

RECENT INITIATIVES TAKEN BY THE STATE GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU FOR QUALITY EDUCATION WITH EMPLOYABILITY - A BRIEF STUDY

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Abstract : *The paper studies on the recent initiatives undertaken by the state Government of Tamil Nadu for developing the educational system in the state with the aim of increasing the number of students enrolment in higher studies, to develop their ability to appear all kind of competitive examinations and to increase the employability after the education. The initiatives proposed by the state government of Tamil Nadu are the need of the time for enhancing the quality of education with different perspectives including employment. This study highlights (1) present educational system in the state of Tamil Nadu, (2) major challenges for getting all accessible to education (3) factors which has driven the state governance to undertake initiatives (4) the details of initiatives proposed by the state government of Tamil Nadu for higher studies enrolment and increase employability and (5) the expected outcome of these initiatives and its impact expected for the development of education in the state.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the important components for a healthy society. In particular, quality of education with adequate employable value is more important during the present changing scenario of the society. Many recent studies showcases us that even in this present century a considerable group of people do not have education and some are having education without any upgradation failing to design their life compact with the developing world. India, with more than 1.4 million schools and more than 230 million enrolments, is home to one of the largest and complex school education systems in the world along with China. According to the 2011 census, literacy rate in India was found to be 74.04 per cent and along with 80.09% literary rate, the state of Tamil Nadu is one of the states with well literacy rate as per the census 2011. However, when a question arise that whether such increased literacy rate has assisted the society to increase its standard of living with adequate employability, the answer is not affirmative. In this connection, this article tries to examine various factors which are dominating the module of the educational system particularly in the state of Tamil Nadu. It also evaluates the expected outcome of the initiatives being implemented by the state government of Tamil Nadu to refine the standard of educational system in the state. There is a need to every individual to construct themselves according to the changing concept of the world. The initiatives of the state government in Tamil Nadu are conceptualized and being developed on the basis of the major reforms brought by the Government of India during the recent period.

1. PRESENT EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN THE STATE OF TAMIL NADU

The educational system in the state of Tamil Nadu is as of national pattern with 10+2 system and is one of the states which have healthy literacy rate. There are 64 educational districts covering 17,371 revenue villages in the state². The school education structure in the state has four levels i.e. Primary, Middle, Secondary and Higher Secondary. This structure of education has been followed in major number of states and the syllabus of the classes from primary to secondary have been prepared by the respective state government educational boards. Therefore, besides being included basic mathematics and science, lessons in these states are centre around the particular states and its cultural, traditional, climatic, historical and geographical values. However, as far as syllabus is concerned, the state government of Tamil Nadu implemented uniform syllabus with the aim of consolidating the text of different subjects into one book and issue in term wise. This has eased the teaching pattern in schools. But at the same time many academicians expressed their concerns that the standard of the uniform syllabus system introduced by the government is not equal to that of CBSE. In addition to this, the State government's policy not to detain students up to class VIII and non-revision of the syllabus for one decade were some of the reasons that had resulted in dilution of the quality of school education. Further, it had resulted declining ability of children studying between classes I and VIII. Among children between seven years and 14 years of age, only 21 per cent of them, on an average, could read textbooks of Class I, while 30 per cent could read Class II books³, The performance of the same children in mathematics too was bad. Therefore, it is understood that there is a need to introduce a platform beyond the existing structure so as to make the students to get them capacitated to reach higher studies.

2. MAJOR CHALLENGES FOR GETTING ALL ACCESSIBLE TO QUALITY EDUCATION

The quality of education being imparted to the students plays major role in finalizing the future of students and acts as a key ladder to reach higher studies. Education with quality turns into increased productivity and creativity to develop the country with advanced technology in all fields. If a student is provided quality education, he can get best opportunities to design the life in the modern society with considerable contribution from his side. Quality education in terms of knowledge, skills attitudes, enriched capacities, personality development enables the student to be perfect in his respective subject besides make him understand himself and the world. Therefore, it is significant part of the society and the government to ensure quality education from the primary to higher secondary level with mathematical ability. However, there are several challenges standing in front of us to attain the targeted quality of the education and to say a few :-

- Periodical survey of the impact of the education and to cover all community for quality education;
- Mobilising adequate fund and develop infrastructure for quality education •
- Reducing the dropout rate among students particularly in rural areas •

- Ensuring presence of qualified teachers.

To get accessible all sections of the society either in rural, urban or tribal to quality education is the major challenge. Even after seven decades of independence, still a significant percentage of population are beyond quality education. There is a need to conduct an analytical study in the gray areas of community which is not under the radius of quality education. As a result of this, we could not witness students from rural or tribal areas in higher studies. To ensure adequate involvement of fund for development of infrastructure is another major challenge. In general, the Economic Survey of the year 2017-18 shows that the states and the Union government together have been investing less than 3 per cent of the country's GDP in education. But as far as the state of Tamil Nadu is concerned the average expenditure on education has been increasing every year. Even though, the overall allocation under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and own expenditure for the development of school infrastructure is high comparing to the other states, the actual expenditure for higher secondary is less. Despite the fact that the state of Tamil Nadu had succeeded in its target of opening one high school within the radius of 5 Kms from a habitation and one higher secondary school within a radius of 8 Kms and has achieved one classroom in high and higher secondary schools for every 39 students, the target of establishing adequate infrastructure is yet to be achieved. While the schools are being upgraded to higher level, construction of additional buildings is the major challenge to the state.

As far as dropout rate is concerned it prevails from the primary school level because of various reasons. Particularly social, parental and other financial impediments become main causes for increasing dropout rates. However, the dropouts rate has been reduced in significant number in Tamil Nadu. It was 13.27% in 2010-11, the dropout rate of secondary school students has come down to 8.33%. There has been a marginal decrease in the primary and upper primary dropout rates as well⁴. Further, with the aim of condensing dropout rates in the state, various welfare schemes have also been implemented. For example : Enhanced noon meal scheme, supply of free books, free uniforms, bus pass , mobile library and best school award and in most recently Special Cash Incentive Scheme was introduced with fixed deposit of Rs.1500 and Rs.2000 for 10 & 11th and 12th students respectively.

3. FACTORS WHICH HAS DRIVEN THE STATE GOVERNANCE TO UNDERTAKE INITIATIVES TOWARDS INCRESING EMPLOYABILITY AND ENROLMENT IN HIGHER STUDIES

Even though the number of students enrolment is active from primary to high school level in Tamil Nadu, but there is significant dropout after high schooling. Increase of school dropouts at high school and secondary level may on various reasons, but family circumstances dominate a large number of dropout cases. In addition to this, the number of students being admitted in higher institutions is less comparing to other states. For example, out of 8 lakh students passing out higher secondary every year only 253 students completed Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) to avail admission in Indian Institute of Technology/s (IITs)⁵ across the country. Meanwhile AICTE has instructed to close down about 800 engineering colleges across India. There are no takers for their seats, and admissions are plunging in these colleges every year. Nearly 150 colleges are closed down voluntarily every year due to stricter AICTE rules. According to a rule of the council, colleges that lack proper infrastructure and report less than 30% admissions for five consecutive years will have to be shut down. AICTE has approved the progressive closure of more than 410 colleges across India, from 2014- 15 to 2017-18. Further, over 80 per cent of engineers in India remain unemployed⁶.

Introduction of National Entrance Eligibility Examination (NEET) for medical education has created huge negative impact in the state of Tamil Nadu in the beginning. Students are generally taught the syllabus prepared by the state government boards whereas syllabuses are being covered from the lessons prepared by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). Therefore, there is a need to cover the syllabus for the students who are aspiring to go medical education. In addition, the central government has also planned to introduce such entrance examination for other engineering courses as well as for higher studies for Ayurveda & Siddha across the country.

4. RECENT INITIATIVES OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU FOR HIGHER STUDIES ENROLMENT AND INCREASE EMPLOYABILITY

Keeping in view of the need to increase enrolment of students from primary education and to higher secondary education, we studied above several welfare schemes being implemented in the state of Tamil Nadu. This has invited magnificent development in enrolment and has reduced dropout rates also. The uniform syllabus system be changed in the coming years at par with the syllabus of CBSE with the aim of increasing quality education along with reading efficiency and mathematical ability. To increase environmental friendly and advanced classroom, development of smart class room with digital board have been introduced from class 9 to 12. However, to increase employability there is a need to introduce additional course from the higher secondary level. Even though some vocational courses was introduced, the actual outcome through these courses is merely positive. Therefore, Tamil Nadu government has introduced vocational courses at higher secondary level schools to impart skills that are non-academic in nature and relate to job opportunities. A curriculum has been developed by National Council of Education Research and Training (NCERT) in this regard and be translated in Tamil for course material.

Even after higher secondary schooling or completion of actual graduation, initiatives have taken recently to prepare the students to go for professional courses like Chartered Accountant, Company Secretarial, Cost and Work Accountant and other courses with the aim of increasing the employability. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) to conduct CA training for government and aided school students has been made. Apart from this CA training, the government is also working on several other reforms to improve employability of students and a curriculum for 15 subjects like agriculture, horticulture, fashion technology, hotel management, IT and mechanical engineering, among others are being prepared.

5. EXPECTED OUTCOME OF THESE INITIATIVES AND ITS IMPACT EXPECTED IN EDUCATIONAL AND EMPLOYABILITY

Quality education with advanced system, reducing dropout rates, increasing skill related course and ensuring healthy employability are some of the major challenges in the present educational system. Further, it is pertinent to revamp the existing systems in all these categories according to the initiatives of the central government and overall necessity of the present society. At present, the higher number of students are enrolled in graduate level but at the same time the number of students going to higher studies is less. The actual number of students enrolled higher education during the year 2015-16 is 2,65,946 in the 8 state as per the All India Survey of Higher Education 2015-16 including Ph.D.,

M.Phil and other Post Graduate Courses. The enrolment has been increased during the year 2016-17 after opening of 24 new colleges in the state. Along with this, the increase in employability of arts and science graduates is also expected through the Tamil Nadu State Council for Higher Education (TANSCHE) which is going to set up an industry-compliant certification module in partnership with private organisations like Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

As discussed above the annual average dropout rate at the primary school level in the state was 4.13 per cent in 2014-15, however, as a result of new initiatives mentioned above the average dropout rate will be reduced at the primary level. At the same time, by way of introducing additional vocational courses, the employability after higher secondary and graduation will meet a new heights. Future studies in this regard would fetch the actual facts and there is a need to retrospect the earlier initiatives so as to refine the same with the aim of achieving the targets in education and its employability.

6. SUMMERY

If the present education system have been modified with skill oriented courses, it would be more meaningful along with valuable for the students. While upgrading the level of schools, development of infrastructure should also be taken into consideration before such upgradation is given to a particular school. In case of increasing skill oriented course at higher secondary level, a strong ray of confidence would be emerged in the mindset of students. The various initiatives for getting students after graduation professionally qualified will increase the volume of employability and thus will be a leading cause for the future generation.

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