

1. Each year thousands of children die in government hospitals in India. Recently, more than a hundred children died in a hospital in Rajasthan. Why do such incidents occur so frequently? Critically examine. What urgent measures are needed to salvage the situation? Suggest.

Introduction

A recent UNICEF report revealed that in India over 882,000 children under the age of five died in 2018 — that is over 100 children every hour, or a child every minute, out of which, most of the casualties have been in government hospitals, which is shocking for a country aspiring to be a global superpower in the near future.

Body

- As per official records, more than 600 infants have died in child care wards of government hospitals in Rajasthan and Gujarat since December 1, 2019, where all of the deaths occurred in the neonatal and perinatal ICUs.
- The children were brought into the hospital by parents, mostly from economically weaker sections, from surrounding rural areas where the children were found to be critically ill when brought to the hospital.

Such a situation has been observed repeatedly with regards to government hospitals across India and especially North India. This can be due to the following factors:

- Open door policy and increased referrals - Unlike private facilities, public medical hospitals cannot turn away a patient who comes to them which leads to two/three children on a bed being a common sight in public facilities. This is further exacerbated by the sickest children who have been referred out of other hospitals landing up in public facilities.
- Lack of adequate infrastructure - Majority of public medical facilities are suffering from infrastructure deficiencies. For example, the neonatal ICUs and paediatric ICUs of government medical Colleges have insufficient beds. But the occupancy ratio is more than 180%, which clearly indicates the level of overstretched facilities.
- Poor Primary and Secondary health facilities - With lower levels of public healthcare being defunct, the entire load falls on the tertiary level. It also means people having to travel hundreds of kilometres to access the most basic healthcare services which could have been taken care of by a district level hospital closer to their homes.
- Quantity and Quality of manpower - a shortage of doctors and supporting staff in the paediatrics department which is evident from the recent case where National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) in its fact finding report observed that the hospital did not have faculty as per norms.
- Sanitation and Hospital's procedural deficiencies - A lack of infrastructure and staff, along with unhygienic conditions may have played a role along with

maintenance issues. For example, in the recent Kota case, the Press Trust of India news agency cited that more than 70 percent of key equipment like infusion pumps, warmers and nebulisers for newborns were not in working condition at the hospital.

- Other - Further, other situational factors also play an important role like newly born children suffering from low birth weight, premature deliveries and nascent infections, children being admitted at the last minute, increased referrals during the cold month of december, etc.

At the same time, other factors like a good proportion of babies being underweight (an estimated 35% babies born in Rajasthan have low birth weight, which is less than 2.5 kg), travelling long distances in the cold to reach the hospital, the non-availability of baby warmers, etc also play a critical role.

In this regard, the following measures can be considered worthwhile for salvaging the situation and avoiding loss of precious lives:

- The task of making the primary and secondary level health institutions functional ought to be the utmost priority, such that people can access effective healthcare for common and easily treatable conditions nearest to their homes.
- All the vacancies for medical and paramedical posts should be filled promptly and the administrative procedures should facilitate speedier permanent appointments.
- Rural service should be made compulsory for health personnel of varying categories immediately after their graduation. There should not be waivers of any kind to allow the personnel to avoid doing such service.
- For maximal utilization of the infrastructure of public hospitals, provision should be made for both morning and evening OPDs. The necessary staff, equipment, and space should be provisioned for running such clinics and diagnostic set-up.
- Addressing the most common risk factors for child mortality with prevention methods such as access to diarrhea and pneumonia treatment, measles and tetanus vaccinations and increasing access to quality healthcare.
- Much of north India has been hit by a severe cold wave since late in December, and there is a need to provide blankets, bedsheets and heaters to the patients at the hospitals

Conclusion

From a hospital administrator's point of view, it is necessary to remember that there are no shortcuts to long lasting solutions. Nonetheless, it is important to realize that health is a social phenomenon and a public hospital is a social institution which cannot be developed in isolation from the societal conditions in which it operates, which clearly demonstrates the need for a social revolution with regards to improving health apparatus in the nation.

2. Technology must play a significant part in the field of primary and secondary education for farther reach and better learning outcomes. Do you agree? Substantiate.

Introduction

- Primary (elementary) level: 6-14 years of age. The elementary-level education is guaranteed by our constitution under Article 21 A. For this level, the government has introduced Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) under the Right To Education(RTE) Act.
- Secondary level: Age group between 14-18. For this level, the government has extended SSA to secondary education in the form of the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan.

Body

Technology has changed the education scenario in the last few decades by emerging as one of the most efficient tools used in the learning process, both by tutors and learners.

Significance of technology

Technology plays an important role in:

- Improving the classroom process of teaching, learning and evaluation
- Aiding teacher training.
- Improving access to education.
- Improving the overall planning, administration and management of the entire education system.
- Looking for matter beyond the textbooks is no longer a challenge with respect to time and resources anymore.
- Classroom based learning

Nowadays technology has become integral part of classroom based teachings. Today in many schools, colleges and universities in India instead of blackboard projector screens are used for teachings. Hand writings of teachers are replaced by power point presentation. Student experience a different kind of set up in today's technology based classroom. Gadgets like tablets and laptops are used to take down notes. Animated content are created on various subjects and in different languages so that students can have better understanding of a complex subject in a simple way.

- Online learning management system

Many schools and universities in India are integrating online Learning Management System or LMS platform into their web portal. Students can remotely login to access course material and also attend live classes with teachers. Pre-recorded lectures, videos can be uploaded on the LMS platform making it easy for students to go through it multiple times.

- Learning through mobile Apps
According to a report released by Counterpoint Research, India has become the second biggest smart phone market in the world after China with more than 220 million active users. This presents a huge opportunity for delivering e-learning content through mobile apps. Today educational mobile apps are available on popular platforms like Android and iOS. Developers are creating educational apps based on particular subjects. They are simplifying complex concepts with easy to understand illustrations and animations, puzzles games etc. There are apps available for grammar, physics, chemistry, mathematics and so on. With the prices of tablets and smart phone coming down people from villages and remote areas can also make use of this apps to learn and update their skills.

Govt interventions:

The concept of ICT in schools was initially introduced in December 2004. The Central Government later revised it in 2010 to ensure opportunities for students enrolled at the secondary level of education.

- Presently, the Central Government has subsumed ICT in schools under Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan, a national drive for secondary education.
- **National Mission on Education through ICT:**
An autonomous body, National Education Technology Forum, set up under the Mission, will facilitate decision making on the use of technology.
- **National Repository on Educational Data:** maintain all records related to institutions, teachers, and students in digital form.
- Single online digital repository to make available copyright-free educational resources in multiple languages.
- Diksha has the potential to re-engineer the in-service teacher training in India. It is important to create good content and also to ensure technology consumption by teachers, the role of headmasters in promoting teachers' professional development etc.
- The draft National Education Policy 2019 provides for reforms at all levels of education from school to higher education. It seeks to increase the focus on early childhood care, reform the current exam system, strengthen teacher training, and restructure the education regulatory framework. It also seeks to set up a National Education Commission, increase public investment in education, strengthen the use of technology and increase focus on vocational and adult education, among others

Recognising the importance of digital literacy in rural India, in 2013 Samsung India launched a Smart Class initiative in collaboration with Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti. The initiative is available across 500 Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya Schools, benefitting over 2.5 lakh students. The brand has imparted training to over 8,000 teachers on interacting technology.

Conclusion

- While much is being done in policy formulation stage, implementation is not always up to the mark.
- Even then, efforts in education have long gestation period before showing perceptible results. Need of the hour is to set aside political apathy towards education and invigorate India's education sector.

3. Why are graduates from Indian universities considered unemployable by most firms? Examine. Where does the problem lie? How can it be addressed? Suggest.

Introduction

According to a NASSCOM report, 85% of the Indian university graduates are unemployable. According to a 2016 report by job skills credentialing company Aspire Minds, nearly 80 per cent of engineering graduates in India are not employable. Most of them are forced to take up jobs in non-engineering fields or remain unemployed.

Body

Reasons for unemployability:

- Academic focus: undue emphasis on academic excellence and lack of practical industrial relevant knowledge development. For the same reasons, the companies have to train, retrain the freshly hired graduates which is an additional burden and hence prefer not to hire.
- Uncertainty among graduates: lack of focus and definite career path among graduates. As per a latest report, around 40% of the engineering graduates is preparing for various competitive exams in government sector which is not even related to engineering.
- Curriculum: lack of industry-relevant curriculum. The courses being taught are not in tune with the industry's requirements and has not kept pace with the disruptive changes in the industry.
- Sanction of new institutes: the ease of securing approval from the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) to set up engineering colleges and other higher education regulators has led to the mushrooming of institutes. Most of the education institutions including the better-known ones are understaffed and lack in qualified, competent and suitable faculty members. E.g. the number of approved institutes in Maharashtra alone is around 650.
- Skill set upgradation: The skills required changes very frequently and according change in curriculum updation is needed. E.g. When the IT/electronics field is moving towards Artificial Intelligence, Cloud computing and so on, the curriculum is centered around Microprocessor and microcontrollers.

- Teaching methods: Most of the institutions still follow traditional way of teaching without realizing that the information is available over the internet and the need of the hour is the application level teaching for practical purposes.
- Basic education: Problems of poor primary and secondary education which reflects in the learning outcome in higher education.

Ways to address unemployability:

- Strengthen the primary and secondary education providing a strong base to improve the learning outcome which would reflect in the application level learnability in the higher education.
- Curriculum: has to be revised frequently as per the changing technology in the sector.
- The focus of higher education teaching has to shift from theoretical knowledge assimilation to practical application level knowledge and thus integrating industrial requirements with academic learnings.
- Regulation of institutes: the higher education regulating authorities has to exercise restraint awarding approvals to start institutions without proper infrastructure, faculty and required relevant facilities.
- Spending: the spending in education sector has to be increased to 6% of GDP as per recommendation of various committees including the latest Kasturirangan which would improve the infrastructure of institutes.
- New initiatives like Hackathon, curriculum reform, anytime anywhere learning through SWAYAM, teacher training improve quality of learning. These need to be effectively implemented.
- Establish world-class multidisciplinary research universities. Create a master plan for every state and union territory. Each state must establish an integrated higher education master plan to provide an excellent education for all its residents. Also, Attract the best and the brightest talent to be faculty members.
- Tie-ups with industries to employ industrial relevant skills during graduation. E.g. several colleges in Tamilnadu has sessions of training imparted by professionals during college periods.

Conclusion

Thus, a complete revamp is needed to meet the present demand and address the future challenge that Higher education is about to face. The various steps taken including schemes like RISE, forming HEFA, Institutes of eminence, Rashtriya Uchcharitar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA), fellowship schemes, schemes to retain and attract talented faculties etc., are steps in the right direction.

4. How do Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) address the social sector? Examine. What is the proposed roadmap to achieve the targets related to the social sector? Discuss.

Introduction

SDGs are 17 set of goals as a blueprint to achieve an inclusive sustainable development for all set up in 2015 as part of UN general assembly resolution 2030. These goals are targeted in systematic sustainable development for all with indicators including health, livelihood, women empowerment, poverty elimination, zero hunger etc. These indicators are one of the key indicators in the social sector development.

SDG sets the focus on attainment of these goals through a worldwide agenda and support including those of international organisations and bodies. The focus of the countries to achieve these goals in the set manner also becomes the priority. For eg. In India, Niti Aayog (Government's think tank) is dedicated to achieve the SDGs.

Social sector deals with the rights of citizens to education, land rights, food security, health and sanitation, gender equality, women's empowerment, livelihood and employment guarantee.

Body

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) address the social sector

- Poverty- Eliminating poverty (SDG 1) eliminating hunger (SDG 2)
- Education (SDG 4)
- Health (SDG 3)
- Gender equality (SDG 5)
- Infrastructure (SDG 9)

Proposed roadmap to achieve the targets related to the social sector

- **Poverty**
 - Several large-scale anti-poverty programmes have been implemented. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, for instance.
 - In order to achieve the goal of housing for all by 2022, direct financial assistance is being extended to poor households. Additionally, initiatives have been launched for providing pension and insurance to workers in the unorganized sector, widows and the differently abled. Over 130 million people have accessed life and accident insurance under these programmes.
 - With respect to clean sources of cooking fuel, over 22 million families have been provided with Liquefied Petroleum Gas connections under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana.
- **Education**
 - Stunting among children less than 5 years has declined from 48% to 38.4% between 2005-06 and 2015-16. During the same period, the percentage of underweight children has declined from 42.5% to 35.7%.

- More than 800 million people are covered in India by providing the food grains at affordable prices through the Public Distribution System. The Mid-Day-Meal Programme is providing nutritious cooked meals to 100 million children in primary schools. Additionally, food distribution governance is being strengthened through the digitization of ration cards and an online grievance redressal mechanism.
- Further, sustainable and climate-adaptive agriculture has been boosted by, inter alia, promoting organic farming and issuing of 62 million Soil Health Cards to farmers. A comprehensive plan is also being implemented for doubling farmers' income by 2022.
- **Health**
 - The National Health Policy, 2017 has specified targets for universalizing primary health care, achieving further reductions in infant and under-5 mortality, preventing premature deaths due to non-communicable diseases as well as increasing government expenditure on health.
 - A composite index is being used to monitor and incentivise improvements in health services delivery across states in the country.
 - The government is aiming to immunize all unimmunized and partially immunized children against vaccine-preventable diseases by 2020.
 - Towards achieving universal health coverage, a health insurance cover of INR 100,000 is being extended to all poor families.
- **Gender equality**
 - While much more progress remains to be made, a number of indicators pertaining to the status of women in India have moved in the right direction over the years. For instance, 68.4% of women were literate in 2015-16, as compared to 55.1% in 2005-06. Additionally, 53% of women were independently using a bank or savings account in 2015-16, which is a significant improvement from 15.1% in 2005-06.
 - Numerous measures have been put in place for promoting gender equality. For example, the Beti Bachao Beti Pado (Save the Girl Child, Educate the Girl Child) initiative focuses on a comprehensive package of interventions for the girl child including those pertaining to education and protection.
 - The Maternity Benefit Programme protects women from wage loss during the first six months after childbirth.
 - Further, several programmes are being implemented for enabling greater participation of women in the work force.
- **Resilient Infrastructure**
 - All forms of transportation – roads, railways, civil aviation and waterways are being rapidly expanded. Road connectivity and electricity are being brought to all villages.

- The Bharat Broadband Network Ltd. initiative is aiming to provide high-speed broadband connectivity to all village councils in the country.
- Over the last five years, there has been a consistent growth in installed electricity generation capacity. The installed capacity in non-fossil-fuel sectors has grown by 51.3% and more than doubled in the renewable energy sector (solar, wind, bio- and small hydro power).
- India is making efforts to become an Information Technology and manufacturing hub through its 'Make in India' campaign. These efforts have greatly accelerated Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows and helped the country sustain an average growth of 7.5% during the last three financial years (2014-15 to 2016-17).
- Employment-intensive manufacturing segments are being boosted by providing easy credit to small-scale business entrepreneurs. Additionally, the 'Start-up India' programme promotes entrepreneurship and labour-intensive economic growth.

Conclusion

These goals reflect our evolving understanding of the social, economic and environmental linkages that define our lives." India's development mantra "Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas" (Collective Effort, Inclusive Development) and the associated national programs closely track the SDGs.

5. What do you understand by vocational training? Why is it so vital for our country? Examine.

Introduction

Vocational Education can be defined as the education that is based on occupation and employment. Vocational Education is also known as career and technical education (CTE) or technical and vocational education and training (TVET). The nodal agency for granting the recognition to the I.T.I. is NCVT, which is under the Ministry of Labour, Govt. of India.

Objectives of vocational training

- Enhance the employability of youth through demand driven competency based modular vocational courses.
- Maintain their competitiveness through provisions of multi-entry multi-exit learning opportunities and vertical mobility/ interchangeability in qualifications.
- Fill the gap between educated and employable.
- Reduce the dropout rate at the secondary level.

Skill India is a campaign launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 15 July 2015 which aim to train over 40 crore people in India in different skills by 2022. It includes various initiatives of the government like

- National Skill Development Mission
- National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, 2015
- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)
- Skill Loan scheme

Body

Problem areas of Vocational Education in India?

- There is a high dropout rate at Secondary level.
- Vertical mobility after the skills obtained is less.
- Employers mostly tend to prefer young workers with strong basic academic skills and not just vocational skills.
- Private Industry Participation is lacking.
- Lack of continuous skill up-gradation.
- Experienced and qualified teachers to train students on vocational skills are not sufficient.
- Poor quality of training most of the times is not in line with industry needs.

Why vocational training is so vital for our country

- Demographic Dividend: India has 65% of its youth in the working age group. Efficient utilization of these population would promote saving and investment rate
- Meet employer need of skills: The latest India skill Report indicates that only about 47% coming out of educational institutions are employable.
- A useful vocational education in agriculture, coupled with access to the formal economy for finance and marketing, could raise the quality of life. AGRI-UDAAN programme to promote innovation and entrepreneurship in agriculture is a step in the right direction.
- Prepare workers for a decent livelihood: this improves India's ranking in HDI
- Low-skilled and repetitive jobs are bound to be eliminated by robots and artificial intelligence under the Fourth Industrial Revolution. This scenario is forcing technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions to evolve continuously and sustainably to remain relevant in the future. World class productivity and quality
- For Make in India – It give big opportunity for MNCs to come to India
- Export of skilled workforce to aging developing countries
 - The study titled 'Global Talent Crunch' highlighted that India would have a talent surplus of around 245.3 million workers by 2030 at a time when the Asia-Pacific region itself would face a talent deficit of 47 million workers.

What are the Government Initiatives in the area of vocational education?

- To stimulate and support reforms in skills development and to facilitate nationally standardized and acceptable, international comparability of qualifications, a “**National Vocational Qualifications Framework**” (NVQF) is being established by the Central Government. Several states have initiated vocational education programmes operated in alignment with NVQF.
- National Skill Development Corporation India (NSDC) is a one of the kinds of Public Private Partnership in India. It aims to promote skill development by catalysing creation of large, quality, for-profit vocational institutions.
- Ministry for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has launched the **Skills Assessment Matrix for Vocational Advancement of Youth (SAMVAY)** that provides seamless movement from education to skill.
- A scheme for skilling the unemployed youth in engineering skills using the facility of the technical institutions has been launched as a part of the **PM Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)**.
- **Gram Tarang** – Targeting tribal/naxal affected areas. Training centres created to train people in Auto CAD, advanced welding on advance machinery funded by NSDC.

Case Study

Successful Vocational education model in Germany – ‘classroom instruction plus apprentice training’

- The German system of Dual Vocational Education and Training (VET) has proven itself to be successful over the last centuries.
- It is placed to bridge the gap between the increasing need for theoretical knowledge and real world application of these skills.
- The German system encourages the direct involvement and ownership of the industry in the educational process and is in demand all over the globe – also in India.
- VET plays a vital role in India’s further development, especially in the light of government’s “Make in India” campaign.

Conclusion

ASER’s statistics indicate that overall, only 5.3% of the age group is enrolled in a vocational course, while 60.2% of out-of-school youth are engaged in some form of work. These trends underscore the need to scale up substantive skill-building programmes. A National Vocational Policy should establish equivalence for degrees, diplomas and certifications in the vocational education sector for lateral and vertical mobility.