

## Educational Planning and Policy Research

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### INTRODUCTION

Planning as a systematic instrument of socio-economic development is of recent origin in India although sporadic efforts at it could be traced back to the pre-Independence era. The 'Bombay Plan' drawn up by the industrialists and the 'People's Plan' by M.N. Roy heralded the onset of planning in India. These attempts were, however, at conceptual rather than operational level. The credit for making a determined effort to introduce a comprehensive system of planning in India would go to the Indian National Congress which, in 1938, appointed a National Planning Committee under Jawaharlal Nehru. The Second World War, which followed soon after, adversely affected the probability of introducing the process of planned development of the country. It was only after the cessation of hostilities that the colonial government thought of reviving the process of planning and the Post-War Educational Development Plan (1944) was worked out: The operationalisation of the plan, which was immersed in controversies right from its inception, was overshadowed by the fast developing political situation, leading to the extinction of the British hegemony over India, the vivisection of the country and the installation of a national government in the country.

Soon after its emergence as a free, democratic and sovereign republic, India adopted a system of multi-dimensional planning, with the setting up of the Planning Commission in 1950 under the overall direction of the

National Development Council—the country's apex body in planning. Educational planning was also included as an important component of development planning.

It is disheartening to note that although educational planning has been in vogue for more than four decades, not much attention has been given to strengthening its research base. There have been some studies of macro-level planning, but issues of micro-level planning have been, by and large, ignored. Further, very few studies have been undertaken on the process and methodology of educational planning. No systematic study has been undertaken on the various techniques of plan formulation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the plan schemes. Another area that has been almost neglected is that of perspective planning. Further, the area of human resource development has also received scant attention, except for a few studies on the employment status of the educated.

The large area of policy research is practically an unexplored field. There are very few studies on the impact of socio-political factors on educational development. The pressures brought about by changes in the demographic complexion of the population, the emergence of the resettlement colonies on account of exodus of large segments of population from rural to urban areas and from the developing to the developed countries have not received adequate attention by researchers. Undoubtedly, all these



developments exercise a profound influence on policy formulation for educational development.

Another serious drawback that stares the researchers in the face is the non-availability of baseline statistical data about education. The government's statistical publications are generally out of date. There are very few non-government organisations which collect statistical data about education. As a result, the researchers feel handicapped in taking up research problems, most of which require statistical data.

*The Fourth Survey of Research in Education* (Buch, M.B. 1991) was quite optimistic that educational planning has attracted attention of the researchers as an area of professional study in recent years. Mukhopadhyay et al. (1991) expressed the view that "researches conducted in this area, though few, are indicative of the emergences of a new venture". They reported 15 studies in this area, out of which 6 were conducted on the all-India level. It may, however, be mentioned that an analysis of research studies conducted during the quinquennium under review does not vouchsafe the optimism expressed in the previous survey. The number of studies during the quinquennium under review is only 12. The thematic coverage of the studies is given in Table 1.

### THEMATIC REVIEW

In this survey, we propose to review the studies on a thematic basis rather than a researcher-based one. The main themes under which these studies could be reviewed are:

- (1) Process of educational planning
- (2) Micro/Macro-level studies
- (3) Perspective planning
- (4) Human Resource Development
- (5) Policy Research

It may be mentioned that studies actually reviewed in this survey do not exactly conform to the above themes. They also do not exhaust the various aspects that could be investigated

**Table 1**  
**Number of Studies Reviewed during 1991-96**

| Sl. No. | Area Studied   | No. of studies | States Covered                               |
|---------|--|----------------|--|
| 1.      | Micro/Macro-level Planning   | 2              | Orissa, Rajasthan                            |
| 2.      | Perspective Planning   | 1              | Karnataka                                    |
| 3.      | Human Resource Development, including unemployment of the educated | 4              | Karnataka (Mangalore U.P., Gujarat All India |
| 4.      | Database for Educational Planning                                  | 2              | All India, Haryana                           |
| 5.      | Policy Research  | 3              | All India, Haryana                           |

under the above themes. As already stated, some of the important areas of educational planning have not attracted the attention of researchers. It may also be pointed out that the studies under review also include a few studies, which are the product of post-doctoral research. Subject to these limitations, we shall critically examine the studies completed during the period under review.

### Micro/Macro-Level Studies

Two state-level studies on educational planning were reported. Sahoo, C. (1990) examined the progress of educational development in Orissa during 1951-66 corresponding to the First, Second and Third Plans. The study was based primarily on secondary data. The study not only examined the priorities given to various schemes of educational development in that state, but also analysed the inter-sectoral allocation of resources for education during that period. The study was more of a descriptive type rather than analytical in nature.

In another study, Vyas, J.C. (1991a)



examined the implementation of institutional planning in Rajasthan. His main objective was to find out the number of institutional plans received and reviewed in the office of district education officers (DEOs); to identify the programmes and innovations undertaken in different areas; and to find out difficulties faced by institutions about institutional planning.

According to the study, about 66% of the schools submitted their institutional plans to the DEOs' office, which examined about 60% of the plans and conveyed their comments to the institutions. It was also found that, some of the important innovations taken up by the institutions were: population education, community participation and development activities, propagation of Indian culture, school museum, awareness of environmental problems, etc. Most of the schools took up programmes like examination result improvement, effective supervision, environmental education, small savings schemes, parent-teacher associations, plantation, building decoration, etc.

The difficulties faced by the DEOs' were generally lack of human resources, lack of funds, absence of interest among teachers and lack of provision for training in designing, executing and evaluating the plans.

### **Perspective Planning**

Planning is considered as a process of successive approximations. Planning, to be meaningful has to be an exercise in a long-term perspective. The planner has to visualise the emerging educational scenario in a time span of 10-15 years and to work out the five year plan within that perspective.

It should be a matter of concern that in this important area only one study has been reported. Seetharamu, A.S. (1987) attempted to build up the educational scenario in Karnataka State by A.D. 2001. Basing his study on the secondary sources of data, he attempted to analyse the trends in growth and development of various sectors of education and to critically

appraise their implications for educational development by A.D. 2001. According to the researcher, by A.D. 2001 around 30% of the population in the age-group 14-17 years (13.82 lakhs) would be demanding secondary education and 4.5 lakh students would demand higher education. It has also been estimated that Karnataka State will reach a maximum of 60% literacy level by A.D. 2001 unless special literacy drives are undertaken to enhance this rate.

### **Human Resource Development**

An important factor for accelerating the pace of socio-economic development is the building up of human capital of the requisite calibre. Human beings are the active agents of change and it is through them that the other factors of production are put to the optimum use. Education builds up knowledge, skills, working abilities and capacities of the people in the society, which are important for various production processes as well as for effecting social upliftment. Without adequate human resources, the process of development will come to a grinding halt. Hence any programme of educational planning becomes infructuous unless adequate attention is given to various aspects of human resource development.

The main area of research under this head would be the survey of the available stock of manpower of various specialities, both in quantitative and qualitative terms; the extent of utilisation of the existing manpower; the working out of estimates of professional and other manpower over a long-term time horizon; the employment including self-employment and underemployment of manpower, etc. The relationship of education with socio-economic development would be another area of investigation.

It appears that the estimation of the requirements of the manpower of various categories has not attracted the attention of researchers. In this report, three studies on the



different aspects of employment of the educated manpower have been reviewed. Another study which attempts to assess the role of education in economic development has also been reviewed. All these studies are post-doctoral investigations.

Peer, M. (1994) studied the incidence of unemployment among postgraduates of Mangalore University through a mailed questionnaire. Out of 2,500 postgraduates, who had completed their studies during 1983-89, 762 responded. Among the respondents, the majority had M.A./M.Com degrees, followed by those holding M.Sc./M.B.A. and M. Lib. degrees. Nearly half of them were found to be either unemployed or underemployed. Among the employed, a good percentage expressed dissatisfaction with low salaries, dearth of facilities at work places and mismatch between their academic qualifications and the nature of their jobs. Nearly one-fourth of the respondents expressed willingness to become self-employed. They strongly advocated the starting of job oriented courses. They also expressed dissatisfaction with recruitment procedures, which ignored meritorious students. The reservation policy of the government was also generally criticised by the respondents.

Bajpai, P.K. (1992) attempted to study the socio-economic aspects of unemployed youth. He sought to explore the attitude of unemployed youth towards politicians, bureaucrats and other representatives of power elites as well as towards the educational system. The study also attempted to find out the relationship between unemployment and youth unrest. The study covered the youth registered with Lucknow employment exchange. The total sample, drawn on disproportionate stratified, quota random sampling basis, consisted of 300 unemployed youth. The rural unemployed youth formed 72.3% and the urban youth 27.7% of the sample. The important finding of the study was that only 8% of the youth were interested in self-employment. A large majority (67.3%) were not looking for any specific job. A majority of the youth (87%) were dissatisfied with the present

educational system and favoured vocational education.

In another study, Azad, J.L. and Agrawal, P. (1991) studied the incidence, nature and causation of unemployment of graduates who had completed their studies during the previous ten years.

They analysed the data generated by the National Sample Survey Organization, the employment exchanges, the Planning Commission and the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research. The opinion of the employees was also sought through a questionnaire. It was found that 46% of the respondents were wage employed and 24% were unemployed. The largest incidence of unemployment (54%) was among persons holding degrees in social sciences and commerce. About 37% had to wait for a period between 6 months to 2 years before getting first employment. About 40% had to wait for a period extending to 3 years and above.

Veena, R. (1986) attempted to study the role of education in economic development as also the educational and manpower implications of a development plan for a developing country like India. The study was confined to the state of Gujarat. Both primary and secondary cross-sectional data were utilised for the study. The researcher found that while professional education was significantly related to the gross national product, education in arts, literature, languages had no significant relationship with the GNP. Curiously, education in pure sciences had also no significant relationship with the GNP. The study also revealed wide imbalance between the demand and the supply of educated and skilled manpower, leading to escalation in unemployment of the educated. The researcher suggested a thorough revision of the policy of expansion of higher education presently based on non-economic considerations.

### **Database for Educational Planning**

A comprehensive and up-to-date database is an important input for educational planning. In this



context, two studies have been reported. One relates to the fifth All India Educational Survey conducted by Srivastava, H.S. et al. (1990). This is an ongoing programme of the National Council of Educational Research and Training to provide a one-time baseline data for the formulation of educational policies and plans. The study was conducted on a complete-enumeration basis. Besides assessing the availability of educational facilities at various stages of education in habitations, generally and predominantly populated by the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, the survey also examined the availability of physical and academic facilities, including academic and professional qualifications of teachers. The survey offers a very comprehensive, reliable and updated database for educational planning.

In another study, Kapoor, M.M. and Premi, K.K. (1988) attempted to revise the existing norms with regard to the opening and upgrading of schools, school buildings, provision of furniture and equipment including library and laboratory facilities and provision of teaching, non-teaching and supervisory staff in Haryana State. The study was conducted in three districts of Haryana State selected on a random sampling basis. The study was expected to help the Haryana State Government in revising the norms with regard to the academic and physical infrastructure in schools and thus help in working out the costs of various programmes on a more realistic basis.

### Policy Research

Three studies which have some bearing on policy formulation in education have been reported. The first study by Rai, D.N. (1989) related to an analysis of university education legislation in India between 1857 and 1980. The main objective of the study was to examine whether university legislation had been in consonance with the needs, norms and values of Indian society. It was also intended to find out whether the legislative set up has any in-built system of self evaluation, self-correction, renovation and

protection to preserve the autonomous character of universities.

The study revealed that government control has been exercised with the promulgation of the Indian Universities Act of 1857. This not only politicised the functioning of universities but also interfered with their democratic norms and autonomy. The study also brought out the fact of poor coordination between the educational institutions and industry, which had led to massive unemployment among the educated and campus disturbances. The study does not indicate how campus disturbances have been caused by the lack of coordination between the industry and the universities.

In another study, Choudhury, B.N.R. (1990) attempted to study the aesthetic interests of pre-adolescent pupils of the secondary schools of greater Gauhati and its bearing on educational planning and organisation. The methodology adopted by the researcher consisted of survey testing, questionnaire inquiries and interview technique to find out the appropriate data on aesthetic interests of pre-adolescent pupils. The main findings of the study were that the boys of 10 years age and girls of 11 years age are more interested in aesthetics. Further, their aesthetic interests were developed by providing good cultural environment and training. The researcher has, however, not elucidated the impact of these behavioural patterns among boys and girls on educational planning and organisation or on the evolution of educational policies.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

The preceding review of researches in educational planning and policy research has revealed that quantitatively and, in some cases, qualitatively also, educational planning has not received adequate attention from the researchers. Further, quite a few important areas of research have remained unattended in spite of the fact that we have had experience of educational planning for the last 45 years.

It is beyond the scope of this review to



analyse the causation of this apparent lack of interest among researchers to take up problems of educational planning and policy research for investigation. The non-traditional nature of this newly emerging area of research and inadequacy of competent academic guidance could be important reasons for this phenomenon. The non-availability of reliable statistical data may be another limiting factor. The low priority accorded to researches in educational planning by the research funding agencies, including the Planning Commission, may also have led to the dampening of interest to make a systematic study of this problem and to take suitable action for promoting research in this important discipline.

We shall try to identify some of the inadequately researched areas in educational planning and also attempt to bring out the major aspects that need to be investigated.

An important area of investigation under educational planning is the techniques of plan formulation, implementation, monitoring and feedback. The modalities of decentralised planning, institutional planning, the role of non-government organisations (NGOs) in the process of plan formulation and implementation and the system of school mapping could also be studied. The factors inhibiting the progress of implementation of plan schemes could form another area of research.

Perspective planning has also not received adequate attention of the researchers. It is true that the very concept of long-term planning has been subjected to serious misgivings. Some of the academics have described it as no better than "crystal-ball gazing". The inadequacy and sometimes non-availability of the baseline data, the continuous technological changes, the frequent changes in government policies and the ever rising inflationary pressures are factors that could vitiate any meticulously worked out plan for the future. In spite of all these problems, it is worthwhile visualising a future scenario, howsoever hazy and indistinct it may be. It is a long-term goal to be achieved within a well

thought out time span. If subsequent events necessitate a change in the strategy, or the targets visualised, it does not invalidate the need for perspective planning.

Human Resource Development is another area which has not been investigated adequately. It has been justifiably stressed that "development is brought about not by passive entities such as natural resources and material capital, but by human beings, who are the active agents of change and bring about production of physical capital. In broad terms, human resource development is the process of building up the knowledge, the skills, the working abilities and the innate capacities of all people in a society."

The important aspects of Human Resource Development which could be studied include undertaking benchmark surveys of professional and other manpower, estimating the requirements of various categories of personnel in quantitative and qualitative terms, the extent of utilisation of the manpower, the productive capabilities of the manpower, and the manner in which these capacities could be augmented. Further, the employment, underemployment and mis-employment of the manpower of various categories—skilled, unskilled, educated, semi-educated, uneducated, etc.—could be another area of research. The attitude of manpower towards work and leisure could also form an important area for investigation.

Another question that needs to be studied is the exodus of professional and technical manpower from the developing countries like India to the economically advanced countries and its impact on the process of educational and economic development. The financial loss suffered by the developing countries and the uncertainties that it creates in manpower policies need to be investigated.

A host of problems could be investigated under the broad umbrella of policy research. For example, an important area of study could be the factors impinging upon the evolution of policies of education. Another area may be the



extent to which the policy guidelines are actually translated into educational plans. Further, the manner of formulating and implementing policies could be another area of study.

An important area under policy research would be the influence of socio-economic and political factors on the evolution and implementation of educational policies. The demographic factors that have a bearing on policy planning could be studied. The intrusion of politics into policy formulation and its impact on the process of educational planning would be an area which has not been adequately investigated.

The economic and social inequalities in education is a theme worthy of sustained investigation. It would also be worthwhile studying the gender inequalities in education and the factors that are responsible for their causation. The rural-urban disparities in education and their impact on the society at large is another area worth investigating.

Another important area that should receive the attention of researchers is the equity-excellence syndrome. The extent to which these two factors are mutually supportive or mutually exclusive could form another problem for investigation.

How far do efforts at being equitable erode excellence is another area of research. In this context, the impact of the reservation policy on the quality of education could be studied.

Another area of research would be the constitutional position of education and its impact on educational development. The centre-state relations, the role of local bodies and non-government organisations in planning and administration of education also necessitate sustained research.

A newly emerging area of research is the impact of the New Economic Policy on educational planning. The fundamental question to be investigated is the dichotomy arising out of planning, which invariably involves some degree of central control and direction, and the new economic policy of which liberalisation,

privatisation and market-oriented economy are the basic constituents. Further, the role of private enterprise in educational planning and administration also needs to be studied. In this context, the place of capitation-fee colleges in professional disciplines and their long-term effect on the quality of education would need to be thoroughly investigated.

The utilisation of existing academic and physical infrastructure, the impact of inflationary pressures on costs of education, the working of various schemes of incentives for children, the impact of schemes of financial assistance to students, the internal and external efficiency of the educational system, etc., also need to be continuously investigated.

Finally, the need for up-to-date and reliable data for a sound system of educational planning can be hardly over-emphasised. Besides collecting data about student enrolment of various categories, the number of teachers, institutions and the financial position of the institutions, data also need to be collected in respect of problems like wastage and stagnation, norms of costs, etc.

While concluding, it may be pointed out that the suggestions for further researches in educational planning are only illustrative in character and are in no way exhaustive. It is not the intention of this review to limit the scope of future research and to introduce an element of rigidity in the choice of research areas. What has been proposed is that research in educational planning is still more or less a virgin field, and a number of significant aspects have not attracted the attention of researchers. It is hoped that future researchers will consider these inadequately investigated areas of research and educational planning will become a promising area of research in times to come.

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