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Q3(c)

Education is a key to social development. Elucidate

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2024 · Sociology GS 2 · 10 marks · Visions of Social Change in India

Visions of Social Change in India: Idea of development planning and mixed economy; Constitution, law and social change; Education and social change.

Core demand of the question

- **Show how education links to social development:** skills, citizenship, mobility, health, gender
- Use Indian evidence and **NEP 2020**
- Note that education can also reproduce inequality (**Bourdieu**, caste schooling)
- Elucidate, do not sermonise

Revision summary

Social development is more than GDP; education is a main public lever for capabilities.

Ambedkar treated schooling as anti-caste equipment.

NEP 2020 recasts foundational learning and language policy as development tools.

Bourdieu's cultural capital and India's dual school system show reproduction of inequality.

Education works as a key when joined to work, health and anti-discrimination.

Introduction

- **Social development means a wider set of capabilities than income growth:** health, literacy, dignity, and the ability to take part in public life. Education is a **key** because it is the main public institution that can reallocate those capabilities across generation. In India that claim is tested every day in government schools, coaching factories and the **National Education Policy, 2020**.

Body**How education develops society**

Literacy and numeracy lower child mortality when they reach mothers; they raise the chance of using law, banks and panchayats. Schooling delayed marriage in many groups and is a pathway out of some hereditary occupations. **Ambedkar** treated education as a weapon against caste, not as polish. Public employment and the professions still filter by credentials. **NEP 2020's** stress on foundational literacy, mother tongue, and multiple exit points is an attempt to treat school as development infrastructure rather than only as an exam funnel.

Education also builds a common civic language-unevenly, in a multilingual society. That is development in **Srinivas's** westernization sense and in **Yogendra Singh's** modernisation of tradition: new roles without a total cultural wipe.

The key can jam

Pierre Bourdieu's cultural capital is visible in English-medium private schools versus understaffed rural schools. Caste and class buy coaching. **NEP** can still leave a dual system. Gendered drop-out, disability exclusion, and Adivasi language mismatch show that school can reproduce the structure it is asked to dissolve. **A. R. Desai** would remind us that education without land and work is a limited solvent of class.

So education is a key, not a master key. It works when tied to health, work and anti-discrimination; it fails as a slogan that blames the poor for not 'valuing school'.

Flow diagram

Education -> Capabilities and health
Education -> Occupational mobility
Education -> Citizenship
Caste class English -> Education

Conclusion

Education is a key to social development because it spreads capabilities, delays some patriarchal clocks, and opens civic and occupational doors. In India it is also a market of inequality. **NEP 2020** is a reform of the key; caste, class and language still decide whose lock it opens.

Facts & figures

NEP 2020

National policy on school and higher education: foundational literacy, flexibility, mother tongue emphasis.

Ambedkar

Education, organisation and agitation as the path out of caste subordination.

Bourdieu

Schools reward cultural capital that dominant classes already possess.