Modern Education - An Instrument of Social Change

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ABSTRACT

The role of education as an agent or instrument of social change and social development is widely recognized 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. According to Maclver 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.

Keywords : Education, Social Change, Society, Family, Instrument

I. INTRODUCTION

It can bring about a change in the pattern of social relationships and thereby it may cause social changes. Earlier educational institutions and teachers used to show a specific way of life to the students and education was more a means of social control than an instrument of social change. Modern educational institutions do not place much emphasis upon transmitting a way of life to the students. The traditional education was meant for an unchanging static society not marked by any change. But today education aims at imparting knowledge. Education was associated with religion.

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 behavior 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.

II. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

In the analysis of relationship between education and social change, the question is: how does education lead to social change? In association between education and modernization, the main question is: what kind of education and under what conditions will it generates and strengthen the process of modernization in a society?

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:

1. The agents of change,
2. The content of change, and
3. The social background of those who are sought to be changed, i.e., students.

Educational institutions under the control of different cultural groups reflect the values of those groups which support and control education. In this situation, teachers impart specific values, aspirations and attitudes to the children.

Thus, for analyzing the role of teachers as agents of change, we have to remember the three types of

educational institutions which existed in India before independence: one, which wanted to teach Vedic philosophies (Gurukuls); two, which focused on Indianization of education; and three, which, wanted to impart western type of education.

The second and third type of institutions believed that English education, particularly at the higher levels, would lead to change of social values. Social reformers, who were educated through English, emphasized values like removal of caste restrictions, equality of women, doing away with evil social customs and practices, voice in the governance of the country, establishing democratic institutions, and so on. They, thus, wanted to teach liberal philosophy through education for changing society.

In other words, they regarded education as a flame or light of knowledge which dispelled the darkness of ignorance. However, it is doubtful that the teachers – both in schools and colleges – accepted and taught this liberalism in values.

As such, the educational institutions did not impart the message of social equality, political democracy, and rationality, etc. to students. It was only after independence when the concept of popular democracy was accepted that new goals of egalitarianism, secularism, individualism, socialism, humanism, undermining the institution of caste and the supremacy of Brahmins, etc. to be achieved through education came to be emphasized in schools and colleges by changing the content of education.

The use of education for spreading the values of modernization came to be emphasized from the 1960s and 1970s onwards. Highly productive economies, distributive justice, peoples' participation in decision-making bodies, adoption of scientific technology in industry, agriculture and other occupations and professions were accepted as gods for modernizing the Indian society. And these goals were to be achieved through liberal education.

Thus, modernization was not accepted as a philosophy or a movement based on rational value system but as a process that was to characterize our society. Modernization was, thus, not to be confined only to economic field but was to be achieved in social, political, cultural and religious fields too. Education was sought to be utilized as a channel for the spread of modernity.

The problem is that there is open disagreement among the elite in our society about the socio-political framework and the values of modernization. As such, the question is: who will impart values of modernization? Who will educate? If agents of change are themselves traditional and do not incorporate modern values in their own lives, how can they impart such values to students?

Even though the Education Commissions and the New Policy of Education of 1986 have spelt out with unusual directness the values and characteristics of a modern society, yet the path of modernization through education is not likely to be an easy one. Quite a few political leaders of Hindu organization in power in some states and at the centre are really keen on some traditional cultural elements to be taught through education.

With such philosophies and lack of consensus on the validity of particular values of modernization (like secularism, individualism, socialism, egalitarianism, etc.), how can we expect to achieve goals of modernization? We may, thus, conclude that use of education as an instrument for the spread of modern influences is an issue which requires serious and fresh thought.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Several sociologists like A.R. Desai (1974), S.C. Dube (1971), M.S. Gore (1971), N. Jayaram (1977), K.Ahmad (1979), and A.B. Shah (1975), etc., have focused upon the issue of education as an instrument for social reconstruction and modernization. Ahmad

(1974) has said that although formal education can play a vital role in 'ideational' change through transformation of knowledge, attitudes and values of the people, its effectiveness in bringing about structural changes in society is extremely limited.

This is because of the linkaps between the existing practices and procedures in education and vested interests of the status quoists. Chitnis (1978) has also pointed out the uneven functioning of education as an instrument of development. A.R. Desai (1974) too has questioned the validity of education as an instrument of social change.

His contention is that after Independence, education has not been purposively geared to obtain the desired changes. He has criticised the policies and funding and financing of education to attain the goals of social mobility and equality. To support Desai, we can give the example of education of SCs, STs, women and the minorities which has failed in uplifting their status.

The unemployment and under-employment of uneducated youth is another example of failure of education for achieving the aspirations of youths. The failure to achieve development of the rural areas and alleviating poverty is yet another example. Unless the pattern set by the prevailing distribution of power is broken and there is a tilt in the policies towards the poor, it will be difficult to find resources for the necessary transformation. Change in higher education is also necessary for social change.

Gore, (1971) has pointed out the necessity of change in the content and methods of education, in the environment and context in which it is conducted, and in the convictions and the commitment of teachers and administrators responsible for education for the effectiveness of education in achieving the required development.

Some empirical studies have been conducted in India on the relationship between education and modernisation. One such study was conducted by the NCERT in Delhi (in the early 1960s) covering eight states. These studies described the extent to which the attitudes, aspirations and outlook of school and college students and teachers in the country have 'modernized'.

Modernization in these studies was measured in terms of an adaptation of a scale developed by Alex Inkles. The results pointed out low effect of education on modernization. Students continue to be traditional in matters of family life, etc. Yogendra Singh (1979) conducted a study into the implications of attitudes and values of teachers in Rajasthan University, to modernization.

This study measured the levels of aspiration, commitment, morale and authoritarianism among university teachers with a view to understanding how the role structures and value systems of teachers affect their role as agents of modernization. He found significant relationships between the two and thus held that teachers' values influence the modernization of students.

Earlier, in 1975, E. Haq had conducted a study on the content of secondary school text books and the process of secondary school education in terms of their effectiveness in political modernization. He also pointed out a relationship between education and demographic change.

IV. EDUCATION AS AN INSTRUMENT OF SOCIAL CHANGE

Education as an instrument of social change, influence of education on society, family and their practices
Acc to Prof. RB Mathur (1964)
"Social Change refers to the modifications in the organization and behavior of the grop expressed in its laws, institutions, customs, modes and beliefs. When change supposely for the better it becomes progress which is essentially an evolutionary concept"
Acc to SP Ruhela

"The term social change might imply changes in social attitudes, behavior, customs, habits, manners, relations and value of people, in social institutions and structures, in the ways or styles of living"

4.1 Types of Social change

Progressive/ Positive

The change from social evils to scientific thoughts

Digressive / Negative

In a well going society new evils emerge

4.2 Nature of social change

1. A Universal Phenomenon
2. The spreading of social change is not uniform
3. Variations in the Speed of social change
4. Unpredictable
5. Results in interaction of number of factors
6. Modifications or replacements.

4.3 Aspects of Social Change

- Social
- Economic
- Political
- Religious
- Scientific and Technological

4.4 Factors affecting Social Change

1) Cultural factors
2) Geographical factors
3) Environmental factors
4) Economic factors
5) Factor of migration
6) Technological factor
7) Factor of population
8) Psychological factor
9) Ideological factors
10) Factor of war
11) Diffusion of cultures
12) Urbanization
13) Visual and print media
14) Westernization
15) Industrialization
16) Actions of exceptional individuals
17) Legislation
18) Secularism
19) Democratization
20) Materialistic attitude

4.5 Obstacles in Social Change

1. Superstitious beliefs
2. Conservative nature
3. Cultural fanaticism
4. Castes
5. Classism
6. Religion
7. Fear
8. Regionalism
9. Parochialism
10. Isolation

4.6 Role of education in Social Change

1) Education perpetuates eternal values
2) Promotes capacity to welcome social change
3) Evaluation of social change
4) Transmission of culture
5) Removal of obstacles
6) Increasing the areas of knowledge
7) Leadership role
8) Mother of new changes
9) Spreading knowledge
10) Stabilizing democratic values
11) Control channelizes and modifies thoughts of new generation
12) School as a workshop for citizenship training
13) Awareness against social evils
14) National and international understanding
15) Equality among masses
16) Social Awakening
17) National Development

V. INFLUENCE OF EDUCATION ON FAMILY

According to Maciver

"A family is a group defined by a sex relationship sufficiently precise an enduring to provide for procreation and bringing of children"

A family unit is the unit which builds up a person's personality. How you behave and what you become in life is very much dependent on your family life. Psychologists believe that a child learns the most from his or her family life

According to Burgess and locke

"A family is a group of person united by the ties of marriage, blood or adoption constituting a single

household, interacting and intercommunicating with each other".

The way your family members deal with you has a lifelong effect on your personality. Keeping in view all these facts the importance of your family life cannot be denied. Family unit happens to be the most important part of your life till you grow up. The children are usually closer to their parents and their siblings as compared to any other person in the world. As the children grow up they find good friends, spouses, their own kids and colleagues to share their lives with. Although time brings this change but the importance of family remains there. The children who have a sound family background and who belong to a family with strong family ties are almost always happier. Thus one cannot deny the importance of family life.

5.1 Types of Family
- Extended family
- Nuclear family

Extended Family: The unit in which the adults and children of more than two generations are closely combined. The family in this system extend vertically over three or more generations.

Nuclear Family: The nuclear family is a small unit consisting of parents and children usually two. In this unit the parents are sole authorities and emotional relations among family members are concentrated and intense

5.2 Roles Of family
1. Cooperation of family in education
2. Proper Physical Development
3. Proper moral development
4. Blossoming the interest of children
5. Opportunity to participate in household responsibilities
6. Development of intellect
7. Free expression of child's desires and urges
8. Religious education

5.3 Influence of Education on Family
1. Improve home management
2. Recognition of worth of home
3. Production of educated elite (Families)
4. To discharge productive duties towards home

5. Family Planning
6. An efficient member of family
7. Social efficiency of family
8. Adjustability in family
9. Co-ordination of family and school
10. Education of parents
11. To maintain better homes
12. Cultivation of higher values
13. Propagates cooperation within and outside the home
14. Create liberal and wider attitude
15. Increasing productivity of family members
16. Optimizing Economic efficiency

VI. INFLUENCE OF EDUCATION ON SOCIETY

Education plays a very important role in molding the character of an individual. It is one of the concrete sources from which one get information and knowledge. It affects the society. We can make sense of its effective role from the following points.

6.1 Preservation and transmission of our social, moral and cultural values

In Education, through curriculum, students will be acquainted with social, moral and cultural values and teachers make them familiar with values and ideal through different activities, games, story-telling etc. Education makes them familiar with constitution, rules and regulations of citizens and so on. As we find in NPE 1986 major objectives to produce a productive citizen has been fulfilled by education so education preserves our value and it make others to imbibe those values.

6.2 Awakening of Social feelings

Through education individuals become aware about the importance of unity, love, fraternity and other values. Education makes all people get awakened of being a part of society and how they can contribute the world as society. People know different values and life skills and thus they develop concern for society including social mindedness, values life skills, learning to be, learning to do, learning to know, learning to live together via different activities story telling dramatization.

6.3 Political development of society

Education makes all aware about rights and duties of all, which are their responsibilities and duties so that they can develop their civic sense. Through different lesson of political leaders and stories education develop ideal leadership quality so that in future citizens can lead t e state as a society.

6.4 Economic development of society

Education develops skills in individual and makes him a productive citizen. Through education everyone learns how to earn money and as per their qualification he gets job or labour and on the whole with the help of education more or less everyone get work and earn money so due to increasing literacy per capita income will increase As we find Govt. take help in the form of tax and thus our economy develops. Because of education people migrate in other country and their earning helps to develop society, country. Thus education affects the economic development of society.

6.5 Social control

Education makes all aware about customs and duties the same as it makes aware about the rules and regulations as we find the rules in Indian constitution. People know how to preserve their lives via education. They make also familiar with crimes. Thus education provides a guideline and it controls all society.

6.6 Social changes and reforms

Education makes individuals perfects and aware about the rights. So can claim against dwelled superstitions, beliefs which are harmful for them. Through education everyone learn grow to live and how to save from difficulty and how to inculcate values and ideals in their lives and ideals in their lives so they can appeal in court having of felling injustice. Education makes all aware about how to live peacefully and how to face difficulties in their lives .They become aware about the proverbs like 'nothing ventured, nothing gained' so they develop their risk taking attitudes via education.

6.7 Socialization of a child

Education trains the mind of a child and it teaches him how to inculcate values in his life. It makes the child understand what is society, how he is a part of society, what are his roles in society, how he should behave, how he should interact with others etc. Education helps him to understand who is he? And it develops a sense if a social being in him. In short education socializes a child.

VII.   CONCLUSION

Educate on can also be understood as a factor of social change. The role of education as an agent or instrument of social change and development is widely recognized today. Education can initiate social change by bringing about a change in the outlook and attitudes of man. Modern education has changed our attitude and outlook. It has affected our customs and traditions, manners and morals, religious beliefs and philosophical principles. It has removed to a great extent the superstitious beliefs and unreasoned fears about the supernatural beings. It has widened our vision and removed our narrow ideals, prejudices and misunderstandings. Higher education has brought about more refined behavior.

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