A STUDY OF THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT*

by

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Introduction

Pakistan is a rural country. About 74 per cent of the people belong to rural areas. They are poor and illiterate and depend upon subsistence farming. *Per capita* income is very low. About 32.0 per cent of the people are below the extreme poverty line. They have either very small holdings or are landless workers. Most of the land is owned by big landlords. They have caused the failure of the land reforms and the pattern of landownership has not substantially changed. Poor tenants, sharecroppers and farm-labourers have always been deprived of education by the landowners to get free labour. A dual system of education has been operative in the country to facilitate the elite and to debar the poor. A great disparity exists between the literacy rate of the rural areas and the urban population. The population in Pakistan has been growing rapidly. As most of the population belongs to the rural areas, this sector has been the most affected in that the density of population per square mile and per hectare of cultivated land has increased, resulting in an abundant supply of labour which is not productive in the prevalent circumstances of this country. In the absence of any programme of education and training this has detered the pace of progress. Wherever this labour is used, on account of the low level of education and illiteracy, its performance has remained very poor and deficient. The absorptive capacity of agriculture is very low and surplus labour has not encouraged the farm owners to increase production. Poverty, unemployment and insecurity caused by feuds and quarrels, have pushed the poor rural population to the urban areas. The migrating people have neither skills, nor training to perform non-farm jobs and the industrial sector is not great enough to absorb these people. In this way rural illiteracy has penetrated into urban life with its undesirable effects.

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In spite of huge investment in agriculture, food self-sufficiency is still to be achieved. If one crop gives comparatively better production, it is counterbalanced by a large deficit in some other. There is no improvement in per acre yield. Production is increased only by increasing the area under cultivation. Rural life is conservative. People have not been able to overcome their superstitious beliefs. They lack adaptability, ambition and readiness for change. They feel a general contempt for manual work. Standards of living are very low with insufficient food and the worst housing conditions.

To change rural life, a programme of rural transformation was launched in 1953. It was based on the principles of community development on a self-help basis and called Village Aid. To utilize surplus rural manpower, A Rural Works Programme was introduced in 1961. It was financed by the United States of America. The education of rural people was a part of the programme, but more than 80 per cent of the funds were spent on the construction of link roads and the rest was distributed among health and sanitation, social welfare, irrigation, industries, education and the purchase of machinery. Education received only 2 per cent of the total allocation.

At present the Integrated Rural Development Programme is in vogue, which theoretically emphasizes synchronization of development operations. First importance has been given to agriculture, considering it the base for future rural development. The programme is organized at five levels, but the most important is the markaz (centre) which serves 50 to 60 villages or primary units. It is the hub of the programme activities including banking, credit facilities, machinery workshops, storage, marketing, agro-based industries, health, education and recreation. A long list of objectives of the programme was drawn up, covering almost all the aspects of social life. But the programme could not be expanded after 1973-74 as the concept and the requisite institutional frame-work for rural development were not clear to the government. Farm cooperatives, Agro villas, rural credit schemes and a Pass Book system were introduced as the complements to IRDP and were meant to meet the credit requirements of the farm owners. The aims and objectives of this programme are quite high sounding but in practice the stress was on agricultural development. It has been considered almost synonymous to rural development which is a great deal more than increased farm output. Increased farm production cannot improve rural society if it is not supplemented with education and training of the rural people. The benefits of the developmental programmes are usurped by the big land-owners and the illiterate and poor masses are always deprived.

Increased farm mechanization encouraged by the IRDP progressively robbed the ever-increasing labour force of the meagre livelihood available in the rural areas. As the basic requirements of development have not been met, high price incentives, subsidies and huge loans granted to the landowners have not been proved productive enough. In relation to investment in agriculture and other rural development programmes the returns in the form of income or employment have been trivial.

I felt that the traditional village could not be transformed by programmes of a transitory nature without first changing villagers through the process of education. I wished to confirm this idea and therefore the study was designed to appraise the effects of education on economic, social and political life of the rural communities.

The objectives were :

1. To provide a rationale that education provides a base and contributes towards rural development.

2. To examine the role of education as it is related to the objectives of rural development in its social, economic and political and organizational aspects.

3. To describe the existing situation in the two villages of the case study area in social, economic, political and organizational aspects as affected by the provision and non-provision of education.

4. To compare the existing situation of the two villages.

Related Literature

The need for rural development programmes was realized after the 40's when most of the Asian and African countries achieved independence and let the world know their misery. Increased health measures enlarged the span of life. As there was not a similar decrease in the birth rate, it accelerated the rate of population growth. The available resources of these countries were not sufficient to feed the growing mouths who mostly belonged to the rural areas. Agencies like the World Bank, International Development Agency, Food and Agriculture Organization started assistance programmes.

A new type of literature came out suggesting means and ways for the development of less-developed countries. Gunnar Myrdal (1968), Barbara Ward (1962), Brannon and Jessee (1977), Ray Viker (1975), John Scott (1969), Nigel Hey (1971), O.L. Freeman (1968), W. Cockrane (1969), Hung-Chao Tai (1972), Robert M. Solow (1957) and many others studied the process of rural development and presented their own points of view to change the traditional rural societies. Harbison and Myres (1965) stressed the need of human resource development through education for the general progress of a country. T.W. Schultz (1967) emphasized schooling to transform traditional agriculture. It was education of the farm people which counted most for increasing farm productivity in Japan, Israel and the United States.

Popular strategies for rural development failed in the absence of education. Such revolutionary approaches as land reforms could not change the centuries old rural social structure. After an extensive study of land reforms in eight countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, Hung-Chau Tai (1972) concluded that there was no possibility of increasing production by adopting these programmes. According to him, the main obstacle in the way of implementation was the dis-interest of the landed class and its unwillingness to sacrifice its own interest for the benefit of the peasantry. Saad M. Gadalla (1962) commenting upon the land reforms in Egypt wrote that the present results of land reforms would not raise the living standard of farm people. The situation in the South East Asian countries was also the same. Gunnar Myrdal (1968) remarked that the land reforms could not bring any revolutionary changes in the inequalities of village structure and did not produce any favourable economic results. Jacoby (1971) wrote of the failure of these programmes in the Philippines and Korea. He commented that they did not prove useful for the growth of small farmers and the community leadership was still in the hands of former landlords.

Land tenure acts were promulgated to protect the rights of tenants against the oppressive land owners. As the tenants were illiterate, they failed to safeguard their legal rights. Studies of tenancy laws in Brazil, Ghana (Jacoby 1971), India, Pakistan, Malaya and other South Asian countries (Myrdal 1968) bring to light the fact that these laws did not impove the situation but contrarily worsened it. Credit cooperatives, introduced to meet the immediate economic needs of the lower strata of rural populations, also failed as the big land owners and moneylenders usurped all the advantages of this scheme and made it impossible for the poor people to get even a small loan. The All-India Rural Credit Survey 1951-52, Muzaffar Hussain and

Abdur Rashid's study (1976) in Pakistan, Gadalla's study in Egypt (1962), Yu and Lee's study in Taiwan, Vyas's in India, Rashtia Bank's in Nepal, Williams in West Malaysia and Mahmood Hasan Khan's in Pakistan. Brannon and Jessee (1977) support these views.

The purpose of cooperative farming was to minimize effort and to maximize output. In India it was also intended to eliminate class distinction by giving equal rights to all the participants of the scheme. Tanzania, Peru (Norman Long 1977), India (K.M. Chaudhry 1963) and many other third world countries followed the example with high sounding claims. But in actual practice, as the studies reveal, the petty land owner became a wage labourer of the farm (Myrdal 1968).

Soil and water provide the base for agriculture. There is no possibility of any type of growth without water. But just like all other means of production, the water resources are used exclusively by the big land owners. T.S. Epstein's study (1962) of Wangala shows that the provision of irrigation facilities increased production but it did not result in any reallocation of resources. The change was unilinear and all the other aspects of social life remained the same. The economic growth produced by irrigation could not give birth to a market economy. Even the entrepreneur character could not emerge. When she revisited her area, T.P. Epstein found that the situation had possibly worsened and the large landowners had entrenched themselves even more effectively in the economic system. Improved irrigation facilities are used simply as a type of refuge if monsoons fail. They landlords and villagers alike have not developed attitudes to the use of a perennial supply of water to increase production (Jacoby 1971), (Myrdal 1968) or to shift themselves to double cropping (Myrdal, 1968).

Mechanization includes all mechanical devices which replace labour and other traditional means of farming and help to accelerate the speed of work. No doubt it saves times and make double cropping possible. In third world countries, where rapid population growth and acute shortage of employment opportunities have already created problems, mechanization simply makes the unemployment problem worse. Brannon and Jessee (1977) have referred to the studies of Mcinerney and Donaldson in Pakistan, Singh and Singh in India and Amberchrombie in Columbia which show 8 to 65 per cent reduction in the use of labour force by tractorization. A study by Hiromitsu Kaneda (1969) indicates that the use of tractors can increase intensity of cropping, but there is no possibility of increasing yield per acre per crop as compared to animal draft power.

However, the use of new technology has become imperative to increase agricultural output. The traditional means of production are no longer efficient to meet the needs of expanding population. But the adoption of new technology requires innovative behaviour which is almost absent among the traditional peasants of developing countries. It is the educated big landowners who are more inclined towards the adoption of these new techniques. The existing inequalities widen with the increased modernization of agriculture (Laurence Hewes 1974). A study by V.S. Vyas (1968) indicates that the main indicator for the lack of investment in new factors of development on small farms is the level of literacy. Another study of the same area (V.S. Vyas et al 1968) reports that the younger and dedicated farmers of higher castes with large holdings and money resources gained the most from the use of new techniques. Farmers with small holdings and little liquid capital could not obtain good results and in the end ceased to participate in innovative programmes. Klausen's (1968) study 'Kerala Fishermen' shows a marked difference in response to new fishing techniques between the two fishing communities—one educated and the other illiterate.

Price incentives and market mechanisms affect the decision making process of persons caught in the vicious circle of subsistence farming. A study by Syed Mushtaq Hussain (1969) indicates that market prices have no effect on production decisions. Hexem (1971) has referred to the study of Mathur and Ezekiel which bears the same findings. As he explains, the subsistence farmers and the landless workers who market to their debtors are not affected by these policies. According to him they have no direct influence on the efficiency of production techniques.

Education is not the basic ingredient for increasing land productivity, but it is an important tool in order for the user to understand techniques, to know skills and to be motivated for more production. Education is the only tool through which the ever-expanding knowledge of today's world can be transmitted. Education precedes economic development. The higher rate of literacy of the developed countries was the main cause of their economic independence. The real revolution in a country begins with the establishment of an education system. Education and training of the people contribute directly to national development. Studies by Adam Curle (1966) and Harbison and Myres (1968) indicate that there was a close relationship between a country's attitude towards the education of its people and the rate of its development. They also report that the development of a country

is the result of human effort and not the outcome of accumulated resources. Studies by Herman P. Miller (1962), W. Lee Hansen (1971) and White and Duker (1973) show marked differences in earnings with different levels of education. Weisbrod (1964) and Connel and Dasgupta (1976) consider education a marketable commodity. Their studies show a close relationship between education and employment and occupations. A study by Rogers (1958) shows that in general, education, status, and the number of contacts with others and with government agencies are positively associated with early adoption of an innovation. Comparative studies of agricultural production reveal the fact that farms with educated and skilled operators were producing more than their counterparts with illiterate and unskilled operators (Abdul Saleem 1978). Several comparisons of this kind have been made by T.W. Schultz (1967). Gaddala's study (1962) shows the high correlation of education with net farm income, clothing, health attitudes, children in schools, size of the family, birth control and attitude toward education of girls. In this way education provides a base for all future development. As long as illiteracy is not eradicated, there can be no hope of stable development in the country. Planning for rural transformation without first changing the rural people through the process of education will remain an unrealized dream.

Methods and procedures in the Study

Two villages Bughlani and Kalari in Taunsa subdivision of District Dera Ghazi Khan were selected as samples. This selection was made on the basis of the cultural and geographical similarities of the two areas, keeping education as an independent variable, as it was provided in sample 'A' but there was no school in area 'B'. The areas under study were rainfed. There was an acute shortage of water.

The main source of data was the information provided by the representative of each family of the case study area. Banks and dispensaries did not exist in the area. The school enrolment record was the other source of data. I also recorded my own observations about the living conditions of the people. The main tool of research was a structured interview. An observation sheet was used to record observations.

The data was collected through interviews with the representative of each family of the area under study, during July and August 1979. On the whole 260 interviews were taken; 170 of them took place in Bughlani (sample 'A') and 90 in Kalari (Sample 'B').

The interview schedule had fifteen sections covering almost all necessary information about income, family members' education and occupations, saving habits, attitude toward economic development, traditions, use of mass-media, preferences for a leader and criteria for prestige and status.

Generally percentage statistic was used. But where it seemed necessary mean was also applied. For correlation tetrachoric "r" and contingency coefficient "c" were computed.

Major Findings and conclusions

The analysis of the data confirms the hypotheses of the study that development relates to the educational facilities/opportunities available to the local population. The data suggest that generally economic well-being relates to education. Educated families have higher income, more earning members and less small-age children. They are more eager to educate their off-spring, and enjoy better participation of female partners in economic activities. They do not stick to agriculture if it is not productive enough but adopt other occupations to have sufficient for the family. Therefore educated people have more diversified jobs.

Educated people are comparatively more against old traditions. They also take necessary measures for health and hygiene. System of payment, which is an established indicator of development, changes with education. In this study the educated people made payment to all kinds of hired labour in cash. It was true in the highly educated group, while the other groups also preferred payment in cash but the payment in kind also existed. Educated people have better crops and they often sell their surplus in the open market. With this surplus income they are not hesitant to do part-time work for supplementing their income. They are continuously busy in boosting up their harvest. They grow a vast variety of crops both food and cash, while the illiterate people are contented with only one combination and that too of food and fodder only.

Conclusions

As there is a large scale impact of education on the total life of the people, therefore one can conclude that education is a pre-requisite for transforming the rural social and economic life. Although not attractive at

present, it can be made peaceful and worth-living by providing universal education, at least, upto secondary level, as low education hardly brings any change in attitudes, habits, modes of living, and person to person relations.

Education develops innovative behaviour and brings change in societies. Traditional societies can be transformed only by providing good education. All modern developmental concepts of forming nuclear families, using mass media for both education and recreation, giving good education to the new generation, developing friendly and cordial relations and cooperation with each other emerge out of the education of the citizens.

If a country desires economic independence it will have to invest more in the education of the masses as it develops the habits of thrift and saving and encourages people to work for more and better production.

A good society and a better social order can be created by giving people good education as only an educated society can create a good democratic government by selecting educated social workers as their representatives. Also only educated people can create an educated society as the demand for education increases in the educated families. In illiterate societies the educational institutions always remain under-utilized.

Recommendations

- Provision of education, to every member of rural society, at least upto 8 years should be made the first step of rural transformation.
- To achieve No. 1, without any further delay, education should be made compulsory from age 5 to 12 in the rural areas where the problem of seats and staff does not exist and in many schools, the number of teachers is greater than the number of students.
- Adults education centres should be established. They should be made effective and really functioning.
- Poor sections of rural society should be encouraged by raising loan limits for them equal to a landowner of 25 acres. This facility should be extended to them by mortgaging the machinery they pruchase.
- Rural schools should be made more attractive and comfortable for rural children.

- More wise, accurate, and honest use of funds allocated for the education of rural children.

- More wise, accurate, and honest use of funds allocated for the education of rural areas should be ensured.

- Master plans should be prepared for the development of rural areas.

- Installation of new industrial units in congested urban areas should be discouraged. Industrialists should be advised to choose raw material producing areas for this purpose.

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