

Preface

Being one of the strongest links between elementary and higher education, secondary education is emerging as one of the important educational sectors in India. In order to reap its maximum benefits, it is of utmost importance for policy makers to now address the dual challenge of quantity expansion and quality enhancement. This book not only provides useful insights into quality related concepts of secondary education in India but also answers questions on why there is need to improve quality of education, how one can measure quality of education and the ways to improve quality. This book reviews the present status of quality of secondary education in schools at the national and state level in India, thereby identifying inequalities that exist at various levels and evaluating the factors that determine student outcomes and efficient teaching abilities in India. It also seeks to understand the extent to which school resources and infrastructural facilities, teachers and teaching methods, family characteristics, self-motivational factors, and exposure to mass media affect the performance of students. Along with this, perceptions of students and teachers on various issues related to enhancement of quality education and efficient learning environment in schools are also presented in this book.

For this, the analysis in this volume is conceptually designed at three levels: (i) national level performance and linkages; (ii) state level progress, disparities and linkages; and (iii) school level: measurement and improvement of learning outcomes of students and efficient teaching practices. While, first two approaches simply provide answers to research questions on why measuring the quality of secondary education is important in India; the third approach identifies various determinants for measuring the quality of secondary education. Both quantitative and qualitative methods have been used to probe the various issues related to the quality of secondary education at the micro and macro levels.

The book is divided into five parts. While the first part introduces the topic and gives a theoretical and conceptual framework, the second part describes the study area and research design used in the study. The third part presents the growth and linkages of secondary education at national and state levels. The key highlights of this section are that it provides answers to questions like: Why is it important to

shift focus on secondary education? Why is there a need to improve quality? Given the fact that quality of education needs improvement, the fourth part gives empirical evidence on how quality of education can be measured, the factors that determine student outcomes, and the quality of teaching practices in schools. The last part concludes and gives policy implications and recommendations.

This book provides a methodological framework to scholars interested in measuring and evaluating the quality of secondary education in various settings. We hope that educational institutions, research scholars, students, policy makers, and many others find these findings useful and beneficial for strengthening and delivering the quality education in South Asia, Southeast Asia, and other developing regions. A major part of this study is based on the doctoral thesis, approved and awarded by School of Social Sciences, Indira Gandhi National Open University, to the first author.

The conduct of this research and writing of this book was an enriching experience for us. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the people whose help has been valuable in writing this book. Firstly, we are grateful to the National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER) and IGNOU for not only providing us with an expert platform and infrastructural support, but also for facilitating us with various research material and references required for conducting this study. We express our deep gratitude to the faculty members and other staff members of both of these institutions for their guidance and support throughout. We are thankful to the National Book Trust (NBT), India and the National Action Plan for Readership Development of the Trust for granting us permission to use the National Youth Readership Survey (NYRS) primary data. We are also grateful to the board of the *Journal of Educational Planning and Administration*, published by the National University of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi for granting us the permission to republish some regression results and literature from the paper entitled 'Evidences of Linkage between Secondary Education and Socio-Economic Outcomes in India' published in Jan 2016 issue. We acknowledge the support of both these institutions.

Since this research work has undertaken primary survey from senior secondary schools in Delhi, we would like to give our special thanks to all those principals, teachers, students, and other key stakeholders in surveyed schools in Delhi who volunteered and participated in this study. Without their support this analysis would not have been completed. We are grateful to Dr. Vichar Das, Mr. Mehta, Mr. Vijay Thakur and Mr. Deepak for providing us with necessary input during the translation and printing of questionnaires, data collection and data entry. We want to acknowledge all our friends and colleagues for their great support during the study.

Last, but not the least, we are profoundly grateful to our family members, who have always been a true source of inspiration for us, for keeping up our morale, for being continuing source of help and encouragement, for their love, patience and

understanding throughout the period. Their creative ideas and enduring support have helped a lot in completing this book. Finally, we would like to mention that the views expressed in this book are our own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the affiliated organizations.

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Quality of Secondary Education in India
Concepts, Indicators, and Measurement

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2018, XXXVII, 225 p. 51 illus., 4 illus. in color., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-981-10-4928-6