

## **Globalisation and Education of Underprivileged**

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**ABSTRACT:** *According to the latest census the literacy rate in India is pinned at seventy four percent. A substantial number of children are still out of school, and dropout rate is also high and a major concentration of these children is from the underprivileged section of our society. The current article aims to throw light on the educational needs of the lower echelons of our society in an era of globalization in which imparting education in a traditional manner is generating what Drucker calls 'service workers' in the globalised world. The current paper attempts to study the factors that hinder the educational progress of the underprivileged children. The observations and interviews are based on the author's first hand experiences of working with underprivileged parents and their children in various schools. While the basic needs of food, clothing, health, sanitation and shelter of these children remain unmet, education takes a backseat. An ever increasing rate of unemployment contributes to the lack of interest in education. The study was conducted on a sample of two hundred families from the underprivileged areas of Aligarh district of U.P. in India.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Globalisation, Education, Underprivileged, Poverty, Private schools*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The process of globalization has created a borderless world through the free flow of knowledge and materials and mobility of people, making it a global village. It is a process of diverse changes and transformations that integrate the world. "Globalization may be thought of initially as the widening, deepening and speeding up of world wide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life, from the cultural to, the criminal, from financial to the spiritual" notes David Held (Global Transformation, 1999) According to the Human Development Report (UNDP, 2002) globalization is creating interdependence among nations but the "world seems more fragmented, between rich and poor, between the powerful and powerless." The way society functions reflect in all the sections of society. Any social, economic or political change on the globe affects education, health, welfare and family life of people in different parts.

The impressive economic changes in Asian countries can be explained largely by the willingness and ability of governments to adapt and change. To address the economic challenges more effectively, countries aimed at policy changes that liberalized the economies and created more effective trade and investment conditions, adopted technology based development strategies, encouraged industrial clustering to attract foreign direct investment and the investments in human development. Despite India being a late mover in adopting the changes needed to adjust to globalization, World Bank analysts point out, it was able to achieve higher economic growth and greater interactions in global economic activities. India's ability to adapt to the requirements of globalization is reflected in its rising capacity to innovate technologically. The newly industrialized countries like India especially enhanced their capacity to innovate in technological and manufacturing development and invested in social and economic policies that support growth.

### **II. GLOBALISATION AND EDUCATION**

Globalization requires developing countries to improve the quality of their human resources and also to up skill. A concerted effort at the national level is needed for this and can be achieved through the involvement of multiple institutions and policies. Transfer of knowledge between peoples and states is an important pre requisite as well as a consequence of the process of globalization. With it, knowledge brings about an exchange of technology paving ways for growth of states. In this transfer of knowledge and technology, education assumes a role of central importance as it is "a potential instrument of creation, assimilation and transmission of such knowledge."<sup>1</sup> Education equips a person with knowledge and skills and helps him/her to understand basic needs and priorities and so demand not only better services but also develops in children and youth a healthy attitude which produces in them a modern outlook and perspective allowing them access to an extensive spectrum of opportunities. It is an investment and every child has a right to education and hence to development. Education helps in human development which leads to advancement of economic growth.

Governments in Asia also realized that high technology enterprises must be located near or have access to knowledge centres that can generate or stimulate innovation and provide a reliable source of skilled workers and other human resources. It was also recognized that knowledge based organizations on which globally oriented businesses depend, like the R&D laboratories, colleges and universities providing trained personnel and research capacities, and consultancy organizations that help commercialize technology, develop new products, and help manage international activities more effectively, should be located near high technology enterprises. Globally competitive companies depend on data gathering and analysis and on training and continuing education facilities that can help them become learning organizations and continue being so.

As globalization enhances interaction, integration and interdependence among people and organizations across national borders, it provides new opportunities that communities can exploit to different extents. Communities that are well connected with the processes of cross border exchange will benefit from globalization; communities that are not well linked with markets and commercial exchange will miss out on these new opportunities and, may be left behind. The larger the communities left behind, the greater will be the disparity in incomes and wealth, and in opportunities and rewards. Globalization must be inclusive and its benefits widely spread within a country. The trend of the process of globalization is that rich are getting richer and poor are getting poorer. "Accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole i.e. on the side of the class that produces its own product in the form of capital" wrote Karl Marx.<sup>2</sup>

### **III. EDUCATION IN INDIA**

In post independence India, provisions for education were incorporated in the Constitution under Article 45 in Directive Principles of State Policy, which insisted on providing compulsory education to all children up to fourteen years of age. Various schemes and programmes were initiated; different educational bodies and policies formed, all culminating in one Right to Education Act of 2009 that makes education free and compulsory for all children up to fourteen years of age. The latest census puts literacy rate at seventy four per cent and enrolment in schools has increased but India is still burdened with a huge illiterate population. An estimated 59 million<sup>3</sup> children in the age group six and fourteen years are still out of school. Most of them belong to the poor and disadvantaged group. Unemployment scenario is also grim with more than 41 million educated youth being unemployed.<sup>4</sup>

While access to education has increased considerably in India average years of schooling of adults has also increased between 1985 and 2001 and gross enrolment ratios have increased at secondary and tertiary levels.<sup>5</sup> Increased enrolment rate in basic education masks the fact that poor children including working children, street children, children in remote areas, children from minority groups, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and disabled children, are not mostly enrolled. With India's formal entry into the globalization phase of capitalist development, its impact is already there for all to see. In any country the impact of any policy should be evaluated with reference to its effects on quality of life of the people and one of the ways of examining it in a neo-colonial country is to examine how many people in the country have been able to improve their standard of living. This would also mean how many people are able to meet buy minimum things required to keep the body and soul together or simply put, have access to basic health care, nutrition, income and quality education.

Just as physical capital augments worker productivity according to the human capital theory, so does human capital acquired through education improve the productivity of individuals.<sup>6</sup> Education plays a major role as a factor in the rise of output per worker. The new growth theories place education at the centre of their elucidation for long term economic growth. Besides attaching the economic role to education, it has a social role to play. It has been consistently demonstrated that proper schooling influences various factors of social well being such as infant mortality, total fertility rate, child health, gender gap in children. Education takes part in a political task of state by disciplining the people and imbibing certain political values in them that makes them act a particular way and help in the smooth functioning of governments.

Education more than repays its costs to society. Social returns are high, particularly at primary and junior secondary levels, and particularly if estimates for externalities are included. It provides one necessary ingredient for economic growth. Literacy and numeracy are key instruments with which to help self employed including farmers. Primary education can directly help in alleviating poverty. Providing the poor with human capital can represent a much targeted form of spending. Education also brings important gendered benefits. Basic education empowers women and enhances their self confidence. An educated mother is likely to marry later, space her pregnancies better and seek proper medical care for her children and herself when needed.<sup>7</sup> Evidence shows that babies born to mothers without formal education are at least twice as likely to suffer from malnutrition or die before the age of five than are babies born to mothers who completed primary school.(Bicego & Ahmad,1996) An educated girl is the best guarantor that her children attend school-thereby ending the inter generational transmission of poverty. At the margin, the education of girls can be said to have

an even higher social priority. Education increases people's choices, both in work and leisure and is so an important consumption good. Notions of justice and equality underpin its status as a human right.

#### **IV. OBJECTIVES**

This paper will try to analyse the reasons behind the lower enrolment of underprivileged children in schools and higher rate of their dropouts. The problems faced by these children and dilemmas incurred by their parents will also be looked into. The findings are based on the interviews with parents and observations by the writer, of underprivileged children in three schools in Aligarh district. The educational needs of the lower echelons of our society, in view of globalization, will also be discussed.

Large population, low level of per capita income and poor infra structural facilities enabled U.P to become the largest resource recipient of central funds.<sup>8</sup> the award of eleventh finance commission, U.P received 19.80 per cent of total central funds. Part of the money is meant to be spent on the development of education in U.P. Educational reforms have also been underway enjoying political consensus. Only school education is now considered as socially beneficial and higher education has been excluded from this category. In policy terms, only school education is generating "social benefits and positive spill over effects."<sup>9</sup> With propagation of this thought other levels of education came to receive lesser financial assistance. In primary education stress has been given on mass education, effectively compromising the worth of educational instructions.

#### **V. 5. OBSERVATIONS**

The first and foremost reason behind the low rate of enrolment of underprivileged children is poverty and deprivation. Where it is difficult for parents to make their both ends meet, education takes a back seat. Education is considered unproductive as it does not give immediate results. When father of nine year old Amir was asked why he discontinued his son's education, he replied that his son would earn more by serving on a *dhaba* (canteen) than by going to school. He further said, " Schooling is a long term process and you have to pump in money always before it gives results and we are not sure whether he gets some gainful employment or not. He will be left with no job and his degrees would not let him engage in manual work. This will spoil his life." Though government provides free education in its schools and has initiated the mid day meal and various other schemes, it has not been able to attract the parents and children as parents prefer to send their children to work or begging. The mother of one *Chotu*, who works on a university *dhaba*,(canteen) said that some university students tried to teach her children and a few children from neighbourhood for sometime but they could not even afford the children's time for that as they are the ones who bring money after the day's hard labour and feed their families. This is the case usually when the father of children is dead, drunkard or out of work. There is an additional burden on the small shoulders of earning and feeding their usually large families and their childhood is lost to that. Children become a source of income and are vulnerable to exploitation. According to the National Labour Institute, some 92 million children are neither enrolled in schools nor in any labour force.<sup>10</sup> On being asked why she did not send her eight year old boy to the school, the mother said that whether in school or not, the boy has to take up the work his father is doing (the father is a fruit vendor) so why waste time and money on sending him to school. With the children of marginalized groups still out of the mainstream of education, government is considering the reduction in subsidies given in education and the argument put forward is that subsidies are crowding out necessary infrastructural expenditures. It is also proposed that user charges in education sector should be raised. While it is proposed that twenty percent of the total expenditure in primary education should be raised from the beneficiaries, that is the students, thirty three percent at secondary level and fifty percent in higher education is also planned.<sup>11</sup> This, if implemented, will raise the burden on vulnerable groups who want their children get educated and will effectively purge their children from education sector.

In case of poor children going to schools, education provided is not of the required standard as to make them capable of gainful employment. These schools continue imparting education in a traditional way based on memorising and copying rather than developing analytical thinking in them. There is no provision for skill development in schools narrowing down their employment opportunities. The old fashioned education pattern is creating, what Drucker calls "service workers"<sup>12</sup> and a large number of degree holders who are rendered incompetent in the era of globalization. These unemployed literate youth serve as a discouraging factor for the parents. Several generations of these people are caught in a vicious cycle of poverty and unemployment, generating an unfavourable attitude towards education. They spend all their earnings on religious rituals and marriages but do not consider education of children worthy of investment. Ignorance becomes a factor for the lack of interest in education in marginalized sections of society.

The education provided in schools run by various government and non government bodies lack the basic infrastructure and are ill equipped to prepare students for future endeavours. The children lack basic skills of modern information and technology placing them much below the standard that globalization demands. The role performance by the teachers is also not up to the mark. They lack basic training and skills and provide

academic instructions in the same old traditional ways which fail to spawn the interest of students endowing them a reason to quit. Since parents are also either uneducated or less educated, children lack guidance or are ill guided. Long absentees due to ill health, marriage functions or long visits to relatives also contribute to the weak educational base of underprivileged children which becomes a factor for their failure in exams or opting out of the school.

One more factor that presents an obstacle to enrolment of underprivileged children is the unavailability of schools in vicinity. Children have to cover long distances to reach schools. Father of six children, Saleem is a *rickshaw* puller. He wants to educate his children but is not ready to send his daughters to school that is far away from their residence. He believes that girls are safer at home and should not be send out of their parents watch. His two daughters have dropped out after completing their elementary education while his sons attend the school. Over crowded classes, lack of textbooks and other teaching aids affects the learning process badly. Children of underprivileged families are unable to meet out the expenditures incurred during learning process buttressing the case for dropout and discontinuation of studies. While boys are supposed to add to the family earnings through labour on hazardous and non hazardous jobs, girls are supposed to look after their younger siblings and help in household chores. Patriarchal mindset places education of girls at a lesser footing. "The girls will be married off and we need to save up money for that,...cant afford to send them to school" said a thirty five year old mother of four children. "Also it is difficult to find a proper match for a well educated girl and so girls should be dissuaded from getting higher education," she further added. Many parents agree that education for girls is necessary but express their helplessness in going ahead with it.

Globalization has opened up markets causing economies grow, new sectors emerge and hence a demand for new skills increases. This makes mandatory modern education and technology awareness for children who will otherwise be left out. Employment opportunities increase but impact of globalization is not so mesmerizing for poor as inequality and dependence is also augmented. With globalization, internationalization of education is also worrying as needs and conditions vary across the globe. In this era of globalization, the status of education has changed from 'service' to 'industry'. Receiving boost from WTO, the wave of liberalization led not only to economic but also to social and cultural globalization. The policy of liberalization aimed at reduction or completely doing away with government controls, restrictions and strict regulation and licensing policy in all spheres of economic development and social progress. It gave greater independence to economic and social entrepreneurs to operate in a free atmosphere and work under the forces of market mechanism. Liberalized policies came to govern not only the economic services sector such as agriculture and industry, but also social service sectors such as education and health. Under the policy of privatisation, the government attempted the reform of the public sector and started believing in private ownership rather than government regulation and its own singular hold. This was followed by a mushroom growth of private schools which are not accessible to the children of underprivileged. Hefty admission and other charges and exorbitant monthly fees discourage these children and their parents from seeking admissions in private schools. The commercialization of education due to privatisation has made it costlier and out of bounds for the children of disadvantaged groups. Most of the private schools hold admission tests to determine which children are worthy of admission in their schools. The children selected are usually from better financial positions that can pay the heavy money that is charged by these schools on pretext of one or the other activity. Also children who have educated parents and are guided well and their educational needs are taken care of already, also are chosen. This suggests that children from weaker economic background do not stand a chance in these high profile, but with better instruction imparting facilities, schools. This also implies that children of uneducated parents are mostly not guided well and lack the basic exposure to education which becomes a necessary condition for the selection of selection in high profile schools.

Many low profile private schools, especially in underdeveloped areas, lack basic amenities. They fill in children and classes grow to be overcrowded, seriously compromising the quality of education. The teachers also lack basic skills to teach and are minimally qualified. The concrete academic base that can steer the future of children is lost to the commercialized attitude of owners. These children suffer for the rest of their lives. Such children count in the category of literate but not educated. They are left with least career options and mostly stay unemployed. Unable to meet the challenges posed by globalised kind of education, and insufficiently equipped with manual skills, they turn out to be an additional burden on country's fragile economic and social infrastructure. Similar is the fate of children enrolled in government run schools. Though teachers are qualified and skilled, lack of interest in the educating the poor children leads to neglect of academic needs of these children. Many schools are over crowded and number of teachers is insufficient. During an interview, a teacher in a government run primary school said that the number of children in their school is more than 250 as that is the only school in the area and mid day meal scheme attracts children to school. There are only three teachers in the school and all their efforts are directed at controlling and disciplining the children rather than teaching. It is important to mention here that the school is stationed in two rented rooms. Lack of adequate number of teachers in government schools makes schooling a futile exercise.

Securing universal primary education needs to embrace the notion of school quality. Those schools where classes are over crowded and basic infrastructure is missing are unlikely to be able to meet the learning needs of children. Costs of schooling are to be reduced without compromising the quality of education. Role of private players is to be regulated and enrolment of underprivileged children ensured in private schools. In government schools, teachers should be given proper training, teaching aids and textbooks to children should be ensured. The increase in public expenditure to finance the expansion and qualitative improvement of primary school systems, to remove school fees and to increase the incentives to ensure the attendance of girls, are the need of the hour.

Education and educational development of underprivileged population cannot remain insulated in the ever shrinking global village. Globalization has a tremendous impact on the structure and functioning of governmental and other educational institutions. Education is imparted in national and regional languages in government schools which mostly cater to the needs of the underprivileged population. With English language emerging as a universal language, its speakers are better placed. The schools for marginalised children should impart instructions in this language also. Studies indicate that an overwhelming number of students in higher education tend to come predominantly from English medium private schools (Jayaram,1977:185). Almost all private schools charge exorbitant fees and a few from economically weaker classes, with their limited means, struggle to educate their children in these schools. Majority of them go to government schools where usually curricular and extra curricular exposures and confidence building activities are either absent or limited.

The wave of globalisation has spread extensively all over the world and it is not feasible for developing countries like India to stay outside this global phenomenon. Globalisation is regarded as threat and as an opportunity. It has increased national and international competition. Developing countries are facing an increased level of brain drain as there is a competition for quality graduates and skilled labour. Increased competition has also led to a diversification of the production of goods and services, which require a more skilled and trained manpower that can adapt to a changing economic scenario. Globalisation focuses on human development and nature of globalisation policies may have to be drastically different. Globalisation leads to internationalisation of education wherein national identities in education and culture can get blurred.

## **VI. SUGGESTIONS**

Globalisation has brought about a revolution in information technology. Satellites, telecommunication, computers are providing more avenues for rapid dissemination of information. Technology might become single most determinant of the progress of nations. Inability to use, master and adapt modern technology in developing countries may widen the disparity between the rich and the poor within countries. The schooling for underprivileged children, like others, needs to be made interest based. Serious attention should be given to the technology development and its extensive spread. Quantity and quality of instructions in the schools in general and for underprivileged areas should be given special attention. Teaching needs to be interactive rather than monotonous. Administration should take tough measures to ensure that teachers take up their jobs seriously. Community participation in this regard should be encouraged. Schools should be in close vicinity and proper infrastructure must be provided. Modern teaching aids should be adopted and education should be made employment oriented through skill development in children. Vocational training should be made a part of curriculum. Special emphasis also needs to be placed on child labourers and street children not only by making child labour and child begging an offence and punishable under law but also endowing them with the kind of environment where the responsibility of eking out livelihood does not fall on their shoulders. Monthly scholarships, though present in documents, does not always reach the needy. Steps must be taken to make certain that children of underprivileged groups obtain it. State has an important role to play in educational development through provision, regulation, promotion and funding.<sup>13</sup>

## **VII. CONCLUSION**

Uneducated or less educated causing unemployment or low income employments perpetuate poverty, besides other reasons, leading to exclusion of these groups from the mainstream. The self reliance and self confidence under these circumstances dwindle. Outdated methods of teaching leave the children of underprivileged disempowered rather than empowered which is the main purpose of education. Though Right to Education Act of 2009 has certain ambitious provisions but its implementation part will decide the future of millions of underprivileged children.

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