

## Whither Manpower Planning In India

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The study of human resources is vital from the point of view of economic welfare. It is particularly important, because human beings are not only instruments of production but also ends in themselves. It is necessary to know in quantitative terms the number of people living in a country at a particular time, the rate at which they are growing and the composition and distribution of population.

The population of India increased to 846 million in 1991 from 548 in 1971 and 683 in 1981. The density of population increased from 177 persons per Sq. Km. in 1971 to 273 persons per sq.km. in 1991 to the number of persons per family increased from 5.46 in 1971 to 5.52 in 1991. The sex ratio decreased from 930 in 1971 to 927 in 1991. Birth rate decreased from 41.2 per thousand in 1971 to 32.5 per thousand in 1991. Similarly, death rate decreased from 19 per thousand in 1971 to 11.4 per thousand in 1991. The life expectancy increased from 45.6 years in 1971 to 58.2 years in 1991. The life expectancy for males increased from 46.4 years in 1971 to 57.7 years in 1991. Similarly the life expectancy for females increased from 44.7 years in 1971 to 58.7 years in 1991. Literacy increased from 34.6 percent in 1971 to 64.1 percent in 1991. Similarly male and female literacy increased from 46 percent and 22 percent in 1971 to 64.1 percent and 39.3 percent in 1991. Urban population increased from 19.9 percent in 1971 to 25.7 percent in 1991. The ratio of workers decreased from 33.2 percent of total population in 1971 to 27.6 percent in 1991. Similarly, the ratio of male workers decreased from 51 percent in 1971 to 49 percent in 1991, but that of female increased from 13.7 percent in 1971 to 19.8 percent in 1991.

The work participation rate (WPR) declined from 46 percent in 1901 to 39 percent in 1951. Since 1951, however, there has been a contradictory trend. During the first half of the current century, there was no change in the proportion of the work force on land (constant at 71 percent). The British Commercial policy led to competition of machine-made goods of England with Indian handicrafts. This resulted in the decline of the proportion of landless labourers engaged in household industry and forced these persons to move to agriculture to earn their livings. This period is marked by the growth of the proportion of landless labourers from 17 percent of total labour force in 1901 to 20 percent in 1951. This was cancelled out by the decline in the percentage of population working on livestock, forestry, fishery etc.

There has been no significant change in the occupational structure in India since 1951, despite all efforts at rapid industrialization. The work force engaged in the primary sector has remained constant at 72 percent between 1951 and 1971, and was about 67 percent in 1991. The only change observed was that the proportion of cultivator declined from 50 percent in 1951 to 38 percent in 1991, while that of agricultural labourers increased from 20 percent to

26 percent during the same period. This probably shows the growing concentration of land in a fewer hands, with small and marginal farmers being dispossessed of their land and joining the rank of landless labourers.

Formal education and training are given in India under two systems. The first system can be characterized as the university system which is distinguished from the other primarily by the fact that education and training under this system generally end with the award of recognized degrees, marking the completion of a course of education. All courses of education under this system do not end with the award of a degree, but their completion necessarily takes individuals towards a degree.

The university system of education provides full time, regular courses in most cases running for periods longer than a year. These courses are always graded, so that each course is preparatory for the next higher level course. At the base of this education system is the secondary education programme which covers a period of 10 years of formal schooling, followed by another two years of senior secondary schooling programmes at which the school level education ends in India.

In the framework of Indian economic structure, estimation of demand and supply for different categories of manpower for determining the extent of shortages and surpluses is merely difficult, but virtually impossible. The problem in part is associated with non-availability of suitable data. But, most importantly, the organization of production of goods and services in the country is not such that clear-cut estimate of demand for and supply of a given category of manpower is impossible.

Job availability in the organized sector is very low compared to the number of job seekers in the labour market. The fresher will have to face very steep competition in order to secure regular jobs in public and organized private sectors. It is interesting to note that while on the one hand there is tremendous manpower available, on the other, shortage of persons has been experienced in a good number of disciplines. A large number of vacancies remained unfilled in many of the establishment in the organized sectors for want of suitable applicants.

The additional employment generated on an average per year was around 6.5 million. The organized sector accounted for hardly 0.3 million. Therefore, most of the employment generation took place in the unorganized sectors, small scale industries and self-employment sectors. The employment generation both in the public and private sectors are on the decrease. Therefore, much demand for manpower may not be forthcoming from such sectors. Unemployed youth, therefore, will have to concentrate on unorganized sectors, try to go in for small scale industries and carry out self-employment activities. That is to say, they will have to develop entrepreneurship instead of getting frustrated. They should also avail themselves of the opportunities, created by Government through various employment generating schemes.

Manpower planning in India till now has been concerned with estimation of requirements of different categories of educated manpower for future years and comparison of such estimates with estimated supplies of different categories of educated manpower for developing guidelines for educational programmes. In the estimation of requirements, insight has been generally developed from the data on utilization of different categories of the educated manpower in different kinds of economic activities. On the basis of such data, efforts have been made for finding out how many persons of different educational qualification would be needed for supporting a given line of production programmes.

Since the current structure of utilization of educated manpower in different forms of economic activities depends more on the character of supplies of manpower than on needs of skills for different forms of activities, the estimates of future requirements prepared on the basis of the above mentioned methodology is as distorted as the distortions in the current structure of utilization. Moreover, as the structure of utilization never depended on the skill contents of the educated manpower supplied by the educational system, the entire situation has remained utterly anarchic.

By and large, no pattern has emerged in the structure of supplies and in the structure of utilization and of unemployment among the educated manpower. Unemployment has been in evidence among almost all the categories of educated manpower in small and large extent. Coupled with the fact that the overall rate of unemployment in the country remained steady over the last 40 years, such a situation only reflects the rising indifference of the community towards education in general.

In a significant way, a dimension of manpower planning has been opened up before the country. There could be no doubt that maximum contribution to economic growth would follow from the development and utilization of human resources in an appropriate manner. In the past, manpower planning in India did not address itself to this aspect at all. It is evident that things did not progress in the right direction. Thus the need for rethinking on the subject and a realignment of the structure of Indian manpower planning need not be over-emphasized.

## References

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