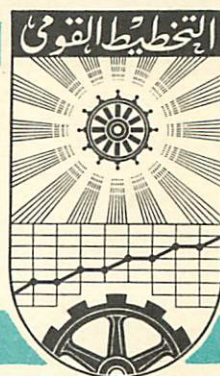


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SOME PROBLEMS OF EDUCATIONAL
PLANNING IN THE ARAB WORLD

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I feel I must begin by defining the terms of this title. I don't want to go into the meaning of the term problem, the term planning and the term educational planning ... etc. I only want to begin by saying that there must be two broad sets of problems. First the problems which face the educational planners as planners and those which face them as educators. In discussing these two sets of problems, I am not pretending I can encompass the whole field. The best title for this talk should be some problems as I see them.

The distinction between these two sets of problems as we have classified them in this present occasion is to some extent artificial because we are always dealing only with the human factor and aiming at maximising its output for the welfare of the society to which he belongs and also for his own benefit. That is why we cannot easily disentangle educational planning from social planning or from the overall national planning. It also accounts for the close interaction between planning in the education sector and planning in any other sector like that of Health, Industry or Agriculture. Every sector in society affects every other sector and is affected by it. This happens to the extent that you cannot distinguish between cause and effect nor between ends and means.

If we agree to this we arrive at the following conclusions:

First, Educational Planning should take place within the overall national planning. There must be a national body responsible for this overall national planning. For a country to establish such a body and to define its authority and responsibility there must be full readiness to do so. This question of readiness creates a number of very illusive problems.

Secondly, any social planning educational or otherwise must take into account factors which have four characteristics:

They are numerous , they are varied , they are varying and they are Intertwined . Ignorance may be attributed either to disease or poverty or both . Disease may be attributed either to ignorance or poverty or both . And poverty may either be attributed to ignorance or disease or both . One is apt to get some circular confusion in his thinking and be forced , if he does not give up in despair , to work out some plan the accuracy of which depends both on the planner and on the situational possibilities of planning .

To make ourselves clearer let us take the outcomes of the discovery of petrol in an Arab country whose basic economy was based on agriculture . The human ability native to the country is not prepared to handle the question of petrol . Large numbers of very skilled foreigners flock into the country to take out the petrol to ship it , to market it , to purify it and maybe to establish related industries . A number of auxiliary trades appear which are usually also occupied by foreigners . Prices go up . Farmers are attracted to leave farming for jobs which are less skilled but more paying . The farming ability tends to get lost for the country while the skilled ability necessary for the new situation is not acquired . New political and social complications begin to appear . Net income of the country may increase with an apparent progress in education but it is usually not in the direction which helps the native human resources to be closely wedded to the natural resources . People immigrate from rural to urban areas creating a vast number of problems on the horizontal level . They move also from one social class to another creating another great number of problems on the vertical level .

Here you get health problems , social problems , economic problems , legislative problems ... etc . and in order to understand phenomena you find yourself in front of a number of hypotheses . If you want to carry out a well designed study you do not test for a single rigid hypothesis but you have to select from a number of competing hypotheses comprising as we said factors which are numerous , varied , varying and interrelated . To come back to our first point we emphasise that when we pre-

problems for the educational planners as planners and others for them as educators we are really oversimplifying matters.

It is obvious that the second type of problems has been confronting us all along . We have always thought of problems , related for example to illiteracy and how to eradicate it. We looked at illiteracy as a stigma which has to be removed . We really tended to look at the ability to read and write as being more ornamental than useful. Egypt has been since the February Declaration very strong at abolishing illiteracy for the last forty years and inspite of all that has been expended we find that the progress made is not commensurate with the money and effort put in. In one Arab country the statistics tell us that 60 teachers are being used to teach 600 illiterates . That is to say one teacher for every 10 and even then we are not certain of the results .

Educators are also always thinking , for example , of examinations; whether they are necessary or not, whether they should be easier or more difficult, whether they should depend on memory or thinking ; theoretical or applied; inclusive or partial; optional or compulsory, long or short and so on . In fact it is even sometimes thought that examinations are too important and too sacred to be discussed . Examinations are at present being enthusiastically discussed in one Arab country. The University people think that the secondary certificate is an entry visa to the University . The logical conclusion to this is that everybody should therefore fail except those who are acceptable at the University . This means that the University is the only field open to those who finish their secondary education with success . This also means that those who succeed must not be more than one or two thousands per University . Failures will either repeat and create bottlenecks at the secondary level or will go out to life work with a sense of failure . Examinations thus treated instead of becoming a force for education turn out to be its very enemy. Apart from examinations educators are also thinking of the school syllabus, the time table, the school books, the homework, discipline, reward and punishment, obedience and rebellion. Leaving alone the pupil, they also

think of the teacher and how to teach him to teach. They think of the supervisor, the head teacher, the functionality of the building, the school meal etc. etc.

There are hundreds of such problems and educators have more recently extended their activities to study the educational ladder and its relation to both psychological and social qualities. A good deal has been done about the points at which the stem of the ladder branches off to some sort of specialisation.

Questions of organisation have also been occurring and recurring. In spite of all that has been said about centralisation and decentralisation there is always that centrifugal tension between those who work in central offices and those who work in the field. There is always tension between pure planners, pure administrators and the technical administrators. There are problems between planners and executors and between those who mediate between the two.

And therefore we do not only plan our education, we also plan our administration and therefore we get another two sets of problems; administration of planning and planning of administration.

Every plan has of course to be evaluated while being implemented. This brings in the three famous sets: planning, evaluation and implementation and everyone of them is brought forward at various levels. Examples of these are planning at the national level, at the governorate level and at the city level and planning for various sectors and subsectors.

Between administration of planning and planning itself as well as between evaluation of planning and planning of evaluation, many are puzzled at the exact relationship between them. And the question is should it be an integral relation or a coordinative relation. If the relation is integral there is the oneness of the two activities while if it is coordinative there is only a conjunctive relationship between the two.

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This very complicated picture makes it all the necessary that we must plan our education, we must also plan for planning . We must evaluate our plans and plan our evaluation . We must also implement our plans and plan their implementation . There is always the danger that one goes on planning for education and does not educate like the person who spends all his life trying to put his books in order but does not read. To fall into this danger is not entirely abnormal .

I am also prone on account of the nature of the subject to go off point from time to time and I have to exert an effort to bring myself back to it.

I may ask myself now the question why plan. We plan in order to know exactly what we are doing . The Arab countries have recently emancipated themselves from foreign rule. Since World War II this emancipation is Asia and Africa is progressing by leaps and bounds. All these countries are left with marked economic backwardness. The efficiency of the people is at its lowest and in order to raise the standard of living you have to raise their income, to raise their income you have to raise their productivity, to raise their productivity you have to raise their efficiency, to raise their efficiency you have to think of maximizing it at the individual and social levels and in order to do so you have to find out the human ability , discover it, enlarge upon it in its three dimensions of form, content and function.

In order to do so we begin by enthusiasm; by people who want action and people who want to study before action. We get people who want to act without studying and at the other end we get people who want to go on studying without acting.

It is the job of the educational planner to enhance the felt need for planning, as you understand it, in the minds of the public as well as the top authorities and legislators.

Through enthusiasm there was advancement of education in the Arab World during the last 10 or 12 years . But such advancement did not coincide with needs and was more out of proportion in some sections than in others.

It is true that the primary education has shown massive expansion. Taking the Arab countries as a whole it has more than doubled. As an example, the Seoudi Arabia primary school pupils in 61/62 are $4\frac{1}{2}$ times what they were in 51/52.

Although there is tremendous progress in the education of girls but their percentage to the total number in primary education is 12% which is low and the percentage of primary school pupils to the total pupil enrollment is 86%. This means that development is highly needed to bring about the balance between girls and boys education at the one hand and between the primary and post primary education at the other .

We also find that the primary school pupils in Syria in 61/62 are $3\frac{1}{2}$ times what they were in 44/45 and although primary girls education is developing at the same rate as that for the boys we find that girls in primary schools are only 29% of the total primary school population. It is thought that the coeducational character of schools in the Syrian village create some resistance with some parents against girls education .

Studying the increase in school building and teachers at the primary level in Syria we find it progressing at practically the same rate that of pupils.

If we also examine the percentage of pupils at every stage, to the total school population, we find 82% at the primary level 18% at the post primary level including 2% at the Higher education level. Still there is a lack of balance between education of boys and education of girls not only in these two countries but in the Arab World taken as a whole and only at the primary level but all along the educational ladder .: Girls

form about 25% of the total primary school population, about 20% of the total secondary school population and about 12% of the total University and higher education . The planner cannot start solving this problem without taking into full consideration both cultural, traditional aspects, economic questions, social conditions, resources, felt needs and aspirations . To go back again to the lack of balance that has to be restored between primary and post primary education we have seen that it is much less in one case than it is in another .

But it must be remembered that in order to make primary education available to all children of primary school age , post primary education in general and teacher training schools in particular have to be greatly encouraged and increased .

Let me take as an extreme example that of Algeria where 1½ million children of primary school age have to receive education. Thousands of French teachers, previously specially trained in France to teach in Algeria, have withdrawn and gone back after the independence. The present practice is that any adult who can barely read and write can potentially become a teacher . Emergency procedures are bound by their very nature to be only temporary . What Algeria needs in terms of manpower for primary education is educators to train teachers . Such educators have also to be prepared . I can immediately think now of missions of Algerian graduates to Arab countries for teachers colleges where they specialise in pre-service and inservice training of primary school teachers . One can think of establishing a number of higher training institutes in Algeria to train teacher trainers .

Here we may pause to find a serious problem facing the planners. acute social pressure demands primary education . Patient planning to prepare the teachers . More patient planning says prepare the trainers of these teachers . Going further we say prepare the trainers who train the trainers of these teachers . In the long run this is excellent but I can say that in any planning the emergency measures are more

appealing than long range plans. That is why the authorities in underdeveloped countries if they want to fulfil their mission they must manouvre their way somehow between the two .

There are also related to trainers of teacher trainers questions of how, when, where, how many, for how long, to what extent, for how much and so on and so forth for which a multitude of data is needed.

In connection with this problem I can also probably think of some similar solution for Yamen. Degrees of difficulty vary.

It is of course understood that the problem of teachers in general and for primary education in particular is not as simple as all that although what we have presented is already sufficiently complicated .

First teacher education is affected both by the general economy of the country and by the status of teachers . It is not easy to attract people to the teaching profession for example in Seoudi Arabia, in Libya or in Koweit. Petrol discovery has its polarising effects on manpower distribution .

If such difficulty is pronounced in a general way for general education it is more marked for certain areas like mathematics and physics and it is still more marked for the recruitment of teachers for technical education. This is true of the Arab countries taken as a whole but if we take UAR we find that according to the manpower study recently carried out, then UAR will be 900 mathematics teachers short of its needs in 1970. This is assuming that the present sources of teachers remain the same.

Our problem is not of course just finding the teacher but the right kind of teacher . The question resolves itself to attracting and selecting the good pupil teacher, giving him suitable training and employing him in such a way that he can be retained . If we can have answers to these questions regarding men teachers can we have parallel answers

regarding women teachers. The answers acquire different magnitudes as they are analysed along different dimensions, i.e. city versus village; Mathematics and natural science versus languages and human sciences, technical schools versus general schools.. etc. etc.

The difficulty is not only related to teacher training, recruitment and retention but it extends over the whole field of Higher and University Education. In the newly developing countries there is always serious lack of balance. Professional technical and highly educated people are very few. If under some illusion they seem too many in some cases it is only because the rate of education is quicker than the rate of development of work opportunities. The community functions are not able to assimilate manpower. It is like putting a bulk of rich food in the stomach of a newly born baby. It creates trouble. Yet we have to strengthen the community. So planning has to be manipulated in such a way as to provide the right human material at the right time. This is a stubborn problem. Again the enthusiasm in newly developing countries for education has created abnormal situations. A survey of students abroad for the whole of Africa and Asia has recently shown that 80% of them are studying arts and literature, 20% are studying science and technical subjects. If we go on in Egypt at the present rate we shall have in 1970 an excess of 4338 graduates of the faculties and a global shortage of over 3000 Engineers.

These figures are probably in need of some correction but in any case they can indicate to us that if a country defines its targets it can to some extent calculate the manpower it needs to achieve these targets.

The Arab countries are in need of expanding higher education without upsetting the educational pyramid. In higher education priority must be given to technology science and vocational education. In this connection must be mentioned that in any field we are also in need not only for trainers but primarily of trainers of trainers.

To mention the field of technical education the figures which we may quote are alarming. In Egypt for example technical to academic education in 1952 was 15:85. It is now beginning to exceed 25:75. There is great progress but we are far short of what we should be. Planned attempts have been made to raise vocational and technical education and to arrest the development of general secondary education. It must be said that public pressure is still encouraging academic education leading to so called white collar jobs. Again we come across the difficult task confronting the planner, i.e. to find out his way between social pressures and the realisation of social objectives towards social development.

The Sudan has recently given attention to technical education and has thus raised it in proportion to academic education from 6.3% in 1955/1956 to 9.8 % in 1961/1962. This means that 90.2 % are receiving academic education while the need for development is crying for reversing the proportion. In Lybia the percentage is 88 % and in Secoudi Arabia it is 92%.

But we may ask again here about the real social and economic need on the one hand as it is seen from above by the Architect of Society and as it is felt by the people.

For technical and vocational education to flourish it must be directly related to employment with good status prestige and worth while social security.

We must also remember the influences of past history in the Arab World. During the Turkish rule the high technical schools were only established for the Turks in Constantinople but vocational schools at the primary and secondary levels were established for orpheans and foundlings.

We have every evidence that foreign rule never really encouraged any form of technical , industrial, commercial or even agricultural education.

In order then to spread technical education in the Arab World we have to create the clean mental atmosphere for it, we have to enhance the receptivity of the people and we have to prove not only the need of the society for it but to make it attractive to individuals as far as status, prestige and security are concerned.

To my mind there is no other major way of creating respectability to manual activity. But I must reemphasise that this is a stubborn problem for the planner who while facing it falls between the needs for social and economic development and the attitudes of the individuals.

Taking manpower question in general we have seen that we are in need of figures to tell us about the manpower situation at present, the manpower situation say in the coming 10 years and the difference between the two. We also need to know what the educational and training institutions can provide during that time. We have also to calculate deaths, recruitments... etc. Doing all this we could arrive at planning for the education and training which could provide for the needs of the country.

All this looks very neat but we cannot plan unless we collect data and handle such data.

The main problems related to the question of mere data collecting in the Arab countries are:

1st. The quick political changes taking place, which result in change of leadership. Some form of stability is certainly needed to help crystallise policies within which targets are defined. If such stability is not reached then movements are either sporadic or liable to be controlled by some outside or strange force. In this case the need and trend for data collecting will change.

2ndly. There are also quick economic changes accompanied by the appearance of certain activities and disappearance of others. Examples of these are what happened in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia due to the

discovery of petroleum and what is happening now in Libya due to the same thing. Klaedoscopic changes are taking place in the total demographic pattern.

There are also questions of nomads which exist in almost every Arab country. In Jordan whose total population is 1.4 millions there are as many as 55,000. This is a real problem for the educational planners and some cooperative effort between Unesco and FAO has to be envisaged.

Then there are questions of communication which make the approach to the people in places like the Sudan extremely difficult for months.

There are a number of other questions related to ways of life and to beliefs, prejudice customs etc.

When it comes to professions, you find yourself standing again the difficulty of classification. Job classifications used in advanced countries do not at all fit in other countries. Every category may have its principle of classifications. With less advanced countries the question of specialisation almost disappears but it begins to appear as a necessity when planning for the future.

If all these factors make data collecting difficult yet it does not make it impossible. If the Swedes have attempted to estimate the number of fish in the Baltic sea and if a statistician can give a figure to the number of hairs on the head of a man who is not bald headed then we still have hope.

With manpower studies there are also of course the questions of the actual needs of the country, and the question of the felt needs. Such needs have to be clearly and deeply felt by both the people as well as the governments.

There are always differences as we have previously mentioned between actual needs and felt needs. The planning bodies see that the country is in need of technicians and machine operators while the average