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Women Empowerment and English in the Globalized World

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Education, as a social process, focuses on the reproduction of knowledge and sociological perspectives can further the understanding of the educational problems by locating this understanding within the context of social change. On the other hand, changes in social, political and economic life are reflected in the educational shifts and reforms. Science education is central to cultural reproduction, special and economic regeneration, any repositioning of the educational system can be of immense sociological significance. For instance, the burden of illiteracy, the criticality of universal elementary education, the emphasis on accountability, the linking of the higher education content to market demands and shifting labour market needs are playing a role in rethinking the aims and outcomes of education as well as on the role of the state in education. On the other hand, at the theoretical level, conceptualizations of women, gender-inequality, family, sexuality, development and education have been questioned and reformulated - within and outside the educational space.

As a matter of fact, education is a strong weapon for conditioning the human, moral, social and emotional factors. Therefore when we teach a language, we actually don't teach that language only but its values, which are internally associated with a particular language. According to Patricia Rayon "English language and globalization have become daunting dangers on the local languages and cultures, she further says that there is no harm in adopting the global language like English but it should not be done at the cost of our culture and languages". We have literature in abundance in local languages. We in India, have a long history of myths, legends, fables, folktales, oral literature and epics which are not merely narratives but exist as

'embodiments of culture' which has the capacity to come of age with the onset of transformation. India has got many interesting, and stimulating stories and legends related to the life of women and their world. Such narratives of the feminine world may be used for the teaching of English and the Social Sciences and this teaching, thus, will serve the following purposes:

1. Teaching English the weaker sections along with women of society.
2. Teaching of various subjects and English with clear aims and objectives in post-independent India;
3. Teaching moral, social and cultural values along with education, keeping in view the good of all;
4. Teaching of English in a relevant and interesting way so that learners get emotionally involved in the learning process.

Empowering Women through the teaching of English

Social conditioning of any society reveals that it is teaching that exposes its inhabitants to the things belonging to the larger contexts. There is no denying the fact that the globalization has entered to a great extent in the institutes of higher education and it is governing them and the things related to them. There is no consideration for the local literature or heritage that has been preserved for years but now it is going to be eclipsed. This is where we need to have a fresh outlook in this connection. We cannot detach this most important part of Indian society from education.

As has been discussed earlier that it is the curriculum that decides the things to be learnt by the masses, it has to be given due attention. It is the singular important thing which has all the elements that are responsible for the conditioning of an individual. Curriculum has subjects – contents, culture, local and folk literature, philosophy and teaching methods. All these create a strong impact on the minds of the learners in general and on the youth in particular. Learners get to attach the things which are actually there in their syllabus.

The existing syllabi of almost all the courses of higher education in the field of humanities in India, as a matter of fact, were designed by the British rulers. They have all the

colonial elements and not the elements, problems, dilemmas related to women and their empowerment. This is where we need to give extra attention. It is, in the present context, essential to review the existing syllabi and reframe the learning materials by incorporating the ideas as related to the women empowerment. The following may be the criteria for the changes at various levels in the curriculum and syllabi:

1. The female world is the source of life and creation but it has been marginalized in the contents, curriculum and education, it must be done away with, now.
2. The main aim of education is the complete development of the society and at the same time empowering the weaker sections in general and women in particular, if it is not so, it can't be called a real development of any society or country.
3. The complete development of women may be actualized only and only through education which has judicious mixture of local literature and information and knowledge about the world, consequently education should be used as a strong weapon for it.
4. The syllabi must be related to our culture, we can't teach alien cultures in the name of teaching literature and humanities.
5. The curriculum must contain the problems, situations and dilemmas of women so that everybody can understand the problems. This will serve the purpose of comprehensive teaching along with the teaching of social needs the society.
6. The opinion of the weaker sections in general and women in particular who feel ignored may be asked for the re-formation of the existing syllabus.
7. The curriculum designing committees must have at least one female member of the society in order to represent their problems and perspectives.

These are some suggestions which may be taken into consideration while we take the whole procedure into action. There is no second thought for it that this has to be done for the betterment of the education system for preserving the cultural and local values for which they are known.

There may be doubts and arguments about everything but there can't be any doubt about the fruits of such education. As it is the key-factor that will bring about the change what we have been entertaining in our minds for a long-time. Education is looked at as a crucial route to

empowerment. It may also be deceptive when one tries to evaluate empowerment and seeks to do some generalization. Education also has a context. NeilaKabeer also rightly writes that:

There are studies that suggest that the changes associated with education are likely to be conditioned by the context in which they are provided and the social relationships that they embody and promote. In societies that are characterized by extreme forms of gender inequality, not only is women's access to education curtailed by various restrictions on their mobility and their limited role in the wonder economy, but its effect may also be more limited. Where women's role in the society is defined purely in reproductive terms, education is seen in terms of equipping girls to be better wives and mothers, or increasing their chances of getting a suitable husband. Given the realities of the society, these are legitimate aspirations. However, they do little to equip girls and women to question the world around them, and the subordinate status assigned to them. Nothing will change radically through education unless it provides them with the analytical capacity and courage to question unjust practices. (2002: 58)

Now this is quite apparent that the lower strata particularly the women of these societies are not coming up in the proper line of the development as a big part of their culture is detached from the main line of education therefore education has to play a vital and wider role in it and it can be actualized by the active role of various institutions of India. It is clearly mentioned in the policies of UNESCO on education:

We believe in the assumption that both human nature and human actions are relative to culture. Culture-oriented approach presumes that culture is dialectic between the classical and the folk, the past and the present, the dead and the living. Culture however is a way of life and it covers, apart from 'high culture', indigenous knowledge, including indigenous theories of science, education and social change. The oral can change their contours and hence their social relevance remains alive. Such a fluid,

flexible and open-ended tradition with a built-in-process of change through transformation ensured its continuance in the life of people through centuries of historical vicissitudes. The infinitely vast tradition of such narratives and numerous others in their multiple variations bear testimony to the phenomenal impact the narrative had on the Indian psyche. (1996)

In the Indian context where students read (if at all they read) only the prescribed text books, the task of the teacher is difficult since students cannot be asked to read the different books or literature that has strong relevance with their local colours and folk culture. As has been pointed out earlier that students in India read very little outside the prescribed text therefore textbooks should be made the instruments of teaching the problems, dilemmas and sufferings of women. By providing stimulating, motivating and socially theme-based material, an interest and awareness can be created. Purposeful teaching of local problems related to the female world, in this way, will be vocationally useful, intellectually challenging, communicatively effective and socially relevant. This approach of teaching, perhaps, may be a great tool for changing the map of education in India.

Education has an important role to achieve a greater degree of social justice. The educational institutions are expected to equip children to the best of their ability for securing a meaningful place in society and thus fostering a process of developing an egalitarian society. However, a large number of children are still excluded from this kind of education that make them humane and more compassionate towards women hence they cannot participate meaningfully in the economic, social, political and cultural life of their communities. To live with multi-ethnic society, it is need of the hour to endow with-lingual disposition that fit for sustainable growth and conscious development.

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