

Education and Social change

Contemporary India

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Education is an integral part of a country's independence. After independence India needed immediate reforms in education system, for bringing social change and thus national upliftment. Nehru emphasised the importance of education in bringing about political, economic, and social regeneration of the country. He envisaged all education must have a social outlook and must train our youth for the kind of society we wish to have. The constitution came into force on 26th January 1950. Article 45 of the constitution, says that the state shall endeavour to provide, free and compulsory education up to fourteen years, within a period of ten years from the commencement of the constitution. Article 28(1), 28(2), 28(3) safeguards, secular education, article 15, 17 and 46 safeguards the educational interests of the weaker section.

In 1968, the Government of India in implementation of the basic recommendations of the Kothari Education Commission, formulated a national policy on education envisaging –

1. Free and compulsory education up to the age of 14.
2. Improved condition of teachers.
3. Three-languages formula and development of regional language.
4. Equalization of education of science and research,
5. Development of education for agriculture and industry

6. Improvement in quality and production of inexpensive textbooks, and
7. Investment of 6 percent of national income in education.

As part of the National Policy of Education , 10+2+3 system was adopted, it involved ten years of elementary and secondary education, two years of higher secondary education and three years of higher degree course. In 1977 and 1978, the Education Ministers of States and Union Territories discussed the overall education policy. They outlined among other's a massive programme of adult education and set the goal of universal elementary education by the end of the sixth plan.. In 1986, the National Policy of Education laid emphasis on universalisation of elementary education, equalization of educational opportunities, women's education and development, vocationalization of school education, consolidation of higher education and modernization of technical education.

A revised National policy of education and a programme of action in 1992 envisaged provision of free and compulsory education to all children up the age of 14 before the commencement of the twenty first century. Education for all (EPA) has been the focal point of the programme in education in the last decade of the twentieth century.

There has been a steady growth of higher education in the country since independence. The number of universities has increased from 25 to about 935 universities which includes 409 state universities, 349 private universities, 50 central universities and 127 deemed universities, according to University Grants Commission (Feb 2020). In 1948, the Government of India appointed a University Education Commission with Dr Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan as its Chairman. The objective was to evaluate the university education and make it meaningful in the spectrum of national life. The Commission's recommendations submitted in 1949 provided that the school

course should cover 12 years in all and the university course should spread over three years.. Established in 1953, the University Grants Commission was authorised to coordinate policy matters and operational rules among various universities and to allocate grants for their development.

As government paid more attention towards industrialization, many technical institutions were opened. The five earlier IIT's at Delhi, Kanpur, Kharagpur, Mumbai and Chennai have been centre of excellence. Many more IIT's have opened in the recent years. There is also a good number of regional engineering colleges too.

Medical education also made rapid progress. Before independence, there were only 15 medical colleges and few facilities for postgraduation. Through successive five year plans, the number of medical colleges increased and there about 81 medical colleges in 1965. For encouraging post graduate medical studies, the Government established post graduate centres in various places. In 1956, the All India Institute of Medical Sciences was established at Delhi. Now many new AIIMS have been opened in various states.

The National Policy on Education (1986) sought to redress traditional gender imbalances in educational achievements and made a strong commitment to a well conceived edge in favour of women as an act of faith and social engineering. In India women literacy rate in 1951 was 8.86%, the combined rate at that time was 27.16%. It has risen to 65.46 % (2011) , the combined rate being 82.14% Many provisions and laws have been made to promote women's and girl's education and the present system of education aims at attaining gender equality.

Soon after independence, efforts were made to promote and modernise the scientific infrastructure in the country by setting up a chain of national laboratories and institutes of higher technical education . Development of

Science and Technology is mainly achieved by preparing plans for the following three sectors a) Department of Science and Technology, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, Department of Biotechnology, Department of Ocean Development, Development of Space and Atomic Energy and Department of Electronics, Ministry of Environment and Forests, b) plans for science and technology component of over 30 socio economic departments including organizations like Indian Council of Medical Research, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Central Board for irrigation and power etc and c) a separate Science and Technology sector in the Plans of the states and Union Territories. Bhabha Atomic Research Center, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), the Indian National Satellite System (INSAT) and the Indian Remote Sensing Satellite have accelerated the pace of development of India's progress.

In the existing education system, India has produced many, professionals, scientists, technocrats, doctors who have excelled at the national and international level. We are everyday excelling in all the fields. However in terms of the quality of education, we still are far behind as far as international standards are concerned. Further the exodus of professionals to western countries for better opportunities, is also a matter of concern. We need to cultivate our population through education and make them as an asset for the country. Our education system should cater to the changing needs of the society. Education should provide value framework which may prepare committed professionals in all the fields, including our leaders. Though education does not guarantee, higher status and high positions to all, but it does help in social mobility. Education is one of the most important tool for bringing a social change in the country. From sociological perspective, education does not arise, because of individual needs, but it arises because of the needs of the society of which an individual is a

member.. The National Policy of Education (1986) laid stress on education for attaining gender equality. For the weaker sections too, education is very important to come into the national upstream, as well as upward mobility. We have a democratic set up in the country, we live in a free society, therefore education has helped in the country to aspire the citizens and look for a change for their betterment in all respect. Students with different levels of intelligence and educational aspirations, belonging to different socio-economic classes, different castes and religious groups have begun to come in the same type of educational institution and are huddled in same classroom. This changing scenario has brought a social change in the country, which is largely accepted. Education is an instrument for bringing social change and growth and educationists are agents who help in bringing these changes, Indian educational system needs proper implementation right from the grassroot level to bring a positive change in the social order.

References

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