Mains Practice Question

Q. The quality of higher education in India requires major improvements to make it internationally competitive. Give suggestions to improve the education quality and its implementation. (250 words)

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Approach

- Start your answer by briefly describing the present status of education in India.
- Discuss the various issues with higher education in India.
- Give suggestions to improve education in India.
- Conclude accordingly.

Introduction

- With nearly a quarter of India's population being in the age of attending school and college, whether our demographic situation is an asset for our country or not depends on the quality of their learning.
- As per UN report around 50% of adolescents do not complete secondary education, while approximately 20 million children don't attend pre-school.

Body

- **Various issues related to education in India:**
  - **Inadequate government Funding:** The country spent 3% of its total GDP on education in 2018-19 according to the Economic Survey which is very less in comparison to the developed and OECD countries.
  - **Lack of basic infrastructure:** Most of the schools are not yet compliant with the complete set of RTE infrastructure. They lack drinking water facilities, a functional common toilet, and do not have separate toilets for girls.
  - **Poor global ranking of institutes:** Very few Indian universities are featured in the top rankings of the world primarily due to low faculty-student ratio and lack of research capacity.
  - **No coherence between education and demand of Industry**: Industries in India face problems to find suitable employees as education provided is not suitable for directly working in industry and hence have to spend large amounts on providing training for employees.
  - **Inadequate teachers and their training:** The 24:1 ratio of India is way lower than Sweden's 12:1, Britain's 16:1, Russia's 10:1 and Canada's 9:1. Moreover the quality of teachers who are sometimes appointed politically or are not trained adequately is another huge challenge.
  - **Quality of Education:** The ASER reports present a very dismal picture of learning outcomes in India.
- **Measures needed to improve the education in India:**
  - **Make the problem visible:** Regular assessments are needed to measure progress in learning and make the current levels visible in a way that can be understood widely.
    - Further, India should participate regularly in international assessments like Trends

in International Mathematics and Science Study and Programme for International Student Assessment so as to set goals and benchmark its performance and progress.

- **Higher public spending on education:** There is a need to raise spending on education to about 6% of the GDP, as without proper funding Indian education sector would lead to further deterioration of the education quality.
- **Skill education:** There is a need for providing vocational skill training to each student at school level from pre-school to class 12th.
- **Internationalization of Higher Education:** There is need to create a knowledge hub in India for attracting foreign nationals to India and to promote research collaboration and student exchanges between Indian institutions and global institutions through organised efforts.
- **Establish a reading mission**: The need of the hour is to ensure that 80% of our children can read and write well in any one language by the time they are nine years old, we would have solved 80% of our educational problems.
    - Reading has to become a focus area of both action and measurement and a movement which involves all. Specialised training programmes need to be created for teachers on reading skill development and measurement.
- **Invest in technology for education:** There is a need to do research and develop ways to use technology to drive the change we desire. The focus should not be on installing hardware but creating new, high-quality content such as intelligent teaching systems and tools that will help students to hone basic skills like reading and mathematics, and developing content in multiple Indian languages.

Conclusion

Improving the quality of education in the school will create an enabling environment that will embed the concept of lifelong learning. The students will remain enrolled in the school and learn and become enablers and productive whereby they can participate in nation-building.