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Education and social change

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Abstract

Education is a medium for social change and development which constitutes an essential input into the development process itself, which is widely accepted in modern society. Any society can bring about the desired changes and cope with the rapid development of technology only through education. It has played an important role in securing socio-economic progress, improving income distribution, eradicating poverty by generating new employment opportunities; it also removes class discrimination, gender bias and promotes equality and justice. Undoubtedly education can be a very important collateral factor in the process of social change. It can help to accelerate and work out that process by disseminating knowledge, awareness, information, skills and values to the changing socio-economic issues of the planet. Thus education is the fundamental method of social development and reform, which enriches an individual's understanding of themselves and the world. Every aspect of a man's life has witnessed a phenomenal change through education. Education has acted as an agent of socialization of the younger generation to meet society's expectations. It also guides the child towards new values and assists the development of intelligence and increases society's potential for its own transformation.

Keywords: Education, society, change, social, system, individual, role, nation

Introduction

Education plays an important role in analyzing a change that takes place in society. Such as it provides knowledge to the people about the nature and form of change, the society can consequently decide about the adaptation of a change. Education is considered as a major agency of socialization that brings about social change both to the individual and the community at large.

Education is such a strong weapon that helps in the development of modern thoughts in society. It updates the attitudes, ambitions and outlook of individuals to a great extent and helps in the eradication of social problems like the caste system, untouchability, dowry system and female feticide are eradicated from the society by educating people through public awareness programs with the help of electronic and print media etc. In this way the social patterns of the people have changed. There is no difference of caste, color or creed when we travel on a passenger bus or train. By bringing such changes in society, education helps in the promotion of equal opportunity and integration.

The current social structure or network of social institutions is unable to successfully identify the current needs of individuals and when new materials offer advanced systems of meeting individual needs. It can bring about a change in the pattern of social connections and thus may cause social change.

Role of education in social change

The role of education as an agent or tool of social change and social development is broadly recognized; it is a key component of the development of the nation. It is seen as a vector for social change but it is mainly allocated a conservation role since its key function is in the socialization of the young and upholding of the social order. In times of rapid social change, the role of education in the services of the state is highlighted. Social changes take place as a response to the many types of changes that take place in the social and economic environment.

Education is a social institution in which a society's children can learn basic academic skills and cultural norms can be applied to their children's learning skills. Through a child-centered education, students can see their specific role in the transformation of society.

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Societal change comes from the combined changing needs of the individuals in that society. All nations of the world are equipped with some form of the educational system though these systems differ significantly.

The socialization of the young and maintaining proper social order is among the main functions of education. It not only performs as a means to bring regarding social changes in society but also to excel and to increase the rate of such change in society. Education is playing an active role in preparing the way for the development of science and technology. It has brought about unique changes in every aspect of men's lives. Education preserves culture and keeps a record of facts that will be used by future generations. It prepares people with skills and tricks of the trade that will strengthen them economically. It also enables them to think, make better decisions and become innovative in their approach. It also creates consciousness among the masses about the causes and effects of various social changes from time to time.

Education as an instrument of social change

Society has undergone vast transformation throughout its history. New ideas have come into view and social changes have been brought about by both individual and collective actions. Changes in society are inevitable due to the existence and amalgamation of different cultures, languages and religions throughout society.

Education can change society by providing opportunities and experiences through which humanity can cultivate the means for change through the emerging needs and philosophy of a changing world. Healthy social progress requires cautious planning in every aspect of life: social, cultural, economic and political. Education must be planned in a manner that is in keeping with the needs and ambitions of the people as a whole.

Education in perspective of social change

Different educationists and philosophers have viewed education as a process of development, whereby the means of education are manifold. It encompasses the all-around or holistic development of the child and also includes teacher education as an independent field of study. Further it has the fundamental economic value of being a tool of social change and control. Education is both the foundation of a society and the architect of it. Education is not only relevant in the present time -- it is also the means for preparing for the future.

According to Francis J. Brown "Education is a process which brings about changes in the behaviour of the society." It is a process that enables every individual to effectively participate in the activities of the society and to make a positive contribution to the progress of society.

A French Sociologist David Emile Durkheim conceived of education as "Education is the socialization of the younger generation." He further States that is "All education is a continuous effort to impose on the child ways of seeing, feeling and acting which he could not have arrived at spontaneously."

Durkheim (1950) explained that "It is society as a whole and each particular social milieu that determine the ideal that education realizes. Society can survive only if there exists among its members a sufficient degree of homogeneity; education perpetuates and reinforces this homogeneity by fixing in the child from the beginning, the essential

similarities that collective life demands. But on the other hand, without certain diversity all cooperation would be impossible; education assumes the persistence of this necessary diversity by being itself diversified and specialized".

Samuel Koenig described that "Education may also be defined as the process whereby the social heritage of a group is passed on from one generation to another as well as the process whereby the child becomes socialized, i.e. learns the rules of behaviour of the group into which he is born."

Swift (1969) treated education as "the process by which the individual acquires the many physical, moral social capacities demanded of him by the group into which he is born and within which he must function".

Function of education in the sphere of social change

Some important functions of education in the sphere of social change are outlined as follows:

1. Creating a desire for change

Education helps to change people's attitudes in favour of modern ways of life and build up attitudes that can fight prejudices, superstitions and traditional beliefs. It can bring about a change in attitudes in favour of small families regarding rising traditional values and socio-cultural barriers of caste and class towards religion and secularism. Education acts alongside the processes of social development, which are other forms of social change.

Education creates a desire for change in society, which is a prerequisite for any kind of change to come. It makes underprivileged, downtrodden and backward people aware of their lot and installs a desire to improve their condition. Education can be of great help in identifying weaknesses in our social structure, social gaps, gaps in knowledge and in gaining the knowledge and skills necessary for achieving progress in all spheres of life.

2. Adopting social change

Whenever a social change occurs it is often adopted by others, while others find it very difficult to adjust to this change. Education functions to assist people in adopting positive changes in their lives. People will accept and adopt any social change until they become convinced of its benefit and desirability. Education helps people remove blind faith and prejudices and accept new ideas. It helps to establish values that act as a condition for the analysis of social change.

3. Leadership in social change

Education in India must be able to make suitable leadership at each level if social changes favourable to democracy are to be introduced. Talented leaders can be produced only because of education. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi and other highly educated and enlightened Indians all made efforts at a conscious level to bring about social change. Basic education designed by Mahatma Gandhi to fight the ills of mass illiteracy, ignorance, ill health and poverty of our people and to expedite the process of social reconstruction.

4. Stabilizing democratic values

Education is a weapon of the democratic revolution. It can help develop democratic attitudes and values toward a better

life. Democratic values like liberty, equality, fraternity, justice, tolerance, mutual respect, brotherhood and trust in the process of peace have been stabilized through education in a free India. These values are useful in bringing about social change.

5. Transmission of cultures

Through its ability to facilitate the transmission of national culture from generation to generation, it is a continuous process of education that lends stability and continuity in society. Not only has this but education also prepared society to adopt needed and desirable social reforms. Thus education is the creator, generator and director of all social change. In short education is a stabilizer, consolidating, establishing and creating a force for societal change.

6. National integration

Education can prove very useful in bringing about national integration as the basis for unity among peoples. When conflicts arise between various groups and sections of society education tries to solve those conflicts by advocating thoughts and feelings which bring about unity in diversity and achieve integration of all of the different groups of people in society. Education has the sacred mission of educating people to rise above petty caste rivalries, communal feuds, linguistic conflicts and regional discords and to try to achieve the cherished ideals of national integration and national glory.

7. National development

Education is the key factor in achieving rapid economic development and technological progress in creating a social order founded on the values of freedom, social justice and equal opportunity. It develops physical and human resources for all sectors of the economy and ultimately brings the desired changes to society and the nation's development.

8. Evaluation of social change

Society is constantly in the process of transformation of various forms of nature in all fields of human activity. Teachers by critical evaluation resolve the desirability or otherwise of these social changes. In other words education lays down the required standards and criteria of value and only after that do this process of evaluation take place effectively and only after these desired social changes are propagated and the undesirable ones are discarded and decried.

Conclusion

Education influences change in thinking, ideology, culture and interaction and this is what makes a society dynamic, vibrant and prosperous. It makes for a civilized society with a sophisticated and competent professional capable of coping with difficult situations and ultimately an expert in the qualities of a good human being. The entire gamut of literature on social change places a high premium on the role of education as the most important agent of social change. It should be noted that defective education leads to defective social change. Thus if society is to change in the right direction, attention needs to be paid to the educational system, as education is at once a creature and creator of social change. Education must be planned in a way that is in keeping with the needs and aspirations of the people as a whole. The most important contribution of education to

society is not only to raise the living standards of its citizens but also to enable them to become better citizens. Therefore society cannot carry on without education and vice versa. As Nelson Mandela former South African President during an address at the Planetarium Johannesburg, South Africa said "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

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