UNIT 2

LESSON 4

UNDERSTANDING THE SOCIAL DIVERSITY

Meaning and Definition of 'Social Diversity'

Those who live in a society with particular culture, differ among themselves in various ways like caste, religion, race, language, etc.
Social diversity means along with differences in the society, the differences arising out of the cultural backgrounds of human groups also combine themselves to form the various kinds of diversities in the society.

Three Bases of Social Diversity

Social diversity hinges on three universal human realities. They are:
i) Each individual is unique
ii) Individuals and their societies are inter-related and inter-dependant
iii) Society and culture are dynamic

Factors of Social Diversity

i) Social races
ii) Language
iii) Life style
iv) Religion
v) Gender
vi) Age

Social Diversity in the Indian Society

Indian society is multi-lingual, multi-ethnic and multi-religious. India has 18 recognized languages and more than 3000 dialects. People living in the Indian cultural environment are the followers of various religions such as Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and several others.

The view point 'acceptance of multi-culturalism is the characteristics of a progressive society' has started gaining strength. Thus the Indian society by understanding its multi-cultural composition, is able to get rid of conflicts and all can work together to advance towards the goal of national development.

Levels of Social Diversity

1. Individual Level of Diversity

Visible identities like height, weight, hair, skin colour etc. are the important dimensions of human difference. Besides these, the two dimensions of individual related social diversity found in a particular society are Self concept and Social relationships.

As an individual grows in the society through social interactions, his self concept gets developed. According to his self concept, his perception of others in the world and his expectations are formed. These play a major role in shaping his social behaviour. It is the individual behaviour that differentiates an individual from others in the society.

2. Regional Social Diversity

Generally, people living in a particular region, will have the same material as well as non-material aspects of the culture and speak a particular language and have unique life style. Stated in brief, though people are united by language and religion, due to the regional differences and sentiments, national interests are side-lined.

As a result, people living in each region are socially isolated and parochialism start developing This kind of regional feeling, socially isolating people of one region from those living in other regions, is known as 'Regional Social Diversity'.

3. Linguistic Level

Though India has more than 3000 languages remaining at present as spoken languages, 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution recognizes only 22 languages as official languages. All these languages are rich in literature. Hindi in Devanagari script, spoken by majority of people in India, is recognized as the Official Language of the Indian Union by the Constitution i.e. National Language of India.

As remarked by A.R. Desai, "India presents a spectacle of Museum of Languages". Most Indians are conversant with Hindi / English. Linguistic social diversity is making the following impacts on the Indian society.

i) It helps to make India shine as a multi-cultural country

ii) It develops tolerance and generosity among people

iii) It develops people with flexibility and open mindedness

4. Social Diversity Based on Religion

India is not a religious State or theocratic State. Religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism etc. which originated from India as well as religions like Islam, Christianity etc. which have foreign origin, exist in India. Though India is a multi-religious country, Indian Constitution has proclaimed India as a 'Secular State'. The essential features of this are:

i) All people (irrespective of their religion) are equal before law.

Ii). No religious activity against laws is permissible.

5. Social Diversity at the Caste Level

All over the world, people are stratified on the basis of economic status. But in India, caste based hierarchical stratification is more dominant than that based on economic status (such as Upper class, Middle class and Lower class). For this reason, it is sarcastically stated, 'India is a country of castes'. Now, in India, there are more than 3000 castes, which are hierarchically arranged from the higher level to the lower level in many vertical layers.

6. Social Diversity at Tribal Level

Tribal pole in India are also called as Adivasis. Tribal groups in India follow their distinct cultural traditions, differentiate themselves from other social groups and occupy distinct regions, especially in hilly and forest areas. Government of India is providing 1% reservation for them in education and employment, enabling them to come out from their isolation. Because of these measures, their standard of living is rising and they have started moving out to the different parts of India and settle to live

Education for Understanding the Social Diversity of India

India is a multi cultural country having people speaking various languages and having different religious beliefs, socio-economic status and innumerable castes. Thus the students should be familiarized with our freedom struggle, the suffering and sacrifices made by our leaders, etc. by including all of them in school curriculum. It should be made compulsory for all students to learn their mother tongue / regional language, Hindi and English by implementing the three language policy. To promote and nurture social diversity in education, government should take the following measures:
(i)   Following common school education system throughout the country
(ii) Providing education for all children i.e. all types of children

Role of Education in Creating Positive Attitude Towards Social Diversity

Role of education in Indian Society to create a positive attitude towards diversity depends largely on teachers. Teachers, with the help of inclusive education can create positive attitude in people, particularly among the parents and those living in the neighbourhood of their schools. The teacher by adopting 'Students group interaction methods' which enable students in each group interact among themselves and interact with other groups, can easily succeed in bringing change in attitudes in students.

The following three group interaction teaching techniques are worth mentioning:
1. Group Interactive Classroom Sessions
2. Co-operative Learning
3. Collaborative Learning

1. Group Interactive Classroom Sessions:

This teaching technique involves dividing the class into small groups, each consisting of five or six students and assigning them different topics or sub-topics of a subject and ask the group members to discuss among themselves the content elements of the topic / sub-topic assigned to their group and engage in learning activities. The central idea of this technique is, students learn through interacting among themselves.

2. Co-operative Learning:

'Cooperative learning' could be defined as follows: "It is a learning process which provides students to get opportunities to learn in a group by forming a number of teams, each consisting of a small number of students of different levels of learning ability for understanding the subject".

3. Collaborative Learning:

Two or more students joining together, sharing their learning activities and trying to achieve learning proficiency is known as 'Collaborative Learning'. In this teaching technique there will be mutual dependence, sharing of learning tasks and accepting responsibilities for learning outcomes. But, collaborative learning is considered by some educationists as just another type of cooperative learning.

Inter-disciplinary Nature of Education with Philosophy, Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, Politics and History

Meaning of 'Inter-disciplinary Nature'

Kockelmans defines inter-disciplinary as follows: "While attempting to solve a particular problem if it is felt that the knowledge of a single discipline is not enough for solving a problem, then the knowledge and methodology of related disciplines are integrated and applied". This integration and interaction of two or more academic disciplines in the study of a subject is known as its inter-disciplinary nature

Inter-disciplinary Nature of the Academic Education Discipline

Knowledge about how educational activities have undergone changes over these years and the other factors that influence the educational activities, will also help us in modifying them to suit the present day needs. In this regard, other academic disciplines like Philosophy, Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, Politics and History have close inter-relationship with the discipline Education. In short, we can say the discipline 'Education' exhibits inter-disciplinary nature and approach.

1. Close Relationship Between Education and Philosophy

'Philosophy' is speculative while 'education' is practical. Thus philosophy is a major concern of education. There is in fact, an intimate relationship between philosophy and education which may be described briefly as under:

- Philosophy points out the way to be followed by education: Education means modification of the child's native behaviour. Philosophy gives ideals, values and principles, and education works out those ideals, values and principles.
- Education is the best means for the propagation of philosophy: Philosophy sets the goal of life, and education provides the means for its achievement.
- All great philosophers of the world have also been great educators: The great philosophers of all times from Plato upto the present day have been great educators. They reflected their philosophical view in their educational schemes.
- Philosophy determines all the broad aspects of education: It is philosophy that provides aims to education. These aims in turn determine the curriculum, the methods of teaching, school discipline and the role of the teacher in the educational process.

2. Inter-Relationship between Education and Psychology

Application of the principles and laws of psychology in educational situations, to solve the different problems faced in the educative process, so as to make it more effective and efficient, is termed as 'Educational psychology'. No teacher without the knowledge of educational psychology can become effective and efficient in the teaching profession. An effective teacher is one, who is not only proficient in the subject content but also possess the requisite skills to select and use the appropriate teaching methods to reach out the subject content to the students. i.e the teacher should know the subject of study as well as the learners. Hence, it becomes clear that the academic discipline education has more close relationship with the discipline psychology than any other academic discipline.

3. Inter-Relationship between Education and Sociology

Sociology as distinct from other disciplines, studies the behaviour of 'Man' in 'Society'. When we apply the principles and theories of sociology in education, to develop educational practices by considering educational institutions as a miniature society and education as a powerful agent of social change, then it becomes 'Educational Sociology'. Following are mentioned as important objectives of educational sociology: To understand
i) the role of the teacher in the community
ii) the role of school as an instrument of social change
function
iii) the needs of the society in which the school functions

4. Close Relationship Between Education and Anthropology

Anthropology is a social science that studies human beings, especially their origin, biological and physical development, customs and beliefs.
     The findings of anthropologists have helped us understand human beings and human progress in a detached, holistic manner. This would go a long way in furthering the aims of education as they relate to development of 'Universal brotherhood', a world that not just knows and respects cultural differences but a world that celebrates differences.

5. Close Relationship Between Education and Politics

Politics is a social science that attempts to explain how societies and social organizations use power to establish regulations and allocate finance and other resources. It could be stated that depending upon the political policies of the governments, educational aims and objectives of a State get determined which in turn regulate the other components of the educative process like curriculum, methods of teaching, freedom and discipline and the role and functions of teachers and financial allocations made accordingly.

   Therefore we can conclude that politics influences all the components of education and the educational practices, i.e. Politics and education have close relationship between them.

6. Close Relationship Between Education and History

History is the study of the human past as it is described in written documents left behind by humans. History of education dwells on how society by means of its pedagogical agents has passed, knowledge, values and skills to the new generation in different social-historical contexts. History of education also enables us to appreciate the importance of education to mankind since time immemorial across the generations. It enables us to critically examine the important role education plays in the transformation of society. In short, it could be said that history of education serves as the base for the construction of a palace called 'modern education system'.

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