

Colonial Impact on Education

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Abstract: Though the new countries inherited educational institutions of various capacities, each one was required to build a new educational system, either from foundation or by expanding a small existing system. Every country made use of education to provide the skilled manpower which is required for national development and to socialize its diverse population into feeling loyal to the new state. Educational expansion was pursued everywhere, but the particular pattern of change was profoundly affected by the nature of the political regime, particularly by colonial status. The colonial powers used education to preserve the status quo, train a limited number of mid-level bureaucrats, limit the growth of nationalism, and, especially impose its culture and language. Accordingly, they limited educational expansion only to the higher levels, even though the demand continued to grow.

Introduction

Colonialism and education are two main ways through which the European powers emerged successfully developed. Though education existed even before colonialism, it was upto a limited constraint or territorial, cultural boundary, but the European nations used their strong powers to introduce a system of education that was completely anew, whose aim was to ensure that nations were controlled upon and exploited. Colonialism arose out of the need for European nations to have direct political control over their colonies so as to ensure the protection of their economic interest. So, colonialism is not just merely a system of exploitation, but one whose main purpose was to repatriate the profits. By exporting the profits generated by the conquered labour to Europe, thus assuring the development of Europe. Colonization was a response to the economic needs of industrial capitalist 'Europe'. European nations desired colonies in order to have access to the raw materials of the colonies, to have markets, for sale of manufactured goods of the home country and a field for the investment of surplus capital. In order to fit into to the demands of the world market colonialism distorted the economy of the conquered colony for their own development self-sustenance.

Education had been accepted world wide as the gate way to the development, but, in order to achieve its aim, the content must be customized to the needs of the society and it has to be internally driven. European nations used force to suppress the traditional educational system to the ground and imposed a foreign educational system that is geared towards development of an internal material base, thus resulting into the development of the European world. This

paper will explore colonialism and education holistically and its impact on the political, economic, social and cultural development.

Colonialism

It is a system of rules which assumes the right of one people to impose their will upon another. Thus leading to a situation of dominance and dependency which systematically subordinates those governed by it to the imported culture in social, economic and political life.

It (*Colonialism*) is the policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying and exploiting it economically. Historically, this has often involved killing or subjugating the local population. A colonial power controls populations with social systems very different from its own, which are distributed at great distances from the metropolitan and territorial capitals. It has to overcome problems of authority distances and cost to persuade subject people to accept both its version of law and order and its control over dominant social institutions. Colonialism arose out of the need for the strong European Powers to have direct political control over another country or territory. With the industrial revolution in Europe, the economy of most industrialized nations became saturated. In Britain the inequalities in wealth and income distribution had weakened the consumption power of the working classes and this did not create room for producers to utilize fully their individual capacity lacking in domestic investment outlets and then they turned their attention to the economically under-exploited regions of the world. Britain then established colonies as archives for their surplus capital where labour and raw materials were cheap.

Power is the ultimate component of the human society as a basis for relations within any group and between groups. It is an ability to defend one's interests and impose one's will by any means available. When one society finds itself forced to relinquish its power entirely to another society that in itself is a form of underdevelopment.

European powers did not establish colonial states to carry out a programme of political development or changes but to erect efficient and effective administrative states for purposes of economic exploitation. The negative impact of colonialism in political terms was quite dramatic. The states lost their power, independence and meaning, irrespective of whether they were big empires or small polities. Again, that certain traditional rulers were kept in office, and the formal structure of some kingdoms was partially retained but that the substance of political life was quite different. Political Power had passed into the hands of foreign overlords. The colonial rule meant the effective eradication of the political power throughout the continent and by force crushed all pre-existing states and those that survived were puppets. Colonialism effected to loss of political power, blockage of national solidarity, craftsmanship distortion and the growth of technology, internal trade, destroyed culture, introduction of new value system, poverty via taxation, paid employment, alienation from the land and environment, and social stratification.

Education

Education is crucial in any type of society for the preservation of the lives of the members and the maintenance of the social structure. Under certain scenarios, education also promotes social change. Under normal circumstances education grows out of the environment, the learning process being directly related to the pattern of work in the society. Education has been universally accepted as the foundation and drive of growth. It is a passport out of poverty. A highly prized possession that anyone can have. It is the foundation for higher living standards and an important tool in the long term eradication of poverty. Education provides you with knowledge and information which in turn brings about desirable changes in the way you think, feel and act. The importance of education cannot be over-emphasized.

Educational expansion was pursued everywhere, but the particular pattern of change was profoundly affected by the nature of the political regime, particularly by colonial status. The colonial powers used education to preserve the status quo, train a limited number of mid-level bureaucrats, limit the growth of nationalism, and, especially impose its culture and language. Accordingly, they limited educational expansion only to the higher levels, even though the demand continued to grow. Private, foreign, and missionary schools were favoured everywhere as alternatives for the upper classes to the inadequate public schools. The public systems were centrally administered. Their curricula were usually copied from the British and were of limited relevance to local needs, the numbers and quality of teachers were adequate, and dropout rates were high. Few modern schools were to be found. Only in certain communities were significant numbers of students enrolled in modern schools. Beyond that only a small percentage of the population (including a few women) received a modern education.

Conclusion

Colonialism and education when carefully analysed it brings out the bare mission of colonialism and how education was used for the realization or execution of that mission. In the field of education, the system remained the way the colonial masters left it. Foreign personnel were recruited to teach her citizens. The early years of independence did not focus on building an adequate philosophical foundation of education that could positively stimulate the heterogeneous cultures of nations. The stimulation was negative rather than capitalizing on national pride and patriotism, the focus was on misguided capitalism and greed that created conditions for regionalism, sectionalism, tribalism, bribery and corruption in the name of flourishment or development and this is where the real problems of development lies.

After independence, the countries nationalized the private schools, which were regarded as promoting alien religions and cultures, and greatly expanded educational opportunities, especially at the upper levels, a small, poor private institution were made it into a national university and subsequently opened state universities. The newly independent countries also equalized educational opportunities. Free tuition and scholarships were provided to lower-class students. Certain made primary education free and compulsory by enacting a series of laws calling for free and compulsory education and placed strict controls on foreign schools, especially the missionary ones.

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