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Council of Comparative
Education Societies
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Ninth Annual International Conference 2018

Comparative Education Society of India (CESI)

in collaboration with

**Department of Sociology, Faculty of Arts, The Maharaja
Sayajirao University of Baroda**

Date: 14-16 December 2018

Venue: The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara, Gujarat, India

CONCEPT NOTE

'Modernity, Transformative Social Identities and Education in Comparative Contexts'

Modernity is associated not as just a point in history, rather it appeared as an enlightenment spirit transcending the past and creating a break from what existed before. Interrogating the legitimacy of the most established pre-modern beliefs, modernity emerged with the promise that championed the ideals of equality, freedom, progress and change. This resulted in a paradigm shift in human relations and thinking. As a socio-political-economic phenomenon, it brought with itself irreversible changes as to how societies were structured and how individuals identified with it. This promise for equality, freedom and knowledge has its roots in the explosion of science, reason and technology, which were to be realized through fields like medicine, law and education. Many oppositions like public-private, secular-religious, traditional-modern, ascriptive-achieved identity, theory-practice and so on are symbolic of changes that modernity brought and education institutions still struggle with.

It is in modernity that ideas like nation-state, democracy and citizenship come in the forefront. Citizenship was an outcome of democratic ideals of freedom, equality and knowledge. Education plays the principal role as both democracy and citizenship worked on the assumption of an informed citizen, thereby, balancing the rights of the citizens with responsibilities. Consequently, modernity emerges as an individualising force, as State targets individuals directly as part of state-craft rather than groups and communities. This led individuals to not just having citizenship rights, but also the right to choose their identities.

In the domain of education, identity is seen to be a contentious issue, given the context of modernity and the relationship it shares with citizenship. It is through science, rationality and knowledge that this transformation of identities and adoption of more universalistic attitudes and approaches were to take shape. Education thus promises this transformation from ascribed to achieved identities. But, the view that education also reproduces the ascribed identities like caste, class, gender or religion shows us a more complex picture of modernity. Identity does not only exclude but also includes, depending upon the contexts. It is rooted in local cultures, oral traditions and complex historical processes too. Different domains of education today echo these concerns of identity and subjecthood. Easy answers in this context are seldom and far too rare as they cannot be located in the binaries, be it of tradition/modern or theory/practice.

Political and popular discourses of the twenty first century centre around the transformative social identities – their power to effect change, on the imminent possibility of conflict and violence in the periods of transition, calling for inclusion in the socio-political-economic mainstream. Education thus cannot lose sight of such transformations as it is and has been the site where modernity and transformative social identities produce, reproduce, and shape the future fabric of the society itself.

Critiques of modernity point out that education is also a means to reproduce existing relations of the society negating its own ideal of critical thinking. It is acknowledged that while modern nation-state provides equality and freedom, it is accompanied by indirect forms of power to control the individual. This form of control emerged alongside new attitudes to work, necessary for the explosion of the technologies of production, resulting in ideas like capitalism and neoliberalism that form a significant part of education discourse today.

Calling modernity a failure is pessimistic; thinking it can still save us in its current form may be a bit too unreal, only an engagement with it can help us find a way forward. Recognizing the gaps in our theories and practices from where certain unintended consequences enter seems essential when we don't have clear answers to some of these questions. This form of critique further points out the struggles that modernity faces with collective freedoms. Modern state always finds it easy to deal with individual freedoms, visible in liberal philosophy and modern notion of rights, but collective freedoms has always remained a problem. The potential of education in questioning the limiting impacts of tradition/ascription cannot be neglected, but reason and science instead of freeing from the social categories further legitimize privilege, exploitation and marginalisation making domination and

hegemony prevail under the new garb of reason, rationality and science, demonstrating how the transformatory effects of education do not fully realise themselves.

How then are we to think about some of these issues in different domains of education? Is there a way through which we can envisage new ways to encounter modernity and tradition? How have earlier debates in different domains of education struggled with some of these questions and how can they add to our understanding?

Education in this context is a double-edged sword. Despite having the potential of bringing transformation, it has also legitimised new structures, often through which old forms of hegemony and domination operate. Education becomes that danger which also has the saving power, and it is this saving power which can be traced in ideas like critique. The last conference of CESI exactly explored this idea of critique weaving it around empathy and welfare. The present conference takes it further and tries to find possibilities and a way forward, from modernity, through modernity and within modernity.

Sub - Themes (Indicative, not exhaustive)

Contradictions and Paradoxes in Education: Historical and contemporary Trends	Teacher Education and Reforms
Modernity, Identity and Education	New Education Economy
Rethinking Critique, Theory and Practice in Education	Gender and Inclusion in Education
Violence, Modernity and Schooling practices	Education in Colonial India
Politics, Ideology, Education: Global discourses and local impacts	Curriculum and Disciplinary concerns
Nation/nationalism, identity and schooling	Social and Economic dynamics of Education/economics of education
Language concerns as a medium of instruction in schooling/education	ICT and Educational access/Educational Technology
Migration, Development and Education	Disability, Inclusion and Education
Diversity, Marginality and Education	Leadership, Organizational concerns, schooling/education
Urban transformations and education	Education in Conflict zones/situations
Social Psychological Concerns in education	Discourses on Childhood

Important Dates:

Last Date for submission of the Abstracts: 15th July, 2018

Confirmation of the Abstracts: 7th September 2018

Final Submission of Full Paper: 7th November 2018
Conference Dates: 14-16 December, 2018

Conference Convenor :

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For further details visit: <http://www.cesindia.net/>