



IMPACT OF CHANGING SOCIAL NORMS ON THE EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION

Darshana Pant, Ph.D.

*Assistant Professor (Dept. of Sociology) Government Degree College Bajpur, Kumaun
University Nainital*

Abstract

The society is dynamic in nature. The social norm may be discussed as what people in some group believe to be normal in the group, that is, believed to be a typical action, an appropriate action, or both (Paluck and Ball 2010). The social changes bring about changes in the social norms which has various implications for the education systems. The changing norms need to be reflected in the educational policies and practices for achieving the conformity. Though on the other hand, these norms at times have been challenged by the educational system for the betterment of the society as a whole.

Keywords: *Social Norms, Educational Planning & Administration*



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1. Introduction

Society is dynamic in nature. The term 'dynamic' means it keeps on going through a number of changes which are perceived and interpreted differently by different elements of the society. The 'dynamism' of the society is evident in the differences that prevail in the structures, policies, procedures of the current society when compared to the traditional one.

Every society, as the research suggests, goes through several social changes that bring along with them several changes in the norms, procedures and processes of the society and its elements. These social changes bring along with them several norms that need to be followed to be a respectable member of the society. These norms further define the desired state of behaviour that it wants its citizens to have. People conform to group expectations out of the human need for social approval and belonging. If individuals depart from a norm, they frequently lose social approval and may be ostracised, gossiped about, or sanctioned in some other way. (Heise & Manji, 2016).

Based on these defined norms are laid down several policies of education to prepare the future generation of the society as per the newly risen norms. These norms keep on changing

with the changes that occur in the society each day. These changes occur due to several social processes such as acculturation, enculturation, urbanization etc. that keep on going in the society and bring about several important changes in the perceptions, and thinking of the inhabitants. These changed perceptions give rise to the newer outlooks which require a completely new set of grooming resulting in revised planning and procedures of all dimensions of the society.

2. Understanding Social Norms

The word 'norm' has several meanings. A common meaning is that a norm is merely a statistical regularity: one notices that many people wear white in order to stay cool on a hot day. Another meaning is what people in a group believe to be typical and appropriate action in that group (Paluck and Ball 2010), such as when one sees in some group that brides wear white at wedding: a social norm. A third meaning is of a prescriptive or proscriptive rule with obligatory force regardless of social expectations, a moral norm: Thou shalt not kill! Finally, norms may be legal, and the set of international and national conventions, charters and laws are often referred to as normative frameworks. (Mackie et. Al. 2015)

Thus a norm is a social construct. It exists as a collectively shared belief about what others do (what is typical) and what is expected of what others do within the group (what is appropriate). (Heise & Manji, 2016). Social norms are generally maintained by social approval and/or disapproval. Social norms interventions focus on peer influences, which have a greater impact on individual behavior than biological, personality, familial, religious, cultural and other influences (Berkowitz & Perkins, 1986a; Borsari & Carey, 2001; Kandel, 1985, and Perkins, 2002).

3. Impact of the Changing Social Norms on the Educational Planning and Administration

The human beings had adopted to educate them in the formal manner to become a civilized member of the society. Since then, education, its planning and administration have been indispensable parts of the society. In a wider sense, education may describe "all activities by which a human group transmits to its descendants a body of knowledge and skills and a moral code which enable the group to subsist". In this sense education refers to the transmission to a subsequent generation of those skills needed to perform tasks of daily living, and further passing on the social, cultural, spiritual and philosophical values of the particular community. (Devan, 2011)

Education has been defined as

"the entire process of social life by means of which individuals and social groups learn to develop consciously within, and for the benefit of, the national and international communities, the whole of their personal capabilities, attitudes, aptitudes and knowledge."

(UNESCO,1974)

The educational system has been thriving to produce well groomed citizens of the country who are able to adapt themselves according to the changing environments. The changes in the social norms have a significant impact on the educational practices. The education system is bound to respond to the changing needs and requirements of the society to produce quality output. This leaves a lot of pressure on the educational system. Thus the educational system now needs to be 'flexible' enough to accommodate for the changing social norms. It needs to be 'elastic' enough to adjust itself according to the needs and requirements of the ever changing society.

4. The Case of India

India is no different from the rest of the societies and has been striving hard to retain a balance between the fast changing norms and producing the required outputs. India has been a signatory to several major international declarations. These declarations are nothing but the new social norms that need to be adhered to being a part of the world society. Taking the example of disability in India, which was once treated as a curse, has now been perceived as a 'different ability' that needs to be handled carefully. Several declarations including Human Rights Declaration in 1948, Salamanca Statement in 1994, Dakar Framework in 2000 have stressed the need to include all the children in a common classroom and create an educationally balanced society that is capable of handling all. This change in the norms needed to be reflected in the Indian educational planning. India thus, introduced the policies like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (2001)¹, DPEP² (1994) and more recently Right to Education (2010) to respond to the current changing requirements of accommodation all and creating conditions for their success. The RTE lays down the platform for 'Free education for all' which means that no child, other than a child who has been admitted by his or her parents to a school which is not supported by the appropriate Government, shall be liable to pay any kind of fee or charges or expenses which may prevent him or her from pursuing and completing elementary education. (MHRD, 2010). The administration of such policies needs a lot of

¹ Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is a programme for Universal Elementary Education. This programme is also an attempt to provide an opportunity for improving human capabilities to all children through provision of community -owned quality education in a mission mode.

² The Centrally-Sponsored Scheme of District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) (External website that opens in a new window) was launched in 1994 as a major initiative to revitalise the primary education system and to achieve the objective of universalisation of primary education.

planning and facilitation at different levels of educational system involving different stakeholders.

5. Conclusion: Cultural and social norms are rules or expectations of behaviour within a specific cultural or social group. Often unspoken, these norms offer social standards of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, governing what is (and is not) acceptable and coordinating our interactions with others (World Health Organisation, 2010). The impact of the social norms on the educational system is widespread at all the levels of education require a lot of planning by the educational experts. The changing social norms are one of the guiding forces of our educational system which gets the entire set of social guidelines to be followed by the education. Where on one hand, social norms decide the direction of the educational goals and procedures at the same time, several social norms are challenged by the educational system itself. Education makes a person develop his/her power of critical thinking that further enables a person to evaluate a social norm and not just adhere to it. Several evil practices /norms have been challenged by the educated system and uprooted from the society. Thus it can be concluded, though social norms are one of the guiding forces for the education system, they get inspired for the better by the education system itself.

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