

EduInspire-An International E-Journal

An International Peer Reviewed and Referred Journal

Council for Teacher Education

(CTE, Gujarat Chapter)

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**Challenges for Education in Knowledge Society: *Globe Issues in Education*****Mr. Chetankumar Sumanbhi Patel**

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Abstract

We are well known that we live in a world of crisis, in a knowledge society, and in an era, in which time is fluid, nothing lasts, everything changes and is unstable. Education has been understood as preparation for life, as personal realization, and as an essential element in progress and social change, in accordance with changing needs. In this paper the author tries to discuss the characteristics of our current society, need for the education, and reformulation of higher education.

Keywords: Global, Issues, Challenge, Education, Knowledge Society

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Introduction:

Our imperfect world is advancing relentlessly towards uncertain future scenarios, and we must try to redirect it towards sustainability, that is, towards a new way of doing things in order to improve our environment while at the same time achieving justice, social equality and economic stability. However change is impossible without learning, just as learning is impossible without change. In the text that follows, I will analyze the need for a new form of education in today's society and identify the specific challenges that higher education faces.

Characteristics of our Current Society

We live in a world in crisis, in a knowledge society, and in an era in which time is fluid, nothing lasts, everything changes and is unstable.

The diverse and heterogeneous society of the new millennium is characterized by a series of internal crises in the welfare state: the social crisis, the environmental crisis and unsustainable practices, the crisis of states, the threat posed by globalization, and finally, the crisis of democracy. The consequences of these crises include the exacerbation of social and economic inequality; the emergence of a global form of planetary management with new decision-making centers that have undermined the decision-making power of individuals and states; and citizens' loss of confidence in the democratic system due to the perception that political decisions are distant and difficult to influence.

When new forms of knowledge and symbolization qualitatively impregnate all basic aspects of a society, or when a society's structures and processes for reproducing itself are so penetrated by knowledge-dependent operations that information creation operations, symbolic analysis and expert systems are more important than other factors of production, then we're talking about the knowledge society (Inn rarity, 2010). The major challenge facing a

knowledge society is the generation of collective intelligence: society's intelligence as a whole is more important than just having a society composed of multiple individual intelligences.

Bertman (1998) described life in today's society as a "nowist culture" and a "hurried culture", because we place more importance on brand-new, high-impact things than on those which require exploration. According to Bauman (2007), we have gone from linear time to pointillist time: what matters is the moment, and our identities are continually being built and modified.

The Need for a New Education

In the beginning, education and the ideals it embodied aspired to create a "perfect" citizenry. Later, the objective shifted to ensuring that citizens were well-trained, and more recently it shifted once again to the awakening of the critical spirit. Today, the ideal is creativity: the capacity to learn and a lifelong willingness to face new things and modify learned expectations accordingly; there can be no learning without re-learning, without the revision that must be undertaken when we realize the weakness of what we thought we knew. In a knowledge society, education is the capacity to be creative in an environment of particular uncertainty, the capacity to properly manage the cognitive dissonance that gives rise to our failure to comprehend reality (Inn rarity, 2010). Therefore, in the world of liquid modernity, we must move away from sporadic education and towards lifelong learning. This entails overcoming security-driven resistance: the pillars to which we cling because they lend us a sense of security: a mistake in a world filled with insecurities and ephemeral validities.

Conventionally, education has been understood as preparation for life, as personal realization, and as an essential element in progress and social change, in accordance with changing needs (Chitty, 2002). Orr (2004) declares that if certain precautions are not taken, education may equip people to become "more effective vandals of the earth". He describes education of the sort we have seen thus far as a possible problem, and argues for a new type of education:

"More of the same kind of education will only compound our problems. This is not an argument for ignorance but rather a statement that the worth of education must now be measured against the standards of decency and human survival. It is not education, but education of a certain kind, that will save us."

(Orr, 2004: 8)

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“Education, in other words, can be a dangerous thing (...). It is time, I believe, for an educational ‘perestroika’, by which I mean a general rethinking of the process and substance of education at all levels, beginning with the admission that much of what has gone wrong with the world is the result of education that alienates us from life in the name of human domination, fragments instead of unifies, overemphasizes success and careers, separates feeling from intellect and the practical from the theoretical, and unleashes on the world minds ignorant of their own ignorance.”(Orr, 2004: 17)

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) has emerged as a paradigm for revising and reorienting today’s education. ESD consists of new forms of knowing and learning how to be human in a different way. This education aims to contribute to the sustainability of personal integrity, or in the words of Sterling (2001), to the integrity of the spirit, heart, head and hands. As argued by Dewey and the educational deconstructionists, it is often not enough to do things according to custom or habit, that is, to reproduce the existing social system. Instead, new answers must be sought. If we are to imagine new ways of living and acting, then we must be capable of assessing and bringing about social change, because successfully achieving sustainable development requires the following principles: being aware of the challenge, taking action voluntarily, assuming collective responsibility and forming a constructive partnership, and believing in the dignity of all human beings without exception. These principles for lasting human development, formulated at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, imply lessons that largely coincide with the four pillars of education set out in the *Delors Report*: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be. In the context of ESD, UNESCO (2008) suggested the inclusion of a fifth pillar: learning to transform oneself and society.

In a sense, education must lead to empowerment: through education, individuals should acquire the capacity to make decisions and act effectively in accordance with those decisions, and this in turn entails the ability to influence the rules of play through any of the available options. Thus, education consists in developing not only personal but also social qualities; it is the development of social conscience: awareness of how society works, knowledge of how it is structured, and a sense of the personal agency which allow action. This agency, however, at the same time restricts our interventions and makes it necessary to decide our personal degree of action. (Goldberg, 2009). Essentially, it opens a dialogue between the personal and the collective, between common and individual interests, between rights and obligations.

Reformulation of Higher Education

Einstein once said that no problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it. Current needs suggest that we must learn to view the world and therefore education, in a new way. Higher education has in the past demonstrated its crucial role in introducing change and progress in society and is today considered a key agent in educating new generations to build the future, but this does not exempt it from becoming the object of an internal reformulation.

According to the *World Declaration on Higher Education for the 21st Century* (1998), higher education is facing a number of important challenges at the international, national and institutional levels.

At the international level, there are two main challenges. The first is the role of supranational organizations such as UNESCO in advancing the prospection of trends and improvements, as well as in promoting networking and twinning programmes among institutions. The European Union (EC-JRC, 2010), for example, has stressed that higher education must change and adapt to economic and social needs, that institutional change is essential to educational innovation, and that information and communication technologies must form part of the teaching and learning process. The second international challenge is to encourage international cooperation between institutions in order to share knowledge across borders and facilitate collaboration, which, furthermore, represents an essential element for the construction of a planetary (Morin, 2009) and post-cosmopolitan citizenship (Dobson and Bell, 2006): the assumption of interdependence, “deterritorialisation”, participation, co-responsibility, and solidarity among all inhabitants of the planet.

States must provide the necessary financing so that universities can carry out their public-service function. States may also enact laws to ensure equality of access and strengthen the role of women in higher education and in society.

The following are the challenges faced by universities and other institutions of higher education:

- Changes in universities as institutions and at the level of internal organization. These changes should aim to improve the management of resources (human, economic, etc.) and be restructured to improve internal democracy. Universities must continue their mission

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to educate, train and carry out research through an approach characterized by ethics, autonomy, responsibility and anticipation.

- Changes in knowledge creation. Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches should be taken and non-scientific forms of knowledge should be explored.
- Changes in the educational model. New teaching/learning approaches that enable the development of critical and creative thinking should be integrated. The competencies common to all higher-education graduates should be determined and the corresponding expectations should be defined. In a knowledge society, higher education should transform us from disoriented projectiles into guided missiles: rockets capable of changing direction in flight, adapting to variable circumstances, and constantly course-correcting. The idea is to teach people to learn quickly as they go along, with the capacity to change their mind and even renounce previous decisions if necessary, without over-thinking or having regrets. Teaching and learning must be more active, connected to real life, and designed with students and their unique qualities in mind.
- Changes aimed at tapping the potential of information and communication technologies in the creation and dissemination of knowledge. The goal of such changes is to create what Prensky (2009) calls *digital wisdom*.
- Changes for social responsibility and knowledge transfer. The work of higher-education institutions must be relevant. What they do, and what is expected of them, must be seen as a service to society; their research must anticipate social needs; and the products of their research must be shared effectively with society through appropriate knowledge-transfer mechanisms.

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Paper Received : 23th March, 2018

Paper Reviewed : 15th April, 2018

Revised Paper Received : 29th April, 2018

Paper Published : 1st June, 2018

CTE