need to strongly articulate ECCE as a right, just as with primary education, with a strong regulatory framework laying down conditions for quality, ownership, responsibility, cost, partnerships, curricula, etc.

School Education

- Education must be made free and compulsory up to secondary level.

- Need to immediately fill the vacant seats of more than 9 lakh teachers.

- Need to stop closure/Merger/Amalgamation of schools as its leading to dropping out of children, especially girls.

Youth and Life Skills

- Allocate Resources and more investment for infrastructure for better participation of women in the skill development programme.

- There should be more information drives across urban (and rural) areas through meetings, street plays including schools and colleges outreach to inform marginalised sections especially girls about career options.

- Policy framework on skills and livelihood must also clearly have a thrust on non-traditional livelihoods, which are more remunerative and have a greater potential for enabling marginalised young women and transgender to make transformative changes in their life (eg. driving, carpenters, electricians and construction workers like masons).

Adult Education

- A new and robust policy for adult education, with long term vision should be developed to address the vast gaps in education of most marginalized communities, especially women from all sections and rural areas particularly. There is an urgent need to integrate literacy in ongoing programmes of Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA) and National rural livelihoods Mission (NRLM) as majority of marginalized and poor people especially women are unable to make full use of these programmes due to lack of literacy skills.

- Government of India must clearly articulate the programme design, target, priorities and finances for the Padhna Likhna Abhiyan if currently; it is the only programme for adult education.

Equity and Inclusion

- Two dimensions that need to be reiterated are: i) The promulgation of an anti-discrimination Act in education that can be effectively disseminated and stringently monitored; ii) a people friendly effective grievance redress mechanism that can be a tool for achieving SDG 4 in all its dimensions.

- RTE Act must be aligned with the RPWD Act 2016 and necessary provisions should be made accordingly.

Teachers

- Teachers vacancy must be filled both in schools and teachers training institutes.

- Teachers should be freed from the non-academic engagements other than that specified in the RTE Act.

- Differential pay system must be revised to give equal pay to teachers with equal qualifications and work.
Introduction

According to Census 2011, India has 165.4 million children in the age group 0-6 years, out of which 121 million live in rural areas and 44 million in urban areas. This age group constitutes 13.59 percent of the population, which is almost one seventh of the total population.

The Constitution of India included children of 0-6 year age group in Article 45, which directed the State to provide free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years. In the wider context, Article 39 (f) directed the State to ensure ‘that children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and that childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment’.

The Supreme Court of India, in its historic Unnikrishnan judgement 1993, declared that the provisions in Article 45, covering all children until they complete the age of 14 years, is a fundamental right. It became imperative for the Government to effect an amendment to the Constitution to provide for free and compulsory education to all those under the age of 14 as a clause within Article 21 which came into effect in April, 2010. Yet, the 86th Constitutional Amendment Act 2002 excluded 17 crore children below six years of age from the fundamental right to education, by restricting Article 21A to the age group 6-14 years of age.

ECCE: Policies and Programs and Current Status

Several policies in India have attempted to address the needs of the young child, creating an enabling framework for the provision of ECCE services. National policy on Education (1992 and 1986) also recognized the holistic nature of child development viz. nutrition, health, social, mental, physical, moral and emotional development.

Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)

India had conceptualized a holistic ECCE programme as early as the 1970s, the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS). The ICDS aims to provide free and universal nutrition, health and pre-school educational services, operating out of Anganwadi Centres (AWCs).
Despite many decades of its existence, the programme still struggles from poor allocation of funds. The budgetary allocations for ICDS have also been declining. Even within the budget for social sector expenditure and financial allocations for components of ICDS have been erratic. More importantly, the lack of importance given to pre-school education (PSE) within ICDS is evident from the absence of a budget head for education within ICDS budgets across most states (with some exceptions such as Odisha). The lack of adequate funds and resources to undertake PSE and set parameters for assessment, in contrast to provisions made for supplementary nutrition and growth monitoring, has also meant that the ICDS and AWCs have come to be seen as merely health and nutrition centres for the poor.

This has led to serious concerns of both access and quality. Currently, only about 48% of children between 0-6 years have access to ECCE programmes. The coverage of ICDS has increased over the years but the number of beneficiaries of the supplementary nutrition programme and pre-school education has ceased to increase.

The quality of services also leaves much to be desired, especially with regards to pre-school education. According to evaluations and studies, various limitations of ICDS range from the non-availability of materials in the centres, due to lack of budgetary allocation. Thus, less resource-intensive activities are more prevalent than those considered more age-appropriate among the prescribed ones.

The perception of poor quality of PSE within AWCs as well as the lack of a regulatory framework has contributed to a conducive environment for the growth of private and NGO-based ECCE services. This is particularly evident from data that shows declining enrolments in AWCs, with increase in under-age enrolments in schools. Repeated conversations with parents show that aspirations for English medium education for their children along with early training in academic skills have contributed to these trends. Furthermore, what is also evident is that it is not just English/academic skills that parents prefer but just as in the case of primary schooling, perceptions of higher quality education in private schools has further contributed to the exodus from state schools to private schools with pre-primary sections in states such as Telangana. In the absence of regulatory and legislative frameworks, the available alternatives to AWCs and government-run schools have been impossible to estimate, their quality is difficult to ascertain and the economic social costs and outcomes of their programmes is hard to determine.

Currently, alternatives to state-run ECCE programmes vary from high end chain pre-schools at one end of the spectrum to programmes run by NGOs in collaboration with communities with limited infrastructure and resources, at the other. The availability of these differential tiers of ECCE, of variable quality and costs, pose a real threat of consolidating inequality and inequitable outcomes for marginalised communities that is already a pattern within primary and secondary education (as a result of similarly available varied options).

Although, the demand for private ECCE service providers is high in urban areas, the data makes it clear that AWCs remain the single largest provider for the critical services related to PSE as well as nutrition at this stage of life.

This calls for the need for improving the quality of public services and also for action to change such a perception where private services are necessarily considered to be providing better quality services.

![Figure 1: GoI - Nominal and Real Expenditure on ICDS](image)
Private providers for Early Childhood Care and Education

Private providers and NGO alternatives, rely on user fees to sustain their programmes as Save the Children India’s study ‘THE RIGHT START: Investing in early years of education’ shows with rare exceptions had started earlier without a user fee, have gradually come to rely now on user fees. All non-state alternatives (examined) have come to rely on some or the other kind of community contribution, in kind (for instance land, volunteering services, donations in kind such as fruits or vegetables, books, play material, etc.), cash (as donations, corporate or individual sponsorships) or out-of-pocket parental expenditure (such as on books, transport, nutrition, etc.). This is strongly indicative of the fact that any alternative to state-run ECCE programmes face the real challenge of sustenance and, in the absence of state intervention, the probability of ECCE costs, currently completely unregulated, being off-set to communities, particularly those in disadvantaged circumstances.

Unregulated Quality and Increasing Inequality

As with school education, the lack of regulation with respect to specific provisions for ECCE, has also allowed for questions of quality to be conflated with questions of cost. This has resulted in two arguments, made in the language of ‘quality’, increasing the inequality. One, programmes for elite communities/private ECCE programmes generate a surplus through their user fees, and justify their user fees in the language of quality. On the other hand, locally sourced/locally prepared resources have come to be justified as adequate/appropriate for marginalised communities due to their ‘low costs’. Without disputing the value of locally developed resources and material, the argument we place here is the need to critically interrogate the quality of provisions across all programmes, and estimate their real costs, rather than accepting different standards of quality (and costs) for different communities.

In addition, in an unregulated environment, it is not just differences in social status and access that can contribute to inequities but also differences in the orientation and nature of intervention itself that need to be critically evaluated. As research suggests, different interventions have differential effects and address different aspects of development (Barnett, 1995). Thus, even enrolment in pre-schools or pre-primary sections of schools (private or state) has to be cautiously viewed, as the focus within such models may well remain on a limited range of school readiness skills such as literacy, numeracy and self-regulation.

As much research in ECCE shows, considering the continuous and cumulative nature of child development, ECCE programmes need to be planned appropriately, going beyond practices of simplistic downward extension of curriculum. It is important for programmes to pay attention to the child’s developing physical, cognitive, socio-emotional, linguistic and creative-expressive capacities and support these appropriately. Important variables that have been identified for this include caring child-adult relationships, play-based curriculum as well as preparation of primary schools to receive children from ECCE programmes. While different kinds of models (i.e., centre-based, community-based programmes, etc.), have all been found to improve later school outcomes, more fundamentally it is perhaps the inclusion of certain principles and processes that guide these models, despite differences, that contribute to better outcomes. Critical among these factors is the role of teachers, classroom management and organisation practices and the availability of adequate play and learning materials and appropriate use of these in activity-based learning opportunities that link across the various domains of development, rather than those that address different domains serially (Kaul and Chaudhary, 2017).

Status of Care Givers

All of these factors also make evident the need to fundamentally invest in the ECCE teacher/caregiver who currently receives very low wages, little attention, has little bargaining power and occupies a marginalised position within the education system as well as within society in general.

As our study shows, though there are variations. Salaries for pre-school teachers/caregivers in general remain lower than even for primary school teachers and even AWWs in most of the non-ICDS models studied, indicating that this largely remains an unprofessionnalised role. Even though salaries as a whole consume the largest portion of the ECCE budgets across models, even for models demanding higher qualifications (e.g., PG Diplomas in ECCE), salaries for teachers remain low.

Learning from Save the Children India’s study on costing and financing of ECCE in India

Public provisions have clearly been inadequate and are declining. Despite commitments to a re-structured ICDS, funding has failed to match estimates for improving quality. Further, with the changes brought by the Fourteenth Finance Commission, the centre’s share of Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) has declined, while providing greater untied funds to states. In states such as Odisha, with a larger (rural) child population, this has also been accompanied by poorer management of finances and implementation of ICDS (CAG Report 2016). On the other hand, private and NGO models show larger variations in per child costs and are also seen to off-set these costs to parents and community. Further both public and private models are seen to critically fail with respect to investing in important ECCE provisions: for example, there is no separate head for PSE under ICDS and provisions for play and learning material in AWCs has also been found inadequate. ICDS and other private and NGO models are seen to invest very little in teachers/caregivers who form the back
Further, many non-state interventions fail to provide for nutrition and other auxiliary services (despite charging user fees). What is also important to note is that of the various non-state interventions studied, five of nine models have costs which exceed the per child annual expenditures of ICDS which provides a range of additional services other than PSE (which ranges from Rs. 4340 in Odisha to Rs. 7415 in Delhi). Ranges for the non-state models, on the other hand, extend from Rs. 6400 at the lowest end to Rs. 29527, of which only two models provide some form of nutrition. While this observation is not made to advocate simply lowering costs (as this does affect the quality of provision as seen with ICDS, which suffers from unrealistic budgets for rent, honoraria, transport of food, etc.), the observations have important implications for policy.

The policy implications remain the same for state-run programmes (i.e., ICDS) and for the regulation of non-state-run programmes although they may need to be articulated differently.

References:
Census 2011: Government of India


Save the Children India study ‘The Right Start: Investing in early years of education’ (2018)

Recommendations

1. Urgent attention towards developing a regulative and legislative framework for ECCE. While India already has a National Policy on Early Childhood Care and Education (2013), in the absence of a legislative mechanism, ECCE provisions largely remain unguaranteed and not assured entitlements. There is a need to strongly articulate ECCE as a right, just as with primary education, with a strong regulatory framework laying down conditions for quality, ownership, responsibility, cost, partnerships, curricula, etc. Each of these points also need careful consideration, as we elaborate further below.

a). Quality: While it is important to set parameters for quality, it is also important to ensure that these parameters do not create barriers for creativity, innovation, experimentation and for contextualization of interventions.

b). Developmentally appropriate practice: Further, regulation of quality should also be uniformly linked to developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) which not only advocate the need for age-appropriate skills and pedagogic practices but also the importance of learning in the mother tongue in the early years.

c). Building a bridge between ECCE and primary schooling: Another critical factor in improving outcomes of ECCE programmes is the need to build a bridge between ECCE programmes and primary schooling. Integrating a bridge curriculum for transition to primary schooling which is sensitive to language, culture and to ensure continuity of learning, prevent high dropout rates and improve retention.

Additional recommendations

1. It is important to ensure that certain cost-heads such as budgets for curriculum development and nutrition are established as non-negotiable for both public and other ECCE providers. It is difficult to recommend a particular amount for this cost head, but the presence of the head would enable investments.

2. Addressing infrastructure costs and availability by making ECCE programmes a mandated part of larger public and private institutions such as universities and industries.

3. Developing professional capacities of the teacher through training and ensuring better pay for the teachers/caregivers.

4. Investing in developing a sound curriculum with extensive teacher handbooks and resources to support classroom learning for better quality of learning.

5. Developing community involvement as an integral part of the model, to ensure greater community involvement and ownership, which allows for phased handing-over of centres to the community.
Introduction

The Sustainable development Goal 4 talks about ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all and has seven targets and three means of implementation. Target 4.1 talks exclusively about the primary and secondary education.

Issues in elementary and Secondary Education

1. Out of School Children: The Draft National Education Policy 2019 states that an estimated 6.2 Crore children of school age (between 6 to 18 years) were ‘Out of School’ in 2015. Further, Global monitoring report reveals that India has the highest number of out of school children in the world. The total number of children which are out of school is 3,88,23,85 (2016-2017) as per the DISE data. This brings us to the urgent need of setting up mechanisms to bring out of children to the schools. The RTE Act talks about engaging the local authority to undertake the mapping of out of school children which has not been undertaken in most of the states.

2. Lack of teachers: There is a lack of more than 9,65,000 teachers in elementary and secondary education which impact the quality. The total percentage distribution of single teacher schools by school category and management was 8.81 in Government schools in 2015-16. And the percentage distribution of single teacher schools in Government schools in 2016-17 was 8.38. This too is against the spirit of RTE Act 2009. Government’s intention to improve the quality of education can be fulfilled only when the basic requirements are fulfilled, filling the vacant seats of teachers being one of them.

3. Drop Out and Transition Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Level</td>
<td>9.27</td>
<td>9.45</td>
<td>9.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Level</td>
<td>19.89</td>
<td>19.97</td>
<td>19.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The school dropout rate of children in Elementary level is 9.27%, whereas the dropout rates at the secondary level is higher accounting for about 19.89% dropout rate of boys is more than the girls.

4. Government School Infrastructure and its limitations: Infrastructural facilities are an integral aspect of quality education and therefore they serve as an important indicator in assessing the performance of schools. RTE Act 2009 has recommended that all schools must have an ‘all-weather building consisting of- at least one class-room for every teacher and an office-cum-store-cum-Head teacher’s room; barrier-free access; separate toilets for boys and girls; safe and adequate drinking water facility to all children; a kitchen where mid-day meal is cooked in the school; Playground; arrangements for securing the school building by boundary wall or fencing.

The DISE Report 2016-17 reveals the worrisome state of the infrastructure in the Indian Schools. More than 45% of schools (Primary, Upper-primary and Senior Secondary) do not have boundary walls and fences.

Poor security measures at the school premises have a direct impact on school dropout especially in girl-children. More than 50% of Primary and Upper-primary schools do not have an electricity connection.

In addition to the RTE Act 2009, the Supreme Court of India has passed stringent orders to ensure water and sanitation facilities in all schools. However as shown in the data below more than 15% of schools do not have a functional drinking water facility and about 10% of schools do not have functional toilets for girls and boys. The percentage of computers in working condition in primary school, Upper Primary Schools and Secondary Schools are as low as 4.37%, 9.49% and 18.84% respectively.

The state of provisions for CSWN is even more alarming. The U-DISE report 2016-2017 indicates that less than 25% of schools have CSWN friendly toilets. Further only about 63% of Primary and Upper Primary Schools and 39.69% of senior secondary schools have a ramp. Such deplorable and scarce infrastructural facilities adversely impact the quality of education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilities</th>
<th>PS (I-V)</th>
<th>UPS (VI-VIII)</th>
<th>SS (IX-X)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boundary Wall</td>
<td>49.56</td>
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<td>56.27</td>
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<td>Electricity Connection</td>
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<td>Library</td>
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<td></td>
<td>54.89</td>
<td>67.64</td>
<td>69.72</td>
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<tr>
<td>Computer in working condition</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>9.49</td>
<td>18.84</td>
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<tr>
<td>Functional Drinking Water Facility</td>
<td>84.11</td>
<td>82.94</td>
<td>86.08</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ramp</td>
<td>63.07</td>
<td>62.65</td>
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<td>Functional Toilets for boys</td>
<td>90.75</td>
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</table>

Source- DISE report 2016-17
5. School Management Committee Status: The mandate to form a School Management Committee (SMC) in every school is a statutory requirement under the national legislation on Right to Education. The DISE report 2016-17 reveals that only 76.88% of schools have formed SMCs in Primary and Upper Primary schools. Further, SMCs also have the responsibility of preparing the school development plan (SDP), based on which allocations for the schools are supposed to be made. However, about 15% of SMCs in 2016 had not prepared their SDP.

Strengthening the community involvement in school governance has shown good results in the quality of education. However, according to the data of U-DISE Report 2015-16 about 15% of Government and Aided schools have not constituted an SMC.

Even in the institutions where an SMC exists, its proper functioning faces multiple obstacles. Participation of parents who are part of the SMCs suffer as there is no provision of an honorarium for them from the government. A very high percentage of parents whose children go to the government schools are daily wage labourers and therefore in order to attend the meeting they have to forego one day’s wage. This is one of the major issues that impact the smooth functioning of the SMC.

6. Teachers Education: One of the important concerns that need attention is the training of teachers. It is necessary that teachers are qualified and receive adequate training because it helps keep them up-to-date with new ways of interacting with students, ensuring a holistic development of the child at school, and updating their pedagogic style.

As per the DISE data 2016-2017, 81.13% teachers were professionally trained. The percentage of trained teachers has seen a growth over the past few years because in the year 2014-2015 only 79.03% teachers were trained and in the year 2015-2016 80.31% teachers were trained. However, more efforts from the government are required as still 20 percent of the teachers are untrained.

As per the study conducted by World Vision India and Christ (Deemed to be) University, most teachers handle groups of children consisting of different classes and multiple ages. Most of these students live with great socioeconomic disadvantages, and with no educational support at home. Teachers have to get the students to learn reading with comprehension, math with application and science in relationship to their environment.

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### Percentage of School Constituted SMC (Government & Aided Managements)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2013-14</th>
<th>2014-15</th>
<th>2015-16</th>
<th>2016-17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>91.08</td>
<td>93.36</td>
<td>94.03</td>
<td>76.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: DISE (2015-16, DISE 2016-17)*

### Percentage of School having Constituted SMC and Prepared School Development Plan (Government & Aided Managements)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2013-14</th>
<th>2014-15</th>
<th>2015-16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>83.65</td>
<td>84.94</td>
<td>85.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: DISE (2015-16, DISE 2016-17)*

### Table 1.23: Percentage distribution of trained teacher by management, all India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Government Aided</th>
<th>Private Unaided</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>81.41</td>
<td>89.79</td>
<td>74.39</td>
<td>40.31</td>
<td>79.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>83.82</td>
<td>90.08</td>
<td>74.28</td>
<td>40.56</td>
<td>80.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>85.39</td>
<td>90.23</td>
<td>74.62</td>
<td>41.29</td>
<td>81.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Status of Marginalized Children: As the data above suggests, the dropout rate amongst the marginalized communities is high especially at the secondary level. Almost 27% children from Schedule Tribe community drop out by the time they complete elementary and reach the secondary level. The drop out level amongst the schedule caste is high as well around 23% children drop out by the time they reach the secondary level.

Policy Challenges in Elementary Education

1. Removal of No Detention Policy: Recently, a bill to remove the no detention policy was passed in the parliament, which scrapped the provision of not failing a child up to elementary level. This provision was one of the strongest pillars of the Right to Free and Compulsory Education and diluting this provision will have immense negative impact on weakening the Act in totality.

However, a positive step by the government is that the The Draft National Education Policy 2019 talks about relooking at the No- Detention policy which is a very welcome step.

2. NITI Aayog Action plan: Niti Aayog’s national action plan takes about outcome based education. It further talks about diluting the inputs norms in the Right to Education Act like qualification of teachers and infrastructural norms.

While it is appreciated that the Ayog talks about improving the quality of education in schools, it needs to acknowledge that without input requirements being fulfilled, achieving quality of education is not possible.

3. Rationalization and closure of schools: More than a, 200,000 government schools have been closed and merged in the name of rationalization. Less number of enrolments in the schools is the reason that the government is using for the closure. However, this policy impacts the accessibility of schools to children, especially girl children. Government need to commission a study on how this closure is impacting the most marginalized children and based on the study, must take informed decisions.

4. Secondary education still not free and compulsory: SDG 4.1 talks about making education free and compulsory up till secondary level, however, India has still not made secondary education free for all. This leads to huge number of drop out at the secondary level of education, especially amongst the girls and children from the most marginalized sections of the society. All the above data gives one an insight into what are the conditions under which elementary and secondary education system operates within our country. While all is not bleak and things are improving, there is still a long way to go to achieve the goals of quality education for all.

Dropout Rate by educational stage and social category, all India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Social Category</th>
<th>Elementary</th>
<th></th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>7.99</td>
<td>8.25</td>
<td>8.12</td>
<td>27.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OBC</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>18.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>SC</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>4.82</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>19.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>7.48</td>
<td>7.44</td>
<td>7.46</td>
<td>24.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OBC</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>17.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>SC</td>
<td>8.02</td>
<td>8.01</td>
<td>8.01</td>
<td>23.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>8.26</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>8.88</td>
<td>27.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OBC</td>
<td>5.41</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>20.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recommendations:

1. Make education free and compulsory up to secondary level

2. Immediate filling of teachers vacancy must be undertaken.

3. Mechanism for mapping the out of school children must be strengthened and this must be taken as the priority task

4. Stop closure/Merger/Amalgamation of schools and commission a study to understand the impact of closure of schools on the children coming from the most marginalised back ground, especially girls.

References:

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2. UNESCO Education 2030 Report.
3. RTE Forum Report 2015
4. Study Report of Enabling Environment for Quality Education. World Vision India and Christ (Deemed to be ) University, Bangalore, 2019.
5. EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES, ENHANCING EDUCATION
7. POLICY BRIEF: SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES
8. Successes, Challenges and Opportunities, June 2014 by Central Square Foundation
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12. ASER 2016 & 17
QUALITY EDUCATION AND EMPLOYABILITY FOR YOUTH

The YP Foundation and Azad Foundation

HIGHLIGHTS

- National Youth Policy, 2014, defines youth age-group as 15-29 years
- 19% of India’s population is in the age group of 15 to 24
- GER for higher education stands at 23.5% for girls and at 25.4% for boys
- For Schedule Caste, it measures 19% for girls and 20.8% for boys; and for STs the gap widens with only 12.9% ST girls enrolled in higher education as compared to 15.6% boys
- At age 14, only 5.3% are not enrolled but by age 17 this increases to 20.7% and further to 30.2% by 18 years.
- Most youth who are enrolled in vocational training opt for short duration courses of less than 3 months (34%) and usually do not graduate with certification that guarantees employment.
- There is an absence of focused programme to provide comprehensive sexuality education in school curriculum.
- Important factor for girls being pulled out of school is the fear in families and communities related to sexuality.
- The unemployment rate in the country rose from 3.39% in July 2017 to 6.23% in March 2018
- Only 5.4% of the labour force is skilled, with the number among women lower at just 3.4%
- Of the 1.8m people trained under PMKVY, 12.4% received placements.
- There is a critical need to address discrimination and violence experienced by LGBTQI community in educational institutions and workspaces.
Sustainable Development Goal 8 emphasizes on decent work and economic growth. The sustainable development goals promote sustained economic growth, higher levels of productivity and technological innovation. Encouraging entrepreneurship and job creation are key to this, and are effective measures to eradicate forced labour, slavery and human trafficking. With the targets in mind, the goal is to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men by 2030.

1. Defining Youth

India is expected to become the world’s second largest economy by 2050 and also boast of the world’s biggest working age population which is expected to touch 962 million by 2030. Furthermore, India will also become the youngest country of the world by 2020 with an average age of 29 years, while rest of the world will be ageing. The United Nations definition of ‘youth’ includes people between the ages of 15 and 24. The National Youth Policy, 2003, Government of India defined youth in the age group of 13-45. However, the National Youth Policy, 2014, defines youth age-group as 15-29 years. For the purpose of this report, we define youth as between the ages of 15 and 24, based on the UN definition. According to the Census of India, 2011, 19% of India’s population is in the age group of 15 to 24.

2. Key Government Initiatives for Education and Livelihoods Of The Youth

The following section lists down the initiatives of the Government of India in achieving the SDG 4 and SDG 8, especially for the education, livelihoods and development of the youth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Name of the Government Initiative</th>
<th>Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)</td>
<td>To enhance access to and improve quality of education at secondary stage, while ensuring equity; providing a secondary school within a reasonable distance of every habitation; and removal of gender, socio-economic and disability barriers in accessing secondary education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Higher Education</td>
<td>The University Grants Commission (UGC) is a statutory body set up by the GoI for the coordination, determination and maintenance of standards of teaching, examination and research in university education. UGC provides with various kinds of scholarships for higher education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Adolescence Education Programme</td>
<td>Adolescence Education Programme (AEP, 2006) meant for school students from class 8th to 11th to empower them by providing curriculum-based information on adolescent reproductive and sexual health (ARSH) in a holistic manner (NCERT, 2013).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>The National Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Policy, 2015</td>
<td>This Policy has tried to incorporate the intent of the SDGS, recognizing the need for women to participate. It recognizes the role of women in economic development and their right to decent work. It also articulated the need for special efforts to be made to involve women in skills development and for creating women-specific vocation education and trainings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)</td>
<td>Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) is a Centrally sponsored Scheme (CSS), launching in 2013 aims at providing strategic funding to eligible state higher educational institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS)</td>
<td>The Objectives is to develop the personality and leadership qualities of the youth and to engage them in nation building activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Out of Education Youth

Enactment of the RTE in 2009 has only had a marginal impact on schooling outcomes of youth in India. The ASER report 2017 indicates that the percentage of out of school children in the 11-14 years’ age group only decreased by 0.6% between 2010 (5.2%) and 2016 (4.6%).

Further, to supplement the coverage of RTE, the government of India also launched the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan in 2009 to enable greater access to secondary education to children in higher age groups. According to the ASER report, the percentage of 15-16 year olds who were out of school was 15.3% in 2016 compared to 16.1% in 2010. The ASER report 2017 states that although only 14.4% of youth in the age group of 14-18 years are not currently enrolled in school or college, this figure varies significantly with age. At age 14, only 5.3% are not enrolled but by age 17 this increases to 20.7% and further to 30.2% by 18 years.

Drop-out rates vary by gender along with age such that by 18 years of age 32% young women are not enrolled as compared to 28% men. Gender disaggregated GER for higher education stands at 23.5% for girls and at 25.4% for boys and has shown stagnation in the previous decade. This gap becomes more glaring in the case of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. For Schedule Caste, the GER in higher education measures 19% for girls and 20.8% for boys; in the latter case of STs the gap widens with only 12.9% ST girls enrolled in higher education as compared to 15.6% boys.
4. Drop Out in Schools

The table below presents data on average annual drop-out rates in school education disaggregated by gender and social category.

The biggest reason for dropping out among boys was their transition to early employment. In one of the studies conducted by ASER, 60.2% of out of school youth said that they were working compared to 38.5% of enrolled youth. Among boys these numbers are 71.6% and 43.4%, respectively about one fourth of the youth said that they had to discontinue their studies because of financial reasons. In addition, 50% of boys who had left school said the reason for doing so was either lack of interest (34%) or because they had failed in school (16%).

Among girls, the predominant reason for leaving school was family constraints (32.5%).

According to a policy audit conducted by Nirantar (2013) of the RMSA programme, one important factor for girls being pulled out of school by parents and family is the fear in families and communities related to sexuality, which includes fear that the girl may experience sexual violence and the fear that she may get into a consensual relationship when she is enrolled in school.

5. Marginalisation of LGBTQI

An imposition of societal gender and sexual norms on young people often privileges those who follow the norms and marginalizes those who break the sexual and gender norms. Young people who identify as LGBTQI often feel excluded and pushed out from the education and health system which cater to those young women and men who follow the gender and sexual norms. A major gap in the school education system is the absence of transgender category. Majority of transgender identifying people withdraw from school because of severe harassment, gender related negative experiences and lack of poverty/special educational quota or reservation.

6. Access to Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE)

Various initiatives with young people have highlighted the importance of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) to ensure the fulfilment of quality education. CSE aims to equip children and young people with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will enable them to develop a positive view of their sexuality; realize their health, well-being and dignity; develop respectful social and sexual relationships; consider how their choices affect their own well-being and that of others; and, understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives.

With the roll-out of the Adolescence Education Programme (AEP, 2006), there was a backlash from 12 state governments in the implementation of the programme resulting in its ban in 2007. The dominant voice of the gatekeepers like teachers and parents groups expressed their discomfort in teaching issues around sexuality. The content was considered culturally inappropriate by these groups.

Presently, there is little information in the public domain on the implementation of the programme. Ayushman Bharat Yojana or National Health Protection Scheme is a centrally sponsored scheme launched in 2018 by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has a component of School Health Programme. The objective of the programme is somewhat similar to the AEP, responsible and healthy behaviours among adolescents. The Ayushman Bharat Yojana or National Health Protection Scheme is aimed at covering 10 crore poor and vulnerable families (approximately 50 crore beneficiaries) providing coverage up to 5 lakh rupees per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization. Based on the objective of the scheme, it is clearly evident that the scheme does not have any specific objective in terms of catering to the needs of the youth with reference to awareness regarding sexuality and

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**Table: Level of Education and Drop-out Rates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>All Boys</th>
<th>All Girls</th>
<th>All Total</th>
<th>SC Boys</th>
<th>SC Girls</th>
<th>SC Total</th>
<th>ST Boys</th>
<th>ST Girls</th>
<th>ST Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper Primary</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>6.03</td>
<td>5.51</td>
<td>8.48</td>
<td>8.71</td>
<td>8.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>17.21</td>
<td>16.88</td>
<td>17.06</td>
<td>19.64</td>
<td>19.05</td>
<td>19.36</td>
<td>24.94</td>
<td>24.40</td>
<td>24.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Secondary</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi*
reproductive health in a non-moralistic approach.

7. Skill Development Programs on Livelihoods for Youth

The unemployment rate in India has doubled between July 2017 and April 2018, with a decrease in the number of jobs in the last financial year 2017-18, data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy show. The unemployment rate in the country rose from 3.39% in July 2017 to 6.23% in March 2018, and is projected to reach 6.75% in April 2018, according to the CMIE data.

Only 5.4% of the labour force is skilled, with the number among women lower at just 3.4%. Unlike most countries who face the risk of an ageing workforce, India’s demographic sets to be much more favourable, in other words, youthful. India’s median age is expected to be 28 years by 2020; however, two crucial points need to be highlighted here as rightly pointed in the NYP 2014, firstly, in order to realize the potential and competitive edge of India’s age structure, “youth must be educated and equipped with the necessary skill-set to forge sustainable livelihoods.” Secondly, “it needs to be recognized that all young people within this age-group are unlikely to be a homogeneous group. Different segments of the Youth would have different needs and concerns, which need to be addressed.”

The National Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Policy, Skill India Campaign and the Pradhan Mantri-Kaushal VikasYojna (PMKVY), 2015 are flagship work of the central government to achieve SDG 4.3 and 4.4 by providing vocational and technical skill training to 400 million people by year 20223. As the policy makers aim at addressing skill deficit through such schemes, it needs to be cautious about the type (market oriented skills), duration (mostly 150-300 hours of training) and quality of skills being delivered.

The educational and skill development programmes and trainings have to be designed in such a way that it empowers people marginalised on the basis of gender and other intersections of caste, class, religion, disability especially women and transgender communities to overcome structural barriers and challenge the status quo by giving them the ability to negotiate with a range of stakeholders at home, community, market and state.

8. Achieving SDG 4 with a gender perspective

In order to achieve SDG 4 and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Development) it is important to align these goals from the gender perspective. Education and livelihoods are considered desirable for women in society in a limited framework of enhancing their marriage prospects. This results in designing of programmes that follow a very gendered division of labour promoting restricted and ‘feminised’ skilling opportunities for women. There is a need for programmes and policies to promote a culture that enables women in transformational skills like decision making critical thinking and skill facilities that enable them to enter take up non-traditional livelihood options that have been traditionally dominated by men. The initiation of the same could only be possible when the shackles of patriarchy could be broken and the participation of young girls and women in education and work space could be promoted. It is also important to re-examine the conventional understanding of gender, in binary of men and women, which excludes experiences of transgender people. Their access to education and livelihood options have remained a big challenge due to structural barriers. The educational and skill development programmes and trainings have to be designed in such a way that it empowers people marginalised on the basis of gender and other intersections of caste, class, religion, disability especially women and transgender communities to overcome structural barriers and challenge the status quo by giving them the ability to negotiate with a range of stakeholders at home, community, market and state.
Recommendations

1. Comprehensive Sexuality Education in schools and colleges: An effort has to be made to bring in action the Comprehensive Sexuality Education curriculum which is non-moralistic and gender-sensitive in approach.

2. Deeply examine the literacy levels and employment data of transgender communities to ensure development of inclusionary programmes and policies on education and livelihoods.

3. Need for Awareness of Skill Development Programs

4. Need for Adult Literacy and Skills Building Plan/Programme with an aim of facilitating more opportunities for women for decent work, including in non-traditional livelihood

5. Allocate Resources and more investment for infrastructure for better participation of women

6. Focus on Girls and Women: There should be more information drives across urban (and rural) areas through meetings, street plays including schools and colleges outreach to inform marginalised sections especially girls about career options.

7. Focus on Non-Traditional Livelihoods: Policy framework on skills and livelihood must also clearly have a thrust on non-traditional livelihoods, which clearly are more remunerative and have a greater potential for enabling marginalised young women and transgender to make transformative changes in their life eg driving, carpenters, electricians and construction workers like masons

8. Training Centre’s Need to be Set up Near Target Communities and an enabling environment

9. Requirement for rights based, transformational training that prepares marginalised youth to become empowered professionals \ Beyond Technical Skill Training and a strong network of support to sustain their work participation
Introduction

Education is a form of power that provides access to knowledge and information which has the ability to transform people’s life; whereas, lack of literacy adds to the marginalization and social stigma of the already backward communities, especially of its women.

Adult Education – Scenario in India

Lifelong learning approach is central to SDG 4, as it focuses on integrating learning opportunities throughout an individual’s life. This approach will not complete a full circle till the time emphasis is also given to adult education in addition to elementary and secondary education. This is imperative for the poor and marginalized communities, especially women and gender transgressing people, who did not get educational opportunities in their childhood due to socio-economic and gender based disadvantages. Adult education is important to not only provide them with skills of reading and writing, but to also enable them access their citizenship rights and entitlements. The lack of literacy among adults and especially women from marginalized communities has also lead to their marginalization in digital spaces; which is the new language of access and empowerment. Adult education, integrating digital literacy, done from gender and equity perspective can change the power equations to carve a way out of their marginalization and deprivation.

NITI Aayog is the nodal agency for attaining SDGs for India. In their SDG mapping document, they have listed close to 50 Centrally Sponsored Schemes but most of them specifically address youth and students. The only adult literacy scheme, Sakshar Bharat has been defunct for the last 2 years. With limited availability of public records the achievements of this scheme remain uncertain.

The uncertain scenario of adult education programming is further exemplified due to limited transparency on budgetary allocation to the scheme and utilisation of funds. Thus, NITI Aayog, the premium think tank and policy advocacy body of govt. of India, has no clear vision or programme for adult education for its 280 million non-literate population of the country.

1. Policy Challenges

1. There is a singular National Education Mission which hosts most of the core schemes for education of the country. This includes schemes for primary, secondary
Current interventions by the government

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Name of Scheme</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Current Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Saakshar Bharat</td>
<td>Saakshar Bharat Programme has four objectives, namely imparting functional literacy and numeracy to non-literate; acquiring equivalency to formal educational system; imparting relevant skill development programme; and promote a leaning society by providing opportunities for continuing education.</td>
<td>Discontinued in year 2017-18 with no plan of action for future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>National Education Mission/Padhna Likhna Abhiyan</td>
<td>All the policies mention a National Education Mission. Budget is being allocated for the same. There is no designated website or information available on the same.</td>
<td>No clarity about the plan, its strategies, targets, priorities and budget allocations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

and adult education. While, emphasis has been laid on primary and secondary education, the same emphasis and exposure is missing for adult education schemes. Additionally, all the schemes given in the NITI Ayog document are for skill development. Only Sakshar Bharat talks about literacy, a policy which is anyway defunct for the last 2-3 years. There is no recent data to substantiate the work done under the scheme or sufficient budgetary allocation to support the same. This lack of attention to adult education programmes has exaggerated the already dismal situation of adult literacy in India, impacting the lives of the millions of the socially and economically marginalized adults especially women in both rural and urban areas.

2. The NITI Ayog Action Plan 2017 is a crucial document which lays down the ways forward for the State and its policies for the next three years. It however, does not mention adult education in its document. The document has provided emphasis on only skill development, but if there is a lack of basic literacy skills, and emphasis is only on vocational and skill training, a substantial number of people in need of skills and vocational training will be left out of the system because of their inability to fulfill the basic criteria of education to avail such opportunities. Thus, lack of adult education opportunities unleashes a vicious circle of exclusion and marginalization.

2. Funds for Adult Education

The Sakshar Bharat program, in the last 3 years has received arbitrary sums of allocation which has no rational (given the number of non literates in India) or consistency. As per the 2017-18 budget, 201.16 (20.1 million) crore has been allocated for the programme. In 2018-19 budget it got substantially reduced to a 52.95 crore (5.2 million). In the same year (2018), as per a Lok Sabha question, the center has not released any funds for the scheme.

The 2019-20 interim union budget finds mention of a Padhna Likhna Abhiyan for which a budget of 100 crore (10 million) has been allocated. However, as of the time this section was being written, even the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), doesn’t mention the scheme on their website and lays out what the scheme entails for adult population of the country. Since there is no information available about the strategies or the targets or geographical coverage of the programme, it is difficult to ascertain where this 100 crore budget is going to be used and who will be responsible for utilising the budget.

3. The most vulnerable communities and adult education - Leave no-one behind

Education like all other development indicators is a cross-cutting issue that defines people’s ability to access and exercise their rights and entitlements. The people who are marginalized because of their gender, social and religious identities are further marginalized due to lack of education and thus lack of ability to access livelihoods with dignity and health services. The following data points will highlight how the lack of education excrates the sense of marginalization of the marginalized communities and make them more vulnerable.

The Transgender persons in India

Census of 2011 recorded transgender persons in India for the first time. There are at least 487,803 self-identified transgender persons in the country. Their literacy rate is at 56.07% which is lower than the national average literacy rate; it is even lower than the literacy rates of females in the country. In census, trans-persons were categorized under males (Census, 2011) which means that this is only the data of trans-persons either self-identifying as male or are assigned gender male at birth which presents a partial picture of the population of transgender people in the country.

Additionally because of their categorization under
males all the other socio-economic data for this population is also missing. There is no governmental data which captures their problems, issues, vulnerabilities, abuse and harassment they face in their families, community, police, education institutions, peers and overall from the larger society. Furthermore, due to several problems faced at the school, many find it unable complete their education and later as adults driven by low education, stigma and discrimination resort to sex-work, begging and other ways of income generation. At present, there is no literacy or adult education program or a program targeting on employment of this population in India which leaves trans-persons with limited options.

The Dalit and Tribal communities

The grim reality of India is that it has the highest number of non-literate adults in the world. Women from the SC and ST communities have abysmally low literacy rates. Following are four States with the lowest female SC literacy rate; Bihar: 38.5% (Rural-37.4%); Jharkhand: 44.2% (R-40.8%); Rajasthan: 44.6% (R-41.4%); Uttar Pradesh: 48.9% (R-47.3%). At the same time, four States with some of the lowest female ST literacy rate include; Rajasthan: 31% (R-29%); Bihar: 33% (R-32%); Andhra Pradesh: 35% (R-34%); Uttar Pradesh: 36% (R-34%). Among these, rural tribal women from Garasia communities in Rajasthan have literacy rates as low as 19% and Saharia communities in Madhya Pradesh literacy rates as low as 32%.

These figures give a true picture of status of literacy in India. However, there is no specific programme or policy to address the peculiarities and challenges of these most vulnerable communities including the further marginalized women within these communities. The literacy needs of most vulnerable communities need cultural sensitive and contextualised interventions for them to make sense of the education imparted to them. However almost all the programmes of adult education have been using ‘one fit for all’ policy with no alternative and specific strategies to reach out to most marginalized, especially women within these communities. Adult education programmes are never accorded the kind of importance that is given to school, higher and vocational education, thus pushing the non literates further to the margins who could not access school education because of their socio economic and gender based marginalization in the first place.

Recommendations:

i. A new and robust policy with long term vision should be developed to address the vast gaps in education of most marginalized communities, especially women from all sections and rural areas particularly. There is an urgent need to integrate literacy in ongoing programmes of Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA) and National rural livelihoods Mission (NRLM) as majority of marginalized and poor people especially women are unable to make full use of these programmes due to lack of literacy skills.

ii. Government of India must undertake a Review of the Saakshar Bharat to measure its impact as well as gaps to assess the reach and effectiveness of the programme. The evaluation data must be put out in public domain and inform the development of a more effective and accessible adult education programme.

iii. Government of India must clearly articulate the programme design, target, priorities and finances for the Padhna Likhna Abhiyan if currently; it is the only programme for adult education. The Padhna Likhana Abhiyan must be sufficiently funded based on a rational calculation of number of adults to be reached out and corresponding finances therefore, instead of a random allocation based on availability of spare resources within education budget.
43% of STs, 29.4% of the SCs and 25.4% of the Muslim families fall below the poverty line.

Dropout rate at upper primary level for SC is 5.51 which increases to 19.36 at secondary level. For STs, dropout rate is at 8.59 and increases to 24.68 at the secondary level.

National Survey of Out of School Children’ report put the number of special-needs children between six and 13 years of age who are out of school at 600,000.

43.5 percent of SC, 48.9 percent of ST and 32.1 percent of Muslim children are accessing preschool facility at ICDS centre.

Young people from disadvantaged communities drop out of skill development programme, which already are short term courses, without completion.

Discrimination and humiliation as critical reasons for dropping out and lack of performance in both schools and colleges by children and youth from marginalised sections.

Studies on out of school children (SRI and EdCIL, 2014) indicate that 0.60 million children with disabilities aged between 6-13 years are not attending school. This constitutes over 28% of CWDs, much higher than the national estimate (2.97%) of out of school children.

The constitution envisaged in 1950, that ‘the state shall endeavour to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years (Art 45).’ “...children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and that childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment (Art 39) . Fifty years later, the 86th Constitutional amendment in 2002, revisited and narrowed its commitment “the state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such a manner as the state may, by law, determine’. It took another eight years before the amendment came into implementation in 2010, leaving out the below six years and 15 to 18 years age group, despite many international commitments. India is signatory to SDGs adopted in 2015 to be achieved by 2030. It may appear that we are on track for achieving some or even many of the SDG targets under SDG 4 in education, it is important to review who may be left behind or what may not be achieved.

1. Children, youth and women who are at the risk of being left behind SDG 4

India, even at the time of the independence and Constitution making, recognised that about a fourth of its population have particular disadvantages of caste and
2. Situation, challenges and some recommendations

The following section reviews the SDG 4 targets with respect to the marginalised and vulnerable children who are enumerated above. An effort is made to broadly map the current education status, gaps and challenges faced and areas that need urgent attention to ensure that above children, youth & women can achieve SDG 4.

Target 4.1: Ensure equitable and quality primary and secondary education

Over the years, the school enrolment data, particularly at the primary level has improved considerably, but learning and drop out continue to remain concerns. As seen below the dropout rates of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe children, particularly of girls in secondary level remains much higher than the national average. The inequality gap would be much higher if the comparison is made with children from the dominant sections.

Average Annual Drop-Out Rate in School Education : 2014

More than 25 lakh school students in India are identified as Children with Special Needs. But the 2011 census says 45% of India’s disabled population are still illiterate, compared to 26% of all Indians.

The dropout rates for physically challenged students are high. Of persons with disability who are educated, 59% complete Class X, compared to 67% of the general population. In a country that has almost universal primary school enrolment, a 2014 ‘National Survey of Out of School Children’ report put the number of special-needs children between six and 13 years of age who are out of school at 600,000.

Centre for Educational Research & Training (CERT) studied 34 universities of India in which 63,325 Muslim students are pursuing their education out of total 9,15,806 students. It is noticed that as per the data of All India survey on Higher Education, Muslim student ratio was only 4.9% in 2016-17, vast section of Muslim population remains illiterate due to lack of facilities for primary and secondary education.

Current strategies and provisions: The current education strategies and provisions for children from the above sections in the primary and secondary school going age includes –

i. pre-matric scholarships for SC, ST, Muslim, children with disabilities, children whose parents are engaged in stigmatising occupations,

ii. Free hostels including KGBVs for girls,

iii. Free coaching.
The pre-matric scholarships for SC students provided by the central government is limited to classes IX and X @Rs.225/-pm for day scholars and Rs.525/pm for hostel students for a period of 10 months in a year. For ST students it is Rs.150/pm and Rs.350/pm respectively for ten months. Minority students are paid between Rs.350-600/month based on actuals. The criteria for the different scholarships vary across communities. Given that 43% of STs, 29.4% of the SCs and 25.4% of the Muslim families fall below the poverty line, any additional support to send the child to school will support the family to ensure the child’s schooling. However the conditions of this provision does not meet the need of the families – the sum given is very small, the process is lengthy, one is not sure it will be awarded even if one completes all the processes, there is no fixed time when the scholarship is provided, the family members often makes many trips to the school letting go of their daily wages to take the scholarship and many others. Feeling humiliated and labelled in the process of accessing the scholarship is also a huge deterring factor for both children and parents.

Free hostels for girls (Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas – KGBV), residential schools and ashram shalas for the SC, OBC and ST children, managed by the social justice or tribal welfare departments are known for the poor quality, poor budgeting, neglect and lack of academic environment in these centres.

Reports of sexual abuse of girls and violence against children are often reported. They are very few in numbers and a number of children who opt for the hostels do not get them. The additional academic supports, free coaching are not implemented. Being maintained by Ministries other than human resources - social justice, tribal or women and child development, the academic environment and performance are not monitored or strengthened.

Recommendation:

i) Pre-matric scholarship should be provided to every child from the above categories. It must be adequate and cover all out of hand expenses in schooling. It should be provided as a matter of right and routine. It should be given on time without any additional effort or harassment of the child or the parent.

ii) The plan for setting up one residential school in every block, one for boys and one for girls under the Ministry of social justice and the re-organising of the ashram shalas suggested in the 11th and 12th Plan periods need to be implemented. All residential schools must be provided the facilities and budgets as that of the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNVs) and even more recognising the historical educational prohibitions and backlogs.

iii) Schools and residential spaces should provide healthy academic environment, encouraging diversity, building upon the knowledge and context of the children from disadvantaged sections, incorporating their culture and knowledge into curriculum and pedagogy. Emotional support and mentorship to children by teachers go a long way to support above children.

iv) Respectful and supportive engagement with parents, encouraging and facilitating their participation in the routine process or as members of the SMCs strengthens the community engagement. Engagement with youth in the community, who are themselves first generation educated members can support the learning and engagement of the younger children.

v) Children with disabilities face particular challenges with the current inaccessible physical space created without any thoughts on how children with disabilities will access them. Often even minimum necessary accommodation in terms of re-arranging class room and school physical spaces, sensitivity building and acceptance among other children are also not given consideration. Much less has been done on training and recruiting teachers for children with disability, curriculum and equipment, transport facilities and the like.

Target 4.2: Ensure access to quality early childhood development, care and primary education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage of Children (0-59 months) who accessed preschool facility at ICDS centre</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>43.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST</td>
<td>48.9</td>
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<td>Muslim</td>
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Even as the integrated child development scheme is one of the oldest schemes, more than thirty years old, it has not reached many of the disadvantaged habitations which make it difficult for these communities to access them. Less than half of the children from the marginalised communities access the provisions of the early childhood care and education, least accessed by Muslim children. Further, by and large, it remains a feeding centre more than an early child hood education centre. Hence even if the children who are first generation learners do access the ICDS centre, it does not lay the foundation for their early child hood education. Further, many reports of under-functioning and discrimination has been reported when children from disadvantaged sections try to access them. The budgetary provision for the programme has been sharply coming down.

According to the 2011 census, there are 368,697 five years old with disabilities in India, out of them, 99,259 (27%) attend educational institutions, while 263,966 (72%) has never attended any. More than 1% have dropped out. Data shows that a total of 40,801 children with disabilities below the age of 5 attend special schools, out of them, 19,341 are girls (47%) and 21,460 are boys (53%).
months programmes, poorly designed and implemented. These are designed as short term one to three out of school programmes, which families from the disadvantaged and poor cannot access higher education and those who drop out of programmes are targeted at children who do not or cannot access higher education and knowledge. The skills development ministry has initiated vocational training and skills picking up the skills informally. As an alternative, the population having formal skills trainings. The majority of SC and ST students form just 11% and 4% of the number of students ending their lives. A large number cases of abuse and repeated abuse of children. Discrimination in higher education and humiliation as critical reasons for their dropping out and lack of performance in both schools and colleges. Given the social and cultural prevalence of discrimination, the practices are default and intentional. Teacher sensitivity building, monitoring and stringent action and public education for promoting diversity and inclusion are essential. At the first level, it is important to accept that discrimination is being practiced and the proof is the version of the affected.

Tertiary education has moved into the private sector to a large extent where high costs do not make it feasible for youth from SC, ST or other vulnerable sections. Hence they compete for the limited opportunities in the government sector. They primarily depend upon the post matric scholarships (PMS) for completing tertiary education. The PMS is badly implemented, completely irregular, waiting period being more than a year in many cases. The students spend considerable time in application and other processes, re-submit the documents year after year, face humiliation from the administration and other students. Discrimination in higher education has resulted in serious cases of abuse and repeated cases of SC and ST students ending their lives. A large number drop out too, spending many years of their productive life period in the campuses and coming out without any direction or further opportunities. Students from SC and ST categories form just 11% and 4% of the total student strength respectively.

There are an estimated 7.8 million children with disabilities aged 19 years or younger (1.3 million aged 4 years and younger, 1.9 million aged between 10 and 19 years) amounting to around 2% of the total child population. There are interstate differences in the estimated number of children with disabilities. A majority have disability in hearing followed by disability in seeing. Among 5 years old with disabilities three-fourths do not get to any educational institution. Nor do one fourth of children with disabilities aged between 5 and 19 years. The number of children enrolled in school drops significantly with each successive level of schooling. There are fewer girls with disabilities in schools than boys. A large number of children with disabilities are enrolled at the NIOS. A review of NIOS figures shows a large increase in the enrolment of children with learning disabilities. While there has been a drop in the enrolment of students with locomotor and visual impairments, enrolment of children living with multiple disabilities have seen a rise.

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<th>10 - 19</th>
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<td>Boys</td>
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<td>1.63</td>
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<td>1.44</td>
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<td>1.14</td>
<td>1.54</td>
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Recommendations:

i) Ensure an anganwadi/mini anganwadi in every habituation where children from the community can access early child care and education, with adequate space and child-friendly environment.

ii) Train educated (school completed) young girls from the same communities to teach and care for children in these centres – building on sensitivity, non-discrimination, knowledge of local culture and knowledge.

iii) All forms of discrimination and abuse of children to be strictly monitored.

Targets 4.3 and 4.4: All women and men access affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education including university; Increase technical and vocational skills among youth

While the above strategies are oriented to meeting the specific constraints and barriers in accessing education, students from the above sections report discrimination and humiliation as critical reasons for their dropping out and lack of performance in both schools and colleges. Given the social and cultural prevalence of discrimination, the practices are default and intentional. Teacher sensitivity building, monitoring and stringent action and public education for promoting diversity and inclusion are essential. At the first level, it is important to accept that discrimination is being practiced and the proof is the version of the affected.

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As the data suggests above from the primary to the secondary level of learning the enrolment of children with disability has seen an abysmal decline however the enrolment at the senior secondary level has seen an increase. However the question remains that if the numbers of children are not getting enrolled at the initial levels of learning then what would be the learning outcome be at the senior secondary level.

There have been concentrated efforts by the centre and the states to ensure physical accessibility, including accessible toilets. However physical verification during CAG audits has documented variations in the data provided by nearly all the states on the provisioning of barrier free access. Gaps in provisioning optimal use and maintenance aids and appliances are also widespread.

School based assessments help diagnose children's learning needs and enhance their participation in learning- policies stipulate exemptions in examinations for children with disabilities, but they are not uniform across the country. Also, there is a lack of awareness of the exemption and the related rules and regulations both among schools, as well as parents. Greater flexibility to accommodate specific needs not covered in the exemption guidelines is also, needed.

The National Curriculum Framework 2005 attempts to address the barriers that curriculum, pedagogy and teaching- learning resources can impose on inclusive education. Despite a few examples being tried out, implementation at scale remains a challenge due to lack of awareness of the diversity in needs as well as adequate practice based evidence from inclusive classrooms.

Recommendations:

i) Enact a comprehensive legislation against discrimination in education, including institutional environment, policies, curriculum, co-curriculum, pedagogy, relationships etc; hold dissemination sessions and take stringent action against violations.

ii) Have well established grievance redress mechanisms, mentorship, counselling and pro-diversity inclusion actions in schools and colleges.

iii) Organise dialogues on patriarchy-gender-sexuality, diversity-social inclusion, accessibility and rights, privileges and disadvantages, constitutional norms, human rights, sustainable development and various other dimensions to pro-actively promote and enrich the campus environment.

iv) Constant capacity building of the anaganwadi workers to better attend to the children with special needs in the anaganwadis.

**Target 4.6: all youth and substantial adults achieve literacy and numeracy**

In keeping with promoting literacy and numeracy for all adults and youth, new schemes have been developed and implemented, the latest being Sakshar Bharat. However, despite the publicity about this scheme, there is little evidence of non-literate persons accessing this scheme or achieving literacy and numeracy. A total re-vamping is essential.

ed. As in many other courses, there are reports of young people from disadvantaged communities, dropping out without completion. Even as it is mandated that each one who joins the course is linked to employment, only 32% percent of them have been linked, pushing them back into the same unorganised sector.

Recommendations:

i) Expand the seats in higher and professional education, ensuring the Post Matric Scholarship adequately to meet the education and living costs of students.

ii) Undertaking youth needs assessment and re-designing the skill training to align to their needs. And address the needs of those youth who are drop out and are unemployed.

**Target 4.5: Eliminate disparities in education for girls, persons with disabilities, indigenous children, children in vulnerable situations; 4.7 promote education for human rights,**
gender equality, sustainable development, peace and non-violence, cultural diversity and global citizenship.

While the above strategies are oriented to meeting the specific constraints and barriers in accessing education, students from the above sections report discrimination and humiliation as critical reasons for their dropping out and lack of performance in both schools and colleges. Given the social and cultural prevalence of discrimination, the practices are default and intentional. Teacher sensitivity building, monitoring and stringent action and public education for promoting diversity and inclusion are essential. At the first level, it is important to accept that discrimination is being practiced and the proof is the version of the affected.

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Overarching concerns

The SDGs provides a time-frame, SMART indicators and a global support mechanism to fasten the implementation and achievement of development indicators. An important framework is the countries willingness to promote development with ‘leave no one behind- reach the furthest behind first-life of dignity’ which has the potential to create a society and world promoting equality, liberty, fraternity and social justice as is also the corner stones of the Indian constitution. Hence we look forward to popularising and monitoring the SDGs from the lens of social equity and inclusion of the disadvantaged sections across all goals and indicators.

Some overarching concerns and strategies that could support this process, over and above, mentioned in the earlier section are listed below:

i) Decentralised real time data on the status of different population groups across different goals and targets. The data gathered by the government masks the status of specific vulnerable sections and is often, Hence policies and provisions do not meet the specific concerns and needs of the said group. In order to ensure that ‘no one is left behind’ development data of the specific group on real time basis becomes important. Here local government and civil society organisations can be engaged to gather such data for policy and strategy building.

ii) Agency of the socially excluded and disadvantaged is an important strategy of reaching the furthest behind for a life of dignity. As is known, development is an on-going complex process, where the agency and participation of the concerned group of people is central to achieving it. Hence strategies need to identify the potential participants who can engage and contribute to achieving the desired development. Youth of the community has great potential and value in being active agents into this process.

iii) The state has created special budget provisions like the scheduled caste sub plan (SCS), tribal sub plan (TSP), minority sector development programme (MSDP) and various other budgetary provisions to focus and fast track the development of disadvantaged sections and equalise opportunities. These budgets are often under-budgeted, under/misutilised or not used judiciously and effectively. The various recommendations mentioned under the various targets can be met from the special budget provisions and if used effectively can eliminate disparities in development rights.

iv) Even as it has already been mentioned above, two dimensions that need to be reiterated are – i) the promulgation of an anti-discrimination Act in education that can be effectively disseminated and stringently monitored; ii) a people friendly effective grievance redress mechanism that can be a tool for achieving SDG 4 in all its dimensions.
Introduction

Education systems are only as good as the teachers who deliver education. Ultimately, education is about teachers engaging with and empowering their students. In order to succeed, teachers need to be equipped with the skills and knowledge that they can apply in the classroom to help their students thrive.

Teachers and teacher policy are integral to quality education. Target 4.c states to ensure that by 2030, there should be a substantial increase in the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially the least developed countries and Small Island developing States.

Issues of teachers

1) Shortage of Teachers

As per UN report in 2016, India is on second number as far as the shortage of teachers is concerned. There are approximately 9 lakhs teachers’ posts lying vacant and more than that are working on contractual basis.

2) Contractualisation of teaching jobs

The attempt to rapidly increase access to primary education in developing countries like India, over the past decade, has created a need to commensurately increase the number of teachers in the system. In order to meet the burgeoning demand for additional teachers amidst fiscal constraints, India has chosen to actively promote the hiring of contract teachers.

According to data from DISE, in 2006–07 there were 5,14,000 contract teachers nationwide, constituting approximately 9.9% of all basic school teachers in the country (DISE, 2007–08). In the year 2009–10, contract teachers constituted 10.97% of all teachers. Provisional estimates for the year 2010–11 indicate that contract teachers constituted 11.22% of total teachers (NIEPA, 2012) demonstrating an increasing trend of hiring contract teachers in India. In 2015-16 the contractual teachers constitute 13.18%, with an even higher percentage in government schools at 14.26 percentage.

Further, of the contractual teachers, almost 35 percent are not professionally trained.

3) Non Academic Engagements of Teachers

- Approximately 9 lakhs teachers’ posts are lying vacant and close to 10 lakh teachers are working on contractual basis
- In 2015-16 the contractual teachers constitute 13.18 percent of the total teachers in schools
- Funds for the teacher training component declined by 87% over six years, from Rs 1,158 crore in 2014-15 to Rs 150 crore in 2019-20, indicating the low priority accorded
- According to NUEPA report, School teachers in the country spend only 19.1 percent of their working hours in teaching. Of the remaining 81 percent, 42.6 percent of the teacher’s time is spent in non-teaching core activities, 31.8 percent in non-teaching school-related activities & 6.5 percent on other department activities.
Various reports have thrown light on the negative impact of teachers engagement in non academic work as an impediment to the quality of education. However, there exists a rampant non academic engagement of teachers in various surveys conducted by the government. While The Right to Education Act 2009 only allows three duties—census, disaster and election (only on polling and counting days), according to a report by the National Institute of Education Planning and Administration (NIEPA), titled 'Involvement of Teachers in Non-teaching Activities and its Effect on Education', government school teachers in the country spend only 19.1 per cent of their working hours in teaching. Of the remaining 81 percent, 42.6 percent of the teacher’s time is spent in non-teaching core activities, 31.8 percent in non-teaching school-related activities and 6.5 per cent on other department activities.

4) Teacher education and teacher training

Well organized and ingenious teacher education programmes are required in the present world. Teacher education programmes have to be critiqued, studied, reformed, rethought and reoriented in the present existence. Teacher education in India is divided in two areas: pre and in-service education. However, the status of teachers training institute is abysmal.

- **Infrastructure of Teachers Training Institutes**: Most of the programmes are facing lack of professional and necessary infrastructure. This results in unsatisfactory professional achievements. In India, several teacher education institutions are operated in rented buildings without proper facilities and without an experimental school, library, computers and other ICT equipment which are necessary for operation a good teacher education department.

- **Privatisation of teachers training institutes**: More than 90 percent of the teachers training institutes are in the hands of private

5) Qualified trained teachers

There are 81.15% teachers in India are professionally qualified for their job. A common feature across the Indian education system is a shortage of qualified teachers. Section 23 of the Right to Education Act of 2009 mandates that all government school teachers should possess minimum qualifications laid down by the National Council of Teacher Education. Under guidelines released in November 2010, those not qualified were given time until March 31, 2015, to complete their training.

In 2015-16, of 6.6 million teachers employed at the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Government Aided</th>
<th>Private Unaided</th>
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</table>
elementary level, 1.1 million were untrained. Of these, 512,000 were in government and aided schools and 598,000 in private schools. At the secondary school level, of 2 million teachers, around 14% were not professionally qualified.

6) Curriculum of teachers training

Pre-service teacher education in India hasn’t been given the importance it deserves. Degree programmes for aspiring teachers do not spend enough time preparing them for the realities of the classroom. The short duration of the programme also limits a candidate’s ability to learn through self-reflection, understanding social realities, engaging in shared learning and gaining practical experience.

The curriculum and programme structure provides teachers with basic skills and assumes that they will be able to apply their learning to any context. The curriculum also fails to address how children learn. There is a pressing need to restructure the ‘field experience’ component and expose teachers to the ground realities of teaching.

In-service teacher education on the other hand, suffers from other issues. Contrary to popular perception, teachers undergo training throughout the academic year. The SSA has a provision for 20 days of in-service teacher training a year.6 However, it appears that little thought goes into the outcomes that these trainings are expected to achieve and given the variety of training.

7) Less budgetary allocation is a main reason which in turn makes suffer the institutions for equipment, facilities, arrangement of co-curricular activities and sometime contractual appointment of the staff shortage. Public financing for school education in terms of the total school education budget and the pattern of expenditure provide only a partial picture of the state’s education policy. The educational performance of a state is directly related to how it plans, allocates and spends its school education budget. While quality of education is a serious concern, it is important to see how states spend on two crucial pillars of school education — teacher and infrastructure. For example Bihar spends 1.3 percent of its total budget on education for teachers’ education whereas Uttar Pradesh spends just .0001 percent as per CBGA report 2017-18.

Funds for the teacher training component declined by 87% over six years, from Rs 1,158 crore in 2014-15 to Rs 150cr in 2019-20, indicating the low priority accorded.

8) Rampant Growth in privatization of Teachers Training Institutes

There is rampant growth of teachers’ training institutes (TTIs), especially private ones, which makes the share of private TTIs as more than 90%. The quality of training in these institution are sub-standard which brings in the need to develop a strong monitoring system for the private colleges. Also, government need to invest more in order to strengthen the government teachers’ training institutes.

Recommendations:

1. Vacant post of more than 9 lakh teachers must be filled immediately.

2. Teachers must be freed from all the non academic engagements (except for the ones defined in RTE Act). Also, the number of days for which teachers can be engaged in the election duty must be defined.

3. Proper monitoring of private institutions—Private Teachers Training Institutes should be put under strict control and if possible to close them and promote government-run institutions by improving their overall performance.

4. The vacant posts in the government teachers training institutes must be filled in order to strengthen the quality of teachers training institutes

5. Adequate provision of funds availability should be made available for teacher education.

6. Curriculum of teacher education programmes should be revised according to changing needs and latest developments in various fields. Certain skills as life skills, techno-pedagogic skills, info-savvy skills, emotional skills, human developmental skills and spiritual skills need to be integrated in the teacher education programmes.
Higher Education is considered, almost 20.53 and 16.95 percent of allocated amount was funded by PSK and MUSK in 2016-17 and 2017-18 respectively.

The launch of SDG has targeted to achieve universalisation of good quality and inclusive education for all. However, not such strong initiatives have been seen, much prominently, in the recent policies and programmes of Union Government of India. As the recent NITI Aayog’s SDG India Index Baseline Reports, 2018 presented different goal wise Index, and have shown for Goal 4, India’s overall score is 58, with a huge dispersion across state, as Bihar scored 36, whereas Kerala has scored 87. In these contexts, this chapter discusses some of the key points relating to the situation of public expenditure on education in India, during recent periods.

While the chapter would discuss the major challenges, it would be important to mention here that one of the major challenges is also the inconsistencies of the latest available data. For instance, to assess the SDG performance; we need a comparative database, which is normally provided by UNESCO. However, this database do not have the expenditure figure from 2014-15. Also, complete expenditures on education by different layers of governments in India are not easy to capture. To elaborate, apart from education departments, the Union and state governments spend money upon education by different other ministries and departments. In case of Union Government, Ministry of Human Resource Development publishes Analysis of Budgeted Expenditure on Education (ABE) every year, which presents a concise picture of expenditure on education by MHRD and other ministries. The latest available ABE is for 2013-14 to 2015-16 and also do not have the current data. In this situation, the current study has more focused on the available information in recent Union Budgets and state Finance Accounts to present a glimpse of the expenditure pattern on education in India, with some reference to other available secondary information.

Despite the Kothari Commission’s recommendation in 1966 to spend at least 6 per cent of GDP on education, even after forty years of the recommendations, Indian Government have not been able to spend more than 4 per cent of GDP on education. Also, India has marked
substantial growth in GDP during the last two decades, but the share of education expenditure to GDP is much lower than Brazil, South Africa, Bhutan and compare to U.K. and U.S.A till 2013, as revealed from UNESCO-UIS database. It is also being noted that India, with its higher population, the per capita GDP numbers are still very low. And also, the participation shares in education (combining all stages of education) are lower than Nepal and Maldives, in case of primary countries, Brazil and South Africa. The share is also expenditure to per capita GDP in India much lower than with other countries reflect that the share of per child looks quite high. Irrespective of that, the comparison ratio of per student expenditure and per capita GDP in many developed countries. Thus, in many cases the expenditure share was much lower, not only with UK, USA, Brazil and South Africa, also compared to Bhutan.

The per student expenditure trend across states in India

Shifting our focus towards the per student expenditure on elementary and secondary education across the important states, we can see existence of huge disparities. In this section, for calculation purpose, latest audited figures on state wise expenditure on different functional heads for the year 2016-17 in States’ Finance Accounts (FA) published by Comptroller and Audited General (CAG) of India has been referred to. The analysis has only considered the revenue expenditure collected from FA and considered the heads 2202-01 for elementary education and 2202-02 for secondary education and 2202-01 for secondary education and 2202-02 for secondary education and 2202-01 for elementary education and 2202-02 for secondary education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Elementary</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Himachal Pradesh</td>
<td>54147</td>
<td>45062</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haryana</td>
<td>43193</td>
<td>37473</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uttarakhand</td>
<td>26734</td>
<td>332245</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerala</td>
<td>42030</td>
<td>26734</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>57462</td>
<td>25349</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>18971</td>
<td>23895</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>23121</td>
<td>28323</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telangana</td>
<td>22456</td>
<td>24393</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>20453</td>
<td>24393</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>34907</td>
<td>20383</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chhattisgarh</td>
<td>32649</td>
<td>20092</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>31317</td>
<td>19427</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>24398</td>
<td>17891</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>60117</td>
<td>17854</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>30783</td>
<td>16090</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>49880</td>
<td>13169</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odisha</td>
<td>20453</td>
<td>12561</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jharkhand</td>
<td>13436</td>
<td>11935</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Bengal</td>
<td>26671</td>
<td>8091</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>6544</td>
<td>6608</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2: Per Student Revenue Expenditure (in Rs.) by State on Elementary & Secondary Education in 2016-17

Source: Calculated by author from data from Finance Accounts and Student numbers form DISE
education. Also, some of the states have not reported expenditures on Mid-Day Meal, under 2202-01, which has been included from other parts of FA for those particular states. Further, numbers of enrolled children in Government and Government Aided schools have been referred from the Flash Statistics on School Education, 2016-17, based on Unified District Information System for Education (U-DISE) data base.

As we can see from figure 2, a substantial difference among states with respect to per student expenditure, both in elementary (I-VIII) and secondary level (IX-XII). For instance, in 2016-17, per student expenditure at elementary level in Himachal Pradesh was Rs. 45,062, whereas the same for Bihar was only Rs. 6608. In Secondary education, per student expenditure in Telangana for the year 2016-17, was Rs. 68,209, whereas the same was Rs. 6544 in Bihar. Also, the participation among different management of schools is equally important for this comparison. For instance, in 2016-17, the total expenditure on elementary and secondary education was Rs. 13,313 crore and Rs. 2,524 crore for Bihar, whereas for Telangana the total expenditure were Rs. 5,103 crore and Rs. 5,063 crore for elementary and secondary education respectively. But, the number of enrolled children for the same year in Bihar were approximately 2.01 crore and 39 lakhs at elementary and secondary level of education, in government and government aided schools; and in Telangana, in government and government aided schools, only 23 lakhs and 7 lakhs were enrolled in elementary and secondary level of education, as revealed from U-DISE database. Thus, it is extremely important to focus more on those states, where larger number of students prefer government or government aided schools, and the allocation on education, across those states, should be enhanced.

Expenditure on education in the Union budget

It is also worth to mention here that the total expenditure on education are combination of both the Union and state governments. Expenditures on education by Union government are spread over by 43 ministries. However, if we see the expenditures on education through different Ministries, presented in latest available Analysis of Budgeted Expenditure on Education 2013-14 to 2015-16, MHRD, GoI, in 2013-14, out of the total expenditure on education by Union Government of India, 64.37 percent were spend only through the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD). Thus our detail analysis later sections are mostly focused on expenditures by MHRD, available in the demand for grants no. 57 and 58, in the Budget Documents.

Apart from the lower index in Goal 4 of SDGs, India is also a country with huge number of young population. To ensure the employability and require quality of education, government needs to focus on appropriate policies and should fund the required amounts. However, in the budgets of last few years, we have not experienced any strong policy announcements to achieve these targets. Figure 2.1 and figure 2.2 below have presented the expenditure pattern by Union Government during the last four years, by department of school education and literacy and higher education respectively, focusing on expenditure on major programmes. The GDP share of gross expenditure on these two departments by Union Government was only 0.60 and 0.66 percent to GDP in 2016-17 and 2017-18, and in 2017-18 (RE) and 2018-19 (BE), it has increased to 0.72 percent to GDP.

It is worth to mention that school education is mainly a state subject. Union government transfers their share for the Centrally Sponsored Schemes on education to states and UTs. As we can see in table 2.1, that almost 80 to 83 percent of total expenditure, of Department of School Education, are spend on National Education Mission (covered Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Teachers Training, now Samagra Shiksha (SMSA)) and National Programme of Mid-Day Meal (MDM) in Schools, which are the major Centrally Sponsored Schemes under this department. However, actual expenditure on MDM in 2017-18 is lower than the actual expenditure in 2016-17 on the same, although the approximate expenditure mentioned in 2018-19 (RE) are higher than the allocation in 2019-20 (BE) for the same. There is a need for the Union Government to focus more on the scholarship programmes.

These tables also have presented about the actual expenditure share, out of total budgeted estimates (BE), for 2016-17 and 2017-18, as a reflection of the utilisation pattern. In 2016-17, the gross and net expenditure for department of school education was slightly less than the BE. However, the deeper look reflects that the Central Sector Schemes and Expenditure on Autonomous Bodies (Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS), Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS) etc.) is higher than the budget estimates, but the expenditure on SSA, RMSA and MDM were much lesser than the BE. In 2017-18, in the same department, the gross and net expenditures are slightly higher than BE, but most of the higher expenditure was for Autonomous bodies. Although, in this year higher expenditure has been marked for RMSA and 99.93 percent of utilisation of the Central’s shares have reported for SSA, but MDM was unutilised for more than 9 percent. These mean that the states are getting the share as a smoother way than the previous years. As some other study on SSA has reported that almost 35 percent of underutilisation of SSA expenditure by states lead to cut Union Government expenditure on SSA (Bhattay, 2015).

Also, in 2018, Union Government has announced to merge SSA, RMSA and Teachers education with a new programme Samagra Shiksha (SMSA), and in 2019-20 (BE) the allocation on that (including ‘Teachers Training and Adult Education’) is almost 18 percent higher than the 2018-19 (RE) on SSA, RMSA and ‘Teachers Training and Adult Education’. We could be only hopeful for proper utilisation of the newly merged scheme SMSA.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.1: Expenditure by Union Government by Department of School Education and Literacy (DD No. 57)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rs. in Crore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62636.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recoveries</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Receipts</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CENTRE'S EXPENDITURE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total-Establishment Expenditure of the Centre</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total-Centre Sector Schemes/Projects</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Digital India e-learning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Award to Teachers</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total-National Means cum Merit Scholarship Scheme</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total-National Scheme for Incentive to Girl Child for Secondary Education</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total-Other Centre Sector Expenditure</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total-Autonomous Bodies</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total- Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total- Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Central Tibetan School Administration (CTSA)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Bal Bhawan</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total- Others</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TRANSFERS TO STATES/UTs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total-Centrally Sponsored Scheme</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total- SamagraShiksha</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total-Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total-Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total-Teachers Training and Adult Education</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total-National Education Mission</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.2 has presented the expenditure trend about some of the major programmes by Department of Higher Education. As we can see, the major expenditures share is on grants to Central Universities and Autonomous bodies, like IITs, IIMs, NITs, IISERs etc. The expenditure share of Rashtriya Uchhatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) was less than 5 percent of total expenditure by this department, although the 2019-20 (BE) this share has increased slightly above that. Also, it is to be noted that the actual expenditure on RUSA was reduced in 2017-18, than 2016-17. Apart from these, one of the major components of expenditure is ‘Interest Subsidy and contribution for Guarantee Funds’, which is made for the students with family income of less than Rs 4.5 lakh per annum, and the interest subsidy would be provided during the moratorium period on educational loans. In fact, it can be seen in table 2.2, that the expenditure on this programme was higher than RUSA till 2016-17. Focusing on the utilisation of estimated allocation, we can see from figure 2.2, that in 2016-17 the actual expenditure was slightly higher than BE, however, it was much lower in case of Digital India-e-learning in the year 2016-17 and decreased in 2017-18. Instead of higher gross expenditure by this department in 2017-18, the centrally sponsored scheme RUSA was less utilised. Also, the scholarship programme, viz., ‘Scholarship for College and University students’, was less than 90 percent of BE.

Table 2.2: Expenditure by Union Government by Department of Higher Education (DD No. 58)
In the latest budget, it has been seen that the government is aiming to “transform India’s higher education system to one of the global best education systems”. However, we have not seen much emphasis on the 2019-20 budget allocation. The allocation for ‘World Class Institutions’ has been increased to Rs. 400 crores, but the allocation for Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA) is lower than the revised estimates of the previous years. In the budget the provision for e-learning and other modern learning facilities for 2019-20 is Rs. 579 crore, of which ‘e-shodh Sindhu’, meant for accessing journals, has received Rs. 242 crore. In case of higher and technical education, major expenditures of Union Government go towards, UGC, IITs, IIMS and other autonomous bodies.

It is also worth to mention that, to ensure better quality education, one has to ensure better teaching quality, for which government needs to provide a better teachers training programme. Although the teachers’ salaries and training expenditures are mostly done by state governments, Union Governments should give more focus on the teachers training. In case of school education, teachers training programme has been merged with SMSA, and prior to that, the main component of teachers training, viz., ‘Strengthening of Teachers Training Institutions’ was thinly funded and also we can see a decreasing trend of expenditure upon that. As, the...
expenditure amount upon this programme were Rs. 495.20 crore in 2016-17, and decreased to Rs. 478.32 crore in 2017-18, and in 2018-19 (RE) the estimated expenditure on it was Rs. 488 crore. The government has launched Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing (DIKSHA) as ‘National Digital Infrastructure for Teachers’ with the aim of training teachers digitally. However, there is nothing mentioned clearly about the expenditure upon that in the budget. Also, we have to ensure the proper digital infrastructure, prior to these.

In case of higher education, only one Central Sector Scheme can be seen for teachers’ training, viz., ‘Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya National Mission on Teachers and Teaching’, and this programme is thinly funded. It has received an allocation for Rs. 130 crores in 2019-20 budget, however, the actual expenditure for it in 2017-18 was only Rs. 72.7 crores. It is extremely important to focus more on teachers training, both in case of higher and school education.

Source of Financing

However, the major challenge of financing education is the source of financing. Apart from the gross budgetary support (GBS), two major source of financing education are Education Cess and National Investment Fund. Education cess played a major role to finance SSA and MDM since its introduction. Union Government of India introduced education cess on corporation tax, income other than corporation tax, import duties, and service tax etc. at a rate of 2 percent for funding elementary education since the fiscal year 2004-05, and in the fiscal year 2007-08 additional 1 percent education cess has imposed to finance secondary and higher education. In the 2018-19 budgets, NDA government has merged ‘education cess’, ‘secondary and higher education cess’ and introduced ‘health and education cess’ with 4 percent upon the personal income tax and corporation tax. The collections from ‘education cess’ are used to be transferred to the Prarambhik Shiksha Kosh and the ‘secondary and higher education cess’ to Madhyamik and Uchchatar Shiksha Kosh (MUSK) (see details in Sikdar, 2018).

If we consider the gross expenditure of Department of School Education and Literacy (demand no. 57) and Department of Higher Education (demand no. 58), almost 20.53 and 16.95 percent of allocated amount was funded by PSK and MUSK in 2016-17 and 2017-18 respectively. In 2019-20 (BE), it is estimated to fund 28.58 percent from these funds. Table 3 presented the gross expenditure reported in the expenditure profile for the two departments; and also the collection amount from ‘education cess’/‘secondary & higher education cess’/ ‘health and education cess’ reported in the receipts budgets. It seems that in 2016-17 and 2017-18, more than 60 percent was directly transferred to the PSK, (as MUSK was not created then) and the remaining part spend on different other programmes, especially under Department of Higher Education. It is expected that the cess collection should be utilized properly in the coming years.

Apart from the cess collection, government should emphasis on other possible sources of financing education, for instances, imposing new taxes and increase the tax bases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rs. in Crore</th>
<th>2016-17</th>
<th>2017-18</th>
<th>2018-19 (RE)</th>
<th>2019-20 (BE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Expenditure of Department of School Education and Literacy &amp; Department of Higher Education</td>
<td>91673.05</td>
<td>112615.16</td>
<td>136209.01</td>
<td>151764.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount met from PSK &amp; MUSK</td>
<td>18818.06</td>
<td>19091.14</td>
<td>37836.88</td>
<td>43380.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of amount met from PSK &amp; MUSK out of Total Expenditure (%)</td>
<td>20.53</td>
<td>16.95</td>
<td>27.78</td>
<td>28.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Collection of Education Cess/ Education and Higher Education Cess/ Health and Education Cess</td>
<td>30248.07</td>
<td>31245.21</td>
<td>50424.45</td>
<td>56129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of amount met from PSK &amp; MUSK out of total Collection of Education Cess/ Education and Higher Education Cess/ Health and Education Cess</td>
<td>62.21</td>
<td>61.10</td>
<td>75.04</td>
<td>77.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key Recommendations

It is well argued by different studies over the past years, about the serious need of increment of public spending on education. The above analysis has shown huge variation of the amount spend across different states. Also, the Union Government’s spending are much less than many other comparable countries. Based on the above analysis, our key recommendations are as follows:

- In spite of having low index in SDG for Goal 4, till now, there is not any significant policy announcement or initiatives have been taken. This is indeed true that proper governance and motivations can improve the situation, but without appropriate financial provisions, it is hardly to achieve the target.

- The above analysis has clearly shown that the education expenditure share to GDP is much lower, especially in case of Union Government. In case of school education, major share of expenditures are focused on National Education Mission, and in case of higher education, mostly on autonomous bodies like technical and management schools. However, it is suggested to improve focus on non-technical universities too, and provide some grants to state run universities to improve their research outputs along with academic outputs.

- The budget allocations upon most of the important programmes are not properly utilised. As it is evident from figure 2.1 and 2.2, that in many cases, the actual expenditures are lower than the budget estimates. It is extremely important to focus on these issues and to ensure proper utilisation of funds.

- It is also evident from the foregoing discussions that teachers being the most important part of education system, the programmes towards teachers training are thinly funded. Government should ensure proper programmes and allocations to train the teachers for ensuring better quality education and achievement of SDG goals.
The spotlight report sums up the ground realities of the education eco system which hints at the unsatisfactory condition of the children and adults at various levels. The spotlight report is an attempt to voice the concerns of the marginalized through the civil society organizations. In the chapters that are being documented bears testimony to the fact that despite being education as a right, there are about 6.2 crore out of school children. While there are progressive policies in place to an extent, however, in terms of catering to the demands of the children most of them are short sighted and are unable to incorporate the diversified needs of the children in a country like India.

Sustainable Development goal 4 talks about ensuring inclusive education and promoting life-long education, however as a discerning citizen of India it is alarming that the major tenets of an inclusive education system is not being ensured, there is rampant discrimination and exclusion especially of those children who belongs to the socially excluded communities. The rights of the disabled children are yet not realized in its true sense. The enrolment and retaining rate of the children from the minority community is worrisome as already mentioned in the chapter of Equity and Inclusion. Only about 48% of the children between 0-6 years have access to ECCE programme, data reveals that the rate of enrolments is declining considerably in AWCs with an increase in under age enrolments in primary schools, which makes us question the entire mechanism of monitoring and evaluation of the ICDS programme run by the Government.

The condition of the teachers is equally worsening as the pay parity is a major concern, the working conditions of the teachers is non-conducive and there is a lack of almost 9, 65,000 teachers in schools. According to the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration the average annual drop out in school is high, at the upper primary level is 6.93%, the upper primary level is 8.59% and at the secondary level is 24.68%, the number is higher in the case of the Scheduled caste and schedule tribe.

In context of youth, even for a country like India which has the highest youth dividend, only 11% of its youth are enrolled in higher education. The unemployment rate in the country rose from 3.39% in July 2017 to 6.23% in March 2018. Only 5.4% of the labour force is skilled, with the number among women at just 3.4%. The much talked about skill development programme initiated by the Government also, failed in providing meaningful employment to the youth, out of 1.8 million youth trained under PMKVY, 12.4% received placements.

Adult education too is a major area of concern because even today the definition of adult education and what it entails is yet not clear also the facts and figures in the ambit of Adult Education is shocking and alarming. The overall literacy rate is about 74.04% wherein the literacy rate of the Muslim community only accounts for 57%. Even the literacy rate of the women in the SC and the ST community in the rural set is low- 52.60% and 46.90% respectively.

Finance and Budget plays an important role ensuring quality and equitable education. Despite the Kothari Commission’s recommendation in 1966 that Government has to spend at least 6% of GDP on education, but even after forty years of the recommendation, Indian Government have not been able to spend more than 4% of GDP on Education. In fact, the implementation of RTE Act, 2009 does not show any significant improvement in state expenditure on elementary education. While the government has been putting efforts to improve the quality of education by introducing new policies (e.g Beti Bachao Beti Padhao), there still needs to be more focused interventions for children who have been left behind. Government also need to pay attention on education of youth and adults by making appropriate budgetary allocations. We are hopeful that through the spotlight a road map could be made where-in the implementation of the SDG frame could be effective and efficient.
Major recommendations from the present report are:

**Overarching recommendations**

1) Adequate allocations, as per the national and global commitments, must be made to education and mechanisms to check the underutilisation must be put in place.

2) Strong rules to regulate private education providers must be in place and further policies to curb the privatisation of education must be developed.

3) There should be more engagement of various stakeholders in education in the process of policy making as well as its implementation.

**Specific Recommendations**

**Early Childhood Care and Education**

4) There is a need to strongly articulate ECCE as a right, just as with primary education, with a strong regulatory framework laying down conditions for quality, ownership, responsibility, cost, partnerships, curricula, etc.

**School Education**

5) Education must be made free and compulsory up to secondary level.

6) Need to immediately fill the vacant seats of more than 9 lakh teachers.

7) Need to stop closure/Merger/Amalgamation of schools as its leading to dropping out of children, especially girls. A study must be commissioned to study the impact of school closure/mergers on the most marginalised children.

8) Teachers training programme should be strengthened and better budgetary allocations must be made to strengthen the public teachers training institutes.

**Youth and Life Skills**

9) Allocate Resources and more investment for infrastructure for better participation of women in the skill development programme.

10) There should be more information drives across urban (and rural) areas through meetings, street plays including schools and colleges outreach to inform marginalised sections especially girls about career options.

11) Policy framework on skills and livelihood must also clearly have a thrust on non-traditional livelihoods, which are more remunerative and have a greater potential for enabling marginalised young women and transgender to make transformative changes in their life (e.g., driving, carpenters, electricians and construction workers like masons).

**Adult Education**

12) A new and robust policy for adult education, with long term vision should be developed to address the vast gaps in education of most marginalized communities, especially women from all sections and rural areas particularly. There is an urgent need to integrate literacy in ongoing programmes of Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA) and National rural livelihoods Mission (NRLM) as majority of marginalized and poor people especially women are unable to make full use of these programmes due to lack of literacy skills.

13) Government of India must clearly articulate the programme design, target, priorities and finances for the Padhna Likhna Abhiyan if currently; it is the only programme for adult education.

**Equity and Inclusion**

14) Two dimensions that need to be reiterated are – i) The promulgation of an anti-discrimination Act in education that can be effectively disseminated and stringently monitored; ii) a people friendly effective grievance redress mechanism that can be a tool for achieving SDG 4 in all its dimensions.

15) RTE Act must be aligned with the RPWD Act 2016 and necessary provisions should be made accordingly.

**Teachers**

16) Teachers vacancy must be filled both in schools and teachers training institutes.

17) Teachers should be freed from the non-academic engagements other than that specified in the RTE Act.

18) Differential pay system must be revised to give equal pay to teachers with equal qualifications and work.
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