Public Education and Social Citizenship - Potentials and Pitfalls.

Paroma Ray

Mphil research scholar, University of Delhi, Delhi, India.

Corresponding Author: Proma Ray, **E-mail:** ray.iph@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

In this paper I aim to explore the ideological and practical connections between citizenship and public education. Drawing from Marshall's social citizenship I will attempt to explore the strands of ideas that facilitate or restrict the growth of social citizenship. The idea of global cosmopolitan citizenship and Deep citizenship will be of special interest to me and I shall attempt to locate the ethics behind them and how it ties up with public education. Questions of justice and equality and rights will be the ethical considerations that would form an undercurrent to my discussion on citizenship and education. Walzer, Agamben and Arendt's ideas will be important in order to understand these dimensions. I will also attempt to briefly trace the evolution of the concept of mass education and public education and look at both nationalizing as well as globalizing tendencies in its history. While I will be looking at the educational policies of India, I shall focus on only those aspects of education in India that fit the general frame of the debates happening globally. Lastly, I will focus on the specific question of movement of both citizens and non-citizens and its relationship with public education. Given that education takes place over a decade of someone's life informal movement has significant impact on the breaks and continuity in one's education and in one's perception of oneself as a member of a productive community that puts a premium value on education and educational qualifications while allowing for the exploitation of those without an education.

KEYWORDS

INTRODUCTION

In this paper I aim to explore the ideological and practical connections between citizenship and public education. Drawing from Marshall's social citizenship I will attempt to explore the strands of ideas that facilitate or restrict the growth of social citizenship. The idea of global cosmopolitan citizenship and Deep citizenship will be of special interest to me and I shall attempt to locate the ethics behind them and how it ties up with public education. Questions of justice and equality and rights will be the ethical considerations that would form an undercurrent to my discussion on citizenship and education. Walzer, Agamben and Arendt's ideas will be important in order to understand these dimensions. I will also attempt to briefly trace the evolution of the concept of mass education and public education and look at both nationalizing as well as globalizing tendencies in its history. While in this paper I am not going to focus on any particular country I will be paying more attention to the situation in India, but since my aim is not to go into the particulars of educational policy of any one nation, I shall focus on only those aspects of education in India that fit the general frame of the debates happening globally. Lastly, I will focus on the specific question of movement of both citizens and non-citizens and its relationship with public education. Given that education takes place over a decade of someone's life informal movement has significant impact on the breaks and continuity in one's education and in one's perception of oneself as a member of a productive community that puts a premium value on education and educational qualifications while allowing for the exploitation of those without an education.

CONCEPTUAL LINKAGES BETWEEN EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP.

Marshall's developmental conception of citizenship which looks at citizenship evolving in three phases namely- civil, political and social imply that the connection between citizenship and public education wouldn't have taken a strong form till the 20th century. For postcolonial states where citizenship didn't develop in stages in accordance with Marshall's categorization; education was seen as many as not simply a social aspect but also a precursor for the full enjoyment of both civic and political aspects of citizenship. This is not to say that the civil and political aspects of citizenship in the post-colonial world was pegged on education but there was a general assumption that for active participation in citizenship one needed a certain level of education. Educational projects and policies in these countries thus evolved with greater speed than it did in non-colonized countries since the former had to telescope development (eg. Adult education policy in India discussed in later sections).

Late 20th century also saw the emergence of the concept of global citizenship, multicultural citizenship and assimilationist citizenship. Assimilationists focused on the importance of learning the host nation's culture and language at the expense of one's native language and culture. Post late 1960s with the rise of civil rights movements in various parts of the world the focus shifted to ethnic revitalization. These

shifts showed themselves in education policies globally and Marshall's citizenship conception was expanded upon by theorists like Drachsler, Kallen etc who spoke of cultural democracy and cultural citizenship. The structural exclusion of many racial, ethnic and language groups alongside an increase in immigration led to the creation of polyethnic and multinational nation states alongside an increasing feeling of hostilities between old and new communities. This development has been noted by Benhabib, Castles, Kymlicka among others. The gap between expectation and reality became visible in educational institutions as well and in many developed countries protests for cultural rights and deeper inclusion came predominantly from students in educational institutions[1].

Many feel that the goals of national education are inconsistent with the citizen's roles in today's multinational and multi-ethnic scenario. Liberal assimilationist education that was pegged on the dual concept of hope (for a better life in the host country) and shame (towards the life left behind) are no longer sustainable and has been the cause of emotional scarring of generations, and a continued feeling among naturalized citizens that they would truly belong only after a complete erasure of their past selves.

Cosmopolitan education and community-based education have thrown up new modes of public education. Nussbaum and Appiah have tried to bridge the gap between the two modes by looking at local identities as key for cosmopolitanism. In Spheres of Justice, Walzer explores the connection between education and citizenship by looking at multiple traditions of citizens education namely basic schooling that's autonomous and equal, specialized schooling and finally the debates on associative and segregated schooling. He looks at the role of schools and schoolteachers in developing critical understanding, production and reproduction of social critics. Schools fill a space between family and society and also fill a time between infancy and adulthood hence its relative autonomy becomes important if it is to provide democratic education which can then form a base for active citizenship. Equal citizenship requires common schooling, but it doesn't require a uniform educational career. The autonomy of basic schooling is important for his idea of complex equality to work since power and status in education is often used to acquire goods and power that don't necessarily flow naturally from a higher degree, alternatively power and status in another sphere can lead to better educational opportunities when complex equality doesn't function (self-financing school structures is an example that allows the wealthy to bring better facilities to their children's schools) A balance between the goals of schooling in shaping citizens and the goals of schooling in providing training for a future career is a difficult one to strike with the former often being sacrificed for the latter.

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[1] Banks, J.A (2014), 'Diversity, Group Identity, and Citizenship Education in a Global Age' *The Journal of Education*, Vol 194 No. 3 PP. 1-12

This dilemma is tackled by Clarke who calls for transformative classrooms and schools that can help students to acquire the knowledge, values and skills needed to become 'deep citizens'. Following Clarke Banks came up with the following schema of citizenship that would help educators conceptualize ways to help students acquire deeper citizenship. The following is his scheme-

> "Legal citizenship - the most superficial level of citizenship in the typology, applies to citizens who are legal members of the nation- state and have certain rights and obligations to the state but do not participate in the political system in any meaningful ways.
>
> Minimal citizenship- applies to those who are legal citizens and vote in local and national elections for conventional and main- stream candidates and issues.
>
> Active citizenship- involves action beyond voting to actualize existing laws and conventions. Active citizens may participate in protest demonstrations or make public speeches regarding conventional issues and reforms. The actions of active citizens are designed to support and maintain - but not to challenge - existing social and political structures.
>
> Transformative citizenship- involves civic actions designed to actualize values and moral principles and ideals beyond those of existing laws and conventions. Transformative citizens take action to promote social justice even when their actions violate, challenge, or dismantle existing laws, conventions, or structures."

Digital storytelling is another form of supplementary education aimed at equipping students for a transformative global citizenship. The program focuses on four key aspects- political ideology, Social collectivity, Subjectivity and understanding of the self, and ethical praxis. Though the program is in an experimental stage cross a few schools in the UK, USA and Canada, such attempts at making education more grounded on multiethnic lived realities, is an interesting development.

Duties of the state towards non-citizens beyond the basic application of due process has also been a matter of debate. Since education for children is seen by many as fundamental and a denial of state education is seen as a grave violation, there has been a call for extending public educational facilities to non-citizens and even illegal migrants. Those who are opposed to this idea sees this as a drain on vital economic resources that could otherwise be used to provide education to legitimate citizens. Bosniak while talking about the impact that alienage has on people dwells on the question of distribution of social goods such as education. She traces various legal and judicial statements in the US which on one hand speaks of children as involuntary migrants and hence cannot be deprived of state education and other social goods but on the other hand there also exists legislation that make public professions report any suspected illegal migrants.

Conceptually all of this opens up some key matters of concern. The issue of education as a road to deeper citizenship, different approaches to justice and diversity within education, equality and social justice as end goals of education and finally the question of the non-citizen's claim to educational rights. None of these questions are new, since none of the matters at the core of these questions are new but with global shifts in perspective, conflicting expectations and realities, these questions take on a new dimension and urgency.

BRIEF HISTORY OF PUBLIC EDUCATION AND ITS LINKS TO CITIZENSHIP

The concept of standardized and systematic public education became extremely popular in the Enlightenment era, where freedom was to be attained through the constant accumulation of rational knowledge and combating public ignorance. The image of public education system and queries into the state of a nation's public education system as an index of its development has been undertaken by proponents situated across a wide temporal and spatial dimension. Ranging from the likes of Thomas Jefferson who saw public education as key in enabling the residents of colonial America to learn self-rule and effectively participate in the public sphere as independent citizens; the British colonizers who promoted public education in England to create better citizens while promoting a system of differently graded education system in the colonies with the intention of producing good subjects (Macaulay's minutes to education can be seen as a stark example of this policy); John Adam who ironically went on an international mission to Silesia to attend sessions on global exchanges on best educational practices, in order to create a deeper sense of national citizenship among Americans back home; Proponents of peace movements in the early 1800s who worked on public education of illiterate adults in order to foster national pride alongside respect for international actors and foreign countries- a more modern version of this can be found from the 1960s onwards with the creation of the International Baccalaureate Organization and the United World College of the Atlantic, the purpose of these two programs was to facilitate a cosmopolitan understanding of cultures in the face of increased cross national migration.[2]

With the rise of fascism across Europe, the role of education in creating a strong allegiance to one's nation became popular irrespective of the ethical ends to which the nation strove for excellence. Pedagogy, curriculum, structure, language of education all became tools that could be used in the service of the nation. Post-colonial struggles too saw a movement for creation and use of vernacular education in order to make legitimate demands for the creation of independent nations. While the links between nationalism and education especially public education has been looked at extensively, the

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[2] Factual information sourced from Reimers, F.M, (2013) "Education for Improvement: Citizenship in the Global Public Sphere" *Harvard International Review*, Vol 35, No, 1. pp. 56-61.

linkages between education and citizenship are often unexplored and sometimes stigmatized since historically educational qualification was used to exclude the large masses of people from the realm of citizenship. Even today invocation of educational qualifications are done to defend a lopsided accumulation of political power by the educated elite (examples of this can be seen where educational qualifications have been introduced as mandatory minimum for a citizen to run for panchayat elections in certain states in India).

Another aspect of education that plays a vital role in post-colonial states is adult education and adult literacy. Adult education in postcolonial India had a special role to play in structuring citizenship. While adult education during the conception of the constitution was neither a fundamental right, nor was it given a significant space within educational policy; it was nevertheless an important planning target. The first phase of adult education between 1947-64 was closely linked to the questions of becoming responsible citizens of a democratic state as well as productive participants in the nation's growth. In all the phases education policy for adults or unschooled youths shifted based on the shift in production priority. Thus, highlighting education as means to an end (the end being the production of productive citizens) rather than an end in itself. Accordingly, the second phase of development mid 1960s- mid 1970s focused on functional literacy and expansion of non-formal education to those without basic literacy. The third phase of public education in the post emergency period saw the rise of a neo-Gandhian form of education with a special emphasis on rural and mass education. Massive illiteracy was seen as a hindrance to popular participation in populist development project accordingly the National Adult Education Policy was formed[3]. This clearly shows that link between citizenship and education isn't merely about the ideological reproduction of the national society but also have material productive logic tying the concept of production with good citizenship.

Given the various dimensions of education and its relations to culture, production, belonging, no particular policy would be adequate in addressing the issues in their totality. Questions of mobility and citizenship is a small but important part of public education and in the next part I shall discuss some of the different elements of mobility and its connection to public education and citizenship.

CITIZENSHIP, MOBILITY AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

Legally educational status has no bearing on citizenship status in India but social, economic capital that is generated by educational qualifications can have significant impact on how citizenship is experienced by individuals and communities alike. In the presence of a graded educational system where quality of education is closely pegged to the price paid for the same, mobility patterns too mirror the asymmetry in education. While the uneducated migrate for low skill jobs and are seen as suspects

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[3]Phases based on the following work Patel, Ila (1996) 'International Review of Education ch 5- India' springer Vol 42 pp.75-96

often living the life of bare existence, having equal legal citizenship but often not able to exercise the same; those with some form of public education have better chances based on level and quality of education available to them and finally those with expensive private schooling experiences who get to enjoy not just national citizenship rights but also gets to make claims on a more cosmopolitan citizenship.

Links between education and citizenship go beyond civic training, matters are complicated when mobility is brought into the picture. Attempts at creating a national unity through education is juxtaposed against aspirations of students for higher mobility often beyond national borders, once a certain stage of education is achieved. Tensions between these various factors can be seen most clearly in the border state of Manipur. With the state focusing primarily on issues of security, central presence of the Indian state in Manipur's education sector is ideologically marginal despite Manipur having a density of public schools higher than the national average. Privatization of education in the border state has led to social and economic transformations especially in relation to people's identification as Indian citizens. Duncan McDuie-ra in his book "borderland City in New India"[4] speaks of some of the currents that link education with citizenship in Manipur. The Boom in private education, which is quickly becoming a norm, has led parents to sell off land to non-Manipuri Indians, development of semi urban areas around school clusters, entry of capital from outside and restructuring of social relations in the region. Such developments have led to clashes between four broad groups with their respective ideas of citizenship- the hill tribe groups that resent the sale of natural resources like pastoral land, forest land and wetlands to private development projects; group that don't identify with Indian citizenship and see aspirational mobility of students into mainland India as a threat; groups that want to use the private education sector as the most efficient way of integrating with mainland India; and groups that use education as a gateway to South east Asia and East Asia. This messy terrain contributes greatly to multiple competing conceptions of citizenships, often resulting in physical violence.

On a more pan national level, homelessness and temporary migration too is a major challenge for educational systems worldwide, this challenge is particularly relevant in India with a fairly high number of homeless families or families that travel without fixed residences not just between states but also within states. Given that registration in formal schools require some form of residential proof, the section of the population that doesn't have one are severely disadvantaged. Even with residential proof, families that travel for informal work eg, Travelling communities of self-employed iron workers wouldn't leave their children behind even if hostel facilities were available in schools[5]. This deficit of trust where parents would rather travel, often dangerously, with their children rather than allow them

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[4] McDui-ra, D (2016), "*Boderland City in New India*". Amsterdam University Press.

[5] While research on this aspect in India is low, data taken from Institute for Children, Poverty and Homelessness in the US suggests certain patterns of relationship between the homeless and the state machinery.

to enroll in residential programs reveal the difference between legal citizenship and active association of oneself as a citizen who deserve a protective environment to bring up their children. While these communities have their own government and their own nation state, they are still unable to exist as truly right bearing citizens. Banality of violence here continues despite having all those nation/citizenship-based identities that were supposed to protect them against the violation of their basic rights. In such a situation they are reduced to live in a constant state of exception, with communities with permanent residencies often looking upon them as suspicious squatters. Suggestions of quotas for the economically marginalized in private schools saw protests by parents who saw the very suggestion as an attack on their rights of providing their children with a 'sanitized' educational environment. The assumed rights of one group was thus used as a weapon to deny another group of the basic right to education. In Hannah Arendt's understanding the stateless person is also a non-person in the absence of legitimate legal or political status. " the rights of man, after all, had been defined as inalienable because they were supposed to be independent of all governments; but it turned out that the moment human beings lacked their own government and had to fall back upon their minimum rights, no authority was left to protect them and no institution was willing to guarantee them"[6] thus when right itself becomes pegged on particular sovereigns and institutions then can we talk of a constitutionalism (which imbibes a spirit of lawfulness within a community, which then becomes a backbone on which rights are propped up) that is universal and permanent? What happens when rights themselves becomes a way of determining who gets to live a certain kind of life and who doesn't whose humanity matters and whose doesn't? For Agamben human rights are not protections against sovereign power but are in themselves mechanisms of power and are bound up from their inception with the regulation and making of subjects. This then naturally complicates the issue of looking at public education as a right for the citizen.

The question of educational rights and access of refugees and aliens become significant. Bosniak points to the fact that many of citizenship's core attributes is not dependent of citizenship's formal status but are extended to individuals based on the fact of their personhood and national territorial presence. In such a case then can arguments be made to ensure that similar levels of education is extended to all despite the documents that they hold or do not hold? This is a significant challenge to the proponents of cosmopolitan education since the matter is not just about a shift in pedagogy but also about a significant shift in constituency.

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[6] (Arendt 1968)

CONCLUSION

Issues of public education for the most parts in developing, post-colonial countries are still being discussed at the stage of physical accessibility. The magnanimity of the task of providing education for all citizens and residents at no cost can be underestimated. However, the discussions on accessibility should go beyond the physical dimension and should aim not simply for markers of professional success but should be structured in a way that facilitates the development of transformational citizenship. Issues of global citizenship, social rights of non-citizens and refugees aren't simple matters of theoretical speculations but are a part of our daily reality whether we acknowledge it or not. A public policy on basic education that doesn't take into account this reality or applies strategies that removes this reality from the realm of public consciousness is bound to lead to disastrous effects if one is to believe that public education that fails to ground people and develop a sense of communal belonging can potentially lead to the rupturing of the nation's social fabric.

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