



ROLE OF FORMAL EDUCATION IN HUMAN LIFE, CURRENT CHALLENGES AND FUTURE PROSPECTS IN INDIAN CONTEXT

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Abstract

Education is not how well you can read, write, speak and listen but whether you can communicate and interact with and perceive the world around you. A good education system not only teaches you practical skills but also helps you broaden your perception, gain better understanding, and teaches you to think for good society. Youths today are quite aware and comfortable speaking about social injustices and other current issues. This can be attributed to the increased access to formal education around the world, which in turn has made people more accepting and open-minded. Therefore, education is a very crucial element of human evolution and development. The importance of formal education is also pronounced in areas of creativity and new innovation. Education encourages thinking outside the boundaries. Education makes aware about life and problems.



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Introduction:

The Government of India is vigorously implementing the new 'National Education Policy 2020' (NEP-2020) replacing the old 'National Education Policy of 1986'. At this historic moment and at the outset, it is natural to ask certain questions and ponder over key ideas of new education. Some of the key questions are: What is education? What role does education play in human life? What are the key challenges the Indian education system is facing? What role does the NEP 2020 tries to play in solving challenges of the education sector? What more can be done or need to be done?

Education system is the building block on which the edifice of society and the nation is built on. It is a liberating force for the humankind. It is the capacity of man through which the precious storage of knowledge is transferred to future generations.

In ancient Greece, Plato extensively thought over education. According to him, individual justice can be obtained when each individual develops his or her ability to the fullest. In this sense, he sees education as overall excellence of man.

Swami Vivekananda defines education as 'the manifestation of perfection already in men.' It is the inner development of man which helps to realise the self. While, Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar sees education as a tool to liberate from the injustices of society. He views education as 'the process by which men can attain self enlightenment.' According to him, "Education is that which make men fearless, teach unity, make understand their birthright and teach a man to struggle and fight for the freedom." This idea of education leads mankind to fight against exploitation and inequality.

The role of Education-

Society is a organised group of individuals. Social progress depends on the individual development. Education plays a key role in individual and social development. The first radical social reformer of Maharashtra, who devoted his entire life to uplift and empower women, lower caste and underprivileged sections of society, Mahatma Phule quotes in Marathi,

“विद्येविना मती गेली।

मतीविना निती गेली।

नीतीविना गती गेली।

गतीविना वित्त गेले।

वित्ताविना शूद्र खचले।

इतके अनर्थ एका अविद्येने केले।”

This quotation very crisply describes the relationship of education with intelligence, ethics, progress, development and condition of under- privileged classes. It shows how education is important for social development as a whole.

Intellectual stimulation is achieved through education. Individuals engaged in intellectual pursuit are harbingers of social progress. The great 20th century scientist Albert Einstein says, "Intellectual growth should commence at birth and cease only at death." So education has the capacity to light the lamp of knowledge in man. Political and social life presupposes educated and aware citizen. Democracy is founded on the bedrock of public debate and interactive reasoning. Education makes man aware of political and social issues of the nation. In turn, this practices lead to strong commitment for democratic traditions. Education is a tool of social justice. Dr B.R. Ambedkar has given the slogan of "educate, organise and agitate." Education

makes women, lower castes and classes of society able to voice their concerns of injustice and exploitation. Here education plays the emancipatory role in getting social justice. Scientific temper is one of the Fundamental Duties of citizens of India. Scientific temper is prerequisite for modern society. Education helps us to think scientifically.

The key challenges-

Education holds the key of social progress. But Indian education system is facing certain challenges which hinder the national progress. Intellectual degeneration of intelligentsia is basic cause of concern. Intellectual class of any society leads society towards better future. Material benefits and monetary greed of intellectual class have made them lazy and loathsome. This class should play the role of conscious keepers. Intellectual degeneration leads society into dark ages. Ethics, morality and values are sidelined in this consumer oriented, market-driven education. Instead of compassion and cooperation, monetary values are stimulated in them. This kind of education leads to social discomfort and lack of national integrity. Values of community and brotherhood are the need of the hour.

Literacy is not education. There is primary focus in our country to increase literacy rate. But more literacy does not mean more education. Now focus needs to be shifted to quality education. Recruitment process in higher education system is not based on merit. Education sector needs enthusiastic and energetic teachers. Teachers should devote their entire time and energy in knowledge acquisition and knowledge dissemination.

Apathy towards practical and solution-oriented research is harming national research ethos. Quality research will lead to social development. Entrepreneurial spirit is absent in educated youth. Educated youth is desperate to get government jobs only. The spirit of enterprise should be inculcated in them. It will lead them in search of diverse areas for employment generation. Society should work for deglamourizing government jobs. Strong institutional infrastructure is basic instrument for healthy learning environment. It should be coupled with skilled manpower. Practical education is the need of the hour. Often it is seen, syllabi is very old and does not relate with practical life. Syllabus should be updated with new discoveries in the knowledge systems.

Key Features of the NEP 2020-

The government of India is implementing the NEP 2020 to amend loopholes in the education system. Important features are as follows:

- 1) Ensuring universal access.
- 2) Ensuring quality early childhood care and education.

- 3) New curricular and pedagogical structure.
- 4) No hard separation between arts and sciences.
- 5) Emphasis on promoting multilingualism and Indian languages.
- 6) Assessment reforms.
- 7) Robust and transparent process for recruitment of teachers and merit based performance.
- 8) Setting up of National Research Foundation (NRF).
- 9) Founding single overarching umbrella body HECI (Higher Education Commission of India).
- 10) To increase public investment in education to 6% of GDP.
- 11) Achieving hundred% youth and adult literacy.
- 12) Internationalisation of education.

These objectives of the NEP 2020 try to tackle most of the challenges in education sector. But as usual, the real devil lies in the implementation. Education and awareness in the citizens leads to the development of society. Everybody should take initiative in learning. Because charity begins at home. We should be in the agents of change. As Nelson Mandela says, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Let us pledge for better education.!

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