Education and Democracy in India

Nita Kumar
Caste, class, gender & religion
India: parliament
India: Democratic education
The Constitution of India

THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC and to secure to all its citizens
JUSTICE, social, economic and political
LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;
EQUALITY of status and of opportunity;
and to promote among them all
FRATERNITY ensuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the Nation;
IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949, do HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.
CASTE

B.R. Ambedkar, Head of the Constituent Assembly, maker of the Constitution of India
Common misconceptions about caste, corrected

• “You can never rise up in the social scale of caste.” No, you can, and this has been so throughout history.

• “Caste is the most damning hierarchy, from which there is no escape.” No. Economic class is more important, and to change your occupation and economic status is the easiest of several ways to ‘escape’ caste. Mobility is part of the story of caste.
Caste, continued

• “Caste” has been banned in the Indian Constitution. Wrong. “Caste-based discrimination” has been banned, except positively (cf the USA: racial discrimination is banned, not “race.”)

• “Caste is unique to India.” Yes, insofar as it is a ritual hierarchy, it is uniquely Indian. But if taken as simply a kind of hierarchy, it is similar to other hierarchies in the world, and as an education, one of the strongest.
Performers
CLASS

Education and Literacy

• Literacy rates increased from 18.3% in 1951 to 64.8% in 2001
• Faster growth in female literacy 14.9% compared to 11.7% in males in last decade
• Of the estimated population of 193 million in the age group of 6-14 years in 2001-02, nearly 82.2% were enrolled in schools
• Number of Children in school: 136 Million
• Number of out of school: 50 to 59 Million
India: illiteracy
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The citizens of India
Thomas Babington Macaulay
Indira, Rajiv and Sanjay Gandhi
GENDER: some facts

• India is a patriarchal society (like all others)
• Sons are more welcome than daughters, though daughters are certainly loved
• Mothers are worshipped
• Women have had separate spheres of work and have also participated in common spheres with men as active agents
THE GREATEST RELIGION IS LOVE
THE GREATEST LOVE IS MOTHER LOVE
Raja Rammohan Roy
1772-1834
RELIGION
Sir Syed Ahmad Khan
1817-1898
Rabindranath Tagore
1861-1941
Shantiniketan
Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi
1869-1948
A school, in the village