

# Education & National Development

A Comparative Perspective

2nd Edition

Ingemar Fägerlind & Lawrence J. Saha

Pergamon Press

# ***Education and National Development***

A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

SECOND EDITION

by

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## *Preface to the Second Edition*

THE preparation for this second edition has given us an opportunity to review and reflect upon the events and changes of thought which have taken place during the early and middle 1980s. Most persons in the education and development field, whether academic, practitioner or both, rarely have the chance to step back to take a broad view of the field. Yet, as we are all immersed in our day-to-day activities, it is often the broad view that we require to understand not only our own special interests, but how these interests fit together with those of others.

The events of the past half decade or so have been important in forcing us to acknowledge some important facts about education, development, and the ability for education to bring about changes of a particular kind. What are some of these events? First of all, the recession during the late 1970s and early 1980s, sometimes gradual, sometimes swift, has shaken the confidence of education and development planners. Economically the world has become a small globe, highly interlinked, highly interactive, highly vulnerable and volatile.

Gone are the days of never-ending economic growth. We now face a world where the degrees of freedom in which to manoeuvre have shrunk. In this environment, the condition of the rich and poor countries has become more visible, and the plight of the very poor can no longer be ignored. The zero-sum game of aid and development, of economic growth and recession, means that no longer can any country regard itself independently of others. Every plan and every strategy related to economic and social development may succeed or fail not because of factors within a country's borders but because of factors outside them. One country's success may be another's downfall. Within this context, the funds for education must compete with other demands on the limited resources of national governments, demands for social security and welfare, health, defense, scientific research, and so on.

As we reviewed what we had written over six years ago, we were surprised at how much still held true, and in some cases has become more important. The path of development of most societies seems to be upward, but cyclical nonetheless, with minor rises and falls in economic and social fortunes. Our overall organizing framework, the three dimensions of the *economic, political* and *social/cultural* appears as relevant now as then. We have become more aware that purely economic-based programs may flounder or fail if the social/cultural and political dimensions are ignored. Furthermore, we are even more convinced that the political context has become all embracing, as all educational and development plans are inherently political, and all participants, whether academics, planners, politicians or recipient citizens, are caught up in the political process whether they like it or not.

In this revision, we have made major and minor changes as we thought were required, while keeping the original work more or less intact. In Chapters 1 and 2 we hope we have made more clear the theoretical underpinnings which we feel are essential to understand the assumptions of our plans and expectations about education and development. Chapter 3 has come in for some updating, due to the economic recession and the decline in educational funding. Chapters 4 and 5, on modernization and political mobilization, we think hold up well, and are as applicable today as when we wrote them.

Chapter 6 on development strategies, with its focus on Sweden, remains largely the same except for changes relating to recent events. Chapter 7 is a new chapter with a focus on women, education and development. We have included it with the conviction that many of the issues relating to development are also issues relating to women, and the topic deserves special treatment.

Chapter 8 on evaluation has been radically altered with the inclusion of several new examples. Chapters 9 and 10 have been extensively updated and the section on the State expanded. It is clear to us that no analysis of education and development relationships, or the formation of strategies, plans or programs is complete without a close examination of the role of the State, and the inescapable fact that all education and development origins, processes, and outcomes are inherently political.

There are topics in the education and development field which we have not given extensive treatment, although we believe they will emerge as significant in the next decade. Most discussions about educational plans and strategies focus on formal education, except perhaps for literacy and literacy campaigns. Adult education, lifelong education, or recurrent education have so far been in the background

of current research and debate. Yet when pressed, many will acknowledge the importance or potential importance of education which takes place outside the formal structure, and which is aimed at adults. The education of adults remains to be integrated into research projects and planning strategies.

Another issue which we believe will dominate education and planning debates into the next decade concerns equity versus effectiveness, and expansion versus quality. In times of economic constraint commitments to equity often give way to concerns over effectiveness, whether measured in terms of getting the most for the money out of educational systems, or being satisfied with educating the talented few and leaving the rest to their own devices. These debates often give the impression that equity and effectiveness are mutually exclusive and competing goals. However we believe more attention should be directed to strategies which do not sacrifice equity concerns in order to maintain quality and effectiveness. Viable development strategies should strive for both.

A third concern focuses upon the many countries and people of the world who find themselves caught with one foot in the traditional and the other in the modern. Many societies are in a state of rapid change, and many of the problems of the developing countries have been attributed to problems of transition. The underlying assumption is that the tradition and the modern are in competition, and in choosing one, the other is lost. Yet some of the most successful countries in the developing world are those who have combined the best of both. We believe a greater recognition of the benefits of the traditional in the transition to the modern will ease the development process for all concerned. The structures and forms of education in developing societies need to build upon the traditional rather than replacing it. We see this as an emerging area for exciting and rich diversity in the expansion and the reforms of education around the world.

In short, we remain convinced that the field of education and development represents the crossroad which brings together academics, politicians, planners, practitioners, and the people in the pursuit of the world's biggest and perhaps most exciting challenge. We are pleased to be a part of that pursuit.

There are many institutions and individuals who deserve our appreciation in being able to produce this edition. First of all, we are indebted to the program experts and staff of the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) in Paris where we were both Visiting Fellows in 1988, and where we found a stimulating environment for rethinking what we had written before. Acting Director Ta Ngoc Chau and Lars Mahleck facilitated our visit and



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Stockholm and Canberra  
30 January 1989

INGEMAR FÄGERLIND  
LAWRENCE J. SAHA

# Contents

<i>List of Figures and Tables</i>	xi
Part 1 Conceptions of Societal Development	
1. The Origins of Modern Development Thought	3
2. Education and Development: the Emerging Confidence in Formal Schooling as an Agent of Change	32
Part 2 Dimensions of Development	
3. Education, Economic Growth and Employment	67
4. Education, Modernization and Quality of Life	96
5. Education, Political Mobilization and Development	123
Part 3 Policy and Practice	
6. Strategies for Educational Reforms	145
7. Women, Education and Development	167
8. Evaluation of Education in Development Policy	191
Part 4 Towards a Typology for Education and Development	
9. Education and Development under Capitalism and Socialism	225
10. Education, the State and Development	264
<i>Selected Bibliography</i>	285
<i>Name Index</i>	305
<i>Subject Index</i>	311

# *List of Figures and Tables*

FIG. 1.1 The Process of Modernization (based on Inkeles and Smith, 1974)	17
FIG. 1.2 Idealized Illustrations of Four Theories of Change and Development	27
TABLE 2.1 Adult Literacy Rate (percent) for Countries of Different Levels of Development	44
FIG. 2.1 World Literacy in a Historical Perspective. Population about 10–15 years of age and older. Percentage figures. (Adapted from Johansson, 1977: Figure 20.)	46
TABLE 3.1 Take-off and Subsequent Stages: Some Dates for Twenty Countries	70
TABLE 3.2 Summary of Prospects for Economic Growth	74
TABLE 4.1 Western Education and Percentage of “High” Individual Modernity among Nigerian 17-year-olds	104
TABLE 4.2 Percentage Who “Follow Politics Regularly” or “From Time to Time” by Country and Education	106
TABLE 4.3 Correlation Coefficients (Panel A) and Beta Weights (Panel B) of Education, Mass Media Exposure, and Occupation Experience on Individual Modernity	108
TABLE 6.1 Some Theories of Development and Educational Reform	147
TABLE 7.1 Percent Females of Total Enrolments and Total Enrolment ratios (in brackets) For Country Groupings: 1960 to 2000 (projected)	173
TABLE 7.2 Sex Differences in Science Achievement, 14-year-olds, Seventeen Countries	175

xii      *List of Figures and Tables*

TABLE 7.3	
Female Labor Force Participation Rates: 1960–1980, by Country Group	177
TABLE 7.4	
Composition of the World Labor Force, by Sex and Sector of Activity (1970 and 1980) (in percentages)	178
TABLE 8.1	
Country Rank Order Correlation Coefficients Between Level of Economic Development and Achievement, IEA Countries	199
FIG. 8.1	
Linear Relationship Between Variables x and y	203
FIG. 8.2	
Non-linear Relationship Between Variables x and y	203
TABLE 8.2	
Approaches to Evaluation Research	207
TABLE 8.3	
Literacy Campaigns in Mozambique 1978–1982: Targets, Enrolments, Outcomes.	209
TABLE 8.4	
Teacher Training and Student Achievement in Less- developed Countries, Summary of Empirical Results	214
FIG. 9.1	
The Interrelationship Between Education and Society	226
FIG. 9.2	
Dialectical Model of Education and Development Dimension	227
FIG. 9.3	
Dialectical Model of Indonesian Education	235
TABLE 9.1	
Types of Education and Development	238
TABLE 9.2	
Contribution to Gross Domestic Product	243
TABLE 10.1	
Educational Expansion for Country Groups	266

PART 1

*Conceptions of Societal Development*



# 1

## *The Origins of Modern Development Thought*

SINCE the end of World War II there have been few subjects which have received as much attention from social scientists, policy-makers and politicians as that of national development (OECD, 1978). The need to rebuild Europe, along with the simultaneous emergence of the new nations of Africa and the growth of old nations in Latin America and South East Asia, has brought into recent focus the importance of factors necessary for social and economic development. The theoretical debates and policy decisions concerning development have varied considerably, and have sometimes stressed technological advancement, but at other times have focused on social well-being. However, throughout these years a key variable in these discussions and practices has been the role that education plays in the development process.

It is our intention to explore in some depth the link between education and development. In doing this we summarize and critically evaluate the theories and cumulative research findings of this important and timely topic. In spite of some proportionate levelling off, nations and international organizations continue to spend vast amounts of money on educational programs (Coombs, 1985). In the mid-1980s some developing countries such as Bolivia, Philippines, and Equador were spending over one-fourth of their national budgets on education (Unesco, 1987). In contrast, industrialized countries have tended to spend proportionately less. For example, during the same period, Sweden, the USA, Great Britain allocated roughly 10 percent of their national budgets to education. Investment in education has traditionally been justified by optimistic assumptions, the first being that an educated population contributes to the socio-economic development of the society as a whole, and the second, that education contributes to the well-being of individuals within the society (Schultz, 1980). In addition, it has become clear that rapidly changing technologies and the changing face of the world economic and political systems require a new flexibility and adaptability by societies and individuals. Education is increasingly

being seen as an essential component for an adaptable and flexible population.

Frequently some of these assumptions which justify educational expansion are called into question, and the age of optimism has given way to an age of caution. As one writer, speaking about educational expansion has said: "Educational expansion, as we now know, does not necessarily make either people or countries more prosperous; instead it may, and does, leave the former without jobs and the latter with increasingly burdensome claims on public funds" (Weiler, 1978:180).

In this chapter we examine the concept of development with the conviction that no discussion of education strategies can be effective without first clarifying the desired development strategy. Most of what follows concerns a discussion of theories of progress and development from early classical thinkers to contemporary writers. We conclude the chapter by identifying the salient dimensions of various development strategies, and leave the examination of the link between education and development to Chapter 2.

### **What is Development?**

There have been few concepts in social and economic thought which have been as ambiguous as that of development. The term has been used in a variety of contexts, often clouded with political and ideological overtones. There are many words with similar meaning to that of development, for example, social change, growth, evolution progress, advancement and modernization. With the exception of the term social change, all the others imply change in a specific direction which is regarded by the users as positive or highly valued.

There have been attempts to resolve this ambiguity in the concept of development. Fletcher (1976) argues, for example, that there is a value-free meaning contained in the notion of development over and above the ideological and political uses of the concept. In discussing this meaning he states:

Secondly, however, 'development' can mean the actualisation of an implicit potentiality, the simplest example being the patterned growth and maturation of a seed, or an initial germ-cell, to the full adult form of the individual plant, or animal, or human person. Without stipulating, at this point, anything too weighty or too precise, this can also certainly seem to apply to man and his *social* situations (p. 43).

This implicit logic of development about which Fletcher speaks is



particularly useful in understanding and planning for change in human societies. It is based on the assumption that both societies and individuals have innate biological, psychological and sociological capacities which can be evaluated in terms of their level of actualization. For example, individuals can be physically healthy or sick, happy or sad and participative or not participative in their social environment. Likewise, societies can be judged as efficient or inefficient in making possible the actualization of their human potential. Following Fletcher (1976) we argue that any change which promotes or actualizes these dimensions of society represents development in an appropriate meaning of the term. We further contend that education in the formal sense is an essential component for the development process as we have defined it above.

Before proceeding to study and analyze this relationship between education and development, we first historically trace the conception of development as used by philosophers and social scientists.

### **Historical Analysis of Development Philosophies**

Ideas and concepts do not occur in a vacuum but are products of the social, cultural and historical events surrounding them. Such has been the case in the thinking about development. Our present age has no monopoly on theories of social change and development. Throughout history people have always been confronted with the reality of change around them, and the philosophers and social commentators have from earliest times attempted to explain how and why these things happened.

On the other hand certain aspects of change have not always been apparent. It is relatively easy to perceive short-term changes that occur daily around us; it is more difficult to perceive broader changes over a long period of time.

For example, historians often think of the fall of the Roman Empire as though it occurred at one point in time in history. For some, this event took place when Rome was invaded by Alaric of the Visigoths in A.D. 410, by Attila the Hun in A.D. 452, by the sacking of Rome by the Vandals in A.D. 455, or by the deposition of the last Roman Emperor in A.D. 476. But how did the people of Rome regard these events? Were they aware that later writers and historians would describe them in such dramatic terms as the decline and fall of an empire? One early historian did not think so.

The three centuries between the great age of Marcus Aurelius and the overwhelming of Rome by barbarians in the fifth century A.D. is often called the epoch of Rome's 'decline and fall'. But