A STUDY ON THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF INTELLIGENCE AND ACADEMIC ABILITY

*Anshu Kumari

Abstract

In this paper, various approaches to studying academic ability as a socially constructed category are presented. mental setup of learners is changing with the recent technologies. Therefore, Global trends are demanding training of versatility for developing new teaching strategies and ability to contribute knowledge for complex issues like individual goals of learners, physical and mental retardation and inclusion, etc. Reform in Education is the main and top priority agenda of almost all countries in the world. the paper considers how 'academic ability' and in particular, 'talent' have been studied in policy contexts and have been shaped by various programmatic imperatives.

Keywords: Ability, intelligence, talent, nation, social construction.

Introduction

The study of 'ability' in this work begins with the assumption that it is a socially constructed category. To borrow from the philosopher Ian Hacking (1999), the word 'construction' highlights the metaphor of 'building' and in a related sense, 'assembling', 'creating' and 'manufacturing'. In other words, my starting point is that the idea of ability is a 'built' one and that it is the product of 'historically situated interactions or causal routes."

In ashram system, there was no any written curriculum for the future creation of the disciples. But teachers were known as "Guru", "Swami", "Acharya" etc. used new strategies to teach them for preparing them for daily life. The ancient scriptures opine that there was a setup for the practice based teaching and learning. For example strategy of *Chakravyuh* was a new pedagogical strategy for the military tactic at that time. Today, the classroom is military ground, where a teacher uses pedagogical strategies for easy and permanent learning. The problem of individual difference has always been. But, the true teacher never gets frustrated, and never takes the road to disappointment. After the independence of India, CABE (Central Advisory Board of Education) setup a committee on *Wardha Education Scheme*, also known as *Nayee Taleem*, this was given by Mahatma Gandhi, for implementation of it. This was reiterated by the CABE in 1944 in *Sargent Plan* for educational development in India through universalisation of primary education, improvement the quality of education. The report of University Education Commission 1948-49 opined that "The most important and urgent reform needed in education is to transform it, to endeavour, to relate it to the life, needs and aspirations of the people and thereby make it the powerful instrument of social, economic and cultural transformation necessary for the realization of the national goals. For this purpose, education should be developed so as to increase productivity, achieve social and national integration, accelerate the process of modernization and cultivate social, moral and spiritual values"

The language that is used to talk about 'ability' or represent any kind of related knowledge forms a discourse about it. If 'ability' is studied as a discourse, then it is possible to understand the forms through which the concept has been spoken of and known in various historical periods. For example, all cultures recognize individuals who demonstrate exceptional performance and attempt

*Research Scholar

to explain the reason for their success. A discursive approach permits us to see that notions of ability are both explanatory concepts as well as the basis of socially recognizable identities.

Theoretical Constructions of Intelligence and Ability

There have been a number of studies which have explored the conceptions of ability including 'intelligence' as academic and/or theoretical 'constructs', which have been shaped by historical and cultural imperatives. Such acts of deconstruction reveal the manner in which individuals become classified as members of groups like the 'intelligent', the 'talented' or 'the gifted'.

Binet argues that the value of the scale to measure intelligence lies in its ability to provide information to the teacher, which would help him or her to adjust teaching to the level of a student's understanding. Its results were valid only if it was examined in the context in which the test was applied and the history of the child.

The gulf between Binet's perspectives and popular essentializations of intelligence is historicized and examined by Stephen Gould in *Mismeasure of Man*(2006 (1981)). The book draws our attention to the historical processes and consequent implications of the abstraction of just one aspect of the human brain, i.e. cognition, into the idea of 'intelligence'. The discourse of intelligence and its technologies of measurement were used to produce data which ratified the categorization of human beings along racial lines. His extensive reanalysis of the data (such as skull measurements) by certain craniometrists and polygenists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries reveals how the belief in the racial superiority of white Europeans led to (intentional) errors in the measurement of data at times. These ideas also shaped perspectives of how intelligence was inherited and distributed in predetermined ways among racial populations. The result was the correlation of IQ with existing ideas of how intelligence was understood. These claims shaped social policy such as the American Immigration Act of 1924 which supported racial segregation (especially of eastern Europeans) and forced sterilization. Gould also identifies methodological problems which were present in influential IQ tests like the military test developed by Robert Yerkes, the evolution of Spearman's 'g' and the technique of factor analysis to further reinforce how the measurement of a trait like intelligence is never separate from its social conception.

Review of Literature

Kakar (1981), Raina and Srivastava (2000) and Baral and Das (2004) are examples of studies which draw on such cultural vocabulary of the Indian subcontinent to challenge the embedded Eurocentrism in concepts like 'talent', 'creativity' and 'intelligence'. Their explorations highlight an underlying 'Hindu world image' as a structuring and organizing principle for the beliefs and behaviour of its members. They embed the discourse on the mind and its development in largely upper caste religio-philosophical traditions which attempt to explain how the goal of enlightenment and release from rebirth may be attained. For example, Baral and Das (2004) explore *buddhi* as the closest Sanskrit approximation of Euro-american treatments of 'intelligence' but they stress the weight of philosophical tradition borne by the concept.Achievement goals in the classroom: Students' learning strategies and motivation processes.

By Ames, Carole; Archer, Jennifer (2009) studied how specific motivational processes are related to the salience of mastery and performance goals in actual classroom settings. One hundred seventy-six students attending a junior high/high school for academically advanced students were randomly selected from one of their classes and responded to a questionnaire on their perceptions of the classroom goal orientation, use of effective learning strategies, task choices, attitudes, and causal attributions. Students who perceived an emphasis on mastery goals in the classroom reported using more effective strategies, preferred challenging tasks, had a more positive attitude toward the class, and had a stronger belief that success follows from one's effort. Students who perceived performance goals as salient tended to focus on their ability, evaluating their ability negatively and attributing failure to lack of ability. The pattern and strength of the findings suggest that the classroom goal orientation may facilitate the maintenance of adaptive motivation patterns when mastery goals are salient and are adopted by students

Conclusion

The roots of knowledge are in the depths of our Indian culture. Only need to recognise and to assimilate. To prepare and to implement a curriculum many problems are faced by the policy maker, teacher educators, teachers and learners due to absence or lack of teaching and learning resources. It will also faces difficulties when, it is not evaluated properly. Therefore, from the top to bottom it is need to invest for curriculum to face challenges and to make new strategies to glibness the education. Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (2007),

the famous German philosopher wrote that *"...dancing in all its forms cannot be excluded from the curriculum of all noble education; dancing with the feet, with ideas, with words, and, need I add that one must also be able to dance with the pen that one must learn how to write?... (p.47)"* If we want to make a global curriculum, then we need to diversify the teaching approaches by making colleague-colleague interaction, by multilingual interaction in classroom, by teacher-teacher interaction, by teacher-administration interaction, by demonstration, by experimental exercises, by giving projects. At the same time, 'academic ability' is not a disembodied concept but one which is attached to the lives of individuals and internalized by them as a category which allows them to make sense of experiences and interactions. The conceptions, priorities and opportunities which are produced by the larger history of India's search for the 'talented' affect the negotiations of individuals in their pursuit of self-fulfillment.

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