UNIT 3 SOCIAL CHANGE, DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION

Structure

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3.1 INTRODUCTION

It has been observed that change is such an evident feature of social reality that any social-scientific theory, whatever its conceptual starting point, must sooner or later address it. Others also point out that the only thing that does not change is change. At the same time it is essential to note that the ways social change has been identified have varied greatly in the history of thought. In this Unit we point out the three main elements of social change that must stand in definite relation to one another:

1) Structural determinants of social change, such as population changes, the dislocation occasioned by war, or strains and contradictions.
2) Processes and mechanisms of social change, including precipitating mechanisms, social movements, political conflict and accommodation, and entrepreneurial activity.
3) Directions of social change, including structural changes, effects, and consequences.

3.2 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you should be in a position to:

- understand the meaning of Social change;
- understand the concept of Social development;
- understand the relationship between education and social change; and
- appreciate the relationship between Education, Economic Growth and Development.

3.3 SOCIAL CHANGE

Change is generally said to be a subject of the law of nature. Changes occur both in nature as well as society. Social change would refer to the changes taking place
in the human society. Social change may also be taken to mean only such alterations as occur on the structure and functions of society. As individuals constantly interact in society, the social structures that govern the forms and rules of interactions relatively stay stable for long durations. However change takes place, speedily or slowly, in the structure which signifies social change. ‘Social change does not refer to social interaction but rather to the normative conditions of interactions’.

Social change has also been viewed as part of cultural change which covers all changes that occurs in any branch of culture like art, science, technology, philosophy, and also changes in the forms and rules of social organization. It needs to be noted that no part of culture is completely unrelated to the social order. However, changes in certain branches of culture may take place without having much impact on the social system. In the context of social change, cultural changes are relevant to the extent that they arise from or have as an effect on social organization.

The scope of social change indicates change in the whole structure of society (from agrarian to industrial) or the changes within the structure of society (introduction of a new system of education). There is observed even ‘lag’ in changes taking place in different parts of the society as the rate of change may not be the same for all the parts. There is also observed lag between societies/countries in terms of changes and, hence, the challenge for one set of societies to ‘catch up’ with the other set of societies.

Social change is also viewed in terms of the direction of change, like moving towards attaining some goal. In that case social changes could be seen as progressive or retrogressive in nature. As regards the source of social change, there are two contrasting perspectives. The evolutionary view holds that social changes pass through a series of self-generating (internal sources) stages. But the diffusionists hold that it occurs due to borrowing of traits across (external sources) societies. Generally, the borrowed traits are modified and adapted to suit the society concerned. So, there could be both internal and external sources of changes occurring in societies.

There are two major theories explaining social changes. The theory of ‘economic determinism’ is associated with Karl Marx and F. Engels who hold the primacy of economic factor in determining the nature of social, political and intellectual life generally. They consider economic structure of society as the base and all other spheres of life as superstructure, and affirm that a change occurring in the base determines, in the ultimate analysis, the shape of the superstructure of society.

But the ‘functionalist-structural’ theory of social change denies any deterministic role of the economic structure of society. It gives equal weight to all spheres of life. It views society as a social system consisting of different parts. Changes occurring in one part lead to changes in other parts of the social system. The social system always intends to achieve equilibrium. It reflects a kind of moving equilibrium. This equilibrium approach does not make much difference between variables. The variables are treated as mutually dependent, and change in one variable inevitably leads to changes in other variables which lead to a state of social equilibrium. The process of change goes on and gives a picture of society in a state of moving equilibrium. The social system is viewed as self-restoring in nature, which resists deflection or ruptures in society (Davis 1981).

3.4 DEVELOPMENT

The concept of development is multi-dimensional in nature. It is viewed in both restricted and comprehensive ways. In a restricted sense, it may refer only to economic changes. Changes in the economy could be both wider and narrow in nature. Wider
changes would refer to qualitative and structural changes in the state of an economy. Further, the concept of growth is very commonly viewed as synonymous with development. However, growth is generally treated in a limited way i.e. quantitative and tangible increase in the GNP, or per capita income. In a broad sense, development implies a relatively stable increase in real national income that is accompanied by a change in the attitudes of the people, their motivation, institutional set up, production techniques, etc. Thus, development has both economic and non-economic dimensions, and these two are interlinked.

Economic development influences non-economic spheres in the life of people. Similarly, non-economic factors promote or hinder economic development. Non-economic factors refer to human capital which includes the social, political, cultural and educational background of the people who participate in the process of development. Education plays an important role in the formation of human capital and thus contributes to economic development in particular, and overall societal development in general.

The concept of development is associated with other concepts such as growth and modernization. Its historical roots lie in the period of major changes connected with the industrial revolution when industrial and social change in Europe became synonymous with social progress.

After the end of the Second World War the dominant view of development was that of modernization of the ex-colonial countries. This view of development looked at the world as composed of two sets of societies – the traditional societies (i.e. ex-colonial countries) and the modern societies (the developed countries of Europe and North America). Here, the process of development meant transformation of the traditional societies into modern societies through adopting institutions, ideas and practices of the latter such as modern science and technology, democratic political institution, capital and expertise etc. In this process, the traditional social structures are transformed into those of a modern type along the lines of what happened earlier in Europe. This involved a one-way process of import of ideas, technology, capital, skills and such resources from the developed countries to the backward ones. But this view has been severely criticized by the underdevelopment theorists who hold that there exists only one system i.e. the capitalist world system in which the developing countries/societies have been underdeveloped through colonial/neo-colonial exploitations and thus facilitated the development of the modern countries of Europe and North America. Another view holds that what is underway is the process of ‘dependent development’ of a section of the people in the developing countries as a result of their close linkages with the developed ones. Thus the concept of development has different connotations depending on the perspective adopted look at the process of changes occurring in different sets of societies/countries.

3.5 PERSPECTIVES ON EDUCATION

Relationship between education and society has been viewed from different angles. There are three major sociological perspectives in connection, namely, (1) the Functionalist perspective, (2) the Marxist perspective, and (3) the Interpretive perspective. The first two perspectives are macro in focus. They concentrate on analyzing the relation between education and society. But the third perspective is micro in nature. It emphasizes the study of micro social processes in the classroom and school.

Functionalist thinkers are concerned with the function of education for society as a whole. They assess the contribution made by education to the maintenance of value consensus and social solidarity. Further, they deal with the functional relationships
between education and the other parts of the social system. This, for example, leads to an examination of the relationship between education and the economic system, the political system and culture, etc., and a consideration of how this relationship helps to integrate the society as a whole. In general, functional analysis focuses on the positive contributions made by education to the maintenance of the social system. It is assumed that education is functional for the society as a whole. Here, four major functions of education could be seen in relation to society, i.e., socialization, role allocation, social mobility and social change.

The Marxian perspective provides a radical alternative to functionalist views of the role of education in society. Marxists have approached the matter in two ways. Either they see education as assisting in the process of the ‘reproduction’ or maintenance of capitalist ‘relations of production’; or they view education as a ‘site of resistance’ to the demands of the capitalist system. Education, according to direct reproduction theories, helps to reproduce or maintain the capitalist economic system. Some of these theories involve an economic determinist conception of society. Other theories are more voluntarist in nature, emphasizing that the ruling class moulds education to suit its own purpose. Finally, certain theories whilst paying lip service to the idea of the ‘relative autonomy’ of education nevertheless see education as nothing more than an element of the ‘state apparatus’, the crucial function of which is to perpetuate capitalist relations of production.

Orthodox Marxists believe that the economic base determines the superstructure in the sense that, for example, a society’s educational system, or its form of government, or the type of family prevalent at any particular time is a direct consequence of the nature of its economic system. Furthermore, as economic base changes, so do other social, political, educational and cultural institutions.

Check Your Progress 1

Notes: a) Write your answer in the space given below.
   b) Compare your answer with those given at the end of unit.

1) There could be both internal and external sources of changes occurring in societies. True or False

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2) Mention the three major sociological perspectives in education.

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In view of the post-independence aspirations for modernization, change and development, it is but natural that several sociologists focus upon the issue of education as an instrument for modernization, change and development. Together the several conceptual analyses and empirical studies on this theme provide a valuable elucidation of the functions of education as an instrument of development, the conditions under which this instrument is effective as the conditions in which its functioning is constrained. They also provide valuable data and insights on how, where and why education in the country has failed as an instrument of change. The writings on the subject reveal a shift in the outlook on education across the years. In the beginning the writings generally exuded faith in education as an instrument of development and focus on spelling out the manner in which it is expected to function as such. In contrast, later writings displayed a measure of skepticism about the effectiveness of education and generally inclined towards indicating where and why it fails.

We find broadly two paradigms on the issue of education and society in India. They are the functional paradigm and the conflict paradigm. In the functional paradigm education is considered as the main instrument of social change and transformation. It is evident in the writings of educationists, planners, policy-makers and most of the sociologists. For example, the opening paragraph in the chapter on education in our Third Five Year Plan (1961) states:

Education is the most important single factor in achieving rapid economic development and technological progress and in creating a social order founded on the values of freedom, social justice and equal opportunity. Programmes of education lie at the base of the effort to forge the bonds of common citizenship, to harness the energies of the people, and to develop the natural and human resources of every part of the country.

Further, the report of Kothari Commission (1964) held:

The destiny of India is now being shaped in her classrooms. This, we believe, is no mere rhetoric. In a world based on science and technology, it is education that determines the level of prosperity, welfare and security of the people. On the quality and number of persons coming out of our schools and colleges will depend our success in the great enterprise of natural reconstruction.

The report adds, 'In fact, what is needed is a revolution in education which in turn will set in motion the much desired social, economic and cultural revolution'.

In the conflict paradigm, education is not considered as a prime mover of social change or as the main weapon, or even one of the important instruments of achieving fundamental social changes. Here, it is asserted that change in or through the educational system is not possible without prior changes in the social structure. The changes in economic structures, in the political power structure, or the legal structure are the mainsprings of change in the social hierarchy and the relationships between different sections in it. All these factors including education are inter-related and interact, and it is difficult to separate out the effects and say that a particular aspect of the change is attributable to education. Hence education seldom rises above the socio-economic and socio-political situation in which it is embedded.

It has been argued that although formal education plays a vital role in 'ideational change' through transformation of the knowledge, attitudes and values of the people, its effectiveness in bringing about structural change in society is extremely limited. The vicious circle in which education is caught in India today may be broken if the linkages between the existing practices, procedures and vested interests in the status quo are meaningfully exposed by social scientists through their research.
3.6.1 Education and Social Change

Education is regarded as the key for restructuring the economies of the developing countries. It helps in overcoming the techno-economic problems and also plays an important role in resolving the socio-demographic problems.

Education facilitates the development of human resources, cultural expression, and improved health and thus provides an essential base for social and economic development. It is considered as an empowering phenomenon which enables the people to combat social justice and exploitation and thus creates the required synergy for a structural socio-political transformation. According to UNESCO, education leads to social revolution.

Education is regarded as an important instrument of social change. The role of education could be viewed from two related but slightly different perspectives, which may be called teleological and empirical perspectives. In the teleological perspective, the role of education is to assist the society to achieve the goals it has set for itself. These include:

i) Goals in the fields of technological, scientific, and other areas of economic development of the country,

ii) Social goals like reduction of various forms of social inequality; and

iii) The goal of moulding the character of citizens as responsible and socially and politically conscientious members of democratic society.

There are roles of education attributed by educationalists, the government, or other agencies but the empirical perspective focuses on examining exactly what role education plays in development at the empirical level. This would involve a delineation of facts as operative at the ground level, and also an explanation of those facts in terms of why and how.

Education was regarded as an important means for reducing social inequalities in India. The Constitution of India made special provisions for promoting the educational interests of the weaker sections of society. Educational support was provided to SC/ST through the programmes of scholarships and fellowships, and making reservations of seats for them in various educational institutions. It was presumed that education would contribute to their overall development. Education could facilitate their economic development as it enables them to get better paid jobs and achieve social mobility. Education also has an emancipators’ role. It promotes social awareness and sharpening of self-respect and dignity. However, it is noted that education performs only a restricted role in the upward mobility of the weaker sections, and at the same time enables the elites to maintain positions of power and authority.

The Indian Constitution provides equality of educational opportunity to all citizens. The liberal democratic system permits competition and holds this as a legitimate strategy for the betterment of one’s status in society. Competitiveness is an important feature of the Indian education system. There is a dialectical relationship between education and social mobility in general and mobility to elite positions in particular. But it is only to a limited extent that education has facilitated social mobility.

The dialectical relationship is manifested in the processes of ‘early selection’ and ‘mass examination’ in India. The process of early selection is involved in the enrolment of children when they are very young in different types of educational institutions. Children from the elite background are ‘selected’ early in life and placed in good quality, high fee, English medium ‘public schools’ where they are prepared – in
terms of skills, behaviour and values – specifically for elite status in their later life. Children of the middle class study in medium quality quasi-public schools run by private institutions, and in Central and Sainik Schools of the Government, and later generally work at middle level occupational strata. Children of the lower class people get the opportunity to study in the ill-equipped low quality regional medium government-run schools and are prepared to join the lower occupational strata in the society. Similarly, the higher education institutions, both general and professional, are of high, medium and low quality. Students of the elite public schools generally enter the selected few elite colleges. Those from the medium and lower quality schools generally get admission to the medium and lower quality colleges and institutions.

However, the educational inequalities created by the process of early selection is counter balanced to some extent by the system of mass examination held at state or national level, in which different types of schools are obliged to take part. The system of mass examination has a symbolic significance of giving all individuals an equal chance based on competition and thus giving democratic legitimacy to the education system. Performance at the examinations plays an important role in linking education with competition for achievement of status and power in life. A very small number of students from the medium and lower quality schools are able to enter into better quality higher education institutions, get better education and achieve better/elite positions in life. The scope available for limited upward social mobility builds and retains the confidence in the system and keep the aspirations of the masses alive in the education system in particular, and the society in general. The governmental provision of reservations in admission to educational institutions for the backward sections of society further reinforces their confidence in the system. Realizing the significance of education in social mobility, the people belonging to the dominant middle castes have set up schools and colleges and increased the opportunities for their education and subsequent benefits in life. It is observed that whereas the strategy of early selection practised by the private education system continues to offer safe routes towards status professions to the children of the elite, mass examination offers to the rest of society the assurance that status can also be achieved through competition. So, while early selection is a ‘reproductionist’ force in Indian education, mass examination is a symbol of the possibility of change.

Various studies have shown that the major beneficiaries of higher education come from the upper social strata and an urban background. Education had earlier facilitated the extension of dominant peasant caste hegemony particularly at the state level. But with the passage of time, those belonging to the lower castes, like SC/STs also made considerable progress in higher education and so has achieved the attendant socio-economic benefits through limited mobility.

3.7 EDUCATION, ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

There exists a highly contrasting set of views on the relation between education and development, particularly on economic development. Education plays a positive role in development; however there are other studies which state that education has no effect on economic performance, for instance, in the agricultural development. Education has also been noted to be having a negative effect on development, particularly in case of rural development i.e. although it is reasonable to assume that formal schooling plays some role in rural and agricultural development, it is quite apparent that schooling alone is not likely to effect any major rural transformation. Whatever the role that education plays, it is not likely to be a powerful agency of change. Education is but one element that contributes to rural development and at certain stages is conceivably far from being the most important.
Education, especially higher education contributes to the process of social and technological changes through research and development. It facilitates the creation of new ideas, tools, techniques and products as reflected in quantum jumps in technological innovations which promote the process of development. Here, development stands between research and diffusion. It promotes change and transformation of techniques, tools and products. However, it may or may not bring in its wake a transformation of the basic value system of a society.

Knowledge is the most powerful engine of production and the most valuable of all capital that is invested in human beings. In earlier times, education was considered an item of consumption. But the view of planners has changed, and education is regarded as investment for achieving rapid development. Most human capital economists hold that education has both consumption and investment value. Education has implications for the existing inequality of income and wealth.

Humans are both producers and consumers of goods and services. At individual/family level they invest in education and training to increase their productivity and income and thereby their consumption. The society as well invests in education with a view to promoting growth and productivity. The government subsidizes education for national development. So there are costs and benefits of education at both private and social levels.

Relation between education and development is analyzed in terms of the rate of return from different levels of education. This has two aspects – rate of return to individuals i.e. private benefits, and rate of return to society i.e. social benefits from education. Previously economists focused on the private benefits in terms of individual income across different levels of education. Later, the social benefits accruing from education was well recognized. In accounting for the benefits from education, it is not sufficient to look only at the higher earnings associated with more education.

Generally education seems to have a positive rate of return and at some levels, they are favourable. However, if the high rate of unemployment is the sole consideration, education may not be said to give a positive return and has even been said to be an economic waste.

An important finding in the studies on rates of return is that elementary education generally yields the highest returns. As one moves up the educational ladder, there is reflected progressively lower rate of return. This could be true of the poor developing countries. However, in case of the developed countries the optimum level of return is not achieved by elementary education.

Besides monetary returns, education has other developmental impact such as:

It leads to reduction in fertility rate and population.

It raises socio-political awareness of the people and, thus, a better citizenry and promotes democracy.

Education facilitates the fuller and better utilization of all the productive resources. Research and development raise the productive capacity of the resources. With increasing level of education of the people, the structure of economy undergoes a change. The dominant sector of the economy shifts from agriculture to industry and then to service sector in terms of contribution to the economy and employment.

There are serious limitations on education to promote social mobility of the weaker sections of society. The prevailing socio-political structures limit educational potential in that the upper strata reaps the major benefits of the gigantic expansion of educational facilities, thereby sharpening the differentiation in rural society rather than reducing it. There is a close correlation between the agrarian class structure and educational
achievement. In India, the political developments since Independence have contributed largely towards determining the course of educational growth. There developed a differential system of education to satisfy the needs and aspirations of different strata of society. Nobody cared about the people at the bottom of the social hierarchy who are considered to be the rejects of society.

3.8 THE MISMATCH PROBLEM

There is noticed certain level of mismatch between education and development, particularly rural development in India. It is opined that the education system is out of pace with the rhythm of life in India. The primary schools are completely focused on preparing students to enter into the secondary system of education. The secondary system has no concern with life around it and is fully meant to prepare students to feed into the tertiary system whose goals seem to rest outside the India’s requirements. The products, particularly of the elite institutions prefer to leave the country and work in the affluent foreign countries only for their individual benefits. A large number of educated youth remain unemployable in the country. The poor people do not find education useful and attractive as it does not ensure job, besides other factors.

Non-formal education, including adult education is seen to have large potential to promote development and social change in a country like India. The classroom-centered education and training is largely geared to producing urban based elites. It has created a serious problem of educated unemployment and also high dropouts and illiteracy among the backward sections of society. The expert-centered, literacy/skill focused non-formal education, including adult education has not been able to adequately cater to the needs of the people.

The stream of non-formal education, including adult education, was introduced long back in the country focused mainly on the programmes of literacy and sometimes a little vocational training. This did not prove to be much useful to the people and their development. This was due to the fact that the problems of the poor are manifold and the kind of non-formal education that is given to them, does not adequately respond to their needs. It is observed that the major challenges for them are to negotiate and confront with the vested interests which oppress them. The first step in learning for them would involve learning to fight the vested interests and the petty bureaucracy.

Besides literacy, education has to meet the need for skill development and employment generation (not creating unemployment). It could develop their personal and collective critical thinking, problem diagnosis and solution through organizing themselves in different ways. The programme would break their isolation and marginalization, and motivate, organize and empower them to fully participate in social and public/political activities in life. Here, the outside support would only facilitate the process and the deprived people would themselves actively participate in their overall development in a sustainable way.

3.9 GLOBALIZATION AND EDUCATION

‘Globalization’ is a favourite catchphrase for business theory and practice, and has entered academic debates and become a focus for discussion in education. But what people mean by ‘globalization’ is often confused and confusing. It has been defined as the process of removing government-imposed restrictions on movements between countries in order to create an “open”, “borderless” world economy. Those who have argued with some success for the abolition of regulatory trade barriers and capital controls have sometimes clothed this in the mantle of ‘globalization’.
The context in which educators operate has been conditioned by people's experience with both formal and informal education. Schools and colleges, for example, become sites for branding and the targets of corporate expansion. Many policymakers automatically look to market 'solutions'. The impact and pervasiveness of these forces of globalization also means that they should be a fundamental focus for education and learning; but there are powerful currents running against honest work in this area. The impact of globalization on education includes:

- Commodification and the corporate takeover of education.
- The threat to the autonomy of national educational systems by globalization.
- De-localization and changing technologies and orientations in education.
- Branding, globalization and learning to be consumers.

The government support to education sector is being substantially reduced. Private educational institutions which operate on commercial principles are rapidly increasing. They could provide the choice of better quality education. In this kind of scenario, middle class is able to take the maximum benefits. They are able to use their existing stock of economic, social and cultural resources to acquire quality education in a deregulated market situation. Market systematically offers privileges to better off families because they have more knowledge and material resources. But the lower classes are adversely affected as they know less about the market in education and do not have adequate material resources to acquire quality education which they cannot afford. At the same time the quality of education in the government supported institutions, declines due to retreat of the state. Those studying in these institutions, mostly the poorer sections, get negatively affected.

The process of globalization would mainly affect the parts of education system that could be exposed to it. Moreover, changes in education are generally slow to occur. Hence, it could be stated that 'strong mismatches and discrepancies will prevail between the expected impact of globalization on education and the actual changes occurring in education as a result of globalization'. It may be noted that globalization is not a radical revolution that is going to completely transform education: its impact will be more an emphasis of certain trends.

The increasing dominance of market in the contemporary society imposes constraints on the state for ensuring the industrial development and competitiveness of the economy, and favouring multinational expansion of national companies. Hence, the increasing race for excellence in the economy does/ will put pressure on the educational institutions to compete with one another in more intense manner. Moreover, increasing economics and reduction in public spending on education would lead to increased segmentation between different types of educational institutions, a decrease in access to good quality education for the poorer sections, and a general decline in the quality of education.

Check Your Progress 2

Notes: a) Write your answer in the space given below.

b) Compare your answer with those given at the end of unit.

3) Briefly identify the relationship between education, economic growth and development.

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4) Mention any three impact of globalization on education.

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<tr>
<th>Impact of Globalization on Education</th>
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<td>1. Commodification and the corporate takeover of education.</td>
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<td>2. The threat to the autonomy of national educational systems by globalization.</td>
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<td>4. Branding, globalization and learning to be consumers.</td>
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3.10 LET'S SUM UP

Social change refers to changes in the social organisation of society. It covers the alterations that occur in the social structure and functions. It encompasses changes in different spheres of social life. The scope of social change varies. It includes changes of the structure of society and changes within the structure of society. There are two major perspectives on social change – the evolutionist and the diffusionist perspectives. Two major theories of social changes are the functionalist theory and the theory of economic determinism.

The concept of development is multidimensional in nature. The concept and theories of development also deal with social change, but they are specific to the kind of changes proposed and occurring in the developing countries after their independence from the colonial rule.

The relationship between education and society has been viewed from three different perspectives, i.e. functionalist perspective, the Marxist perspective, and the interpretive perspective.

3.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1) True

2) i) Functionalist perspective,
   ii) The Marxist perspective, and
   iii) The Interpretive perspective

3) Education generally leads to higher monetary returns
   It leads to reduction in fertility rate and population.
   It raises socio-political awareness of the people and thus a better citizenry and promotes democracy.
   Education facilitates the fuller and better utilization of all the productive resources.

4) Commodification and the corporate takeover of education.
   The threat to the autonomy of national educational systems by globalization.
   De-localization and changing technologies and orientations in education.
   Branding, globalization and learning to be consumers.
3.12 REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS


