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## COMPARATIVE STUDY OF EDUCATIONAL POLICIES OF INDIA AND CHINA

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### Abstract

This paper attempts to analyze the major reforms taken place in China and India in terms of educational policies between 1949 to 2017. A brief analysis shows that there is not much difference in the educational policies of China and India at different levels. The differences lie in the implementation of policies. Though both the countries have reached remarkable growth in the recent decades sustained by rapid educational systems expansion. Good implementation strategies of China as compared to India has helped to secure good global positioning and active participation of foreign investors.

Keywords: Educational Policy, Literacy, India, China

### Introduction

The major reforms in the education system and school curriculum in China has been underway since the founding of People's Republic of China in 1949. The reform began with the national survey study which was organized by the National Ministry Development of Basic Education during July 1996 and end of 1997. Their aim was also to bring reforms in the curriculum development and the comparative study of school curriculum reforms in china, to facilitate system wide reform to develop broadened vision and research based conceptual framework of school curriculum change as an effective way in achieving the goal of world-wide campaign for Education For All (EFA) IN "overall improvement of quality at all the levels". (Zhu, 2014)

For quality education for all educational reforms, an "International Comparative study on educational reform and curriculum change: The Chinese Case" was commissioned by the capacity building section of UNESCO International Bureau of Education for curriculum development. The main objective was to develop in depth policy analysis of most recent (ten years) educational system wise reforms, which had implications for major changes of educational content and methods in early 21<sup>st</sup> century and also to identify the curriculum dimensions to attain high quality and equitable basis education in context to EFA scheme for overall development of the educational system. (Nanzaho, 2007)

The Chinese government has worked out an Eighth five-year plan (1991-1995) and a ten year programme (1991-2000) for the development of education. The development of education revitalization of science and technology and speeding up of socio economic development are the keys to turning china into modernized socialist country in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. (Liu, 2010)



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Under the state council as the central authority, Ministry of Education takes the major responsibility of overall planning and decision making in education system, along with the administration of the basic education which is largely decentralized to the provincial, municipal or county government. The administration and supervision of higher education in China is done at the National, provincial and municipal levels. (Du, 2019)

In China, primary and secondary school of education is completed in 12years which is divided into primary stage, junior secondary and higher and senior secondary stage.

### 1. Implementation of nine-year compulsory education

In the year 1986, since the declaration of “Compulsory education law of the people’s republic of China”, the nine year compulsory education was implemented by the governments at various levels and made significant success everywhere. According to the statistical analysis, in the year 2002, 98.58% children were enrolled in the primary school and the proportion of junior primary and secondary school graduates reached to 97% including vocational school students.

In 1987, the ministry of education and the ministry of finance jointly issued “the opinion on some issues concerning the reform on administration of basic education in rural areas” and the efforts were made to integrate the development of education and upgrading of quality of labor force along with the development of the economy with the advancement of culture and the living standard of the people. AS a result development of rural education and local economy was promoted.

In 1993, primary and secondary schools implemented “Teaching curriculum for full time primary and secondary schools” (pilot) and this scheme includes the arrangement of syllabus and subjects. The present curriculum of senior secondary school consists of subject courses and activities as well.

In 1999, the Ministry of Education (MOE) designed new basic educational curriculum for 21<sup>st</sup> Century. According to the new curriculum, any child reaching the age of 6 years should enter the primary school however in the places where primary schools are not available the child may start his studies by the age of 7 years in primary schools. All the primary school graduates should enter the nearby Juniour secondary schools without sitting in the entrance examination. However, student who taking admission in the senior secondary school should sit for the local entrance admission test to get admission in the senior secondary school.

Illiteracy eradication is being integrated with the illiterates' work and their life. Learning groups of illiterates were organized in various forms and the teaching and reading materials were developed in different fashions. From 1990 to 2001, 46.48 million illiterates had become literate. Also, the illiteracy rate among middle aged and young group people reduced to less than 5 percent. Rate of the adult who can read has increased to 91.28 percent in 2001 from 77 percent in 1990. The evaluation done by the Ministry of Education using random sampling method shows that 24 provinces have met the state standards in the eradication of illiteracy showing the illiteracy rate





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less than 5%. These provinces includes Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, Jilin, Heilongjiang, Liaoning, Jiangsu, Guangdong, Shandong, Zhejiang, Shanxi, Hebei, Fujian, Hainan, Hunan, Anhui, Jiangxi, Sichuan, Shaanxi, Xinjiang, and Chongqing. The illiteracy rate in the middle aged and young age group is less than 1015 percent in the provinces, such as Yunnan, Guizhou, Inner Mongolia, Gansu, Qinghai and Ningxia. 2700 countries participated in the assessment organized by provincial governments and met the national standard. (Ross, 2005)

Since 1990, annual meetings and workshops on illiteracy eradication were held by the Ministry of Education to collect the experience, study the problems, produce solutions and allocate the assignments for the next phase. The encouragement mechanism was jointly established by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance in 1996. The reviewing and appraising will be taken every two years and the prize was 5,000,000 yuan. The Chinese Prize for Illiteracy Eradication was set up by the Ministry of Education.

In 1996 to 2000, excellent teachers and administrators were engaged in illiteracy eradication were given such prize annually by the Ministry of Education. More than 1000 individuals and over 400 exemplary institutions received this prize upto five years. The Model women Prize for the eradication of Illiteracy set up by the Ministry of Education and All China Women's Federation jointly in 1990 to provide awards to the excellent women groups and individual woman engaged in the eradication of illiteracy after every two years.

## 2. Goal of Education

The chief goal of China's educational development is to set up a basic framework of socialist educational system that meets the needs of socialist modernization oriented to the 21<sup>st</sup> century and having distinct Chinese characteristics. The main points of strategies for the achievement of this goal are: improving the quality of education, stressing efficiency in running schools, adjusting the educational structure, adhering to the coordinated and balanced programme of development, increasing educational investment, optimizing the composition of teaching staff, practicing regional planning and strengthening community participation. (Xin, 2020)

The main target group of illiteracy eradication is the middleaged and young illiterates at the age of 1524. The illiterates over 50 are also encouraged to take part in learning programs for illiteracy alleviation.

## The Educational system and Basic education

China's basic education involves pre-school, nine year compulsory education from elementary to junior high school, standard senior high school education, special education for disabled children, and education for illiterate children. Preschool children of three years and over are enrolled in kindergartens which could be full time or part time, boarding or hourly basis. In 2000, 85% of the population in the China has been offered the opportunity of nine year compulsory education, which reached 93% of the targeted population in 2004. (Ministry of Education)



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In 2001, Ministry of Education issued the notion on implementation of basic education new curriculum which needs the provincial and the educational departments to establish 5 year plan according to the three-fold management.

### Primary and Secondary Education

There are a variety of patterns of primary and lower secondary education- 6+3 pattern, 5+4 pattern, 5+3 pattern and a straight nine-year pattern. The most widely practiced patterns are the 5+4 and 6+3. General upper secondary school education lasts 3 years. There are two types of specialized secondary schools. School that admit lower secondary school graduate usually have program of 4 years and some have 3 year program. Primary education in China lasts for nearly 5 or 6 years with the former accounting for 35% of total enrollment and later one with 65% enrollment.

The primary school curriculum has been composed of integrated subjects and more electives are offered. Offering a new course or “comprehensive practice activities”. The course has integrated information technology as a compulsory subject for primary and upper primary school students. Their course study emphasizes on experimental learning and centers on activities. The curriculum is jointly designed by the teachers and the learner’s according to the pupil’s interest, needs and available resources. The teacher and learners participate equally in teacher’s and learners activities.

The teaching subjects are taught through developing connections within a subject and across different subjects and by developing linkages between classroom teaching learning and pupil’s own experience as well as community life. Integrated learning activities are organized while teaching the curriculum content of the individual subjects.

At junior secondary stage 3 years of schooling is there of most of the children. Nearly 98% of students are enrolled in three years of schooling there. The nine year in primary and junior secondary school is compulsory for the Chinese students.

The school year of primary and the secondary schools is divided into 2 semesters. Primary school comprises of 38 weeks of teaching sessions and 13 weeks for holidays and vacations however 1 week is reserved for teaching if required. School year for junior secondary school comprises of 40 weeks of teaching session with additional week for reserved classes and 12 weeks for holidays and vacations. For senior secondary school, 40 weeks of teaching session with one or 2 week for reserve and 10 to 11 weeks for holidays and vacations.

The government has created special funds to improve China’s elementary and high schools for new construction, expansion and the re building of run down structures. Per capita educational expenditure on elementary and high school students have grown greatly.

The government of China introduced a new academic structure in the country called to be “3-3-4” system. It covers three years of junior secondary education, three years of senior secondary and 4 years of university education.





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In the year 2008-09 the government extended free education in the public sector schools. In order to improve the quality of Hong Kong education the government introduced “small class teaching”. The public schools those are on the way to implement this policy will be allocated primary 1 students on the basis of 25 students per class which was further extended to primary 6 classes in the year 2014-15 school year.

Furthermore, to raise the professional standard and status of the teachers, educational bureau has increased the ratio of graduate teacher posts in public sector in primary and secondary schools to 45 percent and 80 percent in 2008-09 school year and the ratio was further increased to 50 and 80 percent in 2009-10 school year. In 2003, the reform in the scheme of evaluation and examination in primary and secondary schools was implemented.

### Higher Education

Higher education in China is administered at the Central and the provincial level, with the provincial government taking the main responsibility. The programme of Higher education in China lasts for 2 to 3 years. The graduate education consists of 2-3 year programme and 3 years master degree programme and then a doctoral degree programme. The higher education in China is continuously growing changing and developing. In 2005, there were slightly over 4000 Chinese higher education institutes. (OECD, 2016)

The curriculum of higher education in China mainly focuses on the interest of the holistic and all round development of the individual. Main focus is on knowledge and skills, process and approaches and affection, attitude and values. The current curriculum reform aims to develop multifaceted competencies of new generation citizens for all around human development not only in intellectual but affective, attitudinal and value dimensions by conducting more interactive teaching learning processes and approaches by focusing center on learner’s development.

Various types of institutions provide higher education which includes general and technical universities, specialized institutions for medicine, agriculture, foreign languages etc, vocational universities and specialized colleges. Entry to the China’s higher education universities is highly competitive. The Bachelor’s degree is granted by universities and specialized institutions. However the right to grant is given by some vocational institutions. The Master’s degree and the Doctor’s degree is granted by the universities and some specialized institutions.

Hong Kong has 12 degree awarding higher education institutions, eight of which are funded by the public through UGC. The UGC is the non statutory body appointed by Chief Executive who advise the government on the development and funding of the higher education system in China. UGC also plays a major role in quality assurance and in promoting research. All the 8 higher education institutions which are funded by the government are an autonomous statutory body which has its own governance and ordinance. They enjoy high degree of academic and institutional autonomy.



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## Financial Investment of China on education

During the period of 1950-78, government education expenditure was 6.50% of total government expenditure and however only 2.20% of national income was spent on the education system in China. But during 1979-92, it rose to 11.01% of total government expenditure and 2.88% of national income was spent. So far, 21 million yuan has been provided by the Ministry of Finance as the prize for the institutions and individuals with remarkable achievements in illiteracy eradication. This shows China does not invest much on the education system their country. (Tsang, 2000)

## Summary of the educational structure

### Academic Education:

The MOE (Ministry Of Education) is the government authority in charge of overall planning, coordination and management of the various kinds and different levels of education in China.

	Age	Enrollment in 2008 (in thousands)
<b>Preschool education</b>	4-6	24,750
<b>Primary education</b>	6-12	103,315
<b>Junior secondary education</b>	12-15	55,742
<b>Senior secondary</b>	16-18	24,763
<b>Higher education</b>	9 and above	30,934
<b>Vocational education</b>	12 and above	19,782
<b>Adult education</b>	18 and above	4,117
<b>Special education</b>		417
		263,820

## Comparison of Educational system in China with India

India and China have faced similar challenges during the building up of national education systems due to rapid industrial and social transformation. However, due to different policies, strategies and historical circumstances have led them to different routes. China has already outperformed India in primary and secondary education showing in the area of quality, accessibility and in education delivery process. India is on the competitive edge with China in higher education. Recently, India is trying to catchup with china in K-12 education policy, however China has already overtaken India in terms of college enrollment and also the number of graduates. We can observe that the challenges of Chinese and Indian education system offer valuable lessons for both the countries as well as rest of the developing world.





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## China and India: History of education

Period	China	India
<b>Late 1940's to mid 1960's</b>	Priority was given to higher education. Primary education first increased, then decreased.	Priority was given to higher education. Primary education was neglected and slow progress.
<b>Mid 1960's to late 1970's</b>	Higher education was halted. Primary education rapidly expanded .	Continued emphasis on higher education. Continued negligence of primary education.
<b>Early 1980's to 2000</b>	Higher education was rebuilt and expanded. Vocational secondary schools increased and then declined. Continued development of primary education took place.	Government shifted their priority from higher education to primary education.

### Attainment of Basic Education

The stock of education is measured by the indicators such as literacy rate, years of education attained and the percentage of educated adult population. Since 1985 the gross enrollment rate in primary education in China exceeds 100 percent. India reached this figure in 2000. However the net enrollment rates are lower- 82% in India and 95% in China. Secondary enrollment rate was about 40% for both the countries in 1985 which is increasing till now. But, the increase in China is much faster than India. According to the UNESCO report, in 2002-2003 the figure was 70% for China and 53% for India. This shows that the rate of gross primary enrollment in India is converging which is also evident from India's gross intake ratio which was whopping 132 percent in India in 2002-2003, however Chinese had 99 percent during that time.

Looking at the rates of enrollment and literacy rates, it can be concluded that India has caught up with China and therefore be misleading. It can also be noted that China has a large pool of educated labor which is a considerable advantage over Indian attracting large number of manufacturing industries and manufacturing plants. China's employment in services and manufacturing in 1999 was about 47% in labor force, compared with 32% for India. However more than 60% of labor in India is in agriculture as compared to 47% in China.

### Attainment of Higher Education

The gross tertiary enrollment rate in China has surpassed India in 2000. There has been a strong technological focus on higher education in China and India. In 2002, China graduated 219,000 engineers, that shows about 39% of all college graduates. However, India's intake in approved colleges was 3, 60, 000 in 2002-03. Despite of well developed tertiary education system, India caters only 8000 foreign students in its colleges and universities. According to ministry of education in 2004 China hosted 110844 foreign students in its colleges and thereby attract more students.



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China is luring foreign trained faculty to its universities in an attempt to make them among the best in the world, this also seems to be a step in the right direction.

### Role of Stakeholders and Regulatory bodies

During the early 1980's, India had better infrastructure qualitatively as well as quantitatively but now Chinese government has taken a lead in Primary as well as higher educational policies.

The current educational system of China is much better than that of Indian educational system. In the name of primary education for all and higher accessibility to higher education, Indian has only created thousands of higher educational institutes like shops more than 5 times of China. However, China has more number of universities as compared to India. In India, there are 6300 universities which have more than 33000 affiliated colleges whereas China is growing its higher education with the help of Universities only.

The twelfth five year plan (2012-2017) which is responsible for governing the higher education did not mention the quality standards in their policy due to this fact the educational quality is degrading in India and has outstripped China.

In India, there is a huge gap between demand and supply as the population of the country is growing day by day but government lacks funding for higher education. The bill is still pending for foreign education. The government should work for "Not for profit" papers but it is working "for profit" papers.

### Quality Concerns

There are very few higher education institutes which maintain the quality of NAAC, NBA etc. In India, the government bodies like MHRD, NCERT are the main regulatory bodies for maintain the standards of educational system but it can be seen that they are not able to evaluate the educational process properly. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and RTE 2009 Act has not been properly implemented yet which are the main reasons of poor educational quality in India. In China national policy is started to improve the compulsory schools in poverty areas whereas in India There is still lack of proper implementation of educational policies.

Indian higher education system concentrates only at the undergraduate degree. In fact, with 2 crores of students, it is one of the largest system in the world in terms of undergraduate enrollment as compared to 1.27 crore in China and 1.04 crore in the U.S. This availability of too many undergraduate degree holders for a smaller economy as compared to China, has created a situation of credential inflation, which means, devaluation of a degree with time due to oversupply of graduates. This is clearly evident from many unemployed and underemployed college graduates. This also reflects the poor quality of education and the kind of skills imparted at the institutions. Despite smaller population and size of higher education system as compared to China, India has more than double the number of students at postgraduate level (27 lakhs vs. 12 lakhs). At the





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vocational education level, China enrolls nearly 96 Lakhs students in vocational education as compared to 40 Lakhs in India. (University Grants Commission, 2008)

However, comprehensive reform on education and examination system are being brought up in China. National policy have been implemented to increase proportion of rural students at selective universities.

## Teacher Quality

While the overall Indian education system is continuously increasing day by day but it is lacking faculty in some institutions. However, in some institutions even if faculty is there, there is lack of qualified faculties. In China, all the primary school teachers need to have a diploma and all the teachers in the secondary schools have to be degree holders in professional certification. China is the first forward thinking district in terms of providing continuous professional training for its teachers. Shanghai has raised the bar entry to the teaching profession since 1990's. In China, every teacher has to complete 240 hours of professional teaching development in 5 years. Teacher study groups are intrinsic to China's success for education. Thus, continuous professional training is provided to the teachers in China. However, India is lacking in terms of professional and qualified teachers.

In China, the percentage of teachers with required qualifications which is set by the state is increased from 80.7% of all primary school teachers in 1991 to 94.6% in 1998. The remaining teachers are called to be as "partially" qualified. At the lower secondary level, the percentage of qualified teachers increased from 46.6% to 80.5% during the same time period. In China pupil-to-teacher ratio in 2002–2003 was 21, nearly half as much as India's ratio of 42. The full-fledged State Education Inspectorate is responsible for monitoring the schools in China, and a teacher wage structure that includes a fixed component as well as a component that depends on student scores, have no doubt played important roles in maintaining and improving the quality of teachers in China.

According to NCER, about 87% of primary teachers in India have acquired a primary or elementary teacher training certificate of one or two years' duration or a bachelor's degree in education. And 58 percent of teachers at the secondary and higher secondary levels have postgraduate degrees, 33 percent have undergraduate degrees, and 9 percent have a lower qualification. However, such statistics mask a pervasive problem in India: teacher absenteeism. Any degree of qualification on paper will be of little help if a teacher does not actually teach. According to Kremer et al. (2004), in a nationally representative sample of primary schools, 25 percent of Indian teachers are absent which is one of the reason why educational system of India is suffering. Although India spends more on education than does China. The high dropout rates and teacher absenteeism indicates that the Indian expenditures on education are not being utilized effectively. Improving the quality of its education system is one of the largest challenges India is facing. High quality teachers, lower student-teacher ratios, better monitoring, and competition



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fostered by school choice all appear to play important role in keeping the quality of basic education in China high.

## Curriculum Framework

In China, there are periodic curriculum revision of the school boards which equip the students with insight powers of analysis and assimilation of information. The Shanghai Municipality inspects schools every year. A monitoring team does a detailed review every 5 years. However, as compared to India there is still lack of proper curriculum which could enhance the educational system. Syllabus designing and delivery up gradation is lethargic and bureaucratic in India which results in educated unemployed.

Chinese give profound number of scholarships to the students however India give few scholarships.

## Role of Students

Chinese students are more oriented towards practical education, however Indians stick to more towards theoretical knowledge and we promote rote learning methods. In the elementary schools in India the children are burdened with the books and reproduce the same material in the exam. However, Chinese students are encouraged towards creative thinking; they learn themselves practically by providing sufficient materials, linking towards daily life. In Elsevier research journal, half of the papers are coming from China and from India number of papers can be counted on the fingers.

## Disparities in Access

### 1. Gender

It is observed that the China's net primary enrollment rate and its net intake rate are slightly higher for females than males. 95% for primary enrollment and 66% for intake rates. This decreasing disparity has reduced the literacy gap rates: 87% of women aged 15+ are now literate compared to 95% of men (UNESCO, undated). The implementation of the "one child policy" has also helped to bridge the gender gap. However in India gender situation is less rosy. The female enrollment rate is 75.7 % in primary education lagged behind the male enrollment figure 88.5%.

### 2. Geography

In China, the eastern coastal regions, and economically developed areas have better in coverage of compulsory education and education indicators. The population coverage ratio for nine year compulsory schooling decreases from 100% in 9 provinces in the east to 65-85% in central provincial regions. The quality indicators such as drop-out rates, transition rates, literacy rates and percentage of qualified teachers are more in the eastern regions as compared to the western areas. The coastal bias in the development of China has made educational disparity in the country. In





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India the education gap has decreased since 1991 from rural to urban areas (rural: 49% to urban 91%). Bihar, for instance has a literacy rate of 41% compared to the national literacy rate 60 percent.

### Resources: The Financing of Education

India spends higher than that of China during the last two decades. Education finance in China relies on the tuition and fees instead of public treasury. In 1991 tuition and fees had accounted for only 4.4%, however up to 2000 the fees and tuition has increased to 12.5%. According to the UNESCO data, 55.8% of education expenditure are from public sources and the remaining 44.2% comes from primary sources. However in India 96% of funding comes from public sources and 4% from private sources.

In China, private schooling accounts for only 1.5% of primary enrollment, 3% secondary enrollment, and 9% vocational enrollment in 2001. In other words, the provision of schooling in China is predominantly public, the financing of it has become completely private. The situation is a bit reversed in India. There are non-governmental bodies that manage 51% of secondary schools and 58% of higher secondary schools (UNESCO, 2004). Even at the primary level, official statistics do not represent private schools unaided by the state government; in urban areas these schools account for 17 percent of all schools. This shows an oft-cited reason for the growth of private education in India: the poor quality of public schools.

### Dropout Rates

Even if India enrolls 100 percent of students in primary education, even if the current situation continues, only 83% of students will reach to grade 5. The dropout rate is an indicator of the quality of the education system. India has some distance to go, before it can ensure that the extra resources funneled into primary education are efficiently used. The emphasis in needs to be taken care on quality-weighted indices, such as survival rates, rather than on raw enrollment rates. China has done better at the primary level, with a survival rate to grade 5 of 99 percent in 2002–2003. In 1990 China was with a 15% dropout rate at the primary level, handily beat India's 38%. By 1998, China's primary dropout rate dropped to 0.9 percent and its lower secondary rate to 3.2 percent. At the secondary level, China's repetition rate in 2002 was 0.3 percent, compared with India's dropout rate which was 4.8 percent. In other words, high enrollment rates in China go hand-in-hand with lower dropout and repetition rates.

### Conclusion

China also spends less fraction of GDP on the educational system as compared to India, but evidences indicate that China is using its resources more efficiently than India. In India dropout rates are high and teacher's asceticism more. However in Chinese schools there is great degree of decentralization in school governance than in India. Although India has significant provision of primary education since government school are of in different quality.



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Based on the above analysis we can conclude that, China's achievements in primary education have been spectacular although Chinese had a history of egalitarianism and poverty reduction. The primary enrollment rate is close to 100%. This has allowed large segments of the Chinese population to benefit from manufacturing- and service-sector employment in a fast-growing economy. There is significant reduction in the gender gap, in education. China has built a strong foundation for sustained growth and development, female education and literacy in economic development. Education equality along ethnic lines has likewise been impressive. The decentralization of schooling administration, despite state-run schools and a bloated bureaucracy have helped in quality delivery of education in China.

However, the major challenge for China is educating close to 90 million adult illiterates and then integrating them into the modern economy. However, with the low fertility rates and an aging population, this is a priority and cannot be ignored. As there is greater prevalence of illiteracy in the interior and the indicators of regional inequality are much worse than those for gender and ethnic inequality. Improvements in enrollment in secondary education and the quality of its delivery are needed. As educational emphasis moves to tertiary education, and financing moves toward tuition and fees, better financing options are needed to be available to students and their families. China's opening up in the financial sector has not kept pace with its opening up in manufacturing sector; the financial sector also needs to open up in order to facilitate the provision of options such as student loans.

Comparatively, In India it is easily observed, a strong tradition of higher education coupled with an English medium of instruction which has put India on the map of the global economy. It also allowed it to position itself as a knowledge-driven economy with special emphasis on information technology and biotechnology. India has realized in early stages of educational development that elementary education cannot be neglected which has already produced results, with increase in primary enrollment and attainment. The large-scale prevalence of private education provides India a flexible platform to enact curriculum and other reforms, even if this advantage has not yet been fully realized.

However, education of girls and improvement of literacy among the young adult women is the need of the hour. This would result in such as decreased fertility, decreased infant mortality, increased education, and increased HIV/AIDS awareness.

Increasing enrollments will count for little, if quality indicators are not improved. Dealing with dropouts, repeaters, and teacher absenteeism is necessary. Incentive-based wage structure for teachers and more intense monitoring of schools are required.

Inequality along all dimensions—gender, geography, and ethnicity—needs to be reduced. Without a uniformly well-educated labor force, India's "demographic advantage" of a youthful population will be in illusion. Broad-based education is more likely to build a consensus on economic liberalization, as more people would benefit from the forces of globalization.





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In the 1950s, India and China were almost on the same level in terms of approach to education — focusing on higher education, especially science and technology. However, in the 1960s, China prioritized overcoming illiteracy while India continued to lay emphasis on higher education in science and technology. India brought free and compulsory education in the form of Right to Education (RTE) in 2009, decades after China did, the study notes. As a result, between 1961 and 1981, China's literacy rate rose to 68 per cent from 43 per cent, while India's reached 41 per cent from 28 per cent in the same period. (Rampal, 2022)

India's focus on higher education came at the cost of “addressing mass illiteracy”, says a study adding that this issue was further exacerbated by “unequal access to education”. (Rampal, China has 20-year edge but NEP can help India improve education quality — UN University paper , 2022). The gaps between the two countries' literacy rates have since narrowed. According to the World Bank Report (2018), India had a literacy rate of 74 per cent while China's was 97 per cent. The UNU-WIDER study notes that most of India's improvement in literacy has happened in recent years, while China has had an edge for the last thirty years. “China has been close to the 100 per cent mark since the early 1990s and India improved from a 62 per cent literacy rate (of the 15-24 years age group) in 1990 to 92 per cent in 2018. The difference in gains made in youth literacy rates boils down to India being late to the game of primary education policies,”.

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