UNIT 2: IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

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2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- Understand the relation between the concept of social mobility with education.
- Understand the role of Education as a tool of social change

2.2 INTRODUCTION

Education prepares one for life. It is a gradual process of acquiring knowledge. So education can be termed as learning. We also learn how to learn and this learning continues throughout one's life. This journey of learning begins from the day of the birth of a child. A baby learns to respond, to smile, to sit, to walk, to speak and many other activities and cognitive process as he/ she grows up. All these things can affect the later life of a child. All these constitute learning and are part of education from different

aspects. Reading and writing are merely one of the aspects of education. It is education that provides individuals the capability of reasoning, to choose between right and wrong, to choose what is good or proper for him/her or to the family, community or for the society as a whole.These perspectives entail that each one of us are educated since we learn or acquire what we feel necessary and interesting. This is categorized as the informal part of education which in no way is less important.But education through formal ways has got its priority due to its acceptance. It provides a wider window for the future life and employment. It equips people with special training required to get a job or prosperity. In this unit we will discuss about the significance of education in detail.

2.3 IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION FOR INDIVIDUALS:

Education is very beneficial as it helps people to improve themselves. It is only through education that we stand distinct and different from other creatures on this earth. The training we get at home, school and different kinds of formal and informal institutions make us better human beings in terms of our understanding of the world, sense of humanity, scientific temperament and the ability to bring ease in life by research and innovations. Education as a whole becomes an emancipatory tool as it takes us from knowledge to wisdom. Education gives people the skills that prepare individuals physically and mentally according to the need of the society. Education equips an individual to earn livelihood. It gives better job opportunities. For employment in any sector, education becomes the most important criterion everywhere in the modern society.The more one gets educated, the wider opportunities, avenues one gets in life. Education is the ladder for an individual's success in life. Education helps in gaining knowledge and a person can grow and expand with the help of it. An educated mind is actually the free mind as it has the ability to make choices. Education helps in

developing the cognitive ability and shaping the human mind with logic and reasoning. In the contemporary world it is education which can change the course of future of an individual. It not only teaches how to read and write, but how to think, how to choose, how to take the right decision, what is good or bad.

2.3.1 Importance of education for society

Education makes people aware of the physical and social environment of human setup. With the help of proper education people can respond to one's surroundings. Education is necessary for every individual, society and country. It enables us to know about our history and culture. Through education we get to know about our rights and duties and it makes us responsible citizens of a country. Education contributes independently to the regulation of conduct through the process of socialization. It teaches an individual discipline and moral values where the successes of communities lie. A progressive and a healthy society is only imaginable when its inhabitants are educated. Education through formal, informal or non-formal way contributes for the maintenance of society. Positive thinking develops through education. It helps us to get rid of superstition and instills logical thinking, humane behavior which is necessary for a healthy society.Quality education changes the quality of life of an individual in particular, and of the society and the nation in general.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1: Fill in the blanks

a. Education through formal ways has got its priority due its ……; it covers the statistics of …..... .

b. We stand distinct and different from other creatures on this earth through ……

c. Education transforms human being into …….....

2.4 EDUCATION AND SOCIAL MOBILITY

Concept of mobility is related with the notion of stratification. Where there is social stratification, there would be social mobility. Social mobility refers to the movement from one stratum to another. It refers to changes in the social position. There are two main types of social mobility - intragenerational mobility and intergenerational mobility. Intragenerational mobility refers to social mobility within a single generation. How individuals move up or down the social ladder during their life span. It is individual's achievement. Intergenerational mobility refers to social mobility across generations. How better or worse one has done than their parents are the subject matter of intergenerational mobility.These studies investigate the extent to which the present occupational status of individual is associated with the status of their family.

Sociologists also distinguish between vertical and horizontal social mobility. Horizontal mobility refers to the movement of a person from one social position to the other social position of the same rank. Vertical mobility is that where a person moves from one position to another, but at a different rank.It can either be upward or downward.

One of the pioneers in the study of social mobility, Pitirim Sorokin, is of the view that these ladders are imperative for the efficient distribution of talents is different occupations, failing to which it would promote inefficiency and disorder. He was particularly interested in the role of educational institutions in allocating people to the various occupational positions. He argued that schools function primarily as a testing, selecting, and distributing agency. In other words, they certify children for particular positions in the labor market, rather than promote each individual's abilities or encourage the development of talent (Oxford dictionary, 2009)

Social mobility is influenced by gender, race, ethnicity also. The impacts of where one is born can have far-reaching consequences in the social hierarchy. However Education and income status continues to be the two most important factors of social mobility. Education opens the door of opportunities. It gives economic as well as social stability. Now, free and

compulsory education to all provides the opportunities to enhance one's educational and income status. Inspite of such equality of educational opportunities, large gaps still exist among different social groups. For e.g. if we see in Indian context, the enrolment and dropout rate in the primary education, is a matter of great concern. This sorry state of affairs exists despite the government implementing special provisions Again due to the hierarchy in the society, educational institutions exist with different qualities. Education provides individuals with knowledge, skills that are necessary for placement in higher occupational position. Social mobility through education basically refers to the changes in the position through occupational status, because education primarily change an individual's economy.

Earlier in India, only the upper caste men were able to get education.But after the introduction of the modern education system, drastic changes were introduced in the education system. The modern education system was made accessible to all and it created possibilities for social mobility. People of any caste can get their children educated and they can follow any occupation according to their education,and ability . In this context, B R Ambedkar's contribution is worth exploring.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 2: What do you mean by intra-generational mobility?

Q 3: 'Schools function primarily as a testing, selecting, and distributing agency'--- Who said?

2.5 EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Society is never static. Social change refers to change in the social structure or institutions. It refers to changes in social order produced by changes in social institutions. Education helps both in preserving and changing the society. Social scientist like Althusser argues that education is the instrument to maintain the status quo. It helps to serve the interest and ideas of the ruling class. On the other hand, many social scientists

treat education as the instrument of social change. Especially in third world countries education is credited to bring the technological change.

T B Bottomore defines social change as a change in social structure, in particular social institutions, or in the relationships between the institutions.The growth of modern sciences has been closely associated with social change.Social change is comparatively slow in simple societies. The notions of change, evolution, development and progress are treated as combined in a single concept since they are logically related. Factors of social change can be physical and biological, technological and cultural. (Bottomore, 1972)

The role of education and social change has to be understood in terms of the relationship between education and other social institutions in society. Two views are important in this regard. According to the first view,education is an independent factor and brings change to the other factors of society like economy, polity, culture etc. Whereas the second view establishes that education is completely a dependent factor and it is subjected to constant change depending on the other factors of the concerned society.

Education as a way of teaching-learning process is expected to impart knowledge, skills, values and behaviour patterns. It can contribute towards change within the society through imparting appropriate values and knowledge etc. Since it plays an important role in occupational placement, it can directly contribute towards social change. Education also brings changes in the outlook and attitude of individual and it also leads to changes in social relationships. With the change in time education has become secular and is free from the cycles of religion and superiority of castes. The present education system provides a platform to everyone to effectively participate in the activities of society and contribute towards the progress of society. Educational institution does not merely exist to transmit society's values and to preserve it but it also helps to promote change and bring reformation in the society.

The educational system functions and shows the way towards social change when new values, attitudes, ideas, ideologies and behaviour patterns are successfully inculcated.It helps to minimize the cultural lag. Educational prosperity can be a harbinger of gradual and constant changes at the societal level as the knowledge garnered from education affects the lives of people at large. As education disseminates knowledge, information, skills etc, it contributes towards igniting and accelerating the process of social change. Educational changes lead to other changes in society, it helps in mobility. It also brings economic development. Education contributes independently to the regulation of conduct and helps in the socialization of a child. Changes in education also lead to changes in the behaviour pattern of a society.

Education, in recent times, has become the most important tool of curbing discrimination based on gender. We see an increase in the numbers of school going girl children; it leads to the advancement of a nation as well as empowerment and liberation of women. Though patriarchy is still there, some changes have come to the structure of society through the empowerment of women, which is only possible with the help of education.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.4: Fill in the blanks:

a. Society is never.....

b. .....argues that education is the instrument to maintain the status quo.

c. .....in education also lead to changes in the .....of the child.

Q. 5: What does social change refer to?

2.6 EDUCATION AS A SOURCE OF CONTINUITY, CHANGE AND MODERNIZATION

Education is a contributing factor as a medium of continuity, as it transmits knowledge from one generation to the other. Continuity is not a

replacement, but to add upon the values. It also brings in change at the level of the individual as well as collective social, political conscience. Change is part of continuity. Modernization, which seems to be very contemporary notion is an offshoot of this continuity and the changes that education ushers us into. Continuity along with changes brings the idea of modernization.

When we see education as a social institution it could be seen as a source of continuity. It transmits society's culture and values to the next generations. Thus it preserves the values of society. Such transmission of culture is done through various agencies like family, school, religion, media etc. Education is training. According to the training, a child behaves. These training and acquisition of knowledge is a continuous process.

Education is considered as one of the basic agents of socialization. Socialization is not intermittent but continuous. This social process of learning begins from day of birth and it's a lifelong process. According to our exposure in society, we learn new values and patterns of behaviour. A single individual plays multiple roles in a society, so every role expects different behaviour pattern and we keep learning accordingly.

The meaning of education is characterized and varied according to space and time. What education meant decades before has changed to a great extent in the contemporary times. Social change is spontaneous. It takes place as a response to the changes that take place in social and non-social environment. Education brings change by bringing change in the outlook of individuals.

Since education has become an important tool of development. all the countries nowadays invest in education. Education is considered as the precondition for advancement. As we talk about modernization, education, science and technology, rationality all these words come to our mind. So formal training/education becomes important here.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 6: How education works as a medium of continuity?

Q 7: When does learning of an individual begin?

2.7 EDUCATION AND SOCIETY: DEFINING THE INTERFACE BETWEEN EDUCATION AND SOCIETY

The very idea that education is a tool of social change also establishes the fact that it is a social institution. Education and educational institutes are structured in time and social space. They don't exist in vacuum. Education influences society and in turn it gets influenced by what is happening in the society. Education exists and functions in the social context along with other social institutions. While education has its impact in the larger society, education also gets affected by other social institutions. The nature and extent of such mutual impact may vary from society to society. Education is interlinked with poverty, cultural diversity and the world of work. Structural inequalities, cultural diversities etc. influence learning. For e.g. the social variable like economic condition, gender correlates with school dropouts. Different social institutions profusely impact the way system of education functions. Every institution plays a key role and supports the society and shapes the individual of that society as well. It is through education that human becomes social being because education injects societal norms, values and behavior.

Education helps in political, economic development of a country and it also makes people aware of their rights and duties. It is through education that the sense of tolerance and acceptance towards diversity is introduced in the human behaviour and nature. This prepares the children for a wider social responsibility.It also caters to the needs of the contemporary society. Education is not merely going to the school and appearing for the test by memorizing what has been taught. Rather, there is a hidden curriculum through which we learn discipline, values and socialization without realizing it.Education helps in adaptability.

In the modern society, education is perceived as the key to greater social equality. It leads to comfort and social security. Education is the driving force for developmental activities in society. Turner has identified six general consequences of education in social systems: Cultural preservation and

storage, cultural retrieval and dissemination, cultural expansion, socialization, social placement and social transformation (Turner, 2011). Culture is comprised of a material and non-material components. Culture is conceived as a set of norms and behaviours that are constructed and deconstructed in interaction with relevant others (ludi,2006). Educational roles revolve around preserving and storing these norms and behaviours, values, beliefs, language, technology, scientific knowledge through family socialization, educational institutions, museum, library etc.

Thus, education is like double-edgedsword, it not only preserves the culture but also helps in the expansion. In the most modern societies, family disseminates only general values, beliefs, history etc while educational institution imparts wider knowledge, thus expands the society's culture.

As such education is a social institution which is linked with the economy, polity and culture. But equality, identity, exclusion are the key concerns in education today. The notion that establishes the porous line between education and society is studied under the sociology of education that brings in social variables like structural inequalities, cultural diversity, and identities of different social groups and maps its relation with education.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 8: How human become social being through education?

Q 9: According to Turner what are the consequences of education in the social system?



2.8 LET US SUM UP

- Education is a tool to impart knowledge and makes us skilled.
- Education makes us human.
- It is a continuous process of learning.