M.A. (EDUCATION) PART-I(SEMESTER-II)   PAPER - I
Education for the Social Change and
Role of Education in Bringing Social Change

LESSON NO. 4   Writer : Dr. Kuldeep Puri

Structure :

4.1   OBJECTIVES

After going through the lesson, the students will be able to :

(a)   explain the meaning of social change.

(b)   clarify the process of social change

(c)   justify the role of education in bringing social change.

(d)   explain the factors responsible for social change.

4.2   INTRODUCTION

Change is the law of nature. Change is imminent and nothing remains stagnant. The societies also evolve from traditional to modern in this process of continuous change. It is imperative to study the process of social change and modernization. This lesson shall discuss the concept, and process of social change and modernization.

4.3   Concept and Process of Social Change

Society is a conglomerate of human beings. The members of a society are in continuous interaction among themselves. They share common heritage, common context and adhere to a common value system. They have clearly defined relationships and roles.

Maclver defines a society as "a system of usages and procedures, of authority and mutual aid, of many groupings and divisions, of control of human behaviour and liberties," Merrill views the society as a 'complex network of patterned relationship of the members where all of them participate though the degree of participation vary. These relationship undergo a change consequently leading to changes in the social structure. Any change occurring in the society is called social change, it refers to

change in the social organizations, the composition and functions of the society.

The individuals, the institutions and value system of the society change. Morris Ginsberg explains that, "By social change I understand a change in social structure i.e. the size of society, the composition or balance of its part or the type of its organizations".

In changed social context the relationships and behaviour patterns exhibit a change. The nature of interaction is modified. Both the change of nature of institutions and organizations, the individual's needs and aspiration also experience a shift. The society transformed itself from agrarian production. It also influenced society. This brought about change in the means of production. It also influenced and redefined the roles of the individuals and their inter-relationship. It effected a redistribution the positions and statueses to the individuals in the society which led to a change in patterns of behaviour.

The times when monarchy was considered be divinely ordained, institutions of the society presented a different look. Emperors and kings were law unto state. In twentieth century the democracy has emerged as the most agreeable form of governance in principle everywhere in the world. The nations enjoying democratic system have empowered their masses and made them a part of the governance. This indicates towards a change that has ocurred in society.

Every society has a value system that includes patterns of beliefs and set of attitudes its members possess. Change in value system is an essential component of social change. For instance, the progressive societies are now in favour of gender equality instead of carrying on with a system that represented a strong male bias. They prefer and work for establishing egalitarian society where equality of human beings is hounoured as a value. It is a clear shift from believing in and conservating the hierarchical society.

The movements for rejecting retrogressive, degenerated and in human customs and rituals like sati, polyandry, female infanticide, human sacrifice in front of deities, slavery also indicate towards change in the collective psyche of the society. These were legally abolished during British rule in India.

Social changes are concomitant with cultural change. Tyler explains the culture as "-----that complex whole, which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." Whereas beliefs, values, philosophy relogion etc. represents non-material components of culture, the tools, gadgets, scientific and technological appliances are considered the material component of culture. It is hard to measure the change in non-material part, where as acquisition and use of material assets is distinct. There always remains a conflict between conformity and change, tradition and mode.The conservative personalities, selective acceptance of new ways and vested

interest in status quo and resistance by established institution may be responsible for this state of affairs. The change relates to dynamics of life situations and hence is not even in all parts of the society. Some societies progress faster and some lag behind. Some societies are open to change and called open societies. Some are closed societies and they resist change. Ogburn has explained the situation as follows :

"When culture begins to change, the modifications do not occur even in all parts of social heritage. Some parts change faster than others.When the different parts are inter-related, the varying rates of change produce a strain between unequally moving parts. The part that is moving at the slowest rate of speed constitutes the cultural lag. Since the other part of culture has already changed, as a rule, the most practicable method of effecting a better integration between the two parts is to make some adjustment in the part that is lagging. Modern technology is changing at a rapid rate and creating important changes, with which our social institutions have not yet caught up. Analysis of important modern social problems such as unemployment, poverty and family disorganization show that much of our contemporary social disorganization issues form the irregular changes in our culture."

When the social change is caused by the factors external to the society. It is called as Exogenous change. These factors are invasions, colonization, cultural contact, diseases etc. War on Iraq and Afghanistan in recent times is bound to change the society.Corporate colonialism is changing the fortunes of the developing nations very quickly and towards retrogression. Contact with the Western culture has induced market change. When the change occurs from within the system it is called Endogenous change. October revolution of 1917 in Russia, Industrial revolution France etc. are the instances of endogenous changes.

Growth of science and technology has revolutionized the world. New technology is reaching the people fast. The traditional societies are turning modern societies. The work situations, methods, relations, consumption patterns are undergoing a great change. Society, which adapts to the situations, grow. The closed societies close the doors of social change in their own peril. Explaining modernization is "the revolutionary change leading to transformation prosperous and relatively politically stable nations of western world." It does not mean that modernization is blind imitation of western nations and mere acquisition of their language, dress, fashion and eating habits etc. Modernization is not a synonym of westernization. Modernization marks social mobility learner argues the point by saying. A mobile society has to encourage rationality, reality for the calculus of choice shapes the individual behaviour and conditions its rewards. The modern societies are objective and have scientific bent of mind. In modern society the individuals are progressive, ready to learn new things and perform new roles, rational in approach and

achievement oriented. They believe in co-existence, cooperation and consensus rather than conflict. They strike a fine balance between rich heritage and modernity.

Industrialization and urbanization help in modernizing a society. But urbanized and industrialized country can change in value system and sensibilities is not modern. The process of social change completes only when along with economic and political change, social practices and value system also register a change.

4.4   Role of Education in Bringing Social Change :

There are various reasons for which a change in the social order occurs. No single cause can be identified for the social change. The lesson shall delve into variety of causes responsible for social change. Education is one of the major instrument of bringing about a change in the society. Role of education in effecting cultural and social changes shall also be discussed in the lesson.

4.4.1 Factors Responsible for Social Change :

There is a multiplicity of factors effects social change. Changes have occurred in different societies due to different reasons at particular points of time. Generalization can not be made. Analytical study is required to know the cause and the direction of any social change. Commenting on causation of social change. Murdock says, "the classes of events that are known to be especially influential in producing cultural changes are increase or decrease in population, changes in geographical environment, migrations into new environments, contact with people of differing cultures, natural and social catastrophes such as floods, crop failures, epidemics, wars, and economic depression, accidental discoveries and even such biographical events as death or rise to power of a strong political leader." Some of the factors causing social change are discussed below :

(a) Physical Environment :

Changes in physical climate effected by calamities like famines, floods and earthquakes affect the whole settings in a society. The magnitude of such changes is so vast that new systems emerge in the process of resurrection. Military invasions, wars and low-key armed conflicts also disturb the physical environment. The nuclear bomb attacks on Japan cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 had resulted into an unprecedented holocaust. War on Afganistan and Iraq are recent examples of destruction of the countries. People of such regions are the victims and face severe challenges of survival and reconstruction. Environmental degeneration as a result of adopting certain questionable modes of production and consumption with complete insensitivity by the band of most developed nations for their own prosperity is another threat.

(b) Demographic Factors :

Changes occuring in size and composition of population influence the social structure and lead to changes. The factors like increase or decrease in population

birth rates, infant mortality rates, fertility control measures, urbanisation, migration of population and educational status of the people influence the process of social change.

(c) Science and Technology :

Development of science and advent of modern technology has made an impact on the life styles of the society. Industrial revolution, infact, represented the power of technological advancement. The technological development is on the fast track. Now-a-days the globe is witnessing Information revolution. Vital changes have been noticed with the latest development in the communications arena. Every village is connected with telephone and mobile phones are on the increase. Easier and quicker communication has significantly influenced the interpersonal relationships and work atmosphere. The change rate depends upon the rate of dissemination of technology to the people. Computers and internet facilities have revolutionized the world of learning.

Inventions of field of medicine have improved the health status of people. The scope of the non-conventional energy will help in conserving the natural resources. On the other hand one can not ignore that weapons of destruction are also produced by science. Whether for good or bad, the development of science and technology brings about major changes in the social context.

(d) Planning

Economic policies of the nations determine the rate of growth, per capita income of the people, provision of educational facilities and health services and also the people's participation in the process of development. These policy formulations have influence on the forces of production and interpersonal relations between sections of society, thus writing a script for change in social order. For instance, adoption of five year plan economy was done to develop the infrastructure and alleviating poverty. For the last few decades a new wave of economic reforms in sweeping the third world countries in general and India in particular. Accepting World Trade Organization (WTO) conditions shall have far reaching consequences. Developing nations have joined together to stall the implementation of some imbalanced pro-rich conditions. Above account indicates that economic policies adopted by any nation contribute significantly to the process of social change.

(e) Legislation :

The acts against sati, dowry, polygamy etc. have influenced the societies. The Indian constitution makes it obligatory to create a society where alll citizens get justice - social, economic, political and also enjoy equality of opportunities. All have freedom of speech, right to live and practice religion of their own choice. Untouchability of abolished. By legislation the elementary education to all in the age group of 6-14 has been made a fundamental right recently. Welfare states adopt

such means to give a positive and progressive direction to the process of social change.

(f) Cultural Diffusion :

The open and dynamic societies interact with other social groups and mutually exchange and assimilate cultural elements of each other. Borrowing and lending of cultural nuances, the give and take, leads to synthesis of cultures. New patterns in different societies emerge and grow. Indian society has been greatly influenced by western civilization and thought. The west has also been influenced by rich Indian cultural heritage. This process is called cultural diffusion and it plays a significant role in bringing about a social change.

(g) Idealogies and Ideas

The ideas of liberty, fraternity, equity were the guiding force of French revolution. Communism, Fascism, Socialism and Gandhian thought effected vital socio-cultural changes in the respective societies.

(h) Influence of Leaders

Study of the socio-culture changes in the society show the impact of the leaders on the process of change. These leaders emerge from the ground and have great influence on the happenings of their times. For instance Lenin in Russia, Mao in China and Gandhi in India had played a major role in shaping the destinies of their mother nations.

4.4.2 Education for Social Change

Society makes efforts to preserve its traditional way of life. It exercises a kind of social control. Naturally, it desires that the new generation conforms to old values. Education performs the role of conserving the heritage. It also transmits the cultural heritage to the next generation. Education has another major role of progression of society. It prepares the new generation for positive change by offering new knowledge and skills. Education is not considered only as a mechanism of 'maintenance of society' but as a 'means of growth' of society. Education commission (1964-66) in the context of social change observes that "If this change on a grand scale is to be achieved without violent revolution (and even then it would be necessary) there is one instrument, and one instrument only, that can be used - Education. Other agencies may help, and can indeed sometimes have a more apparent impact. But the national system of education is the only instrument that can reach all the people. It is now, however, a magic wand to wave wishes into existence. It is difficult instrument whose effective use requires strength of will, dedicated work and sacrifice. But it is a sure and tried instrument, which has served other countries well in their struggle for development. It can do so for India.

Education prepares the individuals for accepting the change. It develops enlightened citizens who in turn acquire a sensibility and critical appreciation of the situations around them. These educated individuals are conscious and aware

in citizens and are ready to accept the change. Education helps in social mobility. In highly ratified society, the masses in general, believe that what ever conditions they are living in are predestined and unchangeable. Education hits out at this very notion, makes people shun this fatalism and tells them that conditions like poverty, hunger, injustice, inequality etc. can change and must change. The first important step towards social change is taken when initial inertia is broken and people develop a faith that things can be changed. The rest of task is accomplished sooner or later.

Education promotes cultural diffusion by including information regarding different cultures in curriculum and by encouraging interaction among people of different societies. Education also induces self confidence among new generation and empowers them to interact, respond and act with the open mind.

Education prepares people to cope up with the latest scientific and technological advancements by providing suitable training. It enables them to become successful and be gainfully employed. Education has a great role in developing the required man power for the country. Wider application of scientific methods and acceptance and practice of technology depends upon the level of education acquired by the people.

Educational institutions are nurseries of new ideas and ideaologies. The philosophic edge to the process of social change is also provided by education.

The process of social change is seldom smooth. It is painful to accept change as it disturbs the status quo and unsettles the vested interests. Such situations lead to conflict, maladjustments and tensions. Educational process, tries to calm the ruffled tempers by preparing people to see reason and logic beneath the emerging situation. However, educational process, by all means, have to be inclined towards positive social change. It has to stand for modernization, secularism, equality, fraternity and for justice to prevail and prosper in the society. In the words of Indian Education Commission (1964-66) the tasks of education are :

(1)   To help to achieve self-sufficiency in food, economic growth and full employment through the development of physical and human resources.

(2)   To help in social and national integration.

(3)   To help in political development by teaching the masses the basic values of democratic socialism and by developing in them the qualities of collective discipline, hard and sustained work and dedicated leadership.

To help modernizing the country through increasing application of scientific knowledge to improve the economy and by developing in the people socio-psychological personality attributes conductive to modernization.

To help in the development of social, moral and spiritual values and not merely tolerance but respect for all religions, which is what secularism means in Indian context.

4.5   SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

1.   Identify and explain the possibly causes for Social Change.
2.   How has the development of science and technology brought about a Social Change ?
3.   Discuss how does the cultural exchange between different societies bring about a Social Change ?
4.   "Education is a principal instrument of effecting Social Change". Please comment.
5.   What role can an educational institution play in bringing about a positive Social Change ?

4.6   SUGGESTED READINGS AND WEB SOURCES

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2.   Ginsberg, Morris. : 'Social Change', British Journal of Sociology, September, 1958.
3.   Gore, M.S. and Desai, I.P. : 'Papers in Sociology of Education', NCERT, 1971.
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3.   www.globalissues.org.
4.   www.ceeindia.org.

4.7   Questions for Self-Evaluation

1.   Change in value system is an essential component of Social Change. Yes/No
2.   New technology is reaching the people very fast.   Yes/No
3.   Changes in physical climate has nothing to do with the social change.

Yes/No

4.   Computers and Internet facilities have revolutionized the world of learning.

Yes/No

5.   Education has a great role in developing the required manpower for the country.   Yes/No

Answer Key :-   (1) Yes, (2) Yes, (3) No, (4) Yes, (5) Yes