

## CHAPTER - I

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The recent trends in understanding the growth and development of education is to study it in the context of a few major determinants. The determinants usually studied are economic, political, social and cultural. All these operate simultaneously in determining the directions and growth of education. While they operate simultaneously, they do not act independently of each other. They also do not act with equal force. At different phases of the history of a country they may act with varying emphases.

In a colonial framework, these determinants have two reference points, the colonising country and the colony. A study of the growth of education in a colony would require an understanding of the interplay of these determinants with reference to the colonising country, colony and an interaction between the systems of these two countries. Though it is difficult to isolate any one of these determinants, it is possible to see the inter-relationship between one of these and education, of course keeping all the other determinants also in focus. For example, in a colonial country, the study of the political determinant is very relevant because the paramount consideration for any colonising country is to hold the colony under its subjugation. The present

study of the growth of education in British India is to view education in the context of political developments. Two major political influences could be studied in respect of educational developments in a colony, viz.,

- i) policies evolved by the colonial power in response to its own political needs and
- ii) movements generated in the colony.

We will present these in two separate sections, although their inter-relationships will also be indicated while dealing with each of these.

#### SECTION - A

##### Policies Evolved by the Colonial Power

##### Process of Colonization:

This is the starting point, the initial phase. In this phase it is important to understand the motive of the colonial power. Under what circumstances did it capture the colony and establish its political rule? The initial motive may purely be economic or it may be military. Political control may have become necessary later to safeguard the economic interests. The evolution of educational policies would depend very much on this initial motive. To what extent this initial motive disturbed the existing power relationships in the colony? How the natives reacted to the disturbance of the existing equilibrium?

Which were the groups in the colony who felt the need for a readjustment in their relationships with the colonial power and other native groups? Answers to all these questions would be able to provide an understanding of the factors which contributed to the development of education in a particular direction. It will also give a proper perspective to study the role played by education in giving rise to new groups and new alignments in the existing groups.

This phase may be called as the phase of consolidation of the political power of the ruler. In most of the colonies this phase is marked by the growth of a new class of people who admire the way of life of the ruler and are ever ready to acquire the mode of thinking and acting of the colonial masters. This new desire and thinking among the native groups is not through an educational system but through informal and formal contacts with the ruling power. The colonial power does not yet feel any necessity for an educational superstructure. The inherent contradictions in the colonial rule have not yet come into the open. In this situation the role of individuals, philanthropic organisations, religious groups associated with the colonizer becomes important in transmitting the new culture of the rulers. This phase may be said to have the following distinct features.

- i) Political consolidation of the ruling power.
- ii) Emergence of new groups in the colony who try to emulate the rulers.

- iii) Absence of any educational policy on the part of rulers.
- iv) Informal contacts between the natives and rulers.  
These contacts are of more value and effect on the development of awareness among certain sections of native population.

Consolidation of the Political Power of Rulers  
and Growth of New Classes in the Colony

Once political power is firmly established, need arises to create supporting sub-structures to maintain and perpetuate the political structure. Education also becomes one of the sub-structures. Education may now be considered to be the resultant of two coordinates. The two coordinates are, i) administrative necessity and ii) political necessity.

Administrative Necessity:

The first coordinate functions at the elementary level and provides the bare necessity for the efficient functioning of the colonial rule. To create a cadre for manning this administrative structure is now the minimum necessity for the colonising country. Government intervention in education becomes necessary and makes it imperative to formulate an educational policy.

Political Necessity:

With the creation of an administrative structure and the training of a cadre for different functions at

various levels necessity arises to make the cadre aware of the ideology of the ruler. The administrative cadre is now initiated to the values of the discipline, loyalty, the need for a particular type of leadership and so on. The educational policy is now oriented towards the ideology of the ruler. Any changes and shifts in educational policies keep this consideration in view.

Conflicts and Contradictions:

The administrative and political coordinates have their own conflicts and contradictions in some situations. The association of natives with the administration creates aspirations in them for more and effective share of power with the ruler. The expansion of education creates the necessary ground for the supply of functionaries at various levels. At a particular time when this demand is made, the political situation from the point of view of the ruler may not be favourable for the demand for more share in the administration. Thus a conflicting situation arises giving rise to various contradictions. These conflicts and contradictions give rise to the need for a readjustment and revision of educational policies. Major changes in educational policies are directed towards resolving these contradictions and conflicts. But as the educational system is functioning within a dynamic situation of economic, social and political changes, new contradictions arise which have to be tackled afresh.

Dimensions of Political Variant:

There are two major dimensions of the political variant affecting the educational policies.

- i) To run the system in the existing framework.
- ii) To make certain the future stability of the rule.

The maintenance of the system in the existing framework brings into play a sort of static relationship. A number of factors are involved in this relationship, viz., the ruler-politician, the ruler bureaucrat, the native politician, the native bureaucrat, existing class-gradations in the society and the general mass of the people. The general policy including that in education, is oriented towards maintaining the existing equilibrium in the society. The support or opposition to this orientation depends on the varying relationships between the factors mentioned above.

The policies operative in the second dimension involve dynamic relationships. Contradictory policies may have to be followed in relation to i) and ii). To make the successful operation of policies with a view to ensuring future stability of the colonial rule the ruling power has to be in constant search of allies. The allies could be located among,

- i) previous ruling classes,
- ii) vested interests in favour of status quo, and
- iii) newly emerged classes.

Among these three categories the groups may be economic, professional and religious. The list is not exhaustive and the groups may vary according to the stage of development of the colony and also the nature of relationship between the colony and the ruler. The alliance may be sought from a single group or a combination of groups and also at certain times from the general mass of people. The greatest single factor soliciting alliance from various groups is the advantage derived from the existing or projected set up of the colony.

The twists and turns in the educational policy, the emphasis laid on various aspects, the major shifts, if any, in short the course of educational development could be studied against the background of the shifting alliances of the colonial power with different power groups in the colony.

Contradictions between Educational and Political Policies:

In certain situations contradictions may arise between the policies followed in political and educational spheres by the ruler. But these are usually due to factors not in control of the colonial power. To cite a few instances, the growth of the nationalist movement, changes in the political set-up or policies of the ruling power, international developments having a direct bearing on the policies of the colonial power - all these interact with the policies followed by the colonial power and the impact

is also felt on educational policies and consequently on educational growth also.

## SECTION - B

### Political Developments in the Colony

#### Weakening of Pre-colonial Power Groups:

The establishment of a colonial rule disturbs the equilibrium existing in pre-colonial society. The tremors of this disturbance are felt in all spheres of life - economic, political, social and cultural. Pre-colonial power groups are displaced from their position of eminence in all spheres of activity. The response of the power groups is either of total hostility to the colonial power or of surrender and apathy. Either of these responses is reflected in the attitude of these groups towards any novel schemes initiated by the colonial power. This is applicable to their attitude towards any departure from the traditional thinking in education.

#### Emergence of New Power Groups:

For its own political consolidation the colonial power creates conditions in which new power groups emerge. The classes from whom these new power groups emerge depend on the type and complexity of society existing in the colony. The society may be purely agrarian or pre-industrial type. It may be a monarchy or an oligarchy. Further the divisions may be vertical as well as horizontal. The horizontal divisions may be based on



economic and political roles performed by different classes. Similarly the vertical divisions may be based on a hierarchy of castes. Again the society may consist of different communities owing allegiance to different religions. All these differentiations may act singly or in combination of two or more factors in the formation of power groups which may be termed as elite formation.

Initial Reaction of Elites:

The initial reaction of the elite groups to the altered circumstances is positive. They become aware of the new possibilities of their growth under the colonial rule. Political stability is a sine qua non for them for any advancement in economic, social and cultural spheres. Thus a need is felt by them to adopt new methods and techniques in all fields of life, education included. Any demand put forward by them is motivated by the following considerations.

- i) Consolidation of their own class.
- ii) Political stability, i.e., political protection of the colonial power.

This basic commitment of the newly emerged elites towards accepting the political framework of the colony under the colonial power have far reaching consequences for educational policies and subsequent developments in education. When a departure from the traditional system

of education becomes necessary for the colonial power, the decision is hailed by the elite groups. They also come forward enthusiastically to lend their support to the new system of education. Inauguration of the new system of education by the colonial power could thus be studied against the background of,

- i) displacement of old elites and their reaction,  
and
- ii) emergence of new elites and their reactions to the new system.

Consolidation and Conflict:

The emergence of the new elites may be on a local, regional or national basis depending on their maturity and the size and divergence of the country. However, due to a further consolidation of the colonial rule and in their own interest, the local or regional limits are transgressed soon. This process gives rise to a political awakening and growth of nationalist movements in the colony. This also helps in strengthening the position of elites but brings in conflicts also. The conflicts could be on two directions.

- i) Conflict with the colonial power.
- ii) Conflict within the elite groups due to  
divergence in class, caste or community relationships.

Conflict with Colonial Power:- Due to the rising political consciousness, the aspirational level of the elites is

raised. Unable to meet these aspirations the colonial power reorients its policy for restoring the equilibrium necessary to hold its rule. This gives rise to many points of conflicts with the elites. The conflicts may be on economic, political and educational policies. The points of conflicts may give rise to political movements launched by the elites. The contradictions deepen further. Changes in the direction of education can be studied and analysed on the basis of these conflicts and contradictions and an attempt to resolve them.

Conflicts within the Elite Groups:- Situations may arise when there is a challenge from within to the dominating elite groups. This challenge may have its roots in different economic and political interests. It may also be due to the existence of different communities practising different religions. Whatever be the cause of the challenge, it manifests itself in affecting the growth of education. Any diverse channels the educational development takes could thus be studied in the contexts of conflicts that arise within the elite groups.

Phase of Mass Movements:

The elite groups leading the political movements soon come to realise that their wider political demands cannot be met unless the movement takes the support of the general masses. The contradictions with the colonial

power leading to conflicts cannot be resolved within the operational framework of elite groups. Hence the support of the masses is sought. This creates a new situation both for the colonial power and the elites. The colonial power is apprehensive lest the political movements take to revolutionary paths and undermine the very foundations of colonial rule. The political leadership is also cautious for fear of losing its grip on the situation. The study of educational policies and development of education during the phase of mass movements may thus have to take into account the following factors.

- i) The form of struggle-revolutionary, reformist, violent, non-violent and so on.
- ii) The scope and extent of mass movements-participation of lower middle classes, workers, peasants etc., in political movements.
- iii) Attitude of the colonial power to the participation of different sections of people; the extent to which they are prepared for compromise and at what price.
- iv) The class character of the leadership; what form of struggle they approve of and to what extent they would like the mass movement to spread.
- v) The state of political consciousness among the masses and their extent of participation in the movement.

Important changes introduced in education during this phase could be linked with the above factors and a clue may be provided to understand such issues as relative emphasis on higher and mass education, political education of masses, participation of students and teachers in political movements, encouragement to industrial and agricultural education, problem of discipline in schools, moral and religious education. The attitude of different parties, groups and individuals participating in political movements towards these educational issues could also be studied within the framework of these five factors.

The growth of education in a colonial country in relation to the political movements could thus be studied in the following dimensions.

- i) The decline of pre-colonial power groups.
- ii) The emergence of new power groups.
- iii) The consolidation of new power groups.
- iv) Contradictions and conflicts of new power groups with the colonial power and within themselves.
- v) Mass movements and final struggle for freedom from colonial rule.

During each phase of the political development, there is a dominant trend indicated by the classification given above. But within each dominant trend, there may

be many other factors. Some of these may support the dominant trend, while others may run counter to it. All these variations could affect the growth of education in its different features. But the major direction of educational policy would be influenced by the dominant trend in a particular phase. For example, when the political leadership comes into conflict with the colonial power, there are many situations and points when they would be making compromises also. However, the hypothesis is that the main direction of educational policies would by and large reflect the dominant trend. Again each phase of the political developments has certain marked features in terms of the policies and programmes adopted by the political parties, groups etc., towards education. These features determine to a great extent the attitudes of major political groups towards the educational system. The reactions may be on the following lines.

- i) Total rejection of the educational system.
- ii) Total acceptance of the educational system.
- iii) Partial acceptance with modifications.
- iv) A complete overhaul of the system.
- v) Creation of an independent system of education.

There may be many points of convergence and divergence between the programmes in education initiated by the colonial power and the political leadership in each

phase of national movement. The study of the area of convergence and divergence would provide an insight into the formulation of educational policies and the emphasis placed on certain features of the programme.

A number of variables affect the growth of education. It is impossible to isolate a single variable and study its effect on education in a historical study like this. But it is worthwhile to attempt to group a few variables in one major area like political developments and study the inter-relationships between the two. This is what has been attempted in this study.

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