



Education as a Catalyst for National Development

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Abstract: National development is about putting resources of the country for the realization of greatest returns. For example, good health and good education have proven to have the greatest returns in countries like Singapore, Finland etc. Most people would agree that any nation's development is mainly because of its people and optimum utilization of resources. Optimum utilization of scarce resources depends upon measuring value of people's asset such as knowledge, experience, skills etc. and leveraging them efficiently in order to achieve development and breakthroughs in innovation. Hence, in true sense nation's development depends on its people. Until recently, physical capital used to be considered the most significant component for economic growth of any country but over the last three decades research has proven the relevance of education as a critical determinant in economic development. Right education leads to knowledge, expertise and skill of the people. The key element for national development or economic progress is not only about numeric increase of academic education of people but also the qualitative advancement of education to the people. In other words, education is true human capital and key catalyst for economic development. Because of its vital contribution to economic growth in the field of education is directly proportional to the human capital formation which ultimately leads to economic growth and national development. This research paper throws light upon the five catalytic roles of education in the process of national development.

Key Words: Education, National Development, Economic Growth, Human Capital, Social Change, Democracy, Poverty.

1. INTRODUCTION :

Starting by sharing two of my favourite quotes, not because we have not heard them before but because I feel we should hear them over and over again till they begin to reflect in our actions. The first is a quote by Nelson Mandela which says:

Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world.

And the second is by the famous Chinese Philosopher Confucius, which says:

*If your plan is for one year, plant rice. If your plan is for ten years, plant a tree.
If your plan is for one-hundred years, educate children.*

Now, why is so much talk about education? Every year the World Bank produces a report - The World Bank Development Report and in this report topics of global importance and development are featured. In 2018, for the very first time ever, the entire report was dedicated to education emphasizing the role of education for futuristic growth. This shows the importance of education in the nation's development. Education has always been priority of international community and the Right to Education was first enshrined in the United Declaration of Human Right in 1948 and finds place in the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) given in the Constitution of India. All the provisions in the Indian Constitution are not enforceable except the fundamental rights. Implementation of the constitutional provisions like Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) lies on the good will of the Government. The government showed its



will by making education as fundamental right by inserting the following in Article 21-A of the Constitution by eighty sixth (86th) Amendment in Constitution.

21A. The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine.

Article 21 guarantees free and compulsory education to children of the age group six to fourteen years and Article 51 of the Constitution tells the duties of the parents of the children of the age group between six to fourteen years to educate their children as their duty. Not only this, quality of education is one of the 17 Sustainable Goals of the United Nation adopted in 2015 as a part of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. The UN report issued on this occasion reveals the fact that education shapes our lives and is important for development of civilization and human progress. The report says that quality education and providing right opportunities to the people to get high standard of education is reaffirmed as a key of goal for the development agenda for 2030. This paper throws light upon the impacts of education in the accomplishment of national development.

2. Objective:

Everyone would agree that education is a good thing. If we see the data available regarding impact of education on human endeavours, one can see that education gives people extraordinary power to change their lives and the lives of generations to come. Education is an instrument of social transformation and it brings qualitative change in one's perception, attitudes, habits and goals. The economic progress of any country largely depends on number of trained and skilled manpower available in different areas. Education acts as a catalyst for economic performance in a country. It is proven fact that workers with specialized education and skill earn so much more than those without such education and knowledge. Understanding how education and training puts huge impact on socio-economic conditions of a country can help to explain why some workers, businesses, societies flourish while others falter. Objectives of this research paper are to explore the roles and importance of education in national development and analyze promotion of education for overall development of any nation.



3. Catalytic Roles of Education :

3.1 Eradicating Poverty

The principle of alleviating poverty by promoting self-sufficiency has a long history. Poverty is a major threat to the survival of humans in the present particularly in developing countries. There is no dispute in contention that education plays a significant role in reducing poverty. Not every person living in extreme poverty is without formal education. Many studies have suggested that people living in poverty today, missed out on the basic education. Education reduces possibilities of poverty being transmitted from generation to generation. Data shows that children from poor background are more likely to be out of school than those who come from well of families. There have been numerous researches on this issue and data shows that one extra year of schooling increases that person's earnings by up to ten percent.



As per UNESCO, in low income countries, as estimated 171 million populations can be out of extreme poverty if all their children have just basic reading skill. Another report by UNESCO published in 2017 addressing education in relation to poverty and early pregnancy highlighted the following fact:

If all adults completed secondary education, 420 million people could be lifted out of poverty, reducing the total number of poor people by more than one-half globally.

It is because of this reason that the United Nations has kept quality education as one of its Sustainable Development Goals to be achieved by 2030. Similar is the story of India in poverty reduction. Record shows that India has done tremendous pursuits in this regard. Few weeks ago, the Minister of State (Independent Charge) of Ministry of Planning, Government of India in his written reply to the Rajya Sabha citing UNDP's Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) 2022, stated that more than 400 million people were lifted out of poverty in India between 2005-2006 and 2019-2021. The number is astonishing and this is because of the fact that India has done phenomenal job in education. One of the key components of poverty reduction is to give our children right education and invest sufficiently in education. This is the secret behind the success of developed country.

Education is one of the most important tools to achieve economic growth and it lays foundation for poverty reduction by raising worker's efficiency and therefore lifting them out of poverty. It empowers human beings with skills which helps them not only to survive but also to thrive. They use these skills to earn higher income thereby building human capital which ultimately works for national development. From the above discussion it is clear that education plays pivotal role in achieving economic and social development which consequently salvages the people from poverty. It is because of this reason that access to quality education is a globally recognized tool to eradicate poverty.

3.2 Human Capital Formation

The National Policy on Education NPE (1986) states that *"The human being is a positive asset and a valuable national resource which need to be cherished, nurtured and developed. The catalyst action of education in this context needs to be planned and implemented meticulously."* In literal expression, the human capital is mixture of human and capital. In economic terms, the capital refers to factors of production used to create goods or services that are not themselves consumed in the process of production. The human refers to the people who participate in economic activities. In simple words, human capital refers to economic value of worker's knowledge, assets and skill. It includes assets like education, training, talent, health, morale, punctuality, discipline etc. Human capital has close relation with human development. With human development qualitative and quantitative progress of a country is bound to happen. In other words, human capital is an element of promoting national development. For developing country like India education is one of the essential factors for creating human capital.

India has made enough progress in terms of building human capital over the last few years. During the last seventy years India's human capital formation has increased consistently. Indian work force has boosted service industry of India which contributes maximum to the Gross Domestic Product of the country. The Indian government has taken many steps to provide more work oriented education to its youth in order to build human capital and to push economy forward. All this is possible because of timely investment in education, but, much needs to be done in terms of capital formation of the country to make India self-reliant. The secret for capital formation is to train and educate our youth in such a manner that they can meet the needs of the economy in the time of globalization. India has made wholesome progress over the last few years in the area of education especially in increasing the enrolment of children, but more needs to be done in terms of quality education.

In India, Government is now willing to pay attention towards investment in education in order to create human capital. In a big and diverse country like India it is very important to have structural change in the area of education before resources are invested to achieve the goal of quality education (SDG-4). India needs to take lessons from countries like Finland, Singapore and many more by giving free education to its children as large population of our country still cannot afford to access quality education. Since education is an essential tool for human capital formation which contributes to economic development, giving free education can bring revolution in education system. Our country will be self-reliant in real sense by providing good education and better opportunities to children. Education has the potential to bring about



transformation in the society. Educated society with its people having efficiency and skills can contribute immensely in revolutionizing the society. Education is something which cannot be taken away from a person and it always helps and reaps benefits. It can be safely concluded that the most crucial factor for overall development of any country is justified and timely investment in good quality education.

3.3 Promoting Economic Growth

It is a famous saying, “Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and he will eat for a lifetime.” Needless to say that education is the powerful tool to drive economic growth. It is believed that increase in the average educational attainment of any country’s population by one year increases annual per capita Gross Domestic Product growth by 0.5%. This increase is equal to increasing per capita income by 26% over a period of 45 years, which is roughly working lifespan of an individual. In economic terms, economic growth is caused by more efficient use of inputs (labour, physical capital, energy, material etc.). For attainment of economic growth productivity of workforce is of paramount importance. It is related to knowledge and skill which are products of education. Economic growth of a country is when workforce is capable of operating industries in such a manner that it holds a competitive advantage over the other countries. Across the world, organizations are putting extra efforts to prepare and train their workforce to meet demands of the future. The preparation is largely in terms of providing education to the workers by training and upskilling them. It will make them acquainted with skills, tools and ability to use the fast changing technologies in their work place. One of the key components of economic growth is investing in education by imparting appropriate training to workforces. The mantra for success in today’s time of fast economic growth is to impart right education to youth which is not limited to academic knowledge. The youth needs the skills, confidence and innovation to meet the challenges of remarkably changing world. The positive impact of education on economic growth is a byproduct of quality education and adaptation of the skills with the change. All the countries of the world need to find innovative ways to educate work force in terms of meeting requirement of changing world. Researches show that present day jobs and work will disappear in few years as technologies are replacing human capital. Future jobs require new skilled workers to compete in a competitive world. Thus, it is envisaged that economic growth will be directly proportional to the implementation of upskilling and giving futuristic quality education to the people forming human capital.

3.4. Developing Democratic Values

There is a deep connection between democracy and education. Democracy cannot be seen in isolation from the spectrum of education. A successful democracy depends upon the character and intelligence of its citizens. Education helps in fostering democratic values like freedom, equality, justice, co-operation, shouldering responsibility, sharing experiences etc. According to George Bernard Shaw “*Democracy implies election of the corrupt few by the ignorant many. Therefore, education is the major means to enrich the strengths and overcome the weaknesses of the people. It is also a means for the widespread diffusion of democratic values.*” Radhakrishnan Commission (1948) mentions in its report that, “*Education is the great instrument of social emancipation, by which democracy establishes, maintains and protects the spirit of equality among its members.*”

Education enables citizens not only to understand the social, political, economic and cultural problems objectively but also form their own independent views on these problems. The first and foremost condition for successful democracy is that citizens are educated. Education plays crucial role in educating the citizens and awakening them about their democratic rights and duties. Earlier the citizens were unaware of their rights and were concerned only about their work and life. They used to blindly follow the orders of the authorities. With the advancement of education, situation has changed. Education provokes them to think independently and question arbitrary actions of the authorities. It ignites passion in the people for social justice and enables them with scientific temperament, further enabling them to realize their true potential which contributes to the success of democracy. This mass awakening is the result of education which paves way for active participation of people in democratic activities. Thereby it is proven that democracy functions better when its citizens are educated.

3.5 Bringing Social Change

Education is and will be the most potent tool for social change. It is the most notable instrument for social change. It facilitates mobilization of people’s aspirations for growth and change. Education brings social change by cultivating a positive attitude and broadening thinking of people allowing them to contribute in the development of society. This



implies that education is an instrument of social change. It changes the conventional approach of perceiving socio-economic problems of the society. It not only sharpens the skills of people but also inculcates new thoughts in them. Illiteracy is the root cause of all evils in the society and educating people can be an instrument of change and eradicating evils. This is the reason behind the success of social reform movements like Brahma Samaj, Arya Samaj, Ramakrishna Mission and Christian Missionaries in the earlier days. In India, education has been instrumental to render social transformation since times immemorial.

4. CONCLUSION :

Education plays a very important role in bringing overall national development. People as human capital play a significant role in economic development of a country and education is the catalyst for shaping people. Education plays its role in every human endeavor like technological developments, skill acquisition, instilling values and fostering awareness. In simple correlation, if a country has higher literacy rate, that country will have lower unemployment rate and higher GDP growth. Education in all respect is the backbone of any country. This is why international community cannot sit idle ignoring the role of education. National Policy on Education (1986) termed education as a “*unique investment in the present and the future.*”

“Education is key to the global integrated framework of sustainable development goals. Education is at the heart of our efforts both to adapt to change and to transform the world within which we live. A quality basic education is the necessary foundation for learning throughout life in a complex and rapidly changing world.”

(Irina Bokova, Director General of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in UNESCO 2015).

Increase in literacy rate with a view to increase economic growth should be the criterion of all the countries worldwide as education has direct correlation with economic growth. Higher literacy rate often leads to higher economic growth. Someone has rightly said that education has great potential to change the world when societies are educated. Human beings have great prospects to bring radical changes in the society. In order to reap the benefits of human capability in a positive way education is the area to be worked upon. Education is the tool to transform human beings and provide them a perspective to see better future for them. In today’s fast changing world education provides solutions to many social evils and complicated problems being faced by humans. Education enables people to transform information into knowledge and analytical skill which are essential to solve the problems the world is facing today. Proper education to the masses helps in eradicating poverty, decreasing crime, unemployment etc. which leads to national development. It is instrumental for peace and prosperity of a nation thus every nation must promote it to the magnificent levels.

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