



The Necessity and Importance of Education for Social and Cultural Development of Societies in Developing Countries

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Abstract. The relationship between education and development of the society is absolute and indubious. On one side, improving the education, and on the other side, educated people are effective means for the development of the society. No doubt the social, economic, political, and cultural development of the society will be difficult if not impossible without the presence of educated people. In this paper, in order to understand and explain the role of education in the development of the society, functions of education are described in terms of economic, political, social, cultural, agricultural and health aspects. Thus, this paper first examines the importance and role of education in the development of the society from the perspective of experts, and then, discusses the place of education in the development of the society. The purpose of this study is to find an answer for the role of education in economic, social and cultural development of the societies in developing countries.

Keywords: education, development, human capital, skill and specialty, society

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is the process of learning and teaching knowledge and skills. This process started with the creation of man on earth, developed gradually, and today it is one of the cornerstones in the progression of societies (Gibson, 2006, p. 160). It is transferred formally and informally, and influences the developmental process of countries in various ways. Education is one of the basic and primary human rights; it is a fundamental component of social and economic development and if well planned, it can lead to a great social and economic output, especially in developing countries (Psacharopoulos & Woodhall, 1985, p. 132). Education is a tool that helps the formation and development of beliefs, knowledge, wisdom, and thought. It can be certainly said that education is the only remedy to the unindustrialization and the only solution to eradicate underdevelopment in today's industrialized world. In recent decades, developed countries and some developing nations have taken large steps towards development and as a result, great progressions have been made; but still there's a long way to go. Lack of necessary expertise, low levels of education and knowledge, and lack of scientific and technological advances are among the most important issues for developing countries in today's world (Zolfaghari & Shatar Sabran, 2009a). While specialty and skill are considered as the first requirements for the development of the society in the international community, a large percentage of the population in developing countries lack this tool and even the primary education. Therefore, it is necessary for governments to prepare plans and programs to promote education, increase public awareness, and enhance technical-vocational skills; so that they can use elite, skilled, and creative human force along with education en route to economic, social, cultural, and political development of societies (Zolfaghari et al., 2009; Zolfaghari, 2008). It should be considered that development is no more in the realm of economy in the global village and it consists of all the social, cultural, political, and economic aspects. Moreover, an important principle closely related to the subject of the study is that plans should be prepared based on educating the individuals in every society; since the key element in the development of every society is the people of the society and they must benefit from education, knowledge and different skills

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(Sariolghalam, 1991). Given the current trends in the international system, people's educational, cultural and specialized training level is the most important difference between countries; and the most significant pillars of development are cultured people. In addition, since the development of society requires dignity and thought tolerance, it needs the best scientific, academic and moral education. The dynamic education and educational system which is comprised of sophisticated and strong staff is another important factor in the pyramid of effective, determinant and stable factors influencing the development.

2. A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

So far, many books have been written in different countries about the effects of education on the cultural, social, and economic development. An example is "Education and National Development" by "Ingemar Fagerlind" (1991), translated by Mehdi Sajjadi which has been published in this field. This book is a comprehensive and detailed investigation of development. Also, the book "Economics, Education", a work by "Daniel C. Rachlin and Hirsch S. Rogers" (1991), translated by Abolghasem Hosseiniun, is an investigation on the effects of education on economic development; but it has not discussed its social and cultural aspects. "Discussions of the Economics of Education", (1994) by "Mostafa Emadzadeh", the Iranian researcher, examines the role of educated human force in the economic development of any place. There are many other books and articles by Iranian authors on the effects of education on the political development, such as "Reason and development in Iran" by "Mahmoud Sariolghalam" (2014), and "political development" by "Javad Eta'at" (1999). The present study is an attempt to analyze the necessity and importance of education for the cultural and social development of societies in developing countries.

3. METHODOLOGY

Collecting the required data is an essential step in the research process. The data collection stage is the beginning of a process in which the researcher collects the field and library findings and compacts them through classification. Then, he analyzes them and evaluate his purpose. Finally, he states the results and finds an answer for the research question based on them. This is a qualitative study in which the obtained secondary data were analyzed descriptively. The required data have collected using published and unpublished sources such as articles, publications, reports, books, newspapers, etc. which are available in special library of organizations as well as university libraries.

In this study, the main instrument used to collect the required data is the researcher himself. It means that the researcher has personally and directly performed the note-taking, transcription, sorting and categorizing the data, interpretation of data, data analysis, and summarizing the secondary data. The present study is a qualitative study and its data analysis was also done qualitatively. The data analysis is as follows:

- 1) All the required secondary data were collected via secondary documents, including all Persian and English print and non-print cases and they were classified in accordance with the objectives of the study,
- 2) The classified and categorized data have been mixed with researcher's knowledge and understanding of the subject. In fact, the facts have been combined with researcher's perceptions,
- 3) The results have been published based on the research objectives.

4. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

The findings of the study suggest that the relationship between education and development has been considered not only in recent years, but also during the Middle Ages. In Plato's ideal state of utopia, learning tips are suggested in advance concerning the best form of collective life by political and ethical issues. Plato introduces education as a way to overcome the problems of life and a factor which helps to find better ways of life. He believes that the highest aim of education is not personal interests and enjoyment, but it is knowing the right ideas to achieve self-awareness (Siddiqui, 2005, p. 286). Based on the findings of the present study, international education organizations have paid a particular attention to this issue in the last century; and about sixty years ago, Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has announced that public education is a free and irrevocable human right; and elementary education shall be compulsory (United Nation, December 10, 1948). In recent years, numerous meetings, conferences and sessions have been held for the purpose of achieving this goal; in these meeting, world leaders have referred to education as a vital and fundamental element in the sustainable development. The importance of education in the development was emphasized when the United Nations named the 2003-2012 decade as the "Education for All" decade. In this regard, with UNESCO's cooperation, special committees have been established for achieving this purpose in different countries of the world, especially in developing countries (United Nations, 2007b). Considering 854 million illiterate adults, and 325 million children deprived of education in recent years, (United Nations Environment Programme., 2005, p. 33) United Nations and UNESCO have been prompted to name the decade 2014-2020 as the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development so that countries of the world, particularly the developing countries, pay more attention to education and literacy development.

Sariolghalam, in the article "stable principles of political development", and his other writings mentions education as the main component of the development of the society and he adds that the key element in the development of every society is the people of the society and they must benefit from education, knowledge and different skills (Sariolghalam, 1991, pp. 29-26). So, socialization, respect for the law, improvement in the quality of life, health development, and productivity enhancement are not possible but through education. The role of education in efficiency and effectiveness of production can be divided in three different aspects: the work effect, specialty ability, invention ability (Zolfaghari, 2003, p. 20). Thus, education influences both manual skills and intellectual skills. Education is the most important factor in development and countries with more investments in this direction have been more successful in the field of development. Herman Kahn argues that the lack of educational capacity may be presented as the most important increasing problem in the development of the world (Eta'at, 1996, p. 212). According to Mahmoud Nourabadi, educational development is the process of evolution of production scientific-technical principles from the traditional to the modern conditions and it focuses on transferring modern knowledge and technology to the heart and core of productive activities in the society (Mahmoudi, 1994, Ss113-111). Japan's rapid economic development, beside economic thoughts, is the result of this type of education which is formed in their childhood and made them hard-working, disciplinable, contented, collectivist, obedient not due to fear but respect, aware, conscientious, etc. In fact, Japanese workers are the products of Japan's efficient educational system; they work hard and pretty well; they are loyal to their jobs; and they have gained the necessary knowledge and expertise for their jobs. Developing countries should also seek to foster creative minds and capable hands in order to achieve conscious development. Education is the first step for this purpose; since it is the cornerstone of economic, social, political and cultural development in every society. The key of development should be sought in hands of teachers and educators of the society. Education needs to know what to teach the learner and the reason why. What traits does it want to create in the personality of the youth, as the future of the country? And in doing so what methods and tools does it use?

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The research findings indicate that the purpose of education is nothing more than preparing individuals for work and specialty with which they earn a living in the society and it does not satisfy any social needs. The government should prepare the citizens in terms of the social and political perspectives and promote the spirit of national, social, and global unity in them. To put it simply, creating a spirit of social cooperation in the country is one of the basic tasks of the government and the only way to make it sustainable is through education. This is also true for countries with high population rate or high population growth rate and it is a useful approach. Education would have the highest effectiveness on the economic, political, cultural and social development of the society when it is purposeful and of high quality. Individuals' awareness become mature and complete when it is reinforced by education. Individuals will not benefit from appropriate awareness till they are educated. Education is a human right, a catalyst for development; it reinforces cooperation, promotes human values and self-confidence, and improve the public welfare and quality of life (Appiah & Gates, 1999, p. 654; Olson & Torrance, 1996, p. 112).

Education enhances family's ability to promote public health and health care. Active participation of women in everyday family planning for life is possible through education. Children whose mothers attended school and were educated are healthier than those whose mothers were not educated. Children whose mothers were educated will have more successful children in the future and this cycle will continue over and over again. The infant mortality rate and diseases such as AIDS and other diseases have decreased through education (World Bank., 2002). Studies have indicated that each one percent increase in the education rate increases the life expectancy rate up to 2 years. Reduction of Infant early mortality rate, maternal deaths due to pregnancy complications, and infectious disease mortality is not possible unless through promoting the level of purposeful and meaningful education (Grossman & Kaestner, 1997, pp. 69-125). Education is essential for all classes of the society; but it is more vital for the poor, since it is a prerequisite for economic development and poverty eradication (Committee for Economic Development., 1971, p. 12). Education increases human resources productivity, develops and mechanizes agricultural activities, and as a result, maximizes the efficiency. Education helps human resources to play a more active role in the economic life and achieve better living conditions. It provides the context for acquiring the required knowledge and skills for participating in public activities and facilitates the establishment of social justice and reduction of inequalities (Zolfaghari et al, July 2009).

In some developing countries, it is still thought that development will be achieved through the provision of new tech machines and tools; while today, the scientific and technical initiatives and innovations are considered as development criteria. So far, gross domestic product (GDP), per capita income, savings, and investments were regarded as indicators of economic development. But today, these indicators are more associated with the scientific and educational aspects rather than economic aspect. Social consensus, national integration and unity, life expectancy rate, respect for the law, respect for self, respect for others, social discipline, work ethic, responsibility, saving, soul fostering, and virtues, norms, and values improvement are among the indicators of development which will be achieved through the preparation of purposeful and meaningful written instructions (Zolfaghari et al, November 2009). Reducing social delinquencies and moral deviations is also a function of education in modern societies in such a way that, poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment are more noticeable than other factors among the numerous motives for social deviations. Employment without having the required specialty and expertise is impossible or at least difficult (Zolfaghari et al, 2009c). According to the investigations on the causes of addiction and crime, illiteracy plays a role in shaping and emergence of crimes in a sensible way (Doroudian, 1992, 109-107). Maximum participation by the people in political affairs, the multiplicity of parties, the diversity of opinions, increase in

the political legitimacy, political socialization, institutional competition, social mobility, educating political elite can be achieved through the education.

Harber believes that education is the key underlying factor in the increase in women's participation in affairs of the society (Harber, 1997, p. 30). Education will make possible the complete development of the human personality and the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental human liberties. It is also a key factor in determining the opportunities and improving the individual, group and social life. The education that prepares people to access learning opportunities will shape their identity and expand their capacity. Political socialization is among the political development indexes which is closely related to education. The role of education in political socialization is to the extent that Fagerlind (Fägerlind & Saha, 1989, p. 122) believes that the government exists till the school exists. In his view, the existence of government depends on the establishment of schools and formation of education process; as he believes that the statesmen should look for what they want for their government at schools. Therefore, education is not only the means for educating the political elite, but also it is a tool for political socialization and societies' politicization. Political participation, civil society, and public thoughts on the events are among the other aspects of political development which will become dynamic with the help of education (Zolfaghari, 2004, p. 11). The greater the role of education is in these areas, the more the feeling of unity and closeness exists between people and the government; and planning and activities will be accomplished more easily and quickly. The Islamic Republic of Iran has always sought to develop policies to achieve these goals and it has taken effective steps for improving the quality of education; it has also gained honors and successes in some areas. Islamic Republic of Iran, besides providing the possibility of the participation of all groups in the educational decision making process, was able to improve the educational indexes of the country for the purpose of enhancing the quality of life. International reports indicate the promotion of the education quality in the Islamic Republic of Iran (Zolfaghari et al, 2009d). According to the United Nations report in 2005, the country's human development indicators have increased from 0.745 in 2004 to 0.759 in 2005 and it has joined the middle-income countries. Iran has also succeeded to increase the life expectancy rate from 67.1 in 1995 to 70.2 in 2005 through its benefits from education. Moreover, adult literacy rate had an annual growth of 1.24 percent in this decade, i.e. an increase of 70 percent in 1995 to 82.4 percent in 2005. The primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment rate has increased from 65.6 in 1995 to 72.8 in 2005 and it shows the annual growth of 72 percent (United Nations, 2007a).

Overall, with regard to all of the research and studies conducted in this area, it can be concluded that: First, the development of the world in the current conditions has special features when compared to the past half-century. Second, the role of educational tools and the mass media has become more vital in the development of the world, particularly in developing countries; because education is the foundation for sustainable development and statesmen of these countries have realized it in recent decades. Thirdly, with respect to all the points raised and praises and admirations for the role of education in the development, it must be stated that developing countries still have a long way to achieve the desired development and they will reach the ideal conditions by strengthening the educational tools and paying a particular attention to these issues. It should be noted that to achieve the desired development, i.e. the social, economic, political and cultural development simultaneously in the society, first, much time has remained, and secondly, the most important element in the development is the presence of civilized people. In addition to the civilized and educated people, scientism, law-orientation, expansion of the public domain, structural separation, flexibility, good power institution and independent mass organization are also among the most important indexes of development that can be achieved with the help of education.

5. CONCLUSION

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With a short review on the role and functions of education, it was found that education has been discussed as the key element in achieving the short-term and long-term goals of development, and it will also be present in future debates. Countries with higher population rates can take large steps in the direction of development through education, human resources, and division of labor. Efforts to educate human resources and to promote professional awareness and knowledge, and specialty manifest in the economic, social, cultural and political development, and ultimately, lead to the consolidation of the independence and national integrity. Statistics indicate that the Islamic Republic of Iran pays attention to the role of education in the social, political, cultural and economic development of the country. But despite all the efforts and actions, the results suggest that the Islamic Republic of Iran is still away from the international standards in the field of education and it is necessary to take further actions for achieving the educational objectives of UNESCO in the third millennium in Iran. It is hoped that a more remarkable role of education will be observed in the social, political, cultural and economic development of the country through paying more attention to this issue.

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