In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Kind

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Political Socialization

Political socialization is both a formal and informal process of social and educative learning, by which political attitudes, skill, priorities and beliefs are intentionally and unintentionally absorbed by the individuals or citizens. Being a significant process, it orientates the people towards a particular type of political behavior, philosophy and ideology. At the same time, it causes stability or instability, continuity or change and strength or weakness in a political system, and in the government of the country. It determines the type of participation in politics and government by the people. It is, without any doubt, the political aspect of the general process of socialization which is always taking place in every society and culture.

Political learning begins early in family life, when the child is still young, when different treatment of the little boys and girls produces different political attitudes and behavior in them. Generally speaking, boys are expected to be active in politics, while girls are deliberately denied political orientation and participation by their parents and other people around them.

Class differences also produce differences in political attitudes and behavior. Rich stratum of the society expects that its members should learn political skills and the attitude of domination or superiority. On the other hand, the poor people, in most of the cases are humble and docile and they socialize their children in the same way. Therefore, their attitudes and behavior are mostly submissive.

There are different agents of political socialization. Some of them are relatively active and instill the political attitude among the individuals in a compelling manner, while some others are passive in this regard and do not directly promulgate such socialization. Family is among the active agents of political socialization.

Most of the basic political socialization takes place within the family. In tribal societies, like Afghanistan, the political socialization within the family is also influenced by certain groups that are outside the family; such as tribes, casts, clans and ethnicities.

Another powerful agent is educational institution. Not only the political attitudes and beliefs of the teachers influence their pupils but civic education is purposely imparted to them. This is one reason why certain subjects relate to the civic education. Moreover, patriotism is also taught in schools by different methods. However, certain formal and modern ways through which basic political understanding can be taught to the children in school are not taught to the children. Mostly, in our country, such education is not part of school course.

Among the other agents of political socialization, TVs, radios, newspapers and journals, political parties, pressure groups and interest groups are the most dominant ones. Sometimes, the influences of these agents are deliberate and consciously inculcated but most often they are not so. In addition, their influence produces some destabilizing effect on the growing minds of young people as they sometimes learn the political cynicism of the adults around them. Resultantly, they start downgrading political sentiments of loyalty and patriotism.

This sort of dichotomy in political socialization, in certain cases, causes the phenomenon of revolt of the youth, more dominantly among the college and university students. Meanwhile, in certain strictly ideological countries, deliberate political socialization, even indoctrination is considered as one of the primary duties of the state.

Once an individual is properly socialized in politics, he can then participate actively in political matters. Such participation is really important for a society, particularly when the society is based on a democratic political system. Democracy demands from the people that they should be vigilant and participatory so that they have their share of participation in the matters of the state. Properly politicized person, having enough political awareness, can have continuous look over the decisions of the government, the policies of the policy makers and the decisions of different political institutions. They are also in a position to take actions, which may be necessary if the decisions and the policies are not for the advantage of the people.

Unfortunately, politics is considered to be very much negative in our society and different institutions, other than the political ones, make sure that they are not politicized in any manner. They keep their members away from politics and advise them to keep a distance from it. In such circumstances, the individuals start losing confidence from politics and consider it to be an evil instead of a blessing.

This gives rise to individuals who are not fully aware of their political circumstances and can easily be fooled by the politicians and utilized in different ways by them.

Man is a political being. If he is not interested in politics, politics is interested in him; therefore, he must make efforts to have political awareness and understanding and also strive so that the younger generations are also socialized properly in this regard.

The different institutions in the society should also take steps to facilitate the political socialization so that we have a politically aware and active young generation.

Role of Technology in Educational System

By Mohammad Zahir Akbari

In the past, learning and education simply meant teacher-center methods mainly face-to-face lectures, reading books or printed handouts, taking notes and completing assignments generally in the form of answering questions or writing essays. In short, education, learning and teaching were considered impossible without a teacher, books and chalkboards. Today, education and training have taken a whole new meaning. Computers are an essential part of every classroom and teachers are using DVDs, CD-ROMs and videos to show students how things work and operate. Students can interact with the subject matters through the use of such web based tools and CD-ROMs. Students are growing up in a digital world. Using digital devices is a huge part of their everyday experience out of school. Through internet they have access to a wide wealth of digital information, content and resources. In addition to computers, modern schools and colleges are using new methods of technology to enhance the learning experience; these include digital television channels, digital radio and sophisticated forms of communication technology. Digital radio and television allow students to access a wealth of different channels which cover a vast range of different subjects including languages, science, history and geography to name just a few. Children are used to new technology as they have grown up with it; it is therefore undoubtedly beneficial that they have the option to use it, to increase their learning capacity and pursue their interests. Educational programmes and podcasts are now widely available to download on computer or MP3 player; this makes education more modern and multi-faceted. The role of technology in the field of education is four-fold: it is included as a part of the curriculum, as an instructional delivery system, as a means of aiding instructions and also as a tool to enhance the entire learning process. In fact, education has gone from traditional passive and reactive to interactive, aggressive and modern. It is essential in corporate and academic settings. In the past, education or training is used to help workers do things differently than they did before. In the latter; education is geared towards creating curiosity in the minds of students. Thus, Research has shown that students learn best when they are engaged. Through the use of technology, students can become active participants as opposed to passive ones they simply receive instructions or information. Technology allows distance learning: Perhaps the greatest impact of technology in the field of learning is its ability to help several people learn simultaneously from different locations. Learners are not required to gather at a predetermined time or place in order to learn and receive instructions and information. All one needs is a computer connected to a modem (or with a CD drive); these tools can literally deliver a 'classroom' at the homes and offices. Technology allows group learning: There are naysayers who argue that distance learning of this sort cannot help students receive the support of traditional group-based learning.

For proving this theory wrong, technology has helped provide distance learners with online communities, live chat rooms and bulletin boards. All these allow students to collaborate and communicate even though they are isolated in their own space. Technology allows individual pacing: Multimedia tools, on-line and CD-ROM based training have helped eliminate the need for an instructor-based lesson plans. Students who grasp concepts faster proceed and move along, without being held back by ones who need more time and help for learning. Such individual pacing is beneficial to all. Technology helps lower training costs and increases productivity: Another benefit of using technology to reach many students in shorter time is lowering training costs. Corporate and academic Institutions can reduce their costs of delivering lessons to students on a per-student basis. Moreover, technology produces quantifiable results and allows students to put into practice this information quickly and with better results. Through the use of technology, students can considerably save time and increase their productivity. Both these points justify the higher costs of advanced technological tools. Roadblocks in the use of technology in learning: Naturally, for education technology to have a positive impact on students, it should be designed and prepared well. Tools used for disseminating information must be developed with students in mind.

There are also factors like lack of computer/technology literacy to be considered. Schools and businesses must bear in mind that education technology is simply a tool and its success depends largely on the amount of planning that goes into it. Using education technology can be a right choice as long as all such factors are considered. Unanimously, Science and technology are the most powerful factors in the history of mankind to revolutionize their world. Accordingly, presence of educational technology, as an effective tool, is growing in the worldwide classrooms. The new generations of kids come ready to work with these new technologies playing an important role in children's learning and acquiring various cognitive skills. So the educational technology must be incorporated into future curricula or more updated. The application of educational technology enhances skills and cognitive characteristics. If we properly use technology in the field of education, it can be a powerful tool that can help: (1) engage and challenge learners (2) provide students with practice and remote learning systems (3) Include demos, feedback and avenues that can help students reflect on what they have learned. It is evident that technology has changed classroom training in myriad ways. It has also helped enhance learning experience as well as a student's perception of what he/she can do. Undoubtedly, Technology makes the learning process more interactive and therefore more interesting and memorable, but unfortunately the Afghan war-torn schools are deprived of all these modern facilities!

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Freedom of Expression and Speech

By Jamshid Haidari

To be free means being able to choose among several solutions. So, freedom is choice. To be free is to choose with full knowledge of facts after deliberation. So, freedom is autonomy within specific sphere of activity.

To be free is to be capable of pursuing activities conforming to their own rationality which implies that one is able to recognize and grasp human activities' specific rationality or purpose. So, freedom is rectitude.

Political freedom:
Political freedom is the capacity and ability of self-determination as an expression of the individual will.

It is closely linked with the concept of civil liberties and individual rights.
Most democratic societies are characterized by various freedoms which are guaranteed or legally protected by the Constitution.

Different forms of political freedoms:
Freedom of assembly, association, religion, education, press, movement, speech and expression, thought

Freedom of speech and expression:
Free speech promotes the free flow of ideas essential to political democracy and democratic institutions and at the same time limits the ability of the State to subvert others rights and freedoms. It promotes a marketplace of ideas which includes but is not limited to the search for truth. It is intrinsically valuable as part of the self-actualization of speakers and listeners

Freedom of Press:
It is simple extension to the press of the fundamental individual rights to freedom of speech and expression.

It is closely related to the Libertarian thoughts which had its origin in the writing of Milton (Areopagitica). Philosophical support was found in the writings of John Stuart Mill (On Liberty):

"The peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is that it is robbing the human race, posterity as well as the existing generation, those who dissent from the opinion, even more than those who hold it. If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth; if wrong, they lose what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth, produced by its collision with error.

A free press has thus been seen as an essential component of a free and rational society.

Requirements for media freedom:
Media freedom to be realized there must also be access to channels and opportunities to receive diverse kinds of information.

Freedom of information/communication has a dual aspect:
Offering a wide range of voices
Responding to a wide ranging demand or need
It also needs – absence of censorship, licensing or other control by the Government so that there is an unhindered right to publish and disseminate news and opinion and no obligation to publish what one does not wish to, The equal right and possibility for citizens for free reception of and access to news, views, education and culture.

Freedom for news media to obtain information from relevant sources:
Absence of concealed influence from media owners or advertisers on news selection and on opinion expressed, an active and critical editorial policy in presenting news and opinion. These prescriptions assume that the only legitimate interests to be served are those either of communicators or of citizens or both, but there are conflicts and inconsistencies…

Freedom of public communication or media can never be absolute but has to recognize limits sometimes set by the private interests of others or by the higher collective good of a society. There is potential conflict of interests between owner or controllers of media channels and those who might want access to the channels but have no power or legal right to secure it either

as senders or receivers. There may be an imbalance between what senders want to say and what others want to hear.

It may be necessary for government or public power to intervene to secure some freedoms which are not in practice delivered by unfettered system, Benefits of media freedom Systematic and independent public scrutiny of those in power and supply of reliable information about their activities. Stimulation of an active informed democratic system and social life, The chance to express ideas, beliefs, views about the world, Continued renewal and change of culture and society, Increase in the amount and variety of freedom available.

Limitations on media freedom:
Corporate pressure, Pressure from ruling elite, Social, economic and political pressures, Religious Legal and governmental restrictions and pressures.
Propaganda model' of media:
Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky:
"Manufacturing consent-The Political economy of the Mass Media"(1988).
According to Herman and Chomsky, media performance is largely shaped by market forces by the bottom line goals of media corporations operating within capitalist State-society.

Built into the system itself is a range of filters that work ceaselessly to shape media output.

It argues that the bias derives from five 'filters' which all published news must pass through and this in turn distorts news coverage.

Five filters:
Ownership: Most large media outlets are owned by big corporations/companies. Funding: All media outlets depend heavily on advertising revenue and news, as a product, plays a minor role. Hence, stories that will affect the 'buying mood' of the readers or the interests of advertisers will be marginalized or avoided.

Sourcing:
For sourcing of information, media depends on government institutions and major businesses and information provided by these sources is generally biased.

Flak:
This filter refers to the various powerful groups that target the media directly or indirectly to manage information their way.

Anti-ideologies: This filter exploits public fear and hatred of groups that pose real or imagined threats.

The Afghan Case
The press freedom situation in Afghanistan have improved in the last years amid greater media diversity, rising professional standers for journalists, and decline in legal harassment and censorship however violence against journalists increased in 2014 as the country suffered from growing insecurity, and the media continued to face legal and other interference from the authorities.

Legal environment:
Article 34 of the constitution allows freedom of the press and expression, and the 2009 Mass Media Law prohibits censorship and guarantees the right of citizens to obtain information. However, there are broad restrictions on content that is deemed "contrary to the principles of Islam or offensive to other religions and sects." Cases involving journalists are supposed to be handled by a commission devoted to media issues, but the legal framework's ambiguity has led to muddled implementation. Four media laws have been approved since 2002, and journalists lack clarity on how different provisions are meant to be applied. Article 130 of the constitution vaguely stipulates that courts and Islamic jurists can rule on cases "in a way that attains justice in the best manner," creating leeway for discriminatory or contradictory rulings

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