

Integrating Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) and Education in India

Assessment and Action Plan

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Abstract

Out of the total 17 SDGs of United Nations, SDG 4 specifically deals with quality education that talks about ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education, and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Out of different targets set for quality education, Target 4.3 states, “Ensure access to girls, boys, women and men quality and affordable education, including university”. The paper deals more on Target 4.3 of SDG on quality education. The paper shares insights about SDG 4 (Quality Education) and how can academia, along with the students contribute in shaping the future. In this paper, an attempt has been made to link the efforts being made at various levels, i.e., the Government, universities and colleges to fulfill the targets of the education set by United Nations. While the first part of the paper talks more about SDG 4 and its understanding, the second part deals with the initiatives taken up by the universities and the government towards contributing to the SDG 4 goals and the third part talks about the strategy for the future. The purpose of the paper is to develop awareness and understanding on SDG 4, inform about the role of education, teachers and educational institutions in supporting the nation to attain SDG 4 targets. The paper also assesses the current status of India with regard to SDG 4, and alignment of the initiatives and policies of education with that goal. The paper concludes with the challenges, and the need for action at individual, institutional and community level for the realisation of SDG 4.

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Context

In September 2015, India and other countries of the world (193) came together at the United Nations to define a common vision of sustainable and inclusive progress for human kind. It included a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with their 169 targets and 232 indicators. These goals have been built upon the Millennium Development Goals which covered 15 year period (2000–2015) and came into effect on 1 January 2016 with the goals to be attained in next 15 years (2016–2030).

Giving due importance to education, a separate SDG 4 on education was decided which focuses on quality and affordable education for all.

Significance

The SDGs are inclusive, indivisible, interconnected, integrated, universal and relevant for all countries. The SDGs focus on how people from various sectors, and in fact, the whole world must work together towards these commonly defined goals. All countries have a shared responsibility to achieve the SDGs and all have a meaningful role to play locally, nationally as well as on the global scale. SDGs are multi-dimensional as they balance the three dimensions of sustainable development—social, environmental and economic. As per the 2021 SDG Index, there is an assessment of each country's overall performance on the 17 SDGs.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 4 (SDG 4)

SDG 4: Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Promote Lifelong Learning Opportunities for All

One of the most effective tools for sustainable and inclusive development is education. By 2030, SDG 4 aims to achieve primary and secondary schooling for all girls and boys, providing equal access to reasonable vocational training and discarding disparities in gender and wealth. The emphasis is on Quality, Access, Equity, and Inclusion (QAEI) at all levels of formal education in India. The SDG 4, additionally focuses on adult literacy, numeracy and upgradation of prevailing education facilities that are sensitive to the needs of children, the disabled and gender. As per the UN Agenda 2030, there are 7 targets and 11 indicators, and 3 means of implementation to achieve the SDG 4. The seven targets are universal primary and secondary education, early childhood development and universal pre-primary education, equal access to technical or vocational and higher education, relevant skills for decent work, gender equality and inclusion, universal youth literacy, education for sustainable development, and global citizenship. The three means of implementation are effective learning environments, scholarships, and lastly, teachers and educators. The third factor is the most significant because the key to achieving SDG 4 is the role of teachers.

Regarding effective learning environment:

Target 4.1 ensures free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education to all girls and boys. The Indicator 4.1.1 signifies the proportion of children and young people (i) in Grades II or III; (ii) at the end of primary; and (iii) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (a) reading, and (b) mathematics, by sex. Similarly, for each of the targets, there are two or atleast one indicator each. (SDG 3.0 Final Report, 2021, NITI Aayog)

Regarding scholarships: The target was to expand the number of scholarships available to developing countries by 2020. The Indicator (4.b.1) indicates the volume of official development assistance flows for scholarships as per the type of study and the sector. (SDG 3.0 Final Report, 2021, NITI Aayog)

Regarding teachers: The target is that the availability of qualified teachers is to be increased considerably by 2030. This may include teacher training in small islands, developing states, developings and least developed countries through international cooperation. The Indicator (4.c.1) signifies the teacher's proportion in pre-primary, primary, lower, and upper level. (SDG 3.0 Final Report, 2021, NITI Aayog)

Why Integrate Education with SDG?

Education is the most important multifaceted element for accomplishing the majority of the SDGs. Teaching SDGs will not only

increase awareness but also promote change in behaviour patterns and thereby, promote sustainable practices. It will prepare students for all issues—global to local, and support them in finding their identity and purpose. Educational institutions are the key drivers of the SDGs, as they are the hub of innovation, critical thinking and incubators of sustainable ideas.

SDG 4 and Education in India: An Assessment

In this section, an attempt is made to assess education in India with respect to SDG 4, along with the other SDGs. There are several education schemes and online initiatives that are aimed at taking forward our country's desired education goals, and achieving SDG 4. The digital initiatives include E-Pathshala, Aadhar link, Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (DISHA), National Scholarship Portal, E-Basta, National mission on Education using ICT, National programme on school standards and evaluation (Shala Siddhi), Sugamya Pustakalaya (e-Library), and Shala Darpatto offer community members, parents and students services based on school management systems. 'Shagun' is a government's school education portal for integrating our country's educational websites.

The schemes at national level are supported by schemes undertaken by governments at state level. The schemes relate to early childhood, primary, higher and tertiary education. Samagra Shiksha (including Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Rashtriya

Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan and Teacher Education), Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA), Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), National Skill Development Corporation, Udaan, Saakshar Bharat, Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), Standard Training Assessment and Reward (STAR), National Service Scheme (NSS), and the Centrally Sponsored Scheme for Teacher Education are some of the key national schemes helping achieve specific SDG 4 targets. The programmes in brief are as follows:

The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Programme or Education for All Movement:

As a part of constitutional Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) has been adopted. The Government of India has initiated programmes for provision of free and compulsory education as a Fundamental Right to all children in the age group of six to fourteen years. There is reservation of 25 per cent seats in private schools for children from economically weaker sections of the society to make education universal and inclusive for all.

Mid-Day Meal Scheme: Launched on 15 August 1995, the scheme focuses on increasing enrolment, better retention, attendance and boosting immunity with better nutritional levels among children. It is a centrally assisted National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education under which hot cooked nutritious meal is served daily (excluding holidays) for all the children studying in Grades I to

VIII. There is SMS-based Mid-Day Meal monitoring which tracks daily attendance of children, food quality, monthly cooking, and school expenses and eBasta for digital school textbooks.

Padhe Bharat Badhe Bharat (PBBB):

A national sub-programme of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) which aims to ensure excellence at the foundational years of schooling or Grades I and II.

Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao: In order to address the issue of the decline in Child Sex Ratio (CSR), the Government of India launched the BBBP flagship programme in 2015, initially in 100 gender-sensitive districts, covering all States and Union Territories as a pilot with at least one district in each state. The implementation of this project consists of two main parts. The first is a nationwide mass communication effort and second, in collaboration with MoHFW and MHRD, specific multi-sectoral activities have been developed to guarantee the girl child's survival, protection and education.

The Rashtriya Avishkar Abhiyan:

RAA programme was introduced in 2015 to improve maths and scientific education in upper primary classrooms, and to inspire and encourage kids between the ages of 6 and 18 to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Saransh: The CBSE has launched an initiative called Saransh that gives schools access to an online self-evaluation tool so they may find areas where their students, staff

and curriculum need improvement then take appropriate action to make necessary changes based on the analysis of results. In order to make decisions that will have an impact, a comparison of the outcomes among Grades IX–XII schools is being made.

Swachh Vidyalaya: The Swachh Vidyalaya programme was started as part of the Swachh Bharat Mission with the goal of constructing separate washrooms for boys and girls in all public schools by 15 August 2015 which was almost achieved by the States and UTs in the time frame. During the allotted time, 4,17,796 restrooms were built or rendered operational in 2,61,400 schools.

Saakshar Bharat (Maintaining and Increasing Efforts in Adult Education): It is a centrally sponsored scheme since 2009 focusing on enhancing women's literacy in India and reducing the number of non-literate adults in India. It encourages lifelong learning by providing education options to those who have left or never entered the formal school system.

Initiatives in Higher Education: There have been various initiatives by the Central Government for quality development of higher education. Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) is aimed at promoting access, equity and quality. The unserved and underserved areas are provided central assistance through infrastructure grants to higher education institutions for strengthening of infrastructure facilities like construction and renovation of libraries, labs,

accommodation, etc., and in State HEIs for the purchase of equipments. Various other programmes include—National Programme for Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL), Shodh Gangotri, Shodh Ganga, National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF), Impacting Research Innovation and Technology (IMPRINT), Uchhatar Avishkar Yojana (UAY), Global Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN), Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds (SWAYAM), SWAYAM PRABHA, National Academic Depository (NAD), National digital library of India (NDL), Technical Education Quality Improvement Programme (TEQIP), Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya National Mission on Teachers and Teaching, Campus Connect Programme, e-Shodh Sindhu (eSS), Virtual labs, eYantra, A-view and spoken tutorial (talk to a teacher programme), e-Acharya, e-Kalpa, FOSSEE (Free library and open source software in education), BADAAL, e-PG Pathshala under National Mission on education through information and communication technology (NMEICT).

The New National Education Policy 2020 (NEP, 2020, Ministry of Education) and SDG 4 share the goals of universal quality education and lifelong learning. Following the principles of SDG, NEP 2020 is based on five pillars—access, affordability, equity, quality and accountability.

Some of India's best practices in education in different states are as follows:

- **Bihar:** Mukhyamantri Balika Cycle Yojana
- **Gujarat:** Migration Card and Migration Monitoring Software
- **Chhattisgarh:** Residential schools for children in LWE-Affected Areas; Pota Cabins. There is a creative educational endeavour to construct temporary schools out of bamboo and plywood.
- **Madhya Pradesh:** In order to improve education quality in public schools, the School Education Department of MP launched a comprehensive project in 2011 called Pratibha Parv, a festival of excellence for the evaluation of teaching and learning as well as educational facilities and activities.
- **Mizoram:** “Each One Teach One Method”—One of the States where the British initially introduced and popularised schooling was Mizoram. With the approach of ‘each one, educate one’ Mizoram achieved, highest success compared to other states with a 91.1 per cent literacy rate.
- **Himachal Pradesh:** Reaching out to youngsters who are not in school. The state administration has gone as far as ‘embedding teachers, who go and live with nomads in the hills in order to teach their children’.

SDGs in the Context of Indian Teacher Education System or School Education Sector

On teacher’s education, a centrally-sponsored scheme of

restructuring and reorganisation of teacher’s education was launched in 1987. It aimed create a sound institutional infrastructure for pre-service and in-service training of elementary and secondary school teachers, and for provision of academic resource support to elementary and secondary schools (MoE, 1987). Under the scheme, provisions for recurring and non-recurring central assistance for setting up of District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs), strengthening of secondary teachers, education Institutions and strengthening of State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs) were made. (MHRD Report, 2009, Ministry of Education)

The NCERT, which was assigned by the Central Government the evaluation of the teacher education scheme, submitted its report in August, 2009 (NCERT, 2009). As per the assessment done by NCERT, the key findings were—

- As per the MHRD guidelines, the DIETs have 7 branches uniformly across the country.
- In most of the DIETs, there is a limited opportunity for professional development of the DIET faculty except through attending orientation programmes, seminars or workshops. No study leave is given for improving academic qualifications.
- All SCERTs (except SCERT Punjab) have their own buildings. Physical facilities are available though not as per guidelines,

and library and ET cell are not equipped adequately.

- The programme for teacher educators of DIETs are organised only by SCERTs of selected states. The SCERTs and DIETs are not involved in SSA activities in some states.
- For capacity building of faculty, in more than 70 per cent of SCERTs, there is no policy.
- SCERTs in Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Goa were involved in revision school curriculum based on the NCF 2005 and preparation of textbooks.
- Only one-third of the sampled SCERTs seem to have the PAC and one-sixth have the research and executive committees.
- Provision for creating staff positions in SCERTs was utilised properly.

The scheme was revised by the Central Government with main components including—Modification in Centre-State financial sharing pattern from 100 per cent to 75:25 per cent for all States and UTs (90:10 for NER States, including Sikkim); continuation of support to SCERTs, SIEs, CTEs and establishment of new CTEs, IASEs and establishment of new IASEs, and restructuring of DIETs; strengthening and restructuring of SCERTs; training for educational administrators, including head teachers; orientation or induction training to teacher

educators; establishment of Block institutes of Teacher Education (BITEs) for augmenting teacher education capacity in SC, ST and minority concentration areas; Professional development of teacher educators; technology in teacher education; Public-Private Partnership (PPP) in teacher education and monitoring mechanism. A paper on 'Current Issues in Teacher Education and Sustainable Development in India' (Berkmans and Jothi) concludes that "As ESD (Education for Sustainable Development) triggered in teaching are still in their early stages, there is a worldwide call for alternative methodologies that can strengthen peoples' SD related capacities such as, understanding complexity, seeing connections and interdependencies, participating in democratic decision making processes, and questioning". (MHRD Report, 2009, Ministry of Education)

How much progress have we made so far

As per the indicators, based on the data from NITI AAYOG, the adjusted net enrolment ratio for elementary schools was 87.26 per cent. The goal of 100 per cent enrolment at the primary level has been met in four states and one UT—Karnataka, Manipur, Tripura, and Delhi. Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh have the lowest percentages among the UTs, while Nagaland, with a 67.38 per cent enrolment ratio, has the lowest ratio among the States (67.88 per cent). The gross enrolment rate for higher

secondary education was 50.14 per cent. Amongst the states, Bihar had the lowest GER (2.49 per cent), while Himachal Pradesh had the highest (81.79 per cent). Chandigarh has the highest gross enrolment ratio of all the UTs at 83.43 per cent. At 53.9 per cent and 50.6 per cent respectively, Sikkim among the states and Chandigarh among the UTs have the highest enrolment rates; Bihar among the states has the lowest enrolment at 13.6 per cent. Rajasthan has the highest success rate, with 88.10 per cent of its pupils meeting the minimal competency requirements. The best UT performance was recorded by Chandigarh (81.6 per cent). The 74.6 per cent of people over the age of 15 are literate. The two states that are closest to meeting the goal of 100 per cent literacy are Lakshadweep (95.7 per cent) and Mizoram (98.5 per cent). Only 64.7 per cent of Bihar's population aged 15 and older was literate. As regards, persons with disabilities, 19.3 per cent have completed at least secondary school (15 years and above). With a performance rate of 32.4 per cent, Goa is the best-performing state, and Delhi is the best-performing UT. In terms of States, Kerala has the highest percentage of trained teachers (94.53 per cent). The goal for all schools is to have at least one teacher for every 30 students. With one teacher for every nine students in the secondary level, Himachal Pradesh has the best Pupil-teacher (P-T) ratio in the country. (SDG 3.0 Final Report, 2021, NITI Aayog)

- Adjusted Net Enrolment Ratio at Elementary Education—87.26 per cent
- Gross Enrolment Ratio for Higher Secondary Education—50.14 per cent
- Students aged 18–23 yrs enrolled in Higher Education—26.3 per cent
- Grade VIII students achieved minimum proficiency in Lang and Mathematics—71.6 per cent
- Literacy level among persons aged 15 years and above—74.6 per cent
- Persons with Disabilities, Completed at least secondary education—19.3 per cent (15 yrs and above)
- Gender Parity Index—1
- Schools had access to electricity and drinking water—84.76 per cent
- Trained teachers in secondary schools—83 per cent
- Pupil teacher ratio at secondary level—21

Data source: SDG 3.0 Final Report NITI Aayog 04.03.2021

SDG INDEX SCORE FOR GOAL 4:

Eleven national level indicators that cover six of the ten SDG targets for 2030 listed under the goal of quality education have been identified to assess India's progress in achieving this goal. These indicators have been chosen based on the data that are available at the sub-national level and to ensure comparability between states and UTs. The SDG Index Score for Goal 4 spans from 29 to 80 for states and from 49 to 79 for UTs. In 2020, the national average was 57 (a

decrease from 58 in 2019). During the 2020–21 academic year, the COVID-19 epidemic negatively impacted school operations. Chandigarh had the best performance. Five states and three UTs won a spot in the front runners category (score range between 65 and 99, including both). However, in the aspirants group, nine states and two UTs lagged behind (with index scores less than 50).

The Indian educational system has received the much-needed push, through programmes like the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Right to Education (RTE).

As per the government's All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2020–2021, the enrolment in higher education institutions for the first time crossed 4 crore mark. During 2020–21, enrolment has increased to 4.14 crores which is an increase of 7.5 per cent from last year (2019–20), and from 2014–15, there has been an increase of 28 per cent and the female enrolment has increased to 2.01 crores in 2020–21 from 1.88 crores in 2019–20. Digitisation in education has promoted the SDG 4 and helped to track the implementation and progress of the SSA and elementary education in different states and UTs by NITI AAYOG. More than one billion Saakshar Bharat recipients were encouraged by the National Literacy Mission Authority to open bank accounts as part of the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana and thus, facilitating financial inclusion as well. (SDG 3.0 Final Report, 2021, NITI Aayog)

CHALLENGES

Despite the large number and multiplicity of flagship programmes, their effective implementation and monitoring is a challenge. Regardless of the RTE enactments, millions of children are still out of school, which is a matter of grave concern. The proportion of out-of-school children was higher in rural India (17.2 per cent) than in urban India (13.1 per cent).

In rural areas, the proportion of out-of-school girls (18.3 per cent) was higher than of boys (16.3 per cent). The proportion of children from SC and ST was the highest, followed by Other Backward Classes. One of the critical areas of concern is relatively lower level of Gross Enrolment (GER) in upper primary, secondary education and senior secondary education. As per ASER 2021 report, the Gross Enrolment Ratio is said to be near 100 per cent up to the age of 14 (Primary GER-100 per cent). ASER data are consistent with these government figures. At the next stage of Grade IX–X, the GER drops 20 per cent of points to 80 per cent and at the higher education stage it reduces dramatically by 55 per cent points to 25 per cent. Adequate financing for SDG 4 is another concern. In 2023 budget, education got the highest allocation to transform India into knowledge-based economy as mentioned by the Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, but percentage of GDP has been hovering around 3 per cent, despite the Kothari Commission (1966) and National Educational

policy 2020's recommendations that total government spending on education be raised to 6 per cent of GNP. According to the concurrent list defined under the constitution of the country (According to the 1976 42nd amendment, education is in concurrent list. Before that it was a state subject.) The other challenges include learning outcomes regarding basic skills of reading and maths, gender inequality, imparting of skills both, technical and entrepreneurial. As regards the COVID-19 challenge, there have been very few studies that cover children's education. Children did continue their studies at home with online classes but there is not much evidence on how engaging was the digital content generated and the impact on learning and participation.

As the SDG 4 mentions, three means of implementation for SDG 4 are learning environment, scholarship and teachers. Regarding Learning environment, changes are required in the teaching pedagogy by encouraging active and practical learning. Attempts should be made to relate the course material to real world applications. Experiential learning should be encouraged. For Pedagogy and learning environment, there is a need to embrace innovative pedagogy, viz., blended learning, experiential learning, embodied learning and support hybrid learning environments, which blend formal and nonformal schooling. Employing interactive, project-based, learner-centred pedagogy is essential.

Regarding Scholarships, there are many scholarships by the

government and other institutions. In order to contribute to this target, we can delegate students to find out about all government schemes for girls' education and scholarships by various foundations and then make the needy students aware about the same. Teachers need to realise that the most important role for successful implementation of SDG 4 and other SDGs is that of teachers. Action required here is meaningful teacher-student interactions, which make course expectations clear and wherever possible, we should integrate SDGs in our teachings. Teacher training is very important and takes us one step forward towards achieving SDGs.

Regarding research, students can be assigned the task to assess the progress of all or any of the SDGs in their respective states or native place, analyse the impact, particularly that of the latest challenge of COVID on SDG, identify research gaps and recommend future course of action.

Recommendations and Action Plan for different Stakeholders

Stakeholders of education sector can be classified as macro, meso and micro level stakeholders. Following are the recommendations and action plan for different stakeholders—

Macro Level Stakeholders— Central and State Governments, National International donors, UN Agencies

Budgetary Allocations: More budgetary allocation to education

sector will fast track the process of achieving the SDG 4 targets.

Leaders and Government Officials Function as Active Advocates of Promoting Education: There is a need for consonance of national leaders and state leaders on the importance of education and fulfilling the SDG 4 targets. Big results are possible only if leaders and government officials become active advocates of promoting education.

Strengthening Governance and Monitoring at all the Level: For the fulfillment of the targets of SDG 4 for India, it is important that the governance and monitoring takes place at all the levels with clear timelines of the same. Further, policy of government should focus on making quality education affordable to all.

Strong Legal and Regulatory Systems: In order to provide affordable and quality education with safety of the children in schools and colleges, a strong legal and regulatory system is essential. There can be special legal and regulatory cell in each state.

UN Solution Exchange (Community of Practice on Education): UNESCO in India was leading the Community of Practice on Education initiated by United Nations in India. It was a very useful knowledge sharing platform on which not only policies used to be discussed but also various innovations, educational system, innovative schools, teachers training modules, etc. There is a need to restart such initiatives. Government may contribute to UN agencies, especially UNESCO to undertake the initiative once again.

Rigorous monitoring using Standardised indicators: More rigorous monitoring of various flagship programmes of Government of India will help in achieving the goal. Standardisation of indicators across the states with same periodicity of data collection and monitoring will be useful at the central and state government level. These indicators should be the same across all states and UTs.

Meso Level Stakeholders—NGOs, Private Sector and Other Institutions

Enhanced Role of NGOs: NGOs have already been dedicatedly contributing to the fulfillment of SDG 4 by working on education in different ways. Majority of the schools are being run through some or the other not for profit institution. These institutions can help in raising awareness and sensitise the community about the need of quality education in India.

Private Sector players: Private sector player are playing a key role through CSR funds as developer of the technologies for innovative education systems, developing holistic curriculums and collaborating with public sector to provide technical support in various ways including monitoring and evaluation of education initiatives and projects. Private sector can play more proactive role by investing more in educational projects in the form of establishing institutions and also funding education awareness programmes.

Among the private sector players, companies and industrial houses, philanthropic institutions, and also education service providing companies are there. It will be useful if the governments interact with not only big companies but also small enterprises to contribute and participate in the agenda of promoting education and in creating a better environment for education.

Programmes on SDG can be organised. Institutes can integrate SDG into courses taught, curricula and as part of strategy or mission and vision. With respect to learning content, sustainability issues can be integrated into all kinds of learning. There can be creation of sustainable campus. Collaboration can provide a global platform for relevant stakeholders to exchange information, experiences and build partnerships with government, private institutions, NGOs, international organisations through workshops and webinars on SDGs.

Micro Level Stakeholders—Groups, Community level federations, Educational groups, Individuals

Role of people's institutions and community institutions: In the recent past, Community institutions in the form of self-help groups and their federations have emerged in India. These community institutions can play vital role in promoting education in rural areas. Presently,

focus is on livelihoods but agenda of education can be emphasised through these institutions. At the Community Level, action areas can be institutional connect with the nearby communities and society for the students to have a comprehension of the current challenges and forthcoming issues. As a part of experiential learning, there can be a connect with communities in the proximity of the institutions to start with and that will enable students, researchers to have real life experiences, identify the problems and become a solution seeking generation. Besides the collaborations with the government and the private organisations, the educational institutions can explore possibilities of collaborations with cooperatives which are mutual benefit and people centric organisations.

Community own cooperative schools: Kerala is a good example wherein there are cooperative schools and colleges. Promotion of cooperative educational institution in other States on the lines of Kerala can give good results.

Start planning from the grassroots to national level: Since grassroot institutions are more aware about the households at the primary level therefore, it will be worthwhile to engage community groups and institutions to create more awareness about the need and usefulness of education. All the formats of impact assessment should have questions on education of children and more specifically the

reasons of not going to school. Hence, the planning for education should start from grassroots.

Engaging enthusiastic youth and educationists in various programmes: Various flagship programmes of government with paid project staff are already in place. In addition to the paid project staff, individuals who want to volunteer for promoting education can also be identified and associated with some honorarium if needed.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the paper commenced with an explanation of the SDG 4—ensure inclusive, quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, the seven targets, eleven indicators and three means of implementations. It emphasised on the significance of education for the achievement of SDG. The paper further focused on education scenario aligning with SDG 4 in India through various programmes, schemes and

recently the NEP. The progress made so far was assessed with the current SDG 4 India index score, the national average and that of the states where Kerala and Chandigarh emerged as the top performers based on data from NITI AAYOG. While there have been various initiatives by international organisations at global level, the governments along with NGOs and other stakeholders at national, state and district levels. The paper concluded with the action that can be at individual, institutional and community level. At individual level, the action areas can be conducive learning environment, awareness about scholarships, teacher integrating SDGs in their teachings and at the institutional level, the action areas can be through the institutes, their programmes, courses, creating sustainable campus and at community level, actions can be collaborating with mutual benefit organisations like cooperatives. Most important is connecting, mobilising and engaging youth as change agents.

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