IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION IN SOCIAL CHANGE: AN ANALYSIS

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Abstract: the role of education as an agent or instrument of social change and social development is widely recognised today. Social change may take place- when humans need change. When the existing social system or network of social institutions fails to meet the existing human needs and when new materials suggest better ways of meeting human needs. Education is seen as a major vector in society, but that it is largely allocated a conservative role, since its main function is in the socialization of the young and the maintenance of the social order. During times of rapid social change, such as the second half of the 20th century, the role of education in the service of the nation is emphasized. When things are going well, especially economically, more experimentation with education is supported, more idealistic goals are pursued, such as equity of educational opportunity. It is in the ideological and moral spheres, however, that education is most clearly expected to pay a leading role. Social change takes place as a response to many types of changes that take place in the social and nonsocial environment. Education can initiate social changes by bringing about a change in outlook and attitude of man. It can bring about a change in the pattern of social relationships and thereby it may cause social changes.

INTRODUCTION

Education can be used as a tool to empower the individual. Through child centered learning, students are able to see their own role in transformation. Societal change comes from the collective transformation of the individuals within that society. It has become secular today. It is an independent institution now. Education has been chiefly instrumental in preparing the way for the development of science and technology. Education has brought about phenomenal changes in every aspect of men's life. Francis J. Brown remarks that education is a process which brings about changes in the behaviour of society. It is a process which enables every individual to effectively participate in the activities of society and to make positive contribution to the progress of society.

EDUCATION THE PRESENT PERIOD

Education today is oriented to promoting values of an urban, competitive consumer society. Through the existing education system, India has produced in the last five decades number of scientists, professional and technocrats who have excelled in their fields and made a mark at the national and international levels. The top scientists, doctors, engineers, researchers, professors, etc. not those who were educated abroad but had got their entire education in India.

The three main deficiencies in the present education system may be described as follows:

(1) The present education does not generate or fortify the type of knowledge that is relevant to our changed society.

(2) Technology associated with a particular body of knowledge is inappropriate to our stage of development in terms of its employment potential or investment demands.

(3) Education has failed to provide value framework which may prepare committed politicians, bureaucrats, technocrats, and professionals on whom our nation can demand for sophisticated system of support services to be useful in taking the country to the highest level.

Through education does not guarantee high status and higher positions to all people, yet without education, an individual is unlikely to achieve social mobility. Gore avers that education plays a role in equalizing opportunities in three ways.

(1) By making it possible for all those who have the desire to be educated and the ability to benefit by that facility;

(2) By developing a content of education which will promote the development of a scientific and objective outlook.

(3) By creating a social environment of mutual tolerance based on religion, language, caste, class, etc. for providing equal opportunities of social mobility to all individuals in society, and for providing equal opportunity to secure good education is crucial.

EDUCATION, SOCIAL CHANGE AND MODERNIZATION

Education has been accepted as one major agency of socialization, and teachers and educational institutions as socializing agents. In describing education as an instrument of social change, three things are important: the agents of change, i.e. students. Educational institutions under the control of different cultural groups reflect the values of those groups which support and control education. The use of education for spreading the values of modernization came to be emphasized from 1960s and 1970s onwards. Highly productive economies, distributive justice, people's participate in decision-making bodies, adoption of scientific technology in industry, agriculture and other occupations and professions were accepted as goals for modernizing the Indian society. And these goals were to be achieved through liberal education.

According to sociological perspective, education does not arise in response of the individual needs of the individual, but it arises out of the needs of the society of which the individual is a member1. In a static society, the main function of the educational system is to transmit the cultural heritage to the new generations. But in a changing society, these keeps on changing from generation to

generation and the educational system in such a society must not only transmit the cultural heritage, but also aid in preparing the young for adjustment to any changes in them that may have occurred or are likely to occur in future. In contemporary societies, "The proportion of change that is either planned or issues from the secondary consequences of deliberate innovations is much higher than in former times." This is more so in societies that has newly become independent are in a developing stage. Consequently, in such modern complex societies, education is called upon to perform an additional function of becoming. Thus, the relationship between educational system and society is mutual; sometimes the society influences changes in educational system and at other times the educational system influences changes in the society.

EDUCATION OF WOMEN

The National Policy on education,1986 also laid emphasis on education for attaining women's equality which will foster the development of new values. The strategies proposed are: encouraging educational institutions to the up active programmes to further women's development removal of women's illiteracy, removing obstacles inhibiting their access to elementary education, and pursuing policy of non-discrimination to eliminate sex stereotyping in vocational, technical and professional courses.

CHANGING IN KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNOLOGY

The changes may be in the existing knowledge and technology. Space exploration industrialization, agricultural and domestic technology, development of transportation, mass media of communication, new understanding of the human organism, individual and social behaviour are some of the scientific and technological areas in which knowledge has expanded a great deal and will still continue to expand. Thus, the development of knowledge and technology may bring changes in syllabus, teaching and evaluating methods and role of teacher.

INDIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND SOCIAL CHANGE

In response to social change educational system must also change. The change may be in consonance with the social change and meet the new goals and demands of various social groups adequately. Otherwise a lag is created between the goals and demands of the society and the goals and demands of the educational system. A number of such lags have occurred in the Indian educational system after independence an in many ways perform a dies functional role in Indian society. This has been accepted by the Kothari Commission very clearly. It reported:

"As is well known, the existing system of education is largely unrelated to life and there is a wide gulf between its content and purposes and the concerns of national development Instead of promoting social and national; integration and making an active effort to promote national consciousness, several features of the educational system promote divisive tendencies; caste

loyalties are encouraged in a number of private educational institutions; the rich and poor are segregated, the former attending the better type of private schools which charge fees while the latter are forced, out of circumstances, to attend free government or local authority.

EDUCATION AND MODERNIZATION IN INDIA: PROBLEMS

The modernization of education in India becomes a special problem in several ways. India has adopted the path of economic development within the framework of a free society and therefore it cannot adopt authoritarian means to modernize education. The center has to get the willing consent of the states and each state has to get the willing consent of its elected representatives in their legislative assemblies before introducing any major change in the allocation of resources to education or in the educational system itself.

Secondly, India has no colonies to depend on its own self and find out its own resources which are bound to be very limited. But, it can avail assistance from advanced countries and international agencies like UNESCO which have developed programmes to assist educational development countries. However, the fact that this aid will also be limited has to be taken into account.

Thirdly, India has lots of diversities. It economy is mixed, including modern factories along with traditional agriculture. Its tribal, rural and urban groups show very wide contrast in their physical and social conditions of living. The different levels of development at which the various sections of society stand differentiate their educational needs and complicate the problem of educational development. The aims, methods and organization of education which may be functional for one group may be dysfunctional for the other.

Lastly, in western societies, economic modernization preceded political and social modernization. Consequently, in their educational thinking, they could lay more emphasis o the needs of the individual than on the economic needs of the country. But India, being largely agricultural and poor has to think of the economic needs of the country before it thinks of the needs of individuals. It cannot initially afford to waste its resources on educational programmes that are not productive in economic terms.

CONCLUSION

Education has become one of the influential instruments of social change in India. It has led to the mobilization of people's aspirations for development and change. Thus in modern complex national societies, education can neither be regarded as a controlling force conserving cultural heritage, nor could it be viewed as an agent of social change. It can only be regarded as a cooperative force in bringing about social changes decided by the forces possessing more pervasive power in society. Thus the Indian education system needs a complete overhaul through proper legislation and its effective implementation. Legislations should be made taking into

account the regional diversities of each state. The masses should be made aware of the new developments.

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