



Educational Strategies to Empower the Poor

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Outline

- ▶ Freire's ideas on how education can empower the poor to lift them out of poverty
- ▶ Brief context: International efforts to achieve Education for All
 - ▶ Lessons from international efforts
- ▶ Emphasis has been increase in numbers: Quantity not Quality
- ▶ What aspects of poverty affect education most?
- ▶ Relation between education and poverty
- ▶ Barriers to achieving universal education goals
- ▶ Inequality and discrimination
- ▶ Best Practices
- ▶ Priorities and effective policies
 - ▶ Role of Academies

Education to Empower the Poor

- ▶ To talk of poverty, education and empowerment in Brazil is daunting
- ▶ Impact of the English edition of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire's book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* in 1970 has been tremendous in North America and is said to have achieved "near-iconic status" in teacher training programs
- ▶ It is important to recall two important points about Freire's ideas
 - ▶ (A) what poverty does to people (results in culture of silence, strips them of confidence, make them passive, vulnerable and fearful)
 - ▶ (B) the goal (social equity) and process of education (knowledge creation and not knowledge transfer), method: Conscientization (raising awareness of causes of inequality)
- ▶ The implications:
 - ▶ Inequality implies that many people are powerless (status quo will prevail)
 - ▶ Education means empowering people by actively involving them in the process
 - ▶ Quantity is not enough, quality is important

Global Goals for Education for All

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- ▶ 1990: Education for All (EFA): international effort to educate every citizen everywhere
 - ▶ Aim to ensure all children have access to primary education by 2015
 - ▶ Increase level of adult education
 - ▶ Focus on gender disparities (girls and women)
- ▶ 2000: Millennium Development Goals (MDG) (Post Rio Summit)(8 goals)
 - ▶ Universal primary education by 2015
 - ▶ Eradicate extreme poverty
- ▶ 2016: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): (17 goals expand on MDGs)
 - ▶ To be achieved by 2030: Inclusive, equitable quality education, lifelong learning
 - ▶ Gender equality by empowering girls and women

What has been achieved? What has been learnt?

- ▶ Uneven achievement of goals
 - ▶ Education goals were not met in many of the countries of the South
 - ▶ Gender equality is still a distant goal in most countries, even in the North
- ▶ What was learnt
 - ▶ Failed to target the root causes of poverty:
 - ▶ Inequality in society, especially gender inequality (structural and societal)
 - ▶ The Multifaceted and interdependent (holistic) nature of development
 - ▶ Not enough focus on human rights, sustainable economic capabilities
 - ▶ The goals should be for all countries, not only the South
 - ▶ Countries of the North have many inequalities within their societies
 - ▶ Poverty, gender inequality, unequal access to many resources
 - ▶ Enough goals: need institutions to implement and monitor them

Quantity not Quality

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- ▶ EFA, MDG > education for all: emphasis on increasing numbers
- ▶ Data indicates robust relationship between schooling and earnings
- ▶ Revolution of rising expectations (social unrest and extremism): quality matters
 - ▶ If there are jobs, the education received will not qualify them for many jobs
 - ▶ Unemployment will cause unrest because people think they deserve jobs
- ▶ Education to a large extent globally, especially in countries of the South, is what Freire called a “banking model”: rote learning, not critical, enquiry-based
 - ▶ Transmission of knowledge: teacher-centered – student listens passively
 - ▶ Students are not actively involved in what they learn
 - ▶ Because they avoid relating the learning to their own experiences
 - ▶ Because they are not constructing the knowledge (and will forget what they hear)

What aspects of Poverty impact Education most?

- ▶ What is poverty?
- ▶ It is both
 - ▶ An absolute term – when people do not have basic necessities: food, water, shelter, clothing (results in absenteeism, poor performance, dropping out of school)
 - ▶ A comparative/relative term – when inequality in society gives unequal access to resources (less opportunities for quality education)
- ▶ A multi-dimensional concept and indicates
 - ▶ not only lack of economic capital (lack of access to good education, good teachers)
 - ▶ but also lack of cultural capital (e.g. parental background) & social capital (networks) (*Education)
 - ▶ results in lack of confidence and positive self-concept (*Education)
 - ▶ makes people vulnerable to discrimination (based on class)(*Education)
 - ▶ ultimately, lack of freedom of choice to function effectively in society (affects life-chances)
- ▶ Cyclical relationship:
 - ▶ poverty prevents people from obtaining good education, and
 - ▶ lack of good education creates poverty
- ▶ Often intergenerational due to lack of education

Relation between Education and Poverty

- Evidence that education and poverty levels are related
- Malnutrition and poverty cause permanent and irreversible damage to both body and mind
- But relationship is not linear: it is complex (stereotypes, limited opportunities, limited horizons)
- Education and Employment
 - Each year of schooling increases salaries and employability
 - Educated populations increase a country's GDP, so poverty decreases and improves economic development
 - No country has achieved consistent economic growth without 40 % adult literacy rate
- Women's education
 - Evidence that education benefits girls at higher rate than boys
 - Delays marriage and having children, have less children
 - Increases ability to earn wages/ Decreases family violence/Increases decision-making power
 - Women focus on children's education and health

Barriers to Achieving Universal Education Goals

- ▶ For people living in poverty
- ▶ Universal Primary Education: problem getting children to school:
 - ▶ Child labor, bad schools, high dropout rates, teacher absenteeism, bad infrastructure
 - ▶ Enrolment in grade 1 does not ensure remaining in school- wastage with drop outs
 - ▶ Output levels often so low that students cannot enroll in secondary schools
- ▶ Gender equality: girls have less education because of
 - ▶ Gender discrimination, boy preference
 - ▶ Girls married off and disposed as burdens
 - ▶ Kept home (cannot go to school) to do house chores and look after siblings
 - ▶ Lack of physical facilities such as toilets and residences in rural areas

Inequality and Discrimination

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- ➔ Inequality in Society and Education: data shows
 - ➔ **Inequality in education driven by quality rather than access**
 - ➔ **The least unequal societies have the lowest poverty levels**
 - ➔ What causes inequality? low levels of education and skills lead to
 - ➔ unemployment / poor health / large families / can be intergenerational
 - ➔ Unequal opportunities can lead to poverty and poverty can lead to social exclusion
- ➔ Education and Discrimination (unequal treatment)
 - ➔ Discrimination due to differences in
 - ➔ gender, ethnicity/race/culture, religion, sexual preference, dis/ability, **class** (poverty)
 - ➔ At societal, institutional, individual levels
 - ➔ **Attitudes of teachers / administrators often push students out of school**

Best Practices

- ▶ The NGO, BRAC now working in 8 countries has had high impact on poverty reduction
 - ▶ Integrated development program (special focus on girls & special needs students)
 - ▶ Considered to be the world's biggest secular private education system
 - ▶ Early childhood to tertiary level : focus on INCLUSIVE EDUCATION
 - ▶ Partner with governments and target the poorest children to complete basic primary education
 - ▶ Provide teacher training, libraries, computer aided learning at the secondary level
 - ▶ Provide scholarships (Bangladesh & Uganda)
 - ▶ Use boat-schools in hard-to-reach areas in Bangladesh to reach the poorest of the poor

Impact

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Multi-pronged education programs

- ▶ From pre-schools to primary, secondary, university levels
- ▶ Mobile libraries, education for special needs children, multipurpose, non-formal and multi-purpose community centers, mobile education, computer-aided learning, adolescent clubs, sports training, English language and ICT classes, etc.
- ▶ 1985-2015: scope in Bangladesh (F=females)
 - ▶ 13,800 **pre-primary** schools/ 400,072 (61% F) students, 13,800 teachers
 - ▶ 5.61 million (67% girls) completed pre-primary, 5.57 million (61% F) went to grade 1
 - ▶ 22,791 **primary** schools/ 681.794 (62% F)/22,622 F teachers
 - ▶ 5.35 million (66% F) completed primary/5.06 million (66% F) transferred to formal schools
 - ▶ 47,953 teachers provided subject-based training/19,737 school administrators
- ▶ Primary School Certificate pass rate 99.99%, 7.26% A grade, 5.44% GPA 5
 - ▶ 2014 Secondary School Certificate: 93% pass rate(93.7%F/92.5%M)
 - ▶ 3,542 (45% F) meritorious students from poor families received scholarships

Integrated Approach is Essential

- ▶ Education is essential to eliminating poverty
- ▶ Need special efforts to target the very poor, women and marginalized groups
- ▶ Education should be multidimensional –
 - ▶ skills training in basic literacy/numeracy/IT
 - ▶ develop self-concept, science & technology, social sciences
 - ▶ knowledge in human rights, arts, music, sports
- ▶ Greatest impediment to education is social prejudice
 - ▶ Improve teacher education and teacher attitudes
 - ▶ Social prejudices regarding gender, special needs children

Priorities and Effective Policies

- ▶ **Increase public funding of education** as a percentage of GDP, rather than as a share of the budget
 - ▶ Public allocation of funds to education is an **investment**, not an expenditure
 - ▶ Lack of education leads to inequality which in turn leads to lack of development
 - ▶ Public-private partnership can build innovative institutions
- ▶ Focus on **women's education**:
 - ▶ Leads to equity in society
 - ▶ Mother's education highly correlated to higher levels of education (important for future generations)
- ▶ Most urgent is to have good **teacher education**: priority should be given to attracting good students to teaching and give them high pay (e.g. Finland)
- ▶ Educational Institutions (teaching methods) need to be **INCLUSIVE**: discrimination based on class, caste, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity are very damaging for education and society

Role of Academies

- Contribute to raising the quality of Teacher Education Institutions
 - Focus on Evidence-based teaching; enquiry and dialogical methods
- Raise status of women in STEM fields

Thank you!