

# EDUCATION SYSTEM IN INDIA..... NEEDS RECONCILATION

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## ABSTRACT

*In India credit of starting Modern educational system goes to British East India Company, but their intention was to create a support base for their rule by educating a small section of upper and middle classes to create a class “Indian in blood and colour but English in taste” who would act as a bridge between the Government and the masses. Today, increasing economic integration of the Indian economy with the world economy it is expected to generate vast job opportunities across the globe and at the same time pose challenges and threats. The rapidly changing technology will create obsolescence in certain categories, but at the same time generate new opportunities. To use these opportunities thrown open by the technological revolution our educational system should create skilled manpower. In current scenario the major question faced by our youths is: Dilemma of “What to learn”. In this paper an attempt is made to analyse what is happening in different disciplines with special reference arts and commerce streams. The paper analyses the growth of educational infrastructure in India and outlines factors that has been responsible for degeneration of Commerce and Arts education in India.*

**Key words:** Arts, Commerce, Education System, Higher education.

## INTRODUCTION:

Globalization and Liberalization policies practiced by the countries world over and in India have both positive as well as negative impact on the education. Increasing economic integration of the Indian economy with the world economy is expected to generate vast job opportunities across the globe and at the same time poses challenges and threats. The rapidly changing technology will create obsolescence in certain categories, but at the same time generate new opportunities. To use these opportunities thrown open by the technological revolution there has to be skilled manpower created by our educational system.

India is a young nation with 50 % of its population under 25 years of age and 65 % below 35 years of age, which is a plus point in the present globalised scenario. This ‘demographic dividend’ if not utilized properly can create a nightmare in the economy. The signs of this are visible when one finds thousands of students applying for a few hundred jobs announced by the government. It is not only that there is jobless growth in Indian economy the world economy is also passing through the similar phase. This has prompted many economies to look inward by creating tariff and non-tariff barriers. The classic examples are BREXIT in UK and rise of the Trump as a President with the slogan ‘America First’. In days to come one can expect this movement to grow louder and spread its tentacles to other western countries of the world. This will shrink the global job opportunities available to Indian students. Coupled with this shrinking job opportunities at home can create nightmare for the economy. The economy that fails to generate enough job opportunities to its able-bodied man and women will see rising social tension and crime which the State will attempt to control by treating it as a ‘Law and Order’ problem and investing more in the ‘law and order machinery’.

In the global environment of today, the biggest challenge before the educational institution in India is about producing students with multi-faceted skills, creativity and ability to compete in global markets. The educational system has to create the graduate and post graduate (product) that have the innovative skill, information technology skills, ability to make decisions in a dynamic environment, Human Resource Development skills, Services Management skills, Entrepreneurial Skills, Stress Management and Strategic skills etc. These are all required by the students to be competent and successful in the present globalised dynamic world.

In India the educational system can be broadly classified into three major streams. These are Arts, Commerce, and Science. Each of these streams has its own set of opportunities as well as threats. The problems of one stream may not be relevant in other and hence this paper would concentrate on Commerce stream in particular and others in general.

The word Commerce and business are synonyms and hence when one speaks about the business one thinks of commerce graduate at its helm of affairs. But sadly in today’s business world, there is emergence of graduates from other field of subjects, especially from engineering branches competing with commerce graduates for jobs in administrative and clerical positions in banking, insurance, management etc. Where job selection is by written test or exam these students fair better than the commerce students and also in oral interview they display better skills of the communication and knowledge and of course, greater degree of smartness.

Today, though official figures are not available one can expect that unemployment level is much higher in commerce stream than in other streams of education. However, the employment situation is grim in all segments of the economy and not only specific to commerce education. According to Annual Employment and Unemployment Survey Report, 2013-14 conducted by Labour Bureau about 12.9 % of the youths in the age group of 18 to 29 years are unemployed whereas the same is merely 1.4 % for those who are above 30 years. This indicates that employment opportunities for fresh entrants have dried up in recent years. The report further points out that unemployment among degree/diploma holders is 28 % whereas for primary and pre –primary literates it is 4 % . Among illiterates, it is just 2 % . This indicates that the problem of unemployment is becoming acute and critical for educated youth in India and commerce and Arts stream is also affected by it. Recently, in Uttar Pradesh for the 368 vacancies of the post of peon in Secretariat, there were 23 lakh applications and those applied included 250 doctorates, 25000 post-graduates, 1.5 lakh graduates, 7.5 lakhs Higher Secondary pass outs, 11.2 lakhs 10 class or equivalent pass outs.

The situation, therefore, demands the answer to the question:

- Why are Commerce/ Arts students unable to compete with the graduates from other Disciplines?
- Is our standard of Commerce/ Arts education is much below the desired level? Why commerce/arts graduates and post graduates are unable to compete with engineering students for jobs?
- Is our syllabus being advanced enough to create a graduate and post graduate which is currently demanded in the market?
- Do our Commerce / Arts graduate possess the required employability skill? Are they competent enough to face complexities of business/open market?
- Is demand and supply balance for qualified work force exists in the economy? If not what are its causes? Who is responsible for this?

The questions are many but answers are not simple and straight.

The answer to the questions that are posed is complicated because the stakeholders that are responsible for this sorry state of affairs are many. At macro-level, it's the Government and Management of educational Institutions that are responsible for the genesis of this problem. Whereas at the micro-level it is University, Colleges, Teachers, and students themselves are responsible for current state of affairs. How? And Why? The answer to these questions will be dealt in the latter part of the paper.

**GROWTH & STATUS OF EDUCATION IN INDIA:**

The Modern educational system started during the rule of the British East India Company. The company was not concerned with the development of the education system as such but wanted to create a support base for their rule by educating a small section of upper and middle classes to create a class “Indian in blood and colour but English in taste” who would act as a bridge between the Government and the masses. The following steps and measures were taken by the British for the development of Education in India.

- **Charles Grant and William Wilberforce**, who were missionary activists, compelled the East India Company to give up its non-invention policy and make way for spreading education through English in order to teach western literature and preach Christianity. Hence, the British Parliament added a clause in 1813 charter that Governor-General-in-Council can spend no more than one lakh rupee for education in British India.
- **Rajaram Mohan Roy** set **up** the Hindu College at Calcutta in 1817 in collaboration with David Hare for imparting Western education.
- **General Committee of Public Instruction, 1823** generated debate between ‘orientalist’ and ‘Anglican’. The debate came to the rest with **Lord Macaulay’s Education Policy, 1835**. **Lord Macaulay Committee** created the system of education which catered to upper strata of society through English. The English become a court language and Persian was banished from courts. English educational institutions where State funded. New English schools like Bethune School (1849), Agriculture Institute (Pusa, Bihar), the Engineering Institute at Roorkee were established.
- **Wood’s Dispatch, 1854** was considered as the “Magna Carta of English Education in India” and contained a comprehensive plan for spreading education in India. It entrusted the responsibility of spreading education to the State. It recommended the hierarchy education level- At the bottom, vernacular primary school; at district, Anglo-vernacular High Schools and affiliated college, and affiliated universities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras Presidency. It recommended English as a medium of instruction for higher studies and vernacular at school level.

- **Sadler Commission (1917)** was appointed particularly to study the problems of the Calcutta University but their recommendations were made applicable to other universities also. It made the following observations and suggestions: i) 12-year school course; ii) 3-years degree after the intermediate stage; iii) Centralized functioning of universities, as a unitary residential-teaching autonomous body. This Sadler Commission pattern till date continues to be followed by the Indian Universities.

In the post-independence period there was a tremendous growth of the general as well as professional education in India. Today, we have Universities and deemed universities that imparts education in Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, Commerce, pure sciences, applied sciences and engineering, medical sciences that bifurcates into Ayurvedic, Homeopathic and allopathic. Apart from above in commerce stream itself there have been tremendous growth of various courses like MBA (finance), MBA (marketing), MBA (HRD) etc. There is also development of various shades of B.Com /M.Com courses like B.Com (event management), B.Com (financial services), B.Com (management), B.Com (banking), BFS /MFS etc.etc.

As per the statistics of the MHRD , in 2015-16 there are 799 universities in India and about 39071 colleges, apart from above there are 11923 standalone institutions with total enrollment of 345,84, 781 students. Of which, male students are 185,94,723 are males and 159,94,058 are females. The ratio of female students in total student population is 46.2 percent in 2015-16 which has increased from 44.6 percent in 2011-12. The overall gross enrolment of youths in higher institutes of learning is about 24.5 percent, which is 25.4 percent for male and 23.5 percent for females.

Year	Number of Universities	Number of Colleges	Stand Alone institutes	Enrollment in Higher Education			Female Enrollment ratio
				Total	Male	Female	
2011-12	642	34852	11,157	29184331	16173473	13010858	44.6
2012-13	667	35525	11565	30152417	16617294	13535123	44.9
2013-14	723	36634	11664	32336234	17495394	14840840	45.9
2014-15	760	38498	12276	34211637	18488619	15723018	46.0
2015-16	799	39071	11923	34584781	18594723	15990058	46.2

Source: MHRD

The gross enrolment ratio indicates an increasing trend both for female as well as male students. For male student's gross enrolment ratio has increased from 22.1 percent in 2011-12 to 25.4 percent in 2015-16, a rise of 3.3 basis point whereas for female students it has increased from 19.4 percent to 23.5 percent with a rise of 3.1 basis point. Thus, growth in the male enrolment ratio is marginally higher than the female enrolment ratio for the period under consideration.

Apart from physical infrastructure important infrastructure is availability of manpower in faculties of colleges and universities. There were 12.47 lakh teachers in 2011-12 that has increased to 15.19 lakh in 2015-16 a Compounded average growth rate of 4.02 percent per annum. The university teachers are classified into various categories such as Professors, Readers/ Associate Professors, Assistant Professor, Demonstrators, Temporary faculty. The Compounded Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) indicates that in Professor Category the CAGR is 7.28 percent, whereas for Reader/ Associate Professor it is merely 0.04 percent; for assistant professor category it was 3.42 percent whereas for demonstrators and temporary faculty it was 9.37 and 10.37 percent respectively.

Year	Gross Enrolment Ratio			Professor	reader/ associate Prof	Asst. Prof	Demonstrators	Temporary	Total
	Total	Male	Female						
2011-12	20.8	22.1	19.4	102738	174265	852894	49164	68392	1247453
2012-13	21.5	22.7	20.1	120156	176402	877596	54608	79849	1308611
2013-14	23	23.9	22	125338	182681	912178	58546	88792	1367535
2014-15	24.3	25.3	23.2	136966	177599	985085	71657	101948	1473255
2015-16	24.5	25.4	23.5	146021	174657	1009196	76933	112006	1518813
Compounded Annual Growth Rate				7.28	0.04	3.42	9.37	10.37	4.02

Enrolment in courses in India (Figures in lakh)			
Stream	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15
Arts	97.3	109.4	107.1
Science	47.3	43.8	40.9
Engineering	41.6	42.5	42.2
Commerce	40.0	38.6	37.2
Medical	9.8	8.9	8.1
Management	5.6	5.2	5.1
Law	3.5	3.3	3.02
Data Source: MHRD Times of India Dated: 19 <sup>th</sup> March, 2018			



Though in last few years there is increase in gross enrolment ratio to 24.5 percent. There are wide variations across the regions as well among different social groups. According to the US-India Policy Institute in Washington, based on data from the 64th round of NSSO survey 2007-08 in the age group 22-35 years, over 15% in the northern region and 13% in the southern region have access to higher education. In the north-central region, the number is just 10% for men and 6% for women, whereas in the northeast, only 8% men and 4% women have access to higher education.

Further, among communities, tribal's and Dalits fare worst with just 1.8% of them having any higher education. Muslims are almost as badly off, with just 2.1% able to go for further learning. Similarly, just 2% of the rural population is educated beyond a higher secondary level, compared to 12% of the urban population and just 3% of women got a college education compared to 6% of men.

South India offers the best opportunities for socially inclusive access to higher education including technical education and education in English medium. For instance, the share of Hindu SC/ST in technical education in south India is about 22%, and the share of Muslims 25%. These were the lowest shares among all communities in south India. But this was higher than the share of most communities, including Hindu OBCs and upper caste Hindus in most other regions.

For the present state of education at macro-level government is responsible because the government in order to achieve the objective of "equity" has converted higher education into mass education without maintaining a balance between demand and supply of educated manpower.

This oversupply is not just the feature of commerce and arts graduates, but is also seen in science and engineering disciplines as well. The recent technological advancement and increasing use of software in office work have resulted in the entry of information technology professionals in office work who can manage the various functions of the office work with minimum knowledge of commerce and accounting. In this job, IT trained manpower is preferred than commerce or Arts graduate because of their superior technology handling capacity.

Another important actor at the macro-level are 'managements' of educational institutions who in order to make fast money climbed the bandwagon of new courses. Today, B.Com, M. Com or MBA are not the only courses that are thought in commerce faculty of the colleges and universities, there is vast spectrum of new courses that have emerged like BCA, MCA(commerce), BBA, BFS, MFS, B.com in Tourism Management, B.com in financial management, B.Com in event management etc. etc. All these courses are started by private educational institutions or by government institutions or by government aided institutions as self-finance courses. These institutions charge exorbitant fees, but lack adequate experienced faculty and infrastructure. In fact, in many of these colleges/ universities employ fresh post- graduates to handle the classes

rather than experience qualified faculty. This faculty is unable to inspire or create top class students as a result; almost 90 percent of our graduates and post graduates are unemployable.

Further, with shrinkage of employment opportunities in the economy, there is intense competition among the job seekers and commerce/arts graduates are finding it difficult to compete with highly endowed engineering and a science graduate. In fact, if one conducts a survey of enrolment at the major B-schools, then one will find that the majority of the students are from engineering branches. Further, the creation of super specialization has also limited the job opportunities for commerce graduates. If commerce graduate fails to get a job in his/her specialization; he/she becomes unfit for a job in other fields. Thus, there is a danger associated with this so called super-specialization. One of the ways in which this problem can be tackled is by creating add on course options for the students in diverse fields where in student pursues main B. Com course, as well as learn side by side add-on courses that would give him specialized knowledge about the specific branch. But, asking students to complete two or more courses in one academic year would be a bit too heavy task.

At micro-level universities/colleges, teachers, parents, and students are responsible for this worsening state of commerce education. Universities are supposed to perform three important tasks: i) Granting of affiliation for courses; ii) formulation of syllabus and iii) Conduct of examination. Universities are supposed to formulate syllabus that is relevant to the industry, but in the name of revamping the syllabus there is just change in name of the paper or just change in the order of the topic is done. No thought is given to the meaningful revamping of the syllabus and course content. Current thinking in subject hardly reflects in the syllabus. Further, the quality of the staff and infrastructure available in colleges are to be checked by the University before granting affiliation for the particular course. But, in spite of lack of infrastructure and qualified staff, universities due to political and other compulsion continue to grant affiliation to the courses. Such affiliation is immoral and amounts to denial of the right to quality education to the students.

Further, the function of conducting exams has been abdicated by the Universities in favor of colleges. Except the T. Y. B.Com /B.A. / B. Sc exam all other exams are conducted by the colleges. Even in post-graduation some of the universities have surrendered the task of the setting of the question paper and conduct of M.com part I and II examination to colleges. In some universities 40:60 pattern is followed where 40 percent component is internal marks of college and 60 percent are external marks based on the question paper set by the university.

Starting of new courses is considered as a prestige issue by the Colleges and is on the spree of starting new courses at undergraduate and post-graduate level. Over the years there is saturation of the students in these courses, but, the infrastructure created especially manpower employed forces them to continue with such courses in spite the fact that there is



hardly any demand for these graduates. BBA, BCA (Commerce), BFS, etc are all redundant courses which no way improves the employability of commerce graduates. Students are forced in these courses by their parents with hope that their ward will get some job after completion of the course. It is the hope of the parents that keep these courses running rather than the need for an economy. In fact, it is a general tendency in society and among the parents that anybody who secures good marks should enroll for science and those who fail to get admission in science will opt for commerce or arts. As result students with low potentials are enrolled in Commerce& Arts that teachers are expected to convert into world class products? Many of these students are pushed up in lower classes because of no fail policy or internal mark system where students secure 80 to 100 percent marks but for external examination fails to secure even 30 percent of marks. In order to show good result at the board or at university examination, the teacher gives them maximum or full marks to the student, without even bothering to pause and think whether these marks are deserved by the student. Further, in order to reduce the workload, the universities have decentralized examination system by entrusting FY, SY degree level exams to colleges, in some universities even post graduate exams are entrusted to colleges. Since the teacher is one who teaches and also frames question paper he teaches what is convenient to him rather than the syllabus and also asks questions from the selected set of question bank that is given to the students well in advance. This has reduced sanctity of the course content and examination pattern and exams have become rituals that are to be conducted every semester. Further, exam schedule is all round the year, there two internal exams; if a student fails to answer any one of the exams then the teacher is expected to give him the third exam. Apart from these internal exams what is popularly termed as ISA there is Semester End Exam where also the same individual is teacher, paper setter as well as evaluator. Further, students are expected to keep 75 percent attendance and hence are expected to attend lectures but hardly 50 percent of the students attend regular lectures and complete 75 percent required attendance. College administration or teachers have no guts to enforce attendance because if disqualification of the students is done due to attendance in lower class there will be no students or requisite divisions next year. In order to maintain divisions and Workload, College teachers and administration indulge in the manipulation of attendance. In fact, the condition of 75 percent attendance is more observed in the breach rather than in compliance.

As far as students are concerned, those who fail to get admission in Science chooses Commerce and those who fail to get admission in Commerce take admission for Arts. This has become a hierarchy of choice for students. Even if somebody breaks this hierarchy and seeks admission for Commerce and Arts, he/she is looked upon as lower aptitude student who can't get admission to science. Thus, society has attached the stigma of some sort of on admission to Commerce and Arts streams. With the expansion of higher secondary level institutions in science stream large percentage of creamy students go for science stream and leftovers who fail to secure admission for science are pushed in Commerce and Arts. And a Poor teacher (whose

quality is also suspect) is expected to convert him into a world class student. This is simply an impossible task unless the quality of students that seek admission in Commerce and Arts courses drastically improves.

Even the quality of the student doesn't matter if the student is willing to learn, but, the majority of the students who seek admission for Commerce and Arts courses want a degree rather than knowledge. Hardly, anybody is interested in reading more than a text book. Now days students are not even ready to read the text book but download the topic from the website where content is not always correct and students are not in a position to distinguish what is correct and what is wrong. In fact, they expect the teacher to give notes and dictum now days are: Good Teacher is one who gives notes; beyond the notes of the teacher hardly anybody interested in reading. In fact, teacher and educational system have been very successful in producing degree holders, but we have failed to create learning student.

## CONCLUSION

Creating a learning student that would continue to learn even after his graduation and post graduation degree is the challenge before the educational system. No educational system can create fully knowledgeable student, but it has to create a student who continually strives to acquire knowledge and achieve perfection. Our education system sadly lacks this aspect and cosmetic changes that we undertake by adopting the western model of education like Choice Based System without any choice or limited choice of selecting papers or without the choice of selecting an institution for studying these papers definitely do not contribute to creating 'learning student'. To conclude, it's time to reconcile the education system in India in the era of global competition.

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