

EDUCATIONAL EQUALITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE: A STEP TOWARDS PROGRESS OF INDIA

Dr. Khalida Akhtar

Associate Professor, Education

Karamat Husain Muslim Girls' PG College, Lucknow, India.

Email Id: khalida.akhtar786@gmail.com

Abstract:

For the progress of any nation, it is very essential that there is educational equality, social equality, justice and all human beings are treated with dignity. There are a number of provisions in Indian constitution for the educational equality and social justice to its people. Despite this, we see a lot of discrimination in society and even in educational institutions at all stages. There are also good laws in India which forbid practices of social inequality. But unfortunately, we have not reached at the desired goal. Social equality is a big step towards human progress and protection of human rights. Education is a means of awakening people towards equality and social justice. Widening of the gap between the rich and poor is posing serious problem of social and economic inequality thereby leading to educational inequality and inequity. India is a welfare state, so it is its responsibility to provide qualitative education to all. Lot of initiatives have been taken up by the government of India and also by the academicians across the country in this direction.

Index Terms: Social Equality, Educational Equality, Human Rights, Social Justice, Equity

I. INTRODUCTION:

There is no public education system in the world that is completely free from unequal educational opportunities. Factors such as motivation, socio-economic background, and the policy etc are most likely in explaining differences among pupils in compulsory school systems. (Bădescu, G & Daniel P (2012). In India from a long time, various schemes like Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan, scholarship for students, free mid-day meals and various other programs were brought about to achieve equality of educational opportunities. Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas in rural areas, Kendriya Vidyalayas, Anganwadi and Balwadi schools, schools for tribals in the tribal areas were opened to provide quality education for all irrespective of caste, creed, colour, sex, region, religion etc. When the downtrodden people get educated, only then they can understand their rights and also think of human rights. For the progress of any nation, it is necessary to have educated and just societies. Human rights can be practiced only in societies which are just and practicing. Equality of educational opportunities and social justice when denied can be a source of frustration and will be a threat to the society and will hinder peace and progress of any country.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- (1) To focus on educational equality and social justice among children.
- (2) To suggest measures to eradicate educational inequality and social injustice

III. METHODOLOGY:

It is mainly descriptive in nature and the researcher has used secondary sources to study the problem.

IV. SOCIAL JUSTICE:

Mason.A. (2003) states John Rawls's account of fair equality of opportunity in his 'Theory of Justice' which provides a good example of the difficulties involved. It is an attempt to defend the idea that equality of opportunity is an independent principle of justice, the enforcement of which takes place to respect for individual rights. According to Ayers et.al (1998) Teaching for social justice cannot be separated from teaching that supports the development of a thriving democracy. It involves, citizens, teachers, students and parents in a conversation about the basis for education in a democracy.

Social justice framework can provide an alternative rationale for a policy emphasis on quality that goes beyond that provided by human capital and rights approaches, it provides a starting point for re-conceptualising quality of education. (Leon,T, Angeline M. B, (2011)

Social Justice and Welfare State:

According to (Marjorie, Mayo, p.10) one of the key characteristics of the welfare state is that services should be provided as social rights, on criteria of the needs of specific categories, groups and territorial areas and not dependent on individual tests of means. The state has to provide an infrastructure of services promoting values of freedom, equality and social integration rather than simply providing residual services for the poor. Brain Barry (2005) is of the opinion that if inequalities of wealth and income are kept within a narrow range then equal prospects for education, health and autonomy can be realized.

V. EDUCATIONAL EQUALITY:

In India, Article 26 of Indian Constitution guarantees equality of educational opportunities. It says that education is a fundamental right and educational institutions cannot deny admission of any student on the basis of caste, creed, religion, color, sex or any of them. Article 46 of the Indian Constitution provides for special education and economic interests of SC/ST and other weaker sections.

Robert M. Mcelroy (1919) states that 'In making real our right to equality of education we must write this law: "No child may be deprived of the right to compulsory and equal education on account of race, color, place of residence, the will of parents, the will of city, county or state."

Right to education (RTE):

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act or Right to Education Act (RTE), is an Act of the Parliament of India enacted on 04 August 2009 (Yadav, R.K 2012). The Act makes education a fundamental right of every child between the ages of 6 and 14 and specifies minimum norms in elementary schools. It requires all private schools to reserve 25% of seats to children (to be reimbursed by the state as part of the public-private partnership plan).

Inclusive Education:

In this type of education, students with special needs and other children study in the same classroom. Inclusive education ensures educational equality.

VI. CAUSES OF EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITY AND SOCIAL INJUSTICE:

Main cause of educational inequality and social injustice is poverty. The socio-economically weak families are uneducated and think that they have to get their daughters married and so they have to learn household chores and do not understand the importance of education for their daughters which cause gender discrimination. They are also unable to guide their sons even if they go to schools thereby, they too are unable to receive proper education. So, there is vast difference between the children of educated parents and uneducated parents, between the students of urban areas and students of rural areas. There are regional differences also, those students residing in developed areas receive quality education when compared to those in underdeveloped areas. Due to lack of Inclusive education in Indian Schools the children with special needs are deprived of quality education and they are segregated from the society. Mostly in rural schools and also in government schools there is either scarcity of infrastructure or it is not well maintained when compared to private and urban schools. All these lead to inequality in education and social injustice.

VII. STEPS TO OVERCOME EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITY AND SOCIAL INJUSTICE:

In the past large number of schemes and scholarships were provided by the government to bring about educational equality and thereby social justice in the society. Schools of quality education like Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas, Kendriya Vidyalayas were established. Students were provided free mid-day meals. Even then there is educational inequality and social injustice. There are so many constitutional provisions and laws to bring about educational equality. These should be implemented strictly. Many people are unaware of the government schemes. Advertisements should be made so that everybody should know about the schemes. In some areas the benefit of schemes do not reach the children due to corruption. This should be checked and strict action should be taken against those found guilty. More number of institutions should be opened near the colony of economically weaker sections of the society and they should study there free of cost. All these measures should be taken on war footing, then only success can be achieved.

VIII. CONCLUSION: At last, the researcher came to the conclusion that an environment should be created that is conducive to achieving freedom to enjoy the fundamental rights and awaken people by means of education towards social justice and equality. As education has become a fundamental right, all children up to the age of fourteen years whether in rural or urban area should receive education free of cost and elder citizens should facilitate this by preventing child labor and encouraging them to go to school.

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