SOCIAL AND ECONOMY DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF CULTURAL TRASFORMATION

Vineeta Arora

Assistant Professor, Department of ABST, Government Bangur PG College, Pali, Rajasthan, India

ABSTRACT

At the present, culture is one of the most important factors of development. The role of culture in development should be treated as multi-layered: on the one hand as an intrinsic value, on secondly as a real factor of regional development leading to increased attractiveness of regions for tourists, residents and investors, thirdly, as an active factor of social development based on knowledge, tolerance and creativity. Culture also belongs to a fundamental reference point in relation to metropolitan functions and the significance of cities in spatial, economic and social arrangements. Currently observable changes in the economies of highly developed countries demonstrate the increased significance of social capital as a significant factor of economic development, which in large part determines the effective functioning of the economy. Culture, which comprises one of the primary elements of preparation to life in society, plays a particular role in the development of social capital. Culture related undertakings contribute to an increase in the intellectual potential of regions and the building of a conscious, open and tolerant citizen society.

The purpose of this paper is an attempt to present culture as a factor of social and economic growth. Examples related to Indian experience with implementation of structural funds depict the thesis of culture as a significant factor in development. In the end, a development vision of Indian Socio-Cultural-Economic policy in the context of cultural related activities is presented here for further studies. Finally, this paper impacts the economic development through socio-cultural transformation.

KEYWORDS: Economic Development, Socio-Cultural Transformation, Socio-Cultural-Economic Policy

INTRODUCTION

Socio-economic development of the disadvantaged groups is a comprehensive area and needs to be understood regarding different frameworks. Social, political, biological, science and technology, language and literature are the main areas that need to be developed to lead to empowerment of disadvantaged groups. Within the socio-economic framework, development is referred to improvement within the lifestyles of the individuals through improved education, incomes, skill development and employment. It is the process of economic and social transformation based on cultural and environmental factors. Therefore, it can be understood as the process of social and economic development within the society. It is measured with indicators such as, gross domestic product, life expectancy, literacy and levels of employment. Social development is a process, which results in the transformation of the social institutions in a manner, which improves the capability of the society to meet the objectives. Economic development is the development of economic wealth and resources of the nations or regions for the well-being of the individuals

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Concept of Social Exclusion

Social exclusion is the denial of equal opportunities imposed by certain groups on others, contradicting in the inability of the individuals to participate in the social, economic andpolitical functioning of the society. When individuals are in a deprived state and they are not given rights to render an effective contribution, then they are stated to be socially excluded. Two main features of social exclusion are, first, deprivation is multidimensional; there is denial of equal opportunities in multiple spheres. Second, it is embedded in the societal relations and societal institutions. There are diverse ways through which social exclusion can cause poverty and deprivation. It is regarded as a major barrier within the course of their socio-economic development and empowerment. Social exclusion has a considerable impact on an individual's access to equal opportunity, if social interactions take place between groups in a power subordinate relationship. The focus on disadvantaged groups recognizes the importance of social relations in the analysis of poverty and inequality.

In India, exclusion revolves around the societal interrelations and institutions that exclude, discriminate, isolate and deprive some groups on the basis of their identity, like caste and ethnicity. Historically, the caste system has regulated and controlled the social and economic life of the individuals within the country. The nature of exclusion revolving around the caste system particularly needs to be understood and conceptualised. It is the caste based exclusion, which has formed the basis for various anti-discriminatory policies within the country. The organisational structure of the caste system is based on the division of people into social groups or castes in which the civil, cultural and economic rights of each individual caste are pre-determined by birth and made hereditary. The assignments of civil, cultural and economic rights are unequal and hierarchal. The most important feature of the caste systemis that it provides for a regulatory mechanism to administer the social and economic organisation through the instruments of social isolation or social and economic

penalties. The caste system is strengthened further with justification and support from philosophical elements within the Hindu religion.

Exclusion and discrimination in civil, cultural and particularly in economic spheres, such as occupation and labour employment, is therefore, internal to the system, and a necessary outcome of its governing principles. In the market economy framework, occupational immovability would operate through restraints in various markets such as land, labour, credit and services required for any economic activity. Labour, being an integral part of the production process of any economic activity, would apparently become part of market discrimination. The civil, cultural and economic rights, particularly with respect to occupation and property rights of each caste are compulsory.The institution of caste essentially involves forced exclusion of one caste from the rights of another. The unequal and hierarchal assignment of economic and social rights by acknowledgment apparently imposes restraints upon the freedom of occupation and human development.

The practice of caste based exclusion and discrimination necessarily involves inability of access and entitlements, not only to economic rights, but also to civil, cultural and political rights. These kinds of social exclusions are major impediments within the course of adequate sustenance of their living conditions. Caste, untouchability and ethnicity based exclusion thus effects the abilities of the individuals to interact liberally with the other members of the community and participate in economic, social and political life of the community. Inadequate citizenship or rejection of civil rights, i.e. freedom of expression, rule of law, right to justice, political rights, right to participate in the exercise of political power, and socio-economic rights, i.e. economic security and equality of opportunities are the major causes of underprivileged and deprived living conditions of the individuals. Caste and untouchability based exclusion and discrimination can be categorised into economic, civil, cultural and political spheres. These have been stated as follows:

Economic Sphere - Exclusion and the denial of equal opportunitieswithin the economic sphere would essentially operate through market and non-market transactions and exchange. Firstly, exclusion may be practiced in the labour market through denial of jobs; in the capital market through denial of access to capital; in the agricultural land market through denial of sale and purchase or leasing of land; in the input market through the denial of sale and purchase of factor inputs; and in the consumer market through the denial of sale and purchase of commodities and consumer goods.

Secondly, discrimination can take place through unfavourable inclusion, specifically through differential treatment in terms and conditions of agreement, or reflected in discrimination in the prices charged and received by groups, which are discriminated against. This can be inclusive of the price of factor inputs, and in case of consumer goods, price of factors of production such as, wages for labour, price of land or rent on land, interest on capital, rent on residential houses, and charges or fees on services such as, water and electricity. Disadvantaged groups can obtain lower prices for the goods that they sell, and could pay higher prices for the goods that they buy, as compared with the market price or the price paid by other groups.

Thirdly, exclusion and discrimination can take place in terms of access to social needs supplied by the government or public institutions, or by private institutions in education, housing and health, including common property resources (CPR) like water bodies, grazing land, and other land of common use.

Fourthly, a group, particularly the untouchables may experience social exclusion and discrimination from participation in certain types of jobs. For instance, the sweeper is usually excluded from getting involved in any kinds of household responsibilities. For these individuals, there are certain norms that are implemented, for instance, separate

utensils are kept for them for eating and drinking purposes, they are made to sit on floor or separate places and so forth.This is due to the concept of purity and pollution of occupations and their involvement in what are known asimpure occupations.

Civil and Cultural Spheres – The untouchables may experience discriminatory treatment and exclusion from obtaining access to public services like roads, temples, water bodies, transportation facilities, infrastructure, educational institutions and medical and health care centres. Due to physical or residential segregation and social exclusion on account of the notion of untouchability, they undergo detrimental effects. Since there is a societal mechanism to standardise, control and implement the customary norms and rules of the caste system.The untouchables usually experience disapproval in the form of social and economic boycott and violence, which act as a constraint to their right to socio-economic development and empowerment.

Political Sphere - Within the political sphere, the untouchables can experience discrimination in access to political rights, and participation in the decision making process. They are meant to perform their jobs, which mainly include, sweeping, and cleaning. They are not allowed to exercise, participate or have a say within the political sphere and are meant to follow the rules and obey the orders of individuals, belonging to upper castes.

Major Policies and Programs on Socio-Economic Development

The implementation of major policies and programs to improve the socio-economic status of the disadvantaged groups has the main objective of bringing them at par with the rest of the society. The major policies and programs that have promoted socio-economic development of the disadvantaged groups have been stated as follows:

Education for All

One can acknowledge in an appropriate manner that not only in India, but in other countries of the world as well, Education for all is comprehensively recognized. Under the leadership of UNESCO, a large number of countries met at Jomtien (Thailand) in 1990 and made the decision to provide Education for All by 2000. In 1992, nine populous countries namely, China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Nigeria, Mexico, Bangladesh, Brazil and Egypt congregated at Delhi to strengthen their commitment towards Education for All (EFA). For the last two decades India, with the help of international agencies, has adopted various measures towards achieving the goal of Education for all. The following are the most significant:

Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) - The National Policy on Education 1986 envisions that free and compulsory education should be provided to all children up to the age of 14. The 86th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002 made free and compulsory education a Fundamental Right for all children within the age group of six to fourteen years. There has been institution of primary schools in rural areas. The increase in the enrolment of children within the age group of six to fourteen years has taken place. There has been significant increase in the enrolment of girls, belonging to SCs and STs Communities and primary and upper primary schools. Measures have been initiated by the central and state governments to reduce drop-out rates and increase the achievement levels. These include, creating parental awareness and community mobilization, involvement of community and Panchayati Raj Institutions, economic incentives, such as, free education, books, stationary and uniforms, improvement in the content and process of schooling and National Program of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (Mid-Day Meal Scheme).

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) – The program that aims at achieving the goals of Universalization of Elementary Education is known as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, it was initiated in 2001. The goals of SSA are,enrolment of all children within the age group of six to fourteen years in school, Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) Centre, Bridge Course by 2005. Bridge all the gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010. Universal retention by 2010, and focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis put upon education for life.

Right to Education Act, 2009 - In August 2009, Parliament passed the historic Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009. The new law is viewed from the perspective of children. It provides a legal framework that allows all children between the ages of 6-14 years to an education of reasonable quality, based on principles of equity and non-discrimination. It provides for children's right to free and compulsory admission, and completion of elementary education. More importantly, it provides for the child's right to education that is free from fear, stress and anxiety. There are several provisions in the Act, these include, provisions prohibiting corporal punishment, detention and expulsion. The most important aspect is to ensure that the teaching-learning processesstake place in an appropriate manner and are free from stress and anxiety (Sec.29), with apparent implications for curricular reform. Testing and school grading systems need to be reviewed to motivate children to develop and broaden their learning. The RTE Act also lays down the responsibilities of teachers. Teacher accountability systems would need to ensure that children are learning and their right to learning takes place in an environment that is free from stress and anxiety.

National Program of Nutritional Support to Primary Education or Mid-Day Meal Scheme – This program was initiated and in the present existence too is contributing a significant part in attaining the goals of UEE. The objectives of Mid-Day Meal Scheme are, improving the nutritional status of children within the classes from I to V in Government, local body, Government aided schools and EGS and AIE centers. Encouraging children belonging to disadvantaged groups to attend schools more regularly and to help them participate in classroom activities. During summers, nutritional support is provided to the children of primary stage in drought affected areas.

National Literacy Mission (NLM)

The National Literacy Mission was launched in 1988. It aims at imparting functional literacy to adult non-literates within the age group of 15 to 35 years within the country. The main programs of the NLM were the Total Literacy Campaign; its main objective was to impart the basic literacy to adult non-literates. Post Literacy Program was launched to develop the literacy skills of neo-literates. Continuing Education Program was initiated to make provision of facilities like rural library, reading room for the neo-literates and other sections of the community. Through Jan Shikshan Sansthans, vocational training was provided to the neo-literates and other disadvantaged sections of the society. The major outcomes of NLM include:

It has been able to cover 597 districts in the country under various literacy programs and approximately 124 million people are reported to have attained literacy skills. The literacy rate of the country has also increased from 52.21% in 1991 to 65.37% in 2001, registering one of the highest decadal growths in literacy so far. However, despite these gains, 34% of the non-literates within the age group of 15 years in the world are in India. There is still continuation of gender, regional and social disparities. The Government of India has decided that an integrated approach to literacy needs to be implemented. This means, the Total LiteracyCampaigns and the Post Literacy Programme will operate under one literacy

project. This approach would enable the massive problem of illiteracy to be dealt with in a holistic manner. By treating the impartment of functional literacy as a continuum rather than as one benefit for the illiterate person, the inputs would be made goal directed. Operation of literacy campaigns would continue in those areas, where there is massive illiteracy. At the same time, those who have crossed the basic learning phase, programmes of consolidation, vocational skills, integration with life skills and other aspects would be given priority.

Health for All

Family Planning Program was initiated in 1951. It aimed at enhancing individual health and welfare. In remote and rural areas, the provision of health care facilities is in a deprived state. There have been investments made for improving the health care facilities. The government is formulating measures to provide health care facilities to all the citizens of India. Major extent has been made within the country to achieve Health for All goals. Emphasis has been put upon the areas of primary health care, immunization, family planning and nutritional support programs. Most of the medical facilities within the country are concentrated around major cities and towns. To reduce the inequality, Government of India launched a program known as National Rural Health Mission (NRHM). Apart from NRHM, Government of India has also launched many programs related to health of women and children like Janani Suraksha Yojna (JSY), Balika Samridhi Yojna (BSY), and Kishori Shakti Yojna (KSY). With the success of NRHM, Government of India is planning to launch a similar program for urban areas called National Urban Health Mission (NUHM).

Other national health programs include, National Vector Borne Disease Control Program (NVBDCP), National Filaria Control Program, National Leprosy Eradication Program, Revised National TB Control Program, National Iodine Deficiency Disorders Control Program, National Mental Health Program, National Aids Control Program, National Cancer Control Program, Universal Immunization Program, National Program for Prevention and Control of Deafness, Pilot Program on Prevention and Control of Diabetes, CVD and Stroke, National Tobacco Control Program and National Program for Control of Blindness.

National Policy for Empowerment of Women

The implementation of National Policy for Empowerment of Women was initiated in 2001. The main objective of this policy is to create an environment through positive economic and social policies for the complete development of women and enable them to realise their complete potential. In all spheres, political, economic, social, cultural and civil, women should be allowed to exercise equal rights. In social, political and economic spheres, they should be allowed to have equal rights to participate and render an effective contribution in the decision making process. Equal access of women to health care, quality education at all levels, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security and public office is imperative. Reinforcement of legal system aims at strengthening all forms of discrimination against women. To change attitudes of the society and community practices by active participation of men and women, to eliminate of discriminatory treatment and violence against women and children and building and strengthening their partnerships with the civil society and women's organizations. All forms of discriminatory treatment and exploitation against the girl child and violation of her rights shall beeliminated by implementation of measures, both precautionary and punitive within and outside the family. These would relate precisely to severe enforcement of laws against prenatal sex selection and the practices of female foeticide, female infanticide, child marriage, child abuse and child prostitution. Elimination of discriminatory treatment of children, especially girls within the family and outside and

projection of a positive image of the girl child will be taking into consideration. There will be special emphasis put upon the needs of the girl child and assignment of substantial investments in areas relating to food and nutrition, health and education, and in vocational education. In implementing programs for eliminating child labour, there will be special emphasis put upon girl children.

CONCLUSIONS

The major social groups comprise of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, minorities and women. These are located in rural as well as in urban areas. There has been initiation of various schemes and programs by the government that aim towards their upliftment. Different programs that have been initiated include, mid-day meal scheme, supply of books etc. Schools for SCs and STs, such as Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya and special treatment in Navodaya Vidyalaya, National Talent Search Schemes, and scholarships are also provided. NSFDC, NSKFDC, NSTFDC, SCDC and STDC have been opened to make provision of financial assistance to SCs and STs. TRIFED makes provision of marketing assistance to the disadvantaged groups for their products.

Empowerment of women, belonging to disadvantaged groups is in an inadequate condition. They have not been able to obtain sufficient access to education, health care and other productive resources. They remain marginalized, poor and socially excluded on a large scale. The children belonging to disadvantaged groups are experiencing various kinds of problems, such as, child labour and are even subjected to mistreatment and exploitation. In the present existence, there have been establishment of programs and schemes that have encouraged free education and skills development among them. It is essential to provide solutions to the problems of poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment. Assisting individuals towards generating a source of income, enabling them to recognize the significance of education and making provision of other resources that would generate welfare of the individuals include civic amenities, infrastructure, proper hygiene and sanitation, clean drinking water and proper nutrition. These are imperative sources that help the individuals to sustain their living conditions in an appropriate manner.

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