

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN EDUCATION AND PROBLEMS OF SOCIALIZATION**Dr. Rahimov M.***Assoc.Prof.**Baku Eurasian University, department of "Humanities and Regional Studies"***Dr. Gasimov S.***Assoc.Prof.**Baku Eurasian University, department of "Humanities and Regional Studies"***Ahmadova A.***Baku Eurasian University, department of "Humanities and Regional Studies"*<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13788501>**Abstract**

The article discusses the issues of creating equal opportunities for students. Equal opportunities in education are understood as equal access to or benefit from educational resources. The understanding of this concept in the Republic of Azerbaijan, its place in the legislative system and the work done are listed. There is evidence that there is a relationship between equal educational opportunities and educational success. Equal opportunities created for schoolchildren make it possible to involve those with poor financial means and those under family pressure to study. All this creates opportunities for talented students to take a place in society according to their abilities. Then, the factors that hinder equal educational opportunities are mentioned, and among them, geographical factors and gender discrimination are given special attention. Issues of providing equal opportunities in education are also clarified. For this purpose, allocation of more funds to education by the state, elimination of psychological factors and creation of educational services taking into account individual differences, reflection of technological development in the educational process and other nuances are mentioned.

Keywords: Education, Socialization, Equal opportunities, Education policy, Educational success

1. Introduction

Education is a process in which an individual develops his skills, attitudes and forms of behavior appreciated in the society in which he lives, and carries out the process of integration into the global family. Education is an environment selected and controlled to accommodate an individual's ability and achieve the most favorable level of personal development. It is the process of achieving a desired change in an individual's purposeful behavior. Education includes activities such as equipping an individual with the knowledge, behavior, skills and habits necessary to keep up with the changing conditions of society. Considering all this, it can be said that education is the necessary knowledge that helps and builds on personality development, prepares the individual for adult life, it is a process that helps in acquiring skills and behaviors. According to Durkheim, education is the effect of the physical and social environment on people. However, when we say education, we mostly mean school activities. For example, to discover and maximize the child's hereditary characteristics; adaptation of children, young people and adults to their living environment; instilling and teaching socio-cultural values to young generations;

It is universally accepted that children have equal educational opportunities. This thesis stems from two observations about education and children: first, education significantly affects one's life chances in terms of success in the labor market, preparation for democratic citizenship, and overall human flourishing; and second, that children's life chances should not be determined by some morally arbitrary condition into which they are born, such as social class, race, or gender. But the precise meaning of the ideal of equality of educational opportunity and its implications are the subject of considerable disagreement (see Jencks 1988).

Apart from general theories of equality of opportunity, there are three main factors that emphasize the importance of treating equality of educational opportunity as an independent issue: the central place of education in modern societies and the countless opportunities it provides; lack of high-quality educational opportunities for many children; and the important role of the state in providing educational opportunities. These factors distinguish education from many other social goods.

Currently, education is considered the basis of activities that provide opportunities to live well together with others. Therefore, education depends on the social status of people, the level of their financial resources, their position and profession, their beliefs, etc. equal access opportunities should be ensured regardless. In the era of globalization, UNESCO characterizes universities as institutions with an indispensable role in social development, economic growth, supporting the production of competitive goods and services, forming and protecting cultural identity, ensuring the integrity of society, fighting poverty and supporting a culture of peace.

The role of education in the process of socialization

The formation of personality is impossible outside of social activity, an individual manifests social essence and acquires social qualities only by being involved in the process of historical experience. Socialization is a complex, multifaceted process of social formation and development of personality that takes place under the influence of the social environment and purposeful educational activities of society. The process of socialization of personality implies that a person becomes a full-fledged member of society, ready to perform the social functions of a worker and a citizen.

Socialization explains the origin of personality itself, which embodies the diversity of customs, norms, values, attitudes and social relations. Man lives in society and no matter how much he wants to, he cannot be freed from it. Therefore, man is not only an "intelligent being" but also a "social being". Socialization - the formation of a person as "homo sapiens" - begins from the moment of birth. All human behavior is the result of learning or socialization [Andreeva; 79-81]. The process of socialization continues throughout life.

One of the important means of personality socialization is education. Modern society requires that every person constantly learns and improves his level of education. Currently, education is viewed as a social system that actively interacts with the social environment. Its effectiveness is determined by the systemic characteristics of interaction between education and society.

The direction of development of modern society is mainly determined by the qualities of modern youth. Many socially important qualities are formed in the educational process.

Socialization as the process and result of personality formation during the assimilation of accumulated human experience is the main goal of the activities of educational institutions. New economic conditions, the instability of the social value system, competition in the labor market, the need for competent, active specialists who are able to quickly learn new things in the labor market, all these impose requirements on education to ensure the successful adaptation of the individual (Boldyrev; 989-991).

Education aims to educate and train a person. Education serves the interests of the individual and society. It represents a certain level of knowledge, skill and set of values. The purpose of education is comprehensive individual development of a person. Education helps to transfer social, cultural and moral values, generally accepted norms of social behavior, necessary knowledge and skills to the young generation. Thus, education helps to form qualities that allow them to be realized in society, that is, education helps to socialize young people.

At the same time, in the educational process, the student's cognitive and professional interests, his ability to build life plans and develop moral ideals are formed, which in turn affects the formation of the individual's internal position.

The activity of the education system takes place in the conditions of the relations that actually exist in the society. The socio-economic, political and spiritual-moral transformations taking place in the society determine the necessity of updating the educational system and its meaningful activity in order to ensure the adequacy of the preparation of young people for the changes in the society. In the modern conditions of democratic transformations of the social environment and the creation of a civil society, the role of education increases immeasurably, its functions expand, and the responsibility of educating students' moral values increases. In the field of education, basic value orientations are established, basic social norms and deviations from them are studied, social behavior motivation is formed (Ипатова; 38-40). Apparently, that is why the

educational process is characterized as training and education.

The problem of establishing a connection between the concepts of "personal socialization", "education" and "upbringing" is relevant today for understanding the role and place of the educational system in the formation of the social qualities of a pupil or student, his moral values. Of course, education contributes to the development and formation of moral and civic qualities of an individual, thereby influencing his socialization. The process of socialization is the most important pedagogical task of upbringing and education, as an introduction to the active participation of a pupil or student in the development of society.

The main goal of social education is to form a personality that is ready to fulfill the social functions of a citizen. It is this internal position that determines a number of structures of his attitude towards values and norms of life in the developing information society. Therefore, the educational process is closely connected with life, socio-cultural environment, and is built according to the requirements of the society and the interests of the state.

Of course, education is one of the leading tools for self-realization. It affects the choice of life values and relationships, individual capabilities, needs, interests, etc. helps to choose which field of activity is more suitable for implementation.

Education belongs to the social sphere of state activity, it is carried out for the interests of the individual, society, and the state, and it is based on the natural right of a person to realize all types of his life activity in society. One of the most important tasks facing education today is to determine the priorities of future transformations of this social institution in order to create conditions that ensure the comprehensive development of a person. This requires the renewal of the trends of humanization of education and the transition to a new understanding of the social orientation of learning. Education has always been designed to meet the needs of society for a certain personality, so special attention has always been paid to the socialization of the individual. Socialization is aimed at the gradual inclusion of young people in the social life of society through upbringing and education. It provides the formation of experience in social life and social relations, teaches interaction with other people, allows to acquire practical individual and group work skills. Today, the priority goal of education is not only the preparation of specialists needed for various fields and sectors of the economy, but also the socialization of the personality and the education of the citizen (Rozhkova; 316-318).

In fact, public schools are not organized to educate, but to train loyal citizens. He defines a number of personal qualities that are the basis for the formation of the personality of the era. For example, the book "On the Positions of Man and Citizen" published in Russia lists the necessary moral qualities that a person should cultivate in himself: "tendency and hard work", "fulfilling the duty of rank", "interest" and so on. There are also practical recommendations for behavior in society: "to be kind to people", "sincere", "to be respectful" [Felbiger; 27]. An alternative model of behavior is condemned: "...a lazy and unemployed person is a useless

burden on the earth and in society" [Felbiger; 39-40]. Twenty pages eloquently describe the harms of "great pride", "pride and arrogance", "meanness", "maliciousness", "lies", "rudeness" and other vices [Felbiger; 45-46].

Teacher-student relations are regulated in all educational institutions. Such relations are supposed to be based on trust, mutual respect, and the authority of the teacher. The rights and duties of students who must respect their teachers and obey their instructions are also explained. Students should not only behave with dignity, modesty and dignity at school, but also at home and anywhere they should oppose arguments, indecent and shameful conversations and speeches, and idle and meaningless activities.

Teachers are prohibited from humiliating the student's human dignity, the use of which is prohibited is listed: belts, sticks, objects depicting all kinds of violence, especially, the use of profanity and obscene words. At the same time, since parents themselves are less involved in the education of their children, teachers take the place of parents among their students, so their work becomes more. Thus, teachers perform the duties of turning their students into useful members of society, educating them, teaching them to think, and to behave rationally, honestly and with dignity" [29; 650-658].

The age period of high school students and students of higher educational institutions is characterized by the development of the motivational sphere, which is expressed in the determination of a person's place in life, the formation of a worldview, and its effect on cognitive abilities. During adolescence, the dynamics of the "internal position" of the developing personality is of crucial importance, which consists in how the will of the young person is related to his will, based on his previous experience, capabilities, and previously formed needs and desires.

It is known that the behavioral paradigm of a citizen of any country should be based on respect for state interests. Another task facing the education system is to "educate" people who obey the law and fulfill their civic duty, who do not shy away from responsibility for everything that happens in society. In general, the education system should serve professional goals as well as preparing a loyal and reliable person for the state of Azerbaijan. He must first be a citizen, then a businessman or a professional civil servant. In other words, the upbringing of a patriotic and socially active person is the cornerstone of the ideology of the enlightened absolutist concept.

Normal functioning of society is impossible without full-fledged education. It has become one of the main factors of economic development, national security, and an important tool of state policy. Improving education for each country essentially designs its own individual future. High-quality education helps talented young people from less fortunate families to build a decent career, increasing their life chances and acting as a kind of social elevator.

Equal opportunities in education

"Equal opportunities" means equal access to or use of resources. Equal opportunities in education means equal access to educational resources or benefit from

them. In democratic societies, everyone has equal access to educational services to develop their potential and abilities in the most appropriate way, without any discrimination. In general, it is noted that there are three principles that ensure equality in education (Soylu, 2020: 30).

1. Provision of laws, decisions and guidelines that protect everyone's rights. This is the concept of equality, which consists in giving all citizens the right and opportunity to rise to the highest level of all levels of education. Although this is the ideal option, biological and economic factors prevent it.

2. Ensuring a minimum level of education for everyone. This view expresses the situation of each country regarding the compulsory implementation of education. It aims to ensure that all children achieve a minimum level of education. Ensuring this right is more important for developing countries. They want to develop a level of upper secondary education along with primary or general secondary education. Because talented people should be selected to provide higher education opportunities. To make that choice, everyone needs to be given the opportunity to at least get an education to get there.

3. Providing an environment that allows each individual to realize their full talents and potential. Equality in this area should be understood as the right of individuals to use their potential. But it is almost possible to achieve this equality in developed countries. Some habits and traditions of individuals and society in underdeveloped countries prevent this. For example, the children of poor families who could not discover and develop their many talents due to lack of education can be cited as an example.

The common goal of all these concepts of equality is to give certain rights to individuals. A right so that once people have this equal access, they can develop themselves and continue to increase their potential. All this is established in both national laws and international law.

Article 25 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan states that "The State, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, language, gender, origin, property status, service position, belief, affiliation to political parties, trade unions and other public associations, has the right of everyone and guarantees the equality of their freedoms. It is forbidden to restrict human and civil rights and freedoms based on race, ethnicity, religion, language, gender, origin, belief, political and social affiliation" (1; 10).

Article 42 of the Constitution includes the right to education and it is stated that "Every citizen has the right to education", "The state guarantees the right to free compulsory general secondary education", "The education system is controlled by the state", "Depending on the financial situation the state guarantees that talented people continue their education regardless of the situation", "The state determines the minimum education standards" (1; 16).

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "Everyone has the right to education. Education is free, at least at the primary and basic level. Primary education is compulsory. Technical and vocational education is open to everyone. Higher education

should be open to everyone, according to their capabilities, under conditions of complete equality" (7).

One of the goals of education is to enable young people to develop into happy individuals. The second major goal of education, which plays an important role in public discourse, is to prepare individuals for productive employment. For the labor market, education has significant benefits for the state (e.g., increased GDP) and individuals (e.g., paid and rewarding employment and all its associated benefits, including more discretionary income, more leisure time, and better health care). This function of education is important as a matter of justice. In terms of income inequality highlighted by leading economists, education aimed at preparing individuals for work has become particularly relevant (Piketty 2014; Saez & Zucman 2014). Since education for employment is a high-position product given the competitive labor market, how educational opportunities are distributed in this area is even more important.

While there is a clear correlation between educational attainment, income, and employment rates, the relationship between academic achievement as measured by tests and labor market outcomes has been found to be weaker (Bowles, Gintis, & Osborne 2001). Research has shown that "soft skills" (e.g., personality traits such as persistence; an individual's goals and preferences) are more predictive of success than cognitive abilities measured by test scores (Heckman & Kautz 2012). Moreover, education aimed directly at employment has a history of entrenching inequalities. Although the link between traditional academic skills and labor market success may be less significant than previously thought, and despite the checkered history of vocational education, formal education still plays an important role in equipping individuals for labor market success on several fronts.

Educational achievement itself is the basis for screening and distinguishing candidates, apart from whether applicants demonstrate specific skills. Finally, a bachelor's degree has gained particular importance in recent years, with holders earning 84% more over a lifetime than those without (see Carnevale, Rose & Cheah 2011). Lesley Jacobs' concept of equity equity (2004) emphasizes the importance of equality of educational opportunities in labor market preparation. Ideally, the stakes in education for success in the labor market would not be as high as they are now, so that a winner-takes-all competition for a job could determine an individual's access to social goods such as health care, leisure, and discretionary income. When the (non-ideal) stakes are so high, equality of educational opportunity becomes even more important (Jacobs 2010).

The Relationship Between Equal Educational Opportunity and Educational Achievement

There is a relationship between equal educational opportunities and educational success. Because the equal opportunities created for schoolchildren make it possible for those with poor financial means and those who are under family pressure to be involved in education. All this creates opportunities for talented students to take a place in society according to their abilities. Education has both general and intrinsic value for individuals and societies as a whole. As the United States

Supreme Court noted in its unanimous decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954), "It is doubtful that any child these days can reasonably be expected to succeed in life if deprived of educational opportunity" (Equality of Educational Opportunity).

There are five models that show the relationship between equal educational opportunities and educational success. These models are as follows (Soylu, 2020: 31):

1. Meritocracy model. According to this model, children's learning potential is not equal from birth. Wealthy and intelligent parents pass on their advantages to their children and influence their success in school. Inherited talent is the source of student achievement differences. Social factors such as family, school, and environment only reinforce biological abilities.

The task of education is to select and nurture those who are highly skilled, high-status, and best able to perform leadership vocations. In this case, the equalization of educational opportunities and conditions makes the hereditary inequality more pronounced.

Proponents of meritocratic equality of opportunity argue that nothing but merit should stand in the way of achieving desired goals. This view requires that the goods of education be distributed only according to individual merit. In the context of education, merit is often measured by admission requirements, aptitude tests, or grades on exams. Of course, merit can also be defined in other ways—by how hard a student works, how much a student improves, or how much a student participates in the classroom—though all of these metrics create measurement problems.

Meritocratic equality of opportunity has known limitations, especially with regard to children. If educational opportunities are to be given to the top scorers in entrance exams, we will overlook the fact that merit is endogenous to education, meaning that educational opportunity itself creates merit (Satz 2007). The more educational opportunities an individual child has, the more "merit" a child can earn. This may suggest that we focus more on the underlying potential of individuals rather than their assessed merit. Still, few believe that we should give opportunities to those with less basic ability or those with the most basic but undeveloped ability at the expense of those who are less qualified but have worked harder (Miller 1996).

To illustrate the second limitation of the meritocratic conception of equal educational opportunity, imagine that all highly selective university places were awarded to members of the upper class through nepotism, and a progressive new government was suddenly elected to power to enforce meritocratic admissions. After generations of amassing superior education, jobs, and wealth at the expense of the poor, the upper classes are in a better position, especially if private schooling, to ensure that their children are the most qualified and thus retain a broad education. social inequalities between representatives of different classes. Although some opportunities are equally open to all, the opportunities to develop "merit" are not equally distributed (Williams 1962). The intergenerational transmission of opportunities to cultivate merit would create a deeply divided and unequal society, contrary to the ideal of equality of educational opportunity.

Apart from the potentially toxic consequences of engaging in meritocratic rhetoric, two other limitations of meritocratic equality of opportunity in the educational context should be noted (Young 1958; Sandel 2020). First, as already mentioned, the definition of dignity itself can be controversial. Is there an account of merit that is completely independent of notions of justice (Sen 2000)? Is it just merit that maximizes productivity? Should merit be based solely on test scores, or should it also consider moral attributes such as the ability to cooperate with others?

The second is that while basing educational opportunities on "merit" may seem appealing to young adults, it is deeply problematic when applied to very young children. As Michael Walzer (1983: 203) points out, the job of a reading teacher is to teach children to read, not just to give them the opportunity to learn to read. And this work probably involves all the children in the class, even those who are not particularly "deserving". Perhaps this is why ability-based educational 'tracking' of very young children seems particularly disadvantageous – all children have certain abilities that need to be developed (Satz 2007).

2. Fundamentalist model. According to this model, family environment is more important and determining than the talent required for education. This situation reflects the inequality of the socio-economic structure. Talent is considered the result of family circumstances and early socialization experiences. Children from poor families do not have equal financial opportunities to compete with others for intellectual development. Therefore, many people are stigmatized with the idea and accusation that they "cannot read". According to fundamentalists, the existing socio-economic structure must be changed to equalize educational opportunities. That is, first of all, an equal socio-economic situation and environment should be created among people.

3. Traditional elite model. Those who belong to this group, called conservatives, argue that the children of the privileged class need to go to high-class and elite schools so that they will be smarter and more successful. According to them, intelligence is not a natural, but a social trait. They believe that this feature is a reflection of the selection of perennial values and culture. It is necessary to refrain from reforming efforts that could disrupt the activities of selected, privileged, private schools.

4. The evolving liberal model. According to the views of supporters of this view, talent is largely hereditary. But the transmission of talent from generation to generation leads to great habits between classes. Therefore, they argue that an ability-based selection process in education will increase social opportunities. They make a weak connection between intelligence, family and background. They differ from the meritocratic model.

5. Compensatory liberal model. According to them, intelligence is not mainly inherited. The education system can be used as a tool to overcome the deprivations and social inequalities created at home. According to them, there is an important relationship between family environment and success. According to

some, the deprivations caused by the family can be changed by implementing certain policies.

These models have been applied in industrial societies for some time. Even now, there are families who apply one of the above-mentioned models to their children's education and believe in it. All this, of course, leads to the elimination of equal opportunities in education.

In addition to the general and intrinsic value of education for the individual, education is also valuable for society. All societies benefit from productive and knowledgeable workers who can create social surplus and respond to preferences. Furthermore, democratic societies must create free citizens who can participate in the project of shared governance. The relationship between education level and socialization has been stated as follows: educated citizens have more opportunities to acquire and exercise citizenship skills, are more interested and informed about politics, and in turn are more likely to vote (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady 1995: 432–437, 445; Dee 2004).

Factors Impeding Equal Opportunities in Education

In general, income and productivity are inversely related. From here and based on our observations, we can say that a relatively large number of school-aged children are concentrated in low-income families. Most of the children in such families cannot continue their studies in compulsory educational institutions until the end. Such children prefer to work in a lucrative job than to study.

Family income affects not only the amount of education a person receives, but also its quality. High-income families have more opportunities to educate their children. Therefore, they aspire to professions in schools that require many years of preparation and are more expensive. On the other hand, it is observed that low-income children go to vocational schools where more trade and technical professions are taught.

There is a positive relationship between income and professional reputation. There is also a positive relationship between the professional position of the parents and the amount of education given to the child. The lower the professional status, the less the amount of education given to children. In societies where higher education is paid, this gap is even greater. Paying for the child's education along with personal expenses has a negative impact on poor families.

Although the implementation of equality of opportunity in education is a function of the state, the limited budgetary resources make it difficult to fulfill this function, especially in underdeveloped countries. However, if the economic situation allows, the state can fulfill this task. In this regard, the state increases its concern by implementing programs such as ensuring the education of poor children, opening state-supported educational institutions, scholarships, educational loans, and increasing nutrition opportunities.

One of the factors that hinder equal educational opportunities is geographical factors. Thus, families living in rural areas face serious difficulties in sending their children to secondary and higher schools. In particular, the absence of full secondary schools in remote

villages, the existence of only primary and mostly incomplete secondary schools makes a significant difference. According to the information released by the State Statistics Committee in May 2023, 54.6 percent of the population of Azerbaijan lives in urban areas and 45.4 percent in rural areas (5). The children of families living in the city are better than those living in rural areas. Their access to education is easier. There are opportunities to choose a school. However, children living in rural areas do not have these opportunities. Rural children spend more time on the road. The presence of high-status schools in urban areas allows the children of wealthy and privileged people to concentrate here. Children of such families are united already from school life, their mutual relations lead to joint solution of problems and success. However, the education costs of rural children are lower. Since tutoring has become an integral part of the secondary education system in modern times, students are forced to go to "class" after school. These costs are 3-4 times lower in rural areas than in cities. Let us note here that the income of the population living in urban areas is much higher than that of rural residents.

It is a good thing that regional differentiation does not affect the quality of education in Azerbaijan. The quality of education does not differ in the west and east, south and north of the country. Sometimes, even a student of a rural school who studies by working on a farm has quite high scores. Undoubtedly, this may be related to the genetic factor. Moreover, recently, the effects of social networks on schoolchildren are also significant. The high accessibility of children living in the city to the Internet and social networks, in addition to the protection of attachment to national and moral values in rural areas, the fact that children growing up in the city cannot yet be adequately trained for the completely new conditions formed in the new information system, also cause problems in their education. Under the influence of social networks, they enter the criminal world, drug addiction, entertainment, etc. they try to show more interest and spend spare time.

Gender discrimination also affects educational equality. In every developing or underdeveloped country, women's education remains lower than that of men. In industrialized countries, there is a normal attitude towards women in terms of continuing education after compulsory education. However, the gender issue affects the education of boys and girls in our country. This is recorded especially in the southern region of our country. Strong religious influences in the southern region and several villages of Baku prevent girls from continuing their education after compulsory incomplete secondary education. However, religious beliefs are not allowed to have any official or unofficial influence on the right to education.

Children of minority peoples living in Azerbaijan are free to attend private or public schools, all levels of education are open to them. Since the majority are Muslims, there is no religious discrimination and privilege in our country, and sectarian differences are not a factor affecting education.

Racial and ethnic groups in different countries are not equal in terms of educational equality. There is now almost no stark difference between people's access to

education based on color. But there is a stark difference in the quality and availability of education for Jews and Arabs in Israel, and it doesn't look like it will disappear anytime soon. It is impossible to claim that there is racial discrimination in terms of access to education and quality of education in our country.

The state, which determines the education policy, sometimes acts as a factor preventing equality of opportunity in education with the change of powers. Thus, disagreements between different political parties prevent the implementation of a stable and balanced educational philosophy and policy. This can harm equality of opportunity in education.

Political parties announce the policies they will follow in education and demand votes from voters. When the political party preferred by the people is in power, it implements its own education policy. This is a requirement of democratic government.

Differences in intelligence, special abilities, sensory discrimination and perceptual potential create differences between individuals. Even when many factors of economic, social and political inequality caused by individual differences are controlled, the environment of inequality continues due to the unequal potential and abilities of individuals.

Family as a cause of inequality in education

The family is a significant source of educational inequalities. Moreover, children have completely different personalities and needs. Differences in family priorities affect the child's prospects in the labor market, general well-being and socialization. The amount of wealth a family has also increases inequality by affecting a child's education. Although the number of parents who choose to pay tuition fees for their children to attend private schools is relatively small, it is now making an extraordinary difference. In the last 10 years, the number of students studying in private secondary schools in Azerbaijan has increased by 1.5 times. In the 2017/2018 academic year, 10,928 students studied in 28 non-state formal general educational institutions, and in 2022, the number of schools will reach 31, and this number will increase to 16,859. Prices in private secondary schools vary by school and class. Annual tuition fees range from \$2,100 to \$10,000. However, 1,674,000 students study in 4,394 state day schools. (9)

Tuition fees in private secondary schools significantly lag behind universities. Observations show that private secondary schools are the most obvious manifestation of inequality in the educational system of Azerbaijan. Although receiving secondary education in private schools is considered as belonging to an elite group, receiving higher education in public universities is considered more acceptable. These students do not have problems with earning a student title and getting high-level jobs after graduating from a higher education institution. Although some of these inequalities have been addressed by social policies that address employment practices, we have reason to believe that some inequality of opportunity will remain.

There are several possible approaches to the conflict between equal educational opportunity and family. One approach subordinates our concern for equality of educational opportunity to our concern for the family.

To support this idea, we can try to argue that it is important for the family to have wealth. Moreover, due to the protection of pluralism and individual uniqueness, the state cannot impose complete uniformity on child-rearing practices. In the Republic, Plato advocated the common upbringing of children within communities. But most philosophers, including Rawls, believe that the abolition of the family is too high a price to pay for equality.

Ensuring Equal Opportunities in Education

Access to education is linked to health and wealth: the more educated a person is, the healthier, wealthier and happier they are. At the same time, education is also seen as intrinsically valuable. Developing one's skills and talents can be a central component of an enjoyable and fulfilling life in and of itself, regardless of the consequences for wealth or health.

The high number of children and young people receiving education in the general population requires more funds to be allocated to education. While this indicator is low in developed countries, it is higher in developing countries.

Ideas about the fair distribution of educational opportunities are particularly troubling given the paucity of resources allocated to education. Developed societies have policies in place to provide some form of free education to their citizens. Article 42 of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan is devoted to the right of citizens to education. It states that "The state guarantees the right to free compulsory general secondary education" (1; 12).

According to the education statistics of 2022, a total of 1,589,829 students studied in the general educational institutions of the republic in the 2021-2022 academic year. 158,608, 132,881, and 91,538 students studied in class I, class IX, and class XI of general education schools respectively. There are 309 primary schools, 3333 comprehensive secondary schools, 775 general secondary schools, 13 special type general secondary schools and 5 full and part-time (evening) comprehensive secondary schools in the republic, including 64 school-lyceums, 54 lyceums, 15 gymnasiums and 16 boarding schools with integrated training. type gymnasium, 1 boarding school with integrated training, a total of 4435 schools operate (6).

A total of 1 million 616 thousand 214 students studied in general educational institutions in our country in the 2022-2023 academic year. It is reported that there are 158 thousand 297 students in the I class, 147 thousand 29 students in the IX class, and 100 thousand 455 students in the XI class (8).

Currently, 187,000 students study in 51 higher education institutions in the Republic of Azerbaijan. More than 110,000 of them have paid education. The cheapest higher education fee in Baku universities is 885 USD. An example of this is Azerbaijan University of Languages. In many universities, the amount is 1470-1770 US dollars. The maximum tuition fee is at ADA University and starts at 3825 USD. At Khazar University, this amount is 2950 US dollars. The law faculty of Baku State University and medical specialties of Medical University are specialties that cost around 2350-2950 USD. It should also be noted that the nominal salary in 2023 was 540 US dollars.

According to the accepted general norms, the number of people with higher education in the society should be at least 30 percent of the total citizens. It is important for the formation of a competitive and sustainable economy, a quality service sector and, most importantly, a cultural society. Crime rates are minimal in societies with a high number of highly educated people. Therefore, as a quick way out of the situation, the quantitative indicator should be increased in Azerbaijan, and the quality can be improved after that.

According to official figures, Azerbaijan ranks last among the CIS countries in terms of the number of students per 10,000 people. According to official figures as of the beginning of 2022, only 140 people out of every 1000 people over the age of 15 have higher education in Azerbaijan. 10 years ago, this indicator was equal to 125 people. That is, in the last 10 years, the number of people with higher education among the population over 15 years old has increased by 12%. In addition to higher education, Azerbaijan lags behind not only developed countries, but also CIS countries in terms of the number of people currently studying in higher education institutions. According to official data, Azerbaijan ranks last among the CIS countries in terms of the number of students per 10,000 people.

According to the indicator for the beginning of 2022, the number of economically active population in Azerbaijan is equal to 5 million 300 thousand people. People with higher education in the country make up only 16.6% of the economically active population. Differences related to higher education indicators are also observed by gender. If only 14% of economically active women have higher education, this indicator is equal to 19% for men.

From the state budget of 2023, 4.4 billion manats of education expenses (3) are planned, which is 536.5 million manats or 13.8 percent more than that in 2022 (4). Funding for education always competes with the desire to provide citizens with other social goods. As Amy Gutmann writes: "The cost of using education to improve children's life chances is so high that other social goods would be foregone" (Gutmann 1999: 129). Other basic welfare needs (e.g., housing, health, food) as well as cultural assets (e.g., museums, parks, concert halls) should be weighed against public funds allocated to education, thus ensuring quality education even in higher education institutions.

Given the importance of education for individuals and society, it is clear that education cannot be distributed by the market: it must be available to all children, even those whose parents are very poor or very neglectful. Furthermore, if education is to play a role in equipping young people to participate in the labor market, participate in democratic governance, and more generally lead prosperous lives, then its content cannot be arbitrary, but must be tailored to these desired outcomes.

It seems possible to create equal opportunities in education by eliminating psychological factors and creating educational services taking into account individual differences and reflecting technological development in the educational process. However, ensuring equality of opportunity in education can be grouped as follows:

- The spread of pre-school education.

- Providing economic support to the family for the children of poor families.
- Providing opportunities for vertical and horizontal transfer between educational levels.
- Establishing a system so that those who leave school without completing their education can complete their education with new and suitable programs from where they left off.
- Implementation of non-formal educational programs for adults.
- Creating jobs for every level of education.
- Creating the opportunity to choose multi-purpose and multi-program education.
- Establishment of guidance and psychological counseling services at all levels of education.

John Rawls developed a concept he called Fair Equality of Opportunity (FEO). FEO requires that social offices and positions be formally open to all, and that equally talented and motivated individuals have approximately equal chances to attain these positions, regardless of social class background (Rawls 2001: 42-44). When applied to education, this principle can support educational interventions that close the achievement gap between the rich and the poor, who have the same high talent potential. This is because students from poorer backgrounds receive the same education as their more affluent peers who have the same potential. The Rawlsian principle of FEO aims to eliminate the influence of social background and economic class on educational achievement. Fair equality of opportunity therefore offers a radical interpretation of equality of educational opportunity.

Conclusion

Education is the influence of the physical and social environment on people, it is a socialization process that helps the development of the personality and prepares the individual for adult life, helping him acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and behaviors. Currently, education is considered the basis of activities that provide opportunities to live well together with others, and for individuals to consciously refrain from illegal activities. Therefore, education depends on the social status of people, the level of their financial resources, their position and profession, their beliefs, etc. equal access opportunities should be ensured regardless. It is not enough to have laws for this. Effective mechanisms are also required for its implementation. In particular, in order to create equal opportunities in education, it is necessary to allocate more funds to it, ensure gender equality, and minimize the influence of religious meetings on education. It seems possible to create equal opportunities in education by eliminating psychological factors and creating educational services taking into account individual differences and reflecting technological development in the educational process. However, there is a need to spread preschool education, provide family economic support for children from poor families, implement non-formal education programs for adults, create jobs for each level of education, and establish guidance and psychological counseling services at all levels of education.

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