Notes

1. Though a growth rate of 5 per cent per capita for over three decades is unprecedented, Germany, Italy, and France came quite close in the 1950s and 1960s. However, there is no other comparable performer. Even Japan, the much-acclaimed forerunner of the East Asian miracle, recorded only 1.5 per cent per capita growth during the period from the Meiji restoration to 1940.

2. These achievements need to be adjusted against many other fallouts of development, such as pollution and other environmental degradations and infrastructural bottlenecks, as well as poverty (for example, in Indonesia).

3. The problem arises from the fact that educational expenditures are considered as consumer spending as well as a contribution to higher income in the future, but these two cannot be easily separated. If we consider the factor of unrealized incomes, the problem becomes even more complex. Whether individuals realize their incomes or not from the investment in education, families and the state continue to spend on it. In such a situation, it is not easy to draw a balance between the two sources of spending. For this reason, some commentors argue that since micro returns are difficult to measure, it is better to estimate the macro returns, which can be derived from the increase in material and intellectual capital. In macroeconomics apparently, the continued costs of education are compared with total individual incomes, or the national income. Shultz (1961) used both approaches but preferred the macroeconomic one.

4. One should, however, assert this with a note of caution. The Philippines could not demonstrate higher levels in the standard of living vis-à-vis its Southeast Asian neighbours despite having a higher rate of literacy. Education alone perhaps cannot guarantee a higher standard of living for a nation. However, it can still be argued that the situation could have been worse had there been lower levels of education in this country.

5. Coombs (1985) indeed captures some of these changes of emphasis on development and education. Perceived anew, the basic objective of education was:

   ... to improve people’s quality of life — not just of some people but of all the people, with special emphasis on the poorest and the most
disadvantaged who had thus far been bypassed by the development process. Economic growth based on increased productivity was still viewed as being of fundamental importance. But the broader end now in view was not simply a rise in the GNP. It was growth with equity, which militated against human exploitation and ensured a fair distribution of the fruits of development. Greater emphasis on more equitable distribution, the economists now argued, was not only a moral imperative but an imperative for healthy economic growth and future political stability. The new concept also rejected the old theoretical notion that economic and social development were distinct and separate processes and that the first must precede the second. Instead, the new thinking recognized that the two were inseparable and must go forward hand-in-hand. Half-sick farmers could hardly be expected to have the stamina to boost their productivity, just as half starved children were in no condition to learn the intricacies of reading, writing and arithmetic (Coombs 1985, pp. 18–19).

6. See Speech by the Minister of Education, Singapore, on the Budget session given on 19 March 1998.
7. Personal communication with Mukul G. Asher (January 1998).
9. The national education policy, which is now being vigorously pursued by the Government of Singapore, has the following explicit purpose (see Webpage of Ministry of Education).

   To develop national cohesion, the instinct for survival and confidence in the future:

   • By fostering a sense of identity, pride, and self-respect as Singaporeans;
   • By knowing the Singapore story — how Singapore succeeded against the odds to become a nation;
   • By understanding Singapore’s unique challenges, constraints and vulnerabilities, which make us different from other countries; and
   • By instilling the core values of our way of life, and the will to prevail, that ensure our continued success and well-being.

10. “Thus when I hear, ‘what should we learn, how should we learn, which system of education is relevant and what way’, then I strongly feel that education is not something which is detached from life. What should we learn and what we want to be — these two are intimately interrelated. You cannot pour more water in a pot than what it can accommodate” (Rabindranath Tagore, *Collected Works of Tagore*, vol. 13, p. 694, translated by Atiur Rahman).
References


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