

POLICY BRIEF

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT THROUGH EDUCATION*

Delhi is a city with high human development achievements. The average years of schooling is 7.5 years as opposed to all India average of 4.8 years. A significantly high proportion of population, 19 per cent, holds first degree (graduation) and above indicating high human capital potential. The target of universal primary education has already been achieved. Delhi government has established three new universities in the state.

Sustainable human development requires that a few grey areas with respect to access and equity and promoting skills and the quality of education need to be addressed through policy and planning interventions. Besides, Delhi needs to target much higher levels of human development in order to achieve higher standards of life.

1. EXPANSION

Pathways to Achieving Ten Years of Average Schooling in Delhi by 2020-21

Given 7.5 years of average schooling in Delhi, it would be not out of place to fix a norm of 10 years of average schooling to be achieved by 2020. This may be considered as representative of a very high quality of life, almost similar to that of the developed countries. A suggested pathway for this could be 100 per cent literate population. 15 and 25 percent of population should be primary and upper primary graduates; 25 and 20 percent population should be secondary and higher secondary graduates and 20 percent population should be post higher secondary graduates. The above distribution of population should help to achieve 10 years of average schooling. There could be many alternative pathways.

* This policy brief is based on the chapter on "Promoting Sustainable Human Development Through Education" prepared as a background paper for the DHDR 2013 by Prof. Sudhanshu Bhushan.

Government of Delhi should prepare an expansion plan at different levels of education in order to achieve ten years of average schooling. The expansion plan should have inbuilt strategy for inclusive expansion.

2. EQUITY AND INCLUSION

- (i) The Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) for SC children has fallen from 69.5 per cent at primary level to 54.1 per cent at the upper primary level. Further, GER of SC children drops from 64 per cent at the secondary to 38.6 per cent at the senior secondary levels. It clearly indicates the difficulties faced by students belonging to these communities in making the transition from primary to upper primary and from secondary to senior secondary levels of school education. Research studies have shown that vulnerability of the weaker sections to move forward in terms of level transitions are partly the result of family's compulsion and partly due to the school related factors.

It requires a high degree of monitoring under decentralised planning of SSA and RMSA to keep a watch on the target groups both with respect to attendance and achievement in the schools. The Directorate of Education may convene meeting with the heads of the schools with respect to the attendance and achievement of students who belong to vulnerable groups such as SCs, Muslims, OBCs and girls.

- (ii) Inclusion of SCs and Muslims in Higher Education: Perception survey results showed that only 12 per cent of SCs and 4 per cent of Muslims are higher education graduates among the total graduates as against their respective share of 27 per cent and 12 per cent in total population.

This observation calls for special efforts to enrol SCs and Muslims in higher education institutions through incentives, motivations and coaching facilities. All the eligible higher secondary graduates belonging to SCs and girls of vulnerable sections should find a place in post-secondary institutions in colleges or vocational institutions.

- (iii) Three categories of workers in the city, viz., service workers, skilled but low-paid workers, and unskilled workers (constituting 74 per cent of the population) possess

low levels of education. Thus, the introduction of policy interventions aimed at upgrading the skills of the working population and certifying the same is the need of the hour in order to augment the market value of these workers.

In this context, a major policy prescription that clearly emerges from the survey is the need for initiating skill development programmes in partnership with various non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and industry associations for upgrading and promoting skill building among this target population.

3. QUALITY EDUCATION

- (i) **Policy on Addressing Teacher Shortage:** There is a teacher shortage in MCD schools. Expansion at secondary and higher secondary schools needs large number of teachers. DU colleges and departments are also functioning with ad hoc teachers due to a large number of vacancies that are yet to be filled since 2008.

The lack of benefits and the sustained insecurity among the ad hoc teachers leads to a serious drop in the quality of their teaching as well as in the research environment. A policy to address teacher shortage in schools and filling up the vacant posts in colleges of Delhi University is urgently required.

- (ii) The introduction of performance pay incentives for teachers (both individual and group) constitute another reform measure that would encourage better teaching and learning outcomes and quality of education.
- (iii) The quality of education received by students is paramount and over-rides all other concerns. Rather than allowing for the continued emphasis on enrolments, learning outcomes need to become the prime area of attention of public policy. Undertaking an independent assessment of learning achievements is the only way of ensuring this and it could serve as a starting point for future educational policies.
- (iv) The setting up of an independent accreditation body for schools would help inform and empower parents to make the right choice of schooling for their children. An alternative could be the setting up a of State Institute for Learning Assessments,

which would study and assess the school wise academic performances of students (from, say, Standard III onwards) and would help in defining the standards of learning achievements for both government and government-aided schools, thereby making them more performance-oriented.

- (v) The review of four year undergraduate programme in Delhi University needs to be undertaken in view of dissatisfactions expressed by student.

4. GOVERNANCE

- (i) Land allotment policy to the private schools management at secondary level of schooling needs to be made for encouraging private participation.
- (ii) The co-ordination between schools run by different managements needs to be established.
- (iii) Hostel facilities to the students, particularly to the weaker sections and girls should be augmented in Delhi.

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