

# PUTTING EDUCATION TO WORK: MANIFESTO RECOMMENDATIONS

## 1. THE ISSUE OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION

India is one of the world's fastest growing economies, but to be a stable and prosperous democracy this growth must be accompanied by a decline in current levels of unemployment. Realising this goal requires strengthening education systems so that they are enabling students to acquire relevant skills, accompanied by growing opportunities in the labour market to productively utilise these skills.

### EMPLOYMENT

- Unemployment rates reached 5% in 2015, with **youth unemployment being a very high 16%**.<sup>1</sup>
- Gender disparities are still high - with women accounting for only **16%** of all service sector workers but 60% of domestic workers.<sup>2</sup>
- Women earn on average **65% of men's earnings**.<sup>3</sup>

### EDUCATION

- **84 million (8.4 crore) children** are out of school.<sup>4</sup>
- **47 million (4.7 crore) adolescents** in India have not transitioned to upper secondary schools - nearly half of the population for that age group.<sup>5</sup>
- **40% of adolescent girls** in the 15-18 age group in India are not attending any educational institution.<sup>6</sup>
- **36% of girls and 38% of boys** are unable to read words in English.<sup>7</sup>
- **42% of girls and 39% of boys** are unable to do basic subtraction arithmetic.<sup>8</sup>

If youth, and female youth in particular, continue to lack basic foundational<sup>9</sup> and transferable<sup>10</sup> skills, this will have a knock-on effect not only on their employment opportunities - as people who cannot read, write and do basic arithmetic have fewer opportunities for gainful employment - but also on the economic growth of the country.

## 2. BOOSTING EMPLOYMENT AND THE ECONOMY THROUGH EDUCATION

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<sup>1</sup> State of Working India Report, Centre for Sustainable Employment, 2018

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

<sup>4</sup> Census, 2011

<sup>5</sup> Unesco Institute for Statistics and the Global Education Monitoring Report

<sup>6</sup> National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), National Colloquium Report, February 2018

<sup>7</sup> Annual Status of Education Report, 2018

<sup>8</sup> *ibid*

<sup>9</sup> Foundation skills as they relate to employment, are those needed to obtain work or continued training and include literacy and numeracy skills.

<sup>10</sup> Transferable skills are the broader range of skills that can be transferred and adapted to different work environments, and allow people to retain employment, such as capabilities to analyse problems, reach creative solutions, communicate ideas, and exercise collaboration, leadership and entrepreneurship.



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The benefits of ensuring access to a full cycle of primary and secondary education are vast - ranging from increasing a person's chances of having a healthy life, to reduce child marriage, and promoting peace.

Education is particularly critical for moving towards sustainable and inclusive economic growth by developing the skills and knowledge of today's youth for a skilled and productive workforce in the future. In sum, education is one of the most important investments a country can make in its people and its future.

### ***I. SECONDARY EDUCATION IMPROVES LABOUR MARKET AND DECENT WORK OUTCOMES***

Education, particularly formal secondary education, is the most effective way to develop the skills needed for work and life. As such, it is widely considered one of the best investments to expand prospects of skilled and adequately paid employment.

- At the individual level, the knowledge and skills workers acquire through education make them more productive. increasing chances of finding decent work and improved earnings, reducing job insecurity. Those with access to quality upper secondary education are significantly less likely than workers with lower secondary to be in vulnerable employment or to work informally without a contract or social benefits.<sup>11</sup>
- For businesses, educated and highly skilled workers foster productivity gains and technological change, through either innovation or imitation of processes developed elsewhere.
- At the societal level, education expansion helps build social and institutional capital, which has a strong impact on the investment climate and growth; it also helps in building social trust, developing participatory societies, strengthening the rule of law and supporting good governance.

### ***II. EDUCATION CAN PREPARE CHILDREN TODAY FOR THE JOBS OF TOMORROW***

Technology is changing the way we live, learn and earn - digitalisation is the most recent phase in the transformation of the labour market. New jobs will be created, requiring technological know-how and a breadth of skills. This will have profound implications for girl's and boy's learning, as education must also keep up and reflect with the changing face of work and produce more high-skill workers.

By 2020, there could be 40 million too few high-skilled workers to meet the demand for these emerging jobs across the world. At the same time it is estimated that almost one billion girls and young women globally lack the skills to succeed in a rapidly changing labour market.<sup>12</sup>

India undoubtedly accounts for a significant proportion of these girls, which is why now more than ever, girl's education must not only be relevant, but free of limiting gender stereotypes. We must

<sup>11</sup> UNESCO, Education for people and Planet: Creating Sustainable Futures for All, 2016

<sup>12</sup> Full Force, Malala Fund, 2018



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harness their untapped potential that is currently going to waste and acting as a break on economic progress and sustainable development of India.

### **III. EDUCATION IS THE FOUNDATION OF INCLUSIVE, SUSTAINABLE GROWTH & POVERTY REDUCTION**

For India to prosper in its participation in the world economy and ensure inclusive economic growth investment in education and the creation of a better-educated labour force is a must:

- A recent study by the World Bank showed that women's lifetime earnings could increase by up to \$30 trillion if every girl in the world received a full cycle of primary and secondary education.
- Another study of 100 countries showed that simply increasing the share of girls completing secondary education by 1% increases economic growth by 0.3%.<sup>13</sup>
- Earnings increase by approximately 10% for each additional year of schooling - meaning that education not only helps to grow the economy but also fights poverty.

## **3. MANIFESTO RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **I. EXTEND THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION UP TO 0-18 YEARS**

- The Right to Education (RTE) Act 2009 currently only guarantees the right to free and compulsory schooling for children in the age of 6-14 years.
- This excludes children of 0-6 years and higher secondary school age, between 15 and 18 years, where they are most likely to acquire foundation skills considered to be essential for career advancement and active citizenship.
- This gap leaves many children, and girls in particular, without the education, skills and knowledge they need to build a better future for their families, communities and country.

**RECOMMENDATION: Commit to extend the of RTE Act to include ECD and pre-primary education for children 0-6 years and higher secondary education for children up to 18 years.**

### **II. ALLOCATE 6% OF GDP TO EDUCATION**

- Currently the Government of India only spends 2.7% of GDP on education.
- This represents a drop from 2012-13 when education expenditure was 3.1% of GDP and remains a significant distance from the 2015 Incheon Declaration and Kothari Commission recommendations of allocating at least 6% of GDP to education.
- A surge in funding for education is critical for both increasing access to education for the 84 million (8.4 crore) children out of school, as well improving the quality of education for those in school.

**RECOMMENDATION: Commit to reverse declining expenditure on education by increasing the percentage of expenditure to at least 6 % of GDP.**

<sup>13</sup> World Bank, Measuring the Economic Gain of Investing In Girls, Policy Research Working Paper 5753, 2011



### III. IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION OUTCOMES, PARTICULARLY FOR GIRLS

- India has almost achieved universal primary school enrollment, although gaps remain at secondary level. But it's not enough to get children in school, we also need to ensure that they learn to read, count, and acquire the necessary life skills.
- The Annual Status on Education Report 2017 shows that even when children are able to continue on to secondary school, their foundational reading and math abilities are poor.
- With 287 million (28.7 crore) adults unable to read, India is home of largest population of illiterate adults in world. Women and girls are particularly being failed by education, with female literacy rates at only 65%, compared to 82% for men, putting India's female literacy rate significantly lower than the world average of 79.7%.<sup>14</sup>
- This is in part down to a shortage in teachers, with 17.51% and 14.78% posts for government teachers was vacant for Elementary and Secondary level respectively.<sup>15</sup>
- India has also seen a decline in trained and qualified teachers, with the percentage of trained teachers at primary level having decline from 77% in 2014 to 70% in 2016.<sup>16</sup>
- India's education system is failing to provide millions of India's children with the basic foundational skills needed for life and work.
- Increasing enrolment rates alone will not have as much positive impact on employment rates and national economic growth if students do not reach sufficient learning outcomes.

**RECOMMENDATION: Commit to improve education outcomes of children, and girls in particular, by reducing the shortage of trained and qualified teachers at all levels of the school system.**

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<sup>14</sup> Census, 2011

<sup>15</sup> Union Minister for Human Resource Development Shri Prakash Javadekar, in reply to a question raised in Lok Sabha, December 2016

<sup>16</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics



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