CHAPTER 3

SOCIO-POLITICAL FACTORS INFLUENCING EDUCATION:

- Introduction
- Influence of Social Condition on Education.
- Influence of Political Condition on Education.
Aims and content of education and methods of teaching differ in different societies depending upon the socio-political condition.

In ancient India, education was a means for inculcating the moral virtues such as honesty, truthfulness, temperance etc. The pupils were expected to learn 'Dharma' which included moral and religious customs, duty, justice etc.

In ancient Greece the aims were different in different stages. Sparta was in war with neighboring states. It, therefore, aimed at developing physical strength, courage and loyalty to the state. The condition of Athens was different. It, therefore, aimed at developing the personality of the students and inculcating aesthetic sense.

Aims change with the space of time. In modern India the aims of education are different from those in ancient India. Today the aims of education should be such as would fit the secular democratic nation of the modern age.

Thus aims of education are related to the socio-political condition of a society, and the content of education is related to aims of education. Educational content is a means through which the aims are achieved. In the above examples the content of education in ancient
India was based on religion and ethics. In ancient Sparta physical exercises, games, warfare etc. were the content of education. In modern India languages, history, geography, civics and many other subjects are included in the courses.

For teaching the content some type of method is required. These methods will also depend on the aims and as aims are related to socio-political condition of a country, methods also are, generally, related to it. For example in medieval India when the society had become traditional and static, the methods that were employed were also traditional leading to cramming and inhibiting free thinking. The methods in independent democratic India should be such as would inculcate in students the capacity to think freely and to work with co-operation.

Thus aims of education, educational content and methods of teaching are mutually related and ultimately all these are related to the socio-political condition.

As T.M. Thomas says: "Educational problems are not born in an academic vacuum, they arise in response to the existing social, political, economic and moral need of the culture". 1

Putting emphasis on culture Theodore Bramell says: "It is the culture in which education germinates and flowers. It is the culture also upon which education exerts, in turn, a nourishing or debilitating influence". Bramell further adds that education is "an institution deriving its meaning and energy from the surrounding environment of things and men".

3.2 INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL CONDITION ON EDUCATION:

Man is a social animal. He lives in society and, therefore, has to adjust himself to the society. The function of education is to help him to adjust himself to the society. Thus there is a relation between education and society. The society is affected by education and in turn education is also affected by society.

"Education is an activity which goes on in a society, and its aims and methods depend on the nature of the society in which it takes place", and hence education differs in different societies at different times. Social factors which affect education are as under:


1. Stratification
2. Economic growth of the society.
3. Religion and traditions.
4. Growth of industry, technology and transport facilities.
5. New knowledge and ideologies
6. Philosophy of the thinkers of the time.
7. Social forces
8. Other agencies

(a) Stratification:

Education depends on the stratification of the society. There are different types of stratifications.

According to the economic condition a society is generally stratified into three divisions: (1) economically advanced class (2) middle class and (3) economically backward class. Economically advanced class gets the advantage of education, while economically backward class does not get that advantage because the people belonging to this class cannot spend money. Differences arise in the quality as well as the quantity of educational facilities.

Today in India economically advanced people send their children in particular schools where fees are charged. These schools are well-equipped schools, having good staff, good teaching aids and many other facilities.
But the poor people cannot spend money for education of their children and they send their children to schools where fees are not charged. Generally these schools are run either by the Government or by local bodies. These schools are poorly equipped.

In England also the children of the upper class go to the public schools and thereafter join the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. On the other hand the children of the working class are educated in state-schools and after finishing the study at school generally take up manual jobs or become clerks.

The stratification may be according to the castes also. In India the society is divided into various castes. The criterion of membership in the caste system is birth. An individual belongs to the caste in which he is born. Caste system is a peculiar institution of the Hindus. In modern western society caste-like systems are to be found in the U.S.A. and in South Africa, where the black and the white races are held apart by birth. In the U.S.A. intermarriage is socially prohibited while in South Africa such a marriage is illegal.

In olden days in India the higher caste people got the advantage, while the lower caste people—especially Shudras were not allowed to take education. In the U.S.A.
and in South Africa, the black race has less facilities.

In the medieval Europe the Feudal System was in existence. This stratification was originally based on the ownership of land. The different strata were called 'estates'. Originally there were three estates, the nobles, the clergy and the peasants. The rights and privileges of each estate were fixed by law. Generally there was no movement from one estate to another. With the growth of commerce and trade it came to be based on cash and less on the ownership of land. In feudal societies education was restricted to the priestly class and to the scribes.

Inequality may be maintained in many ways. It may be maintained by imposing segregation in schools, by outright refusal to admit certain categories of students or by simple market device of making education expensive.

(6) Economic Condition of the Society:

Russell says:

"According to the economic circumstances of a state, the amount of money which it can afford to spend on education will vary. But for the enrichment of the Western nations through the Industrial Revolution, universal compulsory education would have been impossible." 5

The developed countries like the U.S.A. and Japan spend a lot of money for the progress of education but developing countries like India and Pakistan cannot spend as much money because the governments of these countries are not in a position to provide even the bare necessities of life to the people.

Secondly the developed countries require persons who can be helpful in industries. Training is necessary for them and any type of training requires formal education also.

(c) Religion and Traditions:

Religion and traditions of any society play important part in the quantity and quality of education. In Europe imparting education was supposed to be the duty of the Church. Thus education and religion were related. In India also education was based on religion.

"Even in the twentieth century there has been an instance of a school teacher in the U.S.A. being asked to leave service for teaching the theory of evolution which contradicts the biblical views of Divine Creation". 6

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Some traditions may promote education, while others may become a hurdle in the development of education. In ancient India the youth had to remain a Brahmachari (celibate) up to the age of 25 years. This, naturally helped in the development of education. On the other hand the custom of child-marriage would be a hindrance to education.

(s) Growth of Industry, Technology and Transport Facilities:

In simple societies most occupational roles are learnt from one's own father and even in respect of occupational roles which are not so transferred from father to son are learnt through apprenticeship. In these processes formal education is not needed.

"The more advanced the technology the greater the need for highly specialized man-power and hence for a long school life and a greater provision of higher education."

Frederick says:

"As society mechanizes and makes the work of a single individual more productive by using machines, it becomes possible for him to work fewer hours to provide the necessities of life. He is able, therefore,

to is two things of importance to eduction: one can postpone entry into productive work, and he can devote more time after work to activities not necessarily related to the production of goods and services. This is necessary, of course, to provide time for education. For the increased social and technological complexity that results from mechanization requires the individual to know in order to work. 8

Sir Richard Livingstone in Some Tasks for Education says:

"Applied science and technology are the most characteristic features of modern civilization and their development has transformed the conditions of human life and appears to have become its mistress and hope. An obvious conclusion is that in keeping with this transformation, education should be transformed." 9

Printing press, radio, television, transport facilities etc., also play an important part in the development of education.

The type of education depends on the level of technological development, extent of internal and

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