

Mother Claudine's concept of education and social change in today's context – Option for the less privileged.

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Abstract

Mother Claudine, a revolutionary educationist started her God's ministry focusing on the ensuring quality education for the less privileged and needy. This paper attempts to trace Mother Claudine mission to work for the less privileged and its relevance to today's context. The no. of poor and less privileged in India is on the rise. It is an urgent need to reorient our response to provide quality education and ensure holistic development of the less privileged with the focus to address the issues of poverty through education in our society. It also requires reflecting our ministry in the light of present societal challenges.

Introduction

The sisters of the cross strive to reveal to all, the merciful love of the Father and the liberating power of the Paschal Mystery through the ministry of education, by giving priority to the poor and the oppressed, especially the women and youth.

To realize the vision, The mission through various ministers such as formal and non formal education, healing, social work and social actions (sponsorship programmed to educate poor children, rehabilitation centers for the poor battered women, short stay homes, taking care of the HIV/AIDS patients, working among the tribal, Devadasis, mentally challenged schools, Crèches, Geriatric centers etc...), pastoral and catechetical activities, family apostolate, formation of youth etc are the responses of the sisters of Chavanod.

The situation of India today

- Even more than 60 years after independence from almost two centuries of British rule, large-scale poverty remains the most shameful blot on the face of India.
- India still has the world's largest number of poor people in a single country. Of its nearly 1 billion inhabitants, an estimated 350-400 million are below the poverty line, 75 per cent of them in the rural areas.
- More than 40 per cent of the population is illiterate, with women, tribal and scheduled castes particularly affected.
- It would be incorrect to say that all poverty reduction programmes have failed. The growth of the middle class (which was virtually non-existent when India became a free

nation in August 1947) indicates that economic prosperity has indeed been very impressive in India, but the DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH has been very uneven.

- The main causes of poverty are illiteracy, a population growth rate by far exceeding the economic growth rate for the better part of the past 50 years, protectionist policies pursued since 1947 to 1991 that prevented large amounts of foreign investment in the country.
- Poverty alleviation is expected to make better progress in the next 50 years than in the past, as a trickle-down effect of the growing middle class. Increasing stress on education, reservation of seats in government jobs and the increasing empowerment of women and the economically weaker sections of society, are also expected to contribute to the alleviation of poverty.
- Eradication of poverty can only be a very long-term goal in India.

The need of the hour

The following reformative actions are needed today in our education mission.

1. The education policy needs to be formulated to give option for the less privileged and needy.
2. The education policy should insist on individual care and concern for each person.
3. Our education should emphasize activity on the part of the student encourages life-long openness to growth.
4. Our education policy should believe that providing quality education for the less privileged is the God's call.
5. Reflecting on the actual situation of today's world and responding to the call of Christ who had a special love and concern for the poor, our education policy should have made a "preferential option" for the poor. This includes those without economic means, the handicapped, the marginalized and all those who are, in any sense, unable to live a life of full human dignity
6. Our educational planning needs to be made in function of the poor, from the perspective of the poor

Conclusion

As the society is witnessing the increase of less privileged and poor. Our education policy should get inspiration from Mother Claudine and make it relevant to geo-political context of the society. It only requires listening to God's call in our personal and pastoral ministry.

Reference

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