

## BOOK REVIEW

### **Education and International Development: Theory, Practice and Issues**

CLIVE HARBER

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Education has been a driving force for developmental activities in all spheres associated with human development. Development as a phenomenon can acquire many forms, depending upon nature, cause and purpose. However, the relation of education to development is manifold. It can be construed, in other words, that the role and contribution of education in development is crucial and immense. The current book, *Education and international development*, by Clive Harber, tries to define the concept of development from an international perspective and links it with educational interventions at different levels in the developing world.

The volume is divided into 17 different chapters, focusing primarily on four broad themes, i.e., an overview of the field; theories of education and development — explaining the relationships between education and development; ideological goals for education and development; and, lastly, issues of education and development. The list of further readings has been consolidated by theme at the end of each of the chapters. The author presents a special section for “discussion and activities” which provides food for thought to readers and could stimulate their thinking. The author has deliberately chosen topics for the book that are relevant to the curricula of education and international development. However, development is a broad subject to cover in a single volume. The author could have given an overview of the topics covered in the book and a methodology to approach the book in the Preface itself, for the benefit of readers. Nonetheless, the book is a rich source of knowledge on the subject. Individual chapters focus on special topics of importance, presenting an in-depth analysis.

The opening chapter tries to introduce the theme of education and development to readers. The nature of education, access, quality and outcome, in relation to development in developing countries, are areas of focus in this chapter, in order to establish a relationship between education and development leading to economic growth. However, the author presents a word of caution that it cannot be automatically assumed that “education directly or necessarily leads to benefit” to individuals and society in a straightforward manner, and indicates that such a connotation may be problematic.

Chapter 2 presents an overview of the nature of education in relation to developing countries and tries to differentiate between developed and developing economies. The ground is prepared for discussing further issues in the later chapters more intensely. The author has chosen to study the educational conditions in some developing countries. The factors affecting access, quality and effective implementation of education, with equality in developing countries, are discussed. Chapter 3 starts by building a connection between education and economic development, and different areas of



development theory that depend highly on education are brought into focus. The author explores the relationships and the general theories and practices of education and development from a global perspective. Therefore, he never loses sight of the importance of “local culture” and “global pattern and trends” affecting the local context. Some of the key issues common at the global level flow throughout the discourse and the most prominent ones are: gender equality, health, vocational education and employment, corruption, disaster and emergencies, and literacy and language, among others. The human capital theory and socio-economic reproduction theory are the focal point in Chapter 3. Here, discussion of Marx becomes inevitable for the author, in the light of education inequality.

Chapter 4 follows the Western-based modernization theory, which evolved during the post-colonial period in the name of formal schooling. Here, the author does not forget to quote the driving force behind the “modernization theory”, where the “achievement motive” would lead to “economic and technological development”. Chapter 5 discusses the process of democratization through the phases of political development. The role of education in the political development of nations leading to the democratization process in the developing world has been crucial. However, this type of education has encouraged the act of “disparity” and gave way to “banking of education”, which is considered as oppressive in nature. Though, this type of education is inversely related to the process of democratization.

Some other dimensions of the theoretical framework of education and development are examined in Chapter 6. Education is reckoned as a “paradoxical social institution”, since many bad things occur during the course of good things happening due to the spread of education. To cite some examples: violence in schools, bullying, harassment, corporal punishment and racist activities taking place on the premises of educational institutions. The ways and means of acquiring education play an important role in establishing the worth of education. Socialism and capitalism have been instrumental in influencing educational provisions and the “content and processes” of acquiring education, which are the discussion topics for Chapter 7, which discusses how the capitalist model tended to become more dominant. Unchecked expansion of such a model could prove to be disastrous for the planet in the event of excessive exploitation of our natural resources. However, the emphasis now is on green or sustainable development at the international level. Therefore, education is crucial for the promotion of sustainable development.

The author raises certain fundamental issues connected with education and sustainable development in Chapter 8. The case studies involve three countries from the developing world. The role of religion is crucial in education for sustainable development. Chapter 9 examines the role of education in development, using religion as a kaleidoscope. The author considers that the role of religion cannot be underestimated for holistic development. However, more in-depth studies need to be conducted in the areas of education, religion and development with reference to developing world. The author initiates a debate on the point of whether single-faith schools and their process of indoctrination would lead to an international social development against pluralistic religion schools.

Chapter 10 deals with role of masculinity in light of the dimensions of gender, education and development. The gender disparity may lead to the substantive loss of potential for men and women in development. The author tries to differentiate between the biological constructs responsible for the evolution of men and women. The gender-based classification is further associated with social and cultural construction, which specify the expected role and behaviour of people belonging to different

cultures. Thus, the chapter raises discussion on gender equality as a crucial social issue facing education at the global level.

The role of education in situations of crisis arising out of natural phenomenon, such as earthquakes, tsunamis or manmade conflicts, is discussed by the author in Chapter 11, as a developmental issue impacting poorer people. Some instances of such situations coming from developing countries are cited in the book. The important issues in pre- and post-conflict situations could be: how much educational development would be possible and the impact of such change in restoring a “peaceful attitude and behaviour of people in the long run”. Some of the studies conducted by other scholars are quoted in the book.

The provision of education through non-state functionaries is discussed in Chapter 12. The institutions involved could be community-financed, run by missionaries or religious establishments which may not necessarily be profit driven. This could be due to various key factors and a few of them as quoted by the author are: inability of the state in affording education for all; existence of neo-liberalism and preference for private provisions; and, above all, the unacceptable quality of education put in place by the state. The focus of Chapter 13 is especially on education that is supposed to provide the necessary skills for the enhancement of employability. However, in developing countries, formal education is not able to generate much employment and the uncontrolled spread of informal education further leads to unemployment. Vocational education could solve the problem to some extent, however, what should be an acceptable level of entry is still debatable. The chapter highlights the problems contributing to the unpopularity of vocational education in developing countries and suggests a three-pronged approach to resolve skill related issues.

The abuse of entrusted power has been seen as a serious issue in developing countries, and this is the theme of Chapter 14. This misuse is largely focused on private gains. The 10 countries perceived to be “most corrupt” by Transparency International largely belong to the developing world. Individualism and “power distance” play a crucial role in developing resistance to corruption in individuals. The corruption in education forces the system to lose its “impartiality, quality and fairness”. The author has tried to discuss specific factors contributing to corruption in the case of certain developing countries, e.g.: Lebanon: cheating in examinations; Nepal, Ghana, Cameroon and Ethiopia: teacher absenteeism and lack of professionalism; Bangladesh: red-tapeism; Iran: teacher recruitment, promotion, deployment and remuneration; and Egypt: private tutoring, among others.

Education also plays an important role in improving the health and life expectancy of a people. Chapter 15 critically examines the role of education in improving public health. It presents a direct relation between education and health. The author puts forth the issues leading to a slow effect on education in the area of health and lays stress on more curriculum-based programmes leading to health education at different levels, including the secondary and tertiary levels. Education has played a crucial role in combating the spread of HIV/AIDS in developing countries, especially in the African region. Training and re-training of teachers in teaching about HIV/AIDS would be crucial for development.

Chapter 16 focuses on the financial assistance available for educational pursuits from richer countries to poorer ones. Here, the flow is mainly from the developed countries to the developing ones. Different international agencies, like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, UNDP, UNICEF, and UNESCO, amongst others, are playing important and constructive roles in the funding of an

educational project. The author discusses the issue from both the pro and con side of financial assistance and the flow of resources.

Literacy and language are the pace setters of development at the initial stage. UNESCO defines literacy as, "The ability to read and write, with understanding, a short simple statement related to one's daily life". However, language is the mainstay for achieving the stage of literacy. The author, in Chapter 17, tries to re-define the concept of literacy and language along with what level it occupies in the light of development, especiall, in the Third World. The chapter examines issues such as literacy and language, and, with a deeper insight, the stages of education.

The book touches different crucial areas which immensely influence the process of development. The author has presented this book, keeping in view the requirement of students pursuing a course on education and international development. While the book broadly covers all important aspects falling under this theme, there could have been more examples and case studies from developing countries, juxtaposed with those from developed countries. On the whole, the book would be useful for the intended students, in addition to the people working for education and development across national boundaries and with international development organisations. It will provide to novice readers an overview of the role of education in international development, covering different dimensions of education and development with special reference to the developing world.

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