

Educational Development in Jammu and Kashmir: A Sociological Perspective

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The role of education in developing human resources can no more be confined to the welfare framework only. Its potential for promoting development is being recognised in each and every society. This is mainly due to the meaning attached to development in new context where emphasis on economic growth as a measure of development is replaced by a concern for improvement in living standards. Studies reveal that an increase in per capita income does not always result in substantial improvement in social well being. Therefore, education has a promising role to play in this context.

Sociologically speaking, education is a social action performed by older generations upon younger generations in order to prepare them for the role they are expected to take in future[1]. In the context of 'role' playing education is an empowering vehicle in the hands of an individual to interact with the forces around and also makes the individual better equipped to reap the fruits of development. In this backdrop, it can be argued that the social backwardness of J&K prior to independence is largely attributed to the prevalence of mass illiteracy. The whole state was under the shade of ignorance and illiteracy till the dawn of independence. The older generations could not visualise the role of education in building a healthy society. Lawrence (1895) while commenting on the state of education in Kashmir, pointed out:

“The education is backward in Kashmir. The state is also old fashioned and recognises that the supply of educated Pandits is already far greater than the demand.”[2]

Since the dawn of independence, the state leaders visualised the importance of education in preparing the posterity for efficient role-playing. As such, it was necessary to begin with the process of the development of education according to the needs of the society. Due recognition was given to raise the general level of literacy as well as to provide adequate opportunities for primary, higher and technical education. For this purpose, specific provision for 'free and compulsory' education for children until they complete the age of 14 years has been introduced in the constitution of the State.

Planning and Educational Development

In order to meet the constitutional obligation of 'free and compulsory education', there has been a systematic effort since 1951-52 to reorganise the system of education and enrich its content, so as to meet the needs of trained manpower, particularly in the context of the developing economy. However, the late introduction of the First Five-Year Plan in the State disturbed the sequence of events to follow. For example, if we analyse the First Five-Year Plan, 5.18 % of the total outlay

was allocated to education sector, which included engineering and technical education also. It is imperative to note that only 48.86 lakhs of rupees were actually spent on education as against an allocation of 66.06 lakhs. Similarly, Rs. 235.51 lakhs were actually utilised on education in the second plan, when the total outlays on education being 281.68 lakhs. This was 5.73% of the total outlay. And the expenditure being 4.50 percent.

Despite, the non-availability of sufficient funds and lack of essential facilities in schools situated in remote areas of the state, the number of institutions, the enrolment and the plan allocation on education showed a gradual increase at the end of 1994. According to the figures in table 1, the total number of institutions (including primary, middle, high school, colleges-general, professional), which was 1323 during 1950-51, reached to 3670 during 1959-60. It means that the number of institutions tripled in just ten years.

With the coming decades there was an enormous increase in the number of institutions and it reached to a figure of 13,780 during 1993-94. Out of this, the number of schools for boys reached to 9670 during this period as against 1101 during 1950-51. Similarly, the number of institutions exclusively for girls increased from 222 during 1950-51 to a figure of 4110 during 1993-94. On the other hand, from III plan (1962-66) onwards, the plan allocation and expenditure on education touched enormous figures e.g. during II plan allocation for educational sector was Rs. 281.68 lakhs and the expenditure was 235.51 lakhs during the same period. These figures reached to Rs. 4030 lakhs (plan allocation) and 5052.56 lakhs (expenditure) during the VI plan (1980-85) period. Thus the figures reveal that the actual expenditure on education for this period exceeded the plan outlay by Rs. 1022.56 lakhs during this plan. A similar trend was found during the VII and VIII plan. The total plan outlay for VIII plan (1992-97) was Rs. 35,570 lakh out of this annual plan outlay for 1993-94 year was Rs. 8050.00 lakhs and the expenditure was Rs. 7406.67 lakhs during this period. But one important point to be highlighted is that in all plan allocations; such money has been reserved for elementary education. For instance, the total cost of elementary education during 1950-51 was around 26 lakhs (15.92%) of total outlay and these figures reached to 19500 lakhs (40.33%) during VIII Five Year Plan.

Thus, the above figures lead us to argue that the educational sector in the state has received due attention in the financial allocations during the various developmental plans. As a result, the number of institutions as discussed above and the enrolment of students at school and higher education levels increased accordingly. Again, the figures in table 1 reveal that the total number of students (including school level, college, professional) during 1950-51 was 1.34 lakhs and out of this the number of male students was 1.16 lakhs but the number of female students was as low as 0.18 lakhs only. But after this period the coming decades-observed overwhelming increase in the enrolment figures, particularly at the primary levels. The number of students during the period of 1959-60 reached to 3.14 lakh, and during a period of ten years, there was an increase of 1.80 lakh students. The number of male students reached to 2.40 lakh as against 1.24 lakh during the same period. On the other hand, the female enrolment did not show any improvement. Their number increased to 0.74 lakh as against 0.18 lakh during 1950-51. Thus, there was an increase of 0.56 lakh only. But again from Third Five-Year Plan onwards there was a drastic change in the enrolment figures. According to the figures for 1979-80, the total number of students was 8.19 lakhs and out of this the number of males was 5.35 lakhs and 2.84 lakhs for females. This trend continued even during the coming decade and the total enrolment figures reached to 13.89 lakhs

during 1993-94. Therefore, there was an increase of 8.54 lakhs during a period of 13 years. Similarly, the number of male students reached to 8.61 lakhs and 5.28 lakhs for females. During the period from 1979 to 1994, there was an increase of 3.26 lakhs in the number of male students and 2.44[3] lakhs in the enrolment of female students.

Table – I

Enrolment, Number of Institutions, Plan Allocation and Expenditure on Education

Year	No. of Institutions			Enrolment (Lakhs)			Plan allocation (Lakhs)	
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Outlay	Expenditure
1950-51	1101	222	1323	1.16	0.18	1.34	Ist Plan (1951-56) 66.06	48.66
1959-60	2999	671	3670	2.40	0.74	3.14	II Plan (1956-61) 281.68	235.51
1979-80	6907	3400	10,307	5.35	2.84	8.19	VI Plan (1980-85) 4030.00	5052.56
1993-94	9670	4110	13,780	8.61	5.28	13.89	VIII Plan (1992-97) 35570.00	Annual Plan (1993-94) (7406.67)

Source:

Education Commissioner, J&K Government published in 'Digest of Statistics' 1994, Directorate of Economic and Statistics, Planning and Development Department, Government of J&K.

In the delineation above, we can say that there has been a phenomenal growth in the educational sector due to a variety of initiatives taken by the state government. This has particularly resulted in the steady increase in the literacy rate from 11.03 percent during 1961 to 26.67 % and 34.90% 1981 and 1991 respectively. Notwithstanding these achievements, it should not go unnoticed that the development in the field of education and its related services marked certain considerable deficiencies. No doubt, the allocation of funds for the primary education has increased but present rate is not sufficient to cope with the needs of four million young populations in the state. This will require the diversion of huge funds towards universalisation of primary education. Moreover, the institutional and operational facilities remained quite inadequate especially in the rural areas. As a result of this, there is a mass of illiterates in the rural and backward areas of the state. For example, out of total literacy of 26.7 % during 1981, the percentage in rural areas was as low as 21.6 per cent, whereas for the urban areas it was 45.6 % during the same period.

The figures in the table II and III reveal the position of the educational institutions, enrolment and teacher strength at the end of 1991. According to these figures, the enrolment at the primary level

was 3.83 lakhs, whereas the teaching staff position was 16,440. This means 1:29 teacher student ratio and which in no way can be said satisfactory. The institution and pupil ratio was 1:46. The figures as such seem to be nearer to the target of progress but when we look at the location of the schools, their capacity, sanitation and ventilation position, it is no way up to mark. As a result, there are high dropouts.

Table -II
Educational Institutions, Enrolment and Teaching Strength (1991)

S.No.	Institution	Number	Teachers			Enrolment
			Male	Female	Total	
1.	Primary Schools	8326	9835	6605	16440	3.83 lacs
2.	Middle Schools	2079	11515	6484	17999	3.40 lacs
3.	High Schools	861		(a)		2.69 lacs
				12293		
4.	Higher Secondary Schools	202		(b)		0.73 lacs
				4560		

(a) Male and Female Teachers

(b) Male and Female Teachers

Table – III
Teacher, Student and Institutions Ratio (1991)

Type of Ratio	Primary School	Middle School Higher	High/ College (General School education)	College College (Special Professional education)	College (Special Professional education)	University	University
1950-51							
Teacher-Pupil	1:29	1:17	1:23	1:18	1:6	1:3	--
Institution-Pupil	1:57	1:42	1:382	1:309	1:41	1:60	--
Institution-Tr.	1:19	1:8.5	1:16.9	1:18	1:7	1:1.23	--
1990-91							
Teacher-Pupil	1:29	1:24	1:20	1:17	1:9	1:6	1:15
Institution-Pupil	1:46	1:66	1:366	1:1262	1:77	1:309	--
Institution-Tr.	1:1.7	1:7.0	1:23.0	1:50	1:10	1:40	1:91

Source: J&K Draft Plan and Annual Plan 1992-93, Planning and Development Department, J&K Government.

Development of Professional Education

The secondary education commission like Dr. Radha Krishnan Commission pleaded for sufficient funds and even made suggestions “that certain percentage of net revenues from nationalised industries such as railways should be made available for the promotion of technical education.”[4]

But the successive governments in the state have bypassed this recommendation and as such till this day no serious effort has been made to enhance the possibilities and prospects of professional education in the state. According to the figures for 1950-51, there was only one institution for professional education with the enrolment of only 60 students. In addition to this, there were four colleges for special education and the total enrolment in these colleges was not more than 164 students. In the following years, there was a steady progress in the establishment of such institutions with a limited capacity. The number of professional colleges and colleges for special education was 15 and 6 respectively during 1993-94. The intake capacity in these colleges (professional) reached to 3934 and in the colleges for special education to 409 students during 1993-94. Though the progress has been steadily growing but once again the disparity in the male and female enrolment is a matter of concern e.g. out of a total of 15 colleges for professional education there were only 2 colleges for females and their enrolment was 1340 as against 2594 for males. Similar trend was in the colleges for special education. Out of 6 such colleges, there was only one such college for females with their enrolment of 55 students as against 354[5] male students.

No doubt, some serious attention during Sixth Plan was given for the universalisation of education and it earmarked 87% enrolment of children of age group (6-11) and 59% for the age group 11-14 years. A network of schooling facilities with an easy walking distance (1Km) has been established. Therefore, the mass expansion at the elementary level and to improve the standard of teaching was the target of Sixth Plan. So far mass expansion is concerned; the target was fixed by 1995 whereas the improvement in standards of teaching is far away from the reality. This may partly be attributed to the lack of sufficient staff in the schools at the primary level itself. The enrolment position at higher secondary level was 0.73 lakhs during this period, while the staff position was 4560. When we take the comparative view to analyse their ratio, it is 1:20 and the institution and pupil ratio was 1:366. On the other hand, institution and teacher ratio was 1:23.0[6]. In comparative terms, the figures for 1950-51 reveal that the progress in the higher education is much better than at the elementary level. This is mainly due to the reason that from Third Five-Year Plan onwards much attention was paid towards higher education. In the enrolment figures, the female enrolment is lagging behind that of males (see Tab 1). The reasons responsible are not simple. But it can be chiefly attributed to factors like parent's illiteracy, less female educational institutions and less number of female teachers at higher education level. Consequently, the female literacy in the state has remained very low even after cherishing the fruits of seven Five-Year Plans. According to the figures in table 4, the literacy rate in the state was 11.03 % during 1961 and out of which, the male literacy was 16.97 % and the female literacy was as low as 4.26% only. The literacy rate during 1991 reached to 34.90%. The male literacy improved with an average of 43.46 %, whereas the female literacy remained as low as 26.34%. The low female literacy has mushroomed several social problems, which include high infant mortality (85 per thousand), low female participation in the employment in both public and private sectors. (For example, during 1983 the total number of employees was 1.63 in public sector lakhs and 0.10 lakhs in private sector. The share of women was as low as 13.5 thousand in public sector and 1.4 thousand in private sector. By this we can infer that the percentage of female employees to total employment was 8.6%[7] in both sectors.)

And finally low female literacy gave rise to early marriages of the girls, which resulted in the high morbidity rates (32 per thousand in the state).

Table IV
Literacy Rate in J&K 1961-91 (Fig in Percentage)

Decadal Position	1961	1971	1981	1991
Male	16.97	26.75	36.29	43.46
Female	4.26	9.28	15.88	26.24
All Persons	11.03	18.58	26.67	34.90

Source: Education Department, Government of J&K, Srinagar.

Adult Education in J&K

One measure to correct the past wrongs and to minimise the mass illiteracy is to encourage adult education. The number of adult education centres has shown an upward trend and by the end of March 1990, the total number of adult education centres shot up to 4624. There were 17 adult education projects out of which 7 projects are financed by the central government. Besides this, 544 handicraft centres are imparting adult education and 7.19 lakh adults have been made literate since the inception of the programme to the end of 1995[8]. Though these figures show that the adult education programme has made a steady progress in the state but when we look at the literacy figures among the population (20 years and above), the achievement seems to be far from desired target. This is mainly due to the terminus investments in this sector. It costs about Rs. 30 to 40 even at the present level of prices to make an adult literate. Secondly, the arbitrary timings fixed by the instructors in the adult education centres do not suit the available time of masses, who are busy for maximum hours with earning their livelihood.

Educational Development and Employment Prospects

The state's practice of relating the degree to job leads to a situation in which degree or diploma holders are unfit for the job for which he/she was recruited on grounds of qualification, degree, diploma and certificate that serve as paper license to say that the individual is educated. These do not indicate their employability. According to the figures in table V, the qualification wise number of persons during 1971-73 reveal that the number of persons below matric who registered during 1971 was 2740 persons and this number reached to 23893 during 1991 and the figures for 1993 were around 23295. This reveals that during a period of two years only 598 persons were provided job placements. The position for registered graduates and post-graduates continued in the same manner. For example, the number of Post-Graduates who registered themselves for job placement was 409 during 1971 and since then, there has been an enormous rise in their number upto 3080 and 4862 during 1991 and 1993 respectively. Thus, there was an addition of 1782 post-graduates in a short period by two years. On the other hand, a similar trend was found among the job seekers educated in professional courses. The number of persons with engineering degrees was 166 during

1971 and this number reached to 917 during 1991. At present, there are more than 956 persons with such degrees waiting for job placements.

Table V
Qualification wise Number of Persons on Live Register
(Employment Exchange)

Category	1971	1981	1991	1993
Below Matric	2740	9560	23893	23295
Matric and Above	6875	14374	55723	53260
Graduates	1728	6368	14542	15596
Post Graduates	409	1177	3080	4862
Degree Engineering	166	142	917	956
Diploma Engineering	268	318	919	1088
I.T.I. Trained	273	1254	3487	3553

Source: Directorate Employment Exchange, Published in 'Digest of Statistic 1993-94', Planning and Development Department, Government of J&K.

Education should always match up with the socio-economic needs of a society. Recognising this fact, the working group on general education has suggested 41 % of the total outlay of the Fourth Plan for primary and middle school education, 25% on secondary education and 15% for university education along with higher education, so that a qualitative improvement in education at all levels is brought according to the needs of the state. But this has received a deaf ear treatment from Planning Commission. The Commission has failed to generate possibilities for the absorption of the educated youth either in public or private sector. Consequently, all the achievements have not been impressive, and there has been a steady increase in unemployment. Within a range of 34.90 per cent literacy rate, the number of educated un-employed youth has touched upon 96.4 thousand persons in 1990. And every year this number is increasing gradually. For example, during 1991 the number of persons who registered for job placement was 56.80 as against 9.77 thousand during 1962, and 20.82 thousand during 1974-75. The job placement syndrome was 0.75 thousand during 1991 as against 1.15 thousand during 1961 and 1.98 thousand during 1974. Even in this limited job placement, there were regional disparities e.g., out of the total job placement of 0.75 thousand persons for 1991, there were 0.23 thousand belonging to Kashmir division as against 0.52 thousand in Jammu division. Thus, there was a gap of 0.29 thousand between the two regions of the state. The persons who registered for job placement during 1991, as mentioned above, was 56.80 thousand and out of this 40.41 thousand were from Kashmir division as against 16.79[9] from Jammu division.

In the delineation of above discussion, we come to conclude that though there has been a phenomenal growth in the educational development in the state, the qualitative aspect has been in all the developmental plans neglected. There has been no coordinating process between the needs of the society and the required changes in the pattern of education. This may mainly be attributed to the fact that our planners lacked what sociologists call 'social vision' in order to visualise the

far-reaching consequences of minor lags. Hence, it calls upon the government to recognise the relevance of social scientists while formulating developmental policies of any kind, especially educational policies. In order to cope up with the unemployment problem, planning commission will have to activate its efforts and encourage private sector for the employment of educated youth of the state.

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