

Visions Of Social Change In India

Idea Of Development Planning And Mixed Economy

Planning is a blueprint of how social change should take place in society. Planning tells us the area of priority and from where the resources to be utilized /mobilised. If these resources are being received from International monetary fund and loans from other countries, how to pay them back is the concern of planning. With some specific growth rate certain capital gets circulated through which the above loans could be paid back.

India after independence went for structural change. Development planning was initiated in India to cater to the socialist ideas of Nehru and developmental needs of the country. We lacked technological advantage and market advantage and people were making their living from agriculture and traditional handicrafts. Hence, we had no choice but to go for non-capitalist development planning.

In socialist development planning, state controls everything including instruments of growth and production. State determines the way as to how trade and commerce must take place. Hence state monopoly is executed everywhere. India evolved into a country after freedom struggle, in this struggle people came from every strata society. Prior to this movement people had experience of excessive state-controlled during the colonial period and state was capitalist oriented during that time. But again there was a concern that if socialist model will be adopted then there are chances of complete autocratic rule of state. Thus it can be said that socialist development planning was not the goal of the country but it was rather, the only way out at that point of time.

Mixed economy

Mixed economy is an economic system in which both the state and private sector direct the economy, reflecting characteristics of both market economies and planned economies. Most mixed economies can be described as market economies with strong regulatory oversight, in addition to having a variety of government-sponsored aspects.

Under the mixed economy core areas are controlled by the state for example Coal, Railways, shipping, petroleum etc. Certain areas were spelt out where private sector was restricted like defence, electricity and government rule who was considered absolute in these fields. But there were some areas where public and private sectors could work together or compete with each other.

Mixed economy in India has always given importance on agricultural growth as 80% of people were making their living directly from agriculture. Development model that India chose after Independence

was greatly driven by Nehruvian ideology. Nehru believed that massive growth rate is a necessity for India to address to the problems of hunger, unemployment and poverty.

Following the idea of **Mahalanobis**, he indicated a big plan approach for different sectors is essential for economic growth in India. India started as a country dependent on food aid driven by principle of "**ship to mouth**". It was perceived that land reform system, rural cooperatives, green revolution, public distribution system can bring revolution in agrarian sector. Likewise government control over industries was considered essential for economic growth. Government gave direction to other industries dominated by private entrepreneurs through industrial policies, specification of licensing provisions, sales tax and income tax which were considered to be the need of the hour for inclusive growth.

Nehru believed that accelerated growth can bring economic surplus to the hands of the state that can be used in infrastructure sector like health, communication and education. Sociologists look into the impact of mixed economy and development planning in India addressing to the problems associated with work culture, system of governance and other related factors.

MS Gore in his article "developmental policies in India since independence" indicates that land reform system was introduced in the country in a haphazard manner which mostly supported the vested interest of the big landlords.

Gandhian concept of cooperative farming lost its merit and "Benami" transfer gave legitimacy to the private ownership rights over the land to the dominant class. As a result landless labourers substantively started to speak about the failure of development programmes in India. Daniel Thorner calls this as **capitalist agriculture growth in socialist India**.

Community Development Programme was aimed at improving economic growth through the promotion of agriculture, horticulture and communication network. However the local dominant caste took all the benefits who went for contractorship and pocketed all services and infrastructural support. By bribing officials they consumed all the benefits of the program. As a result community development programme led to family/personal development which led to its tragic failure.

The politicisation of the **cooperative movements** by the local affluent class resulted into its dismal performance wherein rather than offering new skills and economic self-reliance to the people at the grassroot level it benefited mostly the dominant and rich class. The seed cooperatives in Haryana, sugar cooperatives in Maharashtra, irrigation cooperatives and Karnataka and finance cooperatives in Bengal all benefited mostly people holding dominant positions who had power to bend all the rules by corrupting the government officials and politicians alike.

Gandhi's vision of development planning was taken in a half-hearted manner as a result development planning instead of promoting equality expanded class inequalities in India. During 1980s an

estimated 260 million people were poor and at the end of 2009, 270 million people fall in this category. Thus one can easily guess that government led development programmes has not fulfilled its promise as it was expected from it.

Most of the poor are scheduled castes and scheduled Tribes, destitute women or single household were suffering from chronic poverty. Even after 62 years of India's independence chronic poverty is evolving into major challenge to India's development programme speaking about comprehensive failure of mixed economic development and strategy guided by socialistic ideology.

With regard to industrial sector more from the industries monopolised by the state (defence, Railways, shipping, oil, steel, coal etc) registered massive loss by 1990s. Looking into the failure of Indian industries it is said that socialist vision was a political compulsions soon after India's independence, but during 1980s the conditions were so different that unless state and market came closer to each other economic growth in India could not have been possible. Thereby employment generation and eradication of poverty will nowhere be coming close to estimated target of five years plan. Rejecting to this idea Marxist sociologist by comparing data on poverty rate in different states finds out that actual poverty is much more high in comparison to estimated poverty.

They consider that actual poverty is not addressed to by the development programme in India because it is emphasizing more on concessions, subsidy, intervention than building capabilities of people therefore poverty sustains and perpetuates, though in official statistics it is spelt out that rate of poverty is declining. This further indicate that industrial policies are aimed at controlling capitalist monopoly. The government in charge of key areas of growth so that people can have basic access to education, health care, food, housing etc but unfortunately this developmental approach has gave way to the rise of state monopoly. Bureaucratisation of work culture, license raj opened doors for corruption ultimately leading to tax evasion, expansion of parallel economy leading to industrial sickness, mass employment and economic disaster.

Therefore India started with developmental program emphasising on mixed economy with glorified socialistic vision but by 1985 it was realised that acceleration of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, gender gap in employment which led to collapse of both industry and agriculture. **PC Joshi** in his book "developmental strategies for India" indicates that time has come when one should go for Gandhian vision of planning that speaks about use of appropriate technology, trusteeship and balance between nature and culture emphasising on human happiness than just materialistic prosperity.

Planning is not the brainchild of sociologist. Thus ignoring sociological wisdom government preferred to go for privatisation and liberalisation during 1990s rather than going for sustainable development growth. The damage done by mixed economic philosophy in 30 years will be much less than what could result due to aggressive expansionist philosophy of economic liberalisation. Liberalisation has led

to openness of market, entry of caste Trans-nationals companies leading to elimination of small players for market resulting in economic monopoly by industries in different sectors. These industries are driven by profit centric orientation without any social responsibility, as a result India does registers growth but the masses are suffering from joblessness, poverty and frustration.

Economic liberalisation has reduced India into a hunting ground of cheap labour as a result exportation of labour is evolving into the new capitalist agenda. Anita Minocha finds out how young software engineers in search of career advancement and materialistic benefits register multiple kind of health hazards which is ruining their lives and it has reduced the younger generation into mindless consumerist class and in the rural sector it has led to poverty. Reflecting on all these pathologies **Amartya Sen** tells that India's development policy has shifted from control by state to control by market whereas but India should of done is to balance out between the two emphasising more on the areas of priority and thereby promoting capacity building. Indicates that government should have started with two different areas of development i.e. **health and education**. Health is both physical and mental capability of a person to earn a livelihood and education gives him capacity to gather skills and challenge discrimination, understand his rights and so he /she is able to demand justice when is not extended to him.

Constitution, Law And Social Change

Making of modern India is a result of elite thinking. The preamble states that "we the people of India solemnly resolve.....". In this we the people only represent the 40 members of Cabinet and not the entire population. All over the world when Constitution is formulated people debate on it. Constitution was the brainchild of some intellectuals and elite present in the Cabinet.

In the West the blacks and women got citizenship rights after lots of protest, mobilisation etc. But in case of India suddenly one day everybody is given citizenship rights with a whole lot of fundamental rights without creating any awareness or mobilisation in the section before it was introduced therefore citizenship guaranteed by the state is largely different from the citizenship practised or used by the citizens.

All the concepts like equality, fraternity and liberty were borrowed from West which cannot be effectively applied to Indian society because of ideological and cultural difference. Europe and America went for Independent through collective participation, whereas in case of India princely states, zamindars were happy with British rule because they were largely benefited by it. The only problem they faced was increased taxation but they were willing to live with that, because they knew that after independence they will lose their property rights. Hence in case of India it was not an inclusive action of the people. Hence the ground which was the foundation for Freedom/Independent movement in West like equality, liberty and fraternity were altogether new to India but still they were included in the introduction of the Constitution without thinking about the capacity required to provide the same to the people in true spirit.

*The two most important/key areas of Indian Constitution are **Directive Principles** and **Fundamental Rights**. Directive principles of State policy talks about what are the basic direction for a state to go for social change. It is advisory in character i.e. looking into primarily resources available with the state; the state will formulate plans for the people for example it talks about abolition of child labour, protection of environment, living wages for workers, ending all forms of inequality etc.*

State is trying to provide primary education to children since 1960s, but in a poor country where hunger and survival are two major problems which leads to health concerns education becomes a foregone conclusion. In India food security was major problem and state went for agricultural development and introduced collective efforts. Till this day the government does not spend more than 2% on educational sectors and it is struggling hard to catch up with the health issues because it's directly related to nutrition and food which is again a big problem. Thus even after more than 60 years of independence and by applying several trial and error methods to address the chronic problems, India has not been able to live up to the most basic expectation required to sustain a dignified human life i.e. food, water and shelter.

Karl Marx said that "labour is the commodities sold in capitalist market". Child in case of India is pie of the parents. Families are child bound but still we have not been able to provide even the bare minimum to our children, who are going to be the future of tomorrow. In Kalahandi, Orissa mothers are selling their child not for money but for the survival of child, as they are incapable to feed them due to massive poverty which is leading to malnutrition, disease and death. Thus in case of India chronic poverty persist and so child labour is difficult to abolish as it serves as an additional source of income for the poor parents.

As far as secularism is concerned India comes in the category of unique nation. Can a state go for secular credentials where people are driven by strong religious consciousness. Hence there is contest between what state want people to be and what people culturally are. Andre Beteille said that people are driven by the manuscripts than by Constitution. Constitutionally bonded labour has been abolished but as a matter of fact we all know that it is practised in every part of India in one form or other.

Vijayalakshmi in a study of women housemaid in Delhi tells that most of them come from Bihar and lack protection. The doors of their return are locked because land alienation has already taken place. Their happiness lies with the members of the family where they're working. They can't demand minimum wage and if they try to liberate themselves police cases are filed against them. Thus bonded labour is abolished constitutionally but practically it is still persists.

Fundamental rights of Indian Constitution talks about adult franchise right emphasising on meaningful political participation by the people. However different studies conducted by various sociologist indicate that how Booth capturing, caste-based voting behaviour was the other name of democratic politics in India. In addition to that, reflecting on Panchayati Raj system thee indicated that how people are coerced to stay away from democratic participation on the grounds of gender, caste and ethnic identity.

Indian Constitution has spoken about the quality of political right .In the traditional Indian society it is considered that political right is a matter of privilege for upper-class. Hence every general election is transforming a political constancy into the battle front explaining the contest between the constitutional provisions of the country and the hierarchical structure of society.

Right to freedom is a constitutional provision that is debated at length with Ramchandra Guha, Upendra Bakshi who consider that freedom is yet to carry any meaning for tribal communities in India. They have become the worst victims of highhandedness of the state due to land alienation. Living within the democratic state most of the displaced tribal live at the mercy of powerful state and constitutional guarantee of liberty and freedom is a fairytale for them.

Reflecting on Narmada Bachao Andolan Ramachandra Gowda indicated that how the beneficiaries of the project coming from Gujarat received the patronage from state in a big way whereas the displaced people mostly belonging to poor tribal communities had to wait four weeks together to have

a meeting with the head of the government. Therefore constitutional provisions of freedom is seriously question by class identity, ethnic identity and economic status. **Amartya Sen** has rightly pointed out that poverty makes an individual speechless, marginalised and therefore freedom as a constitutional provision is not being really enjoyed or exercise by a large majority of people in Indian society.

Education And Social Change

In view of the post-independence aspirations for modernization, change and development it is but natural that several sociologists focus upon the issue of education as an instrument for modernization, change and development. Together the several conceptual analyses and empirical studies on this theme provide a valuable elucidation of the functions of education as an instrument of development, the conditions under which this instrument is effective as the conditions in which its functioning is constrained. They also provide valuable data and insights on how, where and why education in the country has failed as an instrument of change. The writings on the subject reveal a shift in the outlook on education across the years. In the beginning the writings generally exuded faith in education as an instrument of development and focus on spelling out the manner in which it is expected to function as such. In contrast, later writings displayed a measure of skepticism about the effectiveness of education and generally inclined towards indicating where and why it fails.

We find broadly two paradigms on the issue of education and society in India. They are the **functional paradigm** and the **conflict paradigm**. In the functional paradigm education is considered as the main instrument of social change and transformation. It is evident in the writings of educationists, planners, policy-makers and most of the sociologists. Third Five Year Plan (1961) states that Education is the most important single factor in achieving rapid economic development and technological progress and in creating a social order founded on the values of freedom, social justice and equal opportunity. Programmes of education lie at the base of the effort to forge the bonds of common citizenship, to harness the energies of the people, and to develop the natural and human resources of every part of the country.

Further, the report of Kothari Commission (1964) held that The destiny of India is now being shaped in her classrooms. This, we believe, is no mere rhetoric. In a world based on science and technology, it is education that determines the level of prosperity, welfare and security of the people. On the quality and number of persons coming out of our schools and colleges will depend our success in the great enterprise of national reconstruction. The report adds, 'In fact, what is needed is a revolution in education which in turn will set in motion the much desired social, economic and cultural revolution'.

In the **conflict paradigm**, education is not considered as a prime mover of social change or as the main weapon, or even one of the important instruments of achieving fundamental social changes. Here, it is asserted that change is in or through the educational system is not possible without prior changes in the social structure. The changes in economic structures, in the political power structure, or the legal structure are the mainsprings of change in the social hierarchy

and the relationships between different sections in it. All these factors including education are inter-related and interact, and it is difficult to separate out the effects and say that a particular aspect of the change is attributable to education. Hence education seldom rises above the socio-economic and socio-political situation in which it is embedded.

It has been argued that although formal education plays a vital role in 'ideational change' through transformation of the knowledge, attitudes and values of the people, its effectiveness in bringing about structural change in society is extremely limited. The vicious circle in which education is caught in India today may be broken if the linkages between the existing practices, procedures and vested interests in the status quo are meaningfully exposed by social scientists through their research.

Education is regarded as the key for restructuring the economies of the developing countries. It helps in overcoming the techno-economic problems and also plays an important role in resolving the socio-demographic problems.

Education facilitates the development of human resources, cultural expression, and improved health and thus provides an essential base for social and economic development. It is considered as an empowering phenomenon which enables the people to combat social justice and exploitation and thus creates the required synergy for a structural socio-political transformation. According to UNESCO, education leads to social revolution.

Education is regarded as an important instrument of social change. The role of education could be viewed from two related but slightly different perspectives, which may be called teleological and empirical perspectives. In the teleological perspective, the role of education is to assist the society to achieve the goals it has set for itself.

These include:

- i) Goals in the fields of technological, scientific, and other areas of economic development of the country,
- ii) Social goals like reduction of various forms of social inequality; and
- iii) The goal of moulding the character of citizens as responsible and socially and politically conscientious members of democratic society.

Education was regarded as an important means for reducing social inequalities in India. The Constitution of India made special provisions for promoting the educational interests of the weaker sections of society. Educational support was provided to SC / ST through the programmes of scholarships and

fellows, and making reservations of seats for them in various educational institutions. It was presumed that education would contribute to their overall development. Education could facilitate their economic development as it enables them to get better paid jobs and achieve social mobility. Education also has an emancipators' role. It promotes social awareness and sharpening of self-respect and dignity. However, it is noted that education performs only a restricted role in the upward mobility of the weaker sections, and at the same time enables the elites to maintain positions of power and authority.

The Indian Constitution provides equality of educational opportunity to all citizens. The liberal democratic system permits competition and holds this as a legitimate strategy for the betterment of one's status in society. Competitiveness is an important feature of the Indian education system. There is a dialectical relationship between education and social mobility in general and mobility to elite positions in particular. But it is only to a limited extent that education has facilitated social mobility.

Problems with Education In India

There is noticed certain level of mismatch between education and development, particularly rural development in India. It is opined that the education system is out of pace with the rhythm of life in India. The primary schools are completely focused on preparing students to enter into the secondary system of education. The secondary system has no concern with life around it and is fully meant to prepare students to feed into the tertiary system whose goals seem to rest outside the India's requirements. The products, particularly of the elite institutions prefer to leave the country and work in the affluent foreign countries only for their individual benefits. A large number of educated youth remain unemployable in the country. The poor people do not find education useful and attractive as it does not ensure job, besides other factors.

Non-formal education, including adult education is seen to have large potential to promote development and social change in a country like India. The classroom-centered education and training is largely geared to producing urban based elites. It has created a serious problem of educated unemployment and also high dropouts and illiteracy among the backward sections of society. The expert/centered, literacy/skill focused non-formal education, including adult education has not been able to adequately cater to the needs of the people.

The dialectical relationship is manifested in the processes of 'early selection' and 'mass examination' in India. The process of early selection is involved in the enrolment of children when they are very young in different types of educational institutions. Children from the elite background are 'selected'

early in life and placed in good quality, high fee, English medium 'public schools' where they are prepared - in terms of skills, behaviour and values - specifically for elite status in their later life.

Children of the middle class study in medium quality quasi - public schools run by private institutions, and in Central and Sainik Schools of the Government, and later generally work at middle level occupational strata. Children of the lower class people get the opportunity to study in the ill-equipped low quality regional medium government-run schools and are prepared to join the lower occupational strata in the society. Similarly, the higher education institutions, both general and professional, are of high, medium and low quality. Students of the elite public schools generally enter the selected few elite colleges. Those from the medium and lower quality schools generally get admission to the medium and lower quality colleges and institutions.

Various studies have shown that the major beneficiaries of higher education come from the upper social strata and an urban background. Education had earlier facilitated the extension of dominant peasant caste hegemony particularly at the state level. But with the passage of time, those belonging to the lower castes, like SC/STs also made considerable progress in higher education and so has achieved the attendant socio- economic benefits through limited mobility.

Besides literacy, education has to meet the need for skill development and employment generation (not creating unemployment). It could develop their personal and collective critical thinking, problem diagnosis and solution through organizing themselves in different ways. The programme would break their isolation and marginalization, and motivate, organize and 'empower them to fully participate in social and public / political activities in life. Here, the outside support would only facilitate the process and the deprived people would themselves actively participate in their overall development in a sustainable way.