

Social and Economic Impact on Education in India

Dr. Sonali Chakraborty Kumbang

Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Murkong Selek College, Assam, India

Abstract: *This paper studies the way and the extent to which various types of changes influence the shape of the society and how far education is affected by the same. Here an analysis is done on how societal and economic condition of India had a profound effect on her education sector in past two centuries which is still struggling with illiteracy and poverty. Keeping these two big problems in background Central Govt. as well as State Govt. is trying hard to improve the education sector with the introduction of many welfare schemes meant for SC, ST and other downtrodden people.*

Keywords: Society, Education, illiteracy, poverty

1. Introduction

Society and human beings are inseparable. The man creates society and the motivating force behind the creation is his desire to live in company with others. The society may be called a group of individuals living together in particular geographical environment with some accepted principles of common behavior. The shape and size of a society is based on the conduct of its members. Man's social behavior is influenced by external factors and this influence succeeds in changing the pattern of society. It is because of this the nature of society goes on changing rapidly. This may be observed if we look at the conditions of ten years back. We shall find that the nature of the society has changed in many respects during the decade. Experts in social sciences differ about the reasons and factors responsible for changes in society. Some hold that the clash of economic interests responsible for changes in the society, while others opine that changes in technology bring changes in the society. We are not going to discuss these factors here, because this subject falls within the jurisdiction of social sciences. We have only to study here the way and extent to which various types of changes influence the shape of the society and how far education is affected by the same. Here an analysis is done on how societal and economic condition of India had a profound effect on her education sector in past two centuries. The investigator herself took the help of all secondary sources for collecting the necessary data and arranged it century wise for better understanding the progress of education in India which is still struggling with illiteracy and poverty. Keeping these two big problems in background Central Govt. as well as State Govt. is trying hard to improve the education sector with the introduction of many welfare schemes meant for SC, ST and other downtrodden people.

2. Education during the First Half of the Nineteenth Century

Social Transformation

By the end of the first half of the nineteenth century the British rule was fully established in India. The rulers thought it is necessary to change the ideologies of Indian people with a view to give a permanent footing to the British rule. The British policy then aimed to replace the Indian culture, tradition and social and moral values by the English civilization, traditions and values. This, they thought, would make the Indians loyal and respectful to Britishers. In order

to achieve this objective the Englishmen first tried to bring in disrepute the religion that controlled the society.

Economic Transformation

The Englishmen entered India as traders and for a considerable period they continued to trade and earn profits. Later on when power came into their hands their trade policies also underwent a change. This increased their profits manifold and turned this prosperous country into a poverty stricken one. Indian industries were destroyed and the country was made a market for European goods. Consequently, the economic conditions of Indians deteriorated and became deplorable. The Indian people went on suffering humiliations out of sheer helplessness and they become poorer and poorer.

Impact on Educational Set-up

The interference of missionaries in the social life of the people also has its evil effects. The traditional basic educational system began to deteriorate. The financial position of educational institutions controlled by missionaries was sound and for the achievement of their objects they were made attractive too. India had already become a poor country, its industries were paralyzed and its agriculture completely disorganized and fell into pitiable state. Consequently, service remained the only source of sustained life. The system of education prevailing in Indian education system was not such as to help the students in procuring service. The educational set-up in missionary schools, on the contrary, suited students who aimed at getting service. Consequently, they got preference, although in the long run it proved only a mirage.

3. Education in India during the second half of the nineteenth century

Social Transformation

By the second half of the nineteenth century the Indian public had come in close contact with Englishmen and their culture had been influenced by the Western education. After coming into contact with the Western civilization the Indians began to look down upon some evil social practices like bigamy, Sati, untouchability, child marriage and infanticide etc. Fortunately in the year 1885 the Indian National Congress was formed and this institution did commendable work in the sphere of social uplift. Social organizations like Arya Samaj, Brahma Samaj and others started doing commendable work in the sphere of social reform. In this

time Mahatma Gandhi's contribution in the uplift of untouchables was really praise-worthy. The efforts of social leaders to remove evil social practices received the co-operation of the government also and a number of acts were passed and in this way major changes took place in the social set up also.

Changes in the Economic Set-up

Industries played a prominent part in the economic development of a country. The main factor responsible for the poverty of India has been the crippling of its industry and trade and British economic and trade policies were mainly responsible for giving a death blow to the Indian industries and trades. There were no dearth of raw materials and minerals in India but the hostile British policies kept Indians away from utilizing them. Agriculture became the main occupation of the Indian people. The Englishmen earned profits derived from the purchase of raw materials at cheap prices and by the sale of finished products at their dictated rates. The American Civil War broke out in the year 1861. This proved inspiring to Indian textile industry and textile mills were opened in the country. In addition, iron, steel and cement industries were established and the Indian industries which so far had been lying in a state of coma woke up. In the history of India this period may be called a period of great economic changes and the age of industrial development.

Impact on Education

The above mentioned economic and social changes made a deep impact on the educational set-up. Throughout India public leaders opened institutions at various stages for the eradication of illiteracy. Financial aid was secured from the Government also for this purpose. In 1882 the Indian Education Commission was set up which made local bodies responsible for the management and expansion of primary education and also given the right of levying taxes for educational purposes.

Due to social changes the demand for education increased and changes in the economic pattern gave birth to industrialization, opening of secondary schools, industrial and commercial subjects got place in the curriculum. The social and economic changes during the first half of the 19th century also attracted government attention and colleges for higher studies were set up in 1857 in Madras, Calcutta and Bombay. Along with this the Central Hindu College, Varanasi, Ferguson College, Poona and Dayanand Vedic College. Lahore were founded. The feeling of untouchability was considerably reduced due to movements for the uplift of the untouchables. Religious intolerance and the problem of casteism, too, had been removed to a large extent. Harijans got the right of admission in all educational institutions. Industrialization greatly helped to solve these problems.

4. Education During the First Half of the Twentieth Century

Social Changes

The efforts made to widen the path of social progress in the second half of the nineteenth century had changed the entire Indian social structure by the first half of the twentieth century. During this period more stress was laid on

eradication of untouchability, Harijan uplift, expansion of education, eradication of casteism, social narrow-mindedness and evil social practices.

By this time the women in India also become conscious of their rights and urged the then Secretary of State for India Mr. Montague for their right to vote. As a result in 1923 women in India exercise their right to vote in the provincial and central legislature elections. An attempt was made to stop the evil practice of child marriage by the Sarda Act of 1930 which changed the structure of Indian society during the first half of the twentieth century.

Economic Changes

There was no dearth of raw materials in India, but the control imposed by the British rulers and their commercial policies did not allow the Indian trade and industry to prosper. The Indian raw materials were exported to England and in its place finished goods were imported. The First World War broke out in the year 1914 as a result of which all imports were stopped. The government encouraged the industries for the production of war materials. Consequently, industrialization also started in India and factories were established for producing things like matches, sugar, iron, steel, textile, papers etc. By the time of the Second World War industrial development had made some progress. With the growth of industries migration to urban areas also started with the improvement in economic condition people's outlook also underwent a change.

Impact on Education

As a result of social and economic changes that took place in the second half of the nineteenth century, efforts were made to make education available to every individual. In this period the English language continued to be the medium of instruction and the pattern of education followed in the schools remained almost similar to that practiced in English schools. Although even in the first half of the twentieth century the rural population did not enjoy the same facilities of education which the urban people enjoyed, yet the rural people benefited by the industrialization and consequent urbanization. During this period educational expansion took place in the primary level, secondary level, higher level, women's education, harijan education, vocational education, adult education.

5. Impact of Socio-Economic Conditions on Education After 1947

Social Changes

On August 15, 1947, the country achieved independence. With the change in the political set-up the social structure of the society also underwent changes. A new Constitution was adopted on January 26, 1950 which provided equality and social freedom to every citizen. The narrowness of casteism and sectarianism began to lose its grip over the people and the State took over the responsibility of every citizen's social security. Five Year Plans were launched to improve the social and economic condition and for achieving the fundamental objectives laid down in the Constitution. Consequently, an unprecedented change began to come into the outlook of the people as regards the social structure.

Economic Changes

A socialistic economic policy was adopted in accordance with the accepted Constitution. In pursuance of this policy, the economic aspect of the Five-Year-Plans was so framed as to bring the standard of living of every citizen to a satisfactory level. Side by side it was also aimed to keep the economic development in accordance with the social development and efforts were made to shape production, consumption, distribution and other economic factors in a way that they may help to develop economic parity between individuals, besides financial developments.

Impact on Educational Set-up

In this period the following important changes took place in the educational system in India.

Primary Education

Primary education was made free and compulsory for the eradication of illiteracy and for providing every individual an opportunity to acquire the qualities of a good citizen. Later on primary education was given the shape of basic education so that every student may learn and acquire the knowledge of a vocation and on getting opportunity to be able to earn his living and contribute to the economic development of the country.

Secondary Education

The Secondary Education Commission was appointed in 1952 for suggesting ways and means in order to make secondary education compatible with the changed economic and social conditions of the country. On the recommendations of this Commission some multi-purpose schools were opened and curriculum was diversified.

Higher Education

Emphasis had been laid down on the development of industries in the Five Year Plans with a view to improve the economic condition of the country. Consequently, some changes were introduced in the curriculum of universities for turning out efficient scientists and engineers. Side by side, changes were also introduced in the general education for the all-round development of students.

Technical Education

The economic policies underwent a rapid change in the country since the attainment of independence. Industrialization was the main factor for this change. Having experienced the need of efficient and trained workers, technical and vocational subjects were included in the curriculum.

Women Education

In the new structure of the Indian society after independence, women were given equal rights with men. Consequently, women got education and many other facilities, besides co-education were provided.

Rural Education

A considerable percentage of Indian population lives in rural areas. These rural people were always looked down upon during the foreign rule. Consequently, they were given their due place in the new social structure and degree colleges,

training centers and institutions of higher education were opened in rural areas of India.

Health and Medical Education

After Independence a lot of improvement has been noticed in the health sector which is a state responsibility according to the Constitution of India. There were 30 medical colleges in 1959. Twenty five more were opened in 1961. For the all round development of the country, institutions imparting higher education in the subjects of fine arts and handicrafts besides those teaching vocational, commercial and technical subjects, were also opened. In order to bring Harijans, untouchables, depressed and backward class people on equal status with others, the Government made provisions for special financial assistance, scholarships and stipends. The States also made praiseworthy efforts for educating disabled and deaf and dumb persons. In this manner the Central Govt. is making all possible efforts to achieve the objective of bringing social and economic equality.

Government initiatives on higher education

The government is trying to revitalize the Indian higher education system and for this many initiatives have been launched.

- 1) **National Testing Agency (NTA) 2017** to conduct JEE, NEET, NET, CMAT, and GPAT test in India.
- 2) **RUSA: Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan 2013**
About 94% of students of higher education study in 369 State universities, and less than 6% of students study in 150 Centrally – funded institutions.
- 3) **HECI: Higher Education Commission of India** bill was introduced in 2018 to some major changes in the higher education sector in India.
- 4) **IOE: Institutions of Eminence 2017**
Here institutions among the top 50 in the National Institute Ranking Framework rankings or in the top 500 in international ratings were eligible for this title.
- 5) **HEFA: Higher Education Financing Agency 2018**
It was introduced in Budget 2018- 19, HEFA is a joint venture of MHRD and Canara Bank and has been tasked with raising Rs. 1 lakh crore to finance infrastructure improvements in higher education by 2022.

6. Conclusion

In the larger domain of human capital, education and skill development has a big role. RTE act acts as a cornerstone for Indian education. Nevertheless, it is the various education policies, charted out since independence, which led to the historical evaluation of the education system in India. The results of these policies can be said to be mixed. There is still a lot of room for improvement. As Economic Survey 2016-17 points out, lack of health, malnourishment etc. affects the cognitive ability of children. This will, in turn, have a detrimental effect on their future educational prospects. This leads to a vicious cycle of inter-generational illiteracy, poor health and ultimately poverty. So education and health are complementary to each other and reforms in one sector should invariably be preceded and followed by reforms in other sectors. In fact, human development as a

whole can be considered as a wholesome development and we must appreciate the interlink ages of each section of human capital formation, be it may health, education, digital literacy, skills etc. There are various government initiatives targeting each level of the education system in India. Higher Education System is given a greater focus these days. The latest update in the education sector is the Kasturiranjana report or draft new education policy. It captures the need of the hour for reforming education. The modern Indian education system is crying for a revamp. The draft New Education Policy (NEP) is the right moment to take a stock of its past history, achievements, misgivings and to chart out a futuristic education plan for 21st century India.

References

- [1] A Govt. Report, Report of the Indian Education Commission 1964- 66.
- [2] A Govt. Report, "Assam Beyond 2000".
- [3] Aggarwal J. C., Theory and Principle of Education.
- [4] Aggarwal J. C., Landmarks in the History of Modern Indian Education, Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd.
- [5] B. N. Dash, Principles of Education and Education in the Emerging Indian Society.
- [6] B. C. Rai, History of Indian Education.
- [7] B. C. Rai, Problems and History of Indian Education.
- [8] Bhatia and Bhatia, The Philosophical and Sociological Foundation of Education.
- [9] Dr. R. S. Pandey, Education in Emerging Indian Society.
- [10] J. Mahanty, Education Today and Tomorrow.
- [11] K. K. Mukherjee, New Education and its Aspects.
- [12] Kochhar, S.K., Pivotal Issues in Indian Education, Starling Publishers.
- [13] M. Mohanty, Emerging Issues of Indian Education.
- [14] P.L., Rawat, History of Indian Education.
- [15] Mukharjee, S.N., Education in India: Today and Tomorrow.
- [16] Sanjay K. Swain, Trends and Issues in Indian Education.
- [17] V. K. R. V. Rao, Education and Human Resource Development.