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EDUCATION AND MODERNIZATION IN INDIA

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Abstract: Contemporary education, which is an agent of modernization in various forms, is also of the Western origin. Traditionally, content of education was esoteric and metaphysical; its communication was limited to the upper classes or the 'twice-born' castes and the structure of its professional organization was hereditary and closed. The roles both of the teachers and the taught were qualitative-abstractive. Modern education has a fundamentally different orientation and organization. Its content is liberal and exoteric, and it is steeped in modern scientific world-view. Freedom, equality, humanism and denial of faith in dogmas are the themes which a modern education should contain.

Keywords: Introduction, Features, Weaknesses

INTRODUCTION

The foundation of modern education in India was established by the British. Its historical landmarks are: Macaulay's policy of 1835 to promote European learning through English, Sir Charles wood's dispatch of 1854 which for the first time recognized the need for mass education with the private and missionary help and gave up the policy of selective education known as the 'filtration theory', and finally the first Indian Education Commission of 1882 which recommended the initiative of private Indian agencies in the expansion of education. Gradually, a broad structure of educational organization emerged in India which may be roughly classified into three groups: first, primary- vernacular education (with the exception of the English missionary schools); secondly, high school and secondary school education and, thirdly, college and university education.

Teaching of science and European literature was done at the colleges and universities to which select few had access; but the mass education at the primary level remained isolated from this main current. This lag in the structure of education which started from the time of Macaulay has still not been fully bridged. Modernization through education thus right from the beginning in India has been confined to a sub-culture of college and university educated youth and elite and never did become a mass phenomenon. The significance of education in modernization could be analysed in three areas: first, the cultural content of this education, secondly, its organizational structure and thirdly, the rate of its growth. The content of new education was doubtlessly modernizing and liberal in nature.

The categorical structure of the new education was oriented to the present and the future. Disciplines like history, geography, political science and economics, etc., in the curricula had a subtle orientation to focus the attention of students on social and physical realities and on the world- view of contemporaneity and anthropocentrism. This it marked a major break from the traditional outlook and system of values.

FUTURE EDUCATION POLICY FOR INDIA

Since independence, a number of measures have been taken to reform the educational system. These measures can be grouped into three heads, viz. (i) equality reforms, (ii) quality reforms, and (iii) reforms for administrative ease. Studies on the effectiveness of these reforms, further classifying each of these into two categories: as (i) class-oriented reforms, and (ii) mass-oriented reforms, have arrived at the following conclusions.

i. *Equality reforms meant for the masses have turned out to be, by and large, less successful than equality reforms meant for the classes. Thus, equality reforms of higher levels of education have been found to be more successful than at lower levels of education.*

ii. *In the case of quality reforms also, the mass-oriented reforms are less successful as compared to the class-oriented reforms.*

iii. *In advanced environments, the educational reforms seem to have achieved a degree of success but in less-developed and socio- economically weaker environments, educational reforms have been less successful.*

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iv. It thus follows that reforms meant for the classes seem to succeed in a shorter time period.

v. In the case of a majority of the educational reforms, the primary initiative was taken by the government with the mass involvement very much limited. The stakeholders, both the target group and others, simply followed this initiative or the leadership on the part of the government. This contributes to reduced impact of the measures. '

vi. The global approach to educational change has received greater attention by the policy-makers than the specific measures meant for specific target groups.

WEAKNESSES IN EDUCATION SECTOR IN INDIA

Notwithstanding the progress made, there are several shortcomings in the education sector. The main shortcomings are as under:

I. INADEQUATE FACILITIES:

Despite large expansion, education facilities are still short of the needs of the country. Education still covers a limited population of the country. The country still has 46 per cent illiterate females and 24 per cent illiterate males. Illiteracy among the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes is still very high. The dropout rate is very high. 60 per cent of the children do not attend the secondary schools. Only 2.5 per cent of the Indian population attends colleges and university compared with 66 per cent in the USA and 38 per cent in Korea.

II. UNEQUAL ACCESSIBILITY:

Opportunities and benefits of education are highly unequal. For example, education of females is far less than that of the males.

III. IRRELEVANT AND POOR IN QUALITY:

The quality of education in terms of its contents is low. Besides, the course contents of education are less relevant to the needs of the country. For example, there is too much emphasis on general education as compared to technical and vocational education.

IV. IMBALANCES:

The education system also suffers from various imbalances. For instance, a greater proportion of resources is allocated to elementary education and higher secondary education meant for the common people. Similarly, while there is large unemployment among the educated persons with general degrees, those with relevant technical education are in short supply. In the same way, the education system is biased in favour of urban areas and against the rural areas.

V. LOW ACCESS LEVEL IN RURAL AREAS:

There is a high degree of disparity in access to education. The 'access level' is considerably low for the rural population compared to the urban population.

VI. PRIVATISATION:

There is a growing trend towards privatisation of education. It makes education expensive. In view of the above weaknesses, India's record in the field of education is held to be abysmal.

CONCLUSION

The one great lesson of the present age of science is that with determination and willingness to put in hard work prosperity is within the reach of any nation which has a stable and progressive government. There is no doubt that in the years to come India's trade and commerce will grow; there will be more education, better health and a reasonable standard of living will be available. But India's contribution can, and should be far more than these material gains.

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