Institute of Development Studies Kolkata & University of Calcutta

Entrance test for PhD in Development Studies
(2024 Enrolment)

Time allowed: 2 hours *Full marks: 100*

1. Please read the following excerpt and answer all the questions given below: 5x6 = 30

The redistributive effects of education depend entirely on who receives that education and who pays for it. Where education is universal, public education will be fiscally progressive. If only the wealthy receive some form of public education (for example, higher education), then public education spending will be fiscally regressive. Finally, if education is provided to a majority, but not all, of the population, there may be the possibility of a rich-poor alliance, at the expense of the middle class, to reduce education spending, if the rich can purchase substitute education in the private market. Thus the multidirectional nature of public education means that a broad array of coalitions is possible: The poor and middle class might advocate for universal education, the rich and middle class might advocate for increased spending on secondary education from which the poor are excluded, or the poor and rich might advocate for reduced overall education spending. Given the complex coalitions and patterns of redistribution that might emerge, how can we effectively theorize about likely outcomes? The simple act of providing, for example, universal primary education has several crosscutting redistributive impacts: It takes money from the rich to pay for the education of the poor; it increases the country's relative factor endowment of skilled labor; it increases the chance that the shape of the future distribution of income will be decided by merit rather than birthright; and it creates positive externalities for other individuals by increasing the efficiency of transactions in the economy. Examining other, more limited, forms of education spending such as university funding adds the further complication that education is targeted to some groups rather than others. When states democratize and the poorer masses gain control of political decision making, we expect taxation to rise and public education spending to increase. A similar logic applies with the election of leftwing governments that favour higher taxation and hence more funding for public goods such as education. However, this simple assertion must be qualified: if the provision of education is limited but taxation is universal, those who fail to receive education but pay for it are clear losers. In many societies, the poor have to pay taxes that are used to educate solely the elite and middle class. Furthermore, even when education provision is universal, tax systems themselves vary in their progressivity – at the limit, a universal education system funded by a lump-sum tax may be hardly redistributive at all.

As with other factors of production such as land and capital, the supply of education in the economy will determine its rate of return. Accordingly, if the educated elite can limit the further expansion of education, they will reap scarcity rents from their skills. However, as education expands to the middle class and the poor, these rents will be dissipated substantially. Thus, the elite have a vested interest in "protecting" the rents accruing to their education and, thus, in keeping education spending minimal. As with the pattern of fiscal redistribution, we would expect democratization to reflect the interest of the masses in expanding education, not the interest of the rich in protecting their rents. However, these 'scarcity effects' are not constant across states. The structure of the

labour market, whether it is integrated with the global product market and the relative skill bias of technology, will condition the impact of scarcity effects.

If natural ability is uniformly distributed throughout society and education provides a way of "matching" ability to income, we should expect education to help the able poor and harm the less able rich. Education, then, acts as a "lottery" mechanism in relation to parental income, encouraging meritocracy rather than heredity and making the intergenerational transfer of wealth more random. As lottery effects become more important, education becomes yet more threatening to the rich and encouraging to the poor, so much so that the rich might actually prefer to "buy off" the poor with simple transfers of cash rather than allow even minimal education spending. This provides the implication that regimes or parties that favour the rich will try to shift the balance of government spending away from education and toward other government consumption that proves less of a meritocratic risk.

i) Explain what the author means by the possibility of 'a broad array of coalitions' on the question of financing education.
ii) What are the possible redistributive effects of providing universal primary education?
iii) How does tax progressivity matter in determining the distributive outcome of education?
iv) Explain what the author means by 'scarcity effect'.
v) Explain the 'lottery effect' of education.

2. Write about 300 words on ***any one*** of the following: 30
   i) Studying history in the time of 'post-truth'
   ii) Challenges of evidence-based policy-making
   iii) Female work force participation
   iv) Many-sidedness of violence against women

3. The following table excerpted from the report of the National Sample Survey on All-India Debt and Investment, Round 77, conducted in 2019, gives the percentage of adult population (18 years & above) having deposit account in banks in selected states of India. Based on the information in the table, answer if the following statements are 'true' or 'false' or 'cannot be answered without additional information'. Explain your answers in one or two sentences. 5x4 = 20

State/All-India	Rural			Urban		
	Male	Female	Person (Total)	Male	Female	Person (Total)
Bihar	82.7	72.2	77.7	86.1	71.9	79.6
Kerala	93.0	88.4	90.6	91.3	89.9	90.5
Madhya Pradesh	90.1	76.8	83.6	90.1	82.6	86.3
Punjab	91.1	76.8	84.3	91.2	80.3	86.0
Rajasthan	91.2	90.5	90.8	90.0	86.5	88.3
West Bengal	85.9	81.8	83.9	87.7	79.1	83.3
All-India	88.1	80.7	84.4	89.0	81.3	85.2

a) The proportion of males with deposit accounts in banks in Kerala exceeds the proportion of males with deposit accounts in banks in West Bengal.

b) Compared to the other states in the Table, Bihar has the worst figures with respect to the percentage of adult population (18 years & above) having deposit account in banks.

c) Compared to the other states in the Table, Kerala has the best figures with respect to the percentage of adult population (18 years & above) having deposit account in banks.

d) The number of persons with deposit accounts in banks is higher in Rajasthan compared to Madhya Pradesh.

4. The following table provides the figures for life expectancy at birth (in years) for India and Bangladesh from 1990 to 2021. Based on the information in the following tableanswer if the following statements are 'true' or 'false' or 'cannot be answered without additional information'. Explain your answers in one or two sentences. 5x4 = 20

Year	Bangladesh	India	Year	Bangladesh	India	Year	Bangladesh	India
1990	56.0	58.7	2000	65.8	62.7	2010	68.6	66.9
1991	54.2	59.1	2001	66.1	63.1	2011	68.8	67.4
1992	57.6	59.5	2002	66.6	63.6	2012	69.6	67.9
1993	57.9	59.8	2003	66.8	64.1	2013	69.6	68.5
1994	58.6	60.2	2004	67.2	64.5	2014	70.0	69.1
1995	59.5	60.6	2005	67.3	65.0	2015	70.5	69.6
1996	59.5	61.0	2006	67.2	65.4	2016	71.1	70.1
1997	61.4	61.4	2007	66.7	65.8	2017	71.8	70.5
1998	63.9	61.8	2008	67.1	66.1	2018	72.6	70.7
1999	66.1	62.2	2009	67.4	66.5	2019	72.8	70.9

a) Bangladesh surpassed India in life expectancy at birth in the 1990s.

b) The absolute increase in life expectancy at birth in Bangladesh is more than that in India in every decade since 1990s (the decade of 1990s being defined as 1990-1999, and so on).

c) Bangladesh has lower infant mortality rates compared to India.

d) The proportion of population aged above 72.4 years is higher in Bangladesh than in India.