

# COMMUNITY EDUCATION IN NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

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The quality of life is implicit in community education and it enriches it. In the modern period of rapid transformation and communication, community as a whole cannot be averse to it and it has to move with the times. Mass education is the fundamental method for socio-economic transformation of the society. The foremost task is that the nation's human potential should become more enlightened and should make better use of its available resources. In the historical context, the French Revolution of 1788 stimulated modern intellectualism and consequently a dynamic relationship was established between the intelligentsia and the common people and there by socio-economic imbalances had been reduced.

The two-thirds of Indian population is illiterate. Mass education drive is the only remedy. The Government is firmly resolved to wage a clearly conceived, well-planned and relentless struggle against illiteracy, to enable the masses to play an active role in social and cultural changes. Literacy forms an integral part of an individual's personality. The mass approach is likely to cover the entire nation and all segments of the population will be benefitted. A child who is a message from God should be very well looked after as a national property.

## CONCEPTS & OBJECTIVES

The 'community' refers to a group of people living together in a region where common ways of thinking and acting make the inhabitants somewhat aware of themselves as a group.

The 'family' is the most basic educational agency in moulding the lives of boys and girls, where fundamental attitudes and habits are formed; at the same time undesirable and abnormal habits are eliminated. Individual's value structure is based on one's family upbringing. As such a child's interests and abilities are the outcome of his/her family influences, social, religious, cultural



etc. He gets an opportunity to unfold his latent talents, by virtue of that he achieves social position and material rewards in his life.

The term 'education' refers to the broad functioning of preserving and improving the life of the group, a far broader process, an essential social activity by which communities continue to exist. Organised knowledge is man's greatest resource for individual and community growth, and it should be functionally related to meeting life's problems. Life, today, has emerged finer and more subtle than that of our ancestors.

As regards its objectives, the community education programme is meant not only for removing illiteracy alone, its aim is to create awareness about related problems. What education means is that a child or an adult can speak, read, write in mother tongue, along with the knowledge of simple arithmetic and an aesthetic sense in general sense. Culturally, he should fit well with the society by way of enlightened behaviour in a democratic way of life. In economic sense, he should be familiar with workmanship, occupational information and home economics. The chief purpose is to preserve, promote and refine the way of life in which a society believes.

#### BACKGROUND

In India, the problem of poverty and illiteracy is twin and acute and their simultaneous abolition is much desired. The poor are passive spectators in the process of socio-economic development of the present era. The literacy programme should be linked with the national planning strategy and intensive area planning would give employment reorientation to development process with rural bias. Literacy with learning-cum-action groups may possibly revitalize the national life. It is the need of the day.

There are 6 lakh elementary schools, 40,000 secondary schools, 4500 colleges and 120 universities with the result that there is 36 percent literacy; the rest are deprived of the fundamental privilege. It is a matter of serious concern for a country like India. In all 3.5 million teachers are employed and total expenditure on education is about Rs. 3000 crores next to that of defence.

Is it not the legacy for India that 40 percent of the world poor resides in this country? Their low hierarchical pattern is the main constraint to any new change, which is generally resented by them. A break-through is imperative.

#### APPROACH

The Indian society, despite its multi-level, multi-religious and multi-ethnic character, has been inter-dependent and there has been constant interaction. Community education creates self-operating evolutionary process and accelerates their pace. It would reduce tensions, distortions in all spheres of human life and would generate creative energies. The growth in mental ability is relevant to every expansion.

Due to advancing technology and increased level of education, the degree of skill required of the working force is increasing. Such type of education fosters participation of the young in the affairs of the community. The youth's adjustment in the adult world is an integral part of the educational task. They should learn to solve their problems cooperatively.

It is understood that community does not influence all its youths in the same way. Since environment is not identical for all boys and girls, as such child is moulded by his particular set

of environmental conditions. Hence, a positive effort has to be made to ensure the integration of traditional and contemporary elements with formal and non-formal education.

Community service and participation in constructive and socially useful work should be implied in the national educational programme at all stages to foster self-reliance and the dignity of labour. Moral education should form part of the content through inter-related curricular and co-curricular programmes. Teachers and institutions should bear the entire responsibility.

#### POLICY AND PROGRAMME

(a) *Policy*—An ideal system of educational policy should enable individuals to learn and develop to the fullest their physical and intellectual potentiality and promote their awareness of social and human values so that dynamic-status-quo is created in the main stream of the national life. To achieve this, the content of educational curriculum needs to be modified to suit changing times and needs of the hour. Emphasis should be shifted from teaching to learning and the role of the teacher becomes more crucial.

The system must endeavour to narrow the gulf between the educated classes and the masses, and the feeling of superiority and inferiority should be gradually eliminated. A student should be permitted to choose his own course and choose his own time.

Highest priority must be given to free education for all upto the age of fourteen, as laid down in the directive principles of the Constitution. It should be general and not specialised. The accent on elementary education should centre round the totality of personality of an individual.

Besides formal subjects of a curriculum, the system should lay stress on useful community service and it should incorporate also agriculture or horticulture and vocational activity. Information on family planning, health and nutrition, child and mother care should be widely disseminated. This would comprise the development content of community education.

The central link in the system is secondary education which possesses backward and forward linkages, with elementary and college education respectively. Secondary education has to be so structured that by dint of his acquired knowledge and skill, he can enter life's career with a wider choice and mobility. Thus, there is a need for change in the approach to the learning process with creative accent at all levels in the educational policy of the nation.

(b) *Programme*—Besides formal education, the non-formal education comprises the following :—

- (i) National Adult Education
- (ii) Farmers' functional literacy
- (iii) Social education and so on.

To develop a realistic attitude towards work and poster a keener sense of adult responsibility, a vital curriculum is deemed necessary.

An adult education programme was taken up by the Janata Government on the 5th April 1977 in the Parliament. It was indeed a bold and massive programme, which was launched on the 2nd October 1978. It was envisaged that an adult education centre would prove to be a place of reform, training, earning and learning campus. A programme so designed should motivate the people for betterment of life. The process is liable to revive popular initiative for national upsurge. The phasing of the programme would last from 1978-79 to 1983-84 and the



outlay earmarked was Rs. 200 crores. Recently the present Government has given to it a new touch.

This massive programme would cover 100 million in the age group of 15 to 35 years, with special attentions to farmers, women, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. The adult education programme is community-oriented and carefully worked out. The multiple agencies would conduct the programme :

1. Existing school teachers
2. Voluntary organisations
3. Local self Govt. bodies
4. Youth and women organisations
5. Trade and industry
6. Developmental social service departments

It is desirable to associate the local community with schools in the area, through the setting up of local committees whose function will be to assist in their efficient functioning. Religious, economic and political institutions are expected to encourage and shape local and regional education. Service societies, craft-unions and farm groups can serve as catalyst in their respective work areas. The 'Krishi Vigyan Kendras', so formed should be nucleus to educate rural youth for accelerating production. Deserving candidates should be given stipends and scholarships. New innovations and research done in this field of agriculture should be easily accessible to villages by the efforts of the concerned agencies.

Any noble scheme, so framed, does not find easy access to the masses where heterogeneous society persists. This is main drawback in Indian life. The people of different social stock, religious faiths, linguistics and ethnic background maintain their narrow identities which are crucial to overcome. The other potent cause of limitation is the question of survival rather than education in a poverty-stricken country.

The industrial and technological processes are percolating in the country life and they naturally affect the community life, and that is going to be impersonal in character day by day. In this way rural and urban life present differences in value systems and life goals. This presents a situation of crisis of dilemma. Karl Marx observes that the modern educational system is a phenomenon of capitalism and dehumanisation process grows on, and it has destroyed the very fabric of noble cultural instincts.

### CONCLUSIONS

The crux of the problem is social change. The growth of youth towards constructive citizenship is a continuous process with which education is primarily concerned. A new cadre of leadership from the local people should emerge to shoulder the responsibility for the betterment of community life. In this way the cumulative process of feedback will ever perpetuate in the spectrum of ever growing process.

The community education would generate self-operating evolutionary process and provide momentum to it. It would restore peace and harmony in all spheres of human life and would generate creative energies. The growth of intellect is relevant to every expansion.

The weaker sections should be motivated to initiate and sustain progress to carve their own destinies. Dr. M. S. Swaminathan, Member, Planning Commission urges that the dichotomy between education and development should end—and his emphasis is on the need for organic structured linkages between education, development and employment. □