

THE ROAD TO AN ENLIGHTENED NATION: INVESTMENT OF RUSSIA IN FUTURE GENERATIONS

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Abstract

Russia's educational system emphasizes the importance of nations' strategic investment in human capital that underpins sustainable development. Relying on secondary sources, this article has examined evolution, structure and reform measures of the Russian education system. This article has discussed the overall educational framework of Russia from preschool to higher education. Reforms in the education sector such as the National Project "Education", the Federal Program "Modernization of Education" and "Priority 2030" are examined in this article to show inclusive approach of Russia to align education with socioeconomic goals. The article also looks at post-COVID changes, updating the curriculum, training of teachers and digital learning environments. It also interprets Russia's departure from the Bologna process, mandatory patriotic education and military practices at educational institutions as a manifestation of ideological and nationalist motives. By using student performance in international large-scale assessments, such as TIMSS, PIRLS and IOI, the article emphasizes Russia's accomplishments along with continuing difficulties to find a compromise between quality education, innovation and state ideology. On the whole, it argues that Russian educational reforms are geared towards enhancing competitiveness in globalization, promoting national unity and equipping future generations for a rapidly changing world.

Keywords

Education, curriculum, reform, development, Russia.

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1. Introduction

The Russian Federation is the full name of Russia. Spanning across Eastern Europe and northern Asia, it claims the title of being the world's largest country, with Moscow as its capital. Vladimir Putin is the president of Russia and has been since 2000. This article offers a deep analysis of the Russian education system. It is examined by the exploration that Russia has an overall education system format, including preschool education, general education, vocational technical training and higher professional education (Liu, 2024). Education in Russia is divided into these four stages after preschool: Primary General Education, Basic General Education and Secondary General Education.

The preschool education in Russia, for 3 to 7-year-olds, has a good reputation for early development. Preschool education is a preparatory period which provides children with the necessary skills and basic knowledge required as they moved to formal education. Preschool enhances their cognitive readiness and social interaction skills

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(Veraksa *et al.*, 2023). After the preschool education, seven to ten-year-old children enter in primary general education. The primary general education system is the main mechanism of promoting basic numeracy and literacy skills among children. After graduating from primary general education, 11 to 15 year olds attend basic general education where they study a wider range of subjects including history, biology, physics and foreign languages; while continuing to study Russian language and mathematics. 17-year-old students enter secondary general education after their completion of basic general education (Liu, 2024). This level of education shapes the course for individuals in higher education and vocational educational institutions. Those who completed secondary general education with success after completion of the Certificate for Secondary General Education have access to higher education. On the other hand, when students complete their basic general education or secondary general education, they can be involved in vocational education programs (Blinov & Kurteeva, 2020).

President Vladimir Putin has introduced new requirements for Russia's education system with the purpose of improving the quality of education, nurturing patriotism, promoting national cohesion and channeling ideological outlooks to match that of the state. Alongside the National Project "Education" and Federal Program "Modernization of Education", Russia has launched the Pilot Project for Higher Education Reform, New National System of Higher Education, Priority 2030, Conversations about Important Things and Compulsory Military Training (Bayadmin, 2021; Kameneva *et al.*, 2023). Russia has been training students in a way that fits the future job market. The education sector is evolving due to globalization and technological development. Modernization of the educational standards, life-long learning for teachers with a focus on vocational training, early childhood development programs, abandonment of Bologna system, enhanced financing for Research and Development (R&D) at higher educational institutions, increases in number of foreign students are just few examples of new reforms introduced by Russia's education system. This article has examined these changes in detail.

2. Methodology

Using a desk review, this article is based entirely on secondary data. Drawing on a wide range of secondary sources - including existing scholarly literature, official reports, policy documents, and peer-reviewed academic publications - the study aims to analyze the structure of the education system in Russia as well as its evolution and reform.

3. Education system of Russia

3.1. Preschool Education

Education system of Russia is comprised by several levels and is managed by the Ministry of Education and Science. Preschool education is between the ages of 3 and 7. It is optional. Various types of institutions also exist which constitute the preschool education system of Russia such as kindergartens, preschool education centers as well as integrated kindergartens that take care of children with mental, physical disabilities. Above 45000 preschool institutions are in Russia. About 63% of appropriate age group children are enrolled in the preschool education programs while around one million are still on waiting list for getting enrolled in preschool education programs. Preschool education in Russia is controlled by the Law on Education in the Russian Federation (2012) and the Federal State Educational Standard for Preschool Education. Preschool

education programme is an all-round development of the child. It focuses more toward children's socialization and cognitive skills, physical as well as mental welfare of a child. Activities of preschool education are designed to foster creativity and language development of children. Additionally, the activities through play-based learning make children teach basic numeracy. Children with special needs also get enrolled in the preschool education programs of Russia and they receive extra care and attention from the educators (Veraksa *et al.*, 2023). Most of the kindergartens of Russia are public funded. They charge from the parents only up to 20% of the total operation cost. That's why, preschool education program which are public funded are affordable for the parents. On the other hand, there are also private kindergartens in Russia which fees are relatively high. Due to low fee, the demand of government-run kindergartens is high (Seliverstova, 2021; Shiyan *et al.*, 2018; Veraksa *et al.*, 2022). Digital technology has been integrated in the preschool education to develop digital competence among the preschool children which is undoubtedly a part of broader national efforts of Russia to digitalize education. Teachers develop different strategies which help the Russian children to use digital devices safely and effectively. It surely fosters skills which will be crucial for their future education (Kalabina & Progackaya, 2021).

3.2. General Education

Russia's General Education consists of 3 stages: Primary general education; Basic general education and Secondary general education.

3.2.1. Primary General Education

The Russian primary general education is for the children who are 7-10 years old. Primary general education (grade 1-4) lasts for four years. In primary general education, the skills of literacy and numeracy are learnt. The children are educated specially regarding Russian language, mathematics and elementary science. A large number of primary schools begin teaching a foreign language such as English or German to children. The education is not limited to the above, music and 'The World around Us' are also taught to children in the primary school. The World around Us includes learning on geography, history and social studies. In Russia there are state and private schools. Per class there are 20-25 students in public primary schools. And in private primary schools, the figure is even smaller. Students are required to be present at school five days a week. The Russia primary school 5-point grade is used to evaluate students between "1" (very bad) and "5" (excellent). The educational environment of Russian primary schools is much more formal and disciplined. Compliance with rules is highly prioritized in primary schools (Liu, 2024; Velichenkova & Rusetskaya, 2023).

3.2.2. Basic General Education

Basic general education for the children who are 11 to 15 years old. It spans five years and covers grades 5 to 9. Public and private schools are available for basic general education. It includes more advanced subjects and it expands the knowledge gained from primary general education. Besides Russian language, foreign language (usually English or German), history, mathematics- biology, physics, chemistry, arts are taught in basic general education. Basic general education does not only emphasize on knowledge acquisition but also acquiring practical capabilities of critical thinking, problem-solving and creativity as well as cooperative ability. Upon finishing the basic general education,

students must take the Basic State Exam (ОГЭ). It tests students' understanding of core subjects and students' eligibility for continued education paths. That's why basic general education is quite important undoubtedly. High score in ОГЭ enables a student to advance onto Secondary General Education while low score will transfer the student to vocational education-based programs (Liu, 2024; Tekucheva & Gromova, 2016).

3.2.3. *Secondary General Education*

Grades 10 and 11 are covered by Secondary General Education who are aged 16 to 17. It lasts for two years in the life of the students. A number of students remain at the same school where they have completed their basic general education (grade 5 to 9). Again, some students change their school and move to specialized schools or lyceums that offer the students more focused curriculum of their area of interest. The phase of secondary general education is very crucial in the life of the students as this stage determines whether students will pursue higher education or can enroll in vocational programs. Secondary general education concludes with Unified State Examination (ЕГЭ). Noticeable differences can be observed in public and private schools in Russia specially at the secondary level. Public schools ensure a uniform education across Russia. But when the matter is about quality, then it significantly depends on the region. The public schools which are situated in urban area obviously provides better opportunities and qualified teachers than the rural area. Private schools offer higher quality education and the class sizes are small that's why every student gets special attention from their teachers. International curricula like the International Baccalaureate (IB) or advanced placement courses are followed in the private schools. The teachers are highly qualified. More opportunities are available for extracurricular activities and specialized training in the private schools. The fees of private schools are high so students of wealthier families can take admission there. It depends on a family's financial condition and student's academic goals; in which school he should get admitted-public or private. The students who want to excel in Unified State Examination (ЕГЭ) and want to get admitted in top university, for them the private school is good choice due to its rigorous and focused environment. Public schools also offer a good academic environment for students, but the students need to take additional tutoring or specialized courses (Kosaretsky & Ivanov, 2020; Liu, 2024).

3.3. *Vocational Education*

The vocational education is very important as well, because it will equip students with the skills that they would need for a job. Vocational education is available in the two institutions of Russia: technical schools and colleges. Vocational schools offer courses but no degrees, aside from colleges which have degrees and a better range of courses. It's also why we consider colleges to be more prestigious than technical schools. That's why colleges are regarded more prestigious than technical schools. There are two stages of vocational education: first stage vocational education is provided by technical schools and second stage vocational education is provided by colleges. First stage vocational education is targeted at training skilled workers, junior technicians and employees and the duration of first stage vocational education is 2 to 3 years. First stage vocational training may commence on completing basic general or secondary general education. First stage vocational curriculum is concrete trade programme and it gives a lot of hand-on practice in the workshop/lab. However, the contents of first-stage vocational education

are parochial because it focuses on fundamental capabilities required in an occupation. Conversely, the aim of second stage vocational education is preparing the mid-career professional who need more advanced skills. The second stage vocational education can only be pursued after finishing secondary general education and it lasts for 3 to 4 years. Second stage vocational education offers basic and advanced vocational training. The second-stage vocational education course curricula have an academic and practice-based approach to training. At this level, trainings are highly compatible with the higher education systems, if one wants to continue his or her education in a university without a hassle after he or she has completed the second stage of vocational education (Blinov & Kurteeva, 2020; Fedorov & Tretyakova, 2016; Romanova, 2021).

3.4. Higher Education

Higher education system of Russia is committed to academic excellence. It blends theoretical knowledge with practical skills. Robust admission procedure, a credit-based academic system and tenacious grading standard are the noticeable features of higher education framework of Russia. Numerous levels are included in the Russian higher education system such as Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree, Specialist Degree, Candidate of Sciences, Doctor of Sciences. Bachelor's degree is a program of 4 years. It exposes students to core and elective subjective. Simultaneously, it gives focus on foundational knowledge and skills. Besides, students are needed to finish their internship or practical projects to obtain hands-on experience in their chosen field of study. Students must have to pass comprehensive exams and defend a thesis prior graduating with a Bachelor's degree. The Master's degree of Russia lasts for 2 years. It provides specialized and in-depth exploration of the chosen field of study of the students. Research and independent studies are emphasized strongly in Master's program. Before graduating with a Master's degree, students must have to complete thesis or research project. Apart from Bachelor's and Master's degree programs, Specialist's programs are integrated in the education system of Russia which last for 5 years. Specialists program provide intensive training in specialized subjects like medicine, law and engineering. Russia's Candidate of Science degree is equivalent to a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). Candidate of Science is research-based degree which requires the fruitful finish of original research, defense of a dissertation and obviously major contributions to the field of study. The highest academic degree in Russia is Doctor of Science which is higher than a PhD. Candidates must have to obtain Candidate of Science degree before pursuing the Doctor of Science degree. This degree requires candidates to demonstrate substantial contributions to their research field through extensive original research, publications including monographs and other scholarly outputs. It is seen as recognition for lifetime academic achievements rather than just completion of coursework (Barua, 2023)

4. Changes in the education system of Russia during COVID-19

Due to closure of schools, colleges, universities and other learning institutions during COVID-19, education system has gone through drastic changes worldwide (Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021). So, it is very explicit that Russian education system has also significantly impacted by COVID-19 which led to changes in policies, teaching methods and overall education system. Russian educational institutions transitioned to distance learning utilizing platforms like Russian online school, Yandex. Textbook and Teach.ru (Isaeva *et al.*, 2024). Many of the changes introduced during COVID-19 in the education

system of Russia is still in practice today like distance learning, accelerating technology integration, improving digital skills, training for teachers, among others (Valeeva & Kalimullin, 2021).

5. Performance of Russian students in international assessments

Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)

The students of Russia have constantly showed an excellent performance in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). TIMSS is an international assessment which evaluates the students who are in fourth and eighth grades performance in Mathematics and Science. It is conducted after every four years. In the last assessment of TIMSS in 2019, 580000 students from 64 countries participated. The Russian students performed well among the European students. The students of Russia scored an average of 567 in mathematics of fourth grade which placed them among the top performers worldwide. Over the past few decades, significant investments have been made by Russia in educational reforms such as training of teachers, diversification in curriculum, focusing in quality assurance systems which has surely played a great role in the excellent performance of students in TIMSS (Patrinos, 2021).

International Olympiad in Informatics (IOI)

International Olympiad in Informatics (IOI) is an annual competitive competition of programming of secondary school students. This prestigious competition brings together the young minds of around the world for testing their problem-solving competencies and computational thinking. Students of Russia are constantly performing well in IOI. Like 2019, 2021, 2022, 2023, the team of Russia received all four gold medals (Mamaeva, 2024). Adamant training and sturdy educational framework of computer science are the crucial factors for which the students of Russian Federation are performing extremely well in International Olympiad in Informatics (IOI).

Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)

International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) conduct the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) every five years since 2001. This reading comprehension competition is for the students who are 9-10 years old.

In 2021, Russians students performed excellent in PIRLS. Russia ranked 4th among the participating countries. Russia increased its score 14-point from the previous PIRLS which happened in 2016. It significantly demonstrates the positive trend in the performance of reading literacy of the Russian fourth grade students (Mullis *et al.*, 2023). The performance of students is significantly linked with the competency of teachers. Russian Federation has focused on improving the competency of teachers by providing them continuous training and support which ultimately have impact on the performance of the students and their learning outcomes (Kuznetsova, 2016).

Russia's National Project "Education"

National Project "Education" was adopted by the Russian government on May 7, 2018. This project was a segment of broader initiative which integrated multifarious sectors like healthcare, housing construction and agriculture. This project encompasses

reforms from preschool to higher education of Russia. The elementary cause of adopting this project was to enhance the quality and competitiveness in Russian education system. It aims to create equal educational opportunities across all regions of Russia. National Project “Education” has a very crucial aim which is increasing the competitiveness in the education of Russia, with a target for Russia to rank among the top ten countries in term of the quality of education. For this, high standards and benchmarks for educational outcomes have been set. Improving overall quality of education, this project of Russia includes updating curricula, adopting new techniques of teaching, providing training to teachers and better resources to schools. This wants to ensure that students receive a modernized education which surely meets the current standards (Kameneva *et al.*, 2023; Khabarov & Bruev, 2024).

It is evident that students from some segments encounter obstacles in particular those pupils born into rural or poor families. Another important aim of the project is to bring education available to every corner of Russia. It has enacted programs to reduce barriers for students from varied backgrounds. The objective, ultimately, is putting quality education within reach of every child of Russia. This initiative is also invested in facilitating the incorporation of technology into the context of learning, through providing teachers and pupils with access to digital tools and resources. It would be better for learning and good preparation for a technology-driven world. This project also aims to promote international cooperation in the field of education, including the creation of joint programs with foreign universities, exchange programs and collaborative projects which definitely enhance the Russian educational landscape. Another important part of this “Education” project is that it aims to prepare the students for the job market and thus by education, it would in fact prepare them with certain skills which are absolutely needed for the economy (Kupriyanova, 2023).

Digital Educational Environment

Digital Educational Environment aims to revolutionize and enrich the current educational system with digital technologies. It's a model for building a richer and more compelling educational space. It underscores the need to integrate digital tools in learning and teaching. Moodle or Google Classroom, interactive whiteboards, digital assessment tools and virtual classrooms are examples of that some efforts to integrate teaching with various learning processes. These are essentially means of improvement of the students' learning and even the skills of teachers can be improved (Masaeva & Kagermazova, 2023).

Federal Program “Modernization of Education”

The Russian Federal Program “Modernization of Education” is an essential part of the National Project “Education”. This wide-ranging plan is intended to overhaul the educational system to meet current challenges and the future needs. This program consolidates different elements like curriculum reform, digitalisation and policy changes. These instruments ensure that the educational system should correspond to technological progress and the demands of labour market. This program points to the critical need for education reform to be seen as a key element of state policy. This is critical for the effective management and improvement of education. The programme will focus on the need to adapt laws and to change educational schemes for an effective response to these challenges. The programme focuses on the need to adapt laws and to change educational

schemes for an effective response to these challenges. This requires comprehensive curricular reform in line with labor market needs and breakthroughs in technology, particularly information technology as well as science, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields. Improving the qualifications of teachers is a key component of the programme. The study reveals that lack of teacher training and outdated equipment are barriers for the integration of innovative technologies into education. It is proposed in the initiative to increase financial resources allocated to educational institutions. Allocation of financial resources is really necessary because it will help in developing infrastructure and acquiring modern instruments which are substantial for raising the standard of education. Better working conditions for teachers, which includes better pay and more professional development, is another priority area. This is to improve the quality of the education process but also to make sure that teachers have the means necessary, so that they can tackle the contemporary challenges (Moros, 2024).

Priority 2030

Russian government endorses the Priority 2030 plan in 2021. This program is scheduled from 2021 to 2030. Among the goals of this program are establishment of 100 modern and progressive universities which could become the center points for research and development in science, technology and socio-economic areas. Another purpose of the Program is to increase global competitiveness of Russia in the sphere of science and education by encouraging innovations and international cooperation. It seeks also to promote Russia's regional universities (Bayadmin, 2021).

Reforms introduced in the Russian education system

Various modifications have been implemented in the education system of Russia to address the current challenges. The reforms of the Russian education system are primarily aimed at enhancing the quality of education, preparing students for the labor market, instilling a sense of patriotism among students and increasing the number of international students, among other objectives.

Early childhood development

'Education' project focuses on development facilities like the way children's (under three years of age) developmental needs should be addressed. This project also emphasizes on creating a favorable learning environment for the children which will surely support their growth and development (Chaynikova *et al.*, 2021).

Modern School Program

Modern School Program is designed from preschool to secondary education. The aim of this program is to ensure that every child of Russia receives quality education. That's why it aims to create an inclusive environment from preschool to secondary education so that children with disabilities or special needs do not get discriminated (Chaynikova *et al.*, 2021). Quality of education will be enhanced by modernizing school infrastructure and resources.

Quality Enhancement of Students

‘Education’ project of Russia focuses on the enhancement of student’s quality by equipping them with crucial competencies such as logical reasoning, critical thinking, team work and improving their ability to analyze diverse opinions. This project emphasizes on students not only will receive knowledge but also develop necessary skill which will help them in their future and keep them ahead. The crucial aim of ‘Education’ project is to prepare the students for the future professional atmosphere where they will have to collaborate with others and do teamwork (Petrova, 2022).

Conversations about Important Things

In 2022, a series of mandatory lessons was introduced in schools across Russia. This initiative was implemented by Russia’s government in its efforts to boost patriotism, strengthen the nation and consolidate traditional values within student population. The classes are held every Monday morning during the school year, immediately following the raising of the flag (Satanovskiy, 2022).

Conversations about Important Things’ lessons address themes of national identity, public holidays, world events - particularly from the viewpoint of the Russian government. The aim is to teach children loyalty to the state. Another lesson in Conversations about Important Things was added recently - “My Small Motherland”. The lesson is the importance of regional identity and its place in shaping the future of the country (Kotlyar & Coalson, 2022).

Compulsory Military Training

The current focus of the training is students in grades 10 and 11, but there are plans to expand based on this success. The training is part of the existing compulsory self-defence course “Fundamentals of Life Safety” (FLS) with plans to expand it into its own subject called “Fundamentals of Security and Defence of the Motherland”. Basic military skills, such as firing a weapon, launching a grenade and administering first aid are taught to all students. Drone training is part of Compulsory Military Training. Military training is considered as a way to instill discipline and responsibility in young people that will benefit them for the rest of their lives. It gives them practical and social skills, makes them feel more grown up and responsible. The aim of Compulsory Military Training is to train citizens such that the nation will be more ready for national defense (Cuesta, 2024; Staalesen, 2023).

New National System of Higher Education

There was an agreement which adopted in 1999 among the European countries. The aim of that agreement was to establish a standardized system for higher education across Europe. This agreement is known as Bologna process. Initially, it was adopted by 29 European countries which later increased to 49 countries. Bologna process emphasizes on easy movement of students, graduates and staffs for study purposes between various European countries. Russia joined the Bologna system in 2003. But in 2022, it withdrew from it as the officials of Russian assumed that Bologna system is not able to provide adequate benefits to Russian universities. Even this system does not address the national priorities. It is argued that students are not getting prepared for the labor market of Russia adopting the degrees of European-style (Vorotnikov, 2022). Russia will introduce its new

system of higher education from September 1, 2026. That's why Russia is running now pilot projects in six leading universities since May 2023 to test the reforms before the full implementation of the reforms in 2026. Some of these reforms are two level structure, focus on practical skills, patriotic education system, digital integration and so on. Two level of structure of higher education includes basic higher education and specialized higher education. Basic higher education will last for 4 to 6 years and it will provide foundational knowledge to students. On the other hand, after completing basic higher education, students can pursue specialized higher education which will last for 1 to 3 years. There is another reform of new system of education which is focus on practical skills. As due to the following of Bologna system, education system did not prepare students for employment. So, this new system aims to enhance practical skills and competencies of students which are aligned with labor market (Yakimchuk, 2025). This new system also emphasizes on to educate the students on Russian history, culture and national identity by incorporating these things into the curriculum (Nabilkina *et al.*, 2021).

Enhancing Number of International Students

Federal project "Export of Education" was adopted in Russia which is a part of national project "Education". The Federal project "Export of Education" aims to double the number of international students in Russia. For this organizational and legal framework have to be changed so that processes get streamlined, international students get the required information and support for their academic journey in Russia. So, informational support will be improved by this federal project which includes international students will get the details of educational programs, living conditions, support for adjusting with cultural shock, language difficulties and so on. This federal project also focuses on financial support for international students which incorporate scholarship and funding opportunities which are really fruitful to attract students from abroad. This project also focuses on initiatives for international students such as internship at Russian companies, international contest, online courses so that Russian higher education system get visibility and attracted worldwide. Increasing the number of international students, the federal project "Export of Education" aims to promote Russia's culture and also strengthen the geopolitical influence worldwide. Russia aims to use education as the tools of 'soft power' by enhancing Russian image through higher education globally (Krasnove, 2020; Pirozhkova, 2021; Popova & Tuzhilkin, 2024).

Professional Development of Teachers

Development of teachers is very crucial as for better education system in a country. The teachers who are trained can engage students in the learning very efficiently. Additionally, training help them to learn develop skills which are significant for teaching and enhance their knowledge. Apart from these, to learn about different ways of innovative teaching, understanding the specific needs of students, stimulating learning environment, development of teachers is essential (AbdulRab, 2023). Workshops, seminars, conferences, symposiums, online courses are multifarious ways of teacher development. Russia is giving more focus on professional development of teachers as ultimately teachers play a significant role in creating better education system. There is Additional Professional Education for teacher's development in Russia. The focus of Additional Professional Education is on creating favorable conditions for the professional

growth of teachers. It includes diverse programs which emphasize on modern methods of teaching, innovative techniques of teaching, as well as digital competencies. This system identifies individual needs of teachers and train them accordingly (Ibragimov & Masalimova, 2024).

There is another approach for the development of teachers in Russia which is Continuous Teacher Education. It focuses on teachers can learn throughout their career. It is grounded in lifelong learning concept. This approach stimulates teachers to update their skills and competencies constantly to adapt with the changing environment of education. Through continuous workshops, seminars, online courses teachers are given training in Russia. These training programs focus on digitalization, inclusivity, global standards of education to prepare the teachers (Valeeva & Kalimullin, 2024).

Modernization of Curriculum

Curriculum modernization is needed to adjust with the changing world. Due to globalization, technological advancement, changing job market, the world is changing rapidly and curriculum has to be modernized to adapt with this changing world. Curriculum modernization is not just about updating textbooks, including more students. It is more than this. It also emphasizes on developing skills, competency-based learning and so on. It is also about to prepare the students in such a way that they can confront the challenges and grab the opportunities effectively in the future (Campbel, 2020). So, it can be said that curriculum modernization empowers the students and make them lifelong learners. Modernizing the curriculum in Russia's education system is undoubtedly a significant reform as it aligns the education system with contemporary global practices. As a result, undoubtedly students are getting the benefit. Russia has shifted from memorization to competency-based education which emphasizes on critical thinking, problem-solving, data analysis and interpretation, teamwork and collaboration. Educational Curriculum of Russia is getting modernized integrating the best practices worldwide. Educational institutions are encouraged to offer a wide range of subjects to the students so that by studying a variety of subjects, they can comprehend their area of interest and they can continue with their preferred subject in future (Shmis, 2021).

Hybrid Education Model

This is an education model which has combination of both traditional in-person learning as well as online learning. Hybrid learning provides students flexibility. It allows them to balance their classes with other commitments. During COVID-19, educational institutions adopted online method of teaching. It is being still practiced in higher education of Russia due to rampant digitalization of public life. Students of Master's degree programs have to balance study, work and family responsibility simultaneously and so this model of learning is wholesome for them. Alongside flexibility, hybrid learning model enhances inclusivity as it allows students from multifaceted backgrounds to connect by both online and in-person learning (Nikiforova, 2021; Vertakova *et al.*, 2022).

Research and Development in Higher Education

The Russian government is supporting the universities for research and development (R&D) through various funding mechanisms and initiatives. Some institutions are designated as research universities by the government since 2009. These

universities receive supplementary support for enhancing their research capabilities and fostering innovation. An initiative named Project 5-100 was undertaken which mainly focused on improving Russian universities' global ranking by improving the research. As a result, this program has led to significant improvements in research and even many universities of Russia became leading research universities (Panova & Slepykh, 2024).

Collaboration between Industry and Academia

The collaboration between industry and academia is really crucial for multifarious reasons. It is ensured by collaboration that academic research and curricula are aligned with the needs of industry. As a result, students are benefitted as education becomes more practical and they are learning the things which will undoubtedly assist them in their future in various ways. Due to collaboration, there is increased opportunity for getting funds for research projects. Only academia gets benefitted due to the collaboration, it's not like that. Even the industry gets benefitted from the collaboration with academia. Because of research in academia, new findings and ideas get generated which will certainly drive innovation within the industry. Industry can recruit talented students from universities (Bamford, 2024; Esangbedo *et al.*, 2023).

Industry and academia collaboration is highly encouraged in Russia. Universities of Russia maintain collaboration with the industry which is wholesome for both the universities and industries. Collaboration is ensuring in Russia that graduates possess the skills and expertise which market demands. Universities are able to prepare the students to possess those skills and expertise by developing curricula according to the industry needs. Students of Russia are getting internship offers and job opportunities due to the collaboration with industry. 'Priority 2030', adopted by the Russian Ministry of Science and Higher Education on June 24, 2021, is a crucial initiative of Russia for modernizing higher education encourages university-industry partnerships (Belyaeva, 2021; Tekhazheva, 2019).

Giving Prioritization on Science and Technology

In 2022, the President Vladimir Putin declared the period of 2022-2031 to be "decade of science and technology". This announcement was made to the preference of science and technology in solving fundamental tasks of national economy development. The objectives of the decade(2022-2031) are attracting talented youth in the research and development sector; including researchers and developers in most important work for the prosperity of country and increase access to information on achievements in science and technology of Russia among the Russian citizens (Aksyutina, 2022).

Elimination of Bachelor's Degree

Bachelor's degree will be abolished from 2025 in Russia which is a drastic change in the higher education system. The traditional bachelor's degree will be replaced by a two-tier system consisting of basic higher education and specialized higher education. The duration of basic higher education varies from 4 to 6 years, depending on one's major. On the contrary, specialized higher education corresponds to master's degree. Basic higher education must be completed before students can continue to specialized higher education. It emphasizes that specialization more into the selected field. Elimination of bachelor's degree reform is trying to solve the precondition that only a bachelor's degree doesn't actually make one ready for the job market. Even lots of employer demand for

the broader training with specialized education as they assume bachelor degree as incomplete level (University World News, 2022).

6. Conclusion

Education is the tool that equip people with what they need to deal with global challenges. Certainly, education is the root for improvement of cognitive, socio-emotional, technical and digital skills necessary to succeed in a constantly changing world. The importance of quality education is supreme as it forms the foundation for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, in particular Goal 4. Goal 4 sets out to create circumstances under which, by 2030, all can benefit from inclusive and quality education. The importance of education is indisputable in relation to other pursuits of the Sustainable Development Goals, such as poverty reduction (Goal 1), better health (Goal 3) and gender equality (Goal 5) (Shavkidinova *et al.*, 2023). Russia has a strong focus on education. Russia's focus on education is part of a coherent, planned program to improve human capital, promote technological development and built itself as a global power. The Russian education is highly structured and as such heavily focuses on STEM fields. As in other countries around the world, Russia's education system experienced rapid and profound change during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since that time, a number of projects and programs have been launched by the President to upgrade the quality of education. The reforms targeted the creation of a supportive environment for early childhood development and promotion of inclusive education at all levels, from early childhood to secondary education. The students of Russia perform well in all three international exams: the TIMMS, IOI and PIRLS. The Russian education system is aimed at ensuring that students get much more than just theoretical knowledge but also very practical skills which they need in the future. Russia's education system has undergone reform that aims to bring up pupils with patriotic feelings.

They are also providing a "Compulsory Military training program" for students in grades 10 and 11 to instil discipline, a sense of responsibility in the youth. The curriculum in Russian schools teach students about national identity, public holidays and world events (from the viewpoint of the Russian government). One of the important changes in Russian education system is leaving the Bologna System. Russia's decision to adopt European-style degrees led graduates not inadequately prepared for the job market (Vorotnikov, 2022). Russia is sincerely working on expansion of a number of foreign students in the framework of the Export of Education project. The professional development of teachers is given a priority in Russian system of education and it provides for opportunities of training. Russia is currently in the process of reforming its curriculum, including textbook improvement, skill development and a move to competence-based education. The Russian government is supporting universities for research and development through funding from different sources. The Russian system of education is advocating for cooperation between industry and academia (Tekhazheva, 2019). The reforms the Russian educational system goes through, one after another, are there to enhance the quality of education in Russia and thereby improve its position in the global education index.

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