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M.Sc (Maths), M.B.A. (Mktg.), M.B.A. (H.R.),
M.Drama (Acting), M.Drama (Prod. & Dir.), M.Ed.

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22. Issues and Priorities for India

Dr. Ganesh B. Darade

Head of Dept. Economics, Sant Bhagawan Baba Arts College, Sindkhed Raja, Dist – Buldhana.

Introduction

As India prepares herself for becoming an economic superpower, it must expedite socio-economic reforms and take steps for overcoming institutional and infrastructure bottlenecks inherent in the system. Availability of both physical and social infrastructure is central to sustainable economic growth. Since independence Indian economy has thrived hard for improving its pace of development. Notably in the past few years the cities in India have undergone tremendous infrastructure up gradation but the situation is not similar in most part of rural India. Similarly, in the realm of health and education and other human development indicators India's performance has been far from satisfactory, showing a wide range of regional inequalities with urban areas getting most of the benefits.

In order to attain the status that currently only a few countries in the world enjoy and provide a more egalitarian society to its mounting population, appropriate measures need to be taken

Currently Indian economy is facing these challenges

1. Sustaining the growth momentum and achieving an annual average growth of 7-8% in the next five years.
2. Simplifying procedures and relaxing entry barriers for business activities.
3. Checking the growth of population; India is the second highest populated country in the world after China. However, in terms of density India exceeds China as India's land area is almost half of China's total land. Due to a high population growth, per capita remains very poor. It was only \$ 2880 in 2003 (World Bank figures)
4. Development of human resources is very much crucial for attaining economic development which poses as an important challenge before the Eleventh Plan. In order to ensure a continuous and growing supply of quality of manpower we need large investments in public sector institutions of higher learning, combined with fundamental reforms of the curriculum and also service conditions to attract high quality faculty. The scope for expanding capacity through private sector initiatives in higher learning must also be fully exploited, while also ensuring that quality standards are not diluted.

Unless this is done on an urgent basis, we will fail to attain global standards. India has historically lagged behind in the area of technical/vocational training and even today enrolment rates in ITIs and others Vocational institutes, including nursing and computer training schools, is only about a third of that in higher education.

This is quite the opposite of other Asian Countries which have outperformed us in labour intensive manufactures. Our ITIs will have to be substantially expanded not only in terms of the persons they train but also in the number of different skills and trades they teach. The quality and range of their training should keep pace with the changing needs of the economy.

5. Environmental concerns are growing globally as well as within the country. While there may appear to be a trade-off between environmental sustainability and economic growth in the short run, it has to be recognized, that in the longer run environmental sustainability and human well-being are not necessarily in conflict.

Neglect of environmental considerations, as for example in profligate use of water or deforestation can lead to adverse effects very quickly. The threat of climate change also poses real challenge to the well being of future generations which we can ill afford to ignore. Our developmental strategy has to be sensitive to these growing concerns and should ensure that these threats and trade-offs are appropriately evaluated.

6. Another important challenges before the Government is to improve the rehabilitation and resettlement practices. Our practices regarding rehabilitation of those displaced from their land because of development projects are seriously deficient and are responsible for a growing perception of exclusion and marginalization. The costs of displacement born by our tribal population have been unduly high and compensation has been tardy and inadequate, leading to serious unrest in many tribal regions and also in some other regions. Such unrest is also visible in respect of land acquisitions related to Special Economic Zones (SEZs).
7. Improving the governance is another serious challenge faced by the country at this moment. All our efforts to achieve rapid and inclusive development will come to naught if we cannot ensure good governance both in the manner public programmes are implemented and, equally important, in the way the government interacts with the ordinary citizen. Corruption is now seen to be endemic in all spheres and this problem needs to be addressed urgently. Better design of projects and implementation mechanisms and procedures can reduce the scope of corruption. Much more needs to be done by both the Centre and States to reduce the discretionary power of the

government, ensure greater transparency and accountability and create awareness among citizens. The right to Information Act empowers the people to demand improved governance and we must be ready to respond.

8. **Providing Essential Public Services for the Poor.** The most important challenge is how to provide essential public services such as education, health to large parts of our population who are denied these services at present. The performance of education and health sector is disappointing. There are large gaps in respect of educational facilities, health care and in related services such as maternal and child care, clean drinking water and access to basic sanitation facilities for the mass of our population especially the poor who do not have even minimum access.
9. **Regaining Agricultural Dynamism:** One of the major challenges of the Eleventh Plan must be to reverse the deceleration in agricultural growth from 3.2 per cent observed between 1980 and 1996-97 to a trend average of only 1.5 per cent subsequently. This deceleration is undoubtedly at the root of the problem of rural distress that has surfaced in many parts of the country. This deceleration is affecting all farm size classes. A second green revolution is urgently needed to raise the growth rate of agricultural GDP to around 4 per cent. The challenge posed is to at least double the rate of agricultural growth. This calls for action on both the demand side and supply side.

Conclusion

In short in India there is poverty and unemployment are the biggest challenges before economy. To face these various challenges the govt. introduced various schemes for the poor people for creating job opportunities. That is to remove the poverty and solve the problem of unemployment of the nation.

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