

Education As An Instrument Of Social Change

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Abstract

The sociology of knowledge may throw light on some of the perplexing aspects of the relationship between education and social change. Education plays a vital role in the development of an active citizenry of a country. A well-educated population is able to take charge of the many issues facing society, including social problems and political decisions, rather than sitting by the sidelines and allowing someone else to do the deciding for them. Education has the power to help produce thousands of factory-ready automatons, or it can produce students who examine the world with a critical eye and the intention of changing it for the better. The role of the content of curriculum, the organization and the transmission of knowledge may give us more reliable and interesting data. In the fast changing world of the early 21st century public education is also changing. As part of the changes the role of schools and education will also be different both in the educational system and in the society. Together with them the role of teachers will also change. This research paper throws light on how Education can prove as an instrument or agent for bringing a drastic social change.

KEYWORDS: social change, education, society, social problems, instrument, agent

Introduction

Education plays a vital role in the development of an active citizenry of a country. A well-educated population is able to take charge of the many issues facing society, including social problems and political decisions, rather than sitting by the sidelines and allowing someone else to do the deciding for them. *Ira Shor* (1992) writes that education affects students, in that “it can either develop or stifle their inclination to ask why and when to learn”. Education has the power to help produce thousands of factory-ready automatons, or it can produce students who examine the world with a critical eye and the intention of changing it for the better.

What components of an educational system are necessary to bring about the desired effects of social change? In order for education to be successful as an agent of social change, it must include a focus on democratic education, solution-focused critical pedagogy, popular and community-based education, and multicultural education. When these four components are included in a country’s educational program, the system will be effective in creating positive social change.

Social change is influenced by many factors, education is one of them. Education helps in eradication of poverty, class discrimination and gender biasness. It promotes equality and justice in the society. It provides opportunities for progress and mobility.

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. It can bring about a change in the pattern of social relationships and thereby it may cause social changes. 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.

Meaning of Social Change

- * "Social change refers to the modifications in the organization and behaviour of the group as expressed in its laws, institutions, customs, modes and beliefs. The change may be gradual or sudden, evolutionary or revolutionary. When the change is for the better or progress, it is evolutionary concept" - **Prof.R.B.Mathur**
- * "By social change is meant only such alterations as occur in social organization that is structure and functions of society" - **Davis**
- * "Social change means variations or modifications, in any aspect of social processes or patterns" - **Fair Child**
- * "Society is a complex network of patterned relationship degree. These relationship change and behaviour changes at the same time" - **Merill**
- * According to **Herry Johnson** there are: 5 components of social change: - Change in social values, Institutional changes, Change in personnel, Change in Abilities and attitudes, Change in distribution of possessions and rewards.

It is only when the change involves an alteration in the structure and functioning of social forms or processes themselves that we speak of social change. For example, changes taking place in the institution of the family and its impact on the kinship structure would be termed as social change.

What is education for Social Change? **Peter McLaren** defines it as "the process through which students learn to critically appropriate knowledge existing outside their immediate experience in order to broaden their understanding of themselves, the world, and the possibilities for transforming the taken-for-granted assumptions about the way we live"(as cited in Shor, 1992). Social change can, obviously, be positive or negative. Hitler's rise to power initiated stark social change in Germany which was extremely detrimental to society. Yet social change can also be immensely positive, such as the protests and boycotts which led to the abandonment of the Apartheid system in South Africa. As a teacher, it is not one's place to decide what kind of social change must occur when we educate our students. Clearly, one hopes that the social change produced is positive. Yet it is the goal of education simply to produce the opportunity for a student to look at the world through eyes and a mind that do not merely accept the status quo, but rather see the world as a place that can be changed by its citizens.

Additionally, it is vitally important for educators who are actively working to promote social change are less likely to adhere to traditionally 'conservative' views and more likely to be open-minded and accepting of different viewpoints. Educators have a duty to present the many versions of everything they teach. Education is a political act. Thus, when one is an educator and has particular ideas about the meaning of positive social change, it is imperative that the educator provide the opportunity for students to define social change for themselves, using the teacher's definition, as well as many others. Ira Shor (1992) writes that "knowledge is power only for those who can use it to change their conditions". Thus, it is vitally important that students gain the requisite skills to use their learning to change the world they live in.

Factors determining Social Change

- Ω Geographical factors
- Ω Environmental factors
- Ω Natural resources
- Ω Natural calamity
- Ω Migration
- Ω Population
- Ω War
- Ω Psycho-sociological factors
- Ω Some forceful personalities
- Ω Technological factors
- Ω Ideological factors
- Ω Educational factors

Factors affecting Social Change in India

➤ Geographical factor:

Physical or geographical factors like floods, earth quake, famine, epidemics, drought, hot or cold climate transform the life style of people. The volcanic eruption in Japan was responsible for the new kind of architecture in Japan. Epidemics in Surat were responsible for people to awake and more for a better town planning.

➤ Biological factor:

The biological heredity determines the general and glandular constitution of the offspring, which is closely related to temperament, intelligence, physique, difference in sex ratio, which is in fact the result of the biological factor.

➤ Population factor:

Due to increase or decrease in population, the possibility of social change is also influenced. The rise in population, poverty, hunger and meeting necessities of life of people makes changes in social structure. It also effects economic institutions.

➤ Technological and scientific factor:

Technological and scientific innovations break regional barriers by providing easy and quick means of conveyance and communications. The press and radio, aero plane,

computers together have brought the world closer and provided inter-cultural impacts Technology changes society by changing our environments which we in turn adapt:

- The use of machine in industries
- Development of means of communication
- Development of means of transport
- Development of new processes and techniques of agriculture

➤ **Psychological factor:**

The forms of social relationship are constantly changing in the process of interaction between the old customs and new methods. It is believed that when individuals are concerned with the modification in status and roles, stresses and strains are produced in them and thereby social change take place.

➤ **War:**

It influences the population, the economic situation and the ratio of males to females. The people try to bring under one view and roof, interpersonal relations; women come forward to take up jobs in the service of the nation.

➤ **Personality:**

In order for the change in society to be accepted, it is necessary that the high status individuals in the social system approval change and rationalize in terms of groups, values and symbols. Any change would become easily accepted in the society, if the people who are in high position would accept the change.

➤ **Cultural factors:**

Culture gives speed and direction to social change and determines the limits beyond which social change cannot occur. Cultural factors change from generation to generation and they bring about the change in the society. The material aspects of culture are accepted faster than non-material culture.

➤ **Some other factors are Economic, Moral, Religious, and Political.**

Major factors for bringing Social Change in India

- ✓ **Industrialization**
- ✓ **Urbanization**
- ✓ **Westernization**
- ✓ **Modernization**
- ✓ **Education**

Education as an Instrument of Social Change

The role of education as an agent or instrument of social change and social development is widely recognized today. 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. Social change may take place (i) When human need change, (ii) When the existing social system or network of social institutions fail to fulfill the existing human needs and (iii) When new

materials suggest better ways of meeting human needs. Social change do not take place automatically or by themselves.

Education plays an important role in social change. While, on one hand, it is responsible for handing down traditions, customs, culture, knowledge and skills from one generation to other, on the other, it acts as an agent of social change. New ideas and values are initiated by it and become the goals of the young generation to pursue and achieve.

Society thus achieves two goals through education:

- (i) to socialize, shape and develop the individual according to social the needs, and
- (ii) to fulfill society's needs concerning human resources such as training for the specialized skills in the industry and technology of the modern economy.

Education is principally identified with schooling, though in theory it extends far beyond this, being concerned with intellectual and social development. The main emphasis within this is on children, though there is clearly scope for education for all and 'lifelong learning'.

Education has been particularly significant as an instrument of social policy, in the sense not only of policies for welfare but also as policies intended to deal with the structure of society. The aims of education include:

- **Liberal education:** the development of each individual intellectually and socially to that person's fullest potential
- **Socialization:** education is a method of transmission of social norms and values. This is also sometimes seen as a form of social control.
- **Education as 'handmaiden':** the education system serves the industrial process and the economy by producing a trained workforce, and by providing child minding services.
- **Social change (or 'social engineering'):** The education system has been seen as a means of bringing about social change.

Education is required to perform the functions of transmission of fulfillment, enrichment, acceptance, reformulation and reconstruction. It transmits the culture to new generations and transforms the outlook of the younger generation towards the life in the background.

Finch refers to the use of education as a vehicle for other types of social policy. Education provides a convenient basis for policy for children because of its universal coverage, the acceptance of responsibility for children's welfare, and because it has been easy to justify welfare measures in educational terms.

Dr. Radhakrishnan puts it "Education as an agent for social change, what in simpler societies was done by the family, the religious, social and political institutions has to be done by educational institutions today".

E.W. Gordon states “It is the task of the teacher to educate for change, to educate through change, to educate for orderly planned revolution and if needed revolutionary action be taken for the upward movement in the society.

Role of Education

Do you know that schools were designed to bring progressive changes in society? Education system is designed to select good and suppress the bad behaviors’ as it teaches people how to meet changing situations. These changes may be in politics, economy or society in general. Education spearheads changes in the society. It prepares people for change. This is made possible by what it teaches, by how it teaches and by the kinds of values and attitudes it develops in the learners. Schools as social institutions among others, they are established to serve the interests of those established it. When we regard education as an instrument of change we mean that the school should help children to accept and develop values that are appropriate to our kind of future. This means that our children must accept pragmatic values of education. The school system can do several things to help children to adopt education for change values:

- ϕ Assistance in changing attitudes
 - Ideologically
 - Technologically
- ϕ Inculcation of Social, Moral and Eternal values
- ϕ Promoting capacity to welcome and accept Social Change
- ϕ Assistance in adopting Social Change
- ϕ Evaluation of Social Change
- ϕ Aid in the coming of Social Change
- ϕ Analysis in change
- ϕ Cultural creativity
- ϕ Promoting unity and total integration
- ϕ Maintaining human and social relations
- ϕ Removal of obstacles
- ϕ Increasing the areas of knowledge
- ϕ Leadership roles in Social Change
- ϕ Education of Social Change
- ϕ Curriculum, methods of teaching, teacher administration
- ϕ Increasing productivity
- ϕ Changes in curriculum
- ϕ Accelerating the process of modernization
- ϕ The school should strive to educate person in accordance with the needs, requirements in aspirations of the society. The society attempts to modify the educational and school system to meet the increasing demands rather needs of the society reflecting the social norms, values and changes desired by the society.
- ϕ Technologically scientific approach is essential by giving importance and focusing on science based curriculum, work and practical experience in

laboratory, work in workshops and schools, vocational education, emphasis on dignity of labour, adult and education of women be encouraged.

- φ The quality of leadership, administrative skills be honed among the persons.
- φ Encouragement to research work, creative thinking, transforming methods be given importance in school.
- φ Emphasis on collaborative, co-operative teaching group activities encouraged in the school and educational institutions.
- φ Education initiates social change and should give them direction and purpose.
- φ Competent and skilled to lead the younger ones.
- φ Reorientation, suggestions for change, removes obstacles, scientific and secular attitude.
- φ Developing national as well as international outlook and approach by the teacher is expected.
- φ School can stress cooperation and community advancement of all its members, instead of individual advancement in the organization of its various activities.
- φ It must be life oriented and empower the youth to serve their communities and also be responsible for all their living in their society and world at large.
- φ It should develop a positive attitude towards working for the betterment of their lives.
- φ It must also facilitate the development of a spirit of teamwork, neighborhood and quality among all our peoples.
- φ The education given in schools must help to destroy intellectual pride, to create a society in which the privileged educated people do not look down upon the less educated and those with no special abilities.
- φ Education should help to produce divergent thinkers, who can make judgments that can help to discover solutions of the community problems in the peculiar situations.
- φ It must also help to produce people who have special skills which contribute to society's developments and general good of the world.

Thus education determines the nature of changes, which ought to be brought about.

Conclusion

If educators are to be effective in providing their students with opportunities to discover the knowledge necessary to effect change, then a concerted effort must be made to ensure that education includes democratic and critical pedagogies, multicultural education, and community-based education. These educational strategies provide students with the opportunity and space to learn about themselves, their communities, country, and world. When students have the occasion to determine for themselves what is going on and whether or not they agree with it, as well as the chance to ponder possible alternatives, and when these same students are given the circumstances to learn about and appreciate the existence of different cultures, these students gain the necessary tools to become powerful agents of social change. They have examined and debated many different possibilities and perspectives of what society could become. They have

interacted and investigated many different ways of operating in the world, and they have had the chance to see the effects and impacts of these different strategies. Importantly, students who have experienced effective education for social change have had teachers who showed them that they can make a difference and that society operates best when its members participate actively in its workings. Educators, who believe in education for social change work to ensure that their students have the tools to be effective advocates for change, know how to examine multiple viewpoints, and, most importantly, believe in themselves and their own powerfulness. A student who gains these tools and skills is a student who will no longer be passive, and, thus, change will occur.

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