

*The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence.*

~ Rabindranath Tagore

The ethos of our current education system has let loose two social forces: eager acquisition and narrow competition. These forces are creating more consumers and fewer contributors in the education space. Economic prosperity means nothing unless it creates equal and rightful opportunities for one and all. This can only happen if we become sensitive to and subsequently address issues pertaining to discrimination, social or economic. We will fail in our duties if we cannot uphold our unity, being one of the most diverse countries in the world, through realization of a higher purpose of being. Education can open our eyes to such a realization.

Nobility of thought and purpose can only emerge if one is able to keep individual differences at bay and consider one and all to be a part of the same family, leaving no room for discrimination. Liberal education is the root of such noble thoughts and thus a great social enabler. The ‘Right to Education Act’, passed by the Indian Parliament on the fourth day of August two thousand and nine (4.8.2009), underscores the importance of building a strong nation for the future by enabling equal and compulsory access to education in the country.

The second issue of *IIMK Society & Management Review* highlights issues pertaining to education in modern India. Education is particularly important considering the demographic dividend India is poised to enjoy over other developed economies of the world. As a young nation growing out of the world’s oldest civilization, India should make best use of this dividend, a concern highlighted by many contemporary thought leaders. Leveraging the demographic dividend, however, requires great investments in skill, technology, and quality education. For instance, investments in information technology similar in the form to the National Knowledge Network may make quality education highly accessible. Making funds and skills available at the right place and time may help build a scalable education system with a flexible governance structure that leverages our competencies in information technology and management. Building such a system requires a close working relationship between the private and the public sector.

Implementation of a robust education system cannot materialize without social inclusion, especially women empowerment. Empowering women and making them an integral part of India’s growth story will not only address the scarcity of skilled workforce, but also help build a stronger nation. Investment in women empowerment can bear fruit if we as a society can succeed in destroying the prevalent occupational stereotyping of women thereby making the best use of her skill. The consequences of such an endeavour are profound and far-reaching. An effort to improve gender diversity across all sectors is a reflection of this enterprise.

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