



مَعْد التَّخْطِيط القومى

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PRECONDITIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL
PLANNING

by

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Preconditions for Educational Planning.

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It is understood that the term planning is not here taken in a general sense but in the sense which implies the setting of definite targets, the calculation of projections for population and their needs, the calculation of costing and the searching for resources.... etc. Otherwise there is almost always of course some kind of planning. It is also understood that planning means that it is to some extent implementable.

The fact that the plan is implementable brings about the question of the readiness for planning. Such readiness may have to be planned for, and thus it has to be carefully studied, or it may exist through means other than planning.

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One of the most important preconditions is the existing form of government. It is well known that when highly centralised countries intend to plan they usually prepare well structured plans while non centralised countries tend to prepare plans which are semi-structured. The latter are usually indicative while the former can be compulsory.

In a very general way we may ask the following question :

What is, on the whole, the governmental Pattern conducive to good Educational Planning ? The word "good" can be easily defined in terms of effectiveness which can in its turn also be defined.

The above question may, of course, take another shape bringing into consideration the internal and the external structure of the political pattern; authoritarian or democratic, centralised or non-centralised, socialist or capitalist, transitory or stable etc.

The remark may be made here that the above mentioned discussion affects the overall planning, and we have in this case to think of the organisational pattern of the educational machinery both at the ministerial as well as the local level.

The Relationship between Educational Planning Patterns (as they are actually attempted or as they are possible) and government patterns (at the State level, the Ministry level or the local level) may be the subject of comparative research the results of which may be suggestive of adjustments which will make good planning possible.

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In other words we want to bring out the main characteristics of the governmental and the administrative machinery which would help for better participation, formulation, implementation, evaluation and reformulation of plans.

It may be said that to attempt such research may create in some cases unsurmountable political difficulties. But if this is true at the state level, it would be much less so when we move nearer the base of the pyramid.

In any case this research has the international characteristics which may make it capable of attracting international aid for carrying it out.

It is also understood that the formal organisation of governmental machinery is not itself sufficient to bring about the needed results.

It is sometimes thought that if planning units, statistics units or research units are established, then good educational planning would take place. It is obvious that it does not follow.

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The next point which may be discussed is the degree of awareness as to the need for planning, i.e. the felt need for planning. To arrive at this stage there must be firstly the awareness of the problems; secondly the awareness of the limits of these problems; and thirdly the awareness that the proper way of approaching a solution to these problems is through planning. This means that there should be a general idea what planning itself is. Such awareness of problems, their extent, and the method of their treatment necessitates the gathering of data and their dissemination.

When we think of awareness we have to think of the individuals who should possess such awareness. These are the policy makers at all levels with corresponding awareness which is bound to vary.

Without going into details it is understood that one of the main preconditions necessary for planning is the existence of the felt need for planning.

It may be argued that the more the country is developed the more conscious it is of its problems, their boundaries and their method of approach. It is also the impression that the more the people are under-developed the less conscious they are of their problems. Yet the latter are more in need of that consciousness in order to be able to start to think of their problems and of the proper approach to them.

We can at this point find ourselves faced with two sets of problems both in need of being investigated :

- a) The facts related to the degree and the content of awareness of the major educational problems.

- b) The operational question of how to bring about the awareness of problems to a degree which would make it effectively operative. This may lead us in some cases to a sequence of stages through which a country has to pass before it becomes ready for such awareness or for the preparation of implementation of plans.

In such cases we would talk of planning for planning or the study of the conditions necessary to bring about the planning readiness.

We may find that planning readiness is a function of the level of development; thus creating some circular relationship.

Then comes the attitude to data collecting necessary for planning. I am assuming that the formal governmental organisation is conducive to planning for development, and that the auxiliary services are set up and that there is in a general way some planning readiness. Now we have to collect the data necessary for getting the plan ready in its initial form. Statistics have to be prepared in the demographic area, the educational area, the area of occupations....etc. People sometimes do not want to give the correct information or they do not want to give any information at all. Sometimes participation in such activity is related to the people's feeling of its importance and of their responsibility towards such a matter. It is found that people due to certain fears, superstitions, laziness, lack of felt obligation do not want to give the needed information. Sometimes they give the information; but they find that the required details are too much for them. Again we have to think of stages in the degree of accuracy more or less corresponding to stages of development and more or less corresponding to stages of planning.

We are thus faced here with two types of research problems :

- a) The facts related to the attitudes to data collecting and data giving.
- b) The means by which psychological preparation can be effected in the minds of the people, the data gatherers, the administrators and the planners in the area of gathering information and statistical data. Such a question brings about inquiries about various stages and various methods of treatment. We may bring to the attention of people data demonstrating their progress or deterioration, data demonstrating possibilities, waste or comparative data from somewhere else. This may be one way of making them conscious of the importance of studying such data for their future development.

Mention may be made here of the attitudes to planning. In the first place we notice that in developing countries people are demanding education, The governments fall short of teachers, buildings, equipments and finance. They have at least to stand for planning in order to create such basic elements in such a way as to meet the pressure of the people. Conflict crops up between the need for planning and the urgent need on the part of the people for action to quench their thirst for education. Someone may in this case ask "could there then be conflict between long range planning and short term planning?"

It is also noticed that in some countries some people with considerable power resist planning for education for development. Such people with control powers want to protect themselves by preserving the status quo. Educational Planning may reduce their chances for exploitation or even for survival.

It is therefore essential as one of the preconditions for educational planning that all obstacles are removed. A set of factual investigations are therefore needed on the Psychological Obstacles to Educational Planning and another set of operational researches needed on how to overcome such obstacles.

Another set of preconditions to Educational Planning may be found in the economic structure itself.

- (a) The economic structure of one country varies from that of another qualitatively and quantitatively. We may better say that the variations are in degree, in form and in content. The knowledge of every one of these dimensions helps to determine the direction of the plan. An agricultural state calls for a type of plan different from that an industrial state calls for.
- (b) The degree of stability of conditions is also a precondition. If there is a transitory economic, cultural system our plans would be different from what they would be for a country with more stability. To this we may add mobility, nomadic life, emigration, immigration ec.
- (c) There also come the geographic conditions. In some countries communication is extremely difficult specially in some parts of the year.
- (d) For the study of preconditions we may also have to examine laws; written and unwritten. Such laws may be related to marriage, employment, education, age of maturity ...etc. such laws may create indirect limitations to continuing education, to coeducation or to the free choice of education and employment..e

(e) Talking of written and unwritten laws we may mention the attitude towards manual and technical activities. In fact, we mention the attitude towards the whole of middle manpower (and womanpower) activities. In most developed countries there is almost a complete vacuum between the great bulk of unskilled manpower and the highly professional manpower. Very few people accept middle, and technical jobs. Intermediate schools are transformed under pressure to high professional colleges of university level. Most parents send their children to school to be educated so that they avoid manual, technical and middle level work. Such type of work was until recently a field for exploitation at the individual as well as the political levels. Research may prove that the attractiveness of white collar jobs exists in much larger proportions in underdeveloped countries than it does in developed countries. We have then to examine the respectability of manual, technical and middle level jobs. We have to find out factors and means of handling them. Such factors are expected to be numerous, varied and intricately interwoven. Amongst them, may be the chances of employment, possibilities of security, prestige, rights, privileges, also methods of selection and guidance in schools, methods of education, prospects, people's opinions derived from past history and present conditions of work etc.

We have implied that shortage of middle manpower exists not only in industry, but also in teaching, medicine and all avenues of work. As a result of the mentioned vacuum there is a good deal of abuse and waste which makes it imperative to do research.

Again the research on the respectability of middle manpower employment can have its very wide international attractiveness and it can thus attract generous international aid. It also touches on psychological questions of the highest order calling for various methods of approach?

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There are a number of other questions related to preconditions in connection with specific attitudes. Mention was already made of the attitude to technical education. In most countries the residuals who cannot join academic education are those who join technical education. We also know that for a nation to be industrially minded you do not only have to have technicians but you have to introduce something of technical education into general education. You do not only want technicians but you want the whole nation to be technically minded, practically minded, scientifically minded and industrially minded. That would be the general background necessary to support maintain and encourage industrial development. How can we introduce such practical technical scientific subjects in general education? Is there any readiness on the part of the public, the educators, the plannersetc.

Again, what is the attitude to physical education, to religion, to languages. There are already attitudes towards the curriculum contents and their usefulness in mental and character training, for their value as life tools.

There are also problems related to methods, should we teach analytically or globally or both and in what sequence? Should we be harsh or kind to pupils? Should we be permissive or restrictive? and so on and so forth.

Such problems related to content and method are important because they reflect on the quality aspect which is a major dimension in education for productivity.

Talking at the beginning of this paragraph about specific attitudes we may also mention attitudes to girls' education at their various stages of growth, the attitudes to rural education to special education.....etc.

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This short paper has only given a very preliminary analysis to my notion of the question of preconditions to Educational Planning. It has taken into consideration Education in both its general and specific aspects as well as its quantitative versus qualitative aspects. The paper reflects not only my ideas but also those of my colleagues at the Beirut Regional Centre.