

VIABILITY OF WELFARE TECHNOLOGY IN MASS TECHNICAL LITERACY PROGRAMME

By

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ABSTRACT

Each developing country should be encouraged to identify its own priorities and develop welfare technology mobilizing its own natural and human resources and should not unnecessarily imitate the stereotyped technologies from the developed countries. The existing curriculum has to be updated and strengthened to include the concept of welfare technology. Mass Technical Literacy Programme (MTLP) should be launched and propagated by institutions so as to reach the grass root level to generate awareness and bridge all gender and social category gaps. Need-oriented research works to be promoted at all levels so as to make education more realistic and practical. In order to bring about all round prosperity, a model of MTLP vis-à-vis a socio-economic system is being hereby proposed and described. Proper interaction must exist between educational institutions on one hand and beneficiaries on the other.

Keywords: Education, Human Resource, Socio-economic System, Mass Technical Literacy Programme, Welfare Technology.

INTRODUCTION

Education is utilitarian. Its aim is not limited to provide optimum benefits to mankind from the available resources within the framework of socially accepted norms, but to renovate and bring out specific changes in the existing set-up to combat the decline in social, ecological, cultural and ethical aspects of the nation. The geopolitical and economic scenario in the world is rapidly undergoing unprecedented changes. In view of the aforesaid situation, it is desirable to ponder as to what has to be done to keep pace with the rapidly changing scenario. Hence, we have to strive towards excellence in our performance in basic educational innovations to ensure accountability to society.

Viability Scenario

Since independence, the Central Government had constituted various committees and commissions for Review of National Policy on Education [1]. The interdependence of various levels of education and their impact on national development are well established. The three levels of education, viz. primary, secondary and higher education are equally important in the overall development of the country. Besides, these are more

complementary in nature than antagonistic.

The track record of our country in the educational domain as a whole is however gloomy and disappointing. The total number of illiterates in the country increased from 300 millions in 1951 to 400 millions in 1981 [2] and this trend continued to rise in the eighties and nineties [3]. In the absence of the people's participation through voluntary organizations, political parties and State Support, there will be no revolution in education.

Development is not a unidirectional activity. In fact, it has been increasingly evident that economic growth in terms of GDP or GNP is necessary but by no means are a sufficient condition for social progress and those supplementary measures needed if the problems of poverty, disease, hunger and unemployment are to be efficiently addressed. The sophisticated education system has its own advantages but imitating stereotyped education can hardly bring about desired benefit to vast sections of population in a developing economy like ours. The education needed for a developing nation must identify the socio-economic priorities of its own, and be made appropriate taking into consideration of local resources. Educationists, hence, must come up with

innovative ideas to take stock of real life situations.

Education System

Education system consists of three main components such as Educational Management, Teaching Institution and Finance Procurement.

Education Management receives policy input as feedback from a socio-economic system. The developing nations must identify their socio-economic priorities by themselves considering optimum utilization of human and scarce natural resources. After a debate in which all sections of people interested in development process participate, a national policy should be formulated to serve as guide-lines for educational management. The main objective of education should be creation of ethos that would produce manpower with sufficient ability and character dedicated to national development. The educational management has to be operated by planners, managers, sociologists and technologists of high eminence to suggest directives to teaching institution in the light of national policy. They have to see that the true goals of education are satisfactorily achieved through optimal utilization of resources of men and materials. They have to control and plan the activities of R and D centres with special emphasis on development of appropriate welfare technology.

The technology institutions are responsible primarily for imparting teaching to students and conducting research. They should also disseminate their knowledge by providing technical services like Mass Technical Literacy Programme (MTLP) at the local level. Knowledge without wisdom is of no avail either for development of individual, society or the world. Hence nothing could be more sacred than conducting development programme without yielding to temptations and external pressures.

Defining achievable goals is the first step in any development programme. Thus design of curriculum requires special consideration and precaution because defining goals are just as much a part of professional development as the learning in the class-rooms. The curriculum should be dynamic so as to include local

social aspects also into its consideration. Inclusion of Mass Technical Literacy Programme (MTLP) for updating curriculum is a must. Under the MTLP, the students will also get acquainted with the real life problems faced by the people within the catchment area of the institution. In a nut shell, the existing curriculum of education should have to be compatible with the social-environment and human values because ultimately, the students have to operate within a rapidly changing society for the sake of welfare to the many.

As regards financing, the developing countries are highly handicapped with regards to education. In spite of the consistent commitment of the Government of India to raise budgetary allocation in education to 6 per cent of GNP, in practical terms it has seen a continuous decline from a high of 6.79 per cent in the First Five Year Plan (1951-1956) to the latest Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007) [4]. This budgetary allocation to education includes general education comprising primary, secondary and university education, technical education, art and culture, and sports and youth services. Recently for reinforcing its National Policy on Education, the Government of India has taken a decision to raise funds by imposition of an education cess.

Mass Technical Literacy Programme

To make the curriculum more effective, Mass Technical Literacy Programme (MTLP) should be launched through active participation of the students. Even now a days in certain parts of the developing nations like ours, people are under severe grip of superstition and have accepted poverty as their ultimate destiny. Apart from removing psychosis of poverty equilibrium, the students can very easily illustrate some simple technical aspects of safe drinking water, fire-resistant low cost housing, effective sanitation, non-conventional energy resource generation, water harvesting, etc. In turn the students will gain valuable experience in developing technical solution to real life problems faced by the people in the catchment area of the institution. Our objective should not be to make students a philosopher. Rather, we must aim to make students capable for dealing with a variety of real life problems [5]. They should be capable of generating

potential and capacity to serve society and mankind.

For carrying out development programmes uniformly throughout the country, as far as practicable, the whole nation should be divided into smaller regions. It will be more useful to establish a well equipped Welfare Technology Development (WTD) Centre at the local levels, i.e. state, regional, district or taluka level. If the development policy is concerned with the nation as a whole and state, regional, district or taluka approach is ignored; the development will generally be concentrated within the vicinity of urban areas whereas rural areas will be neglected. Already the Third World countries have suffered a lot due to these imbalances. Each local area (state, region, district or taluka level) has to be entrusted with the objective of development of welfare technology as per the pressing social requirements and availability of human and natural resources of the area. As an example in an area like Kahalgaon in the district of Bhagalpur in the state of Bihar where fly ash is available in abundance, development of fly ash bricks or some other useful materials may bring hope of employment and prosperity to thousands of families within the local area.

The functions of a Welfare Technology Development centre are manifold and therefore, the centre has to devise suitable ways and measures for creation of large number of work-places in the area. It has to develop and propagate technology that promotes creation of large number of work-places so that it can be readily adopted by the people of the local area. It may work as a great saviour because here man is at the centre of developmental endeavour and the most deprived comes into sharp focus. By means of Mass Technical Literacy Programme and Socio-economic interaction model as shown in Figure 1, attempts have been made to emphasize the significance of Welfare Technology Development centre in large numbers to accelerate the progress of the Third World. The model is self-explanatory.

The impact and importance of Welfare Technology in Mass Technical Literacy Programme (MTLP) shall prove worthy of the responsibilities entrusted to the development of human resources of the developing

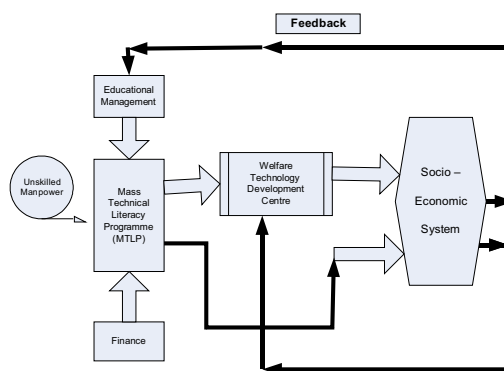


Figure 1. Mass Technical Literacy Programme vis-à-vis Socio-economic System Interaction Model

societies at the grass root level itself. The interaction model of MTLP and Socio-economic System is shown in Figure 1. It has manpower, the feedbacks from socio-economic system and instructions from educational management as inputs. It is responsible for development of welfare technology to be transmitted to socio-economic systems and monitoring responses for further improvements. For a nation like ours belonging to the Third World, the appropriate welfare technology has to be labour-oriented, less capital intensive, and should promote utilization of locally available materials and manpower so that socio-economic disparities are minimized and quality of life is improved and upgraded. As a matter of fact MTLP has to display a vital role in contributing to the progress of any developing nation.

This would probably be the most ethical way to solve not only the problems of hunger, poverty, unemployment and illiteracy but also stop the rapid degeneration of human values. The advancement of modern technology has brought with it a crumbling of human values as witnessed by social intrigue, mass oppression, hatred, violence, drug addiction - a completely shattered social culture.

Conclusions

Socio-economic system has been used in a very vast sense and comprises of urban, rural, industrial, business and other activities responsible for growth of the country. Socio-economic system also includes some abstract elements like social values, culture and equality that enrich the quality of human life. Welfare technology functions attempts to bring about complete harmony with social, cultural and ecological environment and tries

to provide opportunities for creating large number of work-places, by essentially preserving the cultural heritage and dignity of the human being. This concept of welfare technology attempts to minimize the socio-economic disparities.

The existing curriculum should, therefore, be updated and strengthened by including concept of welfare technology. There is need for us to understand the damage brought about to our social fabric caused by our casual approach to work. When the national interest is at stake, we must reaffirm and uphold our professional obligation to society. We have an obligation towards society to prise out from the innermost recesses of the brains of our progeny the diffidence arising out of their fear of enterprise.

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