Education as an Instrument of Social Change

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Abstract: Education is considered as the most powerful and effective instrument of social change and social development in present time. Social change implies change in the social structure and function of the various units which form society. Social structure includes social institution like family, the marriage system, caste system, educational institution, customs, manners, literacy form, language, dress and food habits etc. It is the education that brings about the assimilation of the cultural values and transmit it from generation to generation. It provides a stability to the society and explains the complexities of life. The individual character, personality, common sense, culture, thinking, skills, habits etc depends upon education. Education has been and is being played as an agent of socialization of the younger generations so as to reach the expectations of the society. Education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform. Its guides the children towards new values and assists the development of intelligence and increase the society potential for its own transformation. Society promotes industrialization, urbanization, rural development and social mobility by various means one of the main ones being education.

The axe of education can cut down the thik roots of outmoded traditions, superstitions, ignorance, backwardness etc which hinder the process of social change. Education acts as a ‘social organiser’ and ‘social leveler’ by providing vocational training, skills and knowledge to its citizens. The outstanding function of education should be to prepare children for active and co-operative democratic citizenship in changing world.

Keyword: Education, Instrument, Social change, school, Teacher

Introduction: Education and social change are very intimately related. Hence, Education should prepare the back ground for social change. Not only this, education should also spell out the kind of desirable change needed by society and how these changes are to be brought about. For this, education should try to study and understand the various problems of society in specific area from time to time and should become the integral part of social development. When education will assume this responsibility, society will grow more and more by adopting needed social change. Social change may take place when human need change. When the existing social system or network of social institution fails to meet the existing human needs and when new materials suggest better ways of meeting human needs. Education fulfils the human needs of society and propagates such ideas which promote social change in all fields of life. Education becomes, In this way, a social process by means of which society moulds children according to its needs and approved patterns of behaviours. It is for this end in view that a society organizes its educational activities according to its needs and aspiration. Francis J Brown remarks that education is a process which brings about changes in the behaviour 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.

Objective of the study: In this paper an attempt has been made to —
Conceptualize the concept of Education and social change
Discuss the role of education as an agent or instrument of social change
Discuss how education certainly can bring about changes in the pattern of social relationships and progress. Learn how different thinkers have explained the phenomenon of social change over time.

**Research Question**: The present study will be carried on according to the research question mentioned below:

1. What is the function of education in the sphere of society undergoing social change?
2. How education can assist in changing attitude among students/upils?
3. How education can help in creating desire for change?
4. How education can create atmosphere of adopting social change?
5. How education can help to overcome resistance of change?
6. How education can emerge with a new dimension of new change?
7. How education can lead in social change?
8. What is the role of education to instigate the advancement education of knowledge?
9. Can education perceptualize eternal values?
10. How education can assist in transmitting culture?
11. How education can help in developing democratic value?
12. How education can assist economic prosperity and national development?
13. How what is the function of education to evaluate of social change?

**Methodology or data source**: This paper is solely based on secondary information which is collected from different sources like books, journals, articles, websites, etc.

**Function of Education in the sphere of social change**: Education is the most powerful instrument of social change. It is through education that the society can bring desirable changes and modernize itself. Education can transform society by providing opportunities and experiences through which the individual can cultivate himself for adjustment with the emerging needs and philosophy of the changing society. A sound social progress needs careful planning in every aspect of life – social, cultural, economic, and political. Education must be planned in a manner which is in keeping with the needs and aspiration of the people as a whole. Sociologists, social psychologists, philosophers, politicians, educators, and educational planners regard education as an instrument of social change. In the words of Dr. Radhakrishnan, "Education is an agent of social change. What is simpler societies was done by the family, the religious, social, and political institutions, has to be done by educational institutions to day."

**The function of Education in the sphere of social change are outlined as under**-

1) Assistance in changing attitudes: Education helps to change the attitudes of people in favour of modern ways of life and develops attitudes which can fight prejudices, superstitions and traditional beliefs. It can bring about a change in attitudes of people in favour of small family towards rising above orthodox values and socio-cultural barriers of caste/class and towards religion and secularism. It accelerates the rate of change by making the people more favourable towards religions. It helps in creating the right kind of social institutions. Education interacts with the process of social development which is another name for social change. It fights diseases, change attitude towards family size and modern medicine and changes the patterns of inter-group
relation between various groups in society. All this leads to changed social patterns and hence social change.

2) Assistance in creating desire for change: Education creates a desire for change in a society which is pre-requisite for any kind of change to come. It makes people aware of social evils like drinking dowry, gambling, begging, bonded labour etc. and creates an urge to fight and change such things. Education makes under-privileged, down-trodden and backward people aware of their lot and instills a desire to improve their conditions. It also help the under-privileged groups of the society to understand the difference between them and the privileged group and creates a desire to fight the social gaps. Thus education creates a desire for change. It can be of great help in identifying weakness in our social structure, social gaps, gaps in knowledge and gaining knowledge and skills necessary for achieving progress in all spheres of life.

3) Assistance in adopting social change: Whenever some social change occurs, it is easily adopted by some people while others find it very difficult to adjust themselves to this change. It is the function of education to assist people in adopting good changes. People will welcome and adopt any social change only when they become convinced of its utility and desirability. Education promotes capacity to welcome and accept the social change. Thus education creates a wholesome and conducive environment for these social changes to become acceptable to all.

4) Overcoming resistance to change: Certain factors create resistance in the way of accepting social change. Education helps in overcoming resistance. The importance of social change is convincingly explained to the people through the process of education. Education helps people in removing blind faith and prejudices and accepting something new.

5) Emergence of new changes: Education initiates, guides and controls movements for social reform. The flood of social reform movements that was witnessed at the turn of the century was due to modern education. Education helped in agitating public opinion towards the abolition of many social evils such as untouchability, child marriage, objection to widow remarriage, unequal rights to women, the custom of women committing sati, superstitions, dogmatism, fatalism, social injustice. Education helped in recognizing the importance of such changes. It was through education alone that public opinion could be turned in favour of these changes. Reform movements such as the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Rama Krishna Mission, and the Christian Missions used education as an instrument to bring about social change. In the words of John Dewey, "Education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform".

6) Leadership in social change: Education in India must be able to create appropriate leadership at every level if social changes conducive to democracy are to be introduced. Able leaders can be produced only through education. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, highly educated and enlightened Indians, made all efforts at conscious level to bring about the social changes. Mahatma Gandhi designed Basic Education to fight the ills of mass illiteracy, ignorance, ill health and poverty of our people and to speed up the process of social reconstruction. He regarded education as the spearhead of a silent social revolution.

7) Advances in the sphere of knowledge: New researches and inventions depend upon education, because only the educated individuals can search for new things in every field. Such people can help in the progress of material as well as non-material culture. Fresh researches in the sphere of knowledge provide the right basis for criticism. Then need for change becomes obvious. Thus education contributes to social change by bringing changes in knowledge.
8) Perceptualising eternal values: A society has some eternal values which stabilize and consolidate it. When these values lose their hold, the society begins to decay and degenerate. In such time of crisis, education protects these eternal values, promote their knowledge and acceptance in such a manner that despite of social changes, people in general keep faith in these values. In our society such eternal values are of moral and spiritual nature. Education should protect, preserve and promote these values.

9) Transmission of culture: Through its function of transmission of national culture from generation to generation as a continuous process education lends stability and continuity to the society. Not only this, education prepares society to adopt needed and desirable social reforms. In this sense education is the creator, generator and director of all social change. In short, education is a conservative, consolidating, establishing and creative force.

10) Stabilising democratic values: Education is a weapon of democracy. It can help in developing democratic attitudes and values for better living. Democratic values such as liberty, equality, fraternity, justice, tolerance, mutual respect, feeling of brotherhood and faith in peaceful methods are stabilized through education in free India. These values are helpful in bringing about social change.

11) Economic prosperity: Education is the most important factor in achieving rapid economic development and technological progress and in creating a social order founded on the value of freedom, social justice and equal opportunity. It develops physical and human resources for all sectors of economy and ultimately brings a desired change in the society.

12) National development: Education is the fundamental basis of national development. National development is the all-around development of the different facets of the nation i.e., economic, political, cultural, scientific and social as well as of the individuals. Therefore, education is the powerful instrument of economic, political, cultural, scientific and social change.

13) Evaluation of social change: A society is constantly under a process of transformation of various forms and nature in all fields of human activity. Teachers, by critical evaluation, determine the desirability or otherwise of these social changes. In other words, education lays down the required standards and criteria of values with reference to which this process of evaluation takes place effectively, and only after that, desirable social changes are propagated whereas the undesirable ones discarded and decried.

14) Promotes Unity and Total Integration: When conflicts arise between various groups and section of a society, education tries to solve those conflicts by advocating thoughts and feelings which bring about unity in diversity and achieve integration of all. Education in India, has this sacred mission to perform by educating people to rise above petty caste rivalries, communal feuds, linguistic conflicts and regional discords and try to achieve the cherished ideal of national integration and national glory.

If we want to speed up social change through education, then

1) Educate all: It refers to universal and compulsory primary and secondary education.
2) Educate backward classes: If we educate the backward classes only then they will be able to make their contribution towards social change, otherwise they will resist social change.
3) Educate women: women education is now considered as sine qua-non of India’s social and national development. It is only through education of women that we can expect happier family life, better hygienic condition, greater reduction in fertility rate, increased production and economic prosperity. They can bring about renaissance in the country.
4) Provide adult education: Introduce and carry out sincerely the scheme of adult education. In the words of Dr. V.K.R.V. Rao, “without adult education and adult literacy it is not possible to have that range and speed of economic and social development which we require.”

5) Various types of education: Besides adult education various types of education like vocational and technical education, population education, moral and religious education, environmental education, continuing, life-long and distance education should be imparted more effectively.

**Conclusion:** In conclusion, we may recollect that Challenge of Education—a policy perspective (1985) very emphatically addressed to role of education in causing deliberate changes in our Indian society. "In the history of mankind, education has formed a continuum and a basis for development of human society. Through development of attitudes, values, capabilities both of knowledge and skills, education provides strength and resilience to people to respond to changing situations and enables them to cause and contribute to societal development." Education initiates, directs and guides social changes and helps in the abolition of social evils. It produces social reformers and leaders who make deliberate efforts to bring about social changes. Education has been recognized as the tool for ushering in changes in an orderly manner. It can also give us models of deliberate social change. Of late many learner-centred literacy projects, such as Jnan Vigyan Manch (Bihar), Ernaculam Total Literacy Programme (Kerala), Total Literacy Campaign (Tamil Nadu), Shiksha Karmi Project (Rajasthan), etc. have brought changes in lives of hundreds of people in improving their quality of life when they became functionally literates. In today’s world, education is looked play a transformative role in building social skills, cognitive skills, emotional coping skills, health related skills, etc.

In the end, it should be noted that educationists, educators and schools have a tremendous responsibility in social change. Defective education leads to defective social changes. Hence if society is to change in the right direction, it is essential that attention is to be paid to the educational system, as education is at once a creature and creator of social change.

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