

Egalitarian Society: Social and Educational Equality-An Introspection

*¹Dr. Saher Hussain

*¹Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, Karamat P.G. College, Nishatganj, Lucknow, India.

Abstract

Equal availability of opportunities for education, irrespective of religion, caste, creed, sex, language, colour, economic condition explains equality in Education. Whereas social equality gives same status in aspects like civil right, freedom of speech, right to property etc. Providing equality in education plays a key role in promoting social justice and equality. All the citizen of a nation should be provided with right to quality education irrespective of their socio-economic background, gender, sex or race. It is a major tool for fostering equality in a society. Education helps in changing the perspective of individuals and make them think on the lines of equality thereby establishing an egalitarian society. For a nation to prosper it is fundamental to have educational and social equality. All the citizens should be equal before Law and be treated with respect and dignity. The constitution of our country gives provisions for educational and social equality to its people. Despite it being mentioned in the constitution of the country, discrimination in education sector in particular and society at large is evident. It is for sure, that for any society to progress and prosper it's state machinery should work towards achieving social justice and reducing the gulf of economic disparity among its people. Steps taken by the government in this direction are definitely a beam of light in darkness of an unequal society.

Keywords: Economic disparity, social justice, educational equality, human rights

Introduction

India is a democratic country. Democracy is an integral part of our political and social fabric. For any society to establish an egalitarian system primarily equality of opportunity has to be enforced. To quote Dr. S. Radha Krishnan democracy provides equal opportunities to its citizens for the development of unequal talents. A nation must engage in optimal utilisation of all sections of population. Education plays an important role for maximizing utilisation of human resource of a country. Provision of equal education for every child is a right and no more a privilege. Educational inequality is a major social concern. Equality of opportunity should be the right of every citizen which helps in the development of her/his potential.

The soul of a country can be determined by the way it treats its most vulnerable and dependent members, then it is for sure that the future of a country can be predicted by the magnitude at which it provides a fair chance of life to each child. Accessibility of equal quality education is so powerful that it can definitely end the vicious cycle of inequality and uplift the lives of deprived children. It is in tune with the spirit of the Constitution. The Education Commission has observed "One of the important social objective of education is to equalize opportunity enabling the backward or underprivileged classes and individuals to use education as a lever to improve their condition.

Objective of the Study

- i) To foster social and educational equity.
- ii) To find out solutions and help diminish disparity.

Methodology

Descriptive and secondary source of data is used to study the problem of inequality in society.

Social Justice

"Justice of society" is another term for social justice. It governs the relations between individuals. In theoretical terms social justice is often understood to be equivalent to justice itself. Whereas social justice emphasises on conditions encouraging development of self. Martha Nussbaum an American philosopher believes that a just society is one that fosters the talents and capabilities of individuals to engage in such activities that are required to have a true "human life" Great sociologists Aristotle and Plato saw justice as a condition of an ideal city state and an individual virtue. According to Ayebis *et al* (1998) teaching for social justice cannot be separated from teaching that favours the conditions conducive for democracy. It engages its citizens including students, teachers, and guardians. Education is a powerful tool for promoting social equality and justice. It gives people the power of knowledge wisdom, skills and values which can understand and fight the challenges of injustice and inequality. Education helps to see the root causes of evils of injustice. By creating an inclusion congenial environment in educational institutions, society can move forward towards a just and equal world. Education should emphasise on understanding the roots of social injustice. This knowledge can further be used to take guided steps to challenge and change these unequal unjust systems.

Welfare State and Social Justice

Every citizen should avail equal economic social and political rights. Equal opportunities should be the aim of state machinery. Social justice promotes just and fair environment across almost all spheres of society. One of the earliest known uses of social justice was in 1840 by Luigi Taparelli. Social justice must prevail to ensure a livable meaningful and respectful life for every individual. Brain Barry (2005) [3] opines that if inequalities of income and wealth are kept within a narrow range then equal prospects of health, education and autonomy can be realized. Social justice should include employment, education, housing, health care etc. Social justice is a matter of concern because it ensures that people are heard and free to make their decisions for life.

In a welfare state everyone should have equitable access to resources. Somewhere even access to resources can be modified depending on the requirement of the individual and society.

Educational Equality

Article 26 of Indian Constitution guarantees equal educational rights to all its citizens irrespective of caste, creed, religion, sex, sect or ethnicity. It is fundamental for the all-round development of the personalities of its citizens. As per the RTE Act and Article 21A of the Indian Constitution Education up to 14 years of age is a fundamental right and it should be free and compulsory. The Indian Constitution in its original enactment defined education as state subject. Under Article 42 of the Constitution an amendment was made in 1976 and education became a concurrent list subject which enables the Government in the Centre to legislate it in the manner which suits. The 86th Amendment Act has now inserted Article 21A in the constitution which has made Education a fundamental Right.

Right to Education (RTE)

The 'Right to Education' Act (RTE) is an act of the Parliament of India enacted on 4th August 2009 (Yadav, R.K. 2020) The Act made education a fundamental Right of every child (6 to 14) and specified minimum norms in elementary schools. Inclusive system of education is a positive step for developing social and educational equity. In this type of education, students with special needs and other normal children study in same classroom. It fosters a culture of mutual respect and belongingness. It provides a space of opportunity to learn about and accept differences in personalities provides a chance to make friendships which further brings out role models and future prospects of growth and development.

Major Reasons of Educational Inequality and Social Injustice

In a society the division of burdens and rewards should always be fair. Social injustice crops up when unequal treatment is given to equals. In order to end justice barriers like oppression, racism, discrimination, sexism should be dealt seriously.

There have been issues of inequality for centuries like subjugation, favoritism and bias social justice matters. It is a powerful idea for a modern contemporary society. The main reason behind this issue is poverty. The socio economic low level of families fail to understand the importance of education in an individual's life. It results in disparity among children of rural and urban area and children of educated and uneducated parents. Due to lack of inclusive system of

education in Indian Schools the children with special needs are deprived of quality education and hence feel alienated from the mainstream. The infrastructural differences among rural and urban schools increases the gulf resulting in inequality. There are several obstacles and challenges related to educational system which hinders promotion of inclusive education. To make inclusion appropriate teacher preparation, awareness and attitude towards disabilities, retention of special children etc. should be made mandatory in all elementary, secondary and higher level education. To make this inclusive system of education successful quality resources, faculties and facilities must be supplied to each institution. There are many constitutional provisions which should be enforced. Awareness for Government Schemes should be ensured. Eradication of corruption should be done it does not allow the resources and schemes to reach the children. Increased number of institutions should be opened for economically and socially weaker sections of society. Free fooding and lodging facilities should be provided for the people in need.

Conclusion

There are many obstacles and challenges related to establishment of social and educational equality in a society. An environment should be created conducive for achieving freedom to enjoy the fundamental rights and awaken people making them aware of their rights. Education till the age of 14 has become a fundamental right for all children should receive education and develop their potentials for a great nation of youths.

It should be free for all whether rural areas or urban centres. Heads of families should ensure that children get educated and be freed from child labour.

References

1. Yadav RK. Right to Education in India: A study, 2012.
2. Kumar S, Kumar K. Inclusive Education in India, Electronic Journal for Inclusive Education. 2007; 2(2). (Summer/Fall) Article 7.
3. Brain Barry. Why social Justice Matters, Polity Press, Cambridge UK, 2005.