

From Pre-Colonial to Post-Colonial Educational Transitions in Southern Asia

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This paper is an exercise in comparative education that seeks to take into account not only the differing styles of colonialism in Asia but also the varying styles of indigenous culture, institutions of learning and schooling, and social structure, in their interaction with the domination of the coloniser. These factors together are seen to lead to the varying trajectories of post-colonial educational and socio-economic development in the region.

THIS, a period of many transitions, is also seeing a great many conceptual and terminological ones. We must begin therefore by defining, or at least describing, the terms and concepts we use. From a condition in which people of one country went to live in and perhaps also dominate another, colonial came almost universally to mean a state of domination and even exploitation of one country by another. Whereas this related largely to the acts of capitalist countries, western and particularly American writing tended to term the dominating relationship of the Soviet Union and communist countries also as colonial. In an academic study of the relationship between countries, nations and economies of different types and levels of development, unequal relationships of all kinds have been variously classified as colonial, neo-colonial or semi-colonial. It is in this last sense, broadly speaking, that the term 'colonial' is being used in this very preliminary survey note on the last couple of centuries. Attention is concentrated on south and south-east Asia, though occasional comparative references to west and east Asia have been necessary in the interest of comprehensive and comparative understanding.

COMPARATIVE STUDIES

Pioneers in comparative education from the vantage point of the west for a century now have studied western educational development in a historical continuum of culture, knowledge and skills. Either the extension of their perspective to the east and south today, or the somewhat revisionist studies apparently from 'below', as it were, as in the work of Altbach and others, still are not adequate to the task of understanding the educational situation of our countries today [Shukla 1994]. Deeper perceptions of Asian history both in the colonial period and earlier; new epistemological perspectives which give greater weight to the viewpoint of the subject; and other ontological bases, e.g. accepting conflict and dialectic/contradictions, have to be brought to bear upon the Asian reality. This paper, necessarily sweeping and cursory because broad and

large in scope in a brief space, is an attempt to encompass the changing educational reality of Asia over the last couple of centuries. The basic explanation, no mere apology, for adopting this approach is that the telescope is as useful an instrument for viewing as is the microscope. We would normally need to collate views from the two. The comments that follow in fact rely on much detailed study. Nevertheless, the author's competence and knowledge about all regions is not equally detailed or recent. The paper is offered with apologies for errors of both omission and commission in terms of facts as well as opinion and attitude.

BACKGROUND

There were many colonialisms, and there were many civilisations and states and societies in Asia. These happened also to be some of the oldest civilisations of the world with some of the most literate cultures. The pre-colonial indigenous systems of learning and schooling - the word is used somewhat loosely for instruction in the 'three RY which was often domestic or individual(ised), for organised schools with grades and classification came in many cases later - covered a small fraction of the population, for duties of a priestly/sacerdotal or bureaucratic/revenue collecting or trading variety were often preceded by apprenticeship at work or in the family. This broad framework, which covered one-third or more of the children (mostly upper caste male in the Indian case), was destroyed, adapted or absorbed into the system built by the colonial powers suited to their administrative and cultural policies. From early plantation to revenue collecting and later trading and finally, as in the Indian case(s), in a subordinate industrialisation or development of infrastructure, these needs differed in different colonies and in different periods.

By the earlier part of the 20th century one had an Asia with Japanese domination in the east (as an Asian exception?) while the rest of the continent was dominated in the main by British, French and Dutch colonialisms, in descending order of importance, the Portuguese and Spanish having already had

their day. We should note that there were exceptions. Thailand, Nepal and Iran, for example, were independent monarchies, but the degree of economic and military pressure on them was not negligible. They had more widespread education in indigenous language and culture. But the direction was the same and clear for all - use European language in the highest instruction and in science and technology, to the extent that they are cultivated. This was the essential price or precondition of 'participation', whatever that may mean, in the trade and economy of the world, the new commercial industrial civilisation. China was a case by itself, whose disorganisation of central authority early in this century led to a national and then people's democratic (or in common parlance communist) revolution which retained the linguistic autonomy of the country and thus in the long run and in the ultimate analysis, the autonomy of its culture and to a substantial extent, of its science and technology.

In this China resembled the Asian exception to colonisation - Japan. Historically, however, Japan can also be viewed as the last example of a capitalist industrial-military national state entity to emerge on the globe, of a more or less autonomous operator in a position to organise its affairs on its own. (It can be seen that the 'space' for garnering raw materials and cheap labour outside and selling industrial exports kept on getting more restricted with each successive capitalist imperialist power making it resort to more internal centralised control, more state intervention or leadership/support and even, for greater competitive efficiency, use of science and technology and related education and training - e.g. UK, France and Germany.) Japan intensified these characteristics all the more and is thus, in our view, incorrectly or at least exaggeratedly viewed as an exceptional or new variety rather than just the ultimate in a series. Later emerging world giants of this order had to resort to socialist (or 'socialist') methods and internal mobilisation. The reference here is to the Soviet and, much later, the Chinese revolution. The logic of this leading in the direction of wars and revolutions can easily

be understood. The fate of colony or semi-colony for the rest, is equally easily understood.

The Chinese and Japanese use of their own languages and autarchical economic and cultural practices considerably aided by this is an option which did not remain available to the rest of Asia and, in our view, provides the major explanation of the differences in economy as well as education and culture in the continent.

Japan did this first, utilising its widespread indigenous base of mass schooling and also some higher learning; adapting selectively from the industrialised world; and retaining traditional patterns and structures of authority, adapting rather than overturning them (in the process perhaps forgoing the sweeter fruits of freedom, individuality, equality and ultimately for a while even democracy) so as to minimise consumption, dissent or whatever might reduce or obstruct the growth of capital, industrial/military might or related economic-political structures or organisations. Like other major capitalist powers, it did acquire colonies and semi-colonies and, for historical and cultural reasons perhaps, built a more oppressive reputation based on both image and reality.

To most of the rest of Asia, southern Asia as I call it, from Iran to Indonesia, Philippines (and even, for our purpose, Korea), this option was no longer available. As can be seen after the dissolution of the Soviet Union - what was known to all knowledgeable persons not shutting their eyes and ears to facts except to those particularly sympathetic to the socialist endeavour, including the present author - most of Asian USSR also fell into this category even as much linguistic, cultural and economic development in these regions, now countries, is undeniable.

VARIETIES OF COLONIAL EXPERIENCE

Early colonialism tended either to assimilate - like the Portuguese who in Goa (now part of India) spread both their language and faith and even intermarried, as did the Spanish in the Philippines - or like the Dutch in Java, confine themselves to extraction and plantation and deal rather distantly with the natives. The former model implied considerable possibilities for educational activity, the latter left little of that when it left in the 1940s. Assimilation was a matter of ideology with French colonialism and cultural conviction where, as in most of Indo-China, many citizens studied like the Frenchmen in France. Even as indigenous schooling persisted, there were French pattern schools in Indo-China and, even more, many Vietnamese among others getting higher education in France. The British who ended up with the largest empire (the sun never

set on it, they said) essentially followed a pragmatic policy under the broadly proclaimed ideology of letting be, pursuing economic and military interests, now permitting old practices to continue (Persian remained the language of the judiciary in Bengal until the 1830s; local functionaries continued in hereditary offices in revenue administration; old practices, old schooling, literacy and accounting continued to receive encouragement until much later in the century, and so on), now assertively proclaiming the supremacy of western ideas, culture and language (of course English). Over time, large varieties of indigenous schooling and higher learning continued to be practised and even found encouragement, in limited though declining measure, through official employment policies. But essentially, the dominance of the English language in all spheres of life; development of an intelligentsia bound through language and culture as well as economic interests and interests in dominance over the subalterns of their own society; promotion of 'English model' anglo-vernacular schooling and universities, were the outcome, even as different British colonies differed in specific details, major as well as minor. Thus in Ceylon, now Sri Lanka, they developed little higher education (and considerable lower education, growing as it did from the prevailing Buddhist practice). The lone university college founded around the beginning of this century accounted for a small fraction of the Sri Lankans (Sinhala as well as Tamil) with higher education, mostly abroad. The flourishing indigenous higher learning, medical as well as general, continued after independence, giving rise to a new political intelligentsia and of course Sinhala language universities. By contrast, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan (then with until 1900 also Burma, now Myanmar, in the Indian empire) acquired a similar university pattern to that of London 1850, an affiliating, purely examining framework neutral between denominations in terms of religious instruction and devoid of a research function. This all fitted in very well with the social and administrative scheme under which the empire worked in India. The old literati, some new subordinate trading classes, and landlord type of associates and agents took enthusiastically to English education, including later university education after some hesitation and debate about its cultural content and the linguistic medium.

Sri Lanka, as with most of Africa perhaps because of less pressure for a university, got early in this century a university college associated with London - basically a teaching entity with aspirations to high academic standards and with provisions for research, selective admissions and considerable residence facilities. It was thus quite different

from the rest of south Asia. This also meant considerable higher education of Ceylonese abroad and soon after independence, the rise of Sinhala universities and an indigenous and indigenist political intelligentsia. Over time it did not prove possible to sustain higher learning without English because of socio-political pressures, viz, western cultural dominance and the desire for quick social mobility of the rising new lower and other middle classes by remedying technical weaknesses, which in turn accounts for its different political history from, say, China and Japan. This is a sequence common to most of Asia with the possible exception of Korea and Taiwan, an illustration of the broader theme of this contribution, viz, the lasting after-effects of colonialism.

Philippines appears to have had a similar experience with English under US domination; it also acquired an American style decentralised institutional structure. It was for historical reasons that a much more culturally proselytising - one could possibly call it aggressive and self-righteous - orientation developed, as was the case even in the brief post-second world war occupation of Japan. This was productive of a much more pedagogic and structural imprint, possibly down to the 'barrio' school. It requires to be clarified how much land reform and transformation of rural social structure took place and with how much impact on rural schooling. It is known for instance for parts of India that where more distribution of land rights to the actual cultivator took place, there was a greater spread of elementary schooling and less of higher English education. The penetration of the curriculum by new ideas and cultural influences was determined by a more complex interplay of property, hegemony and culture and language than there is space to discuss here.

In almost all the colonies little new indigenous or basic industrialisation took place. Some was stoked by the economic interests of the ruling power. The emergence of technical and professional education was correspondingly minor, compounded by the desire on the part of the colonial power to employ expatriate technical personnel, to use half-caste mixed race children, or even to build institutions at 'home', as in the case of the Royal Indian Engineering College at Coopers Hill in UK, on the plea that it would serve the needs of other colonies as well. The influence of science was low and even the much noted 'reluctance' of Indian youth to dirty their hands and take to industrial training for cultural and prestige reasons often was really accounted for by rational economic sense, in that the jobs were few, low-paying and dead-end.

The Korean experience of colonial education appears to have been different in

many ways and with quite different consequences, some accounted for by the second world war and some by the generally top-down, even authoritarian tenor of Japan's own modernisation internally and the characteristics of Japanese colonialism. The total imposition of Japanese language and culture and the prohibition of the indigenous produced a resentment which presumably accounts for the success of a former colony in resuscitating its own language and culture as the main medium of all its education, even as it adopted modern western-style education in universities and technical institutions. Of course, the clash of two imperialisms, Japanese and the liberating allies, also has to be noted. The strength of a long and rich cultural tradition and history of technology and science has had its contribution to make both to military as well as to cultural resistance to hostile occupation, as much as to revival in technology, science and education after independence.

It is useful at this point to look at indigenous elementary instruction and other learning with a little more attention. Japan had its 'terakoya' schools and their successors which the Tokugawa rulers, their successors the Meiji emperors, and the new capitalist industrial regime used as a basis for a universal elementary education system, followed by a graded series of technical and secondary schools and topped by the system of national (then imperial) universities. Japan has always stressed the importance of this universalisation as a basis of its industrial and other strengths, though this has to be viewed in conjunction with other political and related factors noticed earlier. Comparable matters in other countries have varied aspects. In China, it is the central pull of the examination system leading to different levels of bureaucracy which acted as a major trigger for mass education. Possibly the fact that the script was difficult was a negative factor confining learning to smaller numbers. The fact that it was uniform all over notwithstanding differing languages and dialects in various parts of the country helped to unify it in a manner in which India for example was not, making it perhaps easier, in conjunction with larger factors, for the English to come and fill the role of unifier. (Sanskrit, it is claimed, did this for the brahmin intelligentsia in the distant past, as did Persian and Arabic later for mostly Muslim clerics or even commoners through Urdu using its script.) The brief but substantial point about 'mass' or 'elementary' instruction is that there were so many different systems even within the same country, each related to functional purposes or use and not necessarily, in fact not generally, performing the function of preparation for higher learning. Thus instruction for trading or agricultural accounts used also by revenue

collecting officials for bureaucratic or judicial functions were in different scripts for different social groups, representing as they did the contemporary system of social stratification and segregation. Possibly the existence of caste society among Hindus led to a more severe incidence of this in India. The other major feature of indigenous elementary instruction is that it was not only somewhat vocationally oriented, even as it contained cultural/religious elements, but was also brief, lasting two to three years, and had to be followed up by further learning on the job - in the family business, in the state function of revenue collection, etc. In India the spread of such instruction appears to have been of the order of 25 to 33 per cent of the children of the relevant age, which led Gandhi to assert that India had become less literate under British rule than it was before, and Philip Hartog to contradict him. Possibly Burma, Ceylon and other Buddhist countries had much more schooling because of the enjoinder in Buddhism in favour of knowledge for liberation and of the operationalisation of this by the Buddhist clergy through organised 'sanghas' and 'pirivenas' and similar institutions in which the priest carried out instruction as part of religious duty. Islam ordained a similar obligation, but this appears in most countries to have been met in a somewhat less thorough manner. The little child recited the first verses. Memorisation and recitation have been common phenomena in all these cases. The absence of printed books obviously necessitated this and learning thus was often first 'bemani' (without meaning) and then 'bamani' (with comprehension). Writing would often precede reading, perhaps to copy a reading so that it can be read when the teacher or the original is not available, or perhaps because it led to the formation of habits, some manual dexterity and was a device for the better recognition of writing. To return to the matter of universality of elementary instruction, possibly the more democratic and inclusive ideology of Buddhism and Islam led to more of it than in caste-based and segregated Hindu society. Some historians of European literacy (e.g. in Scandinavia) also attribute this to the necessity of signatures in the marriage register - in this author's view a not very substantial issue. Although differences arising from faith and social structure matter, it is the imperatives of an industrial commercial economy with its requirements of skill, the needs of citizenship in the modern state or living in new urban environments or, as argued by educational historians of the revisionist school, of socialising the masses into the ideology of obedience and subordination in a centralised or authoritarian state, or participation in a more open egalitarian democratic one, which lead to

education for all (limited again by the capacity of the citizen to use it - primarily adequate nutrition and the existence of facilities).

The higher learning in 'madrasas', 'pathshalas', 'tols' or other comparable Buddhist, Confucian or other varieties had much religious and some worldly and scientific content. It would be interesting to note that classical Hindu learning in India was by this time carried on through students congregating round a teacher with a particular speciality as his forte, moving on to others for other specialities. There were thus no universities or institutes but towns where large numbers of specialist teachers lived and functioned. In the getting together of these tols and in learned gatherings for disputation, etc, one did notice a community of scholars, and the common texts they relied upon were a source of uniformity and continuity. There was thus no system of education as we know it today with institutions of different levels from primary to higher, each leading to the other, but actually places of instruction unified in this manner for each level which remained more or less distinct for different levels, catering as they did to differing requirements and different social classes or groups.

SOME SOCIO-POLITICAL DIMENSIONS

The educational-cultural varieties of the Asian experience of the past couple of centuries, until in the mid-20th century most Asian countries burst into an independence-revolution-socialist processes and a thrust towards autonomous industrial/economic and political/military development, requires to be set against certain socio-political parameters, in addition to those that are generally noticed.

First, political sovereignty was accompanied by linguistic independence and autonomy - using the language of the country and not a foreign language so as to open the possibility of all knowledge and related positions and skills to all the people, in principle. With almost the sole exception of Japan and, after the revolution, China, no major country enjoyed these fully. China's sovereignty was nibbled away at all ends during the 19th and early 20th centuries and a weak central authority had existed then. Most other countries even when formally independent functioned under the overlordship if not virtual suzerainty of one or the other power. The use in trade and at least some governmental work of the language of this power; the dissemination of and adoption of its ways of life, language and culture by at least some of the elite; the spread of its -impact down the line in the educational process and structure up to a certain point; the rupture between this and the mass education network and the gradual

deprivation of the masses of access to the newest advances in technical and scientific fields and related phenomena, characterised the social-educational scene. The new elites were often from parts of the old, e.g., the brahmins and kayasths and similar caste groupings in most of India (including today's Pakistan and Bangladesh). Indigenous learning did continue even at higher levels to certain extent. But illustrative of the situation was the case of the Oriental Branch of Government College at Lahore, where the children even of pundits and maulvis and of course many landlord and trading families came to study not in the Sanskrit or Persian or Arabic branch but in the English or Anglo-vernacular.

There was also some turnaround in the sense that some children from poorer or 'lower' order families would also take to western education and rise into the elite, some of these being from among converts to Christianity or half-caste mixed race groups. Of course, colonial powers were generally careful, if not also discreet, in not antagonising local society and elites by any excessive enthusiasm for proselytisation or supersession of older upper groups by encouraging too rapid or widespread mobility from lower caste or socio-economic groups through education or employment. Thus, in India traditional village accountants or similar functionaries were appointed on a hereditary basis, and the imposition of an educational qualification came late in the 19th century, and open competition even later. Meanwhile the language and methods of the older law or revenue administration were continued and changed only gradually, even as standardised books prepared by government were sought to be encouraged in indigenous places of instruction gradually through monetary rewards, inspection and examinations [Shukla 1959]. The co-option and reorientation of the more recalcitrantly non-westernising elites was sought to be secured through special schools for chiefs, 'public' schools, etc.

On a broad view, most colonial societies acquired through these means a substantial bureaucracy and a small professional class of lawyers, doctors and other professionals - a development largely out of the old literati and larger in countries where there was a centralised administration and a large indigenous base of learning. Generally, where Islam was a major religion, either on account of the greater commitment Islam evoked or the exigencies of social structure, such development was much smaller - e.g., Iran, Malaysia, and Indonesia, though other factors were also at work (e.g., a plantation economy requiring less administration).

The development of liberal or Marxist thought has been a major, possibly partly unintended, consequence contributing to the

development of democratic and socialist movements, which of course also had original indigenous bases in the class/economic struggles of the peasantry and other exploited classes, but which in many cases acquired an ideology or theory from these sources. In China's case, Mao indigenised theory altogether after the earlier more conventional Marxists had not succeeded. On the other hand, in Vietnam the influence of trench Marxism guided the revolution even as Ho Chi Minn adapted class struggle and theory. A greater reliance on intellectual thought and elite ideas and top downwards dissemination has characterised Vietnamese history (possibly on account of the centralisation of French colonialism and French ideas) compared to China, where no direct imperial rule came about and the indigenous revolution even gave birth to the Cultural Revolution, however shortlived it might have been. It could be argued, though not uncontestedly, that the Cultural Revolution gave expression to the 'little' rather than the 'great' elements in indigenous tradition, and that the social structure was broadened and democratised before it had its inevitable(?) demise [Shukla 1975].

We have noticed that not only did the spread of ideas of freedom, nationalism, democracy, etc., alongside the spread of education contribute to the development of nationalist movements, but they overthrew the very imperial powers which helped spread them though, of course, the freedom movement would have come even without western education. One other phenomenon has been noticed - the disaffection of unemployed youth which has fuelled these movements. Protest continues to be associated with education, youth and unemployment even after national independence and contributes to the development of democracy and the overthrow of dictatorial regimes. This is a continuing association and is seen as dysfunctional today, leading to calls for limitation of education in line with employment opportunities which are made even today in many Asian countries. The differing views on expansion of education in different periods and by different viewers can be noticed. It is also the case that expansion of education gets associated with brain drain or even foreign exchange earnings on a substantial scale today, as before. The relationship is complex and varied, to elaborate upon which space is not available here.

Another aspect of the development of education has been the emergence of new self concepts, new attitudes to community or to the worth of the individual, matters which again require detailed case by case discussion. But a broad shift of ideas in this matter contributing to socio-political changes can be posited [Shukla 1983a].

It is also noticed in many countries - there has been special recognition of this in India recently - that education spread among the upper reaches of the traditional hierarchy of wealth, power and caste. Thus, the need to remove educational and related backwardness was recognised even in the Indian Constitution in 1950. Other inequalities of backward castes, minority communities and women are now being noticed and pressed in ever greater measure. The spread of education adds to the otherwise natural protest against inequalities and also at times to much social unrest, for example inter-ethnic differences as between more advanced minorities (Tamils in Sri Lanka and Indians and Chinese in Malaysia) as against ethnic majorities (Sinhala and 'bhumiputra' Malays, respectively). Quotas, resort to indigenous language policies, etc., seek to remedy these inter-ethnic inequalities, measures which are perceived as injustice to individuals from 'advanced' communities. With the decline of the older Marxist/liberal paradigm in which class and economic status were seen as primary divisions and also desirable, the growth and consolidation of ethnic identities, often cutting across or even minimising/obliterating class/economic differentiations is the pattern of educational and social response to the changing older reality. It has its counterpart in the identity/ideology realm as well. Thus we see the emergence not of a common human future with broad similarities all over the world as the liberal, Marxist or modernisation paradigms had visualised, but ethnicity, diversity of values and identity ('Indianness', like 'negritude' in another continent) or even mystical supra- or para-material concerns as typified by the cult cultures spreading all over. This happens with the most modern technological resources provided by science. All this coexists, too, with a substantial proportion of the population living below subsistence level in the grip of illiteracy in some parts of the continent - a phenomenon which might get accentuated, not reduced, according to some of the gloomier projections of trends resulting from accelerating ongoing reforms in Asian economies.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

It was in the nature of socio-political and cultural matters for the discussion of the colonial past to move imperceptibly into the present and the future. We turn to more earthly issues of science and technology in which two ideas not very generally recognised follow. The widely recognised growth of technical (and professional) education in Asian countries accompanying the western impact, including some modernisation and intensification of agriculture and plantation techniques and the

need for prevention of epidemics and disease, is the subject of some controversy. Many economic historians of India have argued the 'deindustrialisation' thesis, i.e., the proportion of the population engaged in industry actually declined with the destruction of traditional small-scale industry and the increase in the pressure on land of people without other work. This suggests that there was much less technical education than normal development should have triggered. Further, as I have shown, sometimes the empire preferred to train its personnel back home even for the colonies, e.g., at the Royal Indian Engineering College at Coopers Hill in UK in the 1970s, instead of expanding facilities in India for the expansion of public works, railways, etc. Often for technical training half-caste or convert children would be preferred, further limiting the incidence of technical and professional education among the bulk of the people.

A more fundamental consideration is that the entire new technology which was developed in Europe was on the base of indigenous ideas and technique and incorporated the traditional artisan-technician along with his skills into the new large-scale industrial population and structure. When the same technology is transplanted to Asian societies, most of the older indigenous assets of skill and manpower are bypassed. Features of traditional social structure - e.g., caste in India where skill is not only inherited but the ban on mixing of castes in marriage or in occupation — meant a more inseparable divide between the manual and the intellectual. It was by the alliance of the two that modern technology made advances in the west, while their separation further handicapped the growth of a modern technological labour force in India. It is not that, as in the case of Japan, this could not have happened. Most Asian countries possessed indigenous scientific and technological resources which, given a more unimpeded course of events would have modernised along their chosen trajectory, but the impact of an extractive colonialism did not allow it. It is possible, if apparently simplistic, to extrapolate this or a similar schism or break to the sphere of values or culture. But it does appear plausible that while the spread of irrationality and mystic modes is a product of alienation of modern society in the west too, this has been further enlarged or accentuated in Asia by the added burden of living with the tension which arises from the demands of reconciling or moving from the traditional and into the modern, the indigenous to the western - a double burden intensified all the more by the rapid spread of information and communication technology and projection and dissemination of images and messages

from anywhere to anywhere. This makes both the task and accomplishments of education more problematic.

AFTER THE 1950s

Some of the issues now arising have already been anticipated in part. But before the present state was reached, many problematic questions have been and are still being negotiated in Asia. Most Asian societies have sought to pull the educational system up by its bootstraps, as it were. The educational process, which is essentially reproductive - i.e., it can create in its own image - is called upon to help create something new, to change the genetic imprint [Rudolphs 1972], to break the built-in tendency towards inertia [Shukla 1967], which we notice now. The coming up of new rulers, new elites and the growth of new economies, industry and media of communication has introduced factors for change. But essentially some structural and processual characteristics of an educational system - its institutions, pupils, community expectations, educational mores - remain the same and persist even after substantial social or political changes. Authority in school, the grip of examinations, the habits of an affiliating system, etc., persist even when changes of curriculum, teacher-training or institutional devices such as 'autonomous college' or 'deemed university' are resorted to.

After conceding this basic caveat, one can note that political democratisation and social mobility have characterised many Asian societies in the last four to five decades, and that the entry of new sections into education and the ascent of new rulers in society with new aspirations towards industrialisation, economic growth, and equalisation, at least

at the level of social and political rhetoric, have influenced education. This is visible in the wide diversity in the quality of schooling available in many societies, reflecting wide diversities in wealth and power at the same time that expansion pressures similar education, special provisions through quotas, scholarships, etc., for the less privileged, rural lower caste and similar groups. The stress on science and technology education has led to its expansion, but on account of the even greater pressure for expansion in general, the proportion of science-technology has not risen. Needs of the economy are met, even export of trained manpower takes place, sometimes at the expense of domestic needs of people (for instance, doctors in the countryside), but taken as a whole the character of the intelligentsia has only partially been modernised. In recent decades the spread of management and service occupations in the economy has led to a trend toward higher compensation and a move in the direction of education and training, particularly in pure science. The research base of most Asian economies is weak and is not getting strengthened on account of the trends of liberalisation of the economy and the ideology of capitalism and the market as against state regulation (or socialism in the past) in the political arena as well. Of course, the more successful Asian economies have combined the use of state and capitalist production. In these, the situation of science-technology education may be more secure. The situation on China and possibly Korea and Taiwan, notwithstanding differing ideologies, might in this respect not be very different from one on another. China's differences with India, with a different political system, are marked.

Again, with all the rhetoric of equality and freedom, the inability of India and many other Asian states to provide primary education to *all* children and literacy to *all* citizens led to a search for solutions, for example, to the problem of locating and socialising *some* part of the available pool of talent. For the less than 50 per cent of school age children who reach grade five, the 'navodaya vidyalayas' - good residential schools of secondary level - were developed, one in each district, to teach the best by competitive entry, as culture-free as possible and with reservation quotas for rural, tribal and scheduled caste (ex-untouchable) children. Those admitted still come from middle class backgrounds to a large extent, indicating that very large proportions had mothers with a primary education in a country where, as noted earlier, half the children do not reach grade five. Problems of equalisation of educational opportunity in a grossly unequal society could not be illustrated better - a situation characterising most Asian countries, varying in degree with the severity of real poverty and hunger, the level of average national income, and the effort and commitment of government to make provision for good schooling and adequate nutrition, without which the prospects of a permanently half-illiterate, ill-educated society loom large [Shukla 1975].

There has been vast expansion of education all levels in all the countries. Growth of vocational and technical education commensurate with the needs of industry and the economy and of secondary and higher education to meet the needs of general manpower and of fulfilling aspirations to status and social equality and political power generally in excess of manpower requirements, the growth and diversification of the higher education and research system within and outside the formal university network in market-based training workshops and in industry and privately reported research.

corresponding to the growth of, first, national, and now ethnic, pluralistic consciousness of identity, demands for *Dual* uniformity and independence from *mial* influence followed by plurality of *icula* or management of schools, support *ire*-existing indigenous institutions, particularly 'madrasas' among Muslims, had *m*. Transition to modernity and beyond, *il* scientists should recognise, is not to *3ng* any one road, nor would modernity form in all respects. A reflection of *i* found in education in more than one. The demands of ethnic identity and its conflict often with modernity's urgency, freedom, and individuality. The of women, the position of those lower in the traditional social structure

(e.g., caste), are all at issue here. Feminist and civil rights movements and the struggles of submerged groups (tribals, lower caste people in India and comparable groups elsewhere) call for the revision of syllabi and the organisation and distribution of education, to which education and the state respond only partially.

The growth of education demanded by all these modern phenomena calls for more money, upwards of 6 percent of GNP, which most southern Asian states are not spending. In the current climate of liberalisation and the market, and in these poor countries with low monetisation and the entrenched political power of prosperous groups, even in the context of ballot box democracy, the public exchequer is, generally speaking, unable to spend. Privatisation and separate schools for the well-off are being resorted to in increasing measure, with the English/non-English distinction tending to coincide with the private/public management dichotomy. A divided system leading to an even more divided society appears inevitable.

Finally we come to socio-pedagogic issues of the transition. Old authoritarian societies went with like pedagogy. Democratic, open or even other modern technological societies call for progressive child-centred pedagogy (which is obstructed by the inertia to which reference has been made earlier), as also issues related to gender and class/caste. However, fundamentally modern societies call for new kinds of (hu)mans in terms of both personality and cognition. Fast-moving life calls for new capacities of adjustment and coping. New cognitive tools (e.g., computer and the satellite and TV screen call) for ability or 'intelligence', partly of the same kind and partly of new kinds. Within the same society human beings of these various kinds will live together, and the possibilities of mobility and empowerment in a democracy and through education could call for the development of potential in personality and cognitive terms of many kinds in the same person at varying stages or points in life. Extrapolating from the personality-culture symbiosis and interaction which anthropologists have recognised for long but which sociologists and political scientists have tended to ignore and educationists have generally not been aware of, one can see that the socio-pedagogic tasks of nurturing new personalities and cognitive capacities is on the agenda. This has implications for class and school structures and processes. Visualising this task in explicit theoretical terms has not ever begun in an Asian idiom, though some Asian societies have formulated pragmatic responses or ones in terms of political or religious/ideological theory. This theoretical endeavour in education has to commence so as to cope with the computer, with low-skill

tasks of traditional societies and the transcendental categories of indigenous contemplation still prevalent in much of Asia. Mapping out the territory, such as Baveja (1995) has attempted in the area of cognitive ability and development, are illustrative of the building blocks of which or through responses to which will emerge the edifice of pedagogical theorisation and practice for the wide ranging transformation, and the broad and deep range, or divide, as it might turn out, of conditions and potential in Asian societies.

We conclude with this kind of statement of agenda rather than either a detailed specification of ongoing processes or particular solutions. The former is too large for a concluding section of a paper. It merits many contributions perhaps in yet another effort. The latter is a task whose performance is yet to commence. It will involve many other related exercises such as a closer scrutiny of the class struggles in these societies, their struggle to defend themselves and their identities in the wake of domination of international capital and its companion culture, the great language tussle with English gradually but inevitably asserting its dominance, even as spheres of autonomy are preserved primarily by Chinese and Japanese, the bitter student struggles in many countries which have upheld the values of democracy, autonomy and independence even as they appeared, in the short run, to be disruptive of ongoing educational endeavours, and so on. Education in its broadest socio-political involvements is yet to be studied properly in our continent.

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