

TOWARDS A NEW EDUCATION POLICY FOR DEVELOPING NATIONS: EMPHASIS ON TECHNICAL EDUCATION

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1. Introduction

Few countries - whether industrialized or developing - would express whole hearted satisfaction with their current educational systems or the policies which guide it. The dissatisfactions, as are frequently voiced, go beyond idealistic or rather rhetorical expressions such as "perfect education is an ever-receding goal". The experiences of all countries during the post-war decades, despite their varying levels of socio-economic development, have been unique in one respect: that is, the pace of change in every aspect of life has been quickened manyfold. While some of the changes within the socio-economic system would be deliberately brought about, many others result from the process that a change in one of the interrelated, independent and interacting components of the system sets in motion in chain reaction affecting, if not demanding, a corresponding change in all others.

A sub-system within the overall social system which has been thus affected by a variety of changes in the socio-political system is education. It has been influenced by political change both in ideology, and in institutions. The explosion of knowledge, the advances in science and technology, the growth of urban centres, and even the rate of growth of the population demand the sub-system of education to be continually adjusting itself to new needs, roles and challenges. What singles out education as a sector which has to cope with a faster pace of change than any other is that it is in itself a prime stimulator of change - creating with its growth and expansion a demand for social, political and technological transformation. Not only does education bring into existence new aspirations in the people but, more significantly, it makes them both vocal in the expression of the need for change and capable of organizing themselves to agitate for it. Then in turn education has the responsibility of equipping the people to adjust to such change.

In a way it is futile to argue that the educational policy of any given time in any given country is irrelevant, inadequate or unsuitable. Policies are formulated by governments to meet certain prevailing conditions according

* All opinions expressed in this paper are personal and presented as a basis for discussion. They do not reflect those of the Organization to which the writer belongs.