Introduction

The study seeks to analyse the role of education as an instrument of realising the broader objectives of social policy in Israel. There is no denying the fact that the policymakers in Israel have heavily relied on the educational system to fulfill certain social goals. The educational activities have consistently received more public funding than any other undertaking except national defence and have been the cornerstone of Israel’s cultural and socioeconomic development. The Jews have traditionally accorded lot of importance to education but the emerging scenario following the emergence of the state saw in education the medium to mould the immigrating masses from all parts of the world into productive citizens and in uniting them by forging a common identity.¹ The question of the rights of the minorities and their integration is also dealt with extensively by the study considering the hostile environment in which the state made its appearance and the elusive peace that continues to belie the region. The study also attempts at deriving a conceptual framework, focussing on the role of education as an instrument of social policy taking into account the major determinants, constraints and limitations, and then apply it in the case of Israel.

The first logical question that the study poses is whether education as an instrument of social policy? In almost all the modern democratic set ups today it is seen as a part of the taken-for-granted thing. However, if one carefully goes through the debates surrounding the introduction and subsequent extension of compulsory education in most of the countries in the post World War II phase with democratic form of government, the

introduction and subsequent extension of compulsory education demonstrates quite clearly that it was intended to be a means of achieving certain social goals and objectives. Most of the societies were going through a period of flux, trying to come to terms with the war ravaged state of affairs and also with the emergent social complexities that the post war period left for them. In this context these societies attached immense significance to education to facilitate the process of reconstruction. Israel is no exception to this premise. The centrality accorded to education in this phase in all these democratic countries to fulfill social objectives can be considered as one of the reasons to study education (policy) from the social policy perspective. To put it in more general terms 'education has been used as an instrument of social policy by governments of all kinds – with varying degrees of commitment or reluctance, and with different and conflicting intentions. In the process questions arise as to why does the state so significantly engage in the provision of education? What kinds of social policy ends are pursued through education, overtly and covertly? Whose interests are pursued and who actually benefits shall also come up for discussion.

**Historical Background**

Education is a cornerstone of cultural and socioeconomic development. It improves the productive capacity of societies and their political, economic and scientific institutions. Research and experience demonstrate that an educated labour force is a necessary, albeit not sufficient, condition for economic development. Across countries the correlation between national investment in economic growth is striking. The realisation of

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investment in education already existed in the *Vaad Leumi* (Jewish governing body during the mandate) run school system of the *yishuv* (Jewish community before 1948). From 1920 onwards, the Jewish educational system in the country was peculiar in being composed of three educational streams operating in conjunction with and dependent on three political frameworks: general, orthodox religious, and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>European</th>
<th>Oriental</th>
<th>Muslims</th>
<th>Christians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>June 1948</td>
<td>550,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>107,000</td>
<td>49,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Major Group</td>
<td></td>
<td>85</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>End 1951</td>
<td>940,000</td>
<td>465,000</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>53,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Major Group</td>
<td></td>
<td>67</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total Population</td>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>End 1966</td>
<td>1,196,000</td>
<td>1,149,000</td>
<td>223,000</td>
<td>90,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of major Group</td>
<td></td>
<td>51</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total Population</td>
<td></td>
<td>44</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>End 1981</td>
<td>1,588,000</td>
<td>1,731,000</td>
<td>514,000</td>
<td>144,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of major Group</td>
<td></td>
<td>48</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total Population</td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The hallmarks of this splintered structure were the common recognition of national aims, the active involvement of society in educational matters, and the expression of the school’s connection with current life problems in the syllabus and in the pedagogic atmosphere. Though this division into sub-systems was the result of profound political differences regarding the way the Jewish sovereignty was to be realised in the country the Jews had a well established education system operating under the supervision of Vaad Leumi which the state of Israel inherited in 1948. However, that wasn’t the case with the Arabs who mostly attended schools sponsored by the British mandate administration and were rather poorly organized. In brief, at the time of emergence of state there existed already a well-organized Jewish network of schools which had to be given shape to cope up with the following developments. The first of the problems that these schools faced was the absorption of waves of immigrants who were attracted towards Israel following the formation of the state and its law allowing Jews from all over the world to settle in Israel. Most of these immigrants came from Asian and African countries and were not in tune with the predominantly European culture of the Yishuv and had little or no formal education. Their population in a few years following the formation of the state took over the population of the Ashkenazis (the European-American Jews, see Table 1.1). The increase in their population was predominantly due to immigration. The increase in Arab population during this phase was only through natural growth. These immigrants had to be trained to be absorbed in the burgeoning economy and simultaneously integrated in the society through transmission of values central to the

existence of the state. The immigrants who were mostly alien to the tradition of the "yishuv" generally got absorbed in the lower ranking jobs with less rewards and a social gap was created. Over the years this social gap got perpetuated and Israel has seen some strong protests against the state of affairs. The socioeconomic gap overlapping with ethnicity does not augur well for a society committed to providing equal opportunity to all. The Israeli policymakers have normally looked to the education system to cope up with the problem of bridging the social gap and integrating the different sections of the population.  

The other major problem that was identified at the time of formation of the state was that of providing equal opportunity to Israel's minority population keeping in view the democratic structure of polity it acquired. This met with lot of problems. According to the stipulations of the British Royal Commission, which accepted the formation of two separate states, the civil and religious rights of the minorities in the future state had to be guaranteed. The deliberations around it included the educational rights of the minorities that called for a state funded separate system of schools where the minority culture was to be accorded prominence. The problem with the Arab population was heightened by the fact that most of the educated urban middle class population among the Arabs fled during the war immediately after the formation of Israel. Those who remained were mostly peasants with little education. Therefore, to start with a lot of Arabic speaking Jewish teachers had to be engaged to teach in the Arab schools. The separation of the Arab

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6 Winter, M., 'Arab Education in Israel', *Jerusalem Quarterly*, no.12, 1979, 112-121.
system of schools in view of the desire to preserve independent cultural, social and political entities was in conformity with the commitment of the emergent state prior to its formation, but the segregation of the Arab school system casts a shadow over the chances of providing equal educational opportunities. It also goes against the social ideals called for a democratic country with multicultural population. Language of instruction becomes another hindrance in the future advancement of educational achievement. The language of instruction in the higher educational institutions is predominantly Hebrew and English which students in the Arab schools start to learn at a later stage.\(^7\) As we move on to analyse in detail the role of the education system in reducing educational differentials and narrowing social gaps and integrating the masses we shall see that the historical background has a crucial role in the future course of events. The study shall take recourse to empirical evidences to judge how far the educational system has succeeded in fulfilling its mandated tasks in view of the conceptual framework that shall be derived.

The Israeli educational system, as all other institutions have their roots in the pre-state era of the Jewish community in Palestine. The system which Israel inherited was an open, uniform, and ‘demanding’ system. It was open in view of the socialist ethos of the founding fathers of the community who sought thereby to provide equal educational opportunities to all; it was uniform in curriculum and in values imparted, so as to facilitate the building of a new nation out of the newcomers who were gathered from different parts of the world; it was demanding as to the kind and level of knowledge students were expected to master mainly as an expression of the community’s dedication

\(^7\)Ibid. p.121.
to its cultural heritage and as a means of founding a new, modern, and advanced social order.\textsuperscript{8}

Education was conceived of as in the pre-state era but to an even greater extent, as the main tool for the social, cultural, and political integration of the large waves of the new immigrants. This however was limited to the Jewish population as the Arab education was provided with funds and left to be governed on their own. The telling effect of it all can be judged from the statistics of the Arab population’s participation in the education system during the early years of statehood. The misconception of the Israeli policymakers of continuing with the same policy of uniformity was also exposed with the poor performance of the immigrants coming from the Afro-Asian countries. The previous policies had to be shunned and new decisions had to be taken to overcome the educational differentials. The Israeli state resorted to affirmative action in terms of compensatory education providing extra hours of schooling, special orientation programmes, counseling etc. during the mid 1950s. the Arabs however were left out despite serious educational lag and it was extended to them only in the 1980s.

Under the given circumstances the Israeli education system was required to not only absorb the influx of immigrants but also to make them into useful human capital to be absorbed in the expanding economy.\textsuperscript{9} They also had to be initiated into the democratic ethos of politics and acquainted with predominantly dominant European values of the \textit{Yishuv}.\textsuperscript{10} The Israeli education system has done reasonably well to prepare its population for the fast changing economy following rapid industrialisation. The experiments in the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{8} Adler, C., 'Social Stratification in Israel', \textit{Comparative Education Review}, 1974, 14-15.
\end{itemize}
field of educational measures broadly reflect the measures taken in some of the other plural societies and the societal trends suggest that there has been a gradual increase in the pluralistic tendencies in the state.\textsuperscript{11} The multi party system with high percentage of voting and very broad coalitions suggests a very wide degree of power sharing and this has resulted in more and more realisation of ones importance in the vibrant democratic country reflecting a great degree of political unification.\textsuperscript{12}

**Research Questions**

1) How far can education be used as an instrument of social policy?

2) What is the conception of social justice in Israel? How it affects the nature of social policy?

3) What are the major constraints in the Israeli educational policy making and how they affect the nature of policies?

4) How far has the Israeli education system succeeded in reducing educational differentials among the different sections of the population?

5) What is the correlation between educational credentials and career rewards in Israel?

6) To what extent has the education policy in Israel been successful in reducing the socioeconomic gap between the Ashkenazis and the Sephardis: and between the Arabs and the Jews?

7) To what extent has the Israeli education system succeeded in fulfilling the manpower needs of the Israeli economy?

\textsuperscript{10} Adler, C., 'Education and the Integration of Immigrants in Israel, the International Migration Review, vol. 3, 1969.

8) To what extent has the education system been successful in fostering social integration between the Ashkenazis and the Sephardis; and between the Jews and the Arabs?

9) How far has the decentralization of the education system by involving the local councils contributed towards betterment of the educational facilities in Israel?

10) To what extent has the promotion of Hebrew in the education system contributed towards the creation of cultural uniformity.

11) To what extent does the female population participate in the education system from various sections of the population?

Theoretical Framework:
The study shall be broadly undertaken within the framework of political economy which is primarily understood as economic development (production of wealth) in relation to the activities of the state. A more or less triangular phenomenon is involved in which the state with its ability to form laws, social structure (comprising of different social classes and ethnic groups) and economic development form the three vertices which are mutually reversible with each other and change at one vertex has an effect on the other vertices. The state tries to form laws in such a way that it attempts to resolve the tensions in social structure keeping under consideration the level of economic development. Also the state keeps in mind its own interests (status quo in terms of power) in mind and frames legislations accordingly. In a democratic set up the various political groupings and interest groups vie for more space and more concessions. The policies are normally shaped as a result of the intense power struggle that ensues among the various

formations. A clearly agreed normative conception of social justice can however be an answer to the ambiguity surrounding the whole confusion.\textsuperscript{13}

In the Israeli context the legislations bring out the effort of the state in trying to resolve the tensions in the social structure. A close look at the evolution of policies in the state education system clearly brings out the fact that the periods of intense discontentment have marked a change in the policy to such effect that it brought more concessions giving a semblance of improvement in the plight of the aggrieved section of the population.

**Hypotheses:**

1) Educational credentials can offer upward mobility but social inequality is not an educational problem. The socioeconomic gap remains essentially an economic and political problem.

2) Israeli education system has been flexible and innovative enough to cope with the requirements of its burgeoning economy in terms of human capital formation which has supported the rapid transformation of its economy from one stage to another.

3) Separate Arab education system has an alienating effect on the Israeli minority population. It also adversely affects their educational attainment.

4) The better off in the society make better use of the common resources available in the society.

5) Effective decentralisation allowing direct participation of the people in the management of the school education, with accountability, is necessary for the expansion of education.

6) Hebrew, given the scriptural sanction it enjoys, has had a positive impact in the integration of the Jewish population.

7) Education system in Israel has succeeded in forging cultural integration among the diverse Jewish population.

8) The rate of women participation in the education system has risen but they still mostly perform traditional roles in the economy.

Methodology

Israel is very well documented, especially in terms of statistics which is of great help in such a study. Primary sources like ministerial reports, copies of deliberations in the knesset on various legislations, manifestoes, reports of various committees, findings etc. provides a researcher with huge mass of literature to enable a good resource base for conducting such a study. There is no dearth of secondary sources in terms of books analysing the trends in the educational system in Israel as well. A lot of work has been done in Israel analysing the effect of education on various aspects but such a macro level study has so far not approached. In Israel social policy has normally been seen as synonymous with welfare policy due to lack of a normative conception for distribution of the resources or social justice. The study examines the various contending ideologies in Israel to show how various aspects of social policy are dealt in isolation from one another and why the attempt to fulfill goals which are part of social policy have failed to be realised through welfare measures. Needless to say that the study benefits from a range of previous studies and takes recourse to them while analysing the statistical trends between the last two censuses.
Chapterisation

The Study will be organised in the following way:

Introduction

Chapter I: Education as an Instrument of Social Policy

The chapter aims at defining social policy as distinct from the welfare policy and establishing a link between education and social policy. Having done so it primarily focuses at deriving a conceptual framework relating education to social policy. This conceptual framework would later serve as the basis for analysing education as an instrument of social policy in Israel. The chapter takes into account the different viewpoints that have so far looked into the role of education in fulfilling societal needs and objectives. The relation of state and education has also been picked up for discussion in detail given the fact that the state plays central role in controlling and regulating the education system.

Chapter II: Education as an Instrument of Social Policy in Israel

This chapter attempts to focus on the education policy making in Israel: the goals, the constraints, a review of how the policies have been shaped and have fared, the major objectives outlined for the policy changes, and finally how far education serves as an instrument of social policy in Israel. We begin by looking at the conception of social justice in Israel and what bearing it has on the Israeli social policy. For the study of the conception of social justice the manifestoes of the two major parties have been mainly taken into consideration.
Chapter III: Towards Overcoming Educational Differentials

This chapter shall attempt at tracing the educational attainments of the various subgroups among the Israeli population since the inception of the statehood. Israel is a multi ethnic, multi-religious society. The majority Jewish population consists of three major ethnic subgroups, differentiated by continent of origin: immigrants from Asian, African and European-American countries along with their Israel born second and third generation descendants. The remaining Jews are third generation and beyond born in the country but their number is small. Israel's Arab population, accounting for about 20% of the entire population, may be classified into three major religious groups- the Muslims, the Christians and the Druze. The trends and differentials in the educational attainment among the various ethnic subgroups of the Jewish population and the religious groups among the Arabs shall be highlighted in the chapter for the later analyses of success and failures of educational policy measures vis-à-vis diminishing of social gaps and forging integration among the diverse population. For the analysis of trends, the individual level explanatory variables have been mainly taken into consideration.

The individual level characteristics shall take into account the ethnic group wise performance among the Jewish population, distinguishing between first or second and third generation immigrants in Israel. For the Arab population, the three major religious groups have been distinguished in the analysis. Distinction has also been made among those who studied in the iyuni (academic) and in the mikzoi (vocational) secondary school tracks, in the analysis of the transition to the different educational stages. The reason being the very large difference in educational attainments of students in these two
secondary school tracks. Type of locality of residence in 1983 (distinguishing between large cities, veteran towns, development towns and small localities), gender and birth cohort have also been used among the explanatory variables in the statistical analyses. The birth cohort and generation variables are of particular importance for they provide evidence to the extent to which educational gaps among the ethnic groups have diminished over time. While the next chapter deals with the aspect of integration and socioeconomic inequalities, this chapter brings out in statistics the education differentials within the Jews and between the Jews and the Arabs. The significant differences between the communities within the Arabs also shall be highlighted. The trends in educational differentials for the female population among both the Jews and the Arabs shall also be observed.

Chapter IV: Education Policy and Integration

The chapter will deal with various approaches to multicultural education and then see its applicability in the case of Israel. The objective reality in terms of population, the state ideology, official policy and the process of practical implementation of the various educational policies in Israel are going to be the subject matter of this chapter. After analysing these the ability of the Israeli education system to forge integration among the masses at various levels shall be taken up for discussion in tune with the framework already stated.

Chapter V: Summary and Conclusion

The chapter summarises all the findings and the viewpoints raised in the study and provide a feedback on the framework taken up for the study.
Significance of the Study: the study is an effort to look at education from social policy point of view in Israel. So far no known study has been done which tries to establish a relationship between the two variables in the case of Israel. Most of the studies conducted so far have normally picked up some aspects of the social policy in relation to education without looking at things in totality. This is one of the reasons why so many studies have concluded the lofty achievements of the Israeli education policy in bridging the socioeconomic gap. While the potential of the education system to bring about such a change is not being contested, the educational system in Israel needs to be seen in relation with other aspects of social policy. Overcoming differentials in educational attainments can be a factor in bridging the socioeconomic gap in Israel as there is a direct link between education and occupational mobility but then the nature of education and the occupational structure needs to be taken into account to see the income differentials before reaching any such conclusion.