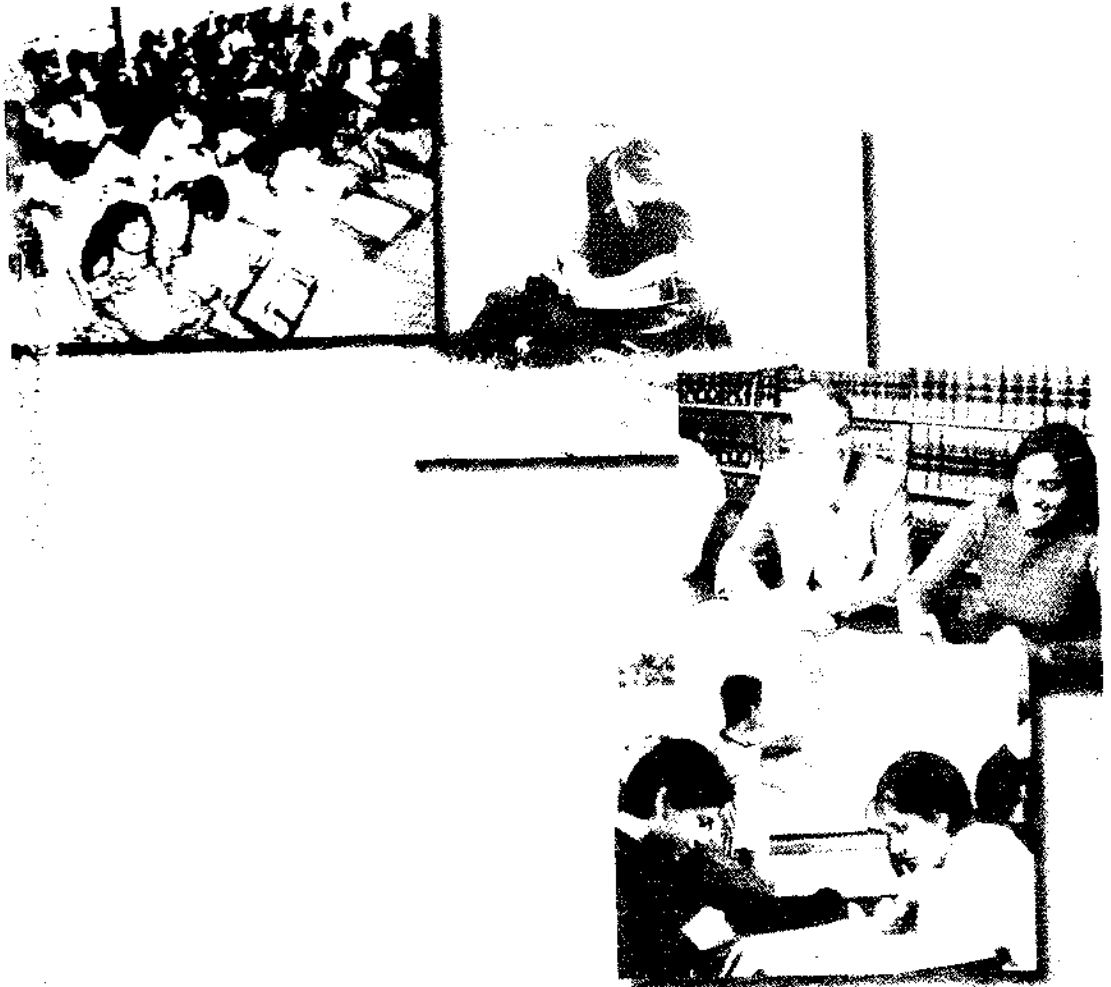


Education and Socio-Economic Development

Education and
Socio-Economic Development



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About the Author

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EDUCATION
AND
SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Rural Urban Divide in India and South Asia

Dr. Sures Chandra Jain

CONCEPT PUBLISHING COMPANY, NEW DELHI-110059

Cataloging in Publication Data—DK

Courtesy: D.K. Agencies (P) Ltd. <docinfo@dkagencies.com>

Jain, Sures Chandra, 1946-

Education and socio-economic development : rural urban divide
in India and South Asia/ Sures Chandra Jain.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

Includes index.

ISBN 8180691535

1. Education—India. 2. India—Economic conditions—Effect of
education on. 3. India—Social conditions—Effect of education on.
4. Education—South Asia. 5. South Asia—Economic conditions—
Effect of education on. 6. South Asia—Social conditions—Effect of
education on. I. Title.

370.954 21

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ISBN: 81-8069-153-5

First Published 2005

© Sures Chandra Jain (b. 1946)

Published and Printed by

Ashok Kumar Mittal

Concept Publishing Company

A/15-16, Commercial Block, Mohan Garden

New Delhi-110059 (INDIA)

Phone : 25351460, 25351794

Fax : 091-11-25357103

Email : publishing@conceptpub.com

*In the memory
of
My Parents*

Preface

This book is an attempt towards linking the system of education with socio-economic development, formulating appropriate policies, and then evolving a planning process for their implementation. India along with all other countries in South Asia have a large under-employed and unemployed majority. This large majority, being outside rebuilding the task of nation-building which if given a proper direction, has the potential to do so.

Obviously, something seriously wrong has gone in our educational planning process. We have now reached a situation where there are educated job-seekers, largely unemployable and residing in urban centres on the one hand, and illiterates and would be illiterates, mainly residing in rural areas, on the other. Both of these groups of people obviously form the bulk of poverty-stricken mass.

The author is primarily interested in analyzing the post-independence era since 1947 as to where and how did we go wrong, and what remedial measures are now required to link the system of education with the process of socio-economic development. A number of studies now clearly prove that in a largely illiterate society, with an under-developed agrarian economy such as India, there is a much higher rate of return on investments in primary and secondary education than on higher education.

The planning process, as developed in this book, integrates the following variables:

- (1) Education for socio-economic development:
 - (a) Primary education,
 - (b) Literacy campaigns, and
 - (c) Vocational training;

- (2) Relevance of education to the needs of learners;
- (3) Structure of education conforming to rural bias; and
- (4) Vocational training and non-formal educational programmes for agricultural mechanization and rural industrialization.

In our attempt to pull the nation out from its persistent socio-economic sluggishness ever since independence from British colonial rule, we must realize the fact that there can be no economic development in India and South Asia unless we adhere to our own indigenous values, cultural traditions and concrete socio-economic realities. The British Government, quite ruthlessly suppressed these values in the case of India, as in all the other former colonies. Nehru himself did virtually nothing to uproot this aspect of colonial legacy during his 18 years of virtually single-handed, virtually unopposed and unchallenged rule as Prime Minister after 1947, nor did any of his successors till date in early 2000s.

Most of the urbanized and educated class, having given up its indigenous values and cultural traditions, became what Dr. Frantz Fanon, an eminent psychiatrist and revolutionary of Algeria, would say, "*the living haunt of contradictions*", or "*strangers in their own land*", as Mahatma Gandhi said.

This highly educated urbanized minority, alienated from its own land and people, who readily accept and appreciate the western style modernization, no matter how irrelevant, absurd and ridiculous is described by no less a person than Jean Paul Sartre, as "*branded ..., as with a red hot iron, with the principles of western cultures*", and by Mao tse-Tung, as those who practice "*the servile imitation of Europe and America*".

Modernization and Westernization have literally become synonymous for the educated and urbanized minority, which needs to be reoriented. In any case as Arie de Ruijter wrote that "each definition of form of cultural identity in the highly-situated product of continuous construction, often strategically chosen and manipulated and related to political and social conditions rather than to 'authentic' cultural needs."

This book was originally written in 1982 when I was in

Canada, updated and thoroughly revised ten years later in 1992, and now updated and revised again the same ten years later in 2002. As a result, some part of this book may in the first instance appear to be a bit disjointed but, in fact, analyses and arguments made 20 years ago and ten years ago are even much more relevant today. This is precisely because primary education, literacy, vocational training, education of girls and dropout continue to be perennial problems and pressing issues facing India and other developing countries. These problems of primary education, literacy, vocational training, education of girls and dropout have only gone from bad to worse in these last 20 years when the book was originally written. An attempt is made in this book to particularly analyse:

- Intellectual sympathy and intuition on the part of teachers for underprivileged children,
- Empirical analysis of the socio-economic rate of return on investment in primary education, literacy campaigns, and vocational training, and
- Educational system as a sub-system of total production system.

This Book is primarily designed as a general reference material for the layman who wishes to become familiar with the subject of education for socio-economic development, as it relates with the over all socio-economic development of the country.

My wife, Dr. Krishna and our two little children, Nidhi and Amogh, who so gracefully provided me with what otherwise would have been their time.

Bhopal,
October 12, 2002

Sures Chandra Jain

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Introduction

...From the theoretical and empirical studies which link education and economic growth, it is very clear that no educated society remains underdeveloped for long, while no illiterate society can achieve sustained rates of economic expansion.

—Human Development in South Asia¹, 1998

In the case of Indian villager an age-old culture is hidden under an encrustment of crudeness. Take away the encrustation, remove his chronic poverty and his illiteracy and you have the finest specimen of what a cultured, cultivated, free citizen should be.

—Mahatma Gandhi², 1939

While there is the acute problem of illiteracy, the country is producing a vast army of educated unemployed. ... The biggest drawback in our educational policy has been its failure to establish a relationship between education and other social, economic variables.

—The Editorial, Hindustan Times³, 1991

It is quite obvious that there can be no authentic socio-development of India and other countries in South Asia unless we constructively mobilize the hitherto neglected majority of the population living either at the subsistence level or below the poverty line.⁴

Educational planning in India has to be done with a definite rural bias. Since independence, the main beneficiary of the system of education has largely been the urban population,

which is only approximately 20 per cent of the total population. The attempts for economic development should be on equitable basis and be proportional to the population in urban centres and rural areas, i.e. we must abandon our urban bias.

After nearly half a century of independence, what we witness today is that over 65 per cent of the total population in India is illiterate; i.e. almost 450 million people, and over 50 million children in the 6-14 age-group have no access to primary education. It is obviously from this majority of illiterates and the would-be illiterates who subsist below the poverty level. This majority generally remains deprived of participation in the task of nation building. It is given an opportunity neither to produce nor to consume.

What we witness after half a century of independence is that there are approximately 25,00,000 persons holding a graduate degree or higher degrees, who are searching for jobs. The educated job seekers with matriculation and higher education form 54 per cent of the total job seekers among the approximately 25 million educated job seekers.

Besides this economic rationale for investment in primary education, we must also provide literacy to all human beings for it, what the National Policy on Education⁵, 1986 would call, "*provides the instruments for liberation from ignorance and oppression*". Dr Karan Singh, a politician and an eminent scholar of India, goes even further when he says⁶:

I believe that as long as millions go without the basic necessities of civilized existence it is utterly unreal to talk to them about things of the spirit, and that the basic material needs of man must be satisfied as a foundation for further spiritual growth.

Thus what we need in India is to identify the needs of our people, set priority, and then plan a system of education to achieve just that. Unfortunately, this has not happened since independence, although it was stated under clause 45 of the Constitution of India:

The State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years, from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years.

The Constitution of India came into force on January 26, 1950. So, as per the original plan, the primary education was supposed to be made available to all children within a period of ten years, i.e. by 1960. But even after more than 50 years after pledge in the Constitution, we have over 50 million children who have no access to basic education. These children would be the illiterates of tomorrow, naturally adding to the nearly 430 million illiterates we have now after 50 years of Independence.

It has also been empirically proved that, in a largely illiterate country like India, there is a higher rate of return on investment in primary education than on higher education. Besides, a literate person is well equipped with the instruments, which provide "*liberation from ignorance and oppression*", as quoted earlier from the National Policy on Education 1986.

So the above conclusions clearly tell us where our priorities should be. In its National Policy on Education⁷ 1986, the Government of India has, however, set priorities for implementing the primary education by 1995, and literacy for all by 2020. These far-off deadlines obviously reflect the Government's low priority for primary education and literacy. An Editorial in the *Indian Express*⁸ has summed it up: "*The fact of the matter is that the problem of illiteracy has never received the kind of attention it should have.*" Another Editorial in the *Hindustan Times*⁹ wrote that, "*In a country like ours where the majority is illiterate, the thrust should be on spreading primary education.*"

As a matter of fact, to provide primary education to all children, and to provide literacy to all adults, the attempts show zeal, but we will continue to set deadlines today and revise them tomorrow, as we have been doing since independence. What we therefore need is to identify our needs, plan accordingly and then vigorously implement.

A similar exercise of planning a fresh policy, without a proper stress on the pressing socio-economic needs, and then not fully implementing whatever has been adopted, has again been carried out recently. The Parliament of India adopted a new National Policy on Education 1986 in May 1986, after nearly two years of public debate.

Many of the ideas and analysis introduced in this book, particularly those linking education with socio-economic development,¹⁰ have not been touched at all in this new National Policy on Education. There is literally nothing new in this new National Policy on Education 1986, that had not been adopted several times before, except for the concept of the so-called Navodaya Vidyalayas. It is planned to open an ideal school in each district bearing the name of Navodaya Vidyalaya, catering mainly to the needs of the rural people. To begin with, this policy itself is not being implemented as per its plan. Besides, there is no justification for opening such a costly school in each district, at an estimated cost of Rs. 5 crore per school, when we could have easily set our priorities for providing primary education and literacy campaign in each village. The priorities are simply not set taking into account the rate-of-return approach on investments in primary education and literacy campaigns, as discussed in Chapter 5 of the book. To this end, I have the following chapters in this book.

Chapter 1 is a quantum illustration of the problem. The data are provided from various official and authentic non-official sources. It is obvious from this chapter that the absolute number of illiterates in the country in general, and in rural areas in particular, has constantly been increasing for the last more than 50 years since independence. On the other hand, we have a growing army of educated unemployed in the country in general, and in urban centres in particular.

The outputs of investments in education, after 50 years of independence, reveal the following:

- (a) Approximately 50 million children in the 6-14 age group with no access to primary education, mainly in rural areas.

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The outputs of investments in education, after 50 years of independence, reveal the following:

- (a) Approximately 50 million children in the 6-14 age group with no access to primary education, mainly in rural areas.

- (b) 500 million illiterates, mainly in rural areas, generally living below the poverty line.
- (c) Lack of vocational training programmes with rural bias.
- (d) An army of education job seekers, mainly residing in urban centres, approximately 50 million from matriculation and above, mostly with no employable technical skills. This above scenario is primarily due to lack of understanding of the learning needs of the under privileged:
 - Intellectual sympathy and intuition on the part of teachers for underprivileged children,
 - Empirical analysis of the socio-economic rate of return on investment in primary education, literacy campaigns, and vocational training, and
 - Educational system as a sub-system of total production system.

The details are given in Chapter 1.

Chapter 2 is an analysis of the lack of primary of education in the country. The inaccess to primary education and high drop-out have obviously been the main reasons for the growing absolute number of illiterates. An Editorial in the *Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, dated 22-11-1993, categorically stated that, "The national commitment for universal elementary education is still found wanting at higher political levels".

Detailed references are made to the fact that illiteracy is a hindrance in the task of completing the programmes aimed at economic development, for an illiterate person produces much less than a literate person. Concerning literacy and development, comparative studies are illustrated from various European countries and Japan.

Many other related topics analyzed in this chapter are self-explanatory; e.g. the lack of vocational training and non-formal educational programmes, etc. The indifference to the education of women, particularly in the rural areas, is discussed in detail.

Chapter 3 is an analysis of the inequality in educational opportunity between the rich and the poor on the one hand, and between rural areas and urban centres on the other.

The policies of the Government of India since independence concerning the equality in educational opportunity have been put in the right perspective. These policies have generally not been very beneficial to the poor in general and the rural dwellers in particular.

Later in this chapter, a comparative study is made concerning varying equalities of educational concepts between developed and developing countries. This analysis is based on case studies from India and the USA on the one hand, and India and Tanzania on the other. A note of caution is sounded in blindly applying the equality of educational opportunity concepts from the USA, etc. to India and other developing nations, which is too often the case. The measures for relevance and suitability are analysed for borrowing the educational systems from other countries.

Chapter 4 deals with inutility and ineffectuality of the system of higher education in India, particularly in relation to liberal arts and humanities.

Data are analysed to show steadily the number of unemployed in liberal arts and humanities, mostly urbanized and without any significant employable skill, is increasing since the independence more than 50 years ago. Later in this chapter way and means are discussed to control this growing unproductive trend.

Chapter 5 is a logical extension of Chapter 4. In this chapter, we have elaborated certain mathematical formulae to prove that, in a largely illiterate country with a rural-based undeveloped agrarian economy such as India, there is a far more rate-of-return on investments in primary and secondary education than on any other level of education. The World Development Report¹¹ 1991 of the World Bank reported its findings that:

... Increasing the average amount of education of the labour force by one year raises GDP by 9 per cent. This holds for

the first three years of education; that is, three years of education as compared with none raises GDP by 27 per cent. The return to an additional year of schooling then diminishes to about 4 per cent a year—or a total of 12 per cent for the next three years.

Chapter 6 is an attempt towards planning a system of education for economic development. The planning process, as developed in this chapter, integrates the following variables:

- (1) Education for socio-economic development:
 - (a) Primary education,
 - (b) Literacy campaigns,
 - (c) Vocational training;
- (2) Relevance of education to the needs of learners;
- (3) Structure of education conforming to rural bias; and
- (4) Vocational training and non-formal educational programmes for agricultural mechanization and rural industrialization.

All the above variables are linked together and illustrated in a systematic diagram. With this diagram, it becomes quite possible to identify the problematic situation comprehensively, and plan the entire system of education, and then implement the various programmes with provision for necessary in-built midcourse adjustments, i.e. evaluation and feedback.

Chapter 7 is the concluding chapter. The various chapters in this book clearly prove the following four postulates:

- (1) The unequal access to educational opportunity in the post-independence era continues to create, widen and perpetuate economic inequalities: higher income for the (urbanized) educated youth minority over the vast majority of illiterates in rural areas;
- (2) The availability of primary, secondary, and higher education in urban centres, with a near total neglect of education in rural areas, is creating social stratification

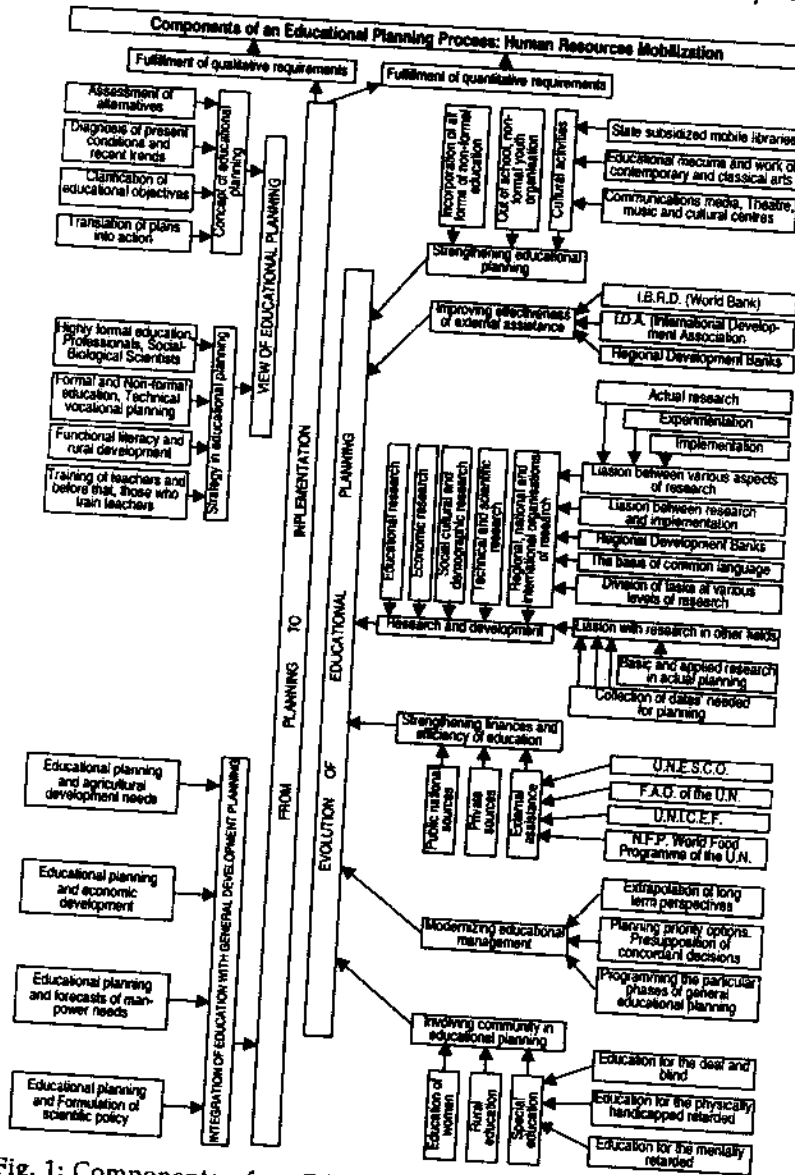


Fig. 1: Components of an Educational Planning Process: Human Resources Mobilization. This diagram and these interrelated and interdependent elements are based upon author's interpretation of *Educational Planning: A World Survey of Problems and Prospects*, UNESCO, Paris, France, 1970.

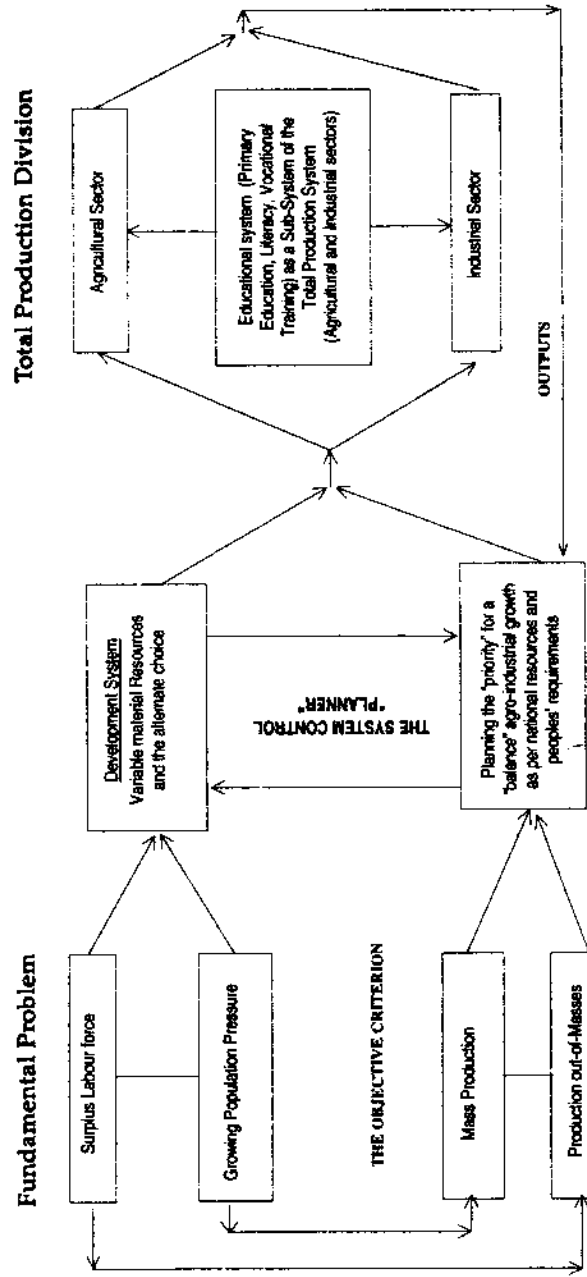


Fig. 2: Educational System as a Sub-System of the Total Production System.

1. Educational System: Primary Education + Literacy campaigns + Vocational Training.
2. Total Production System = Agricultural and Industrial Sectors.

- or status-conflicts between (urbanized) educated and (rural) illiterates.
- (3) In the post-independence era for the last 50 years, the system of education has mainly been responsible for creating a fine demarcation line between rural areas and urban centres:
 - (a) The rural areas representing *Bharat*, keeping in doom and gloom the fate of over 80 per cent of the population;
 - (b) The urban centres, representing *India*, providing educational opportunity to a tiny fraction of the population.
 - (4) It is concluded both ways, rationally and empirically, that the further formal education of the already educated, mainly urbanized, will continue to contribute towards under-development, while an emphasis on the primary education, literacy campaigns and vocational training programmes will lead towards social and economic development of the country.

Chapter 8 deals with Education for Social Development. It is self-evident that we in India, and in fact in many other former colonized nations, have alienated ourselves from our own values in so far as the educated class and the ruling elite are concerned. We continue to perpetuate the perverted and depressive legacies of the British colonizers.

To eliminate this systematic degradation, flunkeyism and wretchedness, created and perpetuated for centuries in the depth and consciousness of our people is, indeed, one of the foremost tasks in the process of nation building. For unless we recover our lost self-image and human dignity, and unless we cling to our own indigenous cultural traditions and civilization pattern, there can be no authentic socio-development.

It is these educated Indians who provided a much desired communication link between the British colonizers and the enslaved masses of India, enabling the British to effectively plunder the country.

Nearly two centuries of British colonial domination systematically deprived the people of India of both rights and responsibilities normally enjoyed by the citizens of a free nation. For most of the population there was no easy access to education, for it was relatively easier for the British to enslave the ignorant and illiterate people.

The tiny fraction of the population educated by the British was primarily intended to serve the interest of British colonialism. The educated Indians in the service of British administration, particularly in the so-called ICS or Indian Civil Service, were systematically used by the British to ruthlessly degrade and dehumanise the people of India. These civil servants themselves were schizophrenic flunkeys of their British masters, the creation of that above quoted notorious Lord T.B. Macaulay.

The fact that the colonial legacy lingers on in the post-independence era, needs no proof. It is 'the way of life' for most of our highly educated and urbanized class. This trend is taking dangerous proportions in this period of so called globalisation as Frans J. Schuurman¹² wrote "...Globalisation is ... primarily cultural in nature. ... Traditional identities are under threat, indigenous people are alienated from their cultural heritage through the global movement of consumer capitalism."

What I would like to emphasize is that even if our indigenous social values, cultural traditions and pattern of civilization are "outdated", when they are second to none in the world to begin with, we still ought to follow and practice our own values.

Srimad Bhagvad Gita¹³ (Chapter III) has it :

Better one's own duty, though devoid of merit than the duty of another well discharged. Better is death in one's own duty; the duty of another is fraught with fear.

In this sloka of the Gita, Krishna is reminding Arjun that it is dangerous to suppress his own personality-expression and copy the activities of somebody else who may be living a nobler and a diviner life.

The right type of education can play a definite role in our attempts towards social development.

There is a need for the identification and formulation of relevant political ideology to suit the pervasive socio-economic realities of India. This search for relevant political ideology is based on a detailed analysis of contemporary capitalist and communist thought pattern, taking into account our indigenous values, cultural traditions and concrete socio-economic realities.

We need to understand the psychoanalysis of inferiority complex and flunkeyism, which has been so deliberately and so deeply germinated into the heart and minds of the colonized people of India by the British colonizers. This analysis is to unfold the factors wherein the colonized people willingly became servile imitators of the socio-cultural values of the colonizers.

We should carry out the comparative analysis of humanistic concepts between developing and developed countries, mainly between India and the Western countries, e.g. U.K. and U.S.A. There in India is an army of sociologists, humanists and intellectuals who are absolutely westernised in their "outlook". This is generally due to their being trained in the West. It is from these people, who occupy the big positions of status and privilege in the country, and who, being ignorant of their own country's history and culture, keep on parroting the social theories of western humanism in India, however irrelevant outdated and unsuitable they might be to meet out ends.

After the Revolution in 1949, the Chinese communists under the leadership of Mao tse-Tung, systematically eliminated the Western influence in the Chinese educational system, largely brought about by American educators, particularly by John Dewey's visit to China.

Human development theories of Marx and Lenin, as being applied in Cuba after the revolution in 1961, under Dr. Fidel Castro are analysed. However, this attempt by the Government of Cuba after the Revolution in 1959 to create such a New Socialist Man did not quite materialize as per the vision of Fidel Castro. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, the philosopher-king of India in

the true Platonic sense, had written as much earlier as in 1926 that¹⁴ "Socialism cannot remove human selfishness". On one hand, and the practice of indigenous culture by the wretched on the other, has, as concluded from the various chapters in this book, created the following two major problems in the country in the post-independence era since 1947:

- (a) Communication gap between educated and illiterate;
- (b) Status-conflict between (urbanized) educated and (rural) illiterate.

To Sum-up

So, the above are the Eight Chapters that form this book. The conclusions arrived at in this book are based on the data analysed for India. However, these conclusions are equally applicable to other developing countries of South Asia in particular, and the Third World in general. The educational problems faced by these developing nations are more or less the same as those faced by India, differing only in quantum, not so much in kind.

If the above policy alternatives were honestly translated into action, it would then certainly remove the poverty, what we have not been able to achieve in India for nearly the last five decades since Independence in 1947.

The data analysed in this Book are mainly from India, South Asia countries, China and developing countries as a whole. The analysis in the Book is applicable to India and South Asian countries in particular, and to the Third World in general.

The nations in the South Asian region, particularly India, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, share the same colonial heritage. All of these nations are the classical victims of the:

1. divide-and-rule policy of the British colonial domination;
2. socio-economic neo-colonization being practiced by the western countries after direct political colonialism in the aftermath of Second World War.

Since we have now been free from colonialism for over four decades, there is a little point in putting the blame on these former colonizers, for it is we ourselves who form our own polity and developmental policies with a urban bias, largely based on western style.

NOTES

1. Mahbub ul Haq and Khadija Haq, *Human Development in South Asia 1998*, The Human Development Centre, Karachi, Pakistan, (Oxford University Press, Karachi, Pakistan, 1998); pp. 26-28.
2. Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works*, Vol. 68 (New Delhi: Ministry of I & B, 1977); p. 266.
3. Editorial, *The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 9-7-1991; p. 11.
4. Although we in India ever since we freed ourselves from the British colonial yoke, have always had the officially declared policy of socialism to carry out the task of nation-building, but the fact remains that despite a somewhat decline in the percentage of people below the poverty line, we have absolutely failed to remove poverty. R. Venkataraman, President of India, while addressing the nation on the eve of Independence Day on August 15, 1990 admitted the following:
One-thirds of the population of India still lives at the subsistence level. The contrast between rich and poor, urbanite and villager, educated and illiterate, urban street-child and the girl-child in particular, suffers from painful disabilities. The vast mass of our people have remained outside the periphery of our progress.
5. National Policy on Education-1986, Ministry of Human Resource, Govt. of India, New Delhi; clause 4.10.
6. Dr. Karan Singh, *One Man's World* (New Delhi: Allied, 1986); p. 112.
7. National Policy on Education 1986; *op. cit.*, (2n) clause 4.10.
8. Editorial titled "Behind the Paradox", in *the Indian Express*, New Delhi; 10-9-1987; p. 6.
9. Editorial titled, "Funds for Education", in *the Hindustan Times*, New Delhi; 4-8-1986.
10. For a detailed analysis of the "total production system", see this author's other book, *Indigenous Resources for Rural Development : A Need for Paradigm Shift*.
11. *World Development Report 1991*, The World Bank, Washington DC, 1991; p. 43.
12. Frans J. Schuurman, The Nation-State, Emancipatory Spaces and Development Studies in the Global Era, in Frans J. Schuurman, Ed.,

- Globalization and Development Studies: Challenges for the 21st Century*, Vistaar Publications (A division of Sage Pub.), New Delhi, 2001, p. 63.
13. The English translation and subsequent interpretation of this stanza is taken from Swami Chinmayananda, *Bhagvad Gita* (Madras: The Chinmaya Pub. Trust, IVth Edition, 1977).
 14. S. Radhakrishnan, *An Idealist View of Life*, (London; Unwin Books, 1970); p. 53.